



RECRUITMENT INFORMATION



NRA

National Rivers Authority

Guardians of
the Water Environment

MISSION STATEMENT

We will protect and improve the water environment by the effective management of water resources and by substantial reductions in pollution. We will aim to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging our duties we will operate openly and balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, groundwaters, estuaries, and coastal waters. We will be business like, efficient and caring towards our employees.



National Rivers Authority
Information Centre
Head Office

Class No NRA Head Office

Accession No ANFN

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| The National Rivers Authority (NRA) | 4 |
| Flood Defence | 5 |
| Water Resources | 6 |
| Water Quality & Pollution Control | 7 |
| Fisheries, Recreation, Conservation & Navigation | 8 |
| The Business Support Services | |
| National Laboratory Services | 10 |
| Finance | 11 |
| Internal Audit | 11 |
| National Information Systems (NIS) | 12 |
| R&D | 12 |
| Legal Services | 13 |
| Corporate Planning | 13 |
| Public Affairs | 14 |
| Personnel | 14 |
| Training & Development | 15 |
| Equal Opportunities | 15 |
| NRA Regional office addresses and telephone numbers (inside back cover) | |



THE NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY (NRA)

The NRA was created in 1989 from the environmental functions of the ten former Regional Water Authorities. We are an independent environmental watchdog and our mission is to protect and improve the water environment. We do this in part by regulating the use of water by industry, agriculture and the private water and sewerage companies.

We operate throughout England and Wales via eight regions which are divided into 26 areas around the natural boundaries of river catchments.

We are responsible for water quality, water resources, flood defence, salmon and freshwater fisheries, conservation, navigation and recreation. We also protect people and property from river and sea floods.

Our duties cover inland waters throughout the whole of England and Wales. This includes rivers, lakes and canals (surface waters) as well as underground waters (groundwaters). Our water quality and fisheries responsibilities cover three and six miles respectively into coastal waters and we are also the competent Authority for some 20 EC Directives including those for bathing water and the quality of water to support freshwater and shellfish fisheries.

We are the navigation authority for over 800 km of river navigations. As you can imagine, this means we provide a huge range of services to a lot of different customers. We have no single point of contact with our customers, although about 60% of our staff (such as flood defence workers, bailiffs, pollution and navigation inspectors and our emergency work force) meet customers in their day to day work on the river bank.

Although we are accountable to Parliament through the Secretaries of State for the Environment and Wales and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, we have considerable managerial and financial autonomy. 75% of our funding comes from our own charging schemes and 25% from Government grants.



FLOOD DEFENCE

Over half of our total financial resources are allocated to protecting people and property from flooding. We are responsible for many thousands of kilometres of complex sea defences and river embankments. This involves constructing, maintaining and modifying them in response to changes in geography and climate. We also advise planning authorities and developers on flood risk and drainage issues. We are always acutely aware of the environmental impact of any project.

We do everything we can to prevent floods but, when they do occur, it is our job to react to the situation and liaise with other bodies to alert communities to the dangers, and offer them assistance. Engineers and hydrologists work closely together in such situations so they can predict and monitor areas at risk.

Working in the area of Flood Defence provides an opportunity to be involved in the delivery of a really worthwhile public service as well as address many stimulating engineering challenges. The skills of the flood defence teams combine in-depth technical understanding with the ability to communicate effectively at all levels.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *This area covers a range of jobs for technicians, engineers and project managers.*
- *Relevant qualifications include Higher National Diploma and Ordinary National Certificate, surveying or engineering-related courses or a degree in Civil Engineering.*



WATER RESOURCES

The demand for water is increasing all the time. This means the management and understanding of water resources is increasingly complex and important. Many people such as those working in water companies, agriculture and industry compete for this water so the NRA has to make sure that it's used fairly and wisely. NRA hydrologists and hydrogeologists are the ones who balance water supply needs against the protection of vulnerable rivers, streams and springs. Licences which allow people to abstract water are only issued when we can be sure that abstraction will not have a detrimental effect on the environment.



A great deal of our hydrologists' work is office based and consists of analysing field data; measuring factors such as river flows, groundwater levels, rainfall and evaporation; and compiling geological maps. It also involves mathematical modelling and the use of other hydrological methods to solve practical problems or to help gather information such as forecasting future water availability which will help us produce our water resource policies.

Hydrologists also help to protect and manage groundwater resources. This involves work in the field such as pumping and testing, geophysical logging and surveying springs.

Both hydrologists and hydrogeologists must have the ability to communicate their findings and concepts to technical and non-technical audiences.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

Opportunities in Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Hydrometric specialisms are open to graduates in Earth Sciences, Geography and Environmental Science or similar. Specific qualifications required vary between posts and regions.

