



Restoring Europe's Rivers

RESTORE Events: Reporting

River Restoration Training Course and Restoration Centre Staff Knowledge Exchange

DATE

25th and 26th June 2013

LOCATION

Hotel Van Der Valk, De Bilt, Utrecht, the Netherlands

AUDIENCE

Project managers, designers and a range of other river restoration practitioners

LIFE 09INF/UK/000032

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and works in partnership with



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Event details

The course aimed to focus on the importance of understanding natural river processes when designing river restoration projects for ecological and habitat benefits. This included identifying how to set measurable project objectives that can then be monitored to demonstrate the level of success of the project. This training course was also part of the staff exchange exercise within the RESTORE project. As a project we felt it would be more beneficial to invite a number of staff exchange persons to join a RESTORE event and spend time during that period to share knowledge and explain how the centres operate. The best option was to invite staff from some of the network centres around the RESTORE regions to this Western Region's training event. This would allow us to build technical expertise, discuss operational strategies with start-up centres and combine the results from 2.5 years of the RESTORE project. The staff knowledge exchange at this training course was the most cost effective way of giving more people an opportunity to network and learn from each other's experiences.

The two day event combined a mix of 'classroom' based activities and site visits. Guest speakers included Miloslav Šindlar from the Czech River Restoration Centre, Michelle Berg from the Dommel and Alain De Vocht from Hasselt University. They provided attendees with a range of case studies to illustrate many of the key topics of the course. The presentations were followed by activities carried out in small groups to encourage in depth discussion and sharing best practice. The course material was based on the presentations given, together with the RRC [Manual of River Restoration Techniques](#), the [Practical Guidance on Monitoring](#) and the [RiverWiki](#). The Manual of River Restoration Techniques is in the process of being updated and will be launched this autumn.

The location on the outskirts of Utrecht offered excellent transport links via Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and many site visit opportunities on the Lower Rhine.

Agenda day 1- 25th June:

- [Introduction](#) (Martin Janes, RRC)
- [River processes in river restoration](#); the elements of geomorphology and hydrology/hydraulics necessary for understanding river restoration (Jenny Mant, RRC)
- [Restoration ecology](#); linking content of the previous session to functional habitats and ecology (Martin Janes, RRC)
- Workshop sessions; discussion around [presentation](#) given by Miloslav Šindlar (Czech River Restoration Centre)

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- Site visit to example of best practice habitat management project on the Waal (lower Rhine branch) lead by Bart Peters (Beaurea Drift) - [presentation](#)

Agenda day 2- 26th June:

- [Introduction to setting project objectives](#) (Martin Janes, RRC)
- [An example of river restoration design](#) (Michelle Berg, Dommel)
- [Delivering project aims through evaluation](#) (Jenny Mant, RRC)
- [Example of ecological successes in river restoration](#) (Alain De Vocht, Hasselt University)
- Site visit to best practice habitat management project at Lusterse Beek near the village of Renswoude led by Christian Huising (Waterboard Vallei en Veluwe). An exercise was carried out on site in small groups to encourage participants to explore ways of monitoring this type of project.

Key issues/background

Across Europe, there is a very limited provision of courses on how to undertake best practice in river restoration and sustainable river management, including input from river restoration experts who are leading the way in terms of research and on-the-ground project implementation. The training element was therefore extremely useful, especially to participants with limited knowledge. The course was filled up almost immediately, which also clearly demonstrate the need for river restoration training courses.

Course content specifically relating to guidance on monitoring of projects, including how to set SMART monitoring objectives, linking to the delivery of WFD is especially useful for practitioners and managers. This was delivered alongside more technically focused sessions, as well as an introduction to ecology and understanding the principles of geomorphology specifically related to river restoration.

Some of the issues faced by practitioners undertaking river restoration across Europe are similar – and there are currently few opportunities to share experiences. Therefore, the overall aims were:

- To provide technical training on how to undertake river restoration in terms of understanding geomorphological, hydrological and ecological processes.
- Provide a forum for discussion and sharing best practice in river restoration
- Showcase some of the tools and resources being developed though RESTORE (RiverWiki).
- Exchange information on river restoration centres and how different organisations implement river restoration.

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This course provided a forum for staff knowledge exchange between the different river restoration originations within the RESTORE partnership. Attendees from this network included:

- The Russian Institute for Water Management
- Finnish Environmental Institute (SYKE)
- Czech River Coalition
- Wetlands International
- Restoration Network of Norway
- River Restoration Centre, UK

Key outcomes, messages and lessons learned

Participants were asked to complete an electronic feedback form which was returned by email. A summary of feedback can be seen in Appendix 2. Overall this feedback was very positive. Specifically, the participants appreciated:

- The opportunity to network with river restoration professionals from across Europe.
- To share experiences, this was highlighted as a significant benefit of attending the course.
- The group exercises and tasks undertaken in the classroom and on site.
- The field site visits, which provided an opportunity to see projects undertaken in the Netherlands.

