



**Hampshire &
Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust**



Which course is right for me?

Find out more about our range of training options, from professional outdoor learning CPD, INSET offer, and our accredited Forest School or Wild Beach training courses.

Whether you want to find out a bit more about outdoor learning, Forest School or Wild Beach training, or would like to develop your practical skills to support learning outside the classroom, the Trust offers a range of adult learning opportunities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Courses are delivered at our beautiful woodland nature reserves and coastal locations or within your own sites and grounds, and are staffed by a team of experienced professionals.

Why choose Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust?

By opting to train with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, you are not only supporting your local wildlife charity but also initiating a new supportive relationship to help you on the journey to becoming an inspiring outdoor educator.

We have a wealth of experience to share from delivering outdoor learning, Forest School and Wild Beach sessions with a range of people, from early years and different key stage school groups, through to adults and special educational needs groups.

Our Tutors are experts in biodiversity protection and ecological management of education sites.

Wilder Schools

We offer programmes that are designed to cater to everyone, from training, resources and advice for staff to tailored sessions for students on school site and off site. With a range of packages available, we have something to suit every need. We want a network of Wilder Schools to support our mission to create a wilder future for the next generation.

The Trust's education service holds the Quality Badge from the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. Our education team are all DBS checked and have completed Outdoor or Forest School First Aid training.

If you would like to know more about training with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, please email: **ForestSchool@hiwwt.org.uk**

If you would like to know more about Wilder Schools, please email: **Wilder@hiwwt.org.uk**

LOtC Quality Badge



Wilder schools logo



Outdoor Learning CPD or INSET training

Would you like to develop your grounds and wildlife gardens for both improving biodiversity and opportunities for learning?

Build the skills, knowledge and confidence within your staff to enable them to take children outside to learn?

As a Trust we believe that learning happens through our hearts and hands before our heads. Our skills in language, science, maths, music and art all develop organically as we grow but are grounded in our childhood experiences. We know that children spend drastically less unsupervised play time outdoors than previous generations and that roaming distance from home and opportunities to explore wild and untamed landscapes with peers have decreased to a point that they are no longer play-realities for many of today's children. With this loss of child-led experimentation, risk taking, exploration and natural loose parts play, children are missing out on opportunities for concrete real-world and whole-body understanding of scientific or mathematical concepts. The learning possibilities outdoors are endless and include volumes, distances, how a pulley works, what materials float best, finding geographic features in a landscape, watching how plants grow, life cycles and seasonal cycles of nature, the aesthetic beauty of newly opened spring buds or a view of the ocean, hearing the musical beats, rhythms and sequences in nature from a bird call to raindrops on the tarpaulin...

This is where we can make a difference for all children and young people within our schools & settings. We can take a critical look at our available outdoor spaces and consider what level of learning we can offer in these spaces now and what level of learning they can afford us if we make some changes.

There are 'levels' of outdoor learning

- learning out of doors (e.g. reading in the sunshine)
- learning with the outdoors (e.g. maths with sticks and stones)
- and learning through the outdoors (getting to know an area and getting inspired to learn by it)

Ideally, we want changes to our outdoor spaces to improve the level of learning as well as improve conditions for wildlife to thrive. The more biodiverse, wilder and connected to the wider environment the grounds are, the more learning opportunities it will afford.

Bespoke CPD sessions can be tailored to the needs of the school, setting and staff, either as twilight sessions or INSET days.



Course Information

Forest School Training

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust first started to deliver Forest School programmes to local schools and community groups in 2007 as part of their environmental education programme. We have been running accredited Forest School training courses since 2012, and have trained nearly 400 Forest School Leaders and Assistants over this time.

Our Tutors offer you individual support, feedback, and advice throughout your training and beyond. Our close ties to the local FSA Hampshire group will give you easy access to skill sharing with the local Forest School community beyond your training.

Our Tutors are active members of the Forest School Association (FSA) ensuring our delivery and assessment remains current and of high quality.

The Forest School Association (FSA) is the professional membership organisation for Forest School practitioners and should be the first port of call for independent information and advice about Forest School in the UK.



Forest School trainees studying accredited Level 2 or 3 courses are eligible for a discounted membership of the Forest School Association. The Trust can give you further details of this offer during the training.

The FSA has compiled a free booklet to support people who are looking to set up a Forest School, become a Forest School practitioner or who are 'Forest School curious'. The document is a reflective tool to help prospective Forest School leaders navigate through common problems encountered by the community during set up and delivery. You can read their guidance [here](#).

Please see the following pages for a comparison of courses to find the one that is right for you.



