



Natural Talent Case Study Template

Name: Eleanor Lewis

Age: 24

Traineeship: TCV Natural Talent - Invasive Non-Native Species

Dates of traineeship: 25th January 2016 – 24th January 2017



About your traineeship

Can you give an overview of your Natural Talent UK traineeship? (What organisations are you placed with/type of work you will be involved in?)

I shall be working for CEDaR (the Centre for Environmental Data and Records), which is a partnership between the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), National Museums Northern Ireland, and the recording community of Northern Ireland. It facilitates the collection, collation, management and dissemination of biodiversity and geodiversity information for Northern Ireland.

I will be specialising in Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). My understanding is that this will entail: reviewing published literature to establish the current understanding on INNS; conducting fieldwork to contribute to recording initiatives which survey invasive species and monitor their impacts on habitats; writing reports and management plans advising on the control and removal of INNS; and working in partnership with others to feed this knowledge into policy.

Why did you apply for a Natural Talent traineeship?

I applied for the Natural Talent traineeship because it looked like an excellent opportunity to build upon my academic knowledge whilst providing me with an opportunity to develop more practical, applied skills. Additionally, the fact that the Traineeships seeks to respond to identified skills shortages in the conservation sector and increase the capacity of volunteers and local communities to take a role in improving local biodiversity really appealed to me.

What kind of employment were you in before undertaking a Natural Talent traineeship?

I have just finished a Master's in Conservation, Biodiversity and Management at the University of Oxford. This is a multi-disciplinary course which has given me a very good knowledge of the science and practice of conservation, as well as a critical understanding of the socio-economic, political, cultural and institutional environments within which policy and management decisions are made.

Prior to my Master's I did an internship with The Dartington Hall Trust, a charity which specialises in Sustainability, Social Justice and the Arts. I helped to research, develop and write the Trust's new 5-year strategy which aims to increase community resilience, with a



particular emphasis upon: sustainable food and farming; jobs and homes; and enriching lives.

What voluntary experience had you done prior to your traineeship?

I have volunteered as a Ranger with the National Trust in the Teign Valley on the edge of Dartmoor for two days a week, for two years. This volunteering has also given me knowledge and experience of a wide range of practical conservation tasks including: halving, coppicing and pollarding trees; bracken bashing; controlled burning of gorse; dry stone walling and working with school and community groups.

What are you most looking forward to during your traineeship?

What I am most looking forward to about the traineeship is the varied nature of the job and the exciting possibilities that it offers for me to extend my knowledge and learn new skills. One aspect that really appeals to me is the way the traineeship feeds into policy on the impacts of INNS. I am also looking forward to working in partnership with key Conservation Organisations and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). I relish a challenge and new experiences and I'm sure this role will offer plenty.

What skills do you anticipate this traineeship will give you?

Through the traineeship I look set to learn and develop a whole range of skills from techniques in species' identification, monitoring and management; training in GIS and data analysis; to experience of writing reports and strategies and the management of projects and volunteers.

How do you feel your traineeship benefits the conservation sector in the United Kingdom?

Invasive species pose a huge threat to biodiversity, this is set to increase with Climate Change and Globalization. The greater the understanding of their implications the better the response of the conservation sector can be, thus minimising the negative impacts.

What career path do you see yourself pursuing and how will this experience will help you?

At the moment I'm not sure if I want to pursue a career in policy or management, this role leaves my options open and hopefully equips me for both.