

Management Plan for Wadi Al-Quff Protected Area

By Issa Albaradeiya



The most effective method to conserve the wealth of our biodiversity is to establish a national system of protected areas with an ambitious management plan. The Environment Quality Authority (EQA) took its first step towards this national system by preparing the first management plan for Wadi Al-Quff protected area.

The management plan is based on a literature review of relevant documents of the State of Palestine as well as scientific articles and reports, a baseline field survey, a national framework analysis, and participatory planning and consultation workshops. Management planning has followed the specific protected-areas management-planning framework found in *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas* (Thomas and Middleton, 2003). The situation analysis, identification of conservation targets, and long-term goals, as well as the management strategy development and definition of short-term management objectives, have been based on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation of the Conservation Measures Partnership (Conservation Measures Partnership, 2013), and have been conducted using the adaptive conservation management planning package called Miradi.

The management plan comprises an analysis and evaluation of the information collected, and the management strategy defines the vision, management goals, and objectives for PA management at Wadi Al-Quff, thereby setting the overall strategic framework.

The long-term (2035) vision for Wadi Al-Quff

Wadi Al-Quff Reserve will be a well-managed, protected area with healthy Mediterranean forest, shrub, and grassland areas that harbour a rich flora and fauna of healthy populations of typical Mediterranean species. The reserve will be visited, studied, and enjoyed by Palestinian and international visitors as a flagship example of Palestinian nature.

The implementation strategy sets out the institutional setup, governance and participation arrangements, staffing guidance, zoning, and other operational aspects that are needed to initiate PA management at Wadi Al-Quff. A work plan, which consists of eight management programmes, and an investment and financial plan for the first management cycle of Wadi Al-Quff Nature Reserve (five years) are derived from the management and implementation strategies.

The management of Wadi Al-Quff will not only need to reduce threats but also support the development of the PA towards a desired state. According to feedback acquired at the planning workshops, the most important aspect of this development is a shift from the current coniferous-dominated forest state to a more natural Mediterranean forest state. The shift of the forest towards its native composition can be achieved based on the natural tendency of Mediterranean forest to become dominant if coniferous forest is not regularly replanted. This is the core of the strategy. By not replanting coniferous trees and at the same time safeguarding the natural rejuvenation of already existing nuclei of Mediterranean forest

within Wadi Al-Quff, a gradual long-term shift towards a dominance of deciduous Mediterranean forest will be achieved.

The investment and financial plan contains information about the necessary investments by category (infrastructure, equipment, operation, and consultancy) that have been estimated for the establishment and operation of Wadi Al-Quff, as well as the full implementation of the management plan. Some information about how to meet the identified financial needs is also included.

The management plan was developed based on a partnership approach that ensures active involvement of effective local communities, NGOs, and governmental institutions. The management planning process was supported by the UNDP with funds from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and has been conducted by IUCN ROWA (the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Regional Office for West Asia).

Dr. Issa Albaradeiya is the director general of Environmental Resources at the Environment Quality Authority.

References

- L. Thomas and J. Middleton, *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas*, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK: IUCN, 2003.
- N. Dudley (Ed.), *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 2013.

Wadi Al-Quff Protected Area is located in Hebron Governorate, and covers an area of 250 hectares (2,500 dunums).

