

## 5.8 C3 Zone: traditional agriculture

C3 Zones are those in which traditional agricultural activities take place, areas lacking in an intensive-agricultural vocation. Traditional agriculture is carried out almost only at a household level and for domestic consumption. Besides being a typical aspect of local habits and an important form of additional income, this kind of agriculture is an important factor contributing to the diversity of the landscape, rich in animal and plant species, while this area is a sort of buffer zone between man-made and natural habitats.

In general, these areas cannot and should not be subjected to intensive agriculture due to their nature; at the same time, if abandoned, deterioration occurs, erosion above all. For these areas agriculture is a means of improvement, safeguard and protection.

For these areas, apart from restoration and hydraulic-agricultural maintenance, the main objective is to preserve the character of the landscape, endowed with a remarkable beauty. Therefore, it is necessary that traditional cultures and techniques be encouraged and supported, and that typical elements of landscape, such as natural hedges, rows of trees, trees standing alone, alternate cultures, be maintained.

In addition, the Park will have to favour reconversion to self-consumption a valuable production having particular characteristics. In particular, in the C3 zone the use of chemicals in agriculture should be forbidden and the development of organic farming should be promoted. This may be obtained also through technical assistance and financial support provided by the Park Authority. The new kind of production could supply a local high-quality market, supported by other economic activities carried out in the area, above all tourism.

Areas which have been destined for traditional agriculture, indicated in orange on the maps, are located on the borders of the river Kereus's main tributary and in the vicinity of Drazi.

Regulations will have to be prepared for Zone C3 similar to those for C1 Zones. In addition to environmental safeguard, these regulations will have to indicate the utility of the existing buildings and the allowed building volumes.

## 5.9 D Zone: mineral exploitation

Mineral interest zones (D Zones) indicated in grey on the maps, are the fundamental element of local economy, employing a high percentage of the total manpower.

Their presence strongly conditions the local mentality and social composition. Although mining is an element in evident environmental degradation and is incompatible with the philosophy and objectives of a protected area, it is necessary to take note of its presence, which can be modified only by long-term plans. These could foresee gradual discouragement or transformation of mining into low-impact activity, meanwhile offering alternative opportunities.

For this reason, it is deemed that a Reconversion Plan has to be started. Integrated with the Master Plan, exploiting the new job opportunities offered by the Park implementation, this Plan should determine stages and modes of this delicate operation.

Meanwhile, a plan for recovery and environmental reformation of degraded areas or for their utilization for social, touristic and cultural purposes, will have to be prepared.

In this framework, a permanent educational exhibition concerning mining and what it has represented in the evolution of local culture, landscape and economy, may be provided for.

#### **5.10 E Zone: the village of Prokopi**

The E Zone (indicated in checked grey on the maps) includes the village of Prokopi. This is the area destined for the development of the village. Its perimeter has been defined based on the indications provided by its present expansion trend: it will have to be verified and possibly modified depending on the indications of existing or foreseen town plans. Zones for the implementation of structures and support activities necessary for the Park will have to be found in this area. In particular, the following structures are provided for: a Natural History Museum, a Visitors' Center, a Youth Hostel and a Multi-Functional Center for sports, lectures, meetings, etc. so as to create a service and recreation pole capable of supporting recreation activities.

#### **5.11 Natural monuments**

The term "natural monument" has long since entered international protection terminology: it defines a particular natural element (for example a particular geological formation, a tree, a very circumscribed habitat, etc.). Compared to its environment, it has unique features from the landscape, historical, cultural or educational and scientific viewpoints.

For this reason, a "natural monument" requires particular forms of protection. Besides preserving its integrity or ensuring its restoration (if necessary) they have to allow the appropriate status for its full appreciation.

Two exceptional elements have been classified as "natural monuments" in Mount Kandili Nature Park. The Giant Plane-Tree and the Twin plane-trees. Doubtless they are not the only ones in the protected area boundaries: more detailed research will doubtless bring to light others.

#### **5.12 Road system**

The Master Plan provides for the opportunity to regulate traffic in the Park: besides the national road, the main internal roads suitable for use by vehicles are identified. These roads are considered as indispensable to ensure connections and the opportunity to use the whole area.

Interventions aimed at improving the quality and safety of these routes will have to be provided for, putting into practice all the possible devices to ensure environmental protection and improvement.

