PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Israel's dynamic landscape and geographic location— at the crossroads of Africa, Asia and Europe—endow it with a rich environment and diverse natural resources. Though small in area, Israel has a unique geography and varying climate that creates ecosystem variation as one crosses the country from north to south and east to west. As a result of this variation, Israel hosts over 500 species of birds, 116 species of mammals, and 7 million people. Given this biodiversity, Israeli institutions (governmental and non-governmental) have made significant efforts to conserve and restore natural resources over the past century.

The U.S. Forest Service has maintained several close collaborative partnerships in Israel for over 28 years, and continues the cooperation today on forestry and natural resource management issues common to both Israel and the United States. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service works with Israeli partners on a range of issues including climate change, ecosystem services, forest restoration, and migratory species issues.

Current collaborative activities seek to continue growing the historic partnership between the U.S. and Israel and address the most pressing environmental issues facing both nations. Israel's forests provide the public vital ecosystem services – from water and food, to open spaces that provide numerous recreational opportunities – but these vital natural resources are severely threatened by increasing land-use pressures driven by a growing population and numerous climate change risks. The USFS supports Israeli efforts to monitor and value ecosystem services, and integrate this data into land use planning and management. Additionally this work compliments Israeli initiatives to draft a climate adaptation plan for Israeli forests and open spaces.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Since 1987, collaboration between the USFS and the Israeli natural resources management sector has included:

- Completion of 25 research projects related to improving natural resource management in Israel
- More than 60 technical assistance missions to Israel by US Forest Service experts
- 97 educational and professional exchanges completed by Israeli experts in the U.S.
- The participation of more than 40 Israeli experts in international seminars organized by the U.S. Forest Service

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