



ARUP



Press release

9th September 2020

Test and Itchen wins 2020 Catchment Scale UK River Prize

Allt Lorgy wins 2020 Site Scale UK River Prize

This year's winning entries for the prestigious 2020 UK River Prize, which recognises and celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations committed to improving our rivers, are the 'Test and Itchen' for the Catchment Scale award, and the 'Allt Lorgy' for the Site Scale Award. The announcement was made at the annual UK River Prize Awards Ceremony which was held online on the 9th September 2020.

The UK River Prize is hosted and administered by the River Restoration Centre, partnered by Arup 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), Roger Owen, Oliver Lowe (Natural Resources Wales), Pam Nolan (Environment Agency) and Ann Skinner (Independent).

After much deliberation, the overall winner of the Catchment-scale award was announced as the 'Rivers Test & Itchen' project in Hampshire. The newly created reach-scale award winner was also announced as the 'Allt Lorgy' project in the Scottish Highlands. Martin Janes (River Restoration Centre Managing Director) virtually presented both projects with their awards, at an online awards celebration. The Test & Itchen project was awarded the Nigel Holmes Trophy – named after a hugely influential and passionate river restoration and conservation advocate. The Allt Lorgy project was also presented with the newly created reach-scale award.

About the 'Rivers Test & Itchen' winning entry



The Test and Itchen River Restoration Strategy is a long-term project being carried out on these two world-renowned SSSI chalk streams in Hampshire. However, both the SSSI's are in unfavourable condition from historical modifications to the physical structure of the channel, the banks and the riparian zone. The aim of the T&I Strategy is to appraise the geomorphological condition of the rivers, identifying the condition of the rivers in relation to their 'natural benchmark' and then to restore the SSSIs and bring them into favourable condition.

The focus of all restoration projects within the T&I Strategy is to ensure the condition of the habitat rather than the preservation of the species directly, with the principle being that good chalk stream habitat is more likely to support characteristic flora and fauna. Although the Strategy is primarily aimed at in-river characteristics, it's also recognised that land management adjacent to the rivers has the potential to affect the quality of the in-river habitat and has been given due consideration to this throughout the project. To date the strategy has used 20,000 tonnes of gravel to carry out bed raising on both rivers at various locations - reversing the legacy of dredging. Slow flowing sections with no chalk stream characteristics have been transformed with increased velocities, better *Ranunculus* (water crowfoot) growth, improved invertebrate communities and spawning of salmonid fish. The evidence of how successful these improvements have been, is seen from surveys by Southampton University.

The T&I Strategy was first initiated in 2010, with the main work starting in 2012, and it will need to continue over the next 20-30 years.

About the 'Allt Lorgy' winning entry



The Allt Lorgy is a typical upland spate burn that, in the late 1980s, was significantly managed for agricultural purposes (e.g. artificial embankments, rock bank revetments and in-channel boulder grade control).

The project is based on restoring the morphology and associated habitats of a 1km section of river and its adjoining floodplain. It has re-established the fundamental physical processes that drive the evolution of the river's form and the associated benefits for instream, riparian and floodplain ecology. Rather than designing a specific channel configuration, the approach aimed to kick start natural processes such that the river re-establishes a natural equilibrium state with increased physical diversity and improved channel floodplain connection.

This involved the removal of artificial constraints (associated with past engineering works) that had simplified the watercourse to a straightened single thread form. Over 250m length of artificial embankments were removed, liberating >900m³ of material. In stream boulders were replaced with large wood structures. Additional wood structures were introduced at key locations and some of the embankment extracted gravel was used for 'gravel augmentation'.

This work has now resulted in a self-sustaining system; enhanced lateral channel migration has begun the natural recruitment of riparian trees into the watercourse which further invigorates the dynamic change. Seven years later and after a number of high flow events, significant evolution of the site has occurred. In effect, the 'circle of restoration' has been closed, providing a sustainably evolving river environment. The majority of the funding was provided by the Water Environment Fund (SEPA) and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA).

Quote from one of the 2020 UK River Prize sponsorship partners:

“Arup is once again delighted to partner The UK River Prize in 2020. We work across the whole water cycle joining up ideas and thinking, working with partners and clients to seek best practice in sustainability and innovation and we fully support the recognition that this prestigious award provides. We are looking forward to meeting this year’s finalists, virtually or face to face, who we are sure will continue to raise the bar of the UK River Prize.”

Mark Fletcher, Global Water Leader, Arup

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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