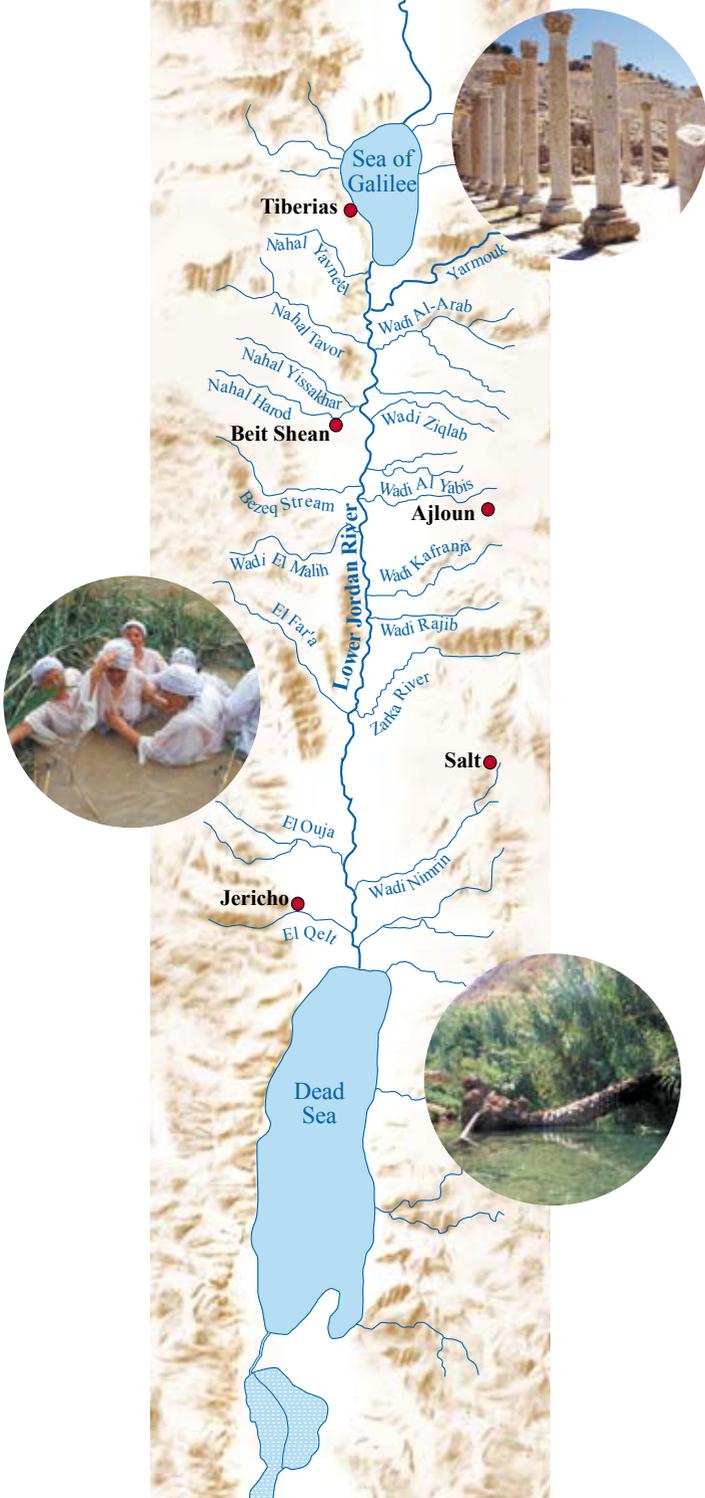


## The Lower Jordan River and its Tributaries



**Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME)**, is a unique organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists. Our primary objective is the promotion of cooperative efforts to protect our shared environmental heritage. In so doing, we seek to advance both sustainable regional development and the creation of necessary conditions for lasting peace in our region. FoEME has offices in Amman, Bethlehem, and Tel-Aviv. FoEME is a member of Friends of the Earth International, the largest grassroots environmental organization in the world.



