



Candidate Pack:

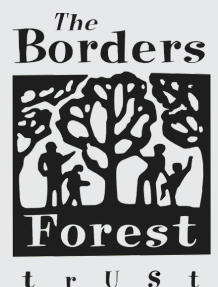
Head of Land Management

Location: Ancrum, near Jedburgh, Scottish Borders.

Salary: £47,000 FTE.

Hours: Full time (37.5 hours per week).

Closing date: Midnight, Sunday 18th October 2026*.



*Please send applications as soon as you can to Cruinn, our recruiting partner, as initial conversations will be held on a rolling basis until this closing date. More information on page 14.

Welcome from Laura Alcock-Ferguson

Chief Executive, Borders Forest Trust

Over the last 30 years Borders Forest Trust (BFT) has led the way in landscape scale regeneration in the South of Scotland. Our work has helped nature recover: planting woodlands and bringing peatlands, wetlands and meadows back to life, giving nature a helping hand to survive and thrive.

We have also reached and work with communities across the South of Scotland to make sure they are inspired by and act for nature and our changing climate, including through an education programme connecting future generations with nature. We run events for people to connect with the land through cultural and heritage projects, and we extend our reach by encouraging and advising other landowners to share our vision.

Our work is sustained by a committed membership, a large group of volunteers, and strong partnerships.

In the last five years we have acquired and begun regenerating new land, and our team has grown with it, bringing new skills to meet the challenges that nature faces while keeping us rooted in community. We have worked on our internal goals too: to be the place where a diverse mix of talented people are supported to do their best work for nature and people across Southern Scotland. What carries us towards our vision is the teamwork and dedication of our passionate, creative staff, trustees and volunteers.

To build on this, we are seeking a knowledgeable and experienced Head of Land Management.

This is a critical senior leadership role, responsible for the long-term direction and standards of management across all of Borders Forest Trust's land holdings: the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland, our other sites, the sites owned by our subsidiary company, and management activities on land owned by others.

If you thrive on building and managing excellent relationships, internally and externally, including with major donors and other funders, leading your team to achieve continued landscape scale regeneration, and bring a truly team-oriented approach while working alongside all of your colleagues, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

If this sounds like an exciting next step for your career, I do hope you will apply.

Laura Alcock-Ferguson



Background on Borders Forest Trust

Borders Forest Trust was founded in 1996 by a visionary group of people determined to address the lack of native woodlands in Southern Scotland. This was an area once covered in expansive wildwoods which supported myriad species but sadly, native woodland now covers just 1.4% of the Scottish Borders.

Our founders were local people who inspired their own dedicated community of volunteers, all passionate about doing something about this lack of biodiversity and about showing how one valley in Southern Scotland could be restored to nature.

Since our founding in 1996, Borders Forest Trust has transformed over 3,250 hectares of land across the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway – an area larger than the city of Inverness. Over 2.8 million trees have been planted by BFT; equivalent to over 10 trees for every person living in the South of Scotland today.

These 2.8 million trees are planted across a range of sites:

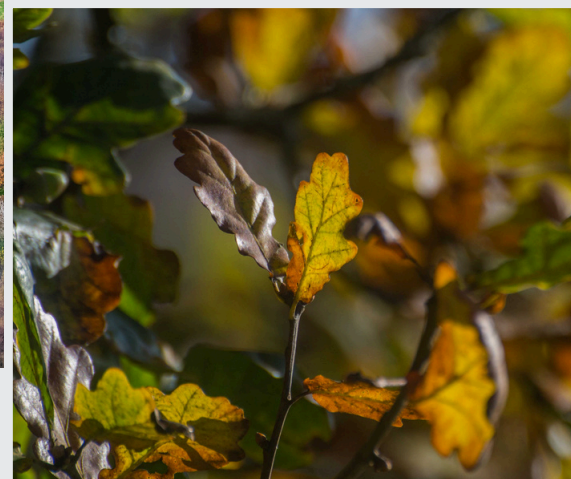
- 1.4 million on BFT owned land at the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland
- 1.3 million trees in outreach with other landowners
- 65,000 in communities.

The work of Borders Forest Trust is still rooted in communities and driven by a passion for restoring lost habitats across the South of Scotland. Our work has revived native woodlands, montane scrub, peatlands, wetlands, heathlands and wildflower meadows.

Our work with landowners inspires them and gives them the knowledge and access to tree planting grants and our volunteer groups to plant trees on their land. Our community and outreach initiatives connect people of all ages and backgrounds to the natural world, fostering stewardship and providing pathways to nature-connection, and ensuring future generations can both enjoy and care for the natural world.