All of the other routes, such as forest roads, footpaths, fire-protection belts, will be subjected to regulations which will be able to forbid transit on them, but will have to ensure access to all local residents for working activities, access to fields, harvesting, etc. except for A1 and B1 Zones, where vehicle traffic will anyway be forbidden, and for A2 Zones which require to be temporarily closed for sound environmental reasons. In addition, the Implementation Rules will identify routes and circuits on which authorized visitors, guided visitors or controlled/regulated traffic will be permitted.

## **6. Park development: Explanation and objectives**

As already said in this paper, the creation of Mount Kandili Nature Park is proposed also in order to apply the modern principles of "sustainable development dynamic planning" (\*) to the protected area.

This approach implies both planning new development programmes and interventions related to sustainable economic activities, and forecasting the opportunities for requalification and recovery of traditional activities existing in the past, now abandoned or carried out with insufficiently updated methods.

The working group, besides presenting a proposal for habitat conservation and utilization rules, has deemed it important also to indicate a first phase of intervention programs that, if the park is created, can be put into practice in both the medium and the long term.

The advanced proposals concern interventions for the development of environmental tourism, environmental education and interpretation. They are associated with proposals for professional training programs to promote skills and knowledge in the Park population (mainly youths).

Obviously, all of the provided indications are not exhaustive of the possible interventions. Other interventions will have to be planned by the Park Council, considering the needs and expectations of local populations, and land potentials.

### **6.1 Tourism and camping**

The local population will derive social and economic benefits from the creation of Mount Kandili Nature Park according to the results in the field of natural resource (conservation) (\*\*) and even more from the implementation and management of interventions and programmes described in this Plan.

---

(\*) "Compatible development" is meant as the social and economic development of the land, based on some fundamental principles such as:

- protecting balance and ecological processes supporting life;
- protecting the widest possible range of species and ecosystems;
- planning rational and long-lasting utilization of natural resources.

(\*\*) For the correct interpretation of terms "Conservation of Natural Resources" reference is made to the definitions of document "World Conservation Strategy", issued by the international WWF in 1981.

The first element which may give a new impulse to the desired development doubtless is the promotion of a new kind of tourism, linked to the knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage of the Park in all of the seasons of the year.

Tourism flows presently interesting Prokopi are of two kinds: one is typically witnessed in the summer (movement of tourists towards the bathing areas in the north of the island); the other is connected to pilgrimages to the local Sanctuary of St John the Russian.

Nevertheless, these are limited phenomena, and so far they have not been able to ensure a significant increase in employment consonant with the population living in Prokopi, neither relating to activities directly connected to tourism (receptivity, catering, etc.) nor to those indirectly connected (agriculture and handicraft production and marketing, etc.).

Among the various objectives of the Park is that of changing this situation, planning facilities and tourist attractions capable of widening the number of users, and being objects of attraction for a higher number of months of the year.

At this stage, the proposed guidelines for developing and managing tourism in the Park are based on two main indications.

The first guideline provides for the promotion of tourism related to sports, meetings and scientific activities. It strictly depends on the creation of the Park and also on detailed planning of activities and facilities to be created. In other words, it is necessary to devise and implement a "pilot project" proper, utilizing national resources as well as those of the European Community. In the framework of the so-called "Mediterranean Integrated Projects" or equivalent initiatives, it is to lead to the creation and promotion of a national-level sports training center.

This Center could be specialized in sports such as archery, riding, pentathlon, etc. in any case sports requiring exposure to the open air and a continuous intense contact with the natural environment.

Facilities serving this center should be created in the immediate vicinity of the village of Prokopi, in areas set aside for urban expansion, and could also be utilized for meetings, stages, scientific seminars at national and international levels.

The Park Authority will be able to create medium- and long-term detailed projects, technical implementation rules, promotion and management plans.

The second guideline for tourist development concerns short- and medium-term interventions aimed at preparing the network of facilities typical of any Nature Park.

In particular, at this stage the creation of pathways, picnic areas, visitors' centers, self-guided nature trails, interpretation areas, etc. is already proposed. They may be directly created by the Park Authority with limited investment, thus obtaining benefits in relatively short times.

It is worth stressing that the proposed facilities are referred to a kind of utilization which, although considered as "minor", represents an important element of the Park institutional

environmental, social and economic organization, and as such is to be carefully evaluated and planned.