Forest School Assistants Level 2

Description of training

The Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants training course offers an in-depth look at the Forest School ethos and qualifies learners to become Forest School Assistants, supporting a Level 3 Leader to run Forest School programmes. The course will take you through the Forest School approach to learning and the principles of risk management. Learners will have the opportunity to develop their practical skills, including:

- Safe lighting, management and use of a campfire
- Safe use of a range of hand tools
- Delivery of a variety of games and activities
- Identification of woodland flora and fauna
- The sustainable use of woodland within the context of Forest School.

The course will be run on Forest School principles, so you will experience the Forest School ethos first hand. The course will be led by a member of our training team and takes place over four days from 09:30 until 16:30 at one of our woodland nature reserves.

Course content

- Four-day in person training covering learning & development and practical skills.
- Portfolio of assignments to be completed within six months of the start date via our Virtual Learning Environment Moodle. This will need access to a PC or laptop.
- Assist with three Forest School sessions led by a qualified Level 3 Forest School leader (we can put you in touch with a suitable person if required).
- Total Qualification Time - 70 hours; Guided Learning Hours - 54 hours

Who is the course for?

Forest School Assistant: This course is designed for individuals wishing to assist with the delivery of Forest School programmes, supporting sessions led by a Level 3 Forest School Leader.

Entry criteria

- Participants should be over 18 years of age
- Participants should have experience of working with children or young people, or with adults in the outdoors.
- Recommended: Participants to hold a current DBS certificate.

(If you do not meet the stated entry criteria for the course of your choice, please email us to arrange an assessment call with one of the training team).

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course, you will be awarded the LASER Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants (RQF). We expect the course to take you six months to complete.

Supporter requirements

To enable and support the trainee to assist at three consecutive Forest School sessions led by a local Forest School Leader and to complete the written portfolio work within six months of the course start date. This may be through releasing the trainee during work hours to attend.

Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the given six-month deadline, the Trust charge a £50 per month marking extension. Please see the Accredited Training Course Agreement for full details.

Forest School Leaders Level 3

Description of training

The Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders prepares participants to set up their own Forest School provision, planning, delivering and monitoring all aspects of a Forest School programme, including:

- How to plan and deliver an Introduction to Forest School programme
- Current theories on the Forest School approach to learning and development
- How to identify, assess and manage risk at Forest School
- Safe use of a range of hand tools and associated skills
- How to light, manage and use a campfire in a Forest School setting
- A range of outdoor games and activities which promote environmental awareness and connection with nature and wellbeing
- Identification of woodland flora and fauna
- The sustainable use of a woodland within the context of Forest School

The course will be led by our training team and takes place over 10 days. The course will be run on Forest School principles, so you will have experience of the Forest School ethos in action. The training days run from 09:30 until 16:30 each day at one of our woodland nature reserves, with as much time as possible spent outdoors. There are two further days to cover a 16 hour outdoor focussed First Aid course.

Course content

- Eight days of training in Forest School theory and practice
- Two skills days to develop and assess practical skills and to discuss progress
- Two Forest School or Outdoor First Aid (16hr) training days (9am to 6pm)
- A coursework portfolio which should be completed within twelve months of the course start date via our Virtual Learning Environment Moodle. This will need access to a PC or laptop.
- Learners are required to plan and run an Introduction to Forest School programme of six sessions with their chosen client group. A mentoring visit will take place at one of the sessions by a member of our Forest School training team. The Introduction to Forest School Programme should take place within twelve months of the course start date.
- Total Qualification Time - 180 hours; Guided Learning Hours - 96 hours (not including First Aid). (An approximate equivalent to undertaking an AS Level within one year).

Who is the course for?

Forest School Leader: This course is the nationally recognised standard of training for individuals wishing to lead and manage a Forest School programme.

Entry criteria

- Participants should be over 21 years of age
- Participants should hold a Level 2 qualification and have significant experience of working with young children or young people, or with adults in the outdoors **OR** a Level 3 qualification in education or childcare
- Participants must hold a current DBS Certificate
- All participants will hold a Forest School First Aid certificate by the end of the course. This training has been integrated into the course and is usually 16-hour Forest School First Aid certificate with a Level 3 Paediatric First Aid Certificate.
- Recommended: visiting a Forest School session or programme before you start your training.

(If you do not meet the stated entry criteria for the course of your choice, please email us to arrange an assessment call with one of the training team).

Forest School Leaders Level 3

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course, you will be awarded the LASER Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders (RQF) which is a nationally recognised qualification and is compatible with the FSA Accredited Forest School Provider Scheme.

Supporter requirements

It is important to ensure your supporter (e.g., headteacher or line manager) is aware of the course requirements and agrees at the onset to support you to complete the course requirements within the year-long deadline.

