

MEDIA KIT

PROJECTS PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY IN JERUSALEM

The Gazelle Valley Urban Nature Park

Jerusalem residents enjoy the presence of a unique natural phenomenon right in the midst of the urban heartland. Trapped between busy roads, housing developments and a modern super-highway, a rich wildlife habitat flourishes with orchards planted on ancient terraces that still bear fruit. This 50 acre tract of undeveloped land in Southern Jerusalem is home to a small population of gazelles that sustain on the local natural resources. Threatened in the past by massive housing development plans, grassroots opposition initiated by residents of adjoining neighborhoods defeated these plans.

In cooperation with SPNI (the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel), the Jerusalem Foundation and the Soreq Valley Drainage Authority, the City of Jerusalem is planning the establishment of the *Gazelle Valley Urban Nature Park*, which will insure the protection and restoration of the site's unique biodiversity and ecosystems. Recently, final approval was given for the statutory plan to preserve the valley as a natural heritage site, protecting it from any future construction.

http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_main/TopSiteJeruEng.asp?newstr=4&src=/pdf_books/GreenJerusalem/index.html

The Jerusalem Bird Observatory

Israel serves as a habitat for millions of migratory birds. The Jerusalem Bird Observatory (JBO), founded in 1994 as the first community-based urban wildlife site in Jerusalem, studies this unique natural phenomenon. The JBO site is rich in natural resources typical to the Jerusalem Hills area. Its location adjacent to the *Knesset* (Israel's Parliament) and Supreme Court, within walking distance from the center of town, enables thousands of school children and visitors from all across the city to visit the center and experience a unique encounter with wildlife activities.

<http://www.jbo.org.il/Eng%20index.htm>

Community Gardens

In the spirit of Sustainable Jerusalem, the city, together with the Society for the Protection of Nature (SPNI), the Community Centers in Jerusalem and with the help of the Jerusalem



MEDIA KIT

Foundation, has turned 40 derelict plots, many in low-income neighborhoods, into beautiful and productive community gardens. For more information:

http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_main/TopSiteJeruEng.asp?newstr=4&src=/pdf_books/GreenJerusalem/index.html

The Wildflower Sanctuary

Once used as an illegal dumping ground, residents of this 5-acre nature reserve have transformed the area into a first of its kind local wildflower sanctuary with over 55 native trees and plants rescued from different construction sites around the city. Bursting with beautiful indigenous flowering plants (such as wild orchids, protected by law), this site at the edge of a low-income immigrant neighborhood is quickly being transformed into a popular recreational and educational attraction. For more information:

http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_main/TopSiteJeruEng.asp?newstr=4&src=/pdf_books/GreenJerusalem/index.html

Metropolitan Parks

The Municipality of Jerusalem, together with the Jerusalem Development Authority, the National Parks Administration, and the JNF (Jewish National Fund), is developing a ring of parks around the city which will incorporate 1,500 hectares of existing parkland, nature reserves, forests and open spaces. Included in the restoration area are the rolling hills that surround Jerusalem, encompassing the Arazim, Motza, Refaim and Tzofim valleys. The goal of the *Metropolitan Parks* project is to conserve and capture the breathtaking natural landscape that surrounds the city while offering quality recreational opportunities to residents and visitors alike, promoting urban eco-tourism.

The Railway Park

A grass roots movement working together with SPNI has won the battle to restore the abandoned railway line and develop a corridor park serving neighborhoods in the southern part of the city. The Jerusalem Development Authority and the Jerusalem Municipality, with the support of the Gottesman Family, have been actively involved in the conservation, planning and development of this neglected open space. Together, they have turned the area into a charming cultural and recreational nature spot for residents and visitors to enjoy in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the urban landscape.



MEDIA KIT

Once completed, the park will include eight kilometers of landscaped walking and cycling paths within the city as well as sports and fitness facilities, and it will connect with the ring of Metropolitan Parks now being developed around Jerusalem. The Railway Park exemplifies the city's sustainable planning philosophy which aims to promote healthy living, historic preservation and nature conservation, while leveraging the urban infrastructure for social and economic development to benefit all of the city's populations.

Source: Green Jerusalem- A Sustainable Future, by Helene Roumani, Jerusalem LAB