

ENGLAND RIVER PRIZE

“Celebrating local involvement in river, estuary and wetland catchment projects”

Press release

8th May 2014

The River Wensum is the winner of the inaugural England River Prize

An ambitious project to restore the 70km River Wensum in Norfolk, which has delivered over 12km to date, has been awarded the first England River Prize.

The prize was won by the Environment Agency, as lead partner, in partnership with riparian landowners, Natural England and Atkins.

The River Wensum is a chalk stream of great importance for its wildlife, supporting species such as water voles, otters and white-clawed crayfish. To improve the health of the river to meet ‘good ecological status’, under the Water Framework Directive, the project has delivered multiple benefits to the whole river, from the headwaters in Fakenham to Norwich.

Practical works have included river restoration, floodplain habitat enhancement and these have led to an improvement in biodiversity, a reduction in flood risk and improved angling and water quality. The river has become more reconnected to its floodplain and biodiversity has been encouraged; contributing to an increase in species such as wigeon, snipe and teal.

Recognising the importance of taking a holistic approach to river restoration, and the diverse range of skills needed for such a task, the project pulled together a wide range of statutory agencies, professional advisors and local partners to deliver improvements to the river.

The England River Prize is being awarded by a partnership of the [River Restoration Centre](#), [WWF-UK](#), the [Environment Agency](#) and the [International River Foundation](#) and celebrates successful approaches in river restoration delivering a wide range of benefits.

The Wensum partnership will use the prize – and the £10,000 grant - to further the aims of river restoration, develop links with universities to monitor success; provide interpretation boards at sites accessible to the public; host a competition for local communities and share lessons learned.

All media enquiries

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ENGLAND RIVER PRIZE PARTNERS