A list of attendees with contact email addresses has been sent out to aid continued exchange of information between contacts. The course also provided an opportunity to remind and encourage people to upload their projects to the RiverWiki.

The course material (based on the [Manual of River Restoration Techniques](#)), the monitoring guidance document [PRAGMO](#) and the [RiverWiki](#) were well received. However, due to the wide range of experience among the participants it was difficult to pitch the event at the right level for everyone. Another constraint was the short time available to run the course.

If we were to do a river restoration training course again we should:

- Be more aware of the range of participants and their pre-knowledge, to make sure we provide training tailored to the needs of the participants.
- Try to not cover too much ground in a short time space, but split session as have been done by the River Restoration Centre's courses in the UK.

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Attendance

The event was attended by 33 people on the 25th and 30 people on the 26th June. See appendix 1 for further details.

Disseminate event outcomes

Power point presentations and a list of attendees with contact details have been disseminated to all attendees of the event. This will allow for networking opportunities to continue. Course materials (power point presentations and links) have been added to the [RESTORE](#) and RRC websites and will be freely available to view. An article on the event has also been featured in the [ECRR newsletter](#) and the August [RRC bulletin](#).

Follow up

This training course provided a forum for staff from river restoration centres across Europe to exchange knowledge and experiences. Discussions were held between the centres on the possibilities to give similar training courses in their respective countries. It was recognised that it is of major importance to continue the relations built up between these centres through the RESTORE project. RESTORE has provided a mechanism for converging organisations working with river restoration across Europe. The conference in Vienna 11-13 of September will provide a final opportunity for the organisations involved in RESTORE to discuss how to progress with the collaboration and information sharing between the countries subject to e.g. the Water Framework Directive and other common regulations influencing the management of freshwater.

RESTORE together with ECRR will:

- Use the networking event the evening before the Vienna conference to talk with the other river restoration groups and identify ways to continue this collaboration.
- Use the Vienna conference to identify the need of future training courses.

As a result of this course, RESTORE/RRC has also been invited to Norway to an event to disseminate information on river restoration and how to set up and manage a national river restoration centre.

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Appendix 1. List of attendees

Name	Organisation
Alain De Vocht	Centre for Environmental Science at Hasselt University
Alizia Kamani	Wetlands International
Anne Lewis	Natural Resources Wales
Bart Peters	Bureau Drift
Charles Perfect	Centre for River EcoSystem Science
Chris Baker	Wetlands International
Christian Huising	Waterboard Vallei en Veluwe
Clara Chrzanowski	Deltares
Eleanor Hall	HR Wallingford
Elena Butakova	Russian Institute for Water Management
Elinor Phillips	Jacobs
Gry Walle	Restoration Network of Norway
Iwan de Vries	Waterschap Velt en Vecht
Julia Danylenko	National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine
Leif Roger Karlsen	Norway Environmental Authority
Liisa Hämäläinen	Finnish Environmental Institute
Marcel Clewits	Clewits Advies
Marcel Cox	Waterschap aa en Maas
Marjan Sommeijer	Waterschap Rijn en IJssel
Martin Krejza	Czech River Restoration Centre
Michelle Berg	Waterboard de Dommel
Miloslav Sindlar	Czech River Restoration Centre
Paul Brotherton	Wetlands International
Raf Baeyens	Aquatich Management
Romeo Neuteboom Spijker	Waterschap Vallei en Veluwe
Roy Laseroms	LWRO
Sarah Smith	North West Kent Countryside Partnership
Ton Geensen	DLG Government Service for Land and Water Management
Vera Coehlo	Wetlands International
Wim Zeeman	DLG Government Service for Land and Water Management
Yaron Hershkovitz	Universität Duisburg-Essen
Alizia Kamani	Wetlands International
Chris Baker	Wetlands International
Paul Brotherton	Wetlands International
Vera Coehlo	Wetlands International
Martin Janes	RRC
Jenny Mant	RRC
Vicky West	RRC
Ulrika Aberg	RRC

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Appendix 2. Summary of feedback

Key: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent

Participant		Tuesday course elements					Wednesday course elements					Overall
		processes	ecology	linking	workshop	site visit	design	monitoring	workshop	ecological	site visit	
1	content presentation	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	c p	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3
		3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	2	3
3	c p	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	c p	3	3	3	1	3	4	4	2	4	4	3
		4	3	3	1	3	4	3	3	3	4	3
5	c p	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4
6	c p	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4
		4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	2	4
7	c p	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
8	c p	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
		3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
9	c p	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
		3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3
10	c p	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	2	4	3	3
		4	4	4	1	3	3	4	2	4	3	3
11	c p	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
		4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
12	c p	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
13	c p	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
		3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3

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Appendix 3. Photos



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