The Jordan River

EcoPeace Middle East - promoting public participation & involvement of the private sector in rehabilitation efforts

"*Water and Climate: Meeting of the Great Rivers of the World*"

International Summit

October 23-25, 2017, Rome, Italy

EcoPeace
Middle East

EcoPeace Middle East

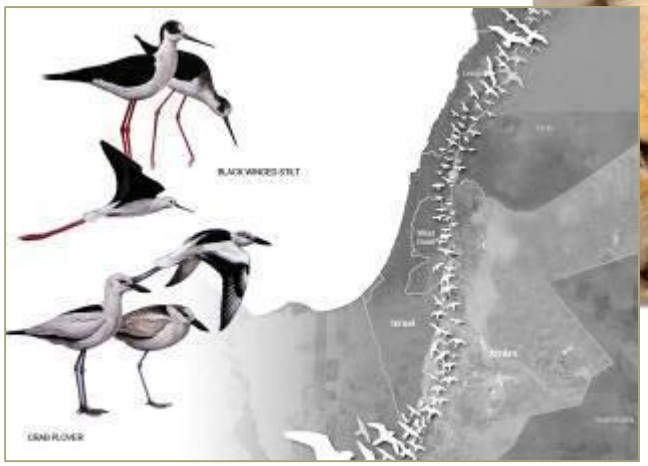
- **Regional environmental organization** comprised of Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmentalists - offices in Amman, Ramallah & Tel Aviv
- Our **primary objective** is to **promote cooperative efforts** to protect our shared environment and to promote sustainable development
- EcoPeace's focus is on **transboundary water resources**, including the Jordan River, Dead Sea, cross-border streams, and shared Aquifers;
- The **interdependency** of our water resources calls for **cooperation**

JORDAN RIVER BASIN
Catchment Boundary
Lake and Reservoir
Salt Pan
River and Canal
Intermittent River
International Boundary
Disputed International Boundary
National Capital, Main City
Area under Palestinian Authorithy
Prepared by UNEP/DEWA/GRID-Geneva for GREEN CROSS INTERNATIONAL
Lambert Azimuthal Equal-Area Projection
0 25 50 75
Kilometers
Sources: ArcWorld, ESRI; Hydro1k, USGS EDC
LEBANON
Beirut
Sidon
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
Tyre
Al-Litani
Al-Hasbani
Banias
GOLAN
Haifa
Lake Tiberias
Nazareth
Yarmouk
Al-Suwayda
Dar'a
Ibid
East Ghor Canal
Al-Mafraq
Nablus
Jordan
Al-Zarqa
Al-Zarqa
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Tel Aviv-Yafo
Ramla
National Water Carrier
Yarkon
WEST BANK
Ramallah
Jericho
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Amman
Hebron
Dead Sea
Gaza
GAZA
Beersheba
ISRAEL
JORDAN
Al-Karak
Dimona
Zefa
Wadi al Hasah
Zin
NEGEV
Wadi al-Arabah
Paran
EGYPT
Ma'an
SINAI
SAUDI ARABIA
Elat
Al Aqabah
GULF OF AQABA
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

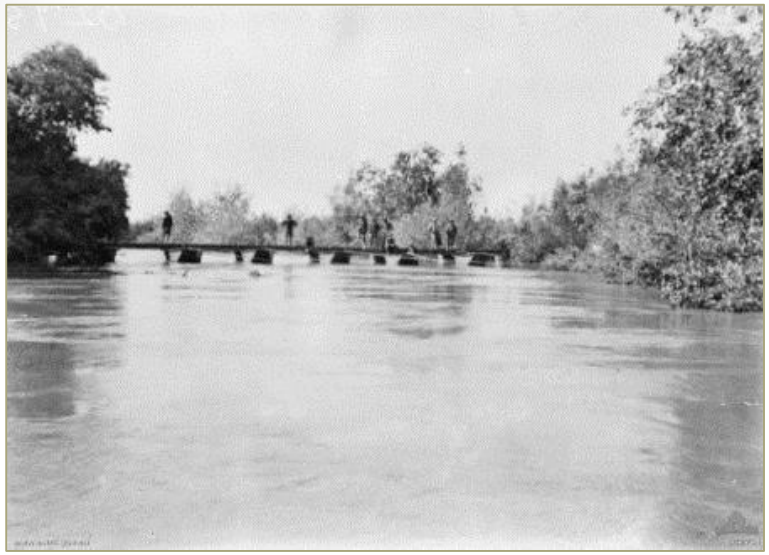
The Lower Jordan River and its Tributaries
Sea of Galilee
Tiberias
Nahal Yavneel
Yarmouk
Wadi Al-Arab
Nahal Tavor
Nahal Yissakhar
Nahal Harod
Beit Shean
Wadi Ziqlab
Wadi Al Yabis
Ajloun
Bezeq Stream
Wadi El Malih
Wadi Kafranja
El Fara
The lower Jordan River
Wadi Rajib
Zarka River
Salt
El Ouja
Wadi Nimrin
Jericho
El Qelt
Dead Sea

