

# Ecological Restoration Brief

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## A Visit with SER Nepal

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In March TXSER board member William Forbes visited SER Nepal as part of a trip to plan a May 2017 service-learning study abroad course at Stephen F. Austin State University. SER Nepal was started by a young scientist/researcher with Dr. Dhananjay Regmi becoming chapter president in 2011. Dr. Regmi studied at the University of Arizona under restorationist Don Falk and received his Ph.D. in geography from Japan. Like many Nepalis, his considerable energy extends beyond his business ownership to other endeavors, including initiating activities of SER Nepal.

The chapter has conducted the following activities: 1) planted over a thousand trees along the sacred Bagmati River within the city of Kathmandu, involving numerous community organizations and volunteers; 2) planted landscaping trees at Kalkani, a key western entry/exit point of the city that receives more air pollution than other parts of the city; 3) established a tree nursery on the southern outskirts of Kathmandu (at Chalnakhel) to support future tree planting initiatives of SER and other organizations; 4) built over 500 bamboo houses, specially designed to withstand future tremors, for villagers displaced by the April 25, 2015 earthquake.



**SER Nepal**  
**Photo Credit: William Forbes**



**L-R - William Forbes, Ram R. Rijal  
& Ramchandra Lama**  
Photo credit: SER Nepal Staff

SER Nepal is operated by Dr. Regmi's assistant Ram R. Rijal, who also completed his graduate studies (masters' degree) in Nepal and Japan, in Ecological Anthropology. Ram is pictured here in the middle with Dr. Forbes on the left and nursery manager/retired forester Ramchandra Lama on the right. The nursery uses many containerized seedlings to achieve better survival. The typical planting season is June, at the beginning of the monsoon rains that run through September. Nepal is a northern hemisphere nation at subtropical latitude, with some tree dormancy November to February. The extended dry season from October to May affects seedling survival. Higher elevations (4,000 feet near Kathmandu to 7,000 feet at the valley rim) support native temperate tree species such as beech, oak, pine, and willow along with lapsi (*Choerospondias axillaris*), chilaune (*Schima wallichii*) and kattus (*Castanopsis indica*), dominant in mid-elevation forests, and the lowland, flood tolerant simal tree (*Bombax ceiba*).

As with many restoration projects around the world, natural and human-caused challenges occur, such as plant survival and

competing land use. Many of the riverside tree plantings were removed by a government flood control project, despite prior coordination. SER Nepal's recent priority has been helping villagers recover from the earthquake. Future activities may include: 1) more tree plantings to reduce erosion, flooding and pollution; 2) research on what trees are best at air pollution mitigation; 3) construction of "rain gardens" around village wells, to assist infiltration and storage of groundwater; 4) and possibly a tree planting including Texas students in May 2017!



**SER Nepal Seedlings**  
Photo credit: William Forbes

**The Society for Ecological Restoration, Texas Chapter promotes ecological restoration as a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and re-establishing an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture.**

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