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University of Pennsylvania  
Institute for Environmental Studies

presents

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## The Red Sea-Dead Sea Conduit: Solution or Disaster for the Dying Dead Sea and Jordan River Watershed

The water level of the Dead Sea is declining at an alarming rate, approximately one meter a year for over the last 30 years or so. The Dead Sea is a unique environmental, economic and cultural asset to Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and the world. The sea's decline is due to freshwater extraction in the upper region of the watershed- this has all but halted the flow of fresh water into the Dead Sea. The upper watershed is heavily utilized by Israel, Jordan and Syria. All in all, these extractions have reduced the flow of water from the Sea of Galilee, via the Jordan River and to the Dead Sea by as much as 90%.

The appearance of sink holes along the shore lines of the Dead Sea, a direct result of the receding shoreline, has all but halted economic development in the region. But this phenomenon has also galvanized the governments into action in exploring options to save the Dead Sea. Two main options are available: one ecological, the other technological. The ecological option is to attempt to restore the historical flow to the sea. The technological option is one of linking the Dead Sea to the Red Sea or to the Mediterranean so as to generate hydropower due to the altitude differences. The energy produced can generate electricity for desalination and the waste brine will be channeled to the Dead Sea, serving to stabilize and perhaps even raising the water level. The severe water crisis in Jordan has lead to regional pressure to explore a Red Sea-Dead Sea alignment for the production of desalinated water for Jordan and for saving the Dead Sea. Consequently, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority turned to the World Bank to raise funds and lead a feasibility study on the Red Sea-Dead Sea alignment. The study should be completed in early 2011 upon which a joint decision to explore building the project will be undertaken by the three governments.

This presentation will address this very controversial project and will compare it to the other alternatives being offered as a backdrop to the past and present uses of the Jordan River and Dead Sea basin. The project and its alternatives also offer insight into the future uses and management of the watershed. The environmental, social and political dimensions of the project and its significance for regional stability will also be discussed.

**Date: November 3, 2010**

**Time: NOON - 1:30 pm**

**Place: Carolyn Hoff Lynch Auditorium**

On the Penn campus: Chemistry Building: 34 & Spruce Sts

**NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

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