



• Creativity • Collaboration • Continuity • Community

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FEATURE STORY

CELEBRATING PERMACULTURE DAY AND THE YEAR OF SOILS IN SAIDOUN - MAY 3

This year started off on a very promising note for us when the **United Nations** declared **2015 the International Year of Soils**.

On **May 3, 2015** permaculture organizations and activists around the globe will celebrate **International Permaculture Day** by organizing activities dedicated to raising awareness about soil and introducing sustainable solutions to preserve and regenerate it.

CELEBRATE WITH US

Of course **SOILS** will be taking part in International Permaculture Day. We are making the final preparations with our friends from around Lebanon for a full day of activities in the village of **Saidoun**, so stay tuned to our Facebook page for updates: <https://www.facebook.com/SOILS.PermacultureAssociationLebanon>

If you'd like to take part in the event or help with the preparations, email us at: contact.soilslebanon@gmail.com

WHY SOIL MATTERS

For the permaculture community and, in fact, for all ecologists and environmentally-minded people, **soil** is at the heart of any natural system supporting all forms of life. Soil itself is a living being.

Earthworms, fungi, bacteria and many other organisms make up a complex ecosystem that maintains healthy and fertile soils. We chose the name **SOILS** for our association because it is from the soil that we get all we need, from food to clean water, medicine, fuel, fabrics, building materials, etc.

The 68th UN General Assembly appointed the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) to promote the importance of preserving and regenerating soils.

Check out and download the toolkits and communication materials on their website: <http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/en/>

The Editorial Team

INTERNATIONAL PERMACULTURE DAY

اليوم العالمي للبیرماكلتشر

In the village of Saidoun (Jezzine caza)
في قرية صيدون (قضاء جزین)

Sunday May 3, 2015 الأحد ٣ أيار ٢٠١٥



**STAY TUNED!
THE FULL PROGRAM
WILL BE REVEALED SOON**

See you there!



LET'S FOCUS

THE CIVIL CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT DALIEH, BEIRUT COAST'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Dalieh is a unique natural site along the coast of Beirut, overlooking the emblematic **Raouche** natural rock formation that dominates Beirut's view from the sea and is featured on many of the city's postcards since the 1950's. This **140,000 m²** natural pocket is the last of the coastal headlands. For decades, this area has acted as an unscripted gathering space, and has encompassed a vibrant informal economy revolving around fishing, popular fish restaurants, boat touring, peddling, and scenic photography. Picnickers and strollers flock to Dalieh seeking a short escape from the city.

However, recent developments point to the looming threat of an exclusive private touristic development that would destroy the site's prosperous biodiversity and geomorphological features, and that would erode its sociocultural practices and traditional fishing economy.

The **Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche** was launched in March 2014 to preserve this open-access shared space for all city dwellers and visitors. We are a workgroup of concerned citizens: engaged professionals in architecture and landscape architecture, urban planning and design, archaeology and heritage management. More importantly, we also count among us the users of Dalieh: fishermen, swimmers, environmental activists, artists and designers, along with a coalition of non-governmental organizations.

Since its inception, the campaign has carried out numerous actions including submitting Dalieh's candidacy to the **World Monuments Fund List** for 2016 (the results will be announced in October 2015).

In **March 2014**, after several months of meetings with the Dalieh Campaign, the **Lebanese Ministry of Environment** issued a draft decree classifying Dalieh as a **national protected area** and submitted it to the Lebanese Legislative Court (Shura Council) for approval, after which it would require a vote by the Council of Ministers. While this would protect Dalieh and impose stringent environmental impact assessment requirements on real estate developers, it is not sufficient to rule out construction on the site.

DALIEH FENCED OFF

Dalieh does not fulfill the legal definition of a public space: the site is not publicly owned and its activities are not regulated or controlled by state authorities. During Ottoman rule, and later during the French mandate, most of the western coastline of Beirut was entrusted to the main families of the city as the city's shared commons. The official cadastral property records indicate that since the 1920's up until 1995, these properties had multiple owners among the so-called "old families of Beirut". However, these property titles did not contradict with practices on and perceptions of Dalieh as Beirut's coastal collective common.

Urban and building regulations have kept Beirut's seafront relatively protected for decades (a thorough exposé on the existing legal framework can be found on the Dalieh campaign's website <http://dalieh.org/#campaign>). In 1995 however, Beirut families' small land parcels in Dalieh were purchased by a real estate company that consolidated them together into a single property ownership belonging to several real estate companies, all owned by a wealthy and very powerful Lebanese political figure.

