



Partners

ATKINS

Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

ARUP

Press release - 28th June 2022

The prestigious UK River Prize recognises and celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations committed to restoring our rivers.

2022 UK River Prize winners

River Ribble wins
Catchment-scale
Award

Swindale Beck wins
Project-scale
Award

This year's two winners are the 'Ribble Life Together' for the catchment-scale award receiving the Nigel Holmes Trophy, led by the [Ribble Rivers Trust](#); and 'Swindale Valley Restoration Project' for the project-scale award receiving the RRC Trophy, led by [RSPB Haweswater](#).

The announcement was made at the annual UK River Prize Awards Ceremony which was held at Chesford Grange, Warwickshire on 28th June 2022. The UK River Prize is hosted and awarded by the River Restoration Centre (RRC) at the annual River Restoration Network Conference. The Award Partners are RRC, Arup, Atkins and Natural Resources Wales.

This year's impressive entries were judged by a panel of industry experts, including Martin Janes (The River Restoration Centre), Pam Nolan (Environment Agency), Ann Skinner (Independent) and Roger Owen (Independent).

After much deliberation, the two winners were announced, the catchment-scale award and the project-scale award, to reflect the different scales at which river restoration is delivered. The River Ribble - 'Ribble Life Together' picked up the catchment-scale award for its river improvement and habitat creation work covering a 575 square mile area, including the Ribble itself and three main sub-catchments – the Hodder, Darwen, and Calder. At the heart of the project was a determination to establish a better relationship between communities and their rivers by developing people's understanding and appreciation of river environment, achieved through engaging with over 13,600 people during the project.

Swindale Beck - 'Swindale Valley Restoration Project' won the project-scale award for its ongoing restoration work in the Lake District to reverse the impacts of past land management and water use practices to benefit wildlife and water quality, reduce downstream flood risk, and enhance the natural landscape. It is demonstrating how positive environmental improvements can be delivered within a farmed landscape.

The runners-up were the River Nar, Norfolk – '*Castle Acre Common*', led by Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board, and Turkey Brook, London – '*Albany Park*', led by Enfield Council.

Martin Janes (River Restoration Centre Managing Director) presented both winning projects with their trophies, at the evening celebration. The River Ribble - 'Ribble Life Together' was awarded the Nigel Holmes Trophy – named after a hugely influential and passionate river restoration and conservation advocate. Swindale Beck - 'Swindale Valley Restoration Project' was presented with the RRC Trophy.

About the UK River Prize Winners

River Ribble - Ribble Life Together

Catchment-scale Award & Nigel Holmes Trophy

Lead applicant: Ribble Rivers Trust



Ribble Life Together (RLT) brought together a range of stakeholders, interest groups and the communities through the Ribble Life Partnership. Using a prioritised ecosystem service approach, the project aimed to improve the natural river heritage of the Ribble Catchment for people and wildlife in an inclusive and integrated way.

A key driver of the project was to make significant improvements to our river system by delivering an ambitious programme of river channel improvement projects and habitat creation projects. This would include 14 fish pass or weir removal projects, 30 new woodlands and delivering 14 wetland projects. These would vary in size and scope, designing bespoke projects for each location that would reflect and enhance local conditions and needs, and provide multiple benefits for the river and local community.

Alongside the river improvements, Ribble Life Together aimed to connect people to their rivers and our work on a scale never achieved before. It aimed to reach new audiences and grow awareness throughout the catchment about the issues our rivers face. This included a catchment wide farm advice programme and an increase engagement with rivers through an education programme, volunteering, apprenticeships and public events. Rivers have been made more accessible through art projects, guided walks and by creating digital, online content such as short films. The idea was for people to explore and celebrate the rich heritage of the river and encourage them to discover the wonder of the river for themselves.

The result would be a healthier river system and a catchment that would be a better place to work, live and visit, whilst also engaging people in their local rivers and encouraging them to take positive action to conserve and improve them.



