



The Kop and Burnazdere Microcatchments in Bayburt region – Turkey

Hot and short summers that are followed by cold winters are not the best preconditions for a healthy vegetation. Thus, the location of Turkey's smallest province, Bayburt, in such conditions pre-disposed it to being poor. Uninhibited deforestation coupled with the use of some bad traditional agricultural techniques exacerbated the situation, threatening the livelihoods of the inhabitants. The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats, TEMA, with assistance from the European Union, set up projects in five villages to improve land productivity and reduce its heavy erosion.

Experts identified several problems and developed strategies for improvement. But a key challenge was how to involve the villagers because introducing ideas that would require villagers to give up traditional agricultural methods posed a serious risk to their already meager incomes. Therefore, sustainable alternatives had to prove their worth first through profitability. It was the first such positive results that persuaded the farmers and to support the project advance forward.

The project activities were designed to increase the diversity of agricultural products, implement sustainable land management and stop soil erosion. The barriers created through reforestation and a stonewall reduced soil erosion and stabilized riverbanks and sediment on the slopes. Cattle watering vessels were installed in the meadows to restrict grazing to specific areas and rotation plans for grazing halted overgrazing and helped the meadows to recover. Alternative income sources were created by introducing fodder plants and other new plants and herbs, and courses on beekeeping were offered.

In essence, the villagers learned how to use their land in an efficient and sustainable way. The results were unmistakable. Income increased by up to 150% for the households involved in the project. The success of the project as well as the difficulties encountered at the beginning raised awareness about the importance of the new agricultural techniques and erosion control.

© Drynet

Source: <http://www.dry-net.org/index.php?page=3&successstoryId=4>

Material may be used and cited with acknowledgement of source