Importance of the Lower Jordan River

- Holy to Christians; important to Jews and Muslims
- Rich in cultural, historical heritage
- ‘Out of Africa’… through the Valley
- Meeting point for flora and fauna of three continents
- Migratory flyway for 500 million birds bi-annually



Lower Jordan River – then…



The "mighty" Jordan… "deep and wide"

- Average annual flow of over **1.3 billion cubic meters**
- Supported a wide variety of habitats/rich biodiversity

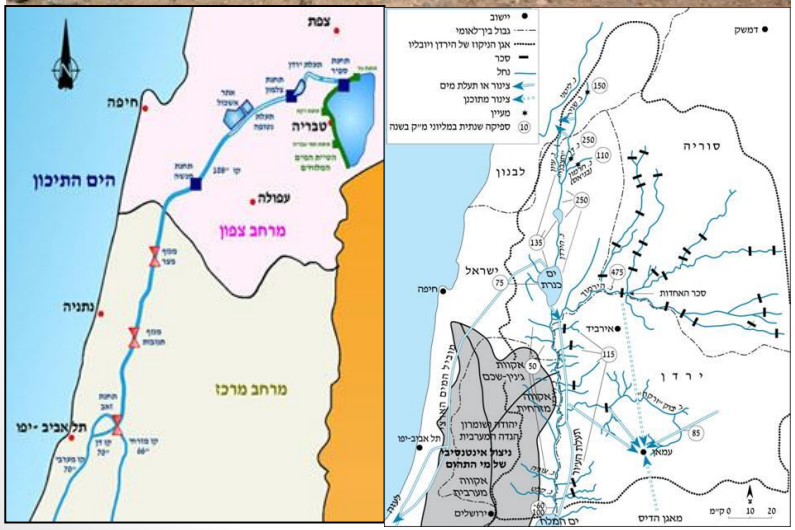
Lower Jordan River – now…

No longer “mighty”… nor “deep and wide”

- 96% of flow diverted
- Polluted - sewage, saline springs, agricultural runoff
- Closed border area
- Minefields, military checkpoints and fences…

Consequences of the “Conflict Mindset”…

The Great Water Grab

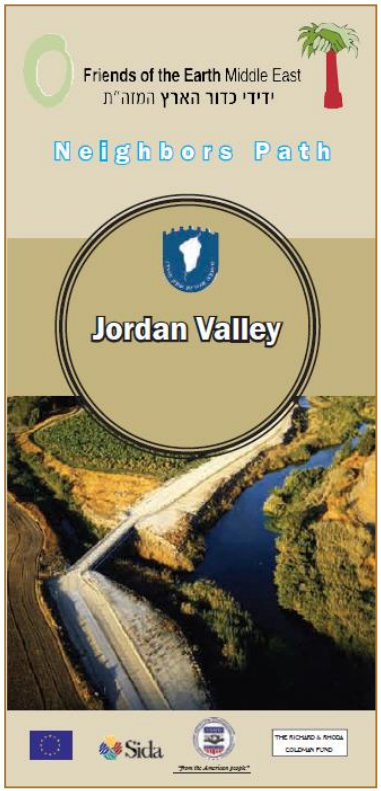


The Back Door Dump

Empowering River Constituents ‘Good Water Neighbors’

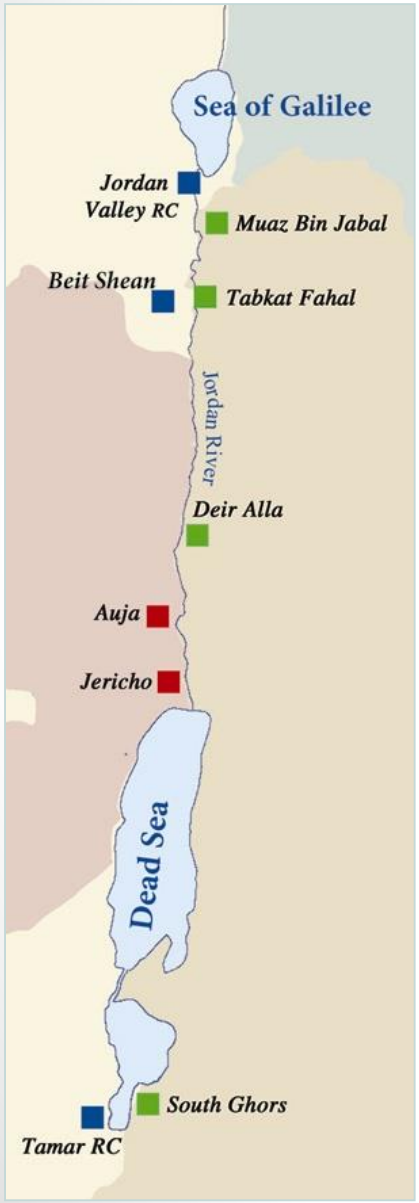
Youth
“Water Trustees” program

Residents
Developing tours “Neighbors Paths”