WATER QUALITY & POLLUTION CONTROL

This is our most well-known area of work, so this function is very much in the public eye. Since we started in 1989 we have made good progress in improving water quality. There is still a great deal to do, of course. Our success in this area doesn't just depend on sharp technical ability, but on sound management skills.

The principle at the heart of our water quality work is to ensure that the polluter pays. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that many of the rivers and lakes of England and Wales are vital to the industrial economy. Our role is to regulate discharges into streams, lakes, rivers, groundwater and coastal waters so that they do not damage our aquatic environment. We decide what substances can be discharged in what quantities, and when and where it is safe to do so. The organisations which have been given consent are closely scrutinised and the effects of their discharges on the environment are carefully monitored. We are often involved in interpreting and applying UK and EC environmental legislation. Much of our work is preventative and involves educating and raising awareness.

The scientists working in this function perform a wide variety of roles from field work and laboratory analysis to dealing with the press, members of the public and policy-makers. This work covers taking samples from designated waters, identifying flora and fauna, collecting and analysing data, writing reports and presenting findings to a wide range of audiences.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *Technical Assistant/Assistant Pollution Control Officer - open to graduates with an Environmental Science degree.*
- *Pollution Control Officer - open to graduates with an Environmental Science degree. Some field experience is also desirable.*
- *Water Quality Planning (Catchment Management Planning) - open to graduates with an Environmental Science degree and practical field experience.*



FISHERIES, RECREATION, CONSERVATION & NAVIGATION



An important part of the NRA's work involves the conservation and protection of water wildlife habitats. Alongside this, we also try to provide good facilities for anglers, canoeists and all other river users. To this end these four functions work closely together to balance the recreational and other uses of the waterways with environmental protection and enhancement.

The work in the Fisheries function involves a mixture of laboratory and fieldwork. This covers activities such as monitoring fish populations and migratory patterns; carrying out detailed studies of fish diseases; taking part in fish rescues; rearing and stocking fishery programmes; liaising with river users and landowners; and helping to formulate new policies to prevent the depletion of fish stocks through pollution incidents.

The Fisheries function is also responsible for producing and marketing the national rod fishing licences which are bought by over 1.5 million people.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *A biological or environmental degree along with a general interest in natural history are standard requirements. As each region has different needs depending on the geography of their river catchments it is difficult to be more specific.*
- *Most regions have Fisheries Officers. These are graduates, often with a diploma from the Institute of Fisheries Management. These posts are suited to mature people with experience in managing people and conflict as a major part of the work involves enforcement - either licence or anti-poaching.*

The Recreation function works to promote the use of water and associated land for everyone to enjoy. The NRA owns or manages over 1200 sites which vary from the Thames Barrier to facilities for angling, sailing, boating, walking, cycling, horse riding and water-related activities. In order to balance the recreational use of rivers with a concern for the environment, those who work in Recreation are responsible for developing regional recreation strategies and site management plans. In doing so they will be involved in collaboration with many external organisations.

The Conservation team is involved in a very diverse range of work which spans the whole of the NRA's activities. This involves carrying out river surveys, liaising with wildlife and environmental organisations and working with school groups. Members of this function are often called into other areas of the NRA to assist colleagues to assess the environmental aspects of their work. Examples of this are looking at flood defence schemes and their effect on the environment or assessing the situation before granting new discharge consents or abstraction licences.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *Recreation, Conservation and Navigation posts, these are often combined into one job, although some regions have specific conservation posts. The appropriate degree background would be necessary, together with experience in dealing with associated organisations such as the Sports Council, Local Authorities etc.*

Navigation staff are responsible for managing over 800 km of river navigations. Their aim is to improve and maintain these rivers and all their facilities for use by the public. This involves the construction of locks, providing facilities such as moorings, enforcing byelaws and ensuring registration and licensing conditions are adhered to.

A lot of the work in Navigation involves collaborating with other inland navigation authorities such as British Waterways and the Broads Authority. A number of joint initiatives have been successfully developed.



THE BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

These are the corporate functions which form the infrastructure for all of our other activities...

