also receives some water from the Israeli Water Company, Mekorot. Yatta neighborhoods receive water on a rotation method. On water supply days, residents fill the water tanks on the roofs. This water needs to last until their next water refill day. Due to the water shortage, residents are forced to buy expensive water from tankers. The issue of water shortage here is a source of great contention since Yatta is located on the Eastern Mountain Aquifer, a natural source of ground-water located exclusively in the West Bank. Despite the aquifer’s location, Israel pumps 40 million cubic meters of water from the Eastern Aquifer and transfers it to agricultural use in Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Abassan El Kabira

The city of Abassan is situated in the south east of the Gaza Strip, near Han Younes. There are 21,000 residents in the city spread over 19,000 dunams according to the city’s master plan, greatly reduced from its size during the British mandate, which included far more land and reached the boundary for 9 kilometers and is highly polluted with the sewage of settlements: Otniel, Carmel, Maon, Susia and Beit Yatir (founded in the 1980s) which include: Besor River, Wadi Gaza. Sources of the stream’s pollution are found both in Israel (Beer Sheva sewage and Ramat Hovav) and in the West Bank (Hebron sewage & Kiryat Arba sewage), causing severe environmental hazards. The pollution has damaged the natural environment and eradicated local fauna and flora species. The local residents suffer from the odor and fly hazards, as well as the contamination of their underground water (wells). Following this tour, we hope you’ll join our struggle for further Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in removing hazards and preserving joint water resources.

Yatta

Located 11 kilometers south of Hebron, the city of Yatta has a population of over 84,000 residents (over 23,000 are children and youth) who mostly work in construction or agriculture. Yatta’s area currently covers, 24,000 dunams according to the city’s master plan, greatly reduced from its size during the British mandate, which included far more land and reached the shores of the Dead Sea. The city of Yatta is surrounded by five Jewish settlements: Otniel, Carmel, Maon, Susia and Beit Yatir (founded in the 1980s) whose total populations amount to 3,000 inhabitants. Yatta suffers from a variety of environmental problems, three of which include:

- Sewage pollution: The Hebron stream flows along Yatta’s north-western boundary for 9 kilometers and is highly polluted with the sewage of Hebron and Kiryat Arba. Like other West Bank cities, Yatta itself has no sewage system. Its residents rely on cesspits which are emptied into the local Wadl intermittently. This situation not only threatens the community’s drinking water sources, but it creates extreme health hazards, and is coupled with foul odors, mosquitos and land pollution.

- Water shortage: Despite its high dependency on agriculture, the community finds it difficult to supply its own domestic needs. The main water well, “Bir El Am”, supplies 850 cubic meters of water a day and is coupled with foul odors, mosquitoes and land pollution.

- Solid waste: Garbage piles in the Han Younes area contaminate water, cause damage to the land, soil and public health hazards. Composition of agricultural waste is currently being promoted as a means of alleviating the problem.

The goals of the trails are to:
- Raise public awareness of shared water and environment concerns of the communities
- Promote cross border cooperation for solving environmental problems
- Develop the potential for local eco-tourism

The brochure was written, updated and edited in March 2010 by Tal Shamir and Michal Sagive.

The trail was developed in 2001 by “EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East” in order to promote local cooperation efforts to protect the shared water and environment between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

“EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East” is a regional environmental organization that works out of 3 offices, Tel Aviv, Amman and Bethlehem to promote cooperative efforts to protect our shared environmental heritage.
Ali’s House, the local Sheikh from whom the first members and impressive sycamore trees. This was the location of the remains of a Palestinian village. The remains of (The three sycamores): Three sycamore trees overlook where you’ll see a beautiful sycamore boulevard with a signpost in blue and white. This path will lead us to the water facilities. On this road, we’ll pass by a Bedouin tomb and a stone building. On the banks of the stream below us, we can see the ruins of a 19th century Mador village that was built on the ruins of a Byzantine settlement. The village was called El Mador by its inhabitants, meaning – a grove and an impressive Antillean well. The well and its facilities were built towards the end of the Ottoman period. The Antillean facility was used for drawing water (by man or beast) to fill the pool. Antilles – canisters were attached to a long chain fixed on a wheel. These were then lowered down to the water source, usually by turning the wheel on which the chain was fixed. The Antilles were filled with water, and raised from the well to be emptied into the accumulation pool and the water troughs. During the British mandate, the Antilles was disassembled and replaced with diesel engines and a modern pump. Return to the car and continue east following the signpost. The cliff pool hang on the river’s bank. In the past, there was a well and an accumulation pool beneath it fed by well water or flood water. The pool was swept away in the 1961 floods and the undermining of the cliff pool. Additional floods in 1981 further crushed the pool’s southern half. Continue along the path and turn right, crossing the gorge on an “Irish” bridge. Pass playground facilities on the right hand side, after which you’ll see a stone well on your left. This well was dug during the British mandate – deep enough that it reached ground water. The water was drawn using a diesel engine that filled an accumulation pool which was used by man and cattle. The pool was first built from gravel stone layers; however, since its original construction it was raised onto building blocks and plastered with cement. An anonymous carving on the pool side praises Allah and states the year – 1934. Observation on Abassan A-Sa’id and Abassan A- Kabir from the “steps” of Kissufim. The mosaic, recently renovated and inaugurated in 1999 as an open gallery presenting local and national art works and sculptures. Many of the pieces depict historical and cultural events. In 1948 the village was fixed. The Antilles were filled with water, and raised from the water source, usually by turning the wheel axis on which the chain was fixed. The Antilles were then lowered down to the water source, usually by turning the wheel on which the chain was fixed. The Antilles were filled with water, and raised from the well to be emptied into the accumulation pool and the water troughs. During the British mandate, the Antilles was disassembled and replaced with diesel engines and a modern pump. Return to the car and continue east following the signpost. The cliff pool hang on the river’s bank. In the past, there was a well and an accumulation pool beneath it fed by well water or flood water. The pool was swept away in the 1961 floods and the undermining of the cliff pool. Additional floods in 1981 further crushed the pool’s southern half. Continue along the path and turn right, crossing the gorge on an “Irish” bridge. Pass playground facilities on the right hand side, after which you’ll see a stone well on your left. This well was dug during the British mandate – deep enough that it reached ground water. The water was drawn using a diesel engine that filled an accumulation pool which was used by man and cattle. The pool was first built from gravel stone layers; however, since its original construction it was raised onto building blocks and plastered with cement. An anonymous carving on the pool side praises Allah and states the year – 1934.