Please share the following with your supporter: <https://youtu.be/sBhi2pw0p98>

The trainee is required to plan, run and evaluate a 6 session Forest School programme for a group.

The supporter agrees to support the trainee to prepare the Forest School handbook by sharing current setting information, such as insurance details and health & safety documents and supporting the trainee to develop Forest School specific health and safety documentation. This may be through regular meetings and/or time allowed during work hours to complete documentation. All training dates listed are mandatory attendance guided learning hours. In addition to the mandatory guided learning hours, Forest School Leaders are required to hold a 16-hour Forest School or Outdoor First Aid certificate, and this two day course is provided within the scheduled dates and cost of this course. The supporter agrees to allow time from work for the trainee to attend all dates.

The supporter will enable the trainee, along with suitable additional adults, to deliver a minimum of 6 x 2 hour Introduction to Forest School sessions to a suitable client group (max. 15 children), following the FS principles, ethos and criteria (i.e. low child to staff ratios to enable risky play opportunities, delivering a child led ethos not curriculum focussed but may offer opportunities to cross reference play and learning observations with the curriculum), in a wooded or green environment which is rich in natural loose parts. Please see <http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>) Should the trainee fail to meet the criteria during their mentoring visit, demonstrating the good practice outlined above, the Trust will impose an additional charge of £50 plus return mileage for a second visit.

Completing portfolio assignments

Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the agreed deadline – usually within one year - the Trust will charge £100 marking fee per month extension. Tutors will make reasonable adjustments to the deadlines due to exceptional circumstances. Please see the Accredited Training Course Agreement for full details on additional charges.

Practical skills

Please note that practical skills (fire lighting, tool work and shelter building) are assessed by the Tutors during the skills days. The trainee is not considered competent to deliver these activities with children by the Trust until the Tutors have assessed these skills on those dates. The trainees are expected to practise their skills before the skills days but should not, for example, lead campfire sessions with children until after the skills assessment unless they meet the other requirements set out by school/setting insurance cover and HCC Evolve sign off. The trainee's Introduction to Forest School Programme should also not start until after the skills days and/or until the Forest School handbook (Part 1 assignments) have been marked and passed by their Tutors.

Wild Beach Leader

Description of training

The Level 3 Wild Beach Leader Training prepares participants to deliver Wild Beach sessions and programmes including:

- How to plan and deliver Wild Beach sessions
- How to identify, assess and manage risk at the beach
- How to build simple shelters for a range of weather conditions
- How to light, manage and use a campfire at the beach
- A range of games and activities for playing, beachcombing and exploring the shoreline
- Inspiring activities that can be linked to the EYFS, NC or uniformed group badges
- How to identify common coastal wildlife
- Nature connection and sustainable choices

The course will be led by our training team and takes place over four days, from 9.30am to 4pm each day, at a local Solent beach with as much time as possible spent outdoors.

Course content

- Four days of training in Wild Beach theory and practise
- A coursework portfolio which should be completed within six months of the course start date via our Virtual Learning Environment Moodle. This will need access to a PC or laptop.
- Total Qualification Time - 90 hours; Guided Learning Hours - 36 hours

Who is the course for?

This course is designed for educators, youth workers, Forest School Assistants or Forest School Leaders wishing to deliver coastal sessions to children, young people or adults.

Entry criteria

- Participants should be over 18 years of age
- Participants should hold a qualification at Level 2 or above in teaching or learning, youth work or environmental engagement roles **OR** should have significant experience working with children or young people.
- Recommended: Participants to hold a current or relevant First Aid certificate when taking groups to the coasts (16hr outdoor or Forest School First Aid or equivalent).

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course, you will be awarded the LASER Wild Beach Leader Training - Level 3 Programme Award. We expect the course to take you six months to complete.

Supporter requirements:

To enable and support the trainee to complete the written portfolio work within six months of the start date. This may be through releasing the trainee during work hours to attend.

Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the given six-month deadline, the Trust charge a £50 per month extension. Please see the Accredited Training Course Agreement for full details.

Meet the team



Dawn Preston

I have been an outdoor educator for over 20 years and I find myself stating 'I love my job!' at least once a day – I feel very passionate about the opportunities I have to inspire children and adults alike to connect with the natural world around them (and to encourage others to do the same). I enjoy the challenge of working with a range of people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of experience - from encouraging play and exploration in our woodlands by very young children and their parents or carers to delivering Forest School training to enthusiastic and committed adults across the two counties.

I have been a Forest School Association Endorsed Trainer since February 2020, which has been both exciting and humbling! Reflective practice is one of the Forest School core principles and the Endorsed Trainer scheme has provided me many opportunities to continue reviewing, updating and developing our training offer to be the best it can for our trainees.



