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**Rivers Are People Too** New Zealand's Whanganui River is about to be granted personhood. After the indigenous Maori people filed to protect the 180-mile meandering waterway, the country's government agreed to grant it legal rights. Following a parliamentary vote scheduled for this year, the river will be given the same rights as a corporation—or a child—with the Maori and the national government each appointing a guardian.

Unlike national parks, which have more stringent protections, the river could be opened for hydropower and other commercial projects. The Maori see the agreement as a victory for their ancestors, who lived off the river for centuries. New Zealand's attorney general, Chris Finlayson, says that with some natural resources, it's important to defer to people who know them best. —Daniel Stone

*The Whanganui is the third longest river in New Zealand.*