

Peatland management project officer

Recruitment Pack



Summary

JOB TITLE: KTP associate – Peatland management project officer

SECTION: Environmental Research Institute (ERI)

SCALE POINT RANGE: £35,870

TERM: Fixed-term contract, 36 months with 6 months probation

START DATE: Before July 5th 2024

PENSION: Local Government Superannuation Scheme

ANNUAL LEAVE: 31 days + 14 days public holidays

RESPONSIBLE TO: Prof. Roxane Andersen

CLOSING DATE: 25th March 2024

The Environmental Research Institute (ERI) is part of UHI North, West and Hebrides, Thurso, one of the academic partners of UHI. Our mission is to ‘provide dynamic leadership in research, innovation and education that advances understanding and informs management of our natural environment’. The ERI’s ‘Peatlands’ theme aims to study peatland resilience across scales and discipline boundaries. Our research seeks to provide underpinning evidence that can drive changes in policy and practice to ensure a resilient future for the peatlands of the Highlands and Islands region, and a just transition for its people.

At Highland Park, we source the peat we use to smoke our barley from an area of Hobbister Moor located approximately seven miles west of our distillery in Kirkwall, Orkney. Rich in heather, this peat creates complex floral aromas in our kilns, delivering the distinctive sweet smoky flavours only found in Highland Park single malt Scotch whisky. Hobbister Nature Reserve is a mosaic of internationally and nationally important habitats including saltmarsh, sea cliffs and peatlands. We own and manage this land under license from Orkney Islands Council and we work in close collaboration with the RSPB for the benefit of wildlife, including red-listed species such as Hen Harrier and Curlew. As such we are required to operate in accordance with the strict regulations associated with nature reserve designation that Hobbister Moor has held for almost 50 years. The way we manage our peat aligns with the Scotch Whisky Association’s Commitment to Responsible Peat Use (CRPU) Strategy and we actively commit to all four of the steps outlined in their framework, which require us to develop and deliver plans for the responsible extraction, reduction, restoration and protection of peat.

We now seek to appoint a highly motivated Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Associate to become the new Peatland Management Project Officer at the Highland Park Distillery on Orkney joint funded by Innovate UK and Highland Distillers.

The successful candidate researcher will be based on Orkney with the Highland Park Distillery team and will have access to ERI’s facilities in the centre of Thurso for training and project development.



Peatland management project officer

Job Description

The successful candidate will develop and deliver a new peatland management strategy for Highland Park Distillery. In this varied and exciting role, the candidate will progress through:

- + Familiarisation with the knowledge transfer and business project partners through coordination of project group and relevant training activities
- + Characterisation of peatland holdings using relevant peatland monitoring techniques
- + Optimisation of peat cutting for restoration potential and whisky flavour
- + Review and enhancement of historical peat cutting restoration
- + Preparation of marketing/information on peatland activities
- + Preparation of a peatland management plan and implementation planning



Key Duties

Research

- + To review existing peat cutting and restoration practices and put them in the context of wider national and international best practice;
- + To develop and deploy a monitoring plan for the Hobbister peatlands at Highland Park Distillery
- + To investigate changes in current peat cutting practices and trial alternative to optimize peat cutting for restoration potential and whisky flavour
- + To develop and trial a new restoration strategy for the peat cut areas on Hobbister peatlands at Highland Park Distillery
- + To develop a long-term responsible peatland management plan for Highland Distillers Ltd

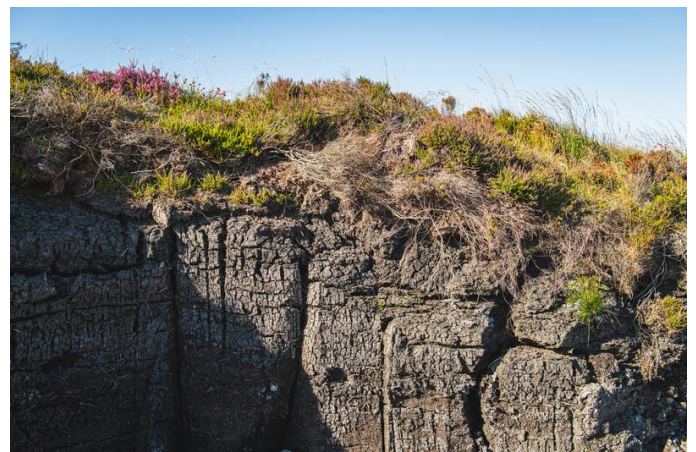
Outreach

- + To lead on the preparation of marketing and information about peatland activities at the Hobbister peatlands and within Highland Distillers Ltd for both internal and external uses.

