Background

Ein Al-Beida - Wadi Maleh trail illustrates some examples of the rich cultural, historical and natural heritage of the lower Jordan River. However, this trail highlights some of the impacts from which the Jordan River, and the area adjacent to it, suffers. The lower Jordan River has witnessed a severe decline of water quantity and quality, with overwhelming negative impacts on the river’s ecosystem and the livelihood of the adjacent communities. Therefore, it is also meant to raise awareness of the issue of water equity and Palestinian access to the river, which is currently denied by the Israelis. This trail also highlights a type of cultural landscape feature in Wadi Al-Maleh and the natural elements that are associated with it.

What to See!

The trail starts from Ein Al-Beida and Bardala, where one can learn about the negative impacts that affect both nature and the social life of such marginalized communities along the Jordan River. Moreover, part of this trail is designed for hiking through Wadi Al-Maleh, where one can encounter beautiful scenes of nature and a diverse elements of wildlife.
Ein Al-Beida

Ein Al-Baida is a small Palestinian village located in the northeastern part of the West Bank - on the border with the Jordan River to the east; the Green Line and Bissan Plain (Bet She’an) to the north, the villages of Bardala and Kardala to the west. The word «Ein Al-Beida» which means the white spring in Arabic, used to flow in the village, but at present has run dry due to the excessive water exploitation practices by the Israelis. This small village was established basically from the families of Tubas in 1952 when some landowners moved from Tubas city to work on their lands - cultivating and harvesting crops due to the abundance of water and the fertility of the soil.

Khirbet Al-Maleh

Khirbet Al-Maleh is a Palestinian hamlet of more than 200 people located 10 kilometers to the east of the Tubas Governorate. It is situated on a moderate elevation of 32 meters above sea level. It borders the Jordan River in the east, Khirbet Al-Farisiya and the Jordan Valley to the north, and Tayasir to the south. The reason why this area is called “Al-Maleh”, which means “Salty”, is due to the salty water that runs into the nearby valley from Al-Maleh spring. The history of Al-Maleh dates back to the Turkish period when Turkish people first settled in. It has been said that the current residents (Daraghma family) have dwelt in the area for 50 years. They came from Tubas and Hebron in search of grazing and water, as they are farmers and livestock breeders.

Wadi Al-Maleh

Wadi Al-Maleh can be defined as a type of cultural landscape that clearly reflects the interaction between humans and their natural environment. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that this area -over time- has acquired various aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical, and social significances. Views and vistas, sounds and smells, the building structures, social values and the deep sense to this place had all helped in forming an area of rich natural and cultural heritage.

In addition to its cultural importance, Wadi Al-Maleh is known to host a number of Biodiversity elements due to the diverse habitats this area has. Being situated along the Jordan Valley, Wadi Al-Maleh is also known to be one of the sites where a number of soaring birds such as the White Stork use as a stopover and roosting site throughout their annual migration over Palestine.

Hammamt Al-Maleh (Salt Valley Spa)

Throughout the Wadi, Hammamat Al-Maleh is one of the distinguished elements in this area, next to the palm trees that surround it. The baths are situated at a distance of 13 km from the city of Tubas from the eastern side and near the village of Tayasir. Since the beginning of this century, and as a result of the mineral water that comes out from the springs near the Earth’s surface, some spa rooms, or “sauna natural baths” have been built. However, these baths have been deserted and damaged throughout the use of the area for military training by the Israelis. Down the valley, an ancient Mill on the edge of the stream bank used to ground seeds, especially wheat, which is a good indication of the abundance of water that used to flow there. This mill remains as a symbol to this area, and one of the attraction sites.

Al-Burj “The Tower”

Located on the road between the west of Tubas and the east of the Jordan Valley at a top of a hill that is 225 m above sea level. This tower was an old castle in the end of a high rocky mountain series. The castle is currently a destroyed building containing old stones and arches. A wall appears around it and on the north side a gate. This castle said to be built during the Crusader period to protect the main road that connects the Jordan Valley with the mountains in Wadi Al-Maleh. Directly opposite to this tower from the eastern part of the Jordan River lies the castle of Salah El-Deen in Ajlun. It has been said that these two castles used to control the area of the Jordan Valley.

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