



*Commercial Salmon Fishing, Dillingham, Alaska
(Photo Credit: Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust)*

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CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter of the International RiverFoundation. It's more than half way into 2018 and the IRF team has been gearing up to deliver the 21st International Riversymposium to be held in Sydney this year.

Our focus on the three pillars of Education, Recognition and Collaboration continues to underpin our priorities and is at the core of everything we do. IRF has gratefully received funding from the Bert and Vera Thies Foundation to continue to deliver some of our key programs, including the Bert and Vera Thies Australasia Riverprize, the Vera Thies Fellowship for Women and the Ken Thies Memorial Scholarship.

We are also grateful for the generous support from our sponsors, including the Australian Water Partnership, who has recently contributed \$25,000 to our Asia Riverprize for a Twinning grant. Our incredible partners enable us to continue to deliver our many river recovery projects, Twinning exchanges, and events.

IRF, together with a small group of Founding Partners, is excited to be driving the development of an overarching 'Resilient Rivers Blueprint', that will identify the key actions that we will take to improve the capacity of our rivers and communities to recover from disturbances and return to a healthy state.

The Blueprint will utilise existing tools and identify innovative new approaches and technologies to build a river resilience network. Our goal is to develop a Blueprint which will be applicable to rivers world-wide and will inspire a global transformation from river recovery to river resilience.

We look forward to the continued support of our partners on the journey to river resilience and to seeing you all at Riversymposium in October!



Dr EVA Abal
CEO



Sydney Harbour, Australia (Photo Credit: Clearview Glass Boat Cruises)

21ST INTERNATIONAL RIVERSYMPOSIUM

14 - 18TH
OCTOBER 2018

With only two months to go until the 21st International Riversymposium, the IRF team has been busy developing an exciting and engaging program of speakers, workshop sessions, networking events and study tours.

This year our event kicks off on Sunday, 14 October with the first networking event, a 2-hour sunset cruise around the iconic Sydney Harbour.

The formal program will run from 15-17 October and includes keynote addresses from Professor William Dennison, Professor Rebekah Brown, Wouter T. Lincklaen Arriëns and Professor I.R. Kihn Ni Ni Thein.

We are also introducing Learn-Inspire-Transform sessions to provide a greater emphasis on interaction and learning and development to our program. The Riverexpo will run over these days, giving delegates the opportunity to meet our keynotes, speak to exhibitors about the great work they are doing and find out about projects they are interested in from some of our sponsors.

On Monday evening, we will host Diversity in Water - an evening cocktail function celebrating diversity in all its forms and discussing how equal opportunities can help to advance sustainable river basin management.

The Riverprize gala dinner is also a highlight at the conference and this year will be no exception. During the evening we will announce the winners of the Australasian and Asian Riverprize, Vera Thies Fellowship for Women and the Emerging River Professional Award.

The conference finishes with delegates able to choose one of three optional study tours to attend. Full details of these study tours, and the **full program** are available at www.riversymposium.com



NEW STAFF

Tara Davis joins us from the Thies International Riverprize winning Willamette river, USA. As the Alumni Coordinator, Tara has been busy reaching out to previous Riverprize winners and finalists to establish an IRF Alumni Network, better connecting our Alumni and mobilising a valuable international community of experts. Tara has extensive experience in river restoration, non-profit management and fundraising, network development, collaboration and strategy development.



Tara Davis

Carla Littlejohn joined the IRF in May and has been working with our partners to manage our existing twinning and river recovery programs and to identify new partnership opportunities. Carla has extensive experience in integrated catchment management, water quality and environmental policy and legislation. Carla's experience includes developing and implementing policy guidance, stakeholder engagement, capacity building and cross-cultural program and project management.



Carla Littlejohn



Parramatta River from Gladesville Bridge, Sydney, Australia. (Photo credit: Attakorn Petcharat)

2018 BERT AND VERA THIESS AUSTRALASIA RIVERPRIZE FINALISTS ANNOUNCED!

This year's Bert and Vera Thies Australasia Riverprize finalists are **Whangawehi Stream (New Zealand)**, **Laidley Creek (Queensland)** and the **Parramatta River (NSW)**. Also highly commended are the **Oven and Kings River (Victoria)** and **Yarra River (Victoria)**.