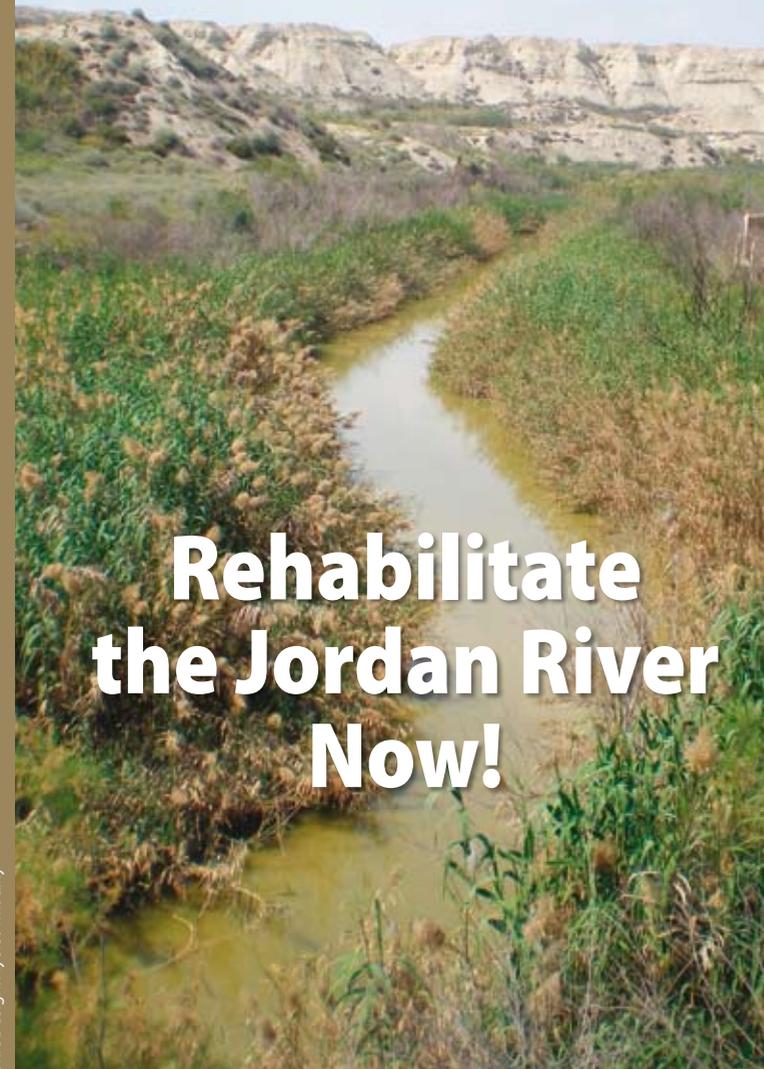
For more information and to support efforts to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River please visit:

[www.foeme.org](http://www.foeme.org)

Friends of the Earth Middle East's Jordan River Rehabilitation Project is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, the Global Nature Fund/ Ursula Merz Foundation and the Osprey Foundation.

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## What can you do to rehabilitate the Jordan River?

- **Sign up** for FoEME's Environmental Peacemaking newsletter to receive monthly updates at [www.foeme.org](http://www.foeme.org).
- Learn more by following us on [facebook](#).
- **Spread the message** by making a presentation or showing one of our great videos at your school, community center, church, synagogue or mosque. Prepared presentations and videos are available for download on our website.
- **Invite FoEME representatives** to speak at your school, community center, mosque, church or synagogue.
- **Write to your political representatives** to encourage them to support regional efforts to rehabilitate the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.
- **Come on a visit to the region!**
- **Tour our Neighbours Paths** during your next visit to the region - or virtually via Google Earth.
- **Visit and stay at FoEME's ecocenters** in Auja (Palestine), Sharhabil bin Hassaneh (Jordan) and Ein Gedi (Israel).
- **Donate** to support FoEME's regional effort to rehabilitate the Jordan River at [www.foeme.org](http://www.foeme.org).



