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# Watershed and Biodiversity Conservation on Bonaire

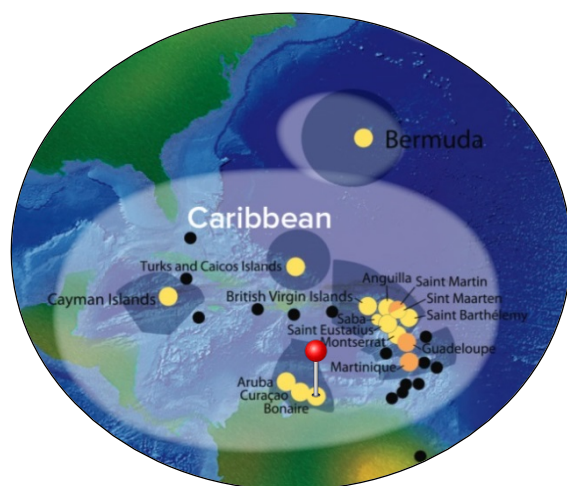
**Targeted territory:** Bonaire

**Total project budget:** 99,862 Euros

**BEST 2.0 grant awarded:** 99,862 Euros

**Duration:** June 2017 – November 2018 (18 months)

**Lead organisation:** Echo Foundation



## Background:

The dry forest habitat on the Caribbean island of Bonaire has undergone dramatic changes over the last two and a half centuries. The impacts of historic tree felling and introduced invasive herbivores, as well as competition from introduced exotic plants have prevented the regeneration of many native plant species. Forest loss has led to a decline of soil fertility due to increased surface water runoff and erosion in the absence of their root systems to bind the soil. Bonaire's dry forest ecosystem is dominated by approximately three to five tree species. Only a few mature large trees remain on the island and several species are almost extinct. They are home to endangered plants, including two *Guaiaecum* species, and birds such as the Yellow-shouldered Amazon parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*), as well as several island endemics.

## Description of the Project:

This project will protect and restore a threatened dry forest habitat by establishing an extensive protected area around a site that exhibits high biodiversity. The site is a unique canyon and part of a large watershed called Rooi Sangu, an important natural heritage site and recognised for its importance to biodiversity. The area is characterised by steep cliffs in which bats may live and parrots and barn owls seasonally nest; large, mature hardwood tree species which serve as food



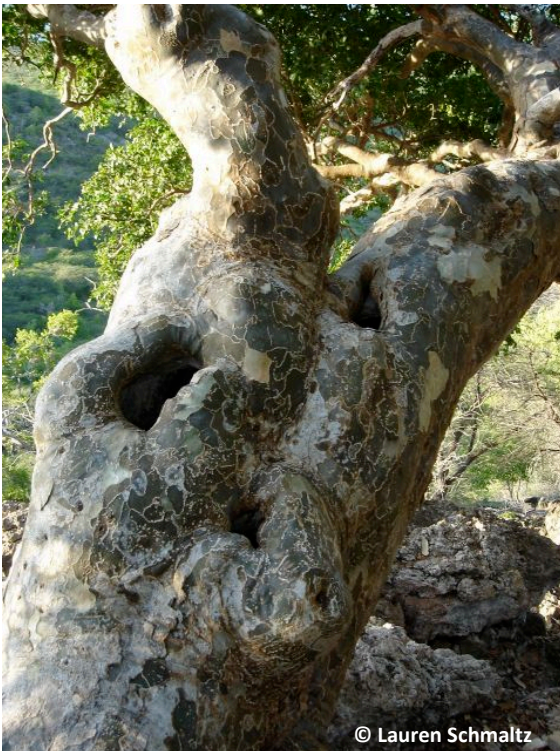
and roosting sites for a diversity of birds; and a deep valley from which surface water flows out over a protected marine reserve. The proposed protected area will include higher and middle terraces, a valley and a portion of a watershed that runs out to a marine reserve.

Fences will be constructed to exclude herbivores from the site while specific native tree and plant species that are absent or under-represented will be reintroduced. A trail system will be developed for education and tourism purposes to increase the opportunity for visitors and residents alike to explore and enjoy nature.

## Intended results:

The project aims to restore and protect the unique canyon landscape of Rooi Sangu so that it can support healthy and diverse populations of plants and animals by:

- Decreasing the damage caused by introduced herbivores within the protected area.
- Improving the accessibility of the protected area to the local community.
- Increasing the presence of rare and important tree species within the site.



## CONTACT

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