Carrifran Wildwood, © Colin McLean, 2025



Dairy Wood, © C. Patience, 2024



Gameshope Burn. Photo © A Monaghan, 2026.

Borders Forest Trust - Strategic Direction

Our Vision

Our vision for Southern Scotland is a place where a rich tapestry of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by volunteers and local communities.

Borders Forest Trust is a charity established to restore native woodland habitats to Southern Scotland, an area with the lowest percentage of native woodlands in mainland Scotland. We aim to demonstrate large scale ecological restoration in action, and inspire landowners, statutory bodies, local communities and policy makers to embrace this alternative model for land use and conservation. We work in partnership with a wide range of local and national organisations as well as landowners, universities, colleges and schools. We are supported by a committed group of volunteers, supporters and donors.



Our Strategic Priorities

Increase native woodland cover – ‘revive the Wild Heart’

BFT owns land so that we can undertake large-scale ecological improvements on it, largely through the planting of new native trees and by restoring upland habitats. We aspire to extend this ‘Wild Heart’ of Southern Scotland.

Enhance existing woodlands and associated habitats

Beyond the sites we operate we also engage in inspiring, reaching out to, and advising other landowners, local communities, and professional foresters. We encourage them to embrace this alternative model for land use and conservation. We also engage with other bodies to advocate and promote best practice in restoration and planting.

Enable people of all ages to engage with woodland habitats

A key element of BFT’s work is fostering an interest in woodland culture with local communities. Since 1996 BFT has worked in over 100 sites across the south of Scotland, and with every school in the Borders, pioneering community forestry and innovative woodland education; as well as promoting forestry skills development, and has a specialism in working with young people and vulnerable groups.

A well-run organisation

BFT’s internal operation is run by a small, dedicated staff team and a board of volunteer Trustees from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

Background on the Head of Land Management

The Head of Land Management is a senior leadership role at BFT, responsible for overseeing the long-term direction and standards for land management of all BFT land holdings, including the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland, other BFT owned sites including our subsidiary-owned sites, and management activities led by BFT on land owned by others.

This site has grown and changed in responsibility over the last few years, and, following a salary and benefits review in 2026, this role has been significantly changed to ensure BFT is looking ahead to our future ambitions.

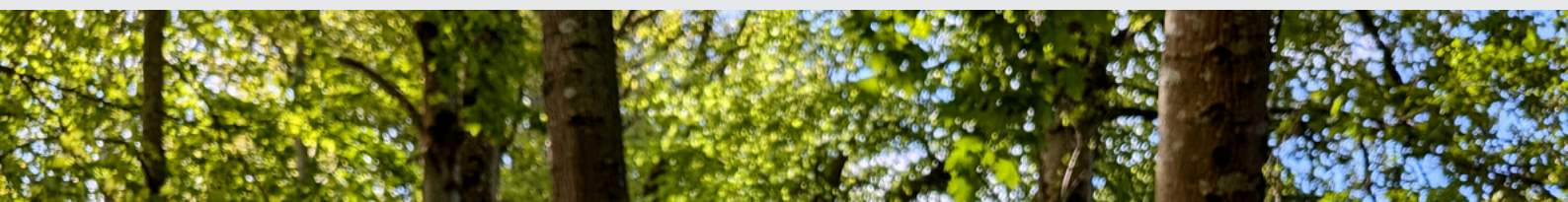
The post is responsible for leading BFT's land management team, ensuring BFT's approach to land management on our own estate, and the advice and outreach support we provide to other landowners, delivering BFT's long-term land management and land acquisition ambitions and reflecting and upholding current best practice in landscape-scale restoration. This includes responsibility for developing and implementing health and safety systems for the whole team (including contractors) and ensuring BFT's sites are safe, accessible and well-maintained.

The post will manage and build excellent strategic relationships externally as well as internally, including with major donors and other funders. Leading the land management team and working with colleagues, the post holder will have overall responsibility for the development, planning and delivery of woodland creation, woodland & other habitat restoration and other ambitions which relate to our Estate and Outreach activities. The post holder will lead on the development and submission of applications to forestry grant schemes and other government land management grants, as well as work with colleagues to ensure that budgets and forecasts are well managed, and that funding and income generation opportunities are maximised.

The Head of Land Management reports to the Chief Executive and leads the land management team, including the Wild Heart team, and line-manages the Wild Heart Site Manager and the Native Woodland Lead.

Why this post is being advertised.