In fact, it is sufficient to consider the impact of daily tourism on the resources the Park has to preserve, or the direct and indirect job opportunities which can be ensured by correct planning, or, finally, problems related to surveillance, approach and assistance, entailed by the mere technical management and control of the Park.

The above interventions and facilities have been identified and indicated on maps.

This part of the Plan describes their meaning in the framework of the Park territory. Some guidelines for their management have been provided, and where it has been possible a proposal concerning technical implementation rules has been advanced. This proposal will obviously have to be optimized in the light of Hellenic laws in specific sectors.

### 6.1.1 Park Gates

In order to give tourists the first useful and indispensable information to visit the park, in the proximity of the main entries park gates will have to be installed, complete with a suitable system of signals.

Suitable panels showing the map of the area, the locations of Visitors' Centers, Museums, routes, etc. will give even the tourist who is absolutely unaware of the Parks existence a rough idea of the protected area.

The criteria for installation of park gates are the following:

- they will have to be located along the main routes entering the Park;
- a suitable space for temporary parking will be provided before near every gate;
- in order to better identify the access gate and to distinguish it from other features such as picnic/roadside rest areas, it is proposed to construct flower beds, hedges, seats, waste baskets, etc.;
- descriptive panels will be well visible but sufficiently high to prevent acts of vandalism.

#### Location:

At a first stage the following gates are projected for along the main access routes:

- St George's Gate, near St George's church, south entry;
- Mandoudi Gate, along the road connecting Mandoudi with Prokopi, north entry;

It will be possible to construct other gates along "minor" access routes: their preliminary location is shown on maps.

A specific access gate will have to be located near the seaside access to the Park.

### 6.1.2 Picnic and Roadside Rest Areas

Picnic and Roadside Rest Areas in the Park are mainly designed for one-day visitors and backpackers. They are areas in the open air, equipped with tables, benches, fireplaces, waste baskets and suitable parking lots.

Preferably they will be constructed near villages, visitors centers, along specially marked routes and wherever the presence of tourists who could need them is foreseen.

**As for general rules of use for installations, picnic and roadside rest areas for tourists will comply with the following requirements:**

- each picnic and roadside rest area must be marked with a suitable guidepost;
- car parks will be provided for each picnic and roadside rest area, their size will be determined by the number of people which the area can sustain, they will be situated at least 10 meters and no more than 50 meters from the area itself;
- the car park grounds, as well as the grounds of the picnic area will have to be left natural, but routes will be constructed so as to afford disabled persons on wheelchairs access to them;
- single parking places will be indicated by barriers made of a free trunk or a row of stones on the ground; the minimum area of a single parking place is 20 sq m;
- a suitable signal system will indicate regulations to be observed (no dumping of rubbish, fires to be lit only in the fireplaces provided, etc.);
- a wooden table complete with benches, fixed to the ground, will be installed for every six persons foreseen in the area;
- the clear space around each table will be 30 sq m;
- areas having more than one table will have a stone fireplace for every four tables; it will be in the open air and at a safe distance from vegetation;
- at least two capacious waste containers will be put at the edge of the area. They will be suitably shielded, unremovable and unopenable by animals.

#### Location:

At a first stage eight picnic areas are foreseen, uniformly distributed throughout the Park, their locations being as indicated on the maps.

### 6.1.3 Camping Grounds and Camping Sites

Experience of parks and natural reserves all over the world has shown that tourism in the open air (tents, campers and caravans) is undoubtedly successful in reconciling environmental safeguard requirements with development ones, provided that structures and facilities devoted to it do not degenerate into stable urbanization structures, taking possession of land.

In addition to this, due to intrinsic features and institutional aims, the park is suitable for a tourism of action, characterized by short stays and rapid rotation of visitors.

Two or three days are sufficient for a non-superficial approach to the natural beauties of the Mount Kandili Park, for a visit which leaves the desire to come back to it in another season. Self-sufficient, small-scale tourism (single persons, groups, families) is the most suitable for this

Park. Doubtless, among all the available reception facilities, self-sufficient and self-managed individual means of transport and accommodation such as campers and caravans are the only ones capable of ensuring the highest possible circulation of tourists without employing land as well as the highest possible diffusion of persons to out-of-the-way places in and out of season, in the absence of promotional incentives.

This kind of vehicle and divelling does not require the existence of specialized structures and facilities, as it can simply be supported by the primary facilities of resident .

