CHRIS HAINSWORTH

Senior Reserve Manager

DESCRIBE YOUR JOB IN FIVE WORDS...

Managing land,

Outdoors, Indoors, Varied

WHERE DO YOU WORK?

CHIPPENHAM FEN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

WHAT DO YOU GENERALLY WEAR TO WORK?

Work wear, boots, t-shirts and fleece. Occasionally I go to a proper meeting an wear chinos and a smart shirt…..very occasionally a tie!

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I get a real buzz out of working to benefit nature. I find the range and variation in the job keeps it interesting. My workload changes depending on the time of year so that also keeps it fresh.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE?

I work on a nature reserve. Everyday can be different. Some days I can be out counting butterflies, identifying plants, checking livestock and other times I can be in the office looking at spreadsheets, reading technical documents and planning next years work.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Not spending all time doing paperwork. Having enough time and money to do everything I would like. Such a diverse job means you need to know about lots of different work areas.

What is a general career route for this job?

There are a couple of routes into the job. Some people who are good with livestock or tools can start by working as an estate worker and then as they get experienced move up the management chain. However other people (like me) come at it via academic qualifications, degree level – and then move into land management advice. It helps if you have practical skills but some of my colleagues are more academic and are good at planning and just seeing what needs to be done.

What qualifications did you need to get the job?

There are 2 routes:

- Firstly have good practical skills such as tractor driving, chainsaws, livestock keeper OR skills like bird recording, botanical surveys, moth or insect specialists.
- Secondly do A levels, degree in relevant subject like Biology, Ecology or Zoology.

What advice would you give someone interested in this type of job or career?

Working in conservation is a really satisfying job. But you need a passion for it as the pay is not amazing!

I would do some volunteering on a nature reserve and see if you enjoy the range and type of work. You will also get to meet other interesting passionate people which is one of the best parts of the job.

I find it really helps to focus on a topic- say birds in your garden or butterflies, hedgehogs etc and study their lifecycle and try to learn all you can about them. Then think how could I make this garden, neighbourhood, area or county better for them? Do they need more food, better areas for nesting, more trees / less trees. I pick a new subject every year and try to work out how I can help it.