BFT has been incredibly lucky to have had the current post holder in our team for 25 years, rising to the role of Head of Land Management. We are now supporting her to handover her role and work after she made the incredibly difficult decision to move on from Borders Forest Trust. A team-wide effort on handover and knowledge capture is underway and we will be supporting the incoming Head of Land Management with a thoroughly supported induction and welcome thanks to this extended handover with the previous postholder.





Job Description

Leadership and Management

- Leading BFT's approach to long-term planning funding for land management and restoration work, leading the development and submission of applications to forestry grant schemes and other government land management grants.
- Developing and maintaining a pipeline of funding opportunities, building relationships with funders, and coordinating the preparation of funding applications, project budgets and supporting information.
- Overseeing and effectively delegating to the land management team the management of grant-funded projects, including compliance with funding agreements, monitoring expenditure, coordinating reporting requirements, and ensuring delivery against agreed outputs and outcomes.
- Working closely with the Chief Executive and Development Manager on funding strategy and major donor engagement, including donor site visits and technical input to funding proposals.
- A member of the Management Team, contributing to the development and delivery of the organisational strategy and taking the lead on land management strategies.
- Advising on developments in land use, regulation, and funding.
- Representing BFT externally at a senior level with policy makers, funders, sector bodies and partner organisations, and benchmarking BFT's approach against current best practice in landscape restoration management, including wildfire risk management, adopted by peer organisations.
- Supporting the Chief Executive with planning and organisational performance.
- Ensuring that the Land Management budgets are managed according to BFT procedures.
- Contributing to development and delivery of organisational policies and compliance with employment legislation, including leading on land management health and safety and contributing to safeguarding.
- Contributing to general fundraising efforts and taking a lead on forestry grant schemes and other government land management grants.

Estate and Outreach

- Taking the strategic lead on estate and land management at Borders Forest Trust, for current and future estate decisions.
- Ensuring that all BFT sites have agreed and costed long-term estate management plans, that conforms to professional standards, setting clear strategic priorities, SMART objectives as well as annual delivery targets, and are managed to deliver those plans on time and within budget.
- Devising and agreeing a variety of long-term land restoration and management projects, and to delegate the management of these, including the fulfilment of any conditions imposed by funders.
- Ensuring the team is coordinated on identifying and developing new opportunities for estate and outreach activities, in line with BFT annual planning cycles, and the estate management plans.
- Ensuring that all opportunities for income, including carbon and government grants for the estate are realised and income or grant claims are received, working with the Finance Manager. Working with the Wild Heart Site Manager and Development Manager to optimise other funding opportunities.
- Ensuring the health and safety of all employees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors on BFT owned and third party sites where we work.
- Ensuring the whole of BFT (both Wild Heart and Community and Education) team is trained and equipped to implement current best practice in landscape restoration management, including Health and Safety and wildfire management, across all sites.
- Overseeing the Land Based Risk Assessments (including a wildfire risk management plan and prevention work) across all BFT sites in line with current best practice.
- Overseeing research and monitoring work carried out by BFT.
- Coordinating and overseeing the BFT staff work with the Ecological Advisory Group and others.



Team Leadership & Management

- To manage the Wild Heart Site Manager and the Native Woodland Lead, provide overall strategic leadership to the Wild Heart Team, and delegate day-to-day operational delivery to them.
- Ensuring your team has a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and targets and has support to achieve them, through coaching, training and development.
- Working closely with the Finance Manager, manage the budget for all land management activities, including financial reporting and managing any variances and areas for action.
- Oversee the Wild Heart team's involvement with BFT's communications and social media work as required.

This job description outlines the main duties and responsibilities of the role and is not intended to be an exhaustive list. The post holder may be required to undertake additional duties appropriate to the level and nature of the role. BFT reserves the right to amend the duties and responsibilities in line with organisational needs.



Members of BFT staff, founders and trustees.
Photo by A. Monaghan, 2025.



BFT volunteers and staff member at Drygrange. © A. Monaghan, 2026.

Personal Specification



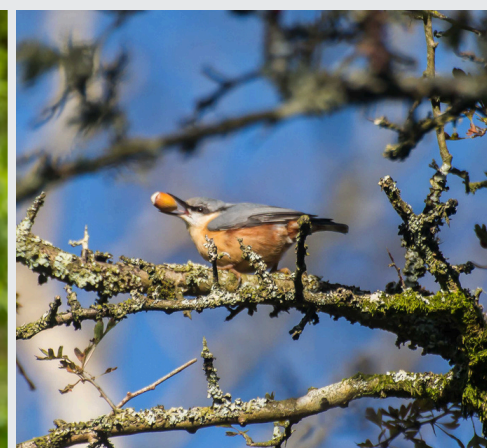
Qualifications / Education

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Degree or equivalent in land management or related subject for environmental objectives	Desirable
Have or be working towards professional qualification such as ICF or RICS	Desirable
Project management qualification	Desirable

