

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

Zone of Kneisseh

9 October 2018

CEPF Grant 108784

Friends of Nature

**CONSERVING LEBANON ENDEMIC FLORA THROUGH COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization: The Friends of Nature.
2. Grant title: **CONSERVING LEBANON ENDEMIC FLORA THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.**
3. Grant number: CEPF-108784
4. Grant amount (US dollars): 154,860 \$
5. Proposed dates of grant: October 2018 – October 2020
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Orontes Valley and Levantine Mountains
7. Date of preparation of this document: 9 October 2018.

A. Project background

This area is part of KBA Sannine-Rihane Slopes and heights.

Kneisseh summit fall in the cadastral zone of villages Kneisseh (no municipality), Kfarselwan and Juar el Hawz, though the largest expanse is under the jurisdiction of Kfarselwan village. Kneisseh is again a habitat for many of Lebanon's endemics and many endemics are herein restricted with an extension into the neighboring Sannine summit only. However, Sannine lands have mostly been appropriated and presidentially decreed for urban development into large touristic resorts. Other parts are already occupied with agriculture, and in the last 10 years sand quarrying grew rampant. For that, the conservation of the Kneisseh summit represents a priority and urgency before similar actions infest on its side and threaten the locally very restricted endemics with extinction.

In this landscape, conservation activities will center on the following selected species due to their state of threat and endemism. They will constitute flagship species for the protection of an array of highly valued biodiversity as well. Floral species targeted in this KBA include:

- *Allium sannineum* Gomb.
- *Hieracium kneissaeum* Mouterde
- *Hieracium schmidtii* subsp. *libanoticum* (Boiss. & Blanche) Greuter

As a part of project 108784, FoN intends to support effective conservation of the above species. To reach this objective, several conservation approaches could be combined from micro-reserves in private lands and marginal agricultural lands to 'nature site' status for municipal and public land as a first stage to develop later into a 'nature reserve'. It is to be noted that conservation of the above species and their habitats will extend similar benefits to a range of other endemics.

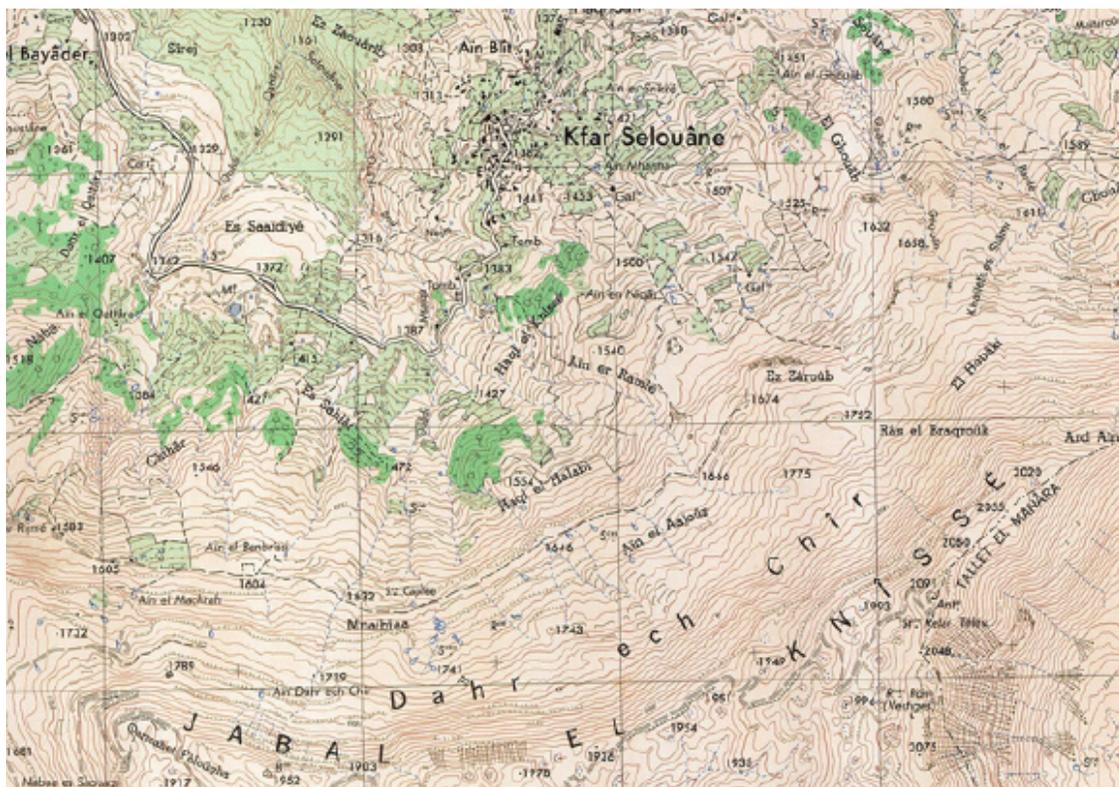
More specifically, FoN will "improve the conservation of SRE in the Kneisseh summit of Sannine-Rihane slopes" through the following activities:

- stakeholder sensitization: which will be attained through individual interactions and series of meetings with heads of local authorities (municipality, mayor..), key and influential social figures, and heads of CSOs, NGOs, and groups.
- botanical training: a one-day workshop will be designed and delivered to stakeholders and institutional members of the KBA at one of the villages or municipalities, all in collaboration with USJ.
- hands-on botanical training: the trained stakeholders and institutional members will follow a hands-on training in the fields joining FON field survey team on field assessments of their endemics.
- SRE field exploration and mapping: will be conducted throughout the growth season to assess

the status in the wild of the selected SRE species. Field survey data will be analyzed to map the species.

- Stakeholder capacity building: a one-day workshop designed first to build stakeholder capacity to recognize conservation measures, then engender their participation at tailoring best conservation approaches to their endemics based on the field surveys (with Dr. Magda)
- Site conservation planning: in coordination with the concerned stakeholders/owners on the terrain and in collaboration with the trained stakeholders to finalize a conservation measure.
- Networking with other conservation modules for future collaboration and exchange of information and success stories either through visit to another reserve or through a workshop.

B. Description of the Area and socio-economic context



MAP OF KNEISSEH AREA

The Kneisseh summit has been totally deforested centuries ago. Villages underlying the slopes of the summit are well inhabited throughout the year with reduced winter migration as observed in other regions. During the civil war, the region of Sannine-Kneisseh was a vantage point occupied by different armies; this has secluded the region from frequenting and development. After the war, the region did not awaken to the rampant urban development trend witnessed in other regions; but unfortunately, other pressures of devastation targeted the region in the form of quarrying for primary material for construction. Quarries have been established on the eastern slopes of the Kneisseh summit, which make actions for conservation the more urgently required.

Other uses of the natural resources are minor. The region is not directly associated with shepherding, which was forbidden during the war, and did not significantly return afterwards because the local community is less reliant on livestock and more dependent on agriculture. Agriculture occurs at the lower

slopes of the Kneisseh mountain close to the villages. Collection of wild plants for communal use is not customary either. Recreational activities have not developed with the exception of occasional trail hiking. Hunting exists, but the site is not a particular hunting destination or front; again, 2018 marked the organization of hunting seasons and prey in Lebanon.

C. Participatory implementation

FoN has a very successful and precedential experience of collaborating with herdsmen toward conservation in the Horsh Ehden Forest Nature Reserve. FoN resorted to redistribution of grazing grounds so as to maintain the protected area outside the grazing zone. FoN is capable of influencing a similar approach in the Kneisseh area, should the need arise though it is not anticipated.

Limited contact has been engendered with local stakeholders at the time of project design in order not to create apprehension while FoN cannot fully engage locally; we have learnt from previous conservation activities that consistent presence and participation with local community is fundamental to inspire confidence in the benefits of our intervention, and to engender positive interaction. Generally in Lebanon, throwing ideas and disappearing is viewed as unfounded and lacks commitment, which reflects an atmosphere of distrust and reluctance to engage on the part of the community.

In implementation, FoN will adopt a "participatory approach" at engaging local community and stakeholders in conservation planning, since it provides better, faster and more sustainable results. Accordingly, the addressed stakeholders will include:

- Local authorities: The project will first target local authorities (municipalities, mayors,..) to inform them of the significance of their biodiversity and natural heritage, to engender their support, and to activate their sense of responsibility for their resources and communities. Local authorities are essential to be well informed and engaged from the beginning in order to pave connection with the local community and to follow on all the progress of the project, so we would collaborate on gradually enhancing their capacities to respond to the public views and complement with effectiveness in undertaken actions. Municipalities will be individually approached at this stage.
- Key influential stakeholders: such as local politicians, prominent figures, religious entities, and other will be addressed and engaged to facilitate collaboration with the community, impact social views, and modify behavioral trends, since these stakeholders have their own platforms to infuse information and trends to their communities as alternatively to respond to community needs and feedback. They will be individually approached to endorse the project and take part in its activities and outcomes.
- Local communities: they will be engaged through several means including dissemination of information, sensitization, enlightened to the endangering threats, and acceptance of their role in biodiversity preservation and abating damage as individuals and collectively as communities. These approaches are important at generating community acceptance and confidence in our involvement, so the community would positively react to our mission. Different community segments will be targeted differently through the appropriate sensitization tools and several times if need be, until local community becomes conscious enough to advocate species conservation. Definitely all segments will be first contacted to set the platform for a first engagement.
 1. Schoolteachers and students will be addressed at schools through lectures.
 2. Local NGOs, CSOs, youth and general public will follow common lectures.
 3. Threat inducers if later identified.

