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Trustees of the Earth : Waqf Forest and Ecological Leadership as Living Law

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Abstract

This article develops ecological trusteeship as a framework for understanding how Islamic environmental obligations take institutional form. It asks how Islamic law grounds ecological leadership and under what conditions a waqf forest can enact that responsibility as living law. The study combines normative legal analysis with a document-based socio-legal reading of published research on the Bogor Waqf Forest. The analysis distinguishes the classical necessities of Islamic law from contemporary proposals to recognise environmental preservation as an independent objective. It argues that collective duties of environmental protection can arise from the need to prevent serious harm to established protected interests. In Indonesia, a conservation purpose can be sustained through a lawfully constituted waqf, a defined stewardship mandate for the nazhir, and compliance with applicable land-use and environmental rules. The Bogor literature illustrates how trustees and communities translate that mandate into agroforestry and management practices. The study identifies the contribution of ecological trusteeship in linking accountability to God and to affected communities with an institutional commitment that can survive changes in leadership. Its findings are interpretive and provide propositions for field testing.

Keywords: Ecological Leadership; Ecological Trusteeship; Islamic Environmental Law; Maqashid al-shari'ah; Waqf Forest

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Introduction

Research on environmentally oriented leadership examines how leaders and organisations shape pro-environmental behaviour and respond to ecological interdependence.[1] Scholarship on Muslim environmentalisms examines how religious commitments acquire practical force through institutions, communities, and public action.[2] Their intersection raises two questions. How does Islamic law ground duties of ecological leadership? Under what conditions does a waqf forest give those duties durable institutional expression as living law?

Indonesia offers a setting in which to examine these questions. A satellite-based study estimated that approximately 9.2 million hectares of forest were lost between 2001 and 2016. Large-scale oil-palm plantations accounted for 23 per cent of the estimated loss, timber plantations for 14 per cent, and conversion to grassland or shrubland for 20 per cent.[3] These historical estimates identify several drivers of degradation. They also frame a question that regulatory instruments alone cannot answer: how can communities translate religious commitments into ongoing responsibilities for particular parcels of land? Indonesian faith-based conservation initiatives show how religious norms can work alongside public regulation.[4]

Environmental leadership research provides several accounts of how leaders influence organisational behaviour. Egri and Herman examine the values and styles of environmental leaders,[5] and Boiral and colleagues distinguish levels

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[1] Deyi Yang et al., "Environmentally Sustainable Leadership: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda," *Australian Journal of Management* 51, no. 3 (2025): 862–890, https://share.google/eqLybNV7hWCVhrtWA; Jennifer L. Robertson and Julian Barling, "Greening Organizations through Leaders" Influence on Employees" Pro-Environmental Behaviors," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 34, no. 2 (2013): 176–194, https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1820; Richard M. Wielkiewicz and Stephen P. Stelzner, "An Ecological Perspective on Leadership Theory, Research, and Practice," *Review of General Psychology* 9, no. 4 (2005): 326–341.

[2] Anna M. Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); Jens Koehrsen, "Muslims and Climate Change: How Islam, Muslim Organizations, and Religious Leaders Influence Climate Change Perceptions and Mitigation Activities," *WIREs Climate Change* 12, no. 3 (2021): 1–19, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.702.

[3] Kemen G. Austin et al., "What Causes Deforestation in Indonesia?," *Environmental Research Letters* 14, no. 2 (2019): 1–9, https://doi.org/Environmental Research Letters.

[4] Fachruddin M. Mangunjaya and Jeanne E. McKay, "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia," *World Views Environment Culture Religion* 16, no. 3 (2012): 286–305, https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01603006.

[5] Carolyn P. Egri and Susan Herman, "Leadership in the North American Environmental Sector: Values, Leadership Styles, and Contexts," *Academy of Management Journal* 43, no. 4 (2000): 571–604, https://doi.org/10.2307/1556356.

of moral reasoning.[6] Other studies connect leadership to green innovation, firm performance, and voluntary environmental behaviour.[7] Afsar and colleagues show how workplace spirituality can help explain pro-environmental behaviour.[8] Their analysis concerns motivation. The present article asks how an Islamic obligation can be specified and assigned to an institutional office.

Research on Indonesian waqf forests has examined conservation finance and agroforestry,[9] site selection and tenure,[10] management strategies,[11] carbon-market prospects,[12] reported socio-economic and ecological outcomes,[13] and donor intentions.[14] These studies offer evidence about the organisation of conservation. This article asks a further question about the allocation of responsibility: who holds the conservation mandate when donors, trustees, or public officials change, and what makes that mandate reviewable?

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[6] Olivier Boiral, Marie Cayer, and Charles M. Baron, "The Action Logics of Environmental Leadership," *Journal of Business Ethics* 85, no. 4 (2009): 479–499, https://ideas.repec.org/a/kap/jbuset/v123y2014i3p363-383.html.

[7] Ahmed Alwheshi, Ahmad Alzubi, and Kolawole Iyiola, "Linking Responsible Leadership to Organizational Citizenship Behavior for the Environment," *Sage Open* 14, no. 3 (2024): 1–16, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241271177; Xiaofeng Su et al., "Environmental Leadership, Green Innovation Practices, Environmental Knowledge Learning, and Firm Performance," SAGE Open 10, No. 2 (2020), 1–14.," *Sage Open* 10, no. 2 (2020): 1–14, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020922909.

[8] Bilal Afsar, Yuosre Badir, and Umar Safdar Kiani, "Linking Spiritual Leadership and Employee Pro-Environmental Behavior: The Influence of Workplace Spirituality, Intrinsic Motivation, and Environmental Passion," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 45 (2016): 79–88, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2015.11.011.

