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| **Volunteer Role Description** | |
| **Volunteer Role Title** | **Role Number** |
| INNS and Projects Volunteer |  |
| **Reserve, Project, Team or Area** | |
| INNS Team, West Yorkshire. Work generally takes place on the Calder (Ripponden) and Colne catchments | |
| **Volunteer Manager/Supervisor** | |
| Elliot Baxendale and Simeon Gurr | |
| **Why do we need this volunteer?** | |
| Our Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and river restoration project teams are looking for passionate individuals to volunteer within the West Region INNS Team. INNS are the second biggest threat to biodiversity within the UK, cost around £2 billion annually to manage, and cause numerous issues across Yorkshire such as infrastructure damage and increased bankside erosion. As part of the team, you will have the opportunity to assist staff with INNS surveying, treatment, and post-treatment restoration.  You will have the opportunity to learn how to identify a number of key native and INNS species, biosecurity, and surveying techniques including the use of our GB-wide app INNS Mapper. Furthermore, there is the opportunity to assist staff members within the wider West Region Projects team and attend skills training days run by the volunteer team.  This role will take place across the Calder and Colne catchments around Huddersfield and Ripponden, primarily on private land and land of partner organisations. Working in a ‘top-down’ manner, volunteers will help us to identify and control INNS across the catchments.    INNS surveying © YWT | |
| **What will the volunteer be doing?** | |
| Volunteers will first be invited to a training session which will cover:   * Biosecurity * What INNS are and why they are important * INNS ID (how to identify our most common invasive species) * Recording methodology * Yorkshire Wildlife Trust H+S processes including risk assessments and lone volunteering   **Surveying**  Volunteers will either accompany staff in river courses or pair up to survey along the canals, logging the presence or absence of any INNS they may find. Both sides of the watercourse are surveyed and any areas which were unable to be reached safely should be noted. Data from the surveys will be collected by staff and then uploaded to the webtool INNS mapper.  **Treatment activity**  Volunteers will have the opportunity to tackle INNS head on by assisting with their treatment across the Calder and Colne catchments, helping continue the work that has been taking place over the last 7 years. This may include pulling/bashing Himalayan balsam, and digging plants like American Skunk Cabbage.  **Restoration**  The Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum (hosted by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust) is currently involved in a pioneering project to explore restoration techniques on riverbanks after INNS treatment. Volunteers would have the opportunity to get involved with this crucial work by helping survey the sites where restoration work has begun, and helping with the other restoration delivery including seed scattering and plug planting, willow spiling, bank revetment, and coppicing.  **River Monitoring**  We are looking to carry out water quality and riverfly monitoring in the Calder and Colne, as well as assist with river restoration in other catchments. Some formal training days are provided (April 22nd) however on-site training is also available. | |
| **Experience, knowledge and skills needed for this role** | |
| Volunteers will:   * Be able to walk long distances (2-5 miles) on uneven ground safely and operate hand tools (following training). Some surveying takes place on canal tow paths which are more accessible. * Be ok to walk in-channel in flowing water (waders and walking poles provided by YWT). * Have access to a smartphone (or at least mobile and printer at home) to be able to access maps and contact the volunteer manager during surveying. * Be able to identify key INNS (following training provided by YWT). * Understand basic biosecurity procedures (following training). * Interested in tackling INNS in Yorkshire. * Have a good eye for detail and the ability to record data accurately. * Lone working may be possible in some situations, which can be discussed with volunteers. | |
| **Does the volunteer need a driver’s licence?** Not essential – if staff are heading to the site, then there is often an option to head over with them. Ideally volunteers should be able to make their way to our West Region Office at Stirley, Huddersfield, or be able to get to the meeting points before a survey. There is no need for volunteers to drive staff vehicles. | |
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| **What’s in it for the volunteer?** | |
| In this role volunteers will:   * Help stop the spread of invasive non-native species and help protect local habitats for future generations. * Gain identification experience of plant species. * Gain experience of surveying in and around watercourses. * Have the opportunity to meet and engage with landowners and the wider public. * Have the chance for quiet walks in the Yorkshire countryside that may otherwise be inaccessible. * Contribute to wider scientific study of INNS across the UK. * Have access to specific INNS and biosecurity training as well as the wider Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Volunteer Training Programme which includes Task Day Leader and Event Day Leader training. * Potential opportunity to survey with other INNS Survey Volunteers and YWT Staff. * Access our internal (and free) Volunteer Training Programme with sessions ranging from hedge laying to environmental law to bush craft skills. * Get 15% off in YWT shops and 15% off in the café, on any days they volunteer at a reserve with a café. | |
| **Where is the role based?** | |
| Primarily in the Colne Catchment and the Calder (near Ripponden), but other areas as required. Our office base is Stirley, Hall Bower Ln, HD4 6FA - just outside Huddersfield. | |
| **Commitment** | |
| 1 or 2 surveys a month between June-August  Attendance at a number of INNS treatment and river restoration task days across the year. | |
| **Duration** | |
| February 2024 – April 2025 (and onward). The schedule will vary across the calendar year, however most of the work will take place during the INNS season (March-November). Below is a rough calendar displaying the approximate mix of tasks volunteers can get involved in. The West Projects Team also have opportunities for freshwater surveys including riverfly monitoring and water quality monitoring which will be occurring within these dates. It is worth noting however that this calendar is subject to change with the weather/with site access restrictions. ‘Task Days’ take place every Monday with an approximate calendar found below. The exact sites and details for the below are confirmed closer to the time. There are also opportunities to carry out tasks outside these dates which can be discussed with the volunteer manager.  April – 2024  • 1st – INNS ID and Surveying Training  • 8th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  • 15th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  • 22nd – Riverfly Training  • 29th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  May  • 6th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  • 13th – High Royd Restoration Vegetation Survey  • 20th – INNS WEEK – Balsam Bash  • 27th – Riverfly Monitoring  June  • 3rd – Balsam Bash and Restoration  • 10th – Balsam Rust Fungus Trial (provisional date)  • 17th – Survey Methodology Training (using INNS Mapper)  • 24th – Riverfly Monitoring  July  • 1st – INNS Treatment/INNS Mapper Surveys on Canals  • 8th – INNS Treatment/INNS Mapper Surveys on Canals  • 15th – INNS Treatment/INNS Mapper Surveys on Canals  • 22nd – Riverfly Monitoring  • 29th – INNS Treatment/INNS Mapper Surveys on Canals  August  • 5th – INNS Treatment/INNS Mapper Surveys on Canals  • 12th – INNS Treatment/INNS Mapper Surveys on Canals  • 17th – High Royd Restoration Plant Survey  • 24th – Riverfly Monitoring  September  • 3rd – INNS Surveys on Tributaries and Landowner Engagement  • 10th – INNS Surveys on Tributaries and Landowner Engagement  • 17th – INNS Surveys on Tributaries and Landowner Engagement  • 24th – Riverfly Monitoring  • 30th – INNS Surveys on Tributaries and Landowner Engagement  October –  • 7th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  • 14th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  • 21st – Riverfly Monitoring  • 28th – Post-INNS Treatment Restoration  November  • 4th – High Royd Coppicing  • 11th – High Royd Coppicing  • 18th – High Royd Vegetation Survey  • 25th – Riverfly Monitoring | |