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**The Mountain Institute named A Top Ten Finalist in
2017 Solution Search Contest
“Farming for Biodiversity”**

WASHINGTON, DC: Solution Search partners have announced that The Mountain Institute’s *Ancestral Technologies and Climate Change* project is a finalist in the 2017 Solution Search contest, “Farming for Biodiversity”.

This contest is a unique effort to identify and celebrate innovative agriculture solutions that strengthen biodiversity and its benefits to food security, livelihoods and nutrition. The grand prize winner will receive \$30,000, with four additional category prizes of \$15,000 awarded for specific excellence in Social/Community Impact, Biodiversity Impact, Food Security/Nutrition Impact and Water Impact. As a finalist, a representative from The Mountain Institute will attend a workshop and awards ceremony at the November UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Convention of Parties (COP) in Bonn, Germany, alongside some of the biggest names in conservation and development.

The Mountain Institute’s Executive Director, Dr. Andrew Taber describes the *Ancestral Technologies* project: “Our partnership with communities in highland Peru, supported by the latest science, has led to restoring water management technologies that have been neglected for centuries. The mountain people we work with are proudly repairing their ancestors’ irrigation infrastructures to revive mountain grasslands and wetlands. In areas hard hit by climate change, locals are seeing improved livestock and crop productivity, better water availability and biodiversity conservation. Winning the Solution Search Prize would provide a strong platform to scale up our innovative approach to benefit communities throughout the Andes and across the mountain world.”

Project description: Selected from an unprecedented 338 entries, the Institute’s *Ancestral Technologies and Climate Change* project combines local, traditional knowledge with modern science to restore pre-Incan water management systems in the grassland-wetland ecosystems of the central Andes, known as the *puna*. High mountain communities, farmers, herders and native wildlife all rely on this fragile ecosystem—as do millions of people downstream. In the communities of Miraflores and Canchayllo, puna landscapes have been drying out and shrinking due to overgrazing by livestock and accelerating climate change. Our project helped locals repair and restore existing reservoirs, irrigation canals and other water regulating systems originally built by their ancestors as far back as 1,000 BC in the Nor Yauyos Cochas Reserve. The results demonstrate that restoring these ancient technologies, which lie unused and often forgotten throughout the Andes, could potentially revive the entire puna ecosystem, benefiting humans and wildlife alike. Around our project site, availability of local water has increased, especially in the dry season, leading to a boost in productivity for livestock and crops. This, in turn, has brought greater food security and economic benefits to Canchayllo and Miraflores. The richness and abundance of native plants and wildlife has also improved locally, making the surrounding puna, and all who rely on it, more resilient to climate change.

To read more and vote for The Mountain Institute, visit <https://solutionsearch.org/contest/farming-biodiversity#finalists>. (You can vote once per day!)

“We are excited about these finalists and the potential to expand and replicate their solutions across the agricultural sector,” said Brett Jenks, CEO of Rare, the international nonprofit that created Solution Search. “Unsustainable agricultural practices remain one of the greatest threats to ecosystems and biodiversity, so solving for these challenges has never been more critical.”

Solution Search is a global-crowdsourcing competition designed to identify, spotlight and promote the most promising approaches to conservation and development challenges.

Partners and judges represent organizations including: Rare, the Global Environment Facility, Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, Patagonia, Save the Children, GAIN, IFOAM-Organics International, The Economist, Inter-American Development Bank, Stockholm Resilience Center, EcoAgriculture Partners, United Nations Rapporteurs, CONABIO (Mexico), Panorama, World Wildlife Fund, Blue Solutions, Global Island Partnership, Food Tank, and Young Professionals for Agricultural Development.

This contest is part of a larger project run in joint partnership by Rare, IFOAM-Organics International and the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat and is funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI), a German initiative supported by The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB).

About The Mountain Institute

The Mountain Institute (TMI) partners with mountain people to transform their livelihoods, protect their cultures and thus conserve vital natural resources for the planet. TMI is the only organization focused solely on mountains worldwide and actively dedicated to mountain communities and their unique environments. Our headquarters office is in Washington D.C. and we have locally-staffed offices in Nepal and Peru. Learn more at www.mountain.org