

*While the world is focused on so many vital issues – from COVID-19 to racial injustice – our work continues and is having positive impacts on Mediterranean forest landscapes and high-ecological-value forests. People at all levels are increasingly aware of the importance of forest systems and we are working with them in a variety of ways. Read on for Medforval's latest news.*

*Let's stop the circulation of the virus, but not the circulation of news!*

## **Contributing to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration: volunteers needed**



To scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration, the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2021-2030 the **Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UN-DER)**. Various Task Forces are working throughout 2020 to prepare for the Decade. One of these is the Task Force on Best Practices, preparing the ground for future knowledge capitalization and dissemination. Thanks to a solid background in restoration initiatives, and current involvement – with the Al-Shouf Cedar Society – in a MAVA project on Forest and Landscape Restoration, **Medforval has become a member and a technical partner of the Task Force on Best Practices.**

Medforval will collect information on forest restoration activities and assess the extent to which they reflect the guidelines of the Global Partnership for Forest Landscape Restoration. In summer 2020 Medforval will interview organizations which have implemented ecosystem restoration with resulting social and economic benefits, a survey which will be conducted under the umbrella of UN-DER, and contribute to one of the outputs expected of the Task Force. If you are interested in taking part in this survey on forest restoration initiatives, with a questionnaire and interview, please contact Medforval at the address below.

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Photo: National Park Köprülü - Antalya

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## European Partnership on Biodiversity: Medforval's proposals



Now, more than ever, it is crucial to support the implementation of the 2030 European Biodiversity Strategy and foster the European Green Deal. The European Partnership on Biodiversity will implement **an ambitious programme to help ensure that, by 2030, nature in Europe is back on a path towards recovery** (see Executive Summary from BiodivERsA). Medforval recently participated in an online consultation for the Partnership which closed on 10 July. The consultation, open to institutions and organizations, both collected feedback on the Partnership and gathered proposals for its further development. **Medforval's participation aimed at ensuring that European biodiversity tools best protect biodiversity and natural sites** in Mediterranean forest landscapes. Our comments underlined the importance of focusing on dissemination, outreach, training, monitoring and ready access to information on nature-based practices. We proposed two additions to the Partnership: one is centred on **the active inclusion of enterprises**, through Expressions of Interest and peer-to-peer initiatives; and the other on **the creation of a register of sites**, similar to those of Medforval, that can host activities and implement on-the-ground nature-based solutions.

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## Protecting forests, involving people





Summer is upon us, and **the danger of forest fires increases every day**. Timely reporting of fires is a crucial means of defending our forests. A new project – ABCD (Astroni forests: know and defend) – has developed and released **an app that allows people to report fires and other dangerous situations**. The Astroni Crater Reserve, Italy, with the University of Naples, the Pozzuoli council, the Park of Campi Flegrei, ARDEA and other associations and private companies, is working on **a forest fire prevention strategy** that combines technological solutions and involves people in voluntary activities. Along with the app, a video surveillance system is being created to identify fire outbreaks. Since the beginning of July people have been taking part in **fire detection activities and cleaning the areas** outside the Astroni Crater Reserve to create fire breaks to protect the Astroni forest areas.

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Photo: Astroni Crater Reserve

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## Natural and cultural heritage in the Shouf Biosphere Reserve



Understanding the links between biodiversity and cultural values is key to preserving the ecological functionality and cultural heritage of the Shouf landscape, Lebanon. Preliminary results of ongoing monitoring activity focusing on the biodiversity of the farmlands in the buffer zone of the Reserve, particularly traditional stonewall terraces, are now available, and will contribute to the **conservation and restoration of extensive agro-forestry habitats**. Monitoring has been carried out for the past three years, with the technical assistance of Italian, Spanish and Lebanese specialists and teachers from Lebanese universities.

Research is also defining the **baseline data to monitor the effectiveness of the Reserve's restoration, sustainable management and governance activities**. In a first phase, 30 sampling sites were identified in the core and buffer zones of the Reserve, including different land management types, with indicators being plants, insects, birds and herpetofauna; **we recorded around 320 species of plants, 30 families of insects, 20 species of birds and 10 species of herps**. The second phase of monitoring began in April 2020. Results so far show that sustainable agriculture practices (e.g. restored terraces) yield similar biodiversity data to abandoned agriculture lands that have been colonized by the original woodlands.

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