



Guided Walks Volunteer

Whinlatter Forest is England's only true mountain forest, full of unique experiences and activities for all visitors. Whinlatter Forest was established as a visitor attraction in 1992, when off road parking and waymarked forest walks were introduced. Over the last 20 years, Whinlatter has developed into one of the top 5 visitor destinations in Cumbria. The unique selling points of the forest are the abundance of magnificent wildlife such as red squirrels, woodland birds, deer and ospreys; and a large range of adventurous activities.

Whinlatter's vision: "to provide a consistently high quality visitor experience for the public to enjoy healthy outdoor pursuits in attractive, sustainable and safe environment".

Guided Walks Volunteers work closely with our visitor experience team to provide our visitors with a memorable experience of Whinlatter Forest.

In this key role you will provide a warm welcome and build positive rapport with visitors, as well as providing information to help them to make their visit a memorable one. You will interact closely with our visitors by passing on your knowledge and information during the guided walk.

Guided Walks Volunteers have the chance to lead tours of various natures / subjects. These could include child friendly tours, wildlife tours, and more – depending on the volunteers' knowledge and interests.

Through sharing your enthusiasm for the forest you will contribute to visitors leaving Whinlatter with a greener heart.

Position Title

Guided Walks Volunteer

Responsible to

Visitor Experience Team, Volunteer Co-ordinator

Key Objective

To ensure that an exceptional, consistent experience is delivered to all Whinlatter Forest's visitors.

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This will be done by providing a remarkable service to visitors in a welcoming environment, and by providing information that encourages a positive relationship between volunteers, staff and our visitors. Guided Walks Volunteers will inspire our visitors so that they become enthusiastic about the Forest and become ambassadors for Whinlatter.

What's in it for you?

1. Meet and work with a fun and diverse team who love forests, adventure and wildlife
2. Make friends
3. New experiences and a variety of roles to enjoy
4. Receive training and the opportunity to learn new skills through training
5. Potential research opportunities into new material for tours
6. Furthering an interest in local wildlife, local history and art
7. Opportunity to work along side The Lake District Osprey Project
8. Free refreshments in a dedicated volunteer common room
9. After 35 volunteering hours get a free annual parking pass, which will be renewed annually subject to hours completed and internal reviews
10. Continuing education opportunities such as guided walks, field trips and events
11. A Forestry Commission Volunteer uniform
12. Annual recognition events
13. Long service awards

Key Work Areas:

1. Meet and welcome visitors who are joining the guided walk
2. Ensure all participants are happy with the distance, duration, and fitness level required for the walk
3. Deliver an exciting range of tours for a variety of audiences – e.g. adults and children
4. Promote the Discovery Pass – a great way to support the forest and get great benefits including free parking and shop discounts
5. Promote the important work The Forestry Commission does and in particular how Whinlatter improves valuable woodland assets in ways that are good for people, nature and the economy
6. Get to know the on-site partners enabling you to encourage visitors to sample Siskins café, GoApe, Rheged @ Whinlatter Forest shop, Cyclewise shop & bike hire.
7. Be aware of the needs for all visitors, including family visitors and disabled visitors
8. Feedback and Evaluation about the site as a whole
9. Farewell and encourage visitors to return

Skills and attributes needed:

1. Enjoy meeting new people
2. Have an interest in forests, adventure and wildlife
3. Are keen to learn new skills

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4. Helpful nature and enjoy being part of a team
5. A great communicator and enjoy interacting with others
6. Have a positive attitude and most importantly have a big friendly smile!
7. Enjoy adapting skills and knowledge to suit different situations and audiences
8. Are interested in getting involved in research in order to produce a variety of guided walks
9. Knowledge of the forest and local area is useful but this can be learnt

Training:

Each volunteer opportunity is different - with its own unique set of responsibilities and therefore requiring its own unique mix of relevant training, skills and experience. All new Guided Walks Volunteers will receive an induction and training following successful appointment.

Commit as much or as little time as you wish. It is helpful if you can commit to a regular slot but this could be weekly, monthly etc. The Centre is open 7 days so we would welcome volunteers who can help at weekends as well as mid-week.

How to apply:

If you are aged sixteen and above and would like to volunteer please complete an application form. An information pack and application form is available from the volunteer co-ordinator. Ways to contact us:

1. Visit www.forestry.gov.uk/whinlatter
2. Send an email to volunteer.lakelandforests@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
3. Call 01229862025
4. Drop into the Whinlatter Visitor Information for a Volunteer Information Pack

Once we have reviewed your application form, we may invite you for an interview and a background check.

Please note: Volunteer placement is a selective process and not all applicants are accepted. The Forestry Commission reserves the right to place volunteers in an area best suited to the applicant's skills and the needs of Whinlatter Forest.

The Visitor Experience Volunteer role is part of a pilot project – this will end in May 2015, however there is a possibility of extension to long term.