

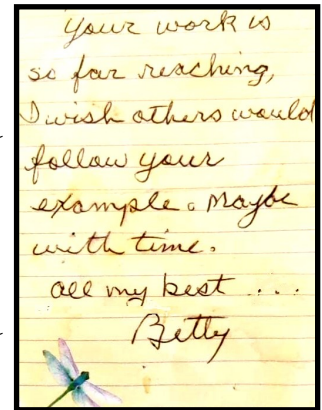
Projects in Progress

Issue 28

Annual Report 2022

‘A sense of place,’ a phrase one often hears in Maine, connotes a character trait proudly held, a sense of identity being grounded in the land. This shot of the place where our SeedTree took root, by a bridge to a cape at the mouth of the mighty Penobscot River, looking looks so remote and isolated it’s hard to imagine our late supporter’s kind words: ‘far reaching,’ could fit. Yet, stepping back to take a wider view, deepening also our *sense of place in time*, parallels appear between our place by a narrow neck’s bridge and the covid-induced narrowing between our programs’ past substantial impact, and our present restructuring to meet changing needs and opportunities opening up for the future.

The River drains a huge watershed of central Maine, containing the new Woods and Waters National Monument, whose name speaks to their interdependence. The forest and waters protected each other as all life in the ecosystem for millennia, relatively uninterrupted by those who arrived



following the rising sun, sustained by their relation to the land, the Wabanaki: People of the Dawn. The Penobscot, who called this place Oonigoneshek or ‘short portage’ for their canoes to avoid the more dangerous waters encircling the cape. They tell of a Hero who seeks out why the river has gone dry. Walking up its dry bed, he comes upon a great frog who has entirely ingested it. He rips out a great tree and smashes it down on the frog, releasing the waters to flow again.

The branches from that tree’s impact made all the tributaries in the watershed. Individually they may be mapped and named until they mingle in the sea. Supporters like you are like those tributaries, and though we, at the River’s mouth, do our best to trace them, the impacts of your generosity soon reach beyond reckoning.

SeedTree Program Outcomes Summary: 1995-2022

Trees , diverse, mostly native species, reported planted by hundreds of youth, farmers, womens’ and community nursery groups in Nepal, (but for a small % in Nicaragua, India, Pakistan and Peru).	5,619,327
Scholarships	112
Wells or pumps	103
Outhouse latrines constructed or restored to service by Eco-Ed participants:	989
Subsidized home latrine/biogas-systems, providing sanitation, clean cooking fuel, compost, destroying the potent greenhouse gas methane.	918
Improved, more fuel efficient, smoke-free cooking stoves, subsidized construction:	2,382
Trained (mostly womens’) group facilitators, given text books and stipend to hold 5-month “Eco-Ed” Classes , motivating thousands to engage in such activities on their own or:	290
recycling/waste management, organic farming, vegetables, bee-keeping, livestock, basket-weaving, saving & credit for ecological, Sustainable income generating projects	

Those who came later by ship, following the setting sun and the stars, arrived with another sense of time and, importantly, value. From early in the 17th century they used the River for log drives that grew until finally stopped in 1976. The alarming aridity coming to the West, warns lest heedless extractive commercial interests consume all forests' precious, life-sustaining waters like the teaching story's frog.

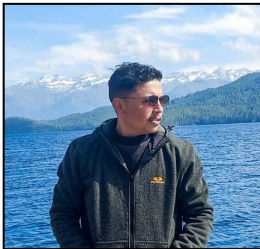
In our early years from 1995, we rode the tidal wave of Community Forestry in Nepal, often introducing it, particularly into various southern regions. Nurseries of up to 50,000 seedlings or more were not uncommon, as even landless poor learned of the opportunities the progressive policy offered them. It has been a privilege to participate in and grow with a program so successful that in the **NY Times** featured **“How Nepal Grew Back Its Forests.”** <https://nyti.ms/3EIPnSG> Yet, like democracy, the work is never done. Needs are changing from establishing Community Forests to administering them profitably and equitably for their communities, while continuing to restore biodiversity in changing climatic, political and economic conditions.

Our restructuring to conform to recommended procedures in Nepal delayed the start of nurseries. In Sindhupalchowk, the changed names of places on the political map confused our record-keeping and reporting. Bhotsipa where we began in 2020-21, is now Indrawati Gaupalika, (rural municipality) on the steep eastern banks of the Indrawati River. Ram reports over 27,000 trees planted by 9 groups there, 4 of which were new.



Ram Gautam guides nursery making.

Our Scholarships were emphasized in 2022. Besides serving as a fiscal umbrella for Himalayan Conservation and Research Institute's needs-based support of three students in Dolpa, SeedTree was able to offer three of our own. Two of these were offered at the Agriculture and Forestry University AFU in Hetauda, Nepal. From three impressive applications for the SeedTree Rob Lillieholm Research Grant, the Scholarship Committee: Suraj Upadhaya, Brian Roth, Rob Lillieholm, and Beeju Paudyal selected the well written proposal of Dipesh Karki. His research into “Pattern of Regeneration and Leaf Traits of *Rhododendron campanulatum* Along Elevation Gradient in Western Nepal,” will take him into Karnali Province where he is shown here by Rara Lake, Nepal's largest. We wish him all success in his research and future career.