Management

- + To manage budget and resources associated with the KTP project
- + To contribute to supervision of peat cutting team

This list of duties is not intended to be exhaustive but simply highlights the main tasks of the post. The postholder may be required to undertake additional duties which might reasonably be expected of him/her and which form part of the function of the post.



Person specification

Required

We welcome applications from candidates with relevant degree (e.g., BSc, MSc, MRes) in areas such as Environmental Sciences, Sustainable Development, Biology, Geography, or equivalent experiences.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate evidence of:

Experience of project management and experience of work in an outdoor environment and as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Experience can be exemplified by:

- + Previous projects, including research dissertation
- + Volunteering with NGOs
- + Commercial or consultancy activity

Applicants should have:

- + Basic knowledge of ecology, e.g., habitat descriptions, species identification
- + Good IT skills (e.g., full Microsoft suite),
- + Effective communication skills and comfortable interacting with stakeholders, so must be self-disciplined, well-organised and able to present themselves in a professional manner with the ability to prioritise a busy and varied workload
- + A willingness to live on Orkney and commute to Thurso occasionally for training and meetings

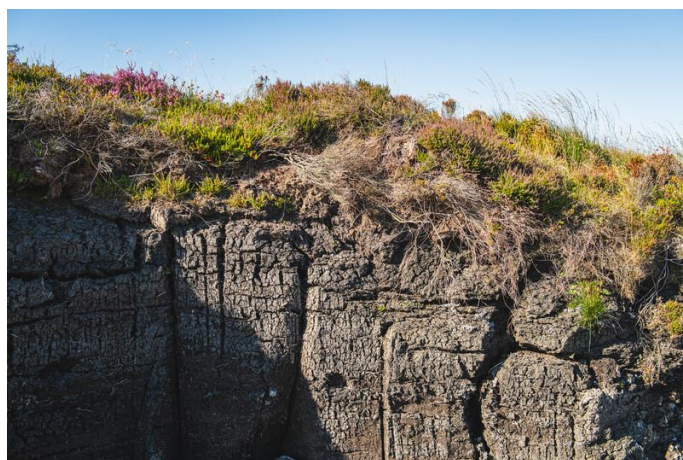
Desirable:

- + Experience of peatland field work, knowledge of peatland processes and attributes
- + Basic skills to collate, wrangle and process small environmental datasets in e.g. Excel
- + A full driving licence is desirable



About the area

Orkney



Orkney is an archipelago in the Northern Isles of Scotland, situated off the north coast of the island of Great Britain. Orkney is 10 miles (16 km) north of the coast of Caithness and has about 70 islands, of which 20 are inhabited. Orkney's largest settlement is Kirkwall. Orcadians are proud of their rich Neolithic, Iron Age, Norse and wartime heritage, and we're aware that we all have a part to play in the ongoing story of these islands

Orkney is regularly voted one of the best places in the UK to live. According to the results, the high employment levels, low crime rate, strong exam results, smaller primary class sizes and good health and happiness scores all make Orkney a warm and welcoming place to be. There's a real sense of community here, and people make sure local groups, services, clubs, and societies are vibrant and open to all.

You'll find some of the finest services and facilities in the country. The new hospital, The Balfour, opened in 2019 and extensive health services are available throughout the islands. In recent years Orkney has seen several new schools and leisure facilities built. We have a local University of the Highlands and Islands campus offering an excellent array of courses and qualifications

Kirkwall



Kirkwall (population c. 10000) is the largest town in Orkney, an archipelago to the north of mainland Scotland. The site of an ancient Norse town founded approximately 1000 years ago, Today, it is a transport hub with ferries to many locations



Independent retailers form the heart of the town, with shops lining the main street as it snakes its way south from the colourful harbour, providing everything you need - from fishing gear to the finest local food and drink. Kirkwall is a cosmopolitan place, with a wide choice of hotels, restaurants and cafes on offer, and the town centre was even named Scotland's Most Beautiful High Street, winning a public vote in 2019.

