

## Employee Volunteering Opportunities with the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

### Who we are

The **Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI)** is a 4-year partnership project which works with local organisations and volunteers to control invasive non-native species across catchments in Northern Scotland, for the benefit of our native wildlife and communities. SISI is led by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, SNH and by in-kind support from project partners and volunteers.

We are keen to build partnerships with businesses and their employees to work together to provide exciting and rewarding team building Volunteer Conservation Days - days which will have a real impact in improving and protecting Scotland's iconic natural heritage, biodiversity and wildlife.

Our staff are experienced and skilled in working with volunteers and leading conservation work parties.

### What we can offer

#### Volunteer as a Team



We offer opportunities for your team to carry out practical conservation and environmental work to remove invasive species from the countryside in our **Volunteer Conservation Days**. These days connect your team with the local environment and are ideal for building team working skills and enhancing staff morale.

Your staff will experience something completely different as a group. They will have fun, maybe get a bit muddy, and gain a sense of achievement through doing something worthwhile and knowing they are making a real difference to help Scotland's wildlife and secure the future survival of our iconic native species.

Our staff will share their knowledge, understanding and passion of and for the natural world around us. This will engage with and inspire your team and connect them with their surroundings and natural environment.

#### What's involved in a Volunteer Conservation Day?

Of course, we can work with you to tailor a specific programme for your group or team – get in touch if you'd like to do that or have something specific in mind.

A normal day or session could include:

- Removing invasive plant species e.g. hand pulling Himalayan balsam or undertaking important site restoration work e.g. tree or wildflower planting or bank stabilisation at a site carefully selected by us or by you
- Getting involved in the setting up of a mink raft -a key tool in our work to monitor and then remove American mink from our rivers. You can even adopt and monitor one yourself after the day is done!
- Doing some river invertebrate sampling or helping in an electrofishing survey with our partner fishery trust
- Learning some new tracks, trails or bushcraft skills to help brew up the tea and erect a rain (or sun!) shelter

Obviously, tea breaks and lunch are important parts of the day and we can make them more interesting by introducing team challenges with a real purpose e.g. learn to light the fire to make the tea or put up the shelter.

#### Where?

Our project stretches from the River Tay area (Perth) in the south to the remote catchments of North West Sutherland. We can offer opportunities throughout this area, including Tayside, Angus, Deeside, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Inverness-shire, Highland and the West coast.









## When?

Project seasonality means that opportunities are mostly available between April – October. However, there may be some winter tree planting opportunities or the chance to get involved in our mink monitoring work outside this time.

## Individual volunteering

Our team also welcome individuals or small groups of 2-3 who want to volunteer and help our project. We would be happy to discuss this further with you.

## The benefits for you

-  Employees finish a **Volunteer Conservation Day** feeling re-energised, de-stressed and motivated.
-  Team building and communication skills have improved as the group has worked together in a fresh unfamiliar environment, with opportunities for employee bonding and relationship building, and achieved a meaningful task.
-  Employees have grown in self-confidence and have better morale through having fun outdoors and helping a nationally and locally important project.
-  The day will meaningfully demonstrate your Corporate Social Responsibility values, build staff engagement and loyalty and enhance their (already positive!) view of their employer as they see your genuine commitment to them as individuals and the local environment.
-  Positive and beneficial publicity - we can profile and promote our corporate partners in the media, on our website and social media channels to celebrate the great work we have done together. Even better – we can do this together.
-  The potential to establish long term volunteering opportunities and partnerships with SISI and local partners.

## Why do we need you?

Invasive species are a great threat to the native wildlife of Scotland. Our project is funded for 4 years, so to be successful and create a long-term sustainable solution to controlling invasive species we need your help.

By recruiting volunteers, building strong partnerships and providing training, we aim to embed invasive species control at a local level, within communities and local businesses and supported by the local fishery trusts. That way there will be a long-term commitment to continuing the good work after SISI has ended.

## Costs

All we ask for is your time and enthusiasm – as much as you want to offer!

We do however need you to provide your own transport to site, make your own individual catering arrangements and to provide your team with the required personal protective equipment – usually just a pair of work gloves each. We can help you with these arrangements if you like.

## Safety & insurance

The activities are all fully risk assessed, and your leader will carry out a safety briefing at the start of the day. All our staff are qualified first aiders and first aid kits will be on site. The organisation hosting the activity has the relevant insurance in place to cover your volunteering activity.

## Find out more

To learn more about our project please visit our website, to discuss working with us please get in contact for a chat;

**Callum Sinclair** – Project Manager; 01671 404705; 07880 601951; [callum.sinclair@nature.scot](mailto:callum.sinclair@nature.scot)

**Vicky Hilton** – Volunteer Officer; 01309 611220; 07340 373211; [vickyhilton@fnlft.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:vickyhilton@fnlft.onmicrosoft.com)

***We'd love to hear from you!***

[www.invasivespecies.scot](http://www.invasivespecies.scot)