Tents also play a leading role in the open-air utilization of the Park, both for long-range visits (lasting more than one day) and for organized group stays.

The proposals to develop and regulate "en-plein-air" (outdoor) tourism in the territory of the Park of Mount Kandili are as follows:

A) As regards camping grounds to be established, the Park management Authority, considering the national and regional law on this matter, will have to devise a special regulation in order to have urbanization works and settlements comply with primary land protection and improvement requirements.

In particular, the following will have to be stated:

- 1) building of covers, palisades, and whatever alters the site's natural aspect is forbidden, as will be covers and the like larger than eight sq m per parked vehicle, for periods longer than 15 days;
- 2) in the off-low season, vehicles must be parked in a suitable area, different from the parking lot. It must be enclosed with a fence and must be made so as not to be visible. Parked vehicles left unoccupied for long periods will be transferred to that area;
- 3) there shall be annual rotation of 30% of areas destined for movable installations so as to allow for possible reconstruction of natural features and for maintenance works;
- 4) all-year-round reception of movable non self-sufficient means of transport and accommodation such as tents, tent-trolleys, cars, means of transporting both passengers and goods, coaches with semi-equipped trailers, etc. is mandatory on reservation or in shifts and with reduced number of receptions during the off-season;
- 5) facilities for emptying chemical and nautical WCs of motor caravans and coaches, water intakes for washing/cleaning etc. must be installed near the camping ground entry. These facilities must be connected to the existing drainage network or to a watertight tank to be emptied and drained into purification plants;
- 6) the camping ground sewerage system must comply with the laws in force on water protection.

If connection to an operating municipal network or depuration by purifier directly managed by the camping ground is impossible, sewage must be piped into a watertight tank; authorized and controlled personnel will periodically empty it and subsequently drain it into purification plants.

Location:

The Park territory at present lacking in camping grounds. At this first stage the Plan foresees the construction of a camping ground about 5 ha in size; it might be located in the existing poplar grove, to the left of the road from Prokopi to Mandoudi (see enclosed maps).

B) As regards camping sites, i.e. picnic and roadside rest areas for visitors in self-sufficient vehicles (motor caravans and caravans) the recommended rules are as follows:

- 1) in general, temporary stops are permitted in parking lots attached to picnic areas, which will be suitably marked;
- 2) the maximum number of visitors admitted in each camping site is six, except for particular cases authorized by the Park Management Authority;
- 3) temporary stops are also permitted in other parking lots, near the Park villages or Visitors' Centers and in other areas which will have to be identified by the Park Management Authority in less fragile and more easily controlled zones. These sites must also be properly marked;
- 4) roadside rest areas equipped with drainage pits must be identified near the sewage system. They will permit to empty vehicles to empty on-board WCs (including those of tourists coaches);

Location:

At this first stage the construction of a camping site in the proximity of Drazi is foreseen. Additional camping sites may be subsequently located in other places, in accordance with the flow increase of tourists, keeping in mind the need for ensuring the lowest possible impact on the natural environment.

C) As regards free camping in tents, the Park territory has been deemed compatible with the presence of a limited number of persons, mainly backpackers, whose visits last several days. Nevertheless, camping in tents outside of camping grounds should be regulated as follows:

- 1) temporary stop (48 hours) in Park rest areas provided with WCs or chemical WC drainage pits, is permitted to a maximum number of 6 tents, except for particular cases explicitly authorized by the Park Management Authority.
- 2) temporary stop (48 hours) in unmarked areas or in areas not included in the rest areas number is permitted to individual users explicitly authorized by the Park Management Authority.

D) Visitors' check-in

In order to check in visitors to the whole system, authorization to stay is conditional on the submission of a written application to the Park Management Authority and/or other officers in charge. Authorization will be granted after payment for a one-year card (to be stamped for each period of stay), the amount of which will be defined by the Park Management Authority.

A low tax may be required for drinking water intake and for the emptying of WCs at the facilities provided .

E) Particular rules

Among other things, the regulation for Park utilization by tourists will state that the following is forbidden in the Park territory:

- camping or stopping with camping vehicles in strict nature reserve and oriented reserve zones;
- camping or stopping with camping vehicles along public roads etc.;
- camping or stopping with camping vehicles along the banks of waterways;

- camping or stopping with camping vehicles in areas subjected to a particular degree of protection, areas which have to be properly marked;
- camping or stopping with camping vehicles outside of signalled areas without a specific authorization;
- having solid wastes in the natural environment or out of the suitable containers;
- emptying chemical WC and foul water tanks other than in drainage pits installed and signalled by the Park Management Authority.