Having used the area for generations, city dwellers had paid little attention to property ownership. However, following a series of recent events, they gradually became aware that Dalieh was privately owned. Since the summer of 2014, rapid transformations have abruptly interrupted Dalieh's social and economic life: fishermen were evicted, their stalls and restaurants demolished, concrete wave-breakers were deposited on the site, damaging its natural vegetation, and the area was fenced off, restricting its access. Numerous clues indicate Dalieh will be turned into an exclusive luxurious private touristic resort like similar developments that have mushroomed along the city's coast over the past decades.

DALIEH, A NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Dalieh and Raouche are the last remaining coastal karstic (limestone) outcrops of the Cretaceous period (around 95 million years ago), containing fossils of sea urchins, oysters and gastropods. Neolithic remains discovered around 1915 suggest that Dalieh was probably the first in-situ flint industry site on the Mediterranean coast, and the first human settlement in Beirut.



Photo by Jala Makhzoumi



Photo by Jala Makhzoumi



Photo courtesy of The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche



Photo courtesy of The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche



Photo by Tala Tabbakh

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SAVE PAPER – Do you really need to print this newsletter?

L.E.T.S. Lebanon

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LET'S FOCUS

THE CIVIL CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT DALIEH, BEIRUT COAST'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Continued from Page 2

Dalieh shelters steno-endemic (critically endangered) species of native coastal plants that are significant to the Lebanese marine ecosystem, now restricted to small areas in Lebanon. Numerous studies (Greenpeace, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Lebanese Ministry of the Environment, etc.) highlight the ecological value of Dalieh as a terrestrial habitat for **fruit bats and birds**, as well as a marine habitat with a network of **underwater caves and vermetid** (worm snails) reefs where a unique marine life flourishes - including a community of **monk seals**.

Dalieh is equally important at the sociocultural level. The Arabic word *dalieh* designates any plant that hangs down, typically on vernacular roof terraces where families, neighbors and friends gather to mark the end of the workday. It was the site of extensive urban agricultural activity until the 1960s, and is still associated with Beirut's traditional fishing history, boosted in the 1950s with the establishment of the Minet el-Dalieh fishing port.

Until the 1960s, it was where Beirutis congregated on the last Wednesday of April every year to celebrate Job's Wednesday (*Arbaat Ayub* - أرבעاء أيوب) commemorating the miracle of the prophet Job, who was healed of his pains after swimming in the sea. Dalieh was also a family picnic site and a destination of "*Siran*" - سيران an activity that involved strolling and food preparation in natural areas. Until recently, it hosted the grand annual Nowroz festivities (Zoroastrian New Year - March 21) celebrated by the Kurdish community.

TAKE ACTION NOW - JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

Become an active member of the campaign by attending our weekly meetings and volunteering for events. Join our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/dalieh.org?fref=ts> or contact us on info@dalieh.org.

1. Enter the competition "Revisiting Dalieh: Calling for Alternative Visions Along Beirut's Coast"

This ideas-competition is open to professionals and students in the design-related disciplines wishing to propose a multifunctional plan to maintain Dalieh as an open-access shared space.

The competition is organized under the patronage of the Lebanese Ministry of Environment, with the support of the American University of Beirut's Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, Nature Conservation Center and Neighborhood Initiative.

For registration or more info, go to <http://dalieh.org/competition.html>

Deadline for registration: May 5, 2015 (the deadline for submissions is May 26, 2015)

2. Spread the word #SaveDalieh

Share stories, personal narratives, family memories and photos on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram using the hashtag #SaveDalieh

Shared by Sarah Lily Yassine - The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche



Photo by Jala Makhzoumi



Photo courtesy of The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche



Photo courtesy of The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche

UPCOMING EVENTS

"THE CYCLING CIRCLE SCHOOL" BICYCLE CLASSES FOR ADULTS



APRIL 13 - MAY 30, 2015

Twice a week
8 professional bicycle riding sessions for adults (18 to 55 years old)

Beirut

\$200 Full course
OR \$33/session

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1584379955182525/permalink/1584394448514409/>

"STORKS PHOTO HUNT" PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



UNTIL APRIL 21, 2015

Open competition for amateurs and professionals. Subject: Storks.
1st prize is a trip to Poland, to visit the stork natural reserves.

