

Project Update: August 2008

I would like to let you know that there was a catastrophic forest fire in the region of our project site two weeks ago. The link below is of a news article about this fire.

<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=111470>

This is the biggest fire that happened in the Antalya region in Turkey. The loss and the environmental devastation are colossal: 4000 hectare forest burned engulfing several villages and causing two fatalities.

The fire started inside the Koprulu Kanyon National Park where our project takes place. Although the exact location of our project was not directly impacted by the fire the local communities of our project site are under scrutiny because the allegations claim that this fire was due arson.

The outcome of this catastrophic event is not limited with the damage given to the bio-physical environment. The social and political environment was equally impacted. The case is being investigated and the local communities are under severe scrutiny. The park management of the Koprulu Kanyon National Park is occupied with this investigation. They are also very busy with immediate rectification measures.

Collaborating with local residents and management representatives are the critical aspects of our project - the "fish filter and 'scare-fish'. Training and awareness raising are the objectives of the social dimension of the project. Considering the fact that the members of the Park Management and the local villagers are both participants and the targets of our project the current social environment will pose a critical challenge to our project.

Going to the site and initiating the field work phase of the project would not be viable until the case resolves and the social environment return to its natural state. I was also advised by Mr. Yilmazturk who is the director of the National Park not to go to the site in these days when I contacted him via phone. He added that such an attempt would severely endanger the success of our project.

Under this circumstance I will have to postpone the initiation of my field work to April-May 2009. Meanwhile, I will continue to work in developing the design and building the fish-filter and the scare-fish instruments of the project. I will be fully prepared for a successful implementation of the project in May 2009.