The **Whangawehi stream** is at risk of faecal contamination from stock and sedimentation from farmland and has suffered from a lack of riparian habitats for bird and fish life. Under a community led catchment management plan, the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group (WCMG) has been helping farmers manage pests and revegetate the river margins, resulting in the establishment of 160,000 native trees, 60 ha of riparian margins and the retirement of 10 ha of native bush block. Monitoring has revealed a 95% survival rate of plants, an increase in bird life and a 15% improvement in water quality. Once nearly extinct,

the white bait population is now abundant, and the endangered long fin eel has grown to healthy populations.

Increased sediment and nutrient transport is impacting on the health of Brisbane River and Moreton Bay. Around 80% of sediment pollution in the lower Brisbane River comes from just 20% of the catchment, mostly from eroded streams and gullies in the Lockyer Valley. A collaborative partnership and an investment of AUD \$2.4 million has transformed a 3 kilometre stretch of **Laidley Creek** in the Lockyer Valley. Works included invasive weed management, planting native trees and grasses, installing six cross channel creek structures and stabilising steep heavily eroded banks. This has resulted in restoration of valuable farmland and improved flood resilience and the prevention of 16,000 tonnes of sediment, 11 tonnes of nitrogen and 22 tonnes of phosphorous from entering the creek and ultimately Moreton Bay.

The **Parramatta River** flows through the heart of one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) launched the 'Our Living River' initiative in 2014, with the mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again. The PRCG is an alliance of local and state government agencies and the community and is responsible for the strategic coordination of the catchment. In October 2018, the group will launch the Parramatta River Masterplan, which provides a manifesto for change in the way the river and its catchment will be managed into the future. The Masterplan grasps the opportunity that accelerated urban growth can bring to improvements in water quality and local amenity if it is well-planned and integrated, with clearly defined and community driven outcomes.



Pasig River, Philippines (Photo credit: PRRC)

INAUGURAL ASIA RIVERPRIZE FINALISTS ANNOUNCED!

The inaugural 2018 Asia Riverprize finalists are the **Pasig River (Philippines)** and the **Yangtze River (China)**.

The **Pasig River** Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) is mandated to ensure that the Pasig River system undergoes rehabilitation in order to support and sustain aquatic life and resources that are conducive for transport, recreation, and tourism.

The Philippines' Pasig River was declared biologically dead in the 1990s due to persistent pollution caused by population growth and industrial development along its riverbanks. However PRRC's and its partners river restoration and management efforts have effectively brought the Pasig River back to life. These efforts have included delivering quality projects, programs, activities, and advocacies in easement recovery, riverbank development, waste and water quality management, and public awareness.

From 1999 to 2017, PRRC has resettled 18,719 families living along the riverbanks to decent homes, dismantled 376 encroaching private structures, established over 37,000 linear metres of environmental preservation areas, developed 17 of its 47 identified tributaries, diverted almost 22,000 kilograms of solid waste, and transformed communities into environmentally-responsible citizens. This has resulted in significant water quality improvement, as well as the revitalization and development of the Pasig River system.

The **Yangtze river basin** accounts for 40% of China's freshwater resources, more than 70% of the country's rice production, 50% of its grain, more than 70% of fishery production, and 40% of the China's GDP.

Asia Development Bank's (ADB) Yangtze River Economic Belt (YREB) team have facilitated significant institutional and policy reforms on river and water governance in the Yangtze River basin.

From 2016 to 2020, support will be directed to four key areas in the YREB development plan: (i) ecosystem restoration, environmental protection, and management of water resources, (ii) green and inclusive industrial transformation, (iii) construction of an integrated multimodal transport corridor, and (iv) policy reform to increase the connectivity and cooperation among provinces and cities.

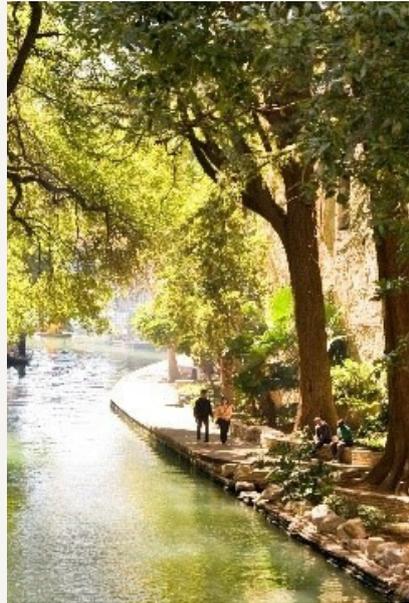
The goal is to prioritise the YREB ecosystem restoration over economic development, including establishing a financial incentive mechanism to reward provinces that launch their own eco-compensation agreements between different provinces or within their own provinces.

