2016 UK River Prize & Nigel Holmes Trophy Finalist

River Wandle

Urban project

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The South East Rivers Trust (SERT), formerly the Wandle Trust (WT), grew from a group of residents concerned for the state of their local river and was established as a charity in 2000-2002.

The Wandle (Carshalton) waterbody was overwide, disconnected and impounded by five weirs. Over-shaded, contaminated with urban runoff, it had little habitat variation, limited fish populations and failed its Water Framework Directive (WFD) target of 'Good Ecological Potential' (GEP).

The overall aims of the River Wandle (Carshalton Arm) Rehabilitation Project were to rehabilitate the river and increase its resilience to future pressures, move the waterbody towards GEP under the WFD, and establish a recruiting brown trout population for the first time in over 80 years.

This project is an excellent example of what is possible in an urban environment and has resulted in the attainment of GEP. Through a number of mechanisms the project has improved water, sediment and habitat quality, resulting in a diverse and functioning headwater with successful trout recruitment.

The long-term vision is now to maintain and enhance this status, ensuring no deterioration and a self-sustaining population of brown trout. Two further long-term aspirations are to extend the work downstream to connect the river to the Croydon to Wandsworth Arm of the Wandle and to install groundwater augmentation to help avoid any future extreme low flows and restore the more natural temperature regime.

South East Rivers Trust (2016)