## The Jordan River is Drying Up:



Unique in its natural and cultural wealth, the Jordan River is presently **threatened by excessive water diversion, pollution and inappropriate development**. Of the 1.3 billion cubic meters of water that would naturally flow down the River Jordan to the Dead Sea each year, **96% is diverted** for domestic and agricultural uses.

As the **Dead Sea's primary fresh water source**, the diversion of the Lower Jordan River is the main reason that the **Dead Sea is dropping one meter ever year** with drastic consequences for its environment, the area communities and their economies.

The **Peace Treaty signed between Jordan and Israel** in 1994 specifically calls on the parties to cooperate for the benefit of the River through:

- Ecological rehabilitation of the Jordan River
- Establishment of nature reserves and protected areas
- Transboundary tourism initiatives

**Palestine**, as a riparian to the Lower Jordan River, must receive access and a fair share of the River's water resources as part of the Middle East peace negotiations.

Though nearly two decades have passed since the Peace Treaty was signed, the state of the Lower Jordan River has only further deteriorated.

## The Jordan River Valley - A Natural and Cultural Treasure:

The **Lower Jordan River Valley** is part of the Great Rift Valley linking Africa and the Fertile Crescent. From the Sea of Galilee, the Lower Jordan River meanders for some 200 km before entering the Dead Sea. Sites of natural and cultural heritage are found on both sides of the valley and justify the valley being described as a cultural landscape of outstanding universal value.

### The Lower Jordan River Valley is:

- The lowest river in the world flowing through some of the narrowest areas of the Great Rift Valley to the lowest point on earth – the Dead Sea.
- An important wetland habitat sustaining diverse vegetation and fauna.
- A flyway for over **500 million** migratory birds twice each year.
- The pathway of early human migration and sites of early human settlement.
- The site of wild wheat's first cultivation.
- Ubiquitous in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and in Islamic sources associating the River to the prophets Moses and Elijah, the Companions of the Prophet Mohammed, and site of the baptism of Christ. The lush northern area of the river valley is known as the Gate to the Garden of Eden.
- The site of momentous battles fought in the valley floor and great Roman cities and medieval castles of the Crusader period.

## FoEME Recommends:

### Ecological Rehabilitation:

- Remove contaminants from the Jordan River and supply water back to the River in sufficient quality and quantity.
- As treatment solutions are found to halt the release of sewage into the Lower Jordan River, governments must commit to return fresh water to the River.
- Based on scientific studies conducted by FoEME, we recommend that the three governments should adopt a regional rehabilitation goal to **return 400-600 million cubic meters** of high quality water back to the Lower Jordan River each year.
- Rehabilitation can be accomplished through water conservation and increased efficiencies. In a recent review of the Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian water economies, FoEME identified **over a billion cubic meters of water that could be saved / produced** by implementing identified conservation strategies. 90% of the identified water savings were found to be less expensive than the marginal cost of water.
- Water saved can be used in part to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River and restore Palestinian water rights.



### Shared Benefits:

- Palestine, Jordan and Israel can share in the benefits of a rehabilitated Lower Jordan River by establishing cross border tourism routes and transboundary peace parks such as the proposed **Jordan River Peace Park** at Naharayim/ Bakoura and the proposed transboundary **Baptism Site**.

### Regional Master Plan Development:

- Launch and implement a comprehensive master planning programme to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River and its tributaries.
- Master plan should determine coordinated regional flow regimes, set water quality standards, identify solutions to treat all pollution sources, launch restoration and preservation programs, establish ecological corridors, and identify opportunities to expand ecotourism infrastructures in the Jordan Valley including the preparation of regional heritage routes.
- Preparation of a master plan has political support in Israel and Palestine.
- The Israeli government has launched a process to prepare a master plan for the Israeli section of the Lower Jordan River.



### Regional Management Mechanism:

- Establish a Jordan River Basin Commission to manage the River while instituting mechanisms to mitigate conflicts and strengthen the integrated water resource management of the Lower Jordan River.