

# Necessary Passage

## civilianization of the military obstacles

Yaron Zelnik | LandBasics studio | Guidance of Matanya Sack and Shachar Zur

The Israeli security system has a very significant presence in the region of the Golan Heights, including military obstacles like landmine fields and anti-tank ditches. In spite of their presence, the civilian planning institutes adopt a hands-off approach towards it.

My project offers a different planning model, which integrates the obstacles at regional processes that occur at the Golan, thus aiming to recruit the values and potentials of the military landscapes for civilian needs.

The landmine fields at the Golan, which were originally designed to delay and prevent mobilization of enemy forces, in practice restrict the civilian population and limit their mobility and access to information. This situation has negative consequences that include civilian injuries and planning limitation. Simultaneously, the landmine fields ensure during decades preserved areas that function as a high quality open spaces, which are characterized by wilderness, ecological and visual values and ensure land reserves for the next generations. Nowadays, the character and the future of those areas are solely decided by the security system and exposed to political-economical processes that are not transparent to the public.

The project proposes a strategic model to map the values of the militarized zone. It divides the military obstacles into 3 planning statuses. In each such status the "civilianization" of the obstacles will be done in different ways:

- **-Reserved-** status ensures the wilderness of the sites and prevents major human intervention.
- **-Limited-** status permits limited accessibility to the sites in a controlled and gradual process.
- **-Accessible-** status at sites that have a high potential for development.

Today, the Israeli National Mine Action Authority, a unit at the Israeli Ministry of Defense, removes part of the landmine fields in order to make them **-accessible-**. Since it will take more than 50 years to clear out the mines, and at the current demining technology some ecological damage is irreversible, I understand that some of the sites require different approach. Therefore I will focus on two different locations and offer two different methods of treatment.

### Tel Azziziat **-Reserved-**

Located at the western slopes of the Golan. The slopes contain pre-1967 landmine fields that were created by the Syrian army. Those 16,700 acres landmines fields are only 1% of the Golan area but due to the fact that they located at a highly viewed areas and adjacent to main roads to the Golan, they have a significant presence at the landscape. The slopes landmine fields also contain many water

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resources as streams and springs with rich ecosystems.

At this area I focus at Tel Azziziat, a hill with a former Syrian stronghold that observes the Hula Valley and was the location of two main battles at 1948 and 1967. On this hill, wild animals shelter within 2750 acres of landmine fields from human influence.

I designed the hill as a 'wolf reserve' based on the landmine fields and the buildings of the past stronghold as an observation platform towards them. The link to the existing points of interest, as Baniyas Nature Reserve and battle-heritage' sites, will offer Tel Azziziat as a part of experiential sequences. At a later stage, I suggest to link this reserve to other nature reserves at the Golan slopes landmine fields by developing the Petroleum Road as a scenic road.

### Ein zivan -**Limited**-

This area is located near the demilitarized buffer zone between Israel and Syria from the Yom Kippur War. Each army has established, on the basis of this zone, stripes of landmine fields and anti-tank ditches from the Hermon Mountain to the Yarmouk River at length of 70km and width up to 20km. At the Israeli side, these military obstacles are called the 'IDF obstacle' and contain landmine fields at past Syrian villages and anti-tank trenches that function as a winter pools system.

Here I focus on Ein Zivan plain, where similar obstacles exist between the ruined Syrian Circassian village of Ein Zivan and the Israeli Kibbutz that was established after 1967 with the same name at a distance of 2km.

I suggest using some of the trenches as a visual-tourist attraction that will highlight the uniqueness of the obstacles and will refer to the Syrian narrative and the agricultural-touristic atmosphere of today.

I link the new attraction to the Golan Trail and the existing points of interest and simultaneously preserve some of the trenches as winter pools that allow the spreading of the amphibian at different areas of the Golan. At a later stage I suggest expanding those systems based on the trenches at both sides of the border to a regional system that maintains human and ecological activity simultaneously.