The implications for the introduction of such river basin reforms are long term, with sustained impact and environmental improvements, particularly in the upper to middle reaches of the Yangtze River.

WINNER OF THE 2017 THIESS INTERNATIONAL RIVERPRIZE- SAN ANTONIO RIVER, TEXAS USA

The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) has been managing point-source pollution issues effectively in its 10,000 square-kilometre basin since the late 1980s, leading to the return of healthy aquatic and riparian habitat.

SARA was created in 1937 and has built many successful partnerships with federal, state and local partners, communities and stakeholder groups. SARA's \$384 million San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP) included flood management, amenities, ecosystem restoration and recreational improvements to over 13 miles of the San Antonio River.



San Antonio River, Texas, USA. (Photo credit: San Antonio River Authority)

SARA was also responsible for the famous 15-mile San Antonio River Walk - a world-leading example of inspiring urban park design and prosperous riverfront development that connects over 2000 acres of public park land and attracts over 11.5 million visitors annually, pumping \$3.1 billion into the local economy.

“THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER TELLS A COMPELLING STORY OF HOW COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS CAN RESULT IN A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN RIVERINE HEALTH WHILE PROVIDING FOR ROBUST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,”
– STEVEN SCHAUER.

FINALISTS OF THE 2018 EMERGING RIVER PROFESSIONALS AWARD

The ERPA was established by IRF to recognise and foster early career river professionals who have demonstrated innovation, excellence and leadership in river, basin, or river-dependent community management. This year ERPA is generously sponsored by OceanaGold Corporation.

The following ERPA finalists have been selected for demonstrating exceptional and measurable achievements in rivers, basins or river-dependent communities

Ms Nantale Nsibirwa (South Africa) is currently completing a Master of Science in Hydrology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a short-term internship with the United Nations (UN) Environment agency.

During the last two years, she has mapped diffuse pollution risk to prioritise ecological infrastructure protection in the uMngeni Catchment, South Africa, which aimed to verify and validate the existing lawful water use in KwaZulu.

Ms Julie Francis (Australia) has a degree in science, a masters of agricultural science and completed the International Water Centre's 9-month leadership program in 2016. Julie specialises in both collaboration and sustainable cities and has worked in a variety of Victorian state and local government roles. She was seconded to Melbourne Water in late 2016 to lead a collaboration of organisations working to transform

the Moonee Ponds Creek into an iconic waterway for Melbourne.

Mr Jose Fernandez (Peru) gained a degree in Forestry Engineering in 2015. He began lecturing to undergraduate students about the application of geographic information systems before taking on the position of Environmental Specialist for the Water Fund for Lima and Callao (AQUAFONDO). He is currently responsible for the management and conservation of water resources and has been involved in a project to develop an integrated water management system in the local peasant community of San Pedro de Casta, Lima Peru.

VERA THIESS FELLOWSHIP FOR WOMEN

The Vera Thuess Fellowship gives women the opportunity to gain valuable work experience through the International *RiverFoundation* and our partners, with the goal of advancing women's participation in water and river management. In honour of the late Vera Thuess, this fellowship goes not only towards supporting a scholar, but towards continuing the important work of bridging the gap in women's participation in river basin management.

Marie Aislinn Cabriole was awarded the second Vera Thuess Fellowship for Women at the 20th International *Riversymposium* Conference in Brisbane in 2017.

Through the Fellowship, Marie is collaborating with the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC, Philippines) to empower women and strengthen their role managing and rehabilitating the Pasig River. Activities have focused on community involvement, gender mainstreaming, water leadership, and sustainable river/urban communities. Marie has also visited some of our IRFs Riverprize Alumni in the USA (San Antonio River), Australia (Sunshine Coast and Bremer Rivers) and the UK (Tweed River) to learn about their programs and obtain valuable insight.



