

Job Specification:

Thame Smarter Water Catchment Programme Manager

About River Thame Conservation Trust

Founded in 2012, the River Thame Conservation Trust (RTCT) is a charitable environmental organisation dedicated to safeguarding the River Thame, its catchment and wildlife, ensuring that these benefits can be enjoyed by people. We are a team of seven staff supported by a board of trustees and a vibrant network of volunteers. We collaborate closely with landowners and a range of statutory, private and charitable bodies, with these partnerships being key to the impact of our work.

The Trust has a strong focus on delivering work on the ground, with programmes to improve the habitat and connectivity of the catchment's watercourses and create new floodplain wetland habitat. Improving our understanding of the health of the Thame's watercourses and the pressures they face is also a focus, pursued through programmes including catchment-wide citizen science water quality monitoring, riverfly monitoring, and monitoring of fish and mammal populations. The data and evidence we gather enable us to target on-the-ground projects, as well as to engage effectively with the organisations and sectors that are essential to addressing the challenges facing the catchment. Our role as co-hosts of the Thame Catchment Partnership places us in a strong position to address these cross-sectoral challenges.

RTCT benefits from being part of a wider family of rivers trusts, under the umbrella of the national body, the Rivers Trust. Rivers Trust affiliation provides a basis for knowledge exchange, sharing of resources, and representation to government and other national bodies through national-level advocacy and campaigns led by the Rivers Trust.

About the Smarter Water Catchment Programme

The River Thame Conservation Trust and the Thame Catchment Partnership are embarking upon an ambitious Smarter Water Catchment (SWC) programme for the Thame Catchment. The programme, funded by Thames Water, will identify solutions to the range of pressures on river health, drawing on insights, knowledge and capabilities held locally and within catchment partner organisations. This will enable the programme to benefit from insights and resources that water company investment priorities and actions do not typically access.

The programme is restricted to non-capital activities, although it is intended to clearly identify capital solutions that can then be presented as "shovel-ready" for delivery by capital funding sources, including but not restricted to water company investment programmes. The programme will also seek to influence river health by addressing opportunities across business, construction, agriculture and household practices. Nature-based solutions are likely to feature among these solutions.

The Role

The Thame Smarter Water Catchment Programme Manager will lead the delivery of the SWC programme. The role is responsible for developing a programme of catchment-scale interventions and changes in organisational and individual behaviour that improve water quality, enhance the aquatic environment, and support sustainable land and water management. The postholder will identify measures by evaluating existing evidence, commissioning new evidence (data, insights and

investigations), identifying interventions needed to address impacts or improve river health, and securing the basis for delivering those interventions (landowner agreement, stakeholder buy-in and planning permission). The role will also seek to integrate with key partner organisations and their processes so that SWC evidence and solutions capitalise on synergies and are recognised and reflected in the plans and priorities of those organisations (spatial plans and policies, operational policies and practice, business plans and investment).

The postholder will manage project resources, build and maintain strong partnerships, and ensure successful delivery of project outcomes, budgets and reporting requirements. The role will provide leadership to a growing project team and work collaboratively with colleagues across RTCT, Thames Water, landowners, farmers, local authorities, environmental organisations and other stakeholders to maximise impact across the catchment.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & Management

- Lead the operational delivery of the Smarter Water Catchment Programme within agreed timescales, budgets and performance targets.
- Identify additional recruitment needs for the SWC programme, develop business cases for these, and attain approval for recruitment
- Lead a wider RTCT SWC team (i.e. those under direct line management and wider RTCT team members to optimise resource use and delivery of SWC

Operational Responsibilities

- Work with the project team, steering group and wider partners to identify project needs, activities and develop plans to deliver those activities, drawing on your technical knowledge of catchment management and organisational remits.
- Commission and oversee externally delivered tasks, projects and activities undertaken by project partners, consultants etc.
- Implement and manage project monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes, ensuring delivery against agreed outcomes and funding requirements, capturing environmental, economic and behavioural impacts.
- Support the Project Director in managing the Project Steering Group, including meeting agenda reporting and administration.
- Identify risks, issues and opportunities, implementing appropriate mitigation measures and adaptive management approaches.
- Manage the portfolio of project plans and activities to ensure collective efficiencies, integration and synergy.
- Create and maintain a project programme – using appropriate project management tools and approaches, ensuring the programme is adaptable to changing circumstances, emerging findings from the project, and opportunities which arise.

Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strong working relationships with Thames Water, acting as a key interface between the funder and RTCT.
- Identify, engage and build relationships with partner organisations that RTCT need to work with to optimally deliver SWCs
- Facilitate collaborative working between partners to maximise environmental benefits and leverage additional opportunities and resources.
- Act as an ambassador for RTCT and promote the benefits of catchment-based approaches to water management.

Compliance & Governance

- Ensure project delivery complies with contractual obligations, funding agreements, environmental regulations and organisational policies.
- Prepare high-quality technical, financial and progress reports for Thames Water and other stakeholders.
- Ensure health and safety requirements are met across all project activities.
- Maintain accurate project records, audit trails and documentation.

Financial Responsibilities

- Manage the project budget and associated expenditure within delegated authority limits.
- Monitor financial performance and prepare forecasts, funding claims and budget reports.
- Ensure value for money is achieved through effective procurement and resource management.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to secure additional funding and investment to enhance project outcomes.
- Identify and develop opportunities from emerging private markets for ecosystem services, where these can be employed as part of catchment solutions.

