



JOB DESCRIPTION – Conservation Officer - Mourne Catchments

TITLE:	Conservation Officer - Mourne Catchments
EMPLOYER:	Mourne Heritage Trust
JOB SUMMARY:	<p>The Officer will support the development and delivery of habitat management plans including conservation grazing elements for the NI Water in their Mournes (upland) catchments. You will work in collaboration with existing MHT teams engaged in Peatland/ wet heath restoration, and erosion control measures and you will facilitate meetings of the Mourne Wildfire Group.</p> <p>You will collaborate on behalf of MHT and NIW with the NIEA led development of the NI Wildfire Action Plan. You will work in partnership with NIEA MHT and NIW to enable condition assessment of protected areas in NIW ownership for the purposes of compliance with habitat regulations.</p> <p>The post holder will be proficient in Microsoft Office and digital mapping software such as ARC GIS or Q GIS in the field (uplands). They will be able to record analysis data and conduct desk based research. Good all round communication skills are essential as are the ability to write complex documents and action plans.</p>
SALARY:	<p>S01 -NJC Pts 23-25 (2025); £34,434 - £36,363 gross per annum. Contributory pension with employers pension contribution 5% per annum Appointments will be made at the first point of the scale.</p>
LOCATION:	Based at Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) offices, 19 Causeway Road, Newcastle with hot desk access at other locations, and hybrid working by agreement. Occasional travel throughout the UK and Ireland will be required.
CONTRACT:	Fixed Term Contract to 31st March 2028, an extension is subject to addition or funding extension. This job is likely to include weekend and evening work and may include focussing hours in particular seasons. Time off in toil for overworked hours This post is subject to a 6-month probationary period
LEAVE:	25 days annual leave and 12 statutory holidays
Reporting to	Landscape Services Development Manager
Transport	Access to a work vehicle will be provided to facilitate access getting to and from site locations (i.e., from base). Access to a suitable form of transport to travel to MHT office locations will be required along with a full clean driving licence
Other Benefits	Flexi – time system, onsite parking and a basic health care plan, provided by the Hospital Saturday Fund.
Requirement	Prospective candidates must have the legal right to work in the UK. This will be verified with shortlisted candidates at the interview stage. Basic Access NI check will be completed prior to appointment



Project Overview:

Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) supports Northern Ireland Water (NIW) to improve the condition of important upland habitats across the Mourne catchments, with a particular focus on the Eastern Mourne Special Area of Conservation (EMSAC) and the Western Mourne ASSI. These landscapes are internationally and nationally important for their biodiversity, peatland habitats and their role in supplying clean drinking water for a fifth of Northern Ireland's population.

A key part of NIW land management plans is the use of conservation grazing on NIW land in the Silent Valley catchment. Conservation grazing involves the careful management of herbivores to help maintain and restore habitats such as species-rich grassland, peatland and wet heath. When planned, monitored and adopted effectively, grazing can improve habitat condition, support species recovery, reduce the build-up of vegetation that contributes to wildfire risk, and strengthen the overall resilience of the landscape.

Grazing also complements other practical conservation measures, including erosion control, peatland recovery and habitat restoration. Collectively the range of conservation approaches supports DAERA's Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy and wider net zero objectives and is expected to feature as a key management tool for the forthcoming DAERA Fire Management Strategy for the Mourne.

Job Purpose

As Conservation Officer, you will work closely with other MHT project teams, NIW (SCAMP), graziers, mountain users, other key stakeholders and forums to help deliver conservation and enhancement of habitats and the species they support in the Mourne catchments.

The role includes supporting targeted grazing, habitat restoration, fire prevention and response, ecological and other surveys, habitat condition and species monitoring in the Mourne uplands, and stakeholder engagement. You will provide practical and technical support on the ground, ensuring safe working practices while helping deliver conservation projects across the uplands.

Responsibilities include field surveying, data collection and analysis, supporting sheep movements for targeted grazing, trialling grazing technologies, and overseeing works such as boundary repairs, erosion control, and habitat restoration. You will help facilitate Mourne Wildfire Group Meetings.

You will also support NIW graziers with any initiatives that support positive change to habitat condition in the Eastern Mourne SAC including potential participation in DAERA's Environmental Farming Schemes (EFS) and other nature-based approaches that have the potential to strengthen habitat and species recovery within the Mourne. This role will support the delivery of that work by helping to coordinate grazing activity, monitor outcomes, record and analyse data, reporting to appropriate key stakeholders including graziers and partners, and contribute to wider habitat management across the Mourne.



