



Ecologist

Stephen Lockwood - Director

● How long have you worked in the industry?

In the UK consultancy industry for 14 years, more widely in the environmental sector both in the UK and abroad for 20 years.

● Which career path did you follow to get to where you are today?

I have an undergraduate degree in Zoology and a Master of Science degree in Biodiversity and Conservation, along with being a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and I'm a Chartered Ecologist.

However, initially I never had a designated career path, but knew that I was interested in the environment, wanted to help conserve the places I spent the most time in recreationally, and to enjoy what I was doing and working in the outdoors. This led me to work in Tanzania on specialist biodiversity assessment projects, as a warden on an island in the middle of the Bristol Channel managing a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and finally to specialising in upland habitats within the UK and their peatland ecosystems through consultancy work.

Luckily this final area is important in an ecological sense for the carbon stores (particularly in peatland habitats) that are present and the juxtaposition of renewable energy development in these areas to help with reduction on our dependency on fossil fuels, so I have managed to develop both my ecological and consultancy skills in parallel. All of these roles have had elements of environmental education which I see as vital.

● How would you explain your job to people?

Generally, my role entails providing specialist advice to help minimise the potential effects of development to biodiversity and the surrounding environment. Aiding in the planning and design stages of post-construction mitigation and enhancement plans, my role can help developers improve the biodiversity within their sites.

However, in the simplest terms it's often a role that falls between being the developer's conscience to ensure they do the right thing for the environment rather than taking the path of least resistance or merely being compliant with environmental legislation, whilst helping their developments to still make economic sense.

● What role can your profession play in the fight against climate change? How can your profession make a difference?

Fortunately, ecologists - and particularly those specialising in peatland habitats and renewables development - can make a real difference to our UK carbon emissions and therefore influence greenhouse gas release. Scotland holds a vast store of peatland, the majority of which are degraded and therefore actively emitting carbon dioxide. Restoration of peatlands, funded either privately or through government backed initiatives, can actively turn carbon dioxide sources to sinks through simple interventions, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and aiding in the fight against climate change.



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