

The (UK) River Restoration Centre

The River Restoration Centre (RRC) is the UK's 'expert information and advice' centre for all aspects of best-practice river restoration and catchment management. Originally founded in 1994 as the River Restoration Project (RRP) by members drawn from the UK public, private and NGO sectors, RRC has been actively raising the profile of river restoration since 1997.

RRC is a membership organisation. Our members help fund our ongoing work and include government agencies, consultants, contractors and local partnerships, as well as interested individuals. We regularly review our activities to ensure that they meet members' needs. Only then can information be efficiently collected, assimilated and disseminated to support future delivery, research and policy.

Our stated purpose is: to actively promote the re-establishment of natural processes, features, habitats and biodiversity of a river system, to support others to achieve this by collating knowledge, information and evidence to share best practice throughout the river and catchment management community.

RRC's activities are set around three core areas:

- **Evidence, innovation and cost-effectiveness**
- **Expert technical advice & evaluation**
- **Dissemination, events, guidance and training**

We manage a unique evidence base of river restoration and management information, with data collected from over 4,800 specific cases in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This collated information (the NRRI), together with a wealth of in-house expertise and knowledge, enables us to provide a focal point for expert technical advice and evaluation, dissemination, events, guidance and training.

With the significant costs associated with river restoration, it is important to give funders and managers confidence in the cost effectiveness of river restoration. To help with this, RRC collates information to ensure that all available science, best practice and evidence are used in the planning of cost-effective river restoration and catchment management.

RRC has provided independent technical advice and evaluation for over 20 years. Our ambition is to ensure that



all new river restoration projects reach their full potential and deliver multiple benefits. We advise river managers, local delivery staff and policy makers together with their consultants and contractors to better, and more confidently, define and deliver local programmes and interventions for restoration or management of rivers and watercourses.

Through our established contacts we have a highly regarded role as an independent and impartial expert voice between uncertain and sometimes conflicting groups. Having both practical and scientific competence means that we can help build stronger links between research and on-the-ground application to restore and manage rivers, watercourses, and their associated floodplains. We can also apply our practical experience proactively to develop research ideas in response to the observed need in order to deliver river-related environmental improvements.

We have developed comprehensive river-related expertise through our work on over 320 restoration projects, and the experience of our staff and associated advisers.

The final core area of RRC's work is around dissemination, events, guidance and training. We provide the statutory agencies, NGOs, managers and supporting practitioners access to a wealth of guidance, training and on-site demonstrations



Sharing good practice in Scotland at Rottal Burn restoration project

of best practice, innovation, evidence and experience. We help to develop their capacity to deliver effective restoration and management of rivers and watercourses.

Our largest event is our Annual Network Conference which attracts over 300 river restoration practitioners. The two day event is a chance for people to present their work, learn from each other and gain new contacts. Alongside this, since 2014, we also run the UK River Prize which is held on the first

Cheriton Stream, a tributary of the river Itchen. Location for a restoration project



night of the Conference. This celebrates best practice in river restoration and catchment management, and awards those that have worked hard to improve their river.

We also build on a collective commitment from our members to exchange experiences, information and data which enables us to carry out our UK dissemination role and to make sure that our outputs meet the needs of our members. In this role we can efficiently collect, assimilate and disseminate evidence to support future delivery. Our monthly Bulletin summaries this information for our contacts, of which there are 3,000.

RRC will continue to support its network of strategic partners, members and associates to meet the challenges and needs of the coming years.

For more information www.thrrc.co.uk



The RRC conference attracts 300 delegates annually.

Conservation and restoration of European rivers: the role of the Wetlands International – European Association

About the Wetlands International – European Association

Wetlands International – European Association is part of the global Wetlands International network, the only global not-for-profit network organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands such as lakes, marshes and rivers. Wetlands International works through its network of offices, partners and experts to achieve its goals. We have eighteen offices around the world, working independently but sharing the same Global Strategy.

Wetlands International – European Association was founded in 2013 and brings together 8 European NGOs working together to raise awareness about wetland ecosystems and to advocate the sustainable use of wetlands for people and nature, in particular by linking science, policy and practice. Current NGO members include the Iberian Centre for River Restoration, the Italian Centre for River Restoration, EuroNatur, the Centre for Wetland Conservation (Cmok, Poland), the Tour du Valat, the Sustainable Eel Group, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, and the Zoological Society of London.



Our overall goal is to improve the conservation and restoration of rivers across Europe

Focus in Europe for a global impact

Wetlands International – European Association focuses on the development and implementation of EU policy, and on its effects and impacts on global wetlands. We use the expertise of our members and our global network to inform EU policy- and decision-makers, and we in turn inform our members and global partners on the implications for them of EU policy developments. In recognition of our contribution to EU environment policy the European Association has been awarded operational grants from the European Commission to support its activities.

Conservation and restoration of European rivers

Our overall goal in relation to European rivers, is to improve the conservation of wild rivers and the restoration of degraded ones across Europe, both as a means to enhance biodiversity and mitigate water-related hazards such as floods and droughts.

While it may be assumed that wetlands are well covered by existing EU legislation, their cross-cutting nature means they are sometimes overlooked. For instance, the Water Framework Directive includes rivers and water bodies that can be counted as wetlands, but functionally linked ecosystems such as floodplains, peatlands and swamp marshes are often not so strongly addressed as would be desirable. Therefore, we place great emphasis on the adoption and implementation of river restoration measures and Natural Water Retention Measures at river basin scale (including estuaries) to maintain and restore wetland ecosystems.

We engage in a joint lobby with our members at EU level using key EU legislation such as the Water Framework Directive, Flood Risk Management Directive, Habitats Directive, and the Eel Regulation to build support to conserve free flowing rivers and unblock barriers to species migration. This area of work spans three governance levels: European, national and basin-level. Using specific cases such as the Sava, the Rhine, the Vistula and the Douro, we use our knowledge on the situation on the ground to influence the EU and national level, e.g. by pinpointing instances when EU legislation is being breached.