Continuous Improvement

- Implement and manage a Programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework - Providing regular reports to the SWC Steering Group and the RTCT Board.
 - Capture lessons learned and contribute to organisational learning across RTCT.
 - Capture and employ insights and best practice from other programmes and projects such as the Mainstreaming Nature-Based Solutions Programme.
 - Identify an approach to sustaining the legacy of SWC beyond its current 4-year period, in particular identifying funding sources and models: blending public, philanthropic and private finance, including the potential for emerging private nature markets.
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Decision Making

- Makes day-to-day operational decisions relating to project delivery and resource allocation.
 - Liaises closely with the Project Director (CEO), including escalating key findings, risks and decisions.
 - Recommends strategic decisions and project direction to senior management.
 - Determines stakeholder engagement approaches and partnership development activities within agreed frameworks.
 - Prioritises activities and manages project risks to ensure successful delivery of objectives.
 - Manages agreed project budgets in accordance with delegated financial authority.
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Working Relationships

Internal

- Chief Executive (SWC Project Director)
- Head of Restoration (SWC restoration lead)
- Volunteer Manager (SWC People Lead)
- Head of Land Management
- Communications Officer
- Financial Controller and Administration colleagues
- Wider RTCT Team

External

- Thames Water
 - SWC Steering Group
 - Thame Catchment Partnership
 - Wider project partners
 - Farmers and Landowners- Liaising closely with the Trust's Agricultural Lead
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Person Specification

Essential Qualifications

- Degree or equivalent professional experience in environmental management, ecology, water management, geography, natural sciences or a related discipline.
- Full UK driving licence and access to own vehicle for business use.

Desirable Qualifications

- Postgraduate qualification in a relevant discipline.
 - Project Management qualification (e.g. PRINCE2, APM or equivalent).
 - Training in catchment-based approaches, water management or stakeholder engagement.
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Knowledge

Essential

- Understanding of catchment, freshwater and ecosystem function, pressures and solutions to those pressures
- Knowledge of water quality, river restoration, natural flood management and/or sustainable land management practices.
- Knowledge of project management principles and programme delivery.
- Familiarity and understanding of:
 - funding mechanisms relevant to nature recovery including Agri-environment schemes and water company investment programmes,
 - strategic policies for prioritising nature recovery e.g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Water Framework Directive Programme of Measures
 - Statutory offset markets, notably BNG, and emerging private nature markets.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the Thame Catchment – geography, ecology, organisations, individuals and economy.
 - Understanding of water company investment programmes and processes, regulatory drivers, and other processes relevant to SWCs, such as LNRS and Local plans
 - Knowledge of regional growth agendas, local economies, spatial planning and how quality and quantity of water and the natural environment are critical to these
 - Knowledge of statutory and voluntary nature-based solutions and ecosystem service markets
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Experience

Essential

- Significant experience of successfully managing complex, multi-partner environmental or conservation projects.
- Developing and maintaining effective partnerships with multiple stakeholders.
- Budget management, reporting and contract compliance.
- Line management, staff supervision or team leadership.
- Preparing and presenting reports to senior stakeholders and funders.

Desirable

- Delivering catchment-based water quality projects.
 - Working with farmers and landowners.
 - Procurement and contractor management.
 - Growing and developing project teams.
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Skills

- **Communication** – Able to communicate clearly and persuasively with a wide range of audiences, including funders, partners, landowners and colleagues.
 - **Organisation** – Capable of managing multiple priorities, deadlines and workstreams simultaneously.
 - **Planning** – Able to develop and implement strategic and operational plans to achieve project objectives.
 - **Problem Solving** – Identifies challenges early and develops practical, evidence-based solutions.
 - **Stakeholder Management** – Builds trusted relationships and works effectively across organisational boundaries.
 - **Leadership** – Motivates, supports and develops team members while fostering collaboration.
 - **Financial Management** – Monitors budgets accurately and ensures effective use of project resources.
 - **Analytical Skills** – Interprets data and evidence to inform decisions and demonstrate project outcomes.
 - **Report Writing** – Produces clear, concise and accurate reports for technical and non-technical audiences.
 - **IT Skills** – Competent in Microsoft Office and project management, data management and reporting systems.
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Behaviours

- **Professional** – Represents RTCT positively and maintains high standards of conduct. Maintains a professional image, consistent with the role.
 - **Collaborative** – Works effectively with colleagues, partners and stakeholders to achieve shared goals. Participates in discussions in a measured, constructive and professional manner
 - **Accountable** – Takes ownership for project performance and delivery.
 - **Adaptable** – Responds positively to changing priorities and emerging opportunities.
 - **Resilient** – Maintains focus and effectiveness when facing challenges or competing demands.
 - **Inclusive** – Values diverse perspectives and promotes participation and partnership.
 - **Proactive** – Identifies opportunities and takes initiative to deliver improvements.
 - **Evidence-led** – Uses data and best practice to inform decision-making.
 - **Environmentally Committed** – Demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental improvement and conservation.
 - **Continuous Learner** – Seeks opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and organisational learning.
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What We Offer

- Supportive, mission-driven team environment.
- Professional development and training opportunities.
- Hybrid and flexible working.
- Membership of the Rivers Trust Pension scheme (6% employee salary contribution plus 9% RTCT contribution).
- Free parking at the Trust's office.

How to Apply

Please submit your CV and a covering letter outlining your suitability for the role and how you meet the required skills, knowledge and experience to:

RTCT Administrative Support Officer: **Paula Hudson** | Paula@riverthame.org by 9 am on Monday the 19th of October.

Interviews are scheduled for **Friday the 23rd of October**, in person in Wheatley, Oxfordshire.