[9] Khalifah Muhamad Ali and Miftahul Jannah, *Hutan Wakaf: Teori Dan Praktik* (Bogor: IPB Press, 2024); Miftahul Jannah et al., "Enhancing Waqf Forest Sustainability through Agroforestry," *Islam Realitas Journal of Islamic & Social Studies* 7, no. 1 (2021): 57–70, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v7i1.4454.

[10] Miftahul Jannah, Azila Ahmad Sarkawi, and Jamilah Othman, "Potential Criteria to Determine a Waqf-Based Forest Location: Case Study: Bogor Waqf Forest, Bogor, Indonesia," *Manajemen Hutan Tropika Journal of Tropical Forest Management* 30, no. 1 (2024): 30–39, https://journal.ipb.ac.id/jmht/article/view/48794/27685.

[11] Miftahul Jannah et al., "Management Strategies of a Productive Waqf-Based Forest in Bogor, Indonesia," *Jurnal Sylva Lestari* 12, no. 3 (2024): 741–759, https://doi.org/10.23960/jsl.v12i3.931.

[12] Khalifah Ali et al., "Integrating Waqf-Based Forests and Carbon Trading," *Jurnal Sylva Lestari* 13, no. 2 (2025): 485–499, https://doi.org/10.23960/jsl.v13i2.1111.

[13] Hari Candra, Syamsul Amar, and Joan Marta, "Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Development: The Impact of Wakaf Forest Institutions on Socio-Economic Benefits," *Journal of Ecohumanism* 3, no. 3 (2024): 1371–1386, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i3.3607.

[14] Yusup Firmannudin, Deni Lubis, and Khalifah Muhamad Ali, "Development of Waqf Forest in Indonesia: Brand Equity Analysis of Bogor Waqf Forest Purchase Intention," *Jurnal Ekonomi & Keuangan Islam* 10, no. 1 (2024): 103–114, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20885/JEKI.vol10.iss1.art8.

The article argues that *khilāfah* and *amānah* ground responsibility, that maqāṣid reasoning explains when harm prevention becomes obligatory, and that a conservation-oriented waqf assigns specific responsibilities to a legally recognised nazhir. Its contribution is to connect these three levels of obligation. The first concerns religious accountability, the second the juristic assessment of environmental harm, and the third the authority and duties created by a particular endowment.

Ecological trusteeship builds on Islamic environmental stewardship and faith-based conservation by specifying the institutional route through which a general duty of care can become a continuing obligation. Here, living law refers to a norm that guides recurrent practice within a social field. In the case of waqf forest, the relevant evidence includes management decisions and community practices through which the declared purpose of an endowment is carried out. The analysis therefore asks whether a conservation commitment can be traced from its normative basis to a designated office and to documented practice.

This study combines normative legal analysis with a document-based socio-legal reading of published case research.[15] The normative analysis distinguishes classical doctrine, contemporary juristic arguments, and Indonesian statutory obligations. The socio-legal analysis uses Moore's concept of the semi-autonomous social field to examine how local arrangements can generate rules while remaining subject to external law.[16] *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* supplies the framework for evaluating the purposes served by those arrangements.[17] The study relies on secondary accounts of practice and makes an interpretive contribution.

The study uses a purposive, integrative review.[18] The corpus comprises Islamic legal and environmental scholarship, Indonesian legislation, and published case studies and institutional materials on waqf forests. The unit of analysis is a passage that identifies a normative argument, statutory duty, reported governance practice, or reported outcome. Sources serve different

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[15] Reza Banakar and Max Travers, *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2005); Naomi Creutzfeldt, Marc Mason, and Kirsten McConnachie, *Routledge Handbook of Socio-Legal Theory and Methods* (London: Routledge, 2019).

[16] Sally Falk Moore, "Law and Social Change," *Law & Society Review* 7, no. 4 (1973): 719–746, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/3052967.

[17] Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), 1-25. https://iiit.org/wp-content/uploads/Maqasid-Al-Shariah-as-a-Philosophy-of-Islamic-Law-Combined.pdf.

[18] Andrew Booth, Anthea Sutton, and Diana Papaioannou, *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review* (London: SAGE, 2016), https://doi.org/https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235930866_Systematic_Approaches_to_a_Successful_Literature_Review; Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of Business Research*, 2019, 333–339, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039.

evidentiary purposes. Legislation establishes legal duties and exceptions, juristic scholarship supports doctrinal interpretation, and published case studies provide secondary evidence of practice. The Bogor analysis gives particular weight to sources that identify the actors, activities, and institutional setting of a reported practice.

Bogor was selected as an illustrative case because its institutional development and agroforestry practices are documented across several publications and because its terrain makes the relationship between land management and erosion risk analytically relevant. Published accounts trace the initiative from an endowment of roughly 1,500 square metres in Kampung Muara, Cibunian Village, to community organisation and the establishment of a foundation.[19] The case provides a setting for examining the proposed mechanism. Its findings cannot establish how Indonesian waqf forests generally operate.

The documentary analysis uses three categories: normative justification, institutional implementation, and communication and learning.[20] First, passages are read for the duty or purpose asserted, such as preventing harm to life or property. Second, that purpose is linked to a legally defined responsibility, such as the duty of the nazhir to safeguard the endowed asset and manage it according to its designated purpose. Third, the sources are examined for reported practices that give effect to that responsibility, such as agroforestry that combines tree cover with compatible production. A reported practice supports a living-law interpretation when the documents show how it gives practical effect to a norm. Claims about recurring compliance, independent effects on erosion, or the motives of participants require further evidence. The discussion applies this sequence explicitly to the Bogor case.

