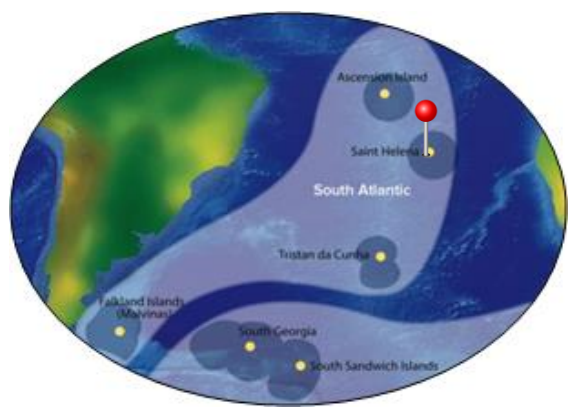




Restoration of Peak Dale's St Helena Gumwood Forest

Targeted territory: Saint Helena
Total project budget: 49,987 Euros
BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 49,987 Euros
Duration: May 2016 – November 2017 (18 months)
Lead organisation: Saint Helena Nature Conservation Group (SNCG)



Background:

The Saint Helena gumwood, *Commidendrum robustum*, is endemic to the island and is listed as critically endangered on IUCN's Red List. Situated towards the isolated Western end of Island, Peak Dale contains the last remnant of Saint Helena's ancient gumwood forest. The forest shows signs of historical neglect due to a lack of resources for its management and restoration and currently there is almost no successful natural regeneration. Many of the surviving individuals are threatened by habitat transformation and damage caused by invasive non-native species (e.g. ring barking by rats and rabbits, trampling of seedlings and soil erosion by feral livestock, smothering by invasive non-native tree species). The gumwood forest is a key habitat and sole refuge for numerous species of flora and fauna, some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

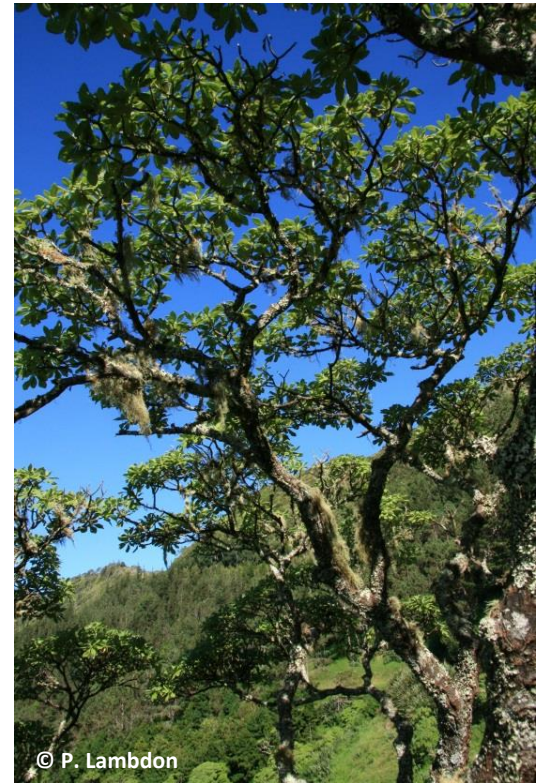
Description of the project:

The project aims to halt the decline of the last remnant of gumwood forest on Saint Helena by undertaking restoration work at Peak Dale. This will inform a best practice technique for gumwood forest restoration that will be applicable to other gumwood species and forest habitats on the island.

Baseline surveys and distribution mapping will be used to establish native and endemic planting areas within the restoration area. The causes of seedling/sapling loss will be identified and measures to mitigate losses will be implemented.

Increasing local capacity to restore gumwood forest and engaging local stakeholders is an integral part of the project; local volunteers will contribute to the clearance and control of invasive species (baiting of rats; clearing of invasive trees; erecting stock-proof and rabbit-proof fencing to protect priority areas within the restoration site) and the restoration planting and surveys of gumwood trees. A management plan for Peak Dale will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders.

A public information and awareness campaign will ensure that the island's population is informed of the project activities. Fostering community involvement will contribute to the long-term sustainable management of the forest.



Intended results:

- Increased local knowledge of suitable restoration techniques and capacity to undertake restoration work to conserve Saint Helena's endemic forest.
- Increased endemic plant biodiversity and increased natural regeneration of gumwoods at Peak Dale.
- Reduced spread of invasive non-native species at Peak Dale

CONTACT

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