Environment Agency

community action

Community Action Project

Thames Volunteers

Community Action Partner

The Environment Agency

Aim: The Environment agency is the biggest and most wide-ranging environmental regulator in Europe. They work across England and Wales to protect and improve the environment by: reducing the risk of flooding and helping to protect people and places; helping businesses to make sure they don't harm the environment through pollution or by taking too much water. They issue licenses and permits, and take action against those who don't take their environmental responsibilities seriously; improving the environment for people and wildlife. They help people get the most out of their environment, including boaters and anglers. And they complete around 400 projects every year to improve the places where threatened species live; working with government, industry and local authorities to make the environment a priority. For more information on the Environment Agency and what they do please visit: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/

Role: They are looking for the following skills and experience: you will be aged 18 years or over; natural enthusiasm and an interest in the River Thames is essential; to enjoy meeting and helping people; some experience in a customer-focused environment would be helpful but is not essential; an interest and aptitude for gardening and grounds maintenance; knowledge of the River Thames and surrounding area would be helpful; a good level of fitness is required as there is some physical work involved and the ability to swim (this is essential because the role is based beside the river and on the lock-side. You must be able to swim.

Training: You will receive the same 'Working near Water' safety training that all field staff in the Environment Agency undertake. This will teach you about the dangers of water and will involve testing out a lifejacket in a swimming pool. You will also receive a basic induction training day telling you more about lock keeping, the kinds of situations you may encounter and how to deal with them, personal safety, safe lifting, and other information which will be valuable on the lock side. On completion of the above, you will be asked to start assisting on the lock side where your training will continue. You will receive a training workbook. The lockkeeper on duty will work through this with you, showing you the detail of how that site works, where the facilities and equipment is located etc. They will also work with you to develop your competence in managing boats safely through the lock. When the lockkeeper is confident that you have understood what lock keeping is all about at that site, they will sign you off (in your workbook) as capable to operate your assigned site unsupervised. They would anticipate that most volunteers should be able to reach this sign off stage after four full days on the lock side with an experienced lockkeeper. The off-site training will take place in April so on-site training to develop your competence can take place in April/May. This will mean you should be signed off to take sole charge of a site during lunch breaks etc, by end of May.

Location: Along the River Thames.

Royal Holloway University of London

Times: May 2013 and finishing October 2013. They are looking for people who can spare at least one day a week. The day and number of days per week can be flexible and will be agreed with the lock keeper. They will be able to work around volunteers' previous commitments (holidays for example) but they will want missing days to be made up at another time so they can maintain a consistent service across the season.
As they provide a daily service at the locks, they will be looking for a mix of volunteers to provide 7-day cover. Lockkeeper working hours vary through the season but they would want you to be on the lockside between at least 9am and 6 pm during July and August.

CRB: CRB is not required.

Application: All volunteers must be registered as Community Action volunteers.