Discussion

From Management to Ethics: What Ecological Leadership Means

Older mainstream leadership theory centred on the individual figure, on control, and on the attainment of organisational targets. This model casts the

[19] Khalifah M. Ali et al., "Enhancing the Role of Zakat and Waqf on Social Forestry Program in Indonesia," *Economica* 12, no. 1 (2021), 1–26.; Ali et al., "Integrating Waqf-Based Forests and Carbon Trading", 485–499.; Jannah, *Hutan Wakaf: Teori dan Praktik*, 1–88.; Khalifah M. Ali and Salina Kassim, "Waqf Forest," *ETIKONOMI* 19, no. 2 (2020), 349–364.; Khalifah M. Ali and Salina Kassim, "Development of Waqf Forest in Indonesia," *Jurnal Manajemen Hutan Tropika* 27, no. 1 (2021), 89–99.; Firmannudin, "Development of Waqf Forest in Indonesia", 103–114.; Jannah et al., "Enhancing Waqf Forest Sustainability through…", 57–70.; Jannah, "Potential Criteria to Determine a Waqf-Based Forest…", 30–39.; Jannah et al., "Management Strategies of a Productive Waqf-Based…", 741–759.

[20] Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology, 2nd Ed.* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2004), 18-43.

leader as an effective decision-maker within the bounds of the organisation and measures success by short-term results. Wielkiewicz & Stelzner[21] call such a framework an industrial approach and criticise it for ignoring the organisation's interconnection with wider systems, including the ecology that sustains it.

As a counterpoint, they offer an ecological perspective on leadership. Its core idea is that good leadership is a provisional resolution of the tension between an industrial drive and an ecological sensibility. Context is taken to matter more than the single decision of a leader; organisations are more adaptive when there is genuine diversity of input in decision-making; and leadership is seen as a process that emerges from interaction rather than as the attribute of one person. What distinguishes this theory is that it incorporates long-term sustainability as a measure, so that the organisation is held responsible for its impact on social and natural ecology.[22]

Western extends this direction through what he terms the discourse of eco-leadership. [23] For him, an organisation is better imagined as an ecosystem than as a machine. The ecological leader works with a logic of connectedness, fostering networks and ethics, and is aware that action at one point affects the whole system. This emphasis on ethics is important, for it distinguishes eco-leadership from mere environmental management oriented toward efficiency.

Systemic leadership theory explains how ecological leadership can emerge from networks and distributed decisions. Organisational studies also explain how managerial incentives or performance measures shape environmental behaviour.[24] This article addresses a further jurisprudential question: what grounds a duty to prevent ecological harm, and how can that duty be assigned to an institution whose mandate continues after a leadership transition?

The Normative Foundation of Ecological Leadership

Islam speaks of leadership through several complementary elements of meaning. The most fundamental element is *khilāfah*, the human position as vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on earth, as affirmed in Qur'an al-Baqarah 30 and al-An'am 165. This position is often misread as a licence to dominate and exploit nature. Scholars of Islamic environmental ethics reject that interpretation. *Khilāfah* is

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[21] Wielkiewicz and Stelzner, "An Ecological Perspective on Leadership Theory, Research, and Practice.", 326–341

[22] Kathleen E. Allen, Stephen P. Stelzner, and Richard M. Wielkiewicz, "The Ecology of Leadership," Journal of Leadership Studies," *Journal of Leadership Studies* 5, no. 2 (1999): 62–82, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/107179199900500207; Wielkiewicz and Stelzner, "An Ecological Perspective on Leadership Theory, Research, and Practice", 326–341.

[23] Simon Western, *Leadership: A Critical Text, 2nd Ed.* (London: SAGE, 2013), 245-271.

[24] Su et al., "Environmental Leadership, Green Innovation Practices, Environmental Knowledge Learning, and Firm Performance," SAGE Open 10, No. 2 (2020), 1–14.."

more properly understood as a mandate of stewardship that demands knowledge and prevents corruption, not as boundless domination.[25]

The position of *khalīfah* does not stand alone. It is bound to amānah, a burden of trust that Qur'an al-Ahzab 72 depicts as so heavy that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains were unwilling to bear it. The human being accepted that trust, and the consequence is accountability. Nature, in this view, is made subservient to humanity (*taskhīr)* not to be exhausted, but to be managed justly. For this reason the Qur'an repeatedly forbids *fasād*, or corruption upon the earth, among others in *al-A'raf* 56 and al-Rum 41, and affirms the principle of balance *(mīzān)* in al-Rahman 7–9.[26]

The second element is imāmah, leadership in the sense of authority that orders communal affairs. The Islamic intellectual tradition regards leadership as a trust and a service, not a privilege.[27] In the jurisprudence of governance, this authority is bound by the well-known maxim *taṣarruf al-imām ʿalā al-raʿiyyah manūṭ bi-l-maṣlaḥah*, that the leader's policy over the people must rest upon the public good.[28] If the environment is part of the public good, as it indeed is, then protecting it is a duty inherent in authority, not a peripheral matter to be set aside when it collides with short-term economic interest.

The third element is *riʿāyah*, care for what has been placed in one's charge. The hadith that each person is a shepherd and answerable for those in their care offers a principle of role-based accountability.[29] Its application to the environment is an interpretive step. Al-Qaraḍāwī develops that step through the concept of riʿāyat al-bīʾah, connecting care for the environment to the objectives of Islamic law.[30]

Together, *khilāfah, imāmah*, and *riʿāyah* describe different aspects of ecological responsibility: trusteeship, public authority oriented toward welfare, and accountable care. The responsibility is exercised by individuals and institutions according to their authority and capacity. Its intergenerational

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[25] Mawil Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2000), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v19i2.1945; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968), 95–121.

