A. Executive Summary

The site Espai Natura Coll de Can Maçana – Montserrat was bought by Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera (formerly Fundació Territori i Paisatge) in 2004 to preserve its natural value and landscape as well as to facilitate the main entrances to the Natural Park of la Muntanya de Montserrat. It harbours a rich flora and fauna typical for the Mediterranean and with several rare species. The spectacular landscape attracts a large number of visitors every year, and to reduce threats and disturbance, specific rules and regulations are put in place. In recognition of its many natural as well as cultural/historical values, the area has been designated as Natura 2000 Site of European importance with a management plan approved in 2005.

B. Area Characteristics and Manager

The image gives an aerial view of the site, with the boundaries of Espai Natura Coll de Can Maçana-Montserrat indicated in red. The massif of Montserrat can be distinguished as the rocky area in the centre of the image.
- Geographic coordinates: **E01°46'09,32'' N41°36'38,85''**
- Area size (ha): 176,58ha
- Predominant ecoregion: Mediterranean Forests, Woodlands and Scrubs
- Name and contact details of the responsible management authority:
  
  Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera, Àrea de Territori I Medi Ambient  
  Mr. Miquel Rafa Fornieles, Director of the Àrea de Territori I Medi Ambient  
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- Supporting evidence of the manager’s right to manage the area: The site was bought to the previous owner in 2004. From then, full ownership of the site by Fundació.

The massif of Montserrat, and especially its renowned Sanctuary, is one of the most visited areas in the region of Catalunya, receiving around 2.4 million visitors per year. Espai Natura Coll de Can Maçana, with over 60,000 recorded visitors per year, is the second main entry point to the Massif. Our site, with 176 ha, covers 7% of the total area of the Natural Park and includes the area called “Agulles” (in English “needles”). The characteristic landscape of sedimentary rocks with shapes ranging from pinnacles to broad walls constitutes a very special landscape, especially given the isolation of the massif in the middle of the surrounding plains.

The site is co-managed with the Natural Park authorities and includes a car park, picnic area (Coll de Can Maçana) and several trails as well as archaeological remnants from the Neolithic period (la Diablera). The remains of a 10th century castle (Castell de la Guàrdia) and of a church (Sant Pau Vell) are also found.
Montserrat also harbours the location of the 1808 battle of el Bruc between the French army and the local defenders, won with the help of a local young drummer who, the legend says, frightened the French army with the noise of his drum and the echoes from the mountain.

The foothills of the massif and part of Espai Natura Coll de Can Maçana have been prone to big forest fires in the past. Last recorded fires affecting the site happened in 1986, 1991 and 1994 although the surrounding areas also burned in 1990, 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2015. For this reason, a LIFE project in now being implemented in the area (LIFE Montserrat) to test the combination of forestry works in strategic areas to prevent the spread of forest fires and the maintenance of these open areas with help of livestock. More information can be found at the project website http://lifemontserrat.eu/.

Another project being implemented at the site (and in other sites in Catalunya) is the LIFE Pinassa. It’s objective is the protection and preservation of Black pine forests in Catalunya (Pinus nigra subsp. salzmanii). For more information see http://lifepinassa.eu/.

Since the very beginning, the site has been managed using a dedicated management plan (approved in December 2005) based in the Eurosite Management Planning Toolkit and a specific Forestry Management Plan (approved in March 2007). In 2016, the management plan is to be revised using the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation planning methodology. As a consequence of this revision, Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera aims to the use the new management plan for the VCA verification.

C. Biodiversity Baseline Conditions

The site is inside the Natural Park of la Muntanya deMontserrat and in the N2000 site E5110012 Montserrat-Roques Blanques. It is also included in the Geopark “Catalunya Central” (www.geoparc.cat/en/).

The main landscape features include rocky areas, Mediterranean pine forests (Pinus halepensis and Pinus nigra salzsmanii) in regeneration after the last forest fire of 1994, evergreen oak (Quercus ilex) forests also in regeneration, and semi natural pastures.

