15 LIFE ON LAND

PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



Poster of Alexsey Sadich for the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (Credit: School of Design)

RESEARCH

AI-Powered Bird Monitoring Takes Flight

Prof. Ilan Shimshoni, Dr. Inbal Schekler, and Mr. Eyal Halabi, from the Department of Information Systems, developed an algorithm that combines artificial intelligence with ecological knowledge to enable automatic, precise, and non-invasive monitoring of seabird nesting colonies. This advanced technology helps scientists better understand the behavior of birds and support efforts to protect them.

Flyway Under the Radar: A Hidden Insect Superhighway

Using eight years of radar data along a 400 km Levantine corridor, researchers, among them Prof. Nir Sapir and Dr. Yuval Werber from the Department of Evolutionary and Environmental Biology, recorded 6.3 million insects and estimated over 700 million cross annually along a previously unrecognized migration route, finding weather-driven, directionally distinct movement that is proportionally lower than European flows-challenging the idea that this corridor funnels insects the way it does birds, with broad implications for regional ecology and disease/pest's spread.

Taxes, Trust, and the Politics of Urban Wildlife

Drawing on a 2020 survey experiment, choice-based conjoint analysis, longitudinal trends from 2019 to 2024, Prof. Itai Beeri of the School of Political Sciences, examined residents' willingness to pay additional local taxes as a novel proxy for support of urban human-wildlife policies. The study found that individual and environmental factors reduce support, while political incentives increase it. Counterintuitively, greater access to policy information can also trigger information overload, ultimately dampening public support.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A Citizen-Science Partnership

The Chief Scientist of Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) has selected the Center for the Advancement of Citizen Science (TCSS), headed by Prof. Yael Kali of the School of Learning Sciences and Leadership in Education, to lead a citizen-science partnership with KKL-JNF, in collaboration with the Technion.

Students Design Posters for the Israel Nature and Parks Authority

In the "Digital Illustration Techniques in Photoshop" course at the School of Design's Visual Communication Department, taught by Mr. Shachar Kover, students each designed a series of three posters inviting visitors to the Authority's overnight campsites. The best entries will be used for campsite promotion and a traveling exhibition. The project included a camping trip to Ma'ayan Harod National Park for inspiration.

Regulating Israel's Waste Sector

Ahead of the proposed waste-sector reform, Prof. Ofira Ayalon, Head of the Natural Resource & Environmental Research Center at the University of Haifa, convened a consultation with some 60 leading experts in February 2026, together with the Regional Councils Center, to address the sector's core challenges, from infrastructure shortages and illegal dumping to regulatory uncertainty, and produce practical recommendations soon to be published in a summary document.

LEARNING AND STUDENTS

Earth in Antiquity: Matter, Place, Idea

Taught by Prof. Moshe Blidstein, of the Department of General History this seminar explores the meaning of earth/soil in antiquity, with an emphasis on its religious and cultic dimensions-examining questions such as the role of earth in ancient religions and rituals, what mythology reveals about the relationship between earth deities and sky deities, its role in political symbolism, the relationship between earth, land, and agricultural fields, and whether earth expresses universality or a specific place

New Course: Environmental Regulation, Responsibility

The new course placed in the Eilat Region, developed by Prof. Ofira Aylon and Adv. Inbar Druyan (from the faculties of Social Sciences & Law), was selected for funding through the Sustainability Initiative's call for new courses. Using Eilat as a case study, the course examines environmental governance, climate resilience, and sustainable development in geographically and socially peripheral regions. Through an interdisciplinary approach that connects environmental, legal, energy, and economic perspectives, students gain the tools to address complex sustainability challenges with real-world impact.

New Course: Haifa Wadis Trail

The practical architecture course, developed by Ms. Dalia Zamora and Ms. Niva Aviram of the Department of Architecture was selected for funding through the Sustainability Initiative's call for new courses. Following the *design-build* model, students will work with local communities to design and construct sustainable way stations along the Haifa Wadis Trail. Combining architectural design with hands-on implementation, the course connects academic learning with real-world social and environmental impact while promoting sustainable development in the city of Haifa.

OPERATIONS

Campus Improvements

New landscaping and outdoor furniture have been added across campus, including local herb and tea plants and seating near the sculptures garden, varied furniture for gatherings on the 600 level, and additional seating in the Stairs Building's public areas for students, including those in the School of Medicine. The 600 Level patio was also upgraded with reused Ipe wood from the former accessibility ramp. These improvements were designed and implemented by the Division of Engineering and Operations.

New Website Showcases the University of Haifa's Impact

The University of Haifa has launched a new Sustainability Impact website, highlighting its commitment to advancing sustainability and impact through research, teaching, campus operations, and community engagement. The site brings together the University's initiatives, achievements, and partnerships, demonstrating how academic excellence is translated into real-world environmental and social impact in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.