[26] Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny, and Azizan H. Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[27] Rafik I. Beekun and Jamal Badawi, *Leadership: An Islamic Perspective* (Beltsville: MD: Amana Publications, 1998).

[28] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Environmental Care in Islamic Teaching: Qur'anic Perspective," *ICR Journal* 3, no. 2 (2012): 261–283, https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v3i2.555.

[29] *Ṣaḥiḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 7138; *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim*, 1829.

[30] Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Ri'Ayat Al-Bi'Ah Fi Shari'at Al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2001),37-63.

dimension follows from the consequences that present decisions can impose on future communities and ecosystems.[31]

Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah and the Place of *Ḥifẓ al-Bīʾah*

The classical framework of necessities (ḍarūriyyāt), associated with al-Ghazālī and developed by al-Shāṭibī, identifies the protection of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property.[32] This scheme provides one route to justify environmental protection. Where polluted water threatens life or soil degradation threatens livelihoods and property, protecting those resources serves recognised necessities. The legal weight of a particular measure depends on the severity and likelihood of the harm, the people and resources exposed, and the measure's capacity to address it.

Contemporary jurists also advance a broader account of ḥifẓ al-bīʾah. Al-Qaraḍāwī treats environmental care as integral to securing the higher purposes of Islamic law.[33] A further reconstruction treats environmental preservation as a distinct objective because ecosystem integrity can be harmed before the effects on any particular person or asset are demonstrable. That is a contemporary proposal about the scope of *maqāṣid*, rather than a settled sixth necessity in the classical scheme.[34] The argument for conservation in this article can proceed on the narrower ground that severe environmental harm jeopardises established protected interests.

The prohibition of harm (*lā ḍarar wa-lā ḍirār*) supplies a basis for restraining activities that inflict appreciable harm. Blocking the means to harm (*sadd al-dharāʾiʿ*) can justify proportionate preventive measures when a proposed activity presents a credible pathway to serious degradation. Maṣlaḥah provides a basis for choosing among legally permissible measures in light of public welfare.[35] In applying these principles, an authority should distinguish a

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[31] Achmad Alfan Kurniawan and Istiqomah Fadlillah, "From Anthropocentric to Ecocentric Jurisprudence: A Maqasid-Based Reconstruction of Islamic Environmental Ethics toward Intergenerational Equity," *Al'Adalah* 28, no. 2 (2025): 143–162, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v28i2.666.

[32] Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), 125-147.

[33] Al-Qaradawi, *Ri'Ayat Al-Bi'Ah Fi Shari'at Al-Islam..., 37-63*.

[34] Akrum Helfaya, Amr Kotb, and Reem Hanafi, "Qur'anic Ethics for Environmental Responsibility," *Journal of Business Ethics* 150, no. 4 (2018): 1105–1128, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3195-6; Titik Triwulan Tutik et al., "Reconstructing Eco-Maqāṣid Al-Sharīʿah for CSR Policy and Radioactive Waste Management: An SDGs-Based Study in Banten and West Java," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2026): 121–126, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v20i1.15916.

[35] Kamali, "Environmental Care in Islamic Teaching: Qur'anic Perspective", 261–283.

demonstrated risk from speculation and assess the costs, effectiveness, and distributional effects of the proposed restriction.

Where averting serious harm requires coordinated action and sufficient participation by qualified actors can achieve it, the duty can be characterised as farḍ kifāyah. Its discharge depends on whether the required protective function is adequately performed. A person who directly causes harm, or a nazhir who has accepted defined duties, may incur a more specific responsibility. The religious assessment and the state-law consequences have distinct sources: the former is a juristic judgment about the duty to prevent harm, while the latter depends on the waqf pledge and applicable legislation. This distinction matters when identifying who can enforce a particular obligation.

Waqf Forest: Institutionalising Ecological Leadership

Values, however strong, require an institutional form in order to operate sustainably. The Islamic tradition has long recognised conservation-oriented institutions. Ḥimā literally denotes a protected or reserved area. In Islamic governance it refers to land designated by legitimate authority and withdrawn from unrestricted private exploitation for a public ecological purpose, historically including the protection of grazing land, forests, watersheds, and wildlife. Access may be restricted or seasonally regulated so that resources can regenerate. *Ḥarīm*, by contrast, is a protective buffer around a water source, river, well, settlement, or other vital resource within which harmful use is prohibited. Thus, ḥimā protects a wider area through public designation, whereas ḥarīm safeguards the immediate ecological support zone of a particular resource. Both embody an early principle of use limitation for collective benefit and have been revived as faith-based conservation approaches in Indonesia.[36]

A waqf dedicates an asset or its benefit to a specified purpose under Islamic law.[37] Conservation benefits from a long time horizon, which makes a perpetual dedication (*ta'bīd*) especially relevant.[38] Indonesian law recognises both perpetual waqf and waqf for a specified period, so duration and designated use must be established from the pledge and applicable rules. The protection of a

[36] Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*; Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*; Mangunjaya and Jeanne E. McKay, "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia."

[37] Wahbah Al-Zuhayli, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu, Vol. 8* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1997)153-162.

