

LET THE DEAD SEA LIVE



Friends of the Earth
Middle East



You can help save the Dead Sea . For more information
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- On the regional level

The Biosphere Reserve concept encourages cooperative activities in the fields of scientific research, conservation measures, education and training for the nature reserves that presently have little or no connection to each other.

- On the International Level

All registered sites become members of the world network of Biosphere reserves. This network enables the exchange of experiences between stakeholders living in similar environments and joint activities between the different Biosphere reserves.

Friends of the Earth Middle East is a unique, non-profit, non-governmental organization that represents a united voice of regional environmental NGOs committed to promoting the development of the region in an environmentally sustainable manner and promoting conservation of shared ecosystems throughout the region.

FoEME's Publications

- "Let the Dead Sea Live" concept Document towards the Dead Sea Basin Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Listings, 2000.
- "One Basin One Strategy" Final Report Symposium on promoting an integrated sustainable regional development plan for the Dead Sea Basin, 1998.
- "Dead Sea Challenges" 1996.

You can make a difference

How to start??

- You can help by writing letters to decision makers and government officials, requesting that they coordinate national development patterns so that the interests of the Dead Sea Basin as a whole would be considered. Visit www.foeme.org for an example letter & details of who to send the letter to.
- Organizations can contribute to attracting more public attention to the Dead Sea issue by listing the information mentioned in this brochure on your web sites. You can also link your website to the FoEME web page which talks about the Dead Sea.
- Join us, volunteer, give lectures at schools, man our information tables, and distribute our campaign brochure, poster, and sticker to the general public.
- FoEME is in need of your support in order to carry out the "Let the Dead Sea Live" campaign. Kindly send your donations to the following address:

Friends of the Earth Middle East
PO Box 9341 Amman 11191 Jordan
Name:
Address:
Phone:
Fax:
E-mail:

FoEME's web site:
<http://www.foeme.org>



Introduction

Lying in the heart of the Syrian-African rift valley at the southern outlet of the Jordan River, the Dead Sea region is internationally known for its unique geological, historical and biological characteristics. Geologically, this region lies at the lowest point on earth and contains the saltiest large water body in the world. Historically, the Dead Sea Basin is the site of Masada, Mount Nebo, and Jesus' Baptism site, among many other historical features.

Biologically, the area is the home of rare wild life species such as the Leopard (already greatly diminished in number) the Ibex and hundreds of bird species, including the globally threatened lesser kestrel and griffin vulture. Thirteen endemic plant species are found in the tropical areas of the Basin.

The region is also a world-renowned location for medical and health treatment. Due to the Dead Sea mineral composition, medicinal mud, hot springs and climatic conditions, the region attracts millions of visitors wishing to take advantage of the therapeutic qualities of its minerals.

Wonders of the Dead Sea!

- The high salinity of the water provides swimmers with natural buoyancy with out any effort.
- The Dead Sea is very rich in minerals that are used worldwide as skincare

and health products.

- The air, water and mud from the Dead Sea create a feeling of calm and tranquility; sunlight passes through a natural filter.

- The sea, mountains, and desert are considered to be a wild, stunning, and charming spot in nature.

But the Dead Sea is Dying:

Despite the natural beauty and world heritage of the Dead Sea area, human intervention is today destroying this desert wonderland.

Drying up the Sea:

- The Dead Sea is shrinking fast.
- Diversion of the waters of the Jordan River and the construction of evaporation ponds for mineral extraction have caused the water level to drop 25m in depth over the past three decades.
- The entire southern basin of the Dead Sea has been dried up and transformed into an industrial site.
- Potentially life-threatening sinkholes have appeared along the shoreline of the Dead Sea. The sinkholes have been termed "the revenge of the Dead Sea to man's actions".
- Domestic and industrial sewage continues to flow into the Dead Sea, polluting wadis, the desert areas, and the unique qualities of Dead Sea water.



No Master Plan for Development:

Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians have numerous development plans for the Dead Sea, yet no master plan is in place and the development undertaken is totally uncoordinated.

- Thousands of new hotel rooms are at various stages of either being built or seeking planning approval.
- New evaporation ponds and expansion of industrial activities are taking place.
- New road construction is threatening the habitat and scenic beauty of the desert areas.

Loving the Sea to Death:

Fierce competition for the Dead Sea Basin resources has led to uncoordinated development among the three bordering nations and even among economic sectors and public agencies within the same nation. This development is characterized by each side seeking to maximize their efforts to exploit the Dead Sea Basin's resources without any consideration of the sum total impact or carrying capacity of the Basin as a whole.

Rescuing the Dead Sea – Let the Dead Sea Live Campaign:

Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME), together with its local NGO partners, have launched an international campaign to Let the Dead Sea Live! After conducting extensive research, meeting with all stakeholders and governments, and presenting the issues

at both local and international conferences FoEME calls on our governments to:

- Urgently develop a regional integrated development plan that will balance both natural carrying capacities and national development targets.
- Create a Dead Sea management authority with its own budget and management plan.
- Determine a red-line water level for the Dead Sea that will limit the amount of water diversion and mineral extraction to more reasonable levels.
- Establish the entire Dead Sea Basin as a World Heritage site and Biosphere Reserve under UNESCO protection.

What is a Biosphere Reserve?

Biosphere Reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to bring together the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. The biosphere reserve concept is characterized by a holistic approach to nature protection and human development through the promotion of cooperation at local, regional and international levels:

- On the local level
- The Biosphere Reserve concept provides for the involvement of local communities and stakeholders in planning and management of the Biosphere reserve.