Relevant habitats found in the site include:

- 6110* Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alyssio-Sedion albi (small extension mainly in rocky areas)
- 6220* Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodietea (total area is increasing after several pasture-recovery operations in the framework of the silvopasture initiative against forest fires)
- 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation (also in the rocky walls)
- 9340 Quercus ilex and Quercus rotundifolia forests (structure improving also after the thinning operations to speed the maturation and recovery of the forest stands after the 1994 fire)
- 9530* Mediterranean pine forest with endemic black pines (*Pinus nigra var salzmanii*) (structure improving also after the thinning operations to speed the maturation and recovery of the forest stands after the 1994 fire and the operations related to the LIFE+ Pinassa project)

- 9540 Mediterranean pine forests with endemic Mesogean pines (*Pinus halepensis* and *P. pinea*) (structure improving also after the thinning operations to speed the maturation and recovery of the forest stands after the 1994 fire)

Relevant plant species also found in the site include:
- *Campanula affinis* Schult.
- *Cytissus heterochrous* Webb ex Colmeiro (=*Genista patens*)
- *Dianthus multiceps* Costa ex Willk. Subsp. *multiceps*
- *Euphorbia nevadensis* Boiss. & Reuter subsp *bolosii* Molero & Rovira
- *Geum sylvaticum* Pourr.
- *Hieracium cordatum* Scheele ex Costa
- *Hieracium cordifolium* Lapeyr
- *Leucanthemum montserratianum* Vogt
- *Raimonda myconii* (L.) Rchb.
- *Saxifraga catalaunica* Boiss.
- *Taxus baccata* L.
- *Ilex aquifolium* L.

And among the many animal species, the following can be highlighted:
- Bonelli’s eagle (*Hieraaetus fasciatus*)
- Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)
- Common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)
- Eurasian Eagle-Owl (*Bubo bubo*)
- Black wheatear (*Oenanthe leucura*)
- Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)
- Iberian Wild Goat (*Capra pyrenaica*), reintroduced in 1996 by the Government of Catalunya from stock captured in the Natural Park of els Ports

*The rare Bonelli’s Eagle is one of the emblematic species of Montserrat. Photo: Carlos Sánchez*
Following infrastructure affects the site:

- The road BP-1103 crosses the northern part of the site and the road BP-1101 follows the western limit;
- The car park and picnic area of “El Coll de Can Maçana” can host a maximum of 90 cars and has several tables and benches, as well as information panels produced jointly with the Natural Park authority. A new information centre is to be set up in early 2016 in the ruins of a former ceramic furnace still in place;
- There’s a Refuge (“Refugi d’Agulles o de Vicenç Barbé”) located in the limit of the site, in the Agulles area. It is managed by the Federation of Hiking Associations of Catalunya (FEEC);
- A main track road crosses the site in a Y fashion. Motorised access is prohibited but is used by cyclists and ramblers. Several other side tracks cover the site nearly everywhere;
- Several climbing routes can be found in the walls near the Agulles sector although climbing is regulated by the NP authority according to the nesting season of different bird species and the presence of sensitive plant species;
- Several caves are also in the site and are regularly visited by cavers (access is regulated in some of them to avoid disturbance to bat colonies);
- In the southern part of the site, 4 canvas rain collectors and 2 deposits are installed to use rain water for the cattle that grazes the two 20-hectare plots, part of the forest prevention infrastructure;
- Finally there are 2 apiaries run by a local bee-keeper that produces high-quality honey, especially focussing on Rosemarie flowering twice a year;
D. Conservation Impact Assessment and Stakeholders

Assessment of potential threats to the biological targets:

- The main threat is over frequentation (over 60,000 people are recorded in the car park), especially in sensible walls (climbers) and caves leading to disturbances to certain species and to erosion of paths and thin-soil areas;
- Recurrent forest fires;
- Plagues to pine trees like *Thaumetopoea phytocampa*;
- Increase of drought due to global climate change;
- Hunting is regulated by the NP authority and only to control wild goat and wild boar populations;

Initial list of stakeholders:

- The Natural Park Management Authority;
- The FEEC, responsible of the management of the refuge and representing climbers, hikers and cavers;
- El Bruc town council (where the site is located);
- The cattle farmer maintaining the pasture land in the site;
- The bee-keeper running the 2 apiaries in the site;
- The partners of the two LIFE projects implemented in the site (LIFE Montserrat and LIFE Pinassa);
- The visitors to the site (users of the picnic and car park area);
- Neighbours to the site;

E. Next Steps for Registering the Area

As the revision of the Management Plan for the site is due in 2016, the idea is to adapt the document to be VCA compliant.

The management team at la Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera will complete the new management plan during the first 9 months of 2016. The current management plan standard for the sites owned by Fundació are the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation ([http://cmp-openstandards.org/](http://cmp-openstandards.org/)). The revision of the plan will certainly include consultation with our stakeholders, specially the NP Authority, as co-manager of the site.

In order to audit the new version of the Management Plan some financial support will be needed, which will be specified once we have the first proposals from the auditors.