FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Creation of a New Protected Area in Southwestern Haiti
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On Wednesday August 7th, 2013 Haiti’s Council of Ministers announced the creation of the “Protected Area of Natural Resources Management of Port Salut/Aquin (Aire Protégée de Ressources Naturelles Gérées de Port Salut/Aquin)” located in southwestern Haiti. It is composed of five zoned sites enclosed within an area covering a total of close to 100,000 hectares (1,000 sq.km.) and includes mixed marine and terrestrial sites.

“We once again applaud the Haitian government’s move to protect our natural resources. This designation is another critical step forward as Haiti renews its commitment to protect the environment, especially in light of President Martelly’s designation of 2013 as The Year of the Environment for Haiti,” stated Jean Wiener, Director of the Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM) in Haiti. “However, the designation is the easy part, now comes the hard part. We must ensure an increased engagement of the local communities, national stakeholders, the government, and our international partners to actively participate in the protection and sustainable management of the resources within this important area. We are also looking towards the designation of Marine Protected Areas in the very near future.”

FoProBiM undertook the outlining of the original park boundaries in 2000, the initial survey of coastal and marine resources within the area in 2008, and actively participated in the preparation of the legal framework and present park boundaries to help bring about this important designation.

Hopefully the Caracol/Ft. Liberté area will also soon be created. This area was surveyed by FoProBiM for an Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) project funded by the government of Chile through the Organization of the American States/Department of Sustainable Development (OAS/DSD) in 2009 in order to determine the value of ecosystem services in the area.

Founded in 1992 the Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM) is Haiti’s only coastal and marine environmental organization. It is an apolitical, non-governmental, non-profit organization founded and headquartered in Haiti and was officially recognized by the Haitian government in 1995 as a foundation working on environment issues in the areas of sustainable development, education, research, monitoring, and advocacy.

As one of Haiti’s oldest environmental organizations, and one of the very few with a 100% full-time dedicated staff, FoProBiM’s mission includes: (i) raising awareness concerning needed changes in regulations and attitudes concerning the environment; (ii) increasing knowledge and capabilities at the government, community and individual levels in order to make sustainable improvements in the environment and the lives of people, and; (iii) conducting educational
programs as well as scientific research, including environmental monitoring, in order to promote improved management of the environment and the protection of biodiversity through a better understanding of the need to sustainably use environmental resources.

FoProBiM is Haiti’s only IUCN member and the National Focal Point in Haïti for: IUCN – The World Conservation Union (World Commission on Protected Areas, Marine; Commission on Ecosystem Management); the International Coral Reefs Initiative (ICRI); WIDECAST; and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) among others. It has also acted as the primary consultant for coastal and marine resources for the preparation of Haiti’s National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) and undertaken a wide variety of projects for institutions as varied as the IDB, UNEP, UNDP, OAS, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), Whitley Fund for Nature, the Haitian Ministry of Environment, and the US Departments of Agriculture (IITF – International Institute of Tropical Forestry), State, Commerce (NOAA: NMFS, CCFHR, OIA), and Interior (USFWS) to name but a few.

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