The proven violation of rules regulating camping in the Park will entail the immediate revocation - for the current six-month-period - of the card-camping authorization and the payment of a fine, the amount of which will be defined by the Park Management Authority.

## **6.2 Programme for the development of activities of naturalistic interpretation, scientific research and environmental education**

In all parks throughout the world, the implementation of suitable facilities for the permanent education of visitors is considered to be of the utmost importance.

In fact, one of the main objectives of the park is to produce awareness through educational messages which bring home the reason for the creation of protected areas, bringing about a change for the better in man's attitude towards the environment, contributing to the creation of a widespread environmental consciousness and a brader consent for political choices oriented towards the conservation of natural resources.

Obviously, Mount Kandili Nature Park cannot be an exception to these principles: therefore, particular attention has been turned to identifying the instruments and location of what is generally known as "environmental awareness". In synthesis, it is aimed at describing natural features of places and transmitting an educational message of conservation.

Areas in which tourism facilities are projected have been privileged in selecting interventions and identifying their locations, in order to rationalize the existing facilities and resources, to take advantage of their educational potential, and not further increase the burden due to man's presence.

In addition, this choice permits the optimization of the Park resources and the simplification of problems related to technical management, surveillance and assistance to the public.

Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that the list provided of both facilities to be established and areas in which they are located does not exhaust the subjects for interpretation in the Mount Kandili Park territory.

In fact, planning educational activities for the visitors is a dynamic element in the organization and management of a park: it is periodically reviewed and has to be continuously updated and perfected.

For this reason, the "interpretation sector" is subjected to a specific planning operation done by experts in various subjects, and the so-called "Park interpretation plan" is one of the main

elements of the whole land planning work in nations where nature park planning and management are based also on long experience. The interpretation activities plan proposed in this project for Mount kandili Park is a basic one.

Therefore, it has to be meant as a minimum starting point which has to be subjected to further elaboration through the creation of an "interpretation plan" proper, which defines overall aims of land utilization for tourism and education purposes, precisely identifies Park users, and establishes means of communication and methods to be adopted.

In particular, the first series of proposals has been planned and identified on maps. They include:

- Visitors' centers
- Nature trails
- Educational areas/Interpretation points.

To fully exploit the Park territory for tourism and education purposes, and to promote it also on an international level, special facilities have been planned on a medium and long term basis. They are:

- Park "Museum"
- Arboretum/Experimental botanic garden
- Enclosure for wildlife.

Aims, implementation criteria, content guidelines, general indications for the location of facilities included in this project, are described in the following paragraphs.

#### 6.2.1 The Park Visitors' Centre

The Visitors' Centre is a designed to introduce the Park environment to visitors; in these facilities they make a first acquaintance with the territory they are going to visit: here the main elements characterizing the area are indicated, as well as their locations.

The Visitors' Centre is also a center providing services and information useful for better utilisation of the Park; in fact, here the visitor may have precise indications on receptivity and on tourism/environmental interpretation programs, may buy information material to acquire a better know-tedge of the various environments of the protected area and to reach them, may plan a guided visit along one of the numerous nature trails in the Park, may buy popularized and education material to deepen his knowledge of territory. In addition, the visitor may obtain authorization, for instance that needed for the allowed and regulated activities in the Park territory, such as camping, mushroom picking, etc. From the viewpoint of Park utilization management, the Visitors' Centre is mainly an instrument for stimulating an appropriate response to the environment, a structure in which "access keys" to the most important natural, artistic, historical, cultural places of the park are provided, together with suggestions which permit the interpretation of their characteristics.

Therefore, it is eviden that there is a need for making the Visitors' Centre an incentive for there to arise a different attitude tourists towards an excursion in the Park territory, which can go beyond the simple desire to be "immersed" in suggestive natural landscapes.

In fact, the park exemplifies an environmental heritage which has a thousand facets and the user has to be oriented from the first moment to visit and utilize this heritage, in such a way that he be able to understand and appreciate its real value and complexity.

#### Location

Two Visitors' Centres have been planned in the territory Mount Kandili Park: the primary one would be created in the village of Prokopi; the secondary one near the northern entry to the Park, near the road to Mandoudi.