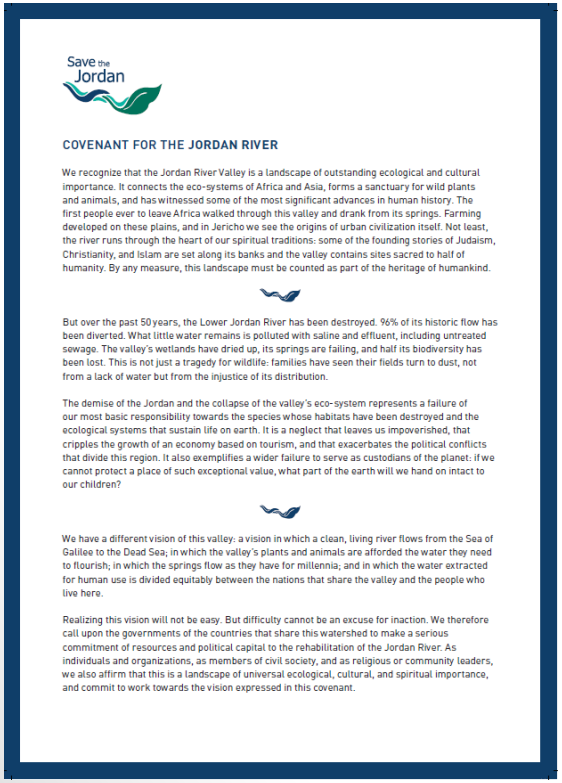
Teachers
Env. Education curriculum

Promoting Municipal Leadership



Involving Faith Leaders

- Educating faith leaders about the poor state of the River and the need for cross border cooperation
- Interfaith networks – creating constituency of faith leaders to raise their voice & sign on to the 'Covenant for the Jordan River'



Save the Jordan

COVENANT FOR THE JORDAN RIVER

We recognize that the Jordan River Valley is a landscape of outstanding ecological and cultural importance. It connects the eco-systems of Africa and Asia, forms a sanctuary for wild plants and animals, and has witnessed some of the most significant advances in human history. The first people ever to leave Africa walked through this valley and drank from its springs. Farming developed on these plains, and in Jericho we see the origins of urban civilization itself. Not least, the river runs through the heart of our spiritual traditions: some of the founding stories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are set along its banks and the valley contains sites sacred to half of humanity. By any measure, this landscape must be counted as part of the heritage of humankind.

But over the past 50 years, the Lower Jordan River has been destroyed. 96% of its historic flow has been diverted. What little water remains is polluted with saline and effluent, including untreated sewage. The valley's wetlands have dried up, its springs are failing, and half its biodiversity has been lost. This is not just a tragedy for wildlife: families have seen their fields turn to dust, not from a lack of water but from the injustice of its distribution.

The demise of the Jordan and the collapse of the valley's eco-system represents a failure of our most basic responsibility towards the species whose habitats have been destroyed and the ecological systems that sustain life on earth. It is a neglect that leaves us impoverished, that cripples the growth of an economy based on tourism, and that exacerbates the political conflicts that divide this region. It also exemplifies a wider failure to serve as custodians of the planet: if we cannot protect a place of such exceptional value, what part of the earth will we hand on intact to our children?

We have a different vision of this valley: a vision in which a clean, living river flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea; in which the valley's plants and animals are afforded the water they need to flourish; in which the springs flow as they have for millennia; and in which the water extracted for human use is divided equitably between the nations that share the valley and the people who live here.

Realizing this vision will not be easy. But difficulty cannot be an excuse for inaction. We therefore call upon the governments of the countries that share this watershed to make a serious commitment of resources and political capital to the rehabilitation of the Jordan River. As individuals and organizations, as members of civil society, and as religious or community leaders, we also affirm that this is a landscape of universal ecological, cultural, and spiritual importance, and commit to work towards the vision expressed in this covenant.

