



ARUP south east water

Press release

30th April 2019

New Forest Wetlands restoration scheme wins prestigious 2019 UK River Prize

This year's winning entry for the prestigious 2019 UK River Prize, which recognises and celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations committed to improving our rivers and catchments, is 'New Forest Wetlands'. This is a ten year Higher Level Stewardship Scheme set up as a partnership between the Verderers of the New Forest, Forestry England and the New Forest National Park Authority. The announcement was made at the annual UK River Prize Awards Dinner, hosted by The River Restoration Centre on 30th April at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel, in Liverpool.

The UK River Prize is hosted and administered by the River Restoration Centre, partnered by Arup, South East Water, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Natural Resources Wales.

This year's impressive level of entries were judged by a panel of industry experts, including Martin Janes (The River Restoration Centre), Oliver Lowe (Natural Resources Wales), Pam Nolan (Environment Agency), Ann Skinner (Independent) and Christopher Spray (University of Dundee).

After much deliberation, the overall winner was announced as the 'New Forest Wetlands' partnership project in Hampshire for its restoration of 60 stream and mire Sites of Special Scientific Interest, across the New Forest area. Fiona Bowles (The River Restoration Centre Chairman) presented Forestry England and project partners with the Nigel Holmes Trophy – named after a hugely influential and passionate river restoration and conservation advocate.

Commenting on the winners' achievement, Martin Janes, Managing Director of The River Restoration Centre said: "It was impossible to ignore the huge amount of work that this partnership has undertaken over the past nine years leading to the improvement and protection of rare wetland habitat. It was great to see the wide focus on 'wetlands', incorporating the stream network, their floodplains and the internationally important mires from which they spring. The restoration is contributing to slowing the flow of water by storing it for longer to reduce flood peaks as well as helping manage drought periods.

Visually, the finished work demonstrates incredible attention to detail, often restoring the stream component to its old course and floodplain with remarkably few visible scars to the landscape, as if it had been there for centuries.

The comprehensive partnership involves a range of agencies, the park authority and the Verderers who manage the grazing, as well as a strong local consultative group, and working with local communities to explain what is being done.”

About the ‘New Forest Wetlands’ winning entry



Fletchers Thorns (left) and Soldiers Bog (right) restoration sites.

The New Forest HLS agreement is worth £19 million over ten years from 2010-2020 with a minimum of £750,000 available for wetland restoration per year. So far the New Forest HLS has delivered 59 projects, totalling 29km of restoration to the New Forest watercourses that had previously been deepened or realigned. The restoration of the mires and streams has reduced damaging erosion of the mires, bed incision and lateral erosion, and has increased floodplain connection, resilience during times of drought, and flood peak reduction.

Many streams in the area are failing current standards for inputs of sediment and phosphate and poor fish habitat; and their ecology suffers from being heavily modified through centuries of use. The project uses a holistic catchment approach, providing advice on soil and land use management in order to reduce sediment runoff to the rivers, and improve infiltration and hydrological processes to reduce flooding and improve drought resilience.

‘New Forest Wetlands’ main project partners



Quotes from the 2019 UK River Prize sponsorship partners:

“Arup is once again delighted to partner The UK River Prize in 2019. We work across the whole water cycle joining up ideas and thinking, working with partners and clients to seek best practice, innovation and pragmatic thinking, and we fully support the recognition that this prestigious award provides. We are looking forward to meeting this year’s finalists who we are sure will continue to raise the bar of the UK River Prize.”

Mark Fletcher, Global Water Leader, Arup

“We are delighted to be partnering and supporting this prestigious national award for a second consecutive year. This year’s impressive level of entries for the 2019 UK River Prize again reflects our ambition of restoring, maintaining and improving our rivers, catchments and the natural environment. South East Water is fully committed to supporting excellence and best practice in water management, which has clearly been demonstrated through the projects submitted by this year’s innovative and creative finalists.”

Simon Lohrey, NEP Surface Water Catchment Management Lead, South East Water

Notes to editors

This year’s UK River Prize category winners – making up the four finalists:

Finalist	Recognised for	Lead applicant
River Bulbourne <i>Hertfordshire</i>	Urban Communities Project	Environment Agency
River Nairn <i>Scottish Highlands</i>	Restoring Natural Processes	Aberarder Estate
New Forest Wetlands <i>Hampshire</i>	Catchment-Scale Project	Forestry England
River Otter <i>Devon</i>	Innovative Approach	Devon Wildlife Trust

The River Restoration Centre Ltd

The River Restoration Centre is the UK's independent expert centre for information and advice on best practice river management. We champion the natural and social benefits of restoring our rivers for a sustainable future. Healthy rivers and catchments provide enjoyment and well-being for people, support native wildlife, are more adaptable to climate change and bring economic benefits for a modern society.

Short videos have been submitted by the winner and finalists. These are available to view on The River Restoration Centre's website. Further information on the finalists is available at www.therrc.co.uk/uk-river-prize

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Further information is available at <http://www.theRRC.co.uk/uk-river-prize>



Supporting Partners



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