



The Mountain Institute's "Restoring Ancient Water Technologies" Project is a Finalist for the 2018 St Andrews Prize

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C.: The Mountain Institute's "Restoring Ancient Water Technologies" project has been selected as one of three finalists for the prestigious St Andrews Prize for the Environment. This year, 190 entries were received from around the world. The winner will be awarded \$100,000 and the two runners up will each receive \$25,000.

The St Andrews Prize for the Environment is an environmental initiative by the University of St Andrews in Scotland and independent exploration and production company, ConocoPhillips. The award recognizes significant contributions to environmental issues and concerns with a focus on sustainability, conservation, biodiversity and community development.

Over the past 20 years, the Prize has supported a wide range of projects from around the world, addressing sustainable development, food security, urban re-generation, recycling, health, water and waste issues, renewable energy, community education and more. Ideas submitted have been global, local and/or scalable and they outline how they will socially and economically impact the communities where projects are based.

Along with two other finalists, representatives from The Mountain Institute's Andes Program will be presenting at a seminar at the University of St Andrews. The Prize winner will be announced April 26, 2018.

The Institute's "Restoring Ancient Water Technologies" project integrates 2,000 years of indigenous knowledge of water management in the Andes with contemporary science and technology to create hybrid solutions that improve water security, support livelihoods and increase ecosystem-wide resilience in mountain communities. It is based on the experience and evidence gained during our [Ancestral Technologies and Climate Change](#) initiative.

In 2013, our [Andes Program](#) began working with mountain communities in the Nor-Yauyos Cochas Landscape Reserve of Peru to address increasing water scarcity. They discovered the existence of a vast, complex and partially abandoned water management system in the alpine high-plateau, or *puna*. Initiated as early as 100 BC, these systems were used extensively by mountain people until about 1532. Through a complex of dams and open-earth canals, this infrastructure recharged ground water reserves, increased water retained in the soil and improved water supplies to irrigation systems. These water systems fed native pastures for wild vicuñas and guanacos along with their domesticated relatives—alpacas and llamas.

As climate change continues to hit the Andes and glaciers keep melting, The Mountain Institute's new project aims to restore ancestral water management systems and principles to make mountain communities less vulnerable to shrinking water supplies. Our objective is to increase the availability of tools, case studies, methods and information while building and strengthening the networks of scientists and indigenous organizations to co-design and implement the restoration of these ancestral waterways.

To learn more about **The Mountain Institute**, visit www.mountain.org.

For more details about this year's **St Andrews Prize** finalists and previous prize winners, visit: www.thestandrewsprize.com.