Tours of the Jordan River for the international community

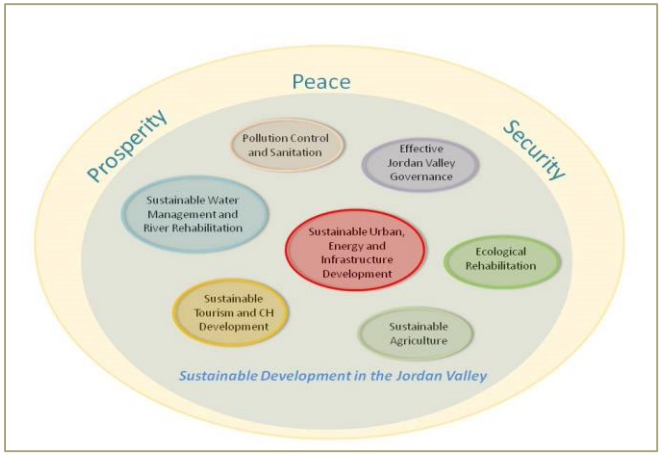
- International delegations
- Donor community
- Ambassadors
- Diplomats

Creating High Level Political Will

- Israeli Knesset
- Jordan Parliament
- Pal. Leg. Council member discussions
- International support
- US Senate Resolution 2007
- EU Parliament Resolution 2010

NGO Regional Master Plan

- Prepared by Dutch experts from RHDHV, and local partners.
- Akin to a Marshal Plan, this plan aims to convert a polluted river and highly depressed economic area to a model for river rehabilitation, economic growth, and regional stability.
- 127 “interventions” (projects) identified; at a cost of $4.5 Billion
- EcoPeace has been working vis-a-vis the Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli governments to achieve a consensus around a selected list of interventions that can move forward now….



Already a change of momentum

- As of May 2013, the Israeli Water Authority is allowing 9 mcm / year of fresh water to flow regularly from the Sea of Galilee into the Lower Jordan River, in an effort to ecologically rehabilitate the river…
- 3 new Waste Water Treatment Plants have been built ;in Israel, Jordan and Palestine, all in proximity to the River. Sewage from the surrounding communities need no longer be discharged into the River.
- Ecological rehabilitation: restoring habitats to help reverse some of the 50% biodiversity loss.

We welcome you to join and support these efforts

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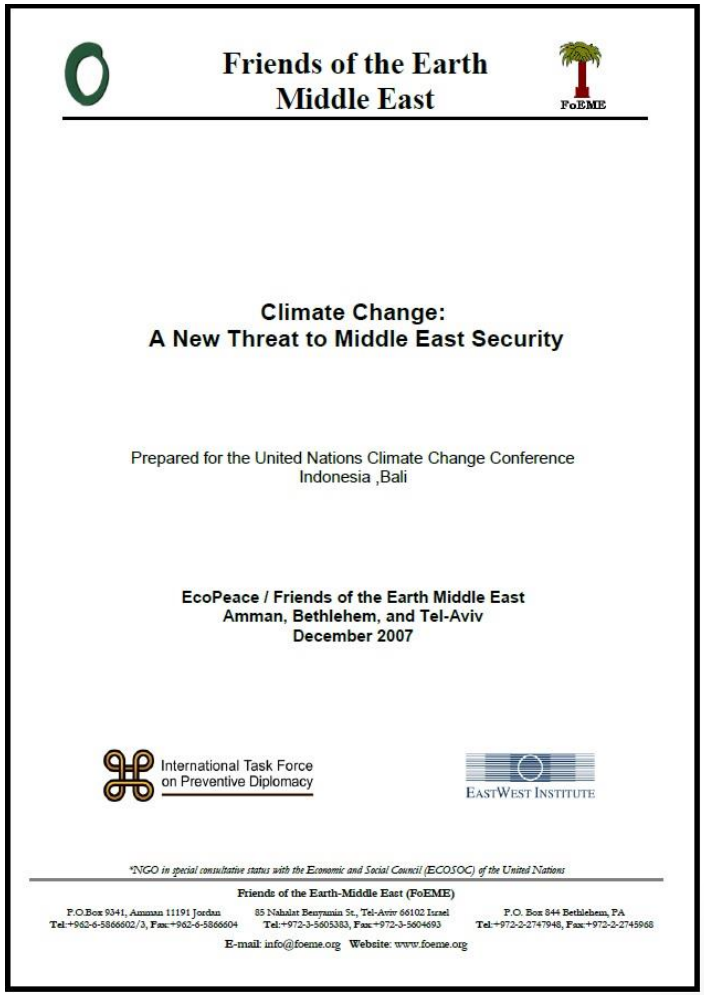
EcoPeace Middle East

www.ecopeaceme.org

Climate Change: A Threat to Middle East Security

- With the Middle East being the world's most water-stressed region, **climate change**, which is projected to cause sea level rise, more extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, and less precipitation, will contribute to even **greater water stress** in the region.
- Governments, policy makers and the general public, through the media, must realize that the climate crisis is therefore a **real threat to the Middle East** with severe environmental, economic, political and security implications.



Friends of the Earth Middle East

FoEME

Climate Change:
A New Threat to Middle East Security

Prepared for the United Nations Climate Change Conference
Indonesia ,Bali

EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East
Amman, Bethlehem, and Tel-Aviv
December 2007

International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy

EastWest Institute

*NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations

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