



Farm 491, Alliston Centre, Stroud Road, Cirencester, GL6 7JS

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: info@ruralink.org.uk

CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER DAY FOR SERVICE LEAVERS AND VETERANS OPERATION KINGFISHER - WILTSHIRE

Ruralink, in partnership with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) and Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), will host a Conservation Volunteers' Day near Upavon, Wiltshire on 10 December from 09.30 to 4.00 pm. This pilot event is specifically aimed at providing Service-leavers and Veterans with a practical and educational opportunity to complement their highly-relevant military skills by developing their knowledge and experience of working in the land-based sector.

It is intended that this event will be the first of many similar volunteering activities for Service-leavers and Veterans organised by Ruralink in conjunction with environmental conservation organisations throughout the country. The primary purpose of these is to support the aspirations of attendees in finding employment in the land-based sector after leaving the military. The project will be known as Operation KINGFISHER.

The volunteers will assist the WWT in planting native trees within the floodplain along the River Avon as the final step in a large-scale river restoration project that will add considerable ecological value to the existing species-rich habitat. They will also gain a detailed insight into the background and aims of the project, wider conservation work undertaken by WWT and DIO, further volunteering opportunities and the role of Ruralink in supporting Service-leavers and Veterans. On hand to offer advice to the volunteers will be:

Olly Howells. Senior Ecologist at Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

Alice Baker. Water Team Manager at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT).

Fiona Galbraith. Founder and Director of Ruralink and a Reservist (ex-Regular) Army officer.

Andy Lee. Volunteer Coordinator at Ruralink and a resettling RAF officer.

Notes for Editors:

Ruralink offers specialist careers advice and support to service leavers seeking follow-on careers in the land-based sector. Working with employers, education providers and individuals it generates pathways into secure, sustainable careers which ultimately is good for food, farming, land management and conservation. Find out more at ruralink.org.uk.

Contact details:

Fiona Galbraith, Director of Ruralink, fiona@ruralink.org.uk.

Andy Lee, Volunteer Coordinator at Ruralink, volunteering@ruralink.org.uk

Press are invited to attend this event. Please inform the team in advance, as above.