The choice of locating the main Visitors' Centre in Prokopi was suggested by the need for favoring cultural exchange and a more direct and deeper contact with the local people and situation.

This Visitors' Centre will be located in an already existing building, in a way compatible with its utilization and functionality of access. If this is not possible, the construction of a suitable building will have to be planned.

The second Centre, located north of the village (see map), may be built on a medium term and if the Park Authority should deem it necessary to itinerise points of attraction and specify them.

In this case, while the first Centre in Prokopi will be used to provide general information on the Park, it will be possible to use the second one to deal with subjects concerning the river, life e.g. the Otter.

To this end, it is worth recalling that the presence of the Otter in the waters of the Kereus river is important for the island of Evvia, and an environmental conservation project, (with public awareness, etc.) could be based in the old mill, a building which after restoration could be used as a Visitors' Centre.

The final plan of the two Centres (restoration and modification works, interior organization, fittings, equipment, etc.) may be developed at the stage of actual establishment of the Park.

Nevertheless, at this stage it is deemed opportune to provide some guidelines concerning the necessary premises for the Centre's implementation and the contents of the Centre itself. These guidelines draw on international experience in the matter of management of parks and other protected areas.

The Centre plan should include:

- 1) a reception, to provide the visitor with:
  - indications on receptivity;
  - indication on how to visit facilities;
  - information and educational material on the utilization of the Park, various ecosystems and autonomous utilization of visit facilities (self-guided activities);
  - indications on tourism/environmental interpretation programmes and on the personnel available for guided visits, excursions, etc.;
  - authorizations to carry out activities subject to regulation;
- 2) consulting books and/or buying leaflets with information and popularization of education material;

- 3) a hall/auditorium for slides/projections and lectures, which could also be used by Prokopi residents for meetings, debates, entertainment.

### 6.2.2 The Park's Nature Trails

The nature trail is one of the most effective means for increasing and re-qualifying the flow of tourists in a protected area. The irreplaceable element for getting to know the park territory and interpreting its values is a trail in an area interesting from an historical and naturalistic viewpoint, which can be covered on foot, by bicycle or on horseback, and sometimes even by vehicle, depending on its environmental context. On the way the visitor is familiarised with all the features of that particular environment, discovering all the most secret aspects, which are generally missed at a superficial glance.

In fact, some interpretation points (stations) are located along the trail; here, thanks to popular educational material (guide-books, signs or labels, etc.) the visitor can interpret the surrounding environment, understand its importance, and finally acquire the habit of respect for the environment.

It is important to stress the way each visitor has the opportunity to choose to follow any route even without a guide, thanks to information available in suitable guide-books, which are provided at the Park Visitors' Centers or at additional selling points.

Criteria utilized in planning nature trails to be constructed in Mount Kandili Park are the following:

- 1) to make the educative message as immediate as possible, particular attention must be turned to selection and location of key-points to be inserted in trails;
- 2) to favor a deeper "immersion" in the environment visited, it is preferable to locate the trail a long way from sources of artificial noise;
- 3) in order that the nature trail be capable of stimulating attention and reliving an educative message which can be appreciated by both adults and children, it is indispensable that the support material (guide-books, explanation plates, educational forms) be adequately designed and implemented, taking into account the various categories or groups of users;
- 4) the nature trail must be constructed in an easily accessible area;
- 5) in the case of particularly long or uphill nature trails, it is necessary to identify resting sites; if possible, they will be located in places of particular aesthetic interest;
- 6) alternatives permitting a shortening of the route on long nature trails will have to be planned;
- 7) preferably the nature trail route should be circular: in this way, the same route will not be covered twice, and new situations, non repetitive, will be encountered on the way;
- 8) generally speaking, nature trails must be without difficulties (e.g. sections facing on ravines, obstacles, etc.). Otherwise, besides the length of the route, the degree of difficulty will be clearly indicated at the beginning of the trail and in popular educational material;
- 9) trails which may be also covered by disabled persons, particularly those in wheelchairs, must be planned. They must meet the following requirements:

- slope must not exceed 3-5%;
  - where substrate is not suitable for wheelchairs (e.g. sand or stones) the trail must be provided with adequate boarding;
  - holes, stones and any other obstacle must be removed from nature trails;
  - the trail must not include any barrier (stairs, narrowing, etc.);
- 10) all the interpretation points along the nature trail are identified by signposts numbered in sequence, to which explanation plates related to the place should be provided. In any case educational material (specifically planned for each trail) must provide a key for interpreting each single point of interest.
- 11) the start and end must be adequately marked, as well as routes and rules to be followed;
- 12) the optimal length of footpath is included between 1000 and 2000 meters.