Dawn O'Malley

Dawn has worked for Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust for 11 years and her experience includes education development (school visit delivery, Forest School delivery and wild play consultation), training and Internal Quality Assurance (delivering, assessing and verifying accredited and non accredited training and providing school grounds advice and INSET) and managing the Trust's communities team (developing and managing partnership and lottery projects, managing a team of community organiser and developing community training).

Dawn is also a member of the Learning Through Landscapes accredited professional network and is experienced in consulting with schools in developing their grounds for learning and wildlife gains.





Abi Gibbard

I have a background of over 30 years as a primary school teacher, and have been a Forest School Leader for 10 years. I joined the Trust to help out with Forest School programmes whilst teaching part-time, then last year I joined the training team delivering Forest School courses and heading up the Wild Beach Leader training. I enjoy taking children outside; to boost their well-being, provide them with some physical play and help them to learn about the natural world around them - all the things we know are good for healthy child development. Being involved with the training means I am able to support other educators to have the confidence and skills to be able to enjoy taking children outside too - thereby ensuring we can reach more children and more schools and settings.



Catherine Wright

I have been working with the Trust for 3 years at Blashford Lakes Nature Reserve as an Engagement Officer, organising and leading on school and group visits to the reserve, the day to day facilities management of the Education Centre and public engagement on the reserve. Prior to this I worked for 5 years for National Trust Brownsea Island, latterly as Outdoor Learning Manager. I am happiest outdoors and often with a class in tow! There is something very special about seeing young people out in nature exploring and discovering new things and seeing their curiosity in action. I've recently been involved with Wild Beach training, having undertaken the course myself. With a mixed marine and terrestrial background, some of my favourite habitats to teach in are aquatic - whether at the beach, pond or river, as there are always so many incredible and often overlooked species to discover.



Caroline Fox

I am an Early Years practitioner, with experience of pre-school and Reception age children. I worked in traditional settings for many years, then from 2014-2018 I worked at Little Owls Woodland pre-school, a fully outdoor setting for children age 2 years 9 months to 5 years. During this time I qualified as a Forest School Leader and took over managing the setting.

In 2019 I joined the Trust team at Swanwick Lakes, initially as a volunteer, then as an Outdoor Learning Tutor. My time is now split between the OLT & volunteer roles. I lead evening groups, doing a range of activities including den building, night walks, pond dipping and bat walks and help with a weekly Forest School programme for a local SEND primary school. I also help with school & college visits, doing a range of activities and support the training programmes - I particularly enjoy helping with practical skills teaching and assessing.



Debbie Cunningham

I've been teaching children and young people for over thirty years, and my passion has always been helping them connect with nature. As a trained Level 3 Forest School Leader, I create hands-on, playful sessions that spark curiosity and confidence outdoors. I've also supported young people through the John Muir Award, encouraging them to explore and care for wild places.

Right now, I work as an Outdoor Learning Tutor with the Trust, and I'm involved in both the Forest School for Families group and the Wildlife Rangers group. I'm especially interested in how spending time outside can boost wellbeing, particularly for people who might not always feel included. My aim is to make nature welcoming, restorative, and fun for everyone.



Kris Richards

I have worked as a teacher in a number of Secondary and Primary Schools since 2004, delivering firstly PE and then Outdoor Education. In 2016 I began working for myself providing Outdoor Learning for children in schools, helping to promote positive attitudes towards nature and a love of playing outdoors.

In 2018 I completed my Level 3 Forest School Leader training with the Trust which inspired a new ethos and way of working. I now work as an Outdoor Learning Tutor and volunteer for the Trust delivering group sessions, Wildlife Rangers and assisting with Level 2 & 3 Forest School training. Being outdoors is where I am most comfortable and working in educational settings and for the Trust allows me to develop as an outdoor educator and gives me the opportunity to work with people of all ages whilst continuing to help promote the benefits of spending time outside.



Sue Edwards

I'm Sue, and I started my path as an outdoor environmental educator as a teenage volunteer for Essex Wildlife Trust, helping school visits and holiday clubs. I have lived and taught under the leaves in ancient Epping Forest, and the most wooded county in England (Surrey!). After securing QTS to teach about the wonders of the world outside while trapped inside a brick school box, I discovered the joy and importance of play through Forest School working for Surrey, and then Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts as a Forest School leader and Trainer. I led outdoor learning projects across varied schools, advising on biodiverse school grounds and how to help children and staff build better relationships with them.

I also work as an Ecotherapist at a primary school, sharing our natural world as part of their nurturing pastoral offer, I'm a school governor and love seeing how stronger relationships with nature can support both staff and children.



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