

Paper from Toni Scarr on the (best) practices of river restoration

Working together improves water management. This includes **sharing knowledge** as well as partnership working. As we look to a more integrated management our rivers and their catchments as part of the water Framework Directive it is also important to look at how other countries around Europe are improving their water management. Evidence indicates that there are a set of similar barriers to river restoration across countries, one of which the lack of accessible evidence. Part of addressing this gap is via an online '[RiverWiki](#)' this is an interactive online source of information on river restoration schemes from around Europe. The RiverWiki is something like Wikipedia for river restoration. It is important that we share knowledge which will help member states in the successful delivery of European Directives. We will also discuss how restoring rivers can enrich our quality of life. We do however need to share this evidence. We need to get better at **valuing all the ecosystem services** that water provides. This would help us to convince other sectors of the benefits of a quality water environment and help us to deliver integrated catchment management. We have created a website <http://www.restorerivers.eu> which is a focal point for pooling information and sharing experience within the European river restoration community.

We held our final RESTORE conference as part of the 5th European River Restoration conference in Vienna. This conference showed us how concerned our audience is to **work with communities** and to finding out what people need to help bring about lasting changes. There was a lot of discussion on flood risk benefits, wildlife, economic, health and even reducing crime through river restoration projects. Many felt that there are gaps in this area and wish for better tools and technology to work and negotiate with stakeholders. We also heard that we need to develop river restoration from a **catchment to basin scale**, to help deliver more potential benefits by working with natural processes. Our keynote speaker, Janez Potočnik European Commissioner for the Environment supported this view saying *'River restoration is a collective adventure across Europe...Now is the time to move from local and experimental projects to broad scale implementation across Europe's rivers.'*

Making the business case for river restoration was also a high priority. Supporting the need for more research on the economic basis and costs of river restoration, much of which will require government support. There was plenty of discussion about the state of **current scientific knowledge**, and the many gaps in our knowledge, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluation. Our initial findings also show that we need to be setting more realistic monitoring targets reflecting the pace of environmental change. Many felt that current monitoring timeframes were far too short. More generally practitioners felt the need to maintain, link and extend existing initiatives that support and share best practice. We also discussed how we can use knowledge we've gained and share this through existing networks to find solutions for our problems.