KEY TASKS:

- Serve as the primary day-to-day contact for graziers, responding to queries by phone, WhatsApp and email, including occasional out-of-hours support.
- Liaise with Northern Ireland Water and key stakeholders to support habitat recovery within the Mourne catchments through conservation grazing and other initiatives.
- Support the grazing contract's delivery, resolving issues and ensuring effective implementation.
- Use digital mapping software to map, analyse field data, and report on the development and delivery of on-ground habitat recovery works, including invasive species control, fencing, wall repairs and wet heath management on NI Water land by staff and contractors.
- Conduct risk assessments and ensure compliance with health and safety policies and procedures, including CDM Regulations and Habitat Regulations requirements, as required.
- Contribute to wider habitat recovery and land management initiatives across the Eastern Mournes SAC by NIW, MHT and their partners.
- Engage landowners, agencies, the Forever Mournes Partnership and user groups, facilitating stakeholder engagement and meetings.
- Promote best-practice approaches and knowledge sharing with contractors, key stakeholders and external service providers.
- Support the development of DAERA's 10-year fire management plans and help facilitate Mourne Fire Group meetings and events.
- Provide regular progress updates to MHT and NIW.
- Work with partner organisations to support training and capacity-building activities.
- Attend SCAMP, statutory, funder and partnership meetings related to habitat management affecting NIW Mourne catchments.
- Support MHT in coordinating volunteers and community groups involved in project delivery within NIW Mourne catchments.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge through relevant training and awareness of statutory requirements.

General Requirements

- Actively contribute to the MHT teams and promote the sharing of knowledge with programme partners and across the wider heritage sector.
- Comply with MHT policies and practices at all times and observe the policies and practices of other project partners.
- Participation in internal staff and MHT Board meetings as required for the programme.
- Ensure that contact with others is of a style and quality consistent with Mourne Heritage Trusts ethos.
- Undertake any other relevant duties as required by the MHT Landscape Services Development Manager/CEO.

No job description can cover every issue which may arise and subsequently the post holder may be expected to carry out other duties along with those itemised above and the duties of the post will be subject to review in accordance with the needs of the organisation.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

1. Level six third level qualification in a relevant subject and at least 2 years' relevant full-time experience, or the part-time equivalent, **or** 5 years relevant work experience full-time (or equivalent part-time experience) in an environmental/ecology/land management role. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the relevance of qualifications and work-related experience.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of upland management requirements associated with designated sites and priority habitats, particularly acid grassland, wet heath and peatland management.
3. Demonstrable knowledge of herbivore husbandry, welfare and grazing needs.
4. Knowledge of environmental and agricultural issues and initiatives that may impact on grazing and site management.
5. Experience of overseeing or undertaking practical countryside works, including implementing health and safety policies and procedures.
6. Experience of building and maintaining effective relationships with landowners and farmers, brokering solutions and solving problems.
7. Ability to communicate effectively, both in writing and verbally, including presentations, report writing and engaging with a diverse range of people at all levels.
8. Effective organisational skills, including the ability to plan, manage and prioritise your workload, meet deadlines, and organise meetings and events.
9. High level of computer literacy, with a good working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications including Excel, PowerPoint and Word.
10. Experience of digital mapping and surveying using ArcGIS or QGIS, with a track record of data analysis and desk-based research.
11. Full clean driving licence.

Desirable Criteria

1. Experience of managing contractors to carry out capital site works.
2. Proven track record of field surveys, including Phase 1 and Phase 2 JNCC vegetation surveys.
3. Experience of fire management prevention issues, response or training.
4. Experience of developing DAERA Environment Fund farm plans.
5. Experience of acting as the secretariat for stakeholder group or forum meetings.
6. Mountain leadership or related skills qualifications.



How to Apply

Complete and submit the online application in the required format by the deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Please note the form cannot be saved and must be completed in one submission.

You will also be asked to submit a separate equality monitoring form.

The deadline for submission (online) is **Monday 15th June 2026 by 12 noon.**

Interviews are scheduled during the week beginning 22nd June 2026.

Contact recruitment@mourne.co.uk (Mon- Fri 9-5pm) if:

- You have any questions about the role or the application process.
- You have any special requirements in relation to attending the interview.
- You may also visit our website for more information (<https://mournelive.com>)

Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Along with the application form, you will be asked to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form in a separate document. Neither of these will be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

Equal Opportunities

Mourne Heritage Trust is an equal opportunities employer, and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Mourne Heritage Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. We guarantee an interview to a person who states they have or have had a disability and who meets the minimum essential criteria for the post. Applicants with a disability who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview.

We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process. Details of any disability are only used for these purposes and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability, are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be asked to outline any reasonable adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment.

Shortlisting for interview

Application forms will be processed for eligibility to invite for interview using the essential and desirable criteria. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide sufficient information for the assessment panel to carry out an objective evaluation of the breadth and depth of information given in the application forms.