



Area-based
conservation
as a key tool for
delivering
SDGs

BUILDING ON NATURE

CITATION

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Case study

15
LIFE
ON LAND



Co-benefit
SDGs

1
NO
POVERTY



11
SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



13
CLIMATE
ACTION



Robin Moore,
Global Wildlife
Conservation
and S.Blair
Hedges, (Temple
University).



Private conservation of remnant forest ecosystems to support sustainable development

Grand Bois Privately Protected Area, Haiti



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Background: Haiti's biodiversity is threatened by the almost complete loss of primary forest cover, which has been reduced by some estimates to approximately 0.3 per cent of the original;⁶⁷ one of the highest losses in the tropics. Forests have continued to be destroyed even within national parks and 42 out of the 50 highest mountains have lost all their primary forest.⁶⁸ Even taking into account technical concerns disputed among experts,⁶⁹ less than one per cent of primary forest remains, placing biodiversity in peril.⁷⁰ Deforestation has already caused the extinction of endemic species, by inference, and many more species are under severe threat.⁷¹

Sustainability challenge: The primary pressures include smallholder agriculture and charcoal production.⁷² There are larger areas of secondary forests and plans for reforestation,⁷³ but any forests other than primary forests will support only a small fraction of the original biodiversity. Some timber use, including some charcoal

production,⁷⁴ may be sustainable, but the critical conservation priority is to preserve the fragments of primary forests that remain, where many of the endemic species are concentrated.⁷⁵

One of the most important remaining forest areas is on the isolated Grand Bois mountain, with substantial forest cover remaining above a thousand metres.⁷⁶ Two research expeditions documented 68 species of vertebrates, including 19 amphibian species, giving this area the distinction of being home to one of the largest groupings of co-occurring frog species anywhere in the Caribbean.⁷⁷ Grand Bois is found in Haiti's Massif de la Hotte mountain range, the number one priority conservation site in the country and one of the most important sites for amphibians in the world.⁷⁸ Because 19 Critically Endangered amphibian species are restricted to this single area globally,⁷⁹ Massif de La Hotte has been recognised as an Alliance for Zero Extinction site,⁸⁰ and probably has the world's largest number of

Case study



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known AZE species in a single site.⁸¹ It is also within a Key Biodiversity Area, a nationally identified site of global significance for biodiversity.

Conservation solution: The NGO, Global Wildlife Conservation, has partnered with Rainforest Trust and the local NGOs, Haiti National Trust and Audubon Society of Haiti, to buy the country's first privately protected area on Grand Bois in 2019. The new reserve broadly overlaps with the newly declared Grand Bois National Park, established by the Haitian government in 2015, but where logging was continuing and new approaches were urgently needed. The privately protected area covers about 5 km² including a core of primary forest, offering protection to several rare species found nowhere else on Earth. These include the Critically Endangered Ekman's magnolia tree (*Magnolia ekmanii*), known only from Grand Bois, and the Tiburon streamfrog (*Eleutherodactylus semipalmatus*), until a recent expedition, thought to have been long extinct.

The forest was already being protected to some extent by local people, who recognised its role as a water tower and a means of preventing the landslides that have proved deadly in large parts of the island. There is local community support for conservation of the area, and continued work on long-term restoration around the site. By purchasing the site directly, and employing local people as rangers, the Haiti National Trust is hoping to secure biodiversity, provide disaster risk reduction and water services to local and more distant communities, and also prevent further losses of unique biodiversity.

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