

For Immediate Release

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## JRS Announces New Grant Award to Develop a Rivers Biodiversity Information System for the Cape Floristic Region, South Africa

SEATTLE, Washington – 31 October 2017 – The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is pleased to announce a new \$273,000 award to the Freshwater Research Centre (FRC) to develop a biodiversity information system for evaluating long-term change in rivers in the Cape Floristic Region, South Africa. The project will be led by Dr. Helen Dallas, Director at the FRC, and stems directly from a previously awarded [JRS Planning Grant](#).

The unique freshwater biodiversity of South Africa's Cape Floristic Region is under enormous pressure from climate change, human activities and invasive species. River health is deteriorating faster than it can be measured. The data that do exist suggest that human impacts have, and continue to, severely compromise biodiversity. This can have serious adverse consequences for ecosystem services, such as the provision of food and safe, clean drinking water.

The region lacks an informative and accessible database for hosting river biodiversity data, impeding assessments of historic and current river conditions. Such information is critical to establish baselines and patterns of change, which are, in turn, necessary to help predict the impacts of future changes to the region's freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The FRC will coordinate a broad group of regional partners to develop a tool that will facilitate a consistent flow of biodiversity data from partner institutions and from strategic sampling sites on CFR rivers. Data from a range of contributor types will be assembled into a reputable, full-featured, open-access database. By creating an integrated, interactive resource for accessing information, the FRC and its partners seek to improve knowledge of Cape Floristic Region freshwater biodiversity and long-term river trends, thereby strengthening the role of data in resource management and conservation.

The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is the only conservation donor dedicated to increasing access to biodiversity data and information in sub-Saharan Africa. The award to the FRC contributes to a growing constellation of JRS awards in southern Africa that work to create richer data sets and information platforms for freshwater biodiversity. Related projects include the [IUCN Lake Malawi biodiversity program](#), the [University of Botswana Okavango Delta data portal](#), and the [University of Cape Town dragonfly and damselfly atlas](#).

See "[Freshwater Research Centre \(2017\) – Healthy Rivers Initiative](#)"

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**About the JRS Biodiversity Foundation** – The mission of the JRS Biodiversity Foundation is to increase access to and use of information that will lead to greater biodiversity conservation and more sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. Founded in 2004, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation supports biodiversity data and knowledge tools that are used to preserve biodiversity in developing economies where biodiversity is most threatened. The foundation has awarded \$16M in grants since 2007. Visit online at <http://jrsbiodiversity.org>

**About the Freshwater Research Centre** – The FRC is a non-profit organization that undertakes research across a range of disciplines in the field of freshwater science. The FRC aims to achieve a thorough understanding of how freshwater ecosystems are structured and how they function, to improve the ability to use water resources sustainably, and to predict the effects of climate change and other human-related impacts on the integrity of freshwater ecosystems. Members are specialist river and wetland ecologists, with collective research experience exceeding 150 years. Visit online at <http://frcsa.org.za/>

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