

## **KKL-JNF Brief**

**Fall 2019**

KKL-JNF is presently launching "**Israel 2040—Moving to the Land of Tomorrow**", also known as the Israeli Relocation plan, which aims to bring **one million new residents to the Negev and half a million to the Galilee by the year 2040**.

This major demographic shift will be realized by transforming these peripheral regions into high-tech centers, including international companies, thereby attracting diverse and strong populations.

### **Highlighting ISRAEL 2040:**

The KKL-JNF Board of Directors has approved KKL-JNF's strategic Israel 2040 plan:

- "Israel 2040—Moving to the Land of Tomorrow", is KKL-JNF's long-term, flagship plan aimed at attracting one million new residents to the Negev and half a million to the Galilee by 2040.
- With this plan, KKL-JNF aims to significantly strengthen the geographical and social periphery, with emphasis on the Negev and the Galilee.
- KKL-JNF will lead and coordinate the activities of all the participating bodies, based on its proven project execution capabilities, resources, strategic vision, community development experience, and connections with the Jewish Diaspora as well as those with the Israeli government, academia, the IDF, and the business sector in Israel and abroad.
- The plan's implementation is founded on Israeli technology.
- KKL-JNF intends to transform the Galilee into a food-tech, agro-tech and bio-tech hub.
- KKL-JNF will transform the Negev into a cyber capital by developing state-of-the-art high-tech villages, scientific campuses and R&D centers. Alongside these, KKL-JNF will establish smart cities that will absorb a young, strong and vibrant population and provide it with the necessary public facilities.
- The purpose of the plan is to attract investors and entrepreneurs, engineers and programmers, and young families and students from Israel and abroad. Instead of relocating to California's Silicon Valley, these people will be motivated to relocate to Be'er Sheva, Kiryat Shmona, Upper Nazareth (Nof HaGalil) and Dimona.
- The three-pronged plan: people for communities, innovative employment opportunities, and education for excellence. These include investing in future generations through educational institutions, scholarships and incentives for students in the fields of science and technology and establishing entrepreneurship and development centers, high-tech parks and advanced technology industries, among others.
- Over the years, the Hula Valley has become one of the northern region's most significant economic growth engines. With the opening of the new Hula Valley

Visitor Center, a significant increase in the number of visitors is expected. The Visitor Center will serve as an important attraction to the region, impacting local economy, providing additional employment opportunities and putting the Galilee on the map. This too is part of the KKL-JNF flagship plan for the coming years.

**KKL-JNF's main areas of activity: forestry and the environment, water management and riverbank rehabilitation, infrastructure for communities and roads, education for youth, tourism and forest and park activities, and R&D.**

**Forestry and the Environment:** KKL-JNF is responsible for 150,000 hectares (375,000 acres) of forests and natural woods throughout Israel and has planted 240 million trees on an area of 92,000 hectares (230,000 acres). In the age of climate change, forests serve as carbon sinks, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, therefore reducing global warming.

KKL-JNF develops community forests and biosphere parks for the benefit of people and a sustainable environment.

**Water Management and Riverbank Rehabilitation:** KKL-JNF helps the national water economy by having built over 230 reservoirs and dams throughout the country, whose water irrigates 70 percent of Israel's agriculture. These reservoirs and dams collect 300 million cubic meters of water annually from runoff, floods and treated effluent.

**Developing Infrastructure for Communities and Roads:** KKL-JNF purchased about 260,000 hectares (650,000 acres), land which was prepared for the establishment of some 1,000 communities throughout the country.

KKL-JNF prepared about 100,000 hectares (250,000 acres) of land for agriculture.

KKL-JNF built about 8,000 kilometers of forest, security and agricultural roads, including those in the periphery and border communities.

KKL-JNF created about 1,300 kilometers of bicycle trails.

**Youth and Education:** KKL-JNF aims to grow tomorrow's leaders through innovative, experiential educational activities and programs, integrated into all educational frameworks, to instill values, knowledge and love of the Land of Israel, community involvement and the preservation of the country's green lungs and open spaces.

KKL-JNF supports informal education and collaborates regularly with pre-military education preparation programs and youth movements.

KKL-JNF operates five Field and Forest Education Centers throughout the country, where a wide range of fun activities and study takes place in the open air, in the heart of forests.

KKL-JNF strengthens the bond between Jewish youth in the Diaspora and the homeland through educational programs, seminars and tours of the country. KKL-JNF operates a wide range of high-quality values educational programs in Israel's geographic and social periphery.

**Tourism and Forest and Park Activities:** KKL-JNF has established more than 1,000 picnic and recreation sites in forests and parks, including camping areas, open to the public 24/7. The

forests and these sites developed and maintained by KKL-JNF, preserve the beauty of the land and its ecosystem services for future generations.