Experience / skills / knowledge

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Extensive experience of managing land, preferably in the uplands for ecological and/or social objectives	Essential
Extensive experience of native woodland management and native woodland creation, preferably in Scotland	Essential
Project management experience	Essential
Budget management and financial reporting experience	Essential
Line management experience including managing a team	Essential
Knowledge and experience of implementing Health and Safety issues and management	Essential
Experience of securing and managing project income and activity through a variety of sources including government grants	Essential
As above, with Carbon income	Desirable

Experience of working with volunteers and stakeholders such as landowners, farmers, neighbours, community groups and schools, listening and balancing a range of views in communications and decisions, while remaining calm under occasional public-facing pressure	Essential
Clear written and verbal communication skills, able to explain priorities and listen to a range of views	Essential
IT skills (Microsoft Office or relevant software)	Essential
Extensive relationship management experience, particularly related to listening to stakeholders and then making decisions and communicating them	Essential
Ability to use GIS software, or willingness to learn	Essential
Experience of developing strategies and translating into plans	Desirable
Experience of deer management	Desirable
Experience operating at a senior/strategic leadership level, including reporting to a Board or senior management team	Desirable
Experience of major donor and/or long-term funder relationship management	Desirable



Personal Attributes / Competencies

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Strong ability to work independently and also able to work as part of a team	Essential
Good at managing a diverse work load and ability to prioritise and deliver when under pressure	Essential

Other Requirements

Criteria	Essential / Desirable
Right to work in the UK	Essential
Full driving license and access to a car with business use insurance	Essential
Ability to work flexibly across multiple locations	Essential
Ability to work flexibly in working hours, including working during some weekends and evenings	Essential



Getting stuck in at Gameshope. Photo © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Gameshope, BFT Wild Heart Sites, © A. Monaghan, 2026.

What it is like to work at Borders Forest Trust

We are a small, dedicated team with 12 posts and our staff range from people who have been here for 25 years to our most recent recruits who have joined us in the last year or so. We have a lot of knowledge and energy to share and look forward to you joining us, to share your knowledge and energy, if you are successful.

Your role will involve teamwork across all areas of the organisation, and particularly with the Land Management teams, who you will lead and manage.

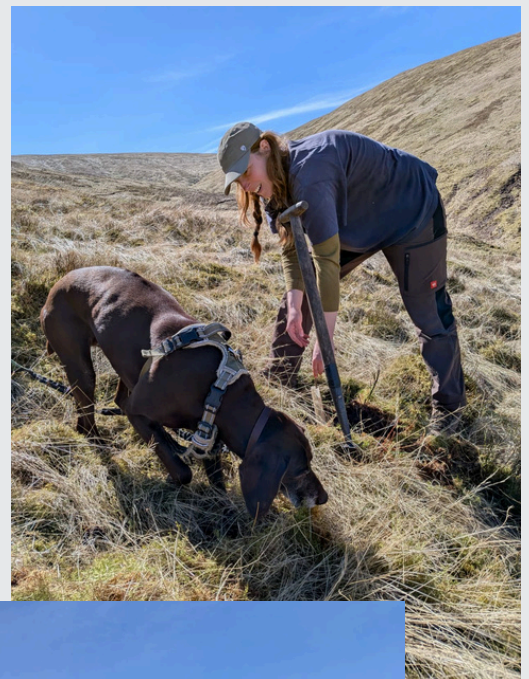
Many staff attend the office near Ancrum, Jedburgh, on Mondays, and our staff meetings are monthly on Mondays, while the remainder of the week is often spent working at our sites or with other landowners.

As a BFT employee, you will be supported in your role with regular 1:1 meetings with the Chief Executive, your line manager, as well as monthly face to face meetings in the staff team.

We support our staff with significant development and learning opportunities, linked to a learning plan as part of annual performance appraisals. This is in addition to mandatory training support on subjects such as health and safety, first aid, GDPR.

We are currently updating our website, and several behind-the-scenes improvements are ongoing, all of which will help you and all our staff to be supported to perform even better in their roles.

Staff at Talla. Photo © A Monaghan, 2026.



Staff at Talla. Photo © A Monaghan, 2026.

Salary, hours, location and benefits at BFT

BFT recently completed an external review of salaries and benefits to ensure we remain competitive. We've included information on the key benefits and wellbeing support provided to all BFT staff below.

