



Floodplain Meadows Partnership 'Ambassadors' Training Opportunity

Following the successful completion of Phases 1 and 2 of our FMP Ambassadorial training programme, we are now advertising for Phase 3.

We are looking to develop a group of people who can act as ambassadors for the Floodplain Meadows Partnership and floodplain meadows in their area. The aim is to train people in the ecohydrology of floodplain meadows, such that they can interpret the state of a site and provide advice on management and restoration. In order to achieve this, we are offering a subsidised training opportunity that will take three years to complete. In exchange, we will invite our ambassadors to represent a county within which they will promote the value of floodplain meadows, share their knowledge with others, give management advice, help in restoration projects and help with the continued collection of long term data where appropriate. Throughout the process they will be supported by staff from the Floodplain Meadows Partnership and its Steering Group.

Ideally, we are looking for people to apply from counties where we do not already have representation OR from counties where we have just one existing Ambassador. We are happy to appoint two Ambassadors in counties with a large number of sites or a big geographical area. Information about our current distribution of Ambassadors can be found on our website

<http://www.floodplainmeadows.org.uk/about-us/fmp-ambassadors>

Your background. Some botanical ID experience is desirable, but not essential. We can support you with this element if you need help.

About the course

This is a vocational course to gain an of understanding of the ecology and ecohydrology of floodplain meadows; enabling participants to gather appropriate field data and provide an evidence base on which to take management decisions.

The content of the course and the practical experience it provides will make a significant contribution to the professional development of people involved in the management, restoration and conservation of these nationally important sites.

Aimed at: floodplain-meadow site managers, conservation advisors, volunteers and professional consultants, who wish to develop a specialism in this subject area.

Learning will be through:

- A 2-day start up residential course to introduce field data collection and botanical survey skills (May 2019)
- On-site installation of dipwell equipment on own/local site
- Regular tasks over the three years of the programme to help build expertise and confidence with field botanical ID and practical field data gathering techniques.
- Access to mentors to help with advice and practical support.
- Support network of similar people through site visits and buddying
- Final residential workshop involving data analysis using participants' own field data
- Completion of data analysis and production of a report summarising findings.

Outcomes

1. A monitoring and management action plan for your chosen site, based on collected and interpreted data.
2. Enhanced skills in understanding the ecology and ecohydrology of floodplain meadows in the UK.
3. A certificate confirming course attendance and completion of assessments

Cost, commitment and application

We are asking for a commitment of between one hour and one day's input per month, plus some additional days for site visits where possible. In some key months (e.g. May, June, July), more than 1 day a month may be required to collect all the botanical data, whereas in some other months, only a dipwell reading is required. It is therefore advisable to choose a site to study that minimises travel time.

A chart is attached, which shows the tasks expected in each month of the course over three years. After completion of the course, we are asking for your availability to help others in your area, to answer queries by email and find ways to promote understanding of floodplain meadow function, management and restoration including undertaking site visits (where possible) to share your knowledge: to be an Ambassadors for the Partnership

This programme is subsidised, however a small charge of £75 is payable as a contribution (please let us know if this is a problem). This charge will also cover your attendance at both residential courses including accommodation and food, and equipment needed, but not local travel costs throughout the field programme¹. The course will be limited to fifteen places in 2019. We may be able to provide help with travel to get to residential courses, if required.

¹ If residential course places have been booked, but you are subsequently unable to attend, and have not agreed this with the Project Manager well in advance, you will be required to cover the accommodation costs incurred yourself.

Applications are invited through this form
<http://www3.open.ac.uk/forms/FMPambassadors/>

The form asks for four supporting documents. These are:

1. A letter of support or reference letter from your current employer. If you are not employed, this could be from a floodplain meadow manager that you work with. If from employer it should confirm that you have agreed how the training commitment can be incorporated within your current role.
2. A current CV.
3. A signed copy of the letter of commitment. Downloadable as part of the application pack.
4. A signed Ethics and GDPR consent form.

Please send your application with the attachments above to floodplain-meadows-project@open.ac.uk giving the following text in the subject line:

Your name. FMP Ambassadors Phase 3 Application documents.

The application process will close on 25th January 2019, and successful applicants will be informed by end February 2019.

Feedback from previous Ambassadors

‘Hilary and David did a really good job of distilling very technical information for beginners and intermediates alike. It was clear that we represented a range of different skills and experiences, many of which were greater than mine, but I never felt lost which must be a good sign’
Sam Thomas, Environment Agency

‘Monthly tasks were a very good approach to take. Easy to sell to your manager in terms of time commitments. Some months the task took only a couple of hours, others a few days, but it all evened out over the 24 months’.
Helen Carty, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Ireland

‘Nothing beats seeing other people’s sites and putting your own into context....
Learning never stops and this is a great way to do this’
Debbie Lewis Bucks Berks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

‘I thoroughly enjoyed writing the report as it brought together all the data collection and analysis into something informative and useful for future management of the site’
Ellie Jones, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

‘It is nice to have another hat to wear, which is organisationally neutral, rather than just wearing the Natural England hat. And being associated with a national network –

FMP – carries more weight than just be a ‘local resident’ or even a ‘local expert’.
Cath Mowat, Natural England

‘Yes, I think the EA already has started to benefit from the knowledge I’ve gained. During this period the EA has recognised the importance of floodplain connectivity and prioritised natural flood management so it has really been beneficial for my work’.

Jane Birch, Environment Agency