

Riverine Ecosystems Health Project of Iraqi Kurdistan

Waterkeepers Iraq receives funds from the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for a River Ecosystem Health Project to look at threats from gravel mines and dams.

Dukan Dam



The era of large, modern dams on our rivers began in the mid-1900s as the the country sought complete control of water resources for agriculture, to generate power, and to prevent flooding in Baghdad. These dams have been promoted as good for the development of our country.

Hasankeyf



We need to evaluate carefully whether these large projects are really necessary and try to understand whether the benefits really outweigh the long-term costs before it is too late for our rivers.

Dukan Dam



There are winners and there are losers and these dams projects have both good and bad effects that need to be fully considered

Chamy Basara



The many tributary rivers and streams that flow through Kurdistan and feed the Tigris River have flowed free and unchained since before recorded history. Rivers are the veins of our country and when large dams are built, they cut up the rivers unnaturally.

Elwha Dam



All over the world and even closer to home, people are protesting and saying no to large dam projects. From the Ilisu and Cizre Dam projects in Turkey, to the Belo Monte Dam in Brazil, people are coming together to question the need for projects that have so many negative impacts. In other parts of the U.S., Latin America and Europe, people are now starting to remove dams to try and restore their river ecosystems.

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Lesser Zab



In-Stream Gravel Mining has been done in Kurdistan, as elsewhere in the world, because the gravel in rivers is easy and cheap to access. But if it is done improperly it can transform fertile farmland and riverside woodlands into a forever barren landscape and damage the river's health, water quality and biological diversity

Lesser Zab



Gravel is important in our economy and is used in cement to literally build our cities. But there are proven ways to mine that better protect our rivers, such as dryland gravel mining away from rivers or at least not mining directly in the river itself ... And if there is no other option, than we must reclaim and restore the river after mining is done.

Goptapa - 2004



Goptapa - 2014



We have so many gravel mines in our rivers that they never have an opportunity to recover. We just see our river forests destroyed, our farmlands eroding away, our water quality declining and fewer fish and other animals that depend upon healthy rivers.

Chamy Razan



Kurdistan is blessed with an abundance of rivers and streams. But many of our rivers have been damaged each year by a practice that's been accepted for decades.