[38] Mohammad Abdullah, "Waqf, Sustainable Development Goals and Maqasid Al-Shariah," *Nternational Journal of Social Economics* 45, no. 1 (2018): 158–172, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSE-10-2016-0295.

perpetual endowment depends on valid title, formal constitution, and stewardship throughout the life of the asset.[39]

Waqf forests in Indonesia rest on that principle. The Bogor initiative shows the sequence concretely. Advocacy concerning forest waqf was answered by a waqif who endowed approximately 1,500 square metres of land in Kampung Muara, Cibunian Village, in 2018. A community was organised in early 2019 and formalised as the Bogor Waqf Forest Foundation in 2020.[40] The land lies close to Mount Halimun Salak National Park on steep, landslide-prone terrain. Forest cover therefore serves not only biodiversity goals but also soil protection, water regulation, and disaster-risk reduction for residents downstream. Its governance links university researchers, the Indonesian Waqf Board, Baznas, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, donors, and the local community.[41]

The experience also reveals that establishing a waqf forest involves two distinct financing tasks. The first is land acquisition or the receipt and legal certification of endowed land. The second is recurrent financing for seedlings, planting, guarding, boundary maintenance, ecological monitoring, and the livelihood activities that keep community participation viable. The Bogor model mobilises Islamic social finance waqf, infaq, sadaqah, and institutional collaboration rather than relying on a single donor. Productive agroforestry is then used to reconcile conservation with local benefit: perennial forest species maintain ecological functions, while compatible crops can provide returns for management and surrounding households.[42] Fundraising, therefore, cannot end when land is obtained; a credible programme must disclose the legal status and ecological plan of each parcel, separate acquisition funds from maintenance funds, report their use periodically, and build a reserve for long-term stewardship.

Maintenance is likewise a governance process rather than a one-time planting event. The nazhir must secure boundaries and waqf certification, prepare a site plan based on slope, water, and vegetation conditions, select ecologically suitable species, organise planting and replacement, prevent fire and illegal use, monitor survival and soil-water functions, and agree with residents

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[39] Miftahul Huda, Aditya Prastian Supriyadi, and Ramadhita, "Productive Waqf Law Reform: A Solution to Support Indonesian Local Economy amid Contemporary Global Recession," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (2025): 336–341; Indonesia, Law No. 41 of 2004 on Waqf, arts., issued 2004, https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/40788/uu-no-41-tahun-2004.

[40] Jannah, *Hutan Wakaf: Teori Dan Praktik*; Jannah et al…,1-26, "Enhancing Waqf Forest Sustainability through Agroforestry"…., 1-88.

[41] Candra, Amar, and Marta, "Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Development: The Impact of Wakaf Forest Institutions on Socio-Economic Benefits"…,1371–1386.

[42] Jannah et al., "Enhancing Waqf Forest Sustainability through Agroforestry"….,57-70; Jannah, *Hutan Wakaf: Teori dan Praktik….,1-88*.

on which products may be harvested without changing the forest's primary function. This operational chain demonstrates why ecological leadership is distributed: legal officers, forestry specialists, religious authorities, donors, and residents perform different but interdependent tasks. If the local community receives no meaningful role or benefit, protection becomes costly and vulnerable; if productive use is allowed without ecological limits, the waqf may retain its legal label while losing its conservation function.

Site-selection research identifies legal certainty as a condition for establishing a viable waqf forest.[43] Management research identifies interacting legal, ecological, economic, social, institutional, and Islamic dimensions.[44] Candra and colleagues report associations between the waqf forest institution and ecological restoration and socio-economic benefits in Cibunian.[45] These secondary findings are treated as study-specific associations; the documents reviewed here do not establish an independent causal effect of waqf status. Research on carbon trading identifies potential financing, with implementation depending on measurement, verification, and arrangements for sharing benefits.[46]

Read through the framework of this article, waqf forest is an institutionalisation of ecological leadership. The land's status as mawqūf binds its function in law. The nazhir is not merely an administrative manager but an ecological leader in the sense of riʿāyah, charged with caring for and being accountable for a collective trust. Because leadership here is attached to an institution and a community rather than to a single figure, the model accords with the idea of ecological leadership as distributed and emergent from interaction, as set out in ecological leadership theory.[47]

Three documentary observations support a bounded reading of Bogor as living law. First, reports of endowment and institutional development identify the actors through whom a conservation purpose was organised. Second, descriptions of agroforestry show how the purpose informs recurring choices about vegetation and production.[48] Third, site-selection and management studies

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[43] Jannah, Azila Ahmad Sarkawi, and Othman, "Potential Criteria to Determine a Waqf-Based Forest Location: Case Study: Bogor Waqf Forest, Bogor, Indonesia"…, 30-39.

[44] Jannah et al., "Management Strategies of a Productive Waqf-Based Forest in Bogor, Indonesia'…, 741-759.

[45] Hari Candra, Syamsul Amar, and Joan Marta, "Ecological Restoration and Sustainable Development: The Impact of Wakaf Forest Institutions on Socio-Economic Benefits," *Journal of Ecohumanism* 3, no. 3 (2024): 1371–1386, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i3.3607.

[46] Ali et al., "Integrating Waqf-Based Forests and Carbon Trading",.. 485–499.

[47] Wielkiewicz and Stelzner, "An Ecological Perspective on Leadership Theory, Research, and Practice."…, 326–341.

[48] Jannah et al., "Enhancing Waqf Forest Sustainability through Agroforestry."…., 57–70.

show that tenure, organisational capacity, and cooperation shape which choices can be maintained. This combination is consistent with Moore's account of a semi-autonomous social field: managers and communities organise activities within the constraints of waqf and land governance.[49] The living-law inference concerns the translation of purpose into practice. The documents do not establish that every parcel has the same title, management rules, or degree of community acceptance.