Salary	The salary for this post is £47,000 per annum. BFT has recently completed an external Salary and Benefits Review including external benchmarking to ensure competitiveness, and the salaries BFT offer are not available for negotiation.
Location and travel	This post will be based from BFT's offices at Monteviot Nurseries near Jedburgh, although many days will be spent at BFT sites across Southern Scotland. Some home working will be allowed and supported. Hybrid working is possible, please indicate your preference during the interview process. Staff and Land Management meetings happen on Mondays. Occasional travel further afield will be required. Due to the need to travel independently to landowner and BFT sites, candidates will need access to a car, with adequate insurance for business use. Agreed mileage is re-imbursed at a rate of 55p/mile and receipted expenses are paid monthly.
Hours and flexible working	This is a full-time role including occasional evening and weekend work. Full-time hours are 37.5 hours per week. Weekend/evening work is acknowledged through time off in lieu – please note we do not pay overtime. Flexible working patterns can be discussed with a focus on outputs and deliverables, rather than strict work patterns. Employees are empowered to manage daily working patterns to suit their work/life balance and the needs of the charity.
Annual leave	34 days annual leave per year inclusive of Bank Holidays (pro-rata for part time staff). Employees can choose to use bank holidays on alternative days to suit their work/life balance.
Pension	10%, 13% or 15% total contribution if contributed to with 4%, 6.4% or 8% coming from the employee.
Employee Assistance Programme	BFT takes staff wellbeing seriously, and offers a range of ways of supporting wellbeing, including offering staff access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This includes counselling, leadership, personal finance and life coaching, a virtual GP service and menopause support.
Other benefits	BFT allows well behaved dogs in the office. As part of the recently completed benefits review, BFT trustees approved further benefits which will be brought in over the coming months including life assurance for all staff and enhanced sick pay.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

BFT values diversity in the workforce as a means of broadening our talent base and achieving the highest level of performance, and we are aware that many people are under-represented within the environmental and forestry sectors. As well as following legislative requirements, BFT aims to work to good practice.

We are committed to inclusion and equality, and promoting equal opportunities in all areas of recruitment, employment, training and promotion. We welcome applications from all people, particularly those under-represented within our sector.

It is our policy, and the law, not to discriminate against applicants or workers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, disability, colour, nationality, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, age, pregnancy or trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. Our employees and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes.

Recruitment and Selection

We will ensure that no applicant, whether internal or external shall receive less favourable treatment on any of the grounds listed above at any stage of the recruitment process.

If there is anything we can do to make any reasonable adjustments to ensure you can engage fully in the selection process, please contact rosie@cruinnconsulting.co.uk for a confidential discussion.



Wild Heart planting day, © A. Monaghan, 2026.



Volunteers, © A. Monaghan, 2026.



How to apply

We have partnered with Cruinn for this recruitment.

If you would like to be considered for this role, please send a letter of application of no more than 3 pages and a CV, to Rosie Gage at Cruinn, email: rosie@cruinnconsulting.co.uk
Cruinn will then offer suitable candidates an initial conversation. **Please do not wait for the closing date to send in your letters of application, as Cruinn will start conversations early in the recruitment window.**

What to include in your letter of application: unless you tell us how you meet all the essential points in the Person Specification (above), you are not likely to be shortlisted. Please also tell us how you meet the desirable points too, where relevant. Always give an example of how you meet these points, as this will help you stand out.

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in our team. To help us monitor this, **we ask all applicants to complete a Diversity Monitoring Form.** This is optional, and information provided will be seen separately from your application and will not be used as part of the selection process.

A note on the use of AI: AI has environmental impacts which BFT is aware of. However, we also recognise that it can be a helpful tool when used at its best, but it should never replace your own voice. The best applications are honest, personal, and reflective of who you are and what you can bring to Borders Forest Trust.

Managers involved in shortlisting or interviewing will not use AI tools to screen, score or rank candidates, and any concern about the authenticity of an application will be explored at interview rather than assumed.

Timetable

Closing date (but please send applications as soon as you can to Cruinn, as initial conversations will be held on a rolling basis until this closing date)	Midnight, Sunday 18 October
First stage online interviews	Wednesday 28th October
Second stage interviews near Moffat (including a site visit near Moffat, likely to take up to 2.5 hours in total)	Wednesday 4th November
Decision by	Wednesday 11th November

If there are any reasonable adjustments we can make, please do get in touch. All discussions are confidential.

Thank you for your interest, if you have any questions, please contact Rosie Gage at Cruinn, email: rosie@cruinnconsulting.co.uk