Kirkwall also has all the services you'd expect from a town of its size. It's home to the Orkney Library, world famous thanks to its social media feeds, but also a real hub offering fantastic services including internet access and an excellent archive. The Pickaquoy Centre is a first-class sports, arts and leisure facility with a swimming pool, arena, cinema, squash courts, climbing wall and much more. Two beaches can be found in St Ola. Inganess, in the shadow of Kirkwall Airport, and Scapa, with its views over Scapa Flow, offering fresh sea air within walking distance of the traditional town amenities. Meanwhile,

Many of Orkney's main transport services also originate in Kirkwall with daily ferries to the north isles, and NorthLink Ferries to and from Aberdeen. All the main bus routes operate through the town's travel centre and Kirkwall Airport with daily flights to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow. The Highland Park Distillery is located on the outskirts of Kirkwall within walking distance.

Further information

<https://www.orkney.com/things>

<https://www.highlandparkwhisky.com/en/our-story>

<https://www.orkney.com/life>

Key Terms and Conditions of Employment

Hours of Work	A full-time working week is one of 35 hours. This may include evening and weekend work, where required.
Holidays	A full year's holiday entitlement is 31 days. In addition, there are 14 days public holidays of which 10 are taken at Christmas and 2 at Easter, the remaining 2 are treated as floating.
Salary	Fixed at £35,870 p.a.
Location	The position is based at the Highland Park Distillery in Orkney although you may be required to work from other sites as appropriate to the duties.
Pension	You will be contractually enrolled into the Local Government Superannuation Scheme. Further details are available on joining.
References / PVG Scheme	For external candidates, appointment will be subject to references and admission to the PVG Scheme.



Further information

The following websites may be useful in providing further information.

The University of the Highlands and Islands: <http://www.uhi.ac.uk/>

UHI North, West and Hebrides: <https://www.nwh.uhi.ac.uk/en/>

Peatland research at UHI North, West and Hebrides:

<https://www.nwh.uhi.ac.uk/en/research/peatlands/>

The Environmental Research Institute (ERI): <http://www.eri.ac.uk/>

For further information on this position, please contact Prof Roxane Andersen, leader of ERI's 'Peatland' research group: Roxane.Andersen@uhi.ac.uk [mailto:](mailto:Roxane.Andersen@uhi.ac.uk)

Completing the Application Form

Please read the application form thoroughly and complete it electronically (preferred) or in black ink. Please ensure that you complete all sections.

Where answers require additional detail, this should be provided on a continuation sheet and attached to the form.

A current CV and covering letter should also be provided in addition to the application form.

The information that you provide in your application form & other supporting information is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be short listed for interview. Your application will be treated in the strictest confidence.

References

Please give the name, address, telephone number and email address (if known) of two referees, including your existing or last employer, to whom reference may be made in support of your application concerning your professional ability and performance at work. References will only be taken up for short-listed candidates.

Please ensure your referees are able to respond promptly as no appointment will be made without receipt of satisfactory references.

Please note that any offer of employment will be conditional upon receipt of satisfactory references from your current/last employer or academic institution, unless advised otherwise.

Submitting your application

Completed applications must be returned by the closing date indicated. Applications (preferably by e-mail) should be sent to hr.nwh@uhi.ac.uk

Or: Human Resources, North Highland College-UHI, Ormlie Road, Thurso, Caithness, Scotland KW14 7EE.

We will acknowledge receipt of completed applications by e-mail. Written acknowledgement of completed applications will only be provided where requested and where a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed with your application for this purpose.

We will contact you concerning your application once shortlisting has been completed.

Key dates

The closing date for receipt of applications is 25th March 2024.

Interviews are planned for 3rd of April onwards.

Interviews will be conducted in person on Orkney. Interviews for overseas candidates may be conducted online initially, but a visit to Orkney will be required prior to a formal offer.

Starting date for successful candidates: Starting date may be negotiated – the position is available immediately (subject to receipt of satisfactory references and securing PVG Scheme membership via Disclosure Scotland). NOTE: The candidate must start working no later than the 5th of July 2024.