The statutory chain begins with lawful ownership or control under Article 15 of Law No. 41 of 2004. Articles 17 and 21 provide for the pledge before the authorised waqf deed official (PPAIW) in the presence of witnesses and its recording in the Akta Ikrar Wakaf (AIW). Articles 22 and 23 govern designation of use, and Articles 32–35 provide for registration. A conservation dedication can be framed under the public-welfare purposes in Article 22(e), subject to its compatibility with Sharia and applicable law. A defined conservation purpose in the AIW, connected to a parcel-specific management plan, gives the nazhir and supervisory authorities a basis for assessing whether activities such as agroforestry remain consistent with the dedication.[50]

Legal Continuity and Enforcement

Article 11 of Law No. 41 of 2004 requires the nazhir to administer, manage and develop, supervise and protect the waqf asset, and report to the Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI). Articles 42 and 43 tie management to the endowment's purpose and prescribe Sharia-compliant, productive management. For a conservation dedication, income-generating activities must operate within that purpose. Article 45 allows the BWI to replace a nazhir on statutory grounds, including failure to discharge duties. Article 62 requires an attempt at deliberation and provides for mediation, arbitration, or court proceedings where agreement cannot be reached. These provisions give institutional continuity concrete meaning: the designated responsibility can survive replacement of its officeholder and disagreements can be taken through the available statutory routes.[51]

Protection of the asset and protection of its designated use involve separate legal controls. Article 40 restricts disposition of endowed property. Article 41 provides an exception for exchange for public purposes under the prescribed spatial plan and statutory conditions, with written authorisation based on BWI approval and replacement property of at least equivalent value and benefit. Article 49 of Government Regulation No. 42 of 2006, as amended by Government Regulation No. 25 of 2018, sets out the approval procedure and additional grounds, including when an asset cannot be used as pledged. Article

[49] Moore, "Law and Social Change."…, 719–746.
[50] Indonesia, Law No. 41 of 2004 on Waqf, arts.
[51] Indonesia. Law No. 41 of 2004 on Waqf, arts. 11, 42–43, 45, and 62.

44 of the Law separately requires written BWI authorisation to change designated use and limits authorisation to cases where the asset cannot be used for the purpose stated in the pledge. Exchanging land, changing the stated purpose, and adapting planting or maintenance methods are thus different decisions. Where a lawful replacement is proposed, assessing equivalence should consider the conservation benefit as well as the asset's monetary value.[52]

Environmental and land-use controls apply alongside the waqf regime. Law No. 32 of 2009 provides for environmental rights and participation, duties to preserve environmental functions, and prohibitions against pollution and destruction. Government Regulation No. 22 of 2021 sets the applicable environmental assessment and approval framework, depending on the nature and scale of the activity. Spatial planning and conservation rules must also be checked against each parcel's status and location, particularly near a national park. The conservation statute and its amendments govern activities where the relevant conservation classifications apply. Proximity to a park does not establish that a parcel falls within its legal boundaries. A parcel assessment therefore needs to verify title, registered dedication, spatial designation and any applicable environmental requirements before commitments about permissible use can be made.[53]

As an illustration, where a proposed use would remove protective vegetation in a steep area, the nazhir would first assess consistency with the recorded conservation purpose and the site's ecological conditions. The responsible authority would separately assess any applicable spatial or environmental requirements. If the proposal entails changing the designation or exchanging the asset, the statutory procedures govern that decision. The example identifies a route for evaluation and oversight without assuming that such a dispute has occurred in Bogor.

The practice, however, also carries legal, financial, ecological, and social risks. Land with an incomplete title or unclear boundaries is difficult to certify as waqf and may invite future disputes. Small or intermittent donations can finance ceremonial planting but not the recurrent costs of guarding, replacing failed seedlings, monitoring, and administration. A nazhir whose expertise is limited to religious administration may lack forestry, fundraising, accounting, and conflict-resolution capacities. Ecologically, poorly selected species or excessive emphasis on marketable crops can simplify habitat and weaken restoration; socially, restrictions imposed without meaningful participation can shift costs to nearby residents. Proposed carbon finance may diversify income,

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[52] Indonesia. Law No. 41 of 2004 on Waqf, arts. 40–41 and 44

[53] Indonesia, Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, as amended, arts. 65, 67, 69, and 70, issued 2009; https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/38771/u: Government Regulation, "No. 22 of 2021 on the Implementation of Environmental Protection and Management" (2021).

yet it can add expensive measurement and verification requirements and create disputes over who receives the benefit.[54] These are not reasons to reject waqf forest, but they show that perpetuity can preserve a weak arrangement as readily as a sound one unless governance is adaptive. The experience of waqf assets affected by the Sidoarjo mud disaster further shows that perpetuity does not eliminate the need for lawful adaptation: replacement or relocation may be required to preserve the original function and benefit of the endowment when its object can no longer be used.[55]

A workable solution is therefore a staged governance model. Before accepting land, the nazhir should conduct title, boundary, and land-use due diligence and obtain a baseline ecological assessment. At establishment, the waqf pledge and management plan should expressly protect the ecological function while allowing techniques to adapt. During operation, a multidisciplinary nazhir team should publish separate acquisition and maintenance accounts, use measurable indicators such as seedling survival, canopy recovery, water and erosion conditions, household participation, and benefit distribution—and commission periodic legal, financial, and ecological audits. A written community agreement should define access, permissible products, responsibilities, complaints, and benefit sharing. Finally, partnerships with the Indonesian Waqf Board, forestry agencies, universities, and Islamic social-finance institutions should provide certification support, technical supervision, research, and diversified long-term funding. This combination answers the central practical problem: waqf raises and protects forest land only when permanent legal status is matched by permanent institutional and financial capacity.

