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# KARNALI RIVER EXPEDITION UPDATE NOVEMBER 2017

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*This is the second newsletter to update on the effort to Save the Karnali River. Your name has been included on the mailing list because of your expressed interest in this project or your connections to the research scientists. Please let us know if there are others we should add to our mailing list or if you would like your name removed.*

## A little about the expedition...

Of the three major rivers emerging from the Nepal Himalaya—the Koshi, the Gandaki, and the Karnali—the Karnali is the only river that remains free-flowing. There are currently three hydropower dams planned for the mainstem of the Karnali River. The construction of any one of these dams will forever change the essence and flow of the Karnali River, as well as the diverse values and benefits derived from it. The construction of all three will devastate the river system and the cultures, species, and economies that depend on it.

Globally, rivers and streams are among the most threatened ecosystems, with rates of species loss greater than those on land (Dudgeon et al. 2006). In Asia, aquatic conservation has been severely hampered by a lack of study, creating a “knowledge impediment” to both quantifying and alleviating biodiversity loss (Dudgeon 2003). Because it has traditionally been understudied, the Himalayan nation of Nepal is at a critical juncture for the study and conservation of its native fishes, and is at risk of losing biodiversity before it can even be fully described. This lack of data is troubling, as the area was designated a “Biodiversity Hotspot” by Conservation International in 2000, and includes several eco-regions that harbor irreplaceable or distinctive biodiversity (Olson and Dinerstein 1998). This project will seek to fill those gaps in knowledge and biodiversity data.

In our effort to **Save the Karnali – Nepal’s Last and Most Pristine Free-flowing River**, our interdisciplinary team will mount a headwaters to confluence expedition. As we travel we will survey the remarkable and outstanding environmental characteristics of the river and surrounding landscapes. In addition, we will strive to understand the diverse perspectives of local communities and create a narrative that conveys the connections—cultural, economic, and spiritual—of this last free-flowing river to its sacred origins and history. This will provide the scientific foundation to develop a culturally informed, locally supported alternative to hydropower development on the mainstem of the Karnali River. The team, with local input, will produce a “Sacred River Corridor” management plan that can be implemented by local community organizations and ultimately help establish Wild and Scenic river legislation to protect the Karnali River.

**GOOD NEWS: Our USAID - Nepal \$50,000 grant concept note was accepted for a full proposal submission!**

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## The WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ACT celebrates its 50th year.

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We want to honor 50 years of Wild and Scenic River implementation in the United States. In the last 50 years 12,734 miles of 208 rivers in 40 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have been protected. Our intent is to bring the Wild and Scenic River concept to Nepal and work with the government to establish the Karnali as **Nepal’s first Wild and Scenic River**. Read more about how The Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation came to be <https://www.rivers.gov/documents/wsr-primer.pdf>.

## ITS “GIVING TUESDAY” - NOVEMBER 28, 2017

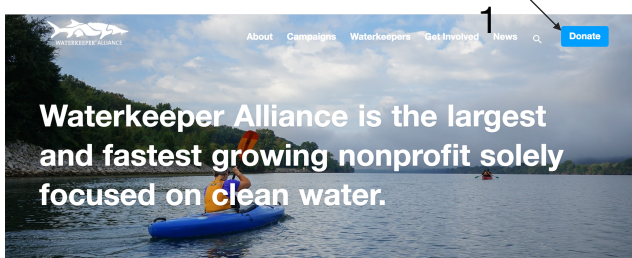
We are accepting tax-deductible donations through Waterkeeper Alliance [www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org). As you visit with family and friends over the Thanksgiving holiday, please remind them of “Giving Tuesday” and through their donations secure their chance to help “Save the Karnali – Nepal’s Last and Most Pristine Free-flowing River” by supporting our expedition. Our fund raising goal is \$203,035. We have submitted grant proposals and gathered private funding and in-kind contributions, if grant proposals are funded, we will cover 72.4% of the proposed budget. To meet our goal, however, we still need to raise \$56,014. Can you help?

### PLEASE TAKE NOTE....

There has been some confusion on how to donate through the Waterkeeper Alliance website. Please be sure to make sure your donation goes to the Karnali River Waterkeeper. If you donated in the past, please make sure you wrote in Karnali River Waterkeeper. If you didn’t, contact Waterkeeper Alliance and they will gladly make a correction for you or contact Karen Bennett at [kabennett01@gmail.com](mailto:kabennett01@gmail.com).

It’s as easy as 1,2,3...

1. Go to the Waterkeeper Alliance website [www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org) and click the DONATE button (at top right).
2. Select the amount of the tax deductible donation you wish to give. Click “Next.”
3. Under Optional: Select a specific Waterkeeper program to support, in the box where it says “General Support”, click the arrows to the right. A drop down menu will appear. Select “Other”. A new box appears that says “Designate to...” **type in** “Karnali River Waterkeeper”. Click “Next” and follow the directions for contact and payment information.



**NEXT ISSUE: An introduction to the expedition team members**