**Summary of the Environmental Protection Department’s Objectives**

**2018-2020**

**&**

**Defining Themes and Objectives**

**for 2021-2023**

**Summary of the Environmental Protection Department’s Objectives for 2018-2020**

**Defining Themes and Objectives for 2021-2023**

At the conclusion of 2020, the Environmental Protection Department underwent a review process, which first examined how our objectives for 2018-2020 had been implemented, and the reasons for their successes or failures. Analyzing the main reasons driving these outcomes helped us define our themes and objectives for the upcoming period. We undertook this process with the understanding that continuous self-review, particularly regarding adherence to our objectives, is the only way for us to progress, improve, and refine our work.

During the second stage of the review process, we further analyzed our trajectory based on the insights we obtained in the initial step. Afterwards, we defined and set measurable objectives for the themes we intend to focus on in the upcoming years. We believe that focusing on the Environmental Protection Department’s themes and objectives — which have expanded greatly over the past decade — is an important step towards achieving SPNI’s nature conservation goals. These goals were defined a number of years ago and remain valid to this day.

Our main themes and objectives were determined primarily for the Environmental Protection Department’s internal needs. However, they are intended to serve the organization as a whole, increase transparency regarding the Environmental Protection Department’s activities, and facilitate broader collaborations between groups.

These themes and objectives are also designed to create a balance between the response-oriented activities that are typical of the Environmental Protection Department’s work, and the need for proactive, planned, and long-term outputs. The themes we have chosen also reveal what we have decided *not* to focus on, whether out of resource constraints or out of desire to focus our strengths on efforts that more effectively achieve our objectives as a civic environmental organization.

Again, the objectives we have chosen and set for ourselves are extremely ambitious. It is our belief, however, that this is how we must operate — we prefer to aim high, and risk not achieving all the goals we have set, rather than aim low, and meet all our objectives. Our chosen objectives will enable us to focus SPNI’s activities as a whole, and those of the Environmental Protection Department in particular, on nature conservation.

The main insights that emerged from evaluating our 2018-2020 objectives were that the Environmental Protection Department’s activities had been greatly influenced by how those objectives were defined, and that there had been a high level of convergence between the objectives and the Environmental Protection Department’s main activities during this period. We have made significant progress with many of the objectives that had been set. However, some objectives have not yet been achieved. In these cases, the main insight that emerged from our analysis was that this was because there was not a specified person within the Environmental Protection Department leading the work, and there was no platform to enable delivering upon the objectives. Consequently, we have decided that an objective should only be set when there is an individual or platform available within the Environmental Protection Department to act upon it. An additional, related insight is that there may be value in reducing the overall number of objectives.

As emphasized previously, the process that we undertook is only the first step. The real test will be in assimilating, implementing, and transforming the objectives into detailed work plans, and in increasing cross-organizational collaboration to achieve our goals.

It is my belief that this work will be an important and significant tool in our journey towards achieving our goals, and I would like to thank the staff of the Environmental Protection Department for their cooperation throughout this process. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to staff from SPNI’s head office, who undertook this work during a particularly challenging time both for the organization and for the entire country, and who are continuing the important work of implementing these objectives. I would also like to thank Nirit Lavie Alon, who has been instrumental in turning the working papers into accessible documents for use by all SPNI’s departments.

[Signature]

**Nir Papay**

**Background**

**2018 – The Departmental Process for Focusing and Setting Objectives**

In 2017, the Environmental Protection Department underwent an internal planning and prioritization process, aiming to focus the work of nature conservation coordinators, as well as SPNI’s activities, on the most significant nature conservation issues facing Israel.

During the initial stage, we defined our nature conservation goals.

Prioritization of themes included selecting the main themes that the Environmental Protection Department, and SPNI, would work on in the next few years.

At this stage, we examined the Environmental Protection Department’s activities through several lenses:

1. The extent to which they were compatible with achieving the goals we had set,
2. Our relative advantage over other organizations, and
3. To what extent they were fundable from external or internal sources.

We undertook this process to increase the effectiveness of the Environmental Protection Department’s activities by focusing its work on certain objectives. Further, we intended to improve transparency both within the Department itself and vis-à-vis SPNI’s divisions, with the goal of increasing synergy. The process was also designed to enable us to evaluate our work and examine the budgetary prioritization of activities for which there is no funding, *i.e*., to help SPNI’s management team make decisions regarding where to focus financial resources from the organization’s internal budget.

Some of the themes we chose were defined as **cross-organizational themes**, so that all divisions would be required to engage with these issues, and in order to increase intra-organizational collaboration and synergy. The remaining themes were defined as **departmental themes**, although nothing prevents SPNI divisions from collaborating on these issues also.

Below is a list of the themes that were selected:

**Cross-organizational themes:**

* Endangered ecosystems
* Ecological corridors
* River rehabilitation
* Marine environment conservation

**Departmental themes:**

* Preventing environmentally harmful planning
* Hot Spots: Key sites for biodiversity conservation
* Sustainable energy
* Establishing nature reserves
* Army for the Protection of Nature
* Invasive species
* Urban nature
* Birding

**SPNI’s aims regarding nature conservation**

**Overall aim:**

To maintain the diversity of expansive, unfragmented, functional ecosystems while preventing the destruction of habitats and species.

**Secondary aims:**

1. Preservation of large open spaces — SPNI will work to preserve large open spaces at various levels of protection.
2. Preservation of unfragmented open spaces — SPNI will work to create contiguous open spaces by preserving ecological corridors as continuous open ecological spaces that enable connectivity and the creation of passages in key bottlenecks.
3. Preservation of critical open spaces — SPNI will work to protect endangered ecosystems where less than 30% of their territory is protected.
4. Promotion of effective management of open spaces—SPNI will work to promote supervision, agricultural management, enforcement, and monitoring to enable functioning ecosystems to be conserved, while preventing damaging processes such as biological invasions, hunting, poisoning, electrocution, damage to water flow, water quality, habitat trampling, habitat fragmentation, etc. This will also involve monitoring, agricultural management, and protecting endangered species.

To achieve these goals, an integrated approach is required, including:

1. Statutory protection[[1]](#footnote-1) for land (habitats, ecological corridors, and preservation of open spaces),
2. Effective land management (enforcement, agricultural management, targeting audiences, etc.),
3. Addressing ecological threats (biological invasions, hunting, poisoning, electrocution, damage to water flow, water quality, habitat trampling, habitat fragmentation, etc.).

To meet these goals, we will need to raise awareness through marketing and communications tools, and educational and public activities through the Education Department and Kehilot (SPNI’s Urban Branches).

1. Statutory protection—the meaning of the term “statutory” is “by law”—a statutory plan is a plan that is approved by law. The meaning here is protection through planning procedures that are prescribed by law. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)