<http://www.greenarea.me/9707/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B1/>

"DALIEH IDEAS COMPETITION" CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN



UNTIL MAY 23, 2015

Online donations to fund the Ideas Competition by The Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche (See LET'S FOCUS)

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/dalieh-ideas-competition>



LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

EARTHWORM POWER - MAKING BETTER SOILS... AND TURNING A PROFIT

Try explaining to a curious Lebanese family that your thesis is about treating rotten food waste with earthworms and you are likely to get looks of cringing disgust or, at best, bewilderment. However, when I proposed the subject of **vermicomposting** to my thesis advisor at the **American University of Beirut (AUB)**, I discovered that she and another instructor had been casually experimenting with it and would, surprisingly, welcome a formal approach to the topic.

My research objective was to explore the technical, economic and social aspects of introducing vermicomposting in Lebanon for a microenterprise. The country has a **solid waste management problem** (roughly **60% of which is organic**), and agriculture depends on high-cost imported synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, to the detriment of small family farms and the environment. Vermicomposting would address both issues, and the microenterprise model could stimulate local economies in communities that are, in many cases, in dire need of investment.

With the funding I received from the **Abillama Eco-Entrepreneurship Award**, I was able to take the theories in my thesis and put them into practice by actually establishing **vermicomposting microenterprises** in different parts of Lebanon. To date, I have several satellite projects that are contributing to the vermicomposting experience locally. First, in collaboration with a team from AUB, we set up a demonstration and dissemination site on the university's campus. In the village of **Qsaibe** in the Metn, known for its carob molasses, an ongoing experiment will determine if carob waste is suitable for vermicomposting - the results so far are very positive. In **Damour** (Mount Lebanon), I'm working with a banana farmer to vermicompost his banana waste. And in **Bchetfine** (Mount Lebanon), I'm helping a local enthusiast establish his own production system which will soon bring in profits.

But my "baby" is a project in the foothills of Beirut. In partnership with the **Samen Eco-Gardens of Fanar**, we are building a vermicomposting enterprise to treat the waste from 25 surrounding households. This represents approximately **600 kilograms of organic waste per month** that will be processed via magical earthworm digestion instead of meeting its fate in an overflowing landfill. This will enable us to sell the resulting **300 kilograms of nutrient-rich vermicast** - an organic soil amendment efficient at both enhancing the fertility of the soil and deterring plant pests and diseases. Although still in the works, we hope that the business will have a positive social impact on the community by providing work opportunities for those in need, be they women or refugees. With time it may even become a cooperative that provides support to farmers interested in starting their own vermicomposting systems.

Shared by Sarah Moledor



Photo by Jean-Pierre Tarabay www.jptarabay.com



VERMICOMPOSTING WORKSHOP

A vermicomposting roundtable and workshop will be held at AUB: **April 17, 5:00-7:00 p.m.**

Places are limited, to register, contact Sara Moledor: vermiculturelebanon@gmail.com

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FOOD HERITAGE - TRADITIONAL "LENTIL TABBOULEH" RECIPE FROM SAIDOUN

For most people in Lebanon, and anyone familiar with Lebanese cuisine, **tabbouleh** evokes a salad with finely chopped parsley and tomatoes. But another version of this popular dish is only prepared in the village of **Saidoun - Jezzine caza** (South Lebanon) and nearby Rimat and Hidab. Unlike its more common cousin, this tabbouleh is made with **blonde lentils** instead of tomatoes. It also replaces parsley with **dill**, which is an extremely abundant herb in this area.

The essential oils in dill leaves (particularly anethol) give the lentil tabbouleh a refreshing taste. This salad is mostly prepared in March, April and May, the period of the year when dill leaves are the most tender and lush. You can also use this tabbouleh as a filling for stuffed vine leaves.

INGREDIENTS (FOR 4 PERSONS) - - - - -

- 1 bunch of dill - chopped finely
- 1 cup of blonde lentils - soaked for 12 hours
- 1/2 cup of fine bulgur
- 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil
- 25 g of fresh mint -chopped roughly
- 2 scallions (green onions) - chopped finely
- 2 lemons - juiced
- Salt and pepper - freshly ground

In a salad bowl, mix the bulgur with the lentils, followed by the onions and pepper, the mint and finally the dill. Mix the lemon juice, oil and salt and pour over the salad. Toss and enjoy.