From Norm to Habit: Fatwa, Daʿwah, and Education

Conservation rules are easier to apply when people understand the conduct expected of them and the reasons for it. Environmental communication helps explain how technical information, religious language, and local experience enter public discussion.[56] In a waqf forest, this work includes explaining which activities are compatible with the dedication and inviting residents to help define practical arrangements.

Indonesia's Council of Ulama (MUI) has issued environmental fatwas on subjects including environmentally responsible mining, protection of

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[54] Khaled N. Aldeen and Ika S. Ratih Sri Herianingrum, "Contemporary Issues on Cash Waqf," *International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance* 3, no. 2 (2020): 119–144; Ali et al., "Integrating Waqf-Based Forests and Carbon Trading"; Jannah et al., "Enhancing Waqf Forest Sustainability through Agroforestry."

[55] Abdul Rokhim and Suratman, "Relocation Model of Waqf Land and Buildings Impacted by Sidoarjo Mud Blowout," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 2 (2021): 244–246, https://doi.org/https://share.google/3S9nzmicT77anR9rI.

[56] Robert Cox and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere, 7th Ed* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2021), 19–42.

endangered species, and forest and land burning.[57] These rulings supply religious language and guidance that can support conservation. Their practical influence depends on interpretation, dissemination, and local uptake. State-law duties and sanctions arise from the applicable legal instruments.

Education does the slower work of forming habits. The pesantren, with its deep social roots, has been tested as a space for cultivating environmental ethics, from curriculum to the management of an area.[58] What is transmitted here is not merely information but disposition: *riʿāyat al-bīʾah* gradually becomes part of everyday conduct. Waqf forest can itself serve as a concrete space of learning, where residents take part in tending while witnessing the results, and from that experience grows a sense of ownership that sustains collective leadership.

Norm, institution, and the manner of conveying them are mutually dependent. A norm that is not institutionalised stops at exhortation, and an institution that does not reach people loses the support that keeps it alive. Ecological leadership works when the three interlock: there is something believed, something that holds it, and something that conveys it until it becomes a shared habit.

Toward Ecological Trusteeship

Ecological trusteeship identifies how Islamic environmental stewardship can acquire a continuing institutional form. Like faith-based environmental governance, it recognises the role of religious authorities, education, and local networks in making conservation intelligible and practicable. Its specific contribution is to connect those resources to an identifiable asset, a legally recognised office, and duties that remain reviewable when managers change. The public trust doctrine offers a functional analogy because it also asks how authority over natural resources can be held to a public purpose.[59] The comparison is analytical. The nazhir's powers and duties in Indonesia derive from waqf law and the dedication, while divine accountability provides the framework's religious dimension.

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[57] Koehrsen, "Muslims and Climate Change: How Islam, Muslim Organizations, and Religious Leaders Influence Climate Change Perceptions and Mitigation Activities".., 1–19; Mangunjaya and Jeanne E. McKay, "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia."…, 1–14.

[58] Jeanne E. McKay et al., "Practise What You Preach: A Faith-Based Approach to Conservation in Indonesia," *Oryx* 48, no. 1 (2014): 23–29, https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0030605313001087.

[59] Klaus Bosselmann, *Earth Governance* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2015); Joseph L. Sax, "The Public Trust Doctrine in Natural Resource Law: Effective Judicial Intervention," *Michigan Law Review* 68, no. 3 (1970): 471–566, https://doi.org/https://repository.law.umich.edu/mlr/vol68/iss3/3/.

Ecological leadership scholarship recognises networks, ethical responsibility, and long-term sustainability.[60] Ecological trusteeship retains these insights and locates accountability on two axes. Horizontally, the trustee answers to affected communities and competent authorities, and takes future generations into account. Vertically, the trustee answers to God for the exercise of an entrusted responsibility.[61] This religious dimension and the statutory mechanisms of supervision address different audiences and operate through different forms of accountability.

Niyyah, or intention, and ḥisāb, or reckoning, explain why a believer may regard ecological care as binding even in the absence of immediate rewards. Workplace spiritual-leadership research offers a related account of motivation and pro-environmental behaviour.[62] The proposition that vertical accountability makes conservation commitments more resilient in practice requires empirical testing.

Waqf gives ecological trusteeship an institutional mechanism. Leadership studies document how a leader's influence can shape pro-environmental conduct.[63] In a conservation waqf, the recorded purpose and the duties of the nazhir establish a continuing mandate across changes of office. The mandate remains effective to the extent that registration, oversight, financing, and everyday management sustain it.

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[60] Egri and Herman, "Leadership in the North American Environmental Sector: Values, Leadership Styles, and Contexts"; Robertson and Barling, "Greening Organizations through Leaders" Influence on Employees" Pro-Environmental Behaviors"; Su et al., "Environmental Leadership, Green Innovation Practices, Environmental Knowledge Learning, and Firm Performance," SAGE Open 10, No. 2 (2020), 1–14."

[61] Aftab Haider et al., "From Stewardship to Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis of Islamic Ecological Jurisprudence and Western Anthropocentric Regimes," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 25, no. 1 (2026): 47–55, https://share.google/bjeQbRE7EBH7ACnXB.

[62] Bilal Afsar, Yuosre Badir, and Umar Safdar Kiani, "Linking Spiritual Leadership and Employee Pro-Environmental Behavior," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 45 (2016): 79–88.

[63] Robertson and Barling, "Greening Organizations through Leaders" Influence on Employees" Pro-Environmental Behaviors.", 176–194.

