

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
Wadi Rum Protected Area
State of Conservation Report



December 1, 2022

Property Summary

Property Name: Wadi Rum Protected Area

Date of Inscription: 2011

Criteria: (iii) (v) (vii)

Property: 74,180 ha (as inscribed in 2011)

Buffer zone: 59,177 ha (as revised in 2017)

Previous World Heritage Committee Decisions

2021: 44COM 7B.74 – Wadi Rum Protected Area (Jordan)

2018: 42COM 7B.67 - Wadi Rum Protected Area (Jordan)

2016: 40COM 7B.65 - Wadi Rum Protected Area (Jordan)

2012: 36COM 8B.65 - Statements of Outstanding Universal Value of the twelve properties inscribed at the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO, 2011)

2011: 35COM 8B.15 - Mixed Properties - Wadi Rum Protected Area (Jordan)

Previous Reactive Monitoring Missions

2014: Report on the Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission to Wadi Rum Protected Area, 27 April-1 May 2014

Previous State of Conservation Reports

WH site lists SOC reports for 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021.

This is the fifth State of Conservation report. As per the UNESCO guidelines, it includes:

1. An Executive Summary of the report.
2. Response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee.

Further, the following are NOT included as they are not applicable to the current report:

3. Other current conservation issues: None included/Not Applicable.
4. Any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.
5. Public access to the state of conservation report.

The State Party requests that ONLY the executive summary be shared publically.

Executive Summary

This is the fifth State of Conservation report prepared for the Wadi Rum Protected Area in response to the World Heritage Committee Decision 44 COM 7B.74 taken during the World Heritage Committee Extended forty-fourth Session held in Fuzhou (China) online meeting in the period 16-31 July 2021. The report focuses mainly on the recommendations set forth in the above mentioned decision. In addition, it provides general updates on the progress made by the State Party (Jordan) in response to the Advisory Bodies recommendation presented in the Reactive Monitoring Report adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2014.

In regard to the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on the implementation of the World Heritage Committee recommendations, as stated in the decision above, the report explains the various impacts of the global pandemic on ASEZA's capacity to implement part of the intended measures aiming to enhance the conservation status of the property, including those related to the buffer zone regulation finalization, the update of the integrated management plan, and the completion of the HEIA process. On the other hand, and despite the hardships imposed by the pandemic, the state party of Jordan was able to follow up on and undertake significant measures pertaining to the implementation of the UNESCO recommendations in the 2021 decision.

This included significant progress on the development and approval of the regulatory framework for the tourist campsites and other tourism activities. It also included an update on the substantial work completed on the development of the cultural heritage inventory, whereby more than 50% of the protected area was surveyed in detail, documenting all cultural elements and yielding a record of more than 7,000 elements of rock art, petroglyphs, archaeological sites, and structures. Further, the report provides an update on the inventory related to the tourist camps and structures whereas the whole of the protected area and its buffer zone, as defined in the new buffer zone proposal, were surveyed - recording all visitor establishments and facilities and classifying them into categories and comparing them to historic data from 2016 which was obtained from analyzing satellite imagery. Criteria used for this inventory included area occupied by each camp, number of tents or accommodation units, and size and number of service facilities. The results of this important inventory were used in the finalization of the tourist camp regulations and will be used as a basis for its implementation.

ASEZA has also progressed significantly in regard to the undertaking of the HEIA assessment. This included a three mission program to apply the methodology adopted by IUCN and ICOMOS for the implementation of the assessment. This included the identification of the site values and attributes, both cultural and natural, and the preliminary analysis of factors influencing them. Nevertheless, the HEIA process was put on hold due to technical and financial constraints and is envisaged to recommence and be completed in the framework of the 2023 program.

Finally, the report includes a specific section on the new development in the governance arrangements of the protected area, under which a national steering committee was established under the auspices of the Royal Court and the direct supervision of the Prime Minister's office, with the mandate to oversee, guide, and support the management of the

Wadi Rum Protected Area in recognition of its national and international importance and in response to growing concerns over its state of conservation, especially in regard to tourism development and visitor management, and also as elaborated in the decisions of the World Heritage Committee. The Committee includes a plethora of national and local institutions covering technical line ministries, local administration and law enforcement bodies, and community development organizations.

Overall, the state party of Jordan perceives progress made on the implementation of the World Heritage Committee as significant and satisfactory, despite the severe constraints caused by the global pandemic. It also reassures the World Heritage Committee that all necessary measures needed to safeguard the site and maintain its state of conservation will be undertaken progressively with the highest commitment demonstrated through the allocation of human and financial resources and the maintenance of political and institutional support.