Dipesh Karki

Since our third SeedTree Kate Kinley Gregg Work-Study Scholar, Sadhana Ranabhat has completed her Masters and taken a forestry position in her home District of Tanahau, Kate wanted to support a fourth from 2022.



Kushum Kumari Khadka

We issued a call for applications, received and reviewed many from young women students embarking on their college careers at AFU. Beeju Paudyal, Kate's first Work-Study Scholar, who is now an Assistant Professor at AFU, took the lead the recipient who was to be a female student selected on the basis of need, academic achievement and desire to make a career in a mission-related field. Kushum Kumari Khadka of Karnali, whose father's health related loss of work had jeopardized her ambition to become a forester, was awarded the grant. Kushum is just entering her 2nd semester at AFU and looks forward to working with SeedTree in the years ahead, so far as her priority academic studies allow. She wrote: “ This opportunity of scholarship has filled hope in me If I get selected ... I vow to make the best use of it and continue my

education with a great effort. I will get chance to engage in environmental researches, projects and programmes ... fruitful for my study and future ...[when] being a forester, I will serve ... the community and the nation through the environmental conservation works." We are glad to have such an earnestly dedicated young woman join our team.

A third Work-Study Scholarship was prompted by sending an article (<https://tinyurl.com/2bpxyar>) about the Amazon's largest fish "saving the rainforest" to Adam Stone in Peru. He told me his wife is studying fisheries and agroforestry at the Universidad Nacional Intercultural de las Amazonia, promising fields for regions human ecology, and asked if I knew anyone who could help.



Netenkena Luz with their 3 children in 2020 (left) and in boat about 2011.

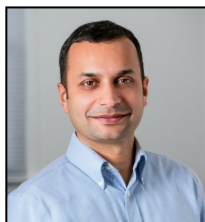
UNIA has a large tree nursery, fish ponds and a hatchery, selling baby *paische*, the local name for the giant fish. I first met Netenkena (Bella) Luz in 2007, arriving at Tierravida just days after the birth of their daughter, Naya (whose birthday we share) and know them as neighbors in Maine. With Adam, she will be putting her learning into action. Prophesy Chocolate, a buyer of Peruvian cacao for their hand-crafted treats, is supporting Seed-Tree/NiBero projects, presently including completion of the well already begun, an adjoining fish pond, and a tree nursery at Tierravida Benxote, their base on an oxbow lake near Pucallpa, Peru. Many of the seedlings grown will be planted as part of ecotours to villages on the Ucayali River or its tributaries or at our EcoReserve, Fundo Nahua (deep in Nahua lands), managed by the local NGO we founded, NiBero. Already there, mahogany, cedro (*Cedrela odorata*, also in the mahogany family Meliaceae), the medicinal *sangre de grado* (*Croton lechleri*), and cacao trees have been planted.



Zoom of seed to be planted from Adam's own planted Cedro tree.



I chose an older, rosy luminous photo of Netenkena Luz, whose indigenous Shipibo name means sunrise light, as she was born at dawn. It also shows how she will travel to UNIA in nearby Pucallpa, and echoes our theme of the intimate relation between the Amazon's great forest and its rivers. It is estimated that the forest produces more than half its own rain. Such developments as UNIA, the ecologically sound livelihoods it promotes, the end of the rapacious, (frog-like) regime downstream in Brazil, all offer a new dawn of hope that delicate, vital balance will endure.



Gaurav Tiwari

With our Nepal Programs Manager having taken on her new responsibilities at AFU, managerial support was needed. Propitiously, Gaurav Tiwari, a 2008 SeedTree intern, will be coming to the USA to join his wife who is doing PhD in Boston. He wants to help with SeedTree initially as a volunteer. With his Master's in Public Diplomacy, impressive international consulting experience with NGOs and the World Bank, we share his optimism. Already he has done a lot to reactivate our internal communications which have been set back since covid. Before leaving Nepal, he visited our Kathmandu office and branches in Sindhupalchowk and Chitwan. Most recently Gaurav met with Satyanarayan Chaudhary who was SeedTree/Nepal Indigenous Development Coordinator 1995-1997 for some of our most productive early work. Satya, a graduate of the agricultural branch of AFU in Chitwan, is fluent in English, Nepali and his native Tharu, widely spoken in Chitwan. A former teacher in his community, Satya also taught about his Tharu culture as a graduate assistant at U. Michigan and has spent years living in America. We've recruited him to act as translator/teacher/guide for Ethan Olson, a former student of Brian Roth and current forester with SAPPI in Maine. Ethan has secured a pledge from his employer to visit Nepal in March to learn and work with us there.

We are planning and preparing a productive visit for Ethan. Satya, a graduate of AFU in Chitwan, is fluent in English, Nepali and his native Tharu, widely spoken in Chitwan villages. He excelled in the Participatory Appraisal process that is the foundation of our work in the communities. Their work together can also serve as a refresher course for our branch Manager there.

So, as the tide turns under our narrow bridge, we see the expanses of the mainland and the future opening before us and are grateful to all donors and doers who have helped us cross!



Carol Kamala Kinsey
Executive Director