

Finnish river restoration centre and watercourse restoration network



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In Finland river restoration has been promoted mainly by the state organization consisting of Finnish Environment Institute SYKE, the regional environment authorities and the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. SYKE serves as the Finnish River Restoration Center. SYKE publishes guidelines, organizes seminars and congresses and keeps up the information system of water construction projects, including restoration cases.

The reason why the knowledge of river restoration was developed in the state organization was the need of restoring thousands of kilometers of rivers and brooks where logs had been floated until 1980's. The regional environment authorities got the responsibility of removing dangerous structures and placing stones back into rivers. In many rivers the restoration was renewed by restoring side arms and spreading out rivers to gain more good habitats mainly for salmonid fish. Some of these additional works are still ongoing in Lapland.

After 2000 the volume of restorations was decreasing and new interests were rising, like restoring brooks in urban and agricultural areas. Volunteer associations began to restore

brooks especially for trouts. Municipalities and regional associations for water protection began to employ designated river keepers to lead restoration works. Thus a part of the responsibility of river restoration has been shifted for local organizations, but regional environment authorities still accomplish restoration cases which need change of permits, like removal or modification of dams for fish migration.

To spread out information of river restoration for publicity, an idea of establishing an open network for river restoration was rising around 2010. The Finnish Watercourse Restoration Network was founded in 2013, with the initiative of the EU Life-project RESTORE. As lakes are important in Finland, the network also contains lake protection associations and water area owners. The network is hosted by SYKE and it gets funding from the Ministry of Environment. The network organizes a yearly restoration congress with special days for rivers and lakes and one day for sightseeing. As the events are organized every year in different locations, participants can get acquainted with activities in all parts of country. The network has proved to be essential in promoting interest for river and lake restoration on local level