NATIONAL LABORATORY SERVICES

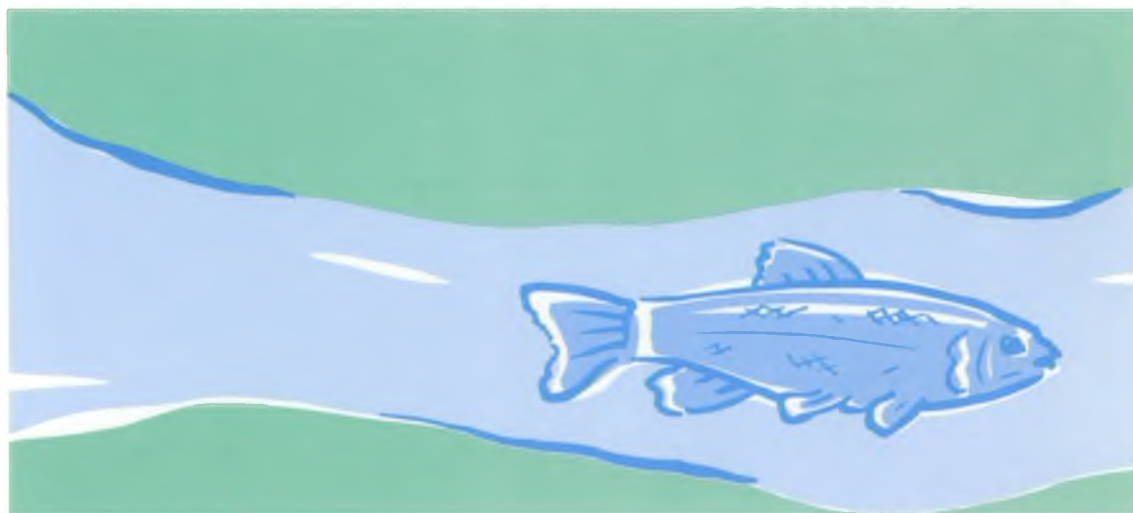
Analytical information is essential if we are to protect and improve the water environment.

Each of our laboratories is equipped with the latest analytical systems to ensure our chemists can maintain a high throughput of samples and meet the very highest standards of laboratory practice. These facilities are now available to other public bodies, organisations, companies and individuals.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

Posts range from:

- *Technical Assistant - open to people with HNCs & HNDs.*
- *Senior Scientist and Laboratory Manager. These more senior posts are held by graduates with four or five years' experience in a related field.*



Our laboratory work includes organic and inorganic chemistry, metals analysis and microbiology. The services we offer include contract analysis, sampling, interpretation and advice. Our automated systems of analysis and robotics ensure both the quality and cost-effectiveness of our procedures.

The work which goes on in our laboratories is part of our national pollution monitoring system. This means the data we produce could be used to prosecute a polluter; set a European standard; or identify a water quality problem that needs urgent attention. The laboratory service also provides on the spot analytical support in the case of pollution incidents.

FINANCE

The Finance function controls the flow of money in and out of the system. What surprises most people is the fact that less than 30% of our income comes from the government. Most of it is generated through discharge and abstraction licences and other charges. It's vital that we know what everything is costing; that work which is contracted out is keenly priced; and that we get value for money without compromising quality. Management accountants advise managers on all of these aspects.



INTERNAL AUDIT

The NRA's Internal Audit function makes sure that all internal control systems operate effectively and that the NRA always delivers value for money. The team produces a range of reports covering aspects such as budgetary control, market testing, procurement, hydrometry and telemetry. This area of work provides an excellent opportunity to overview the business operations throughout the organisation and understand how the various functions operate in collaboration with each other.

TYPICAL JOBS /QUALIFICATIONS

- *Many of those who work in the financial and audit areas of the NRA have a degree in Business Studies or a subject with some accountancy content. However, there are also several people with degrees in a wide range of disciplines who have done well in these areas. Although evidence of numeracy is obviously vital, other qualities such as maturity, innovative thinking, tenacity, flexibility and good communication skills are all equally important.*

NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS (NIS)

This is an area which has had substantial and continued investment over the past few years as the IS projects throughout the NRA must fully support the organisation's business priorities. The team designs and supports both scientific and business interests throughout the organisation. The vast scope and variety of the NRA's work means there is an enormous range of technical and other challenges to be met in this area. Recent projects which the IS team is tackling include planning applications; electronic mail; National IS systems for flood defence management; pollution and fisheries incident reporting and prosecution; and the presentation and analysis of environmental data through geographical information systems (GIS).

Much of the work is, of course, innovative and unique, so it is particularly appealing to those who have an aptitude for planning and problem solving...and a great deal of patience.

R&D

The R & D programme involves the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the NRA. It makes sure the organisation's policies and day to day operations are based on a sound scientific and technical assessment of the issues.