River Ribble - Ribble Life Together photos



Hosted and awarded by



the River Restoration Centre

Working to restore and enhance our rivers

About the UK River Prize Winners

Swindale Beck - Swindale Valley Restoration Project

Project-scale Award & the RRC Trophy

Lead applicant: RSPB Haweswater



RSPB, United Utilities, the Environment Agency and Natural England are working in partnership on a range of projects in the Swindale Valley near Haweswater in the Lake District. Swindale forms a critical part of the United Utilities owned Haweswater drinking water catchment. Over 160 years ago the beck had been straightened, deepened and embanked. Peatland drained, species rich hay meadows had been fertilised and overgrazed, and native woodland degraded. Since the 1950s water from the becks has been taken via the Swindale aqueduct to supplement Haweswater reservoir at the expense of natural river flows.

The project aim was to deliver a range of interventions in Swindale that would reverse impacts of past land management and water use practices to benefit wildlife and water quality, reduce downstream flood risk, and enhance the natural landscape.

The ambitious and holistic approach has restored a large area of blanket bog at the top of the Swindale Valley by blocking moorland drains which will result in increased carbon storage, raise the water table, naturally purifying the water and providing a home to a wide range of specialist wildlife. Tree planting also stores carbon, slows surface water flows and increases water percolation into soil reducing flood peaks downstream. Meanders have been restored to the beck, creating variable flows that underpin sediment transportation and deposition for riffles, pools and gravel bars, and provide areas suitable for salmonids to spawn in. The salmonids are able to access this upstream habitat with a new fish pass and abstraction intake designed to mimic natural flows by taking varied amounts of water at different times. Further work has seen valley fan flows rejuvenated and the restoration of a functional anastomosing wetland.

The Swindale project is now one of the most high-profile projects delivered in the Lake District and is now being used an exemplar case study to enthuse others to do something similar.



Swindale Beck - Swindale Valley Restoration Project photos



Hosted and awarded by



the River Restoration Centre

Working to restore and enhance our rivers

Quotes from the UK River Prize Partners

"This year's river prize entries covered a fascinating range of projects from catchment scale to reach scale, rural to urban. All had achieved amazing outcomes within challenging circumstances. As usual, it was difficult choosing between them, but all four finalists are great examples of excellent river restoration projects. Well done and keep them coming!"

Ann Skinner, UK River Prize judge and RRC Board



"Rivers are a hugely valuable part of our environment, yet they have been hidden and ignored for years. With the increasing awareness of linkages between health and green spaces, the public drive for healthy rivers and the acknowledgement of the commercial gains from nurturing our natural heritage is ever increasing.

Arup have sponsored the River Prize since its inception in 2014. We appreciate and recognise the valuable, but often un-sung, impact of healthy rivers on communities, biodiversity, and the economy. With the pandemic, the appreciation of Nature as a beneficial influence was highlighted. And now is a fantastic time to celebrate the creativity used in caring for our Rivers.

We believe that sustainability should be at the heart of what we do. And Rivers are often the overlooked golden thread that runs through our communities. They bring health, wellbeing, economic and natural stimulus."

Catherine Wenger, UK Water Business Leader, Arup

ARUP

"Atkins is proud to partner the UK River Prize 2022. Our commitment to improving the water environment goes back many years and we are delighted to sponsor this prestigious trophy. Our team looks forward to being able to meet many of you in person at Chesford Grange."

Dr Kevin Skinner, Associate Director, Atkins

ATKINS

Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group

The River Restoration Centre (RRC)

The River Restoration Centre is the UK's independent expert centre for information and advice on best practice river restoration. 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.

Project Films

Short 5 minute films have been submitted by the winners and runners up. These are available to view on The River Restoration Centre's website at <http://www.therrc.co.uk/2022-uk-river-prize>

All media enquiries

Joshua Robins, The River Restoration Centre

josh@therrc.co.uk, 01234 752979

Further information is available at <http://www.therrc.co.uk/2022-uk-river-prize>



the River Restoration Centre
Working to restore and enhance our rivers