

SPAIN'S SEGURA RIVER AWARDED TOP PRIZE FOR RIVER RESTORATION IN EUROPE

The Segura River of Spain has just been named the winner of the International RiverFoundation's 2016 European River*prize*.

The International RiverFoundation (IRF) presented Mr Miguel-Angel Rodenas, President of the Segura River Basin Authority, with the award at a gala dinner held at Vienna City Hall on Thursday 3 March, recognising the river's extraordinary return to health following extensive restoration efforts over the past thirty years.

The Segura River Project has successfully restored the health of the river, with advanced wastewater schemes now supplying reclaimed water to the agriculture industry which rapidly boomed after Spain became a member of the European Union. This once polluted and water-stressed river in Europe's driest basin has been transformed from an exposed sewer to a healthy, vibrant river, home to otter, migratory birds, and other flora and fauna, and the reuse of irrigation water has allowed increased agricultural, leisure and recreational activities.

Mr Bart Fokkens, Chair of the IRF European River*prize* judging panel and Chair of the European Centre for River Restoration, congratulated those who contributed to reviving the Segura River and praised their holistic approach..

"The Segura river management is a great example of an integrated approach with environmental, social and economic restoration activities. The established management framework includes a solid science foundation and shared governance, while the catchment management planning process was ahead of the European legislation requirement. These demonstrated innovations created almost a miracle under the scorching sun of Spain!"

The IRF European River*prize* is awarded annually for outstanding efforts in river management, restoration and protection, and the Segura River was selected over the Aragon River (Spain) and the River Trent (UK) who were also finalists for the prestigious prize.

The Segura River will now automatically qualify for stage two of the renowned Thies International River*prize* in 2016, awarded to those who demonstrate world's best practice in sustainable river basin management, restoration or protection. The 2016 Thies International River*prize* will be awarded at the 19th International Rivers*symposium* in New Delhi, India, on 13 September.

In 2014, Europe's River Rhine went on to win the coveted Thies International River*prize*, worth AU\$300,000, after first being awarded the IRF European River*prize* in 2013.

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