With more and more environmental issues coming to the fore, the NRA is obviously under continuing pressure to carry out more work. The R&D team has to carry out the research needed to plan this work. This involves a strategic balancing act between dealing with new and complex issues in an effective way whilst demonstrating value for money. Developing ways of dealing with environmental issues happens in three ways: developing new technology solely for the NRA; carrying out further development of existing technology; and by making approaches to other organisations for collaboration and partnerships.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Graduates in Computer Science, Computer Studies or any other disciplines which contain a large proportion of computing form the bulk of the NIS team. They also need to be able to combine creative thinking with practical outputs.



TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Head Office has a small team of R&D co-ordinators - all with an NRA operational background. In the regions, staff are seconded to manage an R&D project which would be related to their current role.

LEGAL SERVICES

Our 'polluter pays' principle means that our Legal Services are kept very busy enforcing prosecutions on polluters. The success rate for such prosecutions is over 90% which is an indication that our rigorous pollution policies are beginning to bear fruit.

The legal team also have an input into training throughout the NRA, particularly with multi-functional enforcement teams. They also made a major contribution to setting up the contract with the Post Office for selling rod fishing licences. Recovering outstanding debt and providing evidence in respect of legal and governmental papers are also part of their remit.

CORPORATE PLANNING

The work within Corporate Planning is extremely varied and takes a wide perspective of the organisation's activities and direction. The Corporate Planning team is responsible for producing the Corporate Strategy as well as individual strategies for each of our seven core functions and R&D. These documents are distributed internally as well as to various external bodies who take an interest in our work. The aim of the strategy documents is to explain the NRA's approach to an integrated management of the water environment and, of course, provide a statement of direction for our employees.

Issues such as the review of performance measurement criteria and a new quarterly performance reporting process was introduced into the organisation by the Corporate Planning team. They also developed and implemented a new corporate planning management system.

Giving advice to various agencies is also part of the Corporate Planning team's work.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *These range from Legal Assistant to Regional Solicitor.*
- *Legal Assistants need experience of collating and presenting evidence.*
- *Solicitors require full legal qualifications with a Practising Law Certificate. Those with considerable experience in environmental issues would be eligible for senior posts.*
- *Ability to deal with complex scientific data and confidence in breaking new ground both in court and the boardroom are also valuable.*



TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *Corporate planners need to be highly qualified, capable of handling data, good at report writing and excellent communicators. A background and experience in business planning is a distinct advantage as well as having worked within the NRA in another field.*

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Our Public Affairs function is responsible for communicating with the media, government, interest groups and the general public. This is achieved through both head office and regions who liaise with the media, opinion formers, schools and the general public. Public Affairs produces the NRA's communication materials including reports, brochures and information leaflets. The function works nationally and locally organising exhibitions and co-ordinating specific campaigns.

It liaises with government and statutory bodies on consultations and provides briefing for parliamentary purposes.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *Include press and publication officers.*
- *Qualifications usually degree level, plus experience in a marketing specialism such as print, design or journalism.*



TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *Personnel Manager - a degree or equivalent and a minimum of 5 years' experience in Employee Relations at a senior level.*
- *Personnel Officer - a degree or equivalent. Minimum of 3 years' experience in general personnel work.*
- *Personnel Assistant - Computer literacy and 2 years' experience in an administrative role required. A postgraduate personnel qualification is desirable for all these posts.*

PERSONNEL

The Personnel department has developed new areas of policy and activity to respond to the current and planned changes within the Authority with a view to retaining flexibility and making the best use of our staff. To this end, there has been a lot of development of national employment policies in the areas of relocation and secondment to offer maximum career development prospects. Anyone working in this field will be responsible for the NRA's people: their recruitment; health and safety; training and development; and reward.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The National Training Scheme (NTS) is responsible for designing, implementing and managing training programmes which reflect national and regional priorities.

Courses include management development: both short skill based and distance learning as well as a large number of professional and technical courses which support the implementation of new policies and encourage the adoption of best practice for core functions and support services.

Training officers work with representatives from the functions when designing the programmes and encourage line managers to take part in delivering the courses. This keeps ownership of the training within the organisation as well as making sure the training covers real NRA issues.

TYPICAL JOBS/QUALIFICATIONS

- *Training Manager - degree or equivalent + IPD. Minimum of 5 years' experience in the design and delivery of courses.*
- *Training Officer - degree or equivalent + IPD. 3 years' experience in managing training providers.*
- *Training Administrator - good general education. Computer literate in Wordperfect, Freelance, Supercalc. 2 years' experience in administrative role.*
A postgraduate personnel qualification is desirable for all posts.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The NRA is committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of its employment practices.

NRA VACANCIES

Junior vacancies are advertised on a local basis. Any senior positions will be advertised in the national newspapers and scientific publications.

Adverts will specify if a certain degree or qualification is necessary.



