

20 days in Mekse – Late Spring 2023



I. Land restoration



Beginning of May 2022

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End of May 2023

The decision not to plow and the digging of swales brought back humidity on the land



**Swale trench planted
with poplars**

**Swale hill planted
with oak trees**





Irrigation canals are opened in late spring to keep melt snow water from the mountain on the land before the summer drought



Seedling protection

**If planting poplars produces effects after 3 years,
planting oak trees is a 30 years investment**



Fire prevention with Ayman's herd



Only goats eat thistle

After Wrapped Reichstag and
Wrapped Pont Neuf,
Wrapped trees

In memory of Christo and Jeanne-
Claude and their installations





**Construction
of a
herb spiral
by the entrance**





**Preparation of a site for the Bedouin tent (L:24m, l:5m)
as a shadowed space for religious service, class, and as a
resthouse for visitors**



II. Nature Conservation

3 kinds of meadows are clearly identified on the site

Poor soil

dominated by

Thistle and chicorium endivia



Dry land

dominated by

Wild oat



Rich soil

dominated by

Clover and other legumes





Water inhabitants of the pond
Fishes, frogs, turtles, and a water snake (Natrix)







Dragonflies and damselflies



Butterflies





Lizards



Bees



Wild cocoo bee and a swarm of honey bees caught in a rammed-earth hive





Minotaur emprisonné dans le labyrinthe

III. Education



Chasing Butterflies



Swimming Lesson

Portraits in wheelbarrow





Alouch



Nouh



Yacine



Daher

Next steps



Preparation of the opening

Cluster 001 (cultural space in Mar Mikhail) proposed to organize a festival on biodiversity in late summer for the opening. The mayor agreed on it



Extension of the project next door



Toward A Rocha Center for Biodiversity?

Together with the mayor, we discussed with Dr Rifaat Ghanem, owner of the adjoining land and its unfinished building for renting it in order to develop an A Rocha center next to the land restored by A Rocha.

Dr Rifaat already agreed on that we use the site (the land, the building and the pit) as it is. For instance, we can even put solar pannels on the rooftop.

He also offered to discuss on a lease, a five-years contract with two options: we rent it and manage the work as we want, or we agree with him on the details of the design and materials.

This would be an opportunity for ARL to open an A Rocha center, with a show room for exhibitions on biodiversity. It would bring additional value to the site, and the opening of a shop selling local products would possibly bring an income to A Rocha.

A forest-garden could be developed on the 2 acres land.





The project can be developed step by step, and begin with only two rooms on the ground floor, one for the shop, one for exhibitions