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## **Duck River named among America's Most Endangered Rivers® of 2024**

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, the Duck River, Tennessee's prized waterway renowned for its biodiversity and cultural significance, joins the list of America's Most Endangered Rivers® of 2024. Threatened by excessive development and unsustainable water consumption, urgent action is needed to safeguard this vital ecosystem.

"If we want reliable clean drinking water, and if we want the Duck River to continue sustaining its communities, we must take action now to protect it," said Anabel Winitsky, American Rivers.

Lauded as the most biodiverse freshwater river in North America, the Duck is recognized as one of three global hot spots for fish and mussel diversity and is home to many endangered and threatened species. The river is the drinking water source for nearly 250,000 people and provides water for the region's growing population and industry. The river is the backbone of the local outdoor recreation economy, with more than 150,000 people enjoying the river and its tributaries each year.

Tennessee is one of the fastest growing states in the nation, and explosive growth in Middle Tennessee is having a major impact on local waterways, including and especially the Duck River. Population and industry growth has led to extreme development pressures, and local water utilities are trying to dramatically increase the amount of water they withdraw from the Duck. Inadequate long-term management and unsustainable overconsumption of water from the Duck threatens to drain the river during periods of low flow and drought, putting the river's aquatic inhabitants at risk and threatening long-term water supply for local communities.

"Right now, we're on a collision course. This river is our lifeblood, but poorly planned growth will suck the river dry. The good news is, we can change course and wisely manage our water to protect the river, our economy, and quality of life," said Grace Stranch, CEO of Harpeth Conservancy.

American Rivers and partners call on Tennessee Governor Bill Lee to protect the Duck River by convening a technical working group to develop a comprehensive water use plan and by securing funding for much-needed studies to understand the flow needs of the river. These steps can help ensure the river's long-term health for communities and aquatic species.

The Duck River flows 269 miles through seven counties in Middle Tennessee. It is one of the top three most biodiverse rivers in the world, home to 22 aquatic snail species, 56 mussel species and 151 fish species. Many species in the Duck are federally listed as endangered or threatened, including some whose only remaining viable populations are found in the river.

The annual America's Most Endangered Rivers® report is a list of rivers at a crossroads, where key decisions in the coming months will determine the rivers' fates. Over the years, the report has helped spur many successes including the removal of outdated dams, the protection of rivers with Wild and Scenic designations, and the prevention of harmful development and pollution.

In recent years, other rivers in the region have been listed as most endangered due to toxic chemical pollution, sewage pollution and excessive water withdrawals. They include the Mississippi River in 2022, and the Holston River and Harpeth River, both listed in 2015.

American Rivers reviews nominations for America's Most Endangered Rivers® from local groups and individuals across the country, and selects rivers based on three criteria:

- 1) The river's significance to people and wildlife
- 2) The magnitude of the threat to the river and communities, especially in light of climate change and environmental injustice
- 3) A decision in the next 12 months that the public can influence

## **America's Most Endangered Rivers® of 2024**

### **#1: Rivers of New Mexico**

Threat: Loss of federal clean water protections

### **#2: Big Sunflower and Yazoo Rivers (MS)**

Threat: Yazoo Pumps project threatens wetlands

### **#3: Duck River (TN)**

Threat: Excessive water use

### **#4: Santa Cruz River (AZ, Mexico)**

Threat: Water scarcity, climate change

### **#5 Little Pee Dee River (NC, SC)**

Threat: Harmful development, highway construction

### **#6 Farmington River (CT, MA)**

Threat: Hydro dam

### **#7: Trinity River (CA)**

Threat: Outdated water management

### **#8: Kobuk River (AK)**

Threat: Road construction, mining

### **#9 Tijuana River (CA, Mexico)**

Threat: Pollution

### **#10: Blackwater River (WV)**

Threat: Highway development

## **About American Rivers**

American Rivers is championing a national effort to protect and restore all rivers, from remote mountain streams to urban waterways. Healthy rivers provide people and nature with clean, abundant water and natural habitat. For 50 years, American Rivers staff, supporters, and partners have shared a common belief: Life Depends on Rivers<sup>SM</sup>.

[www.AmericanRivers.org](http://www.AmericanRivers.org)