

WEST BANK

U.S. Forest Service International Programs

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Native Nursery Management and Restoration: The U.S. Forest Service provides ongoing technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture to enhance nursery practices. This year, support focused on seed collection, processing and handling to enhance seedling quality and prepare seedling for planting site conditions in semi-arid areas to increase restoration success rates.

Regional Exchange: The U.S. Forest Service is working across the Middle East and North Africa to cultivate a regional network of natural resource expertise. The Forest Service supported regional exchange visits for MoA to Jordan for workshops and the first annual Arabic-language protected area management seminar. MoA specialists also participate in a year-long international distance education certificate course with the University of Montana.

Conservation Education and Youth Engagement: The U.S. Forest Service supports the Palestinian Child Art Center to implement conservation education activities with at-risk youth and provides training for teachers.

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OVERVIEW

Located along the Great Rift Valley, the West Bank has substantial topographic relief, including the lowest terrestrial point on Earth at the Dead Sea and mountains of significant elevation. Despite the short distances between its northern and southern, as well as eastern and western boundaries, there is considerable variability in climate and ecosystems: arid deserts, forests, and at higher elevations, more moist climates. The natural resources of the West Bank are critically important to Palestinian livelihoods and support agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, traditional and pharmaceutical health, and tourism activities.

The U.S. Forest Service works in the West Bank to provide direct, on-the-ground assistance educating youth about the environment, encouraging stewardship of natural resources, and improving land use, grazing and watershed management practices. This technical assistance program is unique, as few United States Government agencies operate in the West Bank and activities that address natural resource conservation in the area are limited. U.S. Forest Service programs in the West Bank include small grants, international exchange opportunities, and technical assistance. Program areas include environmental education for youth, forest and nursery management, and watershed restoration.

U.S. Forest Service partners in the West Bank span the government, non-governmental, and academic sectors and include:

- Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)
- Hebron University
- Palestinian Children's Art Center (PCAC)



A U.S. Forest Service technical specialist observes seedling growth at a nursery in the West Bank during a technical assistance visit. Photo credit: Damian Rawoot, U.S. Forest Service



Graduates of an environmental education summer camp for youth in the West Bank. The camp was conducted by the Palestinian Children's Art Center, a long-term U.S. Forest Service partner in the region. Photo credit: Damian Rawoot, U.S. Forest Service.