Shared by Toni Khawand



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LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

PLANTING TREES TO BRING BACK A VILLAGE

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now. These powerful words trigger both frustration and determination: the frustration at having missed an opportunity, and the determination to want to wake up and do something about it. This is what prompted me to start **planting trees** in the village of **Dahr El Souan - Mount Lebanon** where I was born and still live. I still like to call it a village although the concrete and asphalt have removed almost every authentic aspect of a traditional village. I still like to believe it's a village, maybe because of the lingering nostalgia and my longing for the pure childhood air I breathed, for the magical mystical paths and spots in which we played, explored, wandered and fed our souls in the woods.

Dahr El Souan was always known for its pine forests and lush nature. In the early 20th century, a group of French specialists found its pure dry air to be perfect for patients suffering from asthma and other pulmonary diseases, so they built the Bhannès hospital. Since then, the abundance of pine trees have kept Dahr El Souan's air clean and fresh - until recently when the region gradually started losing this aspect.

Where have the woods gone? Where has the imagination evaporated? Where has the innocent wilderness of youth vanished? Where has the pure connection to nature and its sacred beauty disappeared and where will my soul wander for enlightenment? Mother earth has suffered a lot of damage, and is still suffering because of every one of us, even if we do it unwillingly or unknowingly. Fires resulting from littering or criminal intent, cutting down trees irresponsibly and clearing forests for further "development" are pushing back our green areas. Whenever we don't recycle, whenever we use too much paper or paper napkins made from trees, we are not helping. And by doing nothing to stop it, we are in fact contributing to the problem with bigger damages and consequences.

As the saying goes: Realizing we've made a mistake is the first step in overcoming and fixing it. We need to reflect on our behaviors and lifestyles, and consider how they're affecting the earth we live on. Have we given something back to the earth for all the gifts she is giving us? Did we try to look beyond our immediate worldly concerns and see the bigger picture? The earth is the source of life and wellbeing for us, our children and the generations to come. What will be our legacy to them?

Reflecting on all this made me want to talk about it, write about it, then get up and take an action on ground. Last year, I decided to take action and help reverse the course of things. The first thing that came to my mind was the need to plant more trees. As it happened, the Chouf Cedar Nature Reserve was offering saplings of local pine trees (*Pinus brutia*), so it couldn't have worked out any better.

I had approached the municipality who provided a couple of workers to help with the transportation and planting. We set to work and managed to plant 2,150 trees by working for 5 full days. One day, I arranged for a group of children between 10 and 15 years old to help out, and as a reward they each received several trees to plant with their parents in their neighborhoods. We planted the trees on both sides of streets, as well as in bare lands or lands that had been ravaged by forest fires. In doing so, we were inspired by previous reforestation initiatives in the Metn villages of Dhour El Shweir and Mrouge. We also gave trees to people who wished to plant them in their own garden. The municipality bought a special truck to water the young trees, especially since last summer was particularly dry. I personally check on the trees and their state every while and then. After the heavy snows of this winter, I will be inspecting the trees again and tend to those that were damaged or exposed.

Maybe the 2,150 trees that I planted will be a flashback to a past time that lingers in my mind, a past which I and others longing for. Maybe it will inspire people around me - or you, dear reader - to want to do something about it too. If we missed an opportunity 20 years ago, then today is the second best time for us to change something.

Shared by Diana Maatouk



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PHOTO OF THE MONTH

You sent us your submissions and you voted for your favorites. Here it is, the PHOTO OF THE MONTH:
To send us your photos, email us on contact.soilslebanon@gmail.com



Celebrating Spring above Ghosha, Mount Lebanon

Photo by Alexandre Dunoyer

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/alexandredunoyer.photographie>

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GET IN TOUCH, GET INVOLVED


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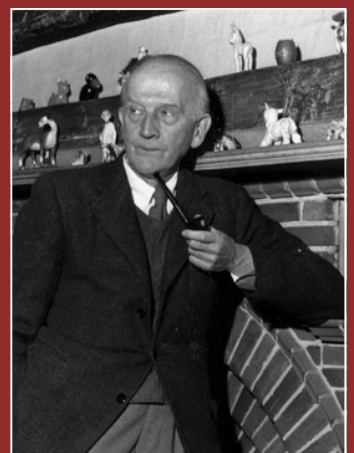
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A THOUGHT TO SHARE ...

"You can't stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes."



**–A. A. Milne (Alan Alexander Milne) - 1882-1956
Winnie-the-Pooh**

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