The wide range of activities that take place in KKL-JNF forests include cycling, walking, running, picnicking and outdoor community and cultural events and KKL-JNF organizes events and tours in forests and parks for the public. KKL-JNF works to make all forests, parks and their facilities accessible to people with disabilities and limited mobility, so that family and friends can enjoy nature together.

#### **General Messages:**

- Unlike the nature and open-air sites of other organizations, admission to which can be quite costly, KKL-JNF sites are free of charge.
- KKL-JNF nurtures and maintains forests and parks for the well-being of Israel's residents and visitors, aiming to cultivate people's connection with nature.
- KKL-JNF invests hundreds of millions of New Israeli Shekels from its own budget on maintaining and keeping its sites clean.
- Out of a desire to enable all Israeli citizens to enjoy the beauty of the country's natural values, benefit from its green lungs and connect with nature, KKL-JNF has greatly invested in making its sites accessible to all. KKL-JNF recently completed a long-term work plan for the accessibility of approximately 300 sites, roads, parks and picnic and recreation areas throughout Israel, in KKL-JNF parks and forests, which meet the requirements of the Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Law and accessibility regulations.
- KKL-JNF is not only responsible for Israel's forests and parks, but also works in behalf of its citizens in many and varied fields, including informal education, the environment, housing, infrastructure and other projects that contribute to the country and improve quality of life.
- In recent years, KKL-JNF has set itself the goal of reducing the gaps between the geographical and social periphery of the State of Israel and its central region. Strengthening the periphery, economically and socially, is of paramount importance and KKL-JNF's main focus of activity.

#### **Hula Lake Park (Agamon HaHula):**

- One of Israel's most visited tourist attractions, the Hula Lake Park belongs to and is operated by KKL-JNF. About 400 thousand people visit the site annually.
- Hula Lake Park is an internationally unique eco-tourism site, offering visitors a rare experience in nature interwoven with history and heritage.
- An important national treasure, the site is renowned for its enormous variety of bird species. KKL-JNF has developed bird watching sites from the Hula to Eilat, with birding parks in the country's center and along the Great Rift Valley, along which the Hula Valley is located. One of the world's major migratory bird flyways, Hula Lake Park serves as a stopover, roosting and wintering haven for hundreds of millions of birds every year.
- An estimated half a billion migrating birds pass through Israel; many of them through the Hula Valley.
- To date, about 550 species of birds have been observed in Israel, hundreds of which have been spotted in the Hula Valley.
- Hula Lake Park is a habitat for an array of wildlife, including waterfowl, birds of prey songbirds, water buffaloes, wildcats and others animal species endemic to the area.

- Hula Lake Park was established as part of the Hula Restoration Project, led by KKL-JNF in the 1990s. After decades of land degradation, the project served to transform the Hula Valley peatland into cultivatable land as well as filter water from the Jordan River, which flows into the Sea of Galilee, whose water quality had also deteriorated. The project involved the digging about 100 kilometers of canals in the Hula Valley, creating the body of water now known as Hula Lake.
- The Hula Restoration Project transformed the Hula Valley from an ecological blight into a fertile expanse of land for agriculture and an inviting avian and wildlife habitat, restoring its wetland biodiversity.
- The gray cranes that nest in the wetlands of Russia and northern Europe migrate in the fall with their whole families to southernly countries, where they spend the winter. Following the completion of the Hula Restoration Project, increasing numbers of gray cranes arrived. Over one hundred thousand of the species now fly over the Hula and tens of thousands choose to remain for the winter, instead of continuing their migration to the African continent.
- Hula Lake Park exemplifies the special partnership between KKL-JNF and the region's farmers: KKL-JNF's Crane Feeding Project provides an alternative source of sustenance for migrating cranes in winter (from October to March) and the solution to the crop damage they had previously caused, while protecting the large and impressive birds and leveraging tourism. The cranes attract hundreds of thousands of visitors.
- With the increase of visitors, Hula Lake Park has become one of the most significant economic growth engines in the Upper Galilee. The circle of residents and communities that benefit is ever-widening, with impressive, privately invested tourism initiatives having developed alongside the park.

#### **A Major KKL-JNF Project:**

##### **KKL-JNF Houses for Excellence**

A major kickoff project in the framework of Israel 2040, KKL-JNF Houses for Excellence provide the basis for viable development in the periphery: education for youth with emphasis on STEM subjects. KKL-JNF has and continues to build new and attractive informal education hubs in Galilee and Negev cities, operated in cooperation with local authorities, with the aim of improving student achievement in core subjects and providing enrichment courses in high-tech, computer science, cyber, web building, etc. The first KKL-JNF House for Excellence was inaugurated two years ago in the Galilee (Upper Nazareth (Nof HaGalil)). Additional Houses for Excellence are under construction in Sderot, Beit She'an, Ofakim and Kiryat Malakhi, and more such Houses are in various procedural stages.