Marie Aislinn Cabriole with the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (Photo Credit: Marie Aislinn Cabriole)

KEN THIESS SCHOLARS COMPLETE FINAL PROJECTS

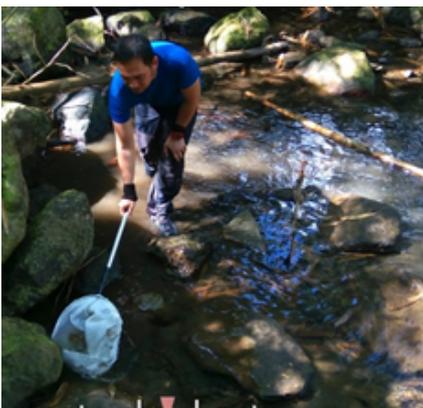
Rej Bungabong and Camaria Holder recently graduated with a Master of Integrated Water Management after being awarded the Ken Thuess Memorial Scholarship in 2017.

To complete the course, scholars are required to undertake a final project of their choice. Rej completed a downstream impact assessment of constructed check dams in the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape in the Philippines, where

he applied his learnings from his masters to identify lapses in the incorporation of essential Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) elements and provided recommendations to ensure a balance in socioeconomic and ecological sustainability in the project study site.

Camaria undertook a placement with Grenada's Ministry of Agriculture, where she investigated the effectiveness of community-based

adaptation interventions implemented in three local communities affected by limited supplies of water for both domestic use and agriculture irrigation. Her findings emphasised the highly complex nature of climate change adaptation, and highlighted that long-term sustainability hinged on the level to which local stakeholders were engaged as agents of change.



Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (Photo Credit: Rej Bungabong)



Camaria Holder with Jane and Paul Thuess (Photo Credit: International RiverFoundation)

SUNSHINE COAST RIVERS INITIATIVE AND CAPRICORNIA CATCHMENTS TWINNING PROJECT IS BRINGING BACK THE LOCALS

In 2015, Australian Riverprize winners, the Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative (SCRI), partnered with Capricornia Catchments Inc. to deliver the Fig Tree Creek Sister Catchment Project.



Capricorn Coast Landcare planting activity - National Tree Day (Photo Credit: SCRI)

The Fig Tree Catchment, in the heart of Yeppoon, is under pressure from increasing urbanisation, weed infestation, erosion and lack of community stewardship. The Fig Tree Creek Sister Catchment Project aims to embrace the waterway through collective community planning and action, building the capacity of the Capricorn Coast region to plan for, develop and implement best practice measures to protect and enhance the values of the waterway.

The twinning program has yielded several worthy outcomes over recent years, including the establishment of the Fig Tree Creek Working Group who coordinate and promote natural resource management activities in the catchment, support for development of the Draft Fig Tree Creek Masterplan, the facilitation of various workshops, stakeholder campaigns and education days, and implementation of on-ground works.

Most recently, Capricornia Catchments commenced on-ground works in the Figtree Creek Catchment through the project “Bringing Back the Locals”. This project aims to support residents who have properties adjacent to the creek, by implementing restoration works including weed and erosion management and revegetation.

This twinning project has allowed both groups to benefit from each other’s knowledge and expertise in sustainable river management, while improving on-ground management for better water quality and public access in this project area. These two groups have worked together in building a shared understanding of this twinning program.

We at the IRF continue to support the partnership and look forward to seeing this project continue to grow and prosper in the years to come. To hear more about the key achievements of this and other successful twinning partnerships, make sure you attend our Learn-Inspire-Transform (LIT) session “Establishing and maintaining successful Riverprize twinning partnerships” at the 21st International Riversymposium in October.



Fig Tree Discovery Day (Photo Credit: SCRI)

UPCOMING EVENTS

World Water Congress & Exhibition

16-21 September | Tokyo

www.worldwatercongress.org

6th Australian and New Zealand Cyanobacteria Workshop

25-26 September | Sydney

www.algae.unsw.edu.au

21st International Riversymposium

14-18 October | Sydney

www.riversymposium.com

9th Global Environment Facility, International Waters Conference

5-8 November | Marrakech

<http://inms.international/9th-gef-biennial-international-waters-conference-iwc9>



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ABOUT IRF

International RiverFoundation champions integrated river basin management for the restoration, protection, and resilience of the world's rivers. We celebrate, recognise, reward and inspire people and organisations, and facilitate the sharing of crucial knowledge on the journey to river resilience.

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