



Glacier National Park
CONSERVANCY



Silk Road to Peace, Hawr Al Azim Marsh, Iran-Iraq

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Mesopotamian Marsh: Hawr Al Azim, Iran

Size: 37,266 ha (~5% of Mesopotamian Marsh)

Mesopotamian Marsh International Peace Park proposal

• Schematic: 3 major assets + islands of green + reclaimed desert



Participants: There are no participant confirmed at this early stage

Objectives: to help protect, save, restore & promote Hawr Al Azim Marsh

- Wetland of a huge watershed in 5 nations, part of nature's filter for the Persian Gulf
- Natural ecosystem, a refuge & sanctuary for rare & endangered species
- Home of Mudhif (vernacular) architecture of the Marsh Arabs, one of the best examples of environmental natural architecture
- Memorial for the war dead of both Iran & Iraq in the 1980-1988 war
- Spring board to "Green the Desert" beyond, by using the experience, knowledge, skills, products, heritage & work of the the Ma'dān people
- Mobilize Iraqi & Iranian officials for an international conference on the Mesopotamian Marsh, with a design charrette for the Marsh Arabs

Values & importance: the Mesopotamian Marsh

- Biggest wetland in the Middle East
- Least damaged & most resilient part of the Mesopotamian Marsh
- Home to several endangered species including the smooth coated otter & Basra Warbler
- Potential as a designated protected area, wildlife refuge, a National Park, UNESCO World Heritage Site & UN BioSphere Reserve a status achieved by the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park

Aspects of transboundary cooperation:

- Water management: common natural wetland as filter for Persian Gulf
- Water management: watershed of 4 countries (Turkey, Syria, Iraq & Iran)
- Heritage preservation: 5,000 year heritage in past & present vernacular architecture & construction knowledge

Status: preliminary concept only. Initial discussions held with UNESCO & Iranian Department of Environment.

Catalyst: plight of Mudhif architecture & construction knowledge

History: Mesopotamian Marsh was part of the Persian Empire under 8 dynasties

Governance & Management:

- Primary management: Iranian government
- Secondary management: Iraqi government
- Tertiary responsibility & need for international cooperation: Turkey & Syria

Results: no real results yet, except the need for cross border cooperation. The Iranian government is waiting for the Iraqi government to be willing to participate in an international conference on the Mesopotamian Marsh

Lessons: these wetlands are precious, in need of help, with enormous potential

Attachments:

- Abstract, dated Aug. 25, 2016
- Brochure, January 18, 2016
- Peace Park proposal, 13 International Peace Parks in 15 countries