In order to better distribute the "load" of tourists in various environments of the park, but also to achieve the recreational and educational goals of Mount Kandili Park, the use of 7 hiking trails is foreseen: their locations and contents are described in the following.

#### *Nature Trail 1 - The Gorges of the River*

This nature trail, located in the proximity of the southern entry to the Park (St George), goes along a particularly charming section of the river. Waters flow between rocks which bear evident signs (faults) of the geological evolution of the area. In addition, luxuriant vegetation on the banks and endemic flower species (several species of bellflowers) make this nature trail extremely interesting from an educational and scientific point of view.

#### *Nature Trail 2 - The Mixed Wood*

Located in a Strict Nature Preserve Zone, this nature trail permits visitors to see the only Park Zone characterized by a broadleaf wood practically intact.

A wide variety of species, rich undergrowth and evident signs of the presence of animals: these are the most significant elements which give the cue for explaining to the visitors the complexity of the equilibria regulating natural ecosystems.

#### *Nature Trail 3 - Flora of the Fields*

This nature trail is mainly interesting from a botanical viewpoint, as it crosses meadows characterized by wild flowers of various species, some of which are rare or even endemic. Besides this, this nature trail gives the visitor an opportunity to get to know the small and very important fauna of meadows, from pollinator insects to earthworms, from spiders to moles: these animals are not well known, although they are important for the meadow ecosystem.

#### *Nature Trail 4 - The River*

The river ecosystem is the main theme of this nature trail, which winds along the banks of the River Kereus. In particular, the fauna associated with the river and the vegetation of the banks make this trail of particular scientific interest.

#### *Nature Trail 5 - The Evergreen Forest*

This nature trail, located at the intersection between the fir wood (*Abies cephalonica*) and the black pine wood (*Pinus nigra*) reveals the distribution and zoning of the vegetation, which is related to the altitude.

### *Nature Trail 6 - The Venetian Fort*

Wide secular woods, undergrowth rich in wildlife, small clearings covered with ferns: these are only some of the environmental elements characterizing this nature trail. In addition, ruins of a Venetian Fort and suggestive landscape visible from them, give this nature trail a great historical and naturalistic value.

### *Nature Trail 7 - Mount Kandili*

This nature trail is mainly dedicated to the interpretation of the morphology of landscape, which is dominated by the massif of Mount Kandili. Ridges, cliffs, faults, forms of erosion, etc.: these are some of the elements which afford knowledge of the genesis and evolution of the Park territory. In addition, the nature trail area offers an opportunity to see the golden eagle, which builds its nest in the mountain's highest zone.

## 6.2.3 The Park's Educational Areas/Interpretation Points

Educational areas, located along nature trails or near picnic and roadside resting sites, or in specific places having particular environmental value, are an additional means for interpreting individual key-points, events, natural phenomena, etc. In particular, in educational areas, which have the function of real natural "laboratories" in the open air, specific subjects may be analyzed and elaborated, starting from what can be seen or done in the surrounding environment. Together with this, research, experimentation, "in-situ" checking activities may be carried out, supplementing cultural demonstration and living interpretation programmes developed elsewhere.

For example, a number of areas could be identified in a certain zone along the course of a river. Schoolchildren visiting the park could learn about the natural ecosystem directly in the field, measuring water temperature and current speed, collecting and classifying samples of benthonic macroinvertebrates, analyzing substrate sedimentological features, etc.

Particular isolated key-points, spread around the territory (therefore not necessarily to be included in a nature trail or educational area) or places which are interesting from an aesthetic viewpoint, give an additional chance for "land interpretation" by identifying and marking interpretation points.

At these points it will be possible to highlight particularly significant elements, and to correlate them in order to have a complete view of their environmental context. For example, the view of a valley will give the cue for speaking of the Park morphology, geological history and hydrogeology.

The planning criteria for educational areas and interpretation points are the following:

Educational areas must be identified and selected according to their location in the Park and also in relation to cultural-tourism activities and programs which will be carried out.

In order to supply useful indications for activating this kind of service, a "sample" nucleus of 10 educational areas, which are able to provide an overall picture of the Park features, has been identified.