Participatory conservation plans and Innovative modules:

- Community-designed conservation and management plans will be established for the designated species and habitats. A workshop will be organized combining all active community members and

institutions aiming to collect the feedback of the community on their perception of effective conservation techniques and applications, and efficient management plan, in addition to their personal and institutional commitments to conservation. The Ministries of Environment and Agriculture will be invited to provide their input and means of assistance.

- Participants will be divided into working groups and associated with facilitators from FoN. Facilitators will drive the discussions to capture the ideas and the consensus of the communities. A carousel rotation will then be undertaken to ensure the revision of participants to all views and the amassing of their feedback. Community feedback will be drafted into conservation and management plan and distributed to the different parties.
- Potentials for creativity toward innovative modes of conservation of the selected species will be harnessed from the communities in a participatory bottom-up approach. The engagement of the community members will breed modules favorable for their management capacities, and signing their commitment to conservation in ways and means that are applicable to their circumstances.
- As to the legal and formal conservation frameworks, community-designed conservation and management plans, in addition to field assessments, will be formulated into the respective legal frameworks for recognition of the conservation of a site and a species.
 - ♣ A “Nature Site” status can be easily acquired with the assistance of the Ministry of Environment and has an implementation timeframe of 25 years; it will constitute a stepping-stone to move later to an enhanced form of conservation based on the particularities of each species.
 - ♣ Micro-reserve module is the most applicable for privately owned lands. Lebanon already has an experience in this regard.
 - ♣ WAQF protected land is also envisaged for the church lands comprising valuable habitats for the above species.
- Innovative modules of conservation inspired by the communities will require the establishment of new frameworks, such as, conservation contracts with the private sector.

D. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

The project will only consider as affected persons community members whose livelihood depends on natural resources of the region; none was identified till now. Occasional grazing and transient hunting do not support livelihood dependence. Yet, should any restrictions imply livelihood jeopardy, the affected persons or community would be consulted during the project.

E. Measures to assist the affected persons

The measures to assist affected persons will be identified through participatory approach during project implementation and included in the action plan.

F. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism.

During the first weeks of implementation, meetings will be organized to disclose the objectives and detailed activities of the project to the local communities. The contact information of FoN, as well as of the Middle East Program Officer from Regional Implementation Team (Sharif Jbour) and the CEPF Grant Director (Pierre Carret) will be provided. The grievance mechanism will be explained to stakeholders in the one-day workshop dedicated to build their capacity to recognize conservation measures and to engender their participation at tailoring best conservation approaches. From previous experience, opening grievance and complaint mechanisms prior to establishing a well commanded understanding of the project and its perpetual benefits would inspire the rise of unlearned complaints assuming forfeiting of social rights when they are not yet prepared to make a discerning decision. The timing of this issue is very

delicate; mistakes would be detrimental for we could end up quelling fears rather than creating objectivity toward conservation. A list of all contacts will again be provided to local stakeholders. A poster will thereafter be placed in the concerned municipalities explaining the complaint mechanism and providing the contacts.

The conflict resolution follows a four steps approach:

- a- Any complaints would be addressed first by FoN. Upon reception of the complaint, the project lead would organize a meeting with a representative of the municipality and the person complaining, to find a solution.
- b- If no satisfactory solution is found, the complaint will be raised to RIT Programme Officer (Sharif Jbour) and Grant Director for mediation.
- c- If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail.
- d- If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.”

Grievances raised by the grantees will be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team for CEPF (Birdlife International) and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response.

G. Implementation Arrangements

Upon launching of implementation, FoN will organize series of meetings with the various stakeholders defined above under participatory implementation section, they include: local authorities, officials, politicians, prominent figures, NGOs, social groups, etc. They will be informed of the objectives of the project and the designed activities with their timetables to enhance collaboration.

Field surveys will be carried out throughout the growth and flowering season of the selected species, recording population information and locations of distribution.

The community will receive botanical training indoors and in the field; this will be followed with capacity building on conservation measures and a participatory dialogue to design conservation plans with the community to protect the SREs.

All stakeholders concerned with conservation will be addressed directly to engage and take their opinion.

The compiled information from all consultations will translate into an action plan. The plan will incorporate lines of action that address the potentially affected people as identified through the consultations and participatory dialogue. A management plan will be formulated taking into consideration all accounts.