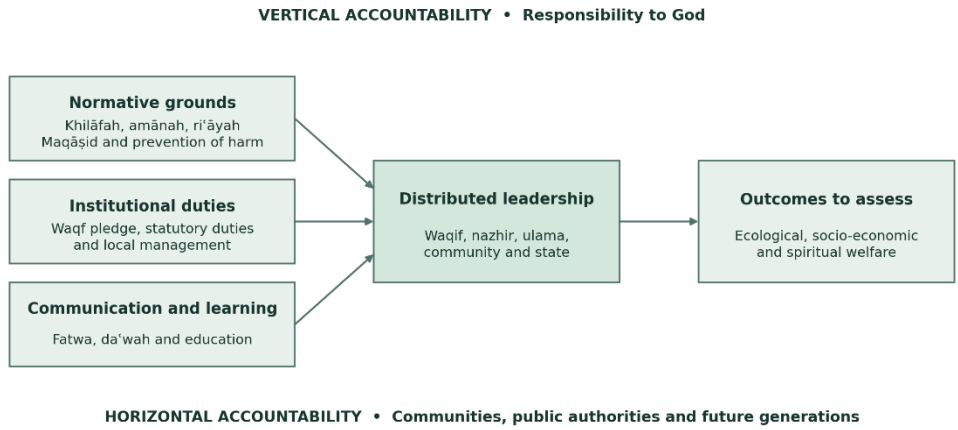

Figure 1. The ecological trusteeship model. Source: Authors' conceptualisation.

Figure 1 maps the proposed mechanism. Its three layers converge on distributed ecological leadership. Statutory and pledge-based duties apply to designated actors, while the layers explain how those duties gain religious legitimacy and become practicable. The normative layer supplies the reasons for care and the criteria for judging harm. The institutional layer assigns tasks through the waqf pledge, the nazhir's statutory duties, and locally agreed management arrangements. The communicative and educational layer helps participants learn and interpret conservation rules through fatwa, daʿwah, and education. *Ḥimā* and ḥarīm provide historical analogues for public protection of areas and resources.

Distributed leadership connects the waqif, nazhir, ulama, local community, and public authorities. Its proposed outcomes are ecological, socio-economic, and spiritual maṣlaḥah. Figure 1 presents these as outcomes to assess. Table 1 compares selected analytic emphases in ecological leadership research with the proposed trusteeship model.

Table 1. Ecological leadership and ecological trusteeship. Source: Authors' conceptualisation.

Dimension	**Ecological leadership literature**	**Ecological trusteeship**
Basis of responsibility	Ecological interdependence, organisational ethics, and responsibility for system effects.	Amānah and prevention of harm, interpreted through maqāṣid.
Allocation of authority	Leadership can emerge through networks and distributed decisions.	Leadership is distributed, with legally defined duties assigned to the nazhir.

Accountability	Organisations, stakeholders, and affected social and ecological systems.	Communities and authorities, future generations, and accountability to God.
Continuity	Networks, organisational policies, and collective practices can persist across leadership transitions.	The waqf pledge, legal protection of the asset, and supervision support continuity.
Evaluation	Indicators vary by approach, including adaptability, environmental behaviour, and sustainability.	Conformity to the endowment's purpose and evidence of ecological, socio-economic, and spiritual welfare.

Implications and Research Propositions

The framework makes the division of responsibility visible. Waqif and nazhir establish and administer the dedication, respectively. Community members and technical partners help shape feasible practices. The BWI and competent public authorities supervise within their legal mandates. For practice, the model directs attention to whether each actor has the authority, information, and resources needed to perform the relevant tasks.

This model has one feature that must be underscored. The leadership in question is not a heroic model resting on a single figure, but a distributed leadership emergent from the interaction of many parties: the waqif who begins, the *nazhir* who manages, the ulama who confer legitimacy, the community that tends, and the state that provides the legal framework. This feature accords with the finding in ecological leadership theory that leadership is an emergent process rather than an innate trait of the individual,[64] and at the same time is rooted in the hadith stating that everyone is a leader over what is in their charge.

Two questions qualify the framework. First, the idea of human vicegerency can be read anthropocentrically. Joining *khilāfah* to *tawḥīd* and *mīzān* places human decisions within a wider order of creation and gives ecological limits an independent role in evaluating those decisions.[65] Second, durable dedication can be difficult to reconcile with ecological change. The conservation purpose can remain stable while the nazhir revises species selection, planting methods, or compatible agroforestry in light of field conditions.[66] Changes in the legal designation or status of endowed assets follow the separate statutory procedures discussed above.

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[64] Wielkiewicz and Stelzner, "An Ecological Perspective on Leadership Theory, Research, and Practice.",… 326–341.

[65] Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust,*…1–18; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man And Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (London: Mandala Unwin Paperbacks, 1990), 95–121.

[66] Jannah et al., "Management Strategies of a Productive Waqf-Based…", 741–759.

The model's contribution is the link between grounds of obligation and the institutional conditions of compliance. Environmental jurisprudence explains why and when ecological harm calls for action. Leadership studies explain coordination among actors. Waqf law provides the legal means to assign conservation duties to an office and safeguard a dedicated asset. The Bogor documents illustrate how these dimensions can meet in everyday management.

Finally, as a conceptual framework, the trusteeship model opens several directions of testing that subsequent research should pursue. The following propositions are not claims this article has proven, but hypotheses that can be tested empirically, especially through ethnographic work and field study of waqf forest.

1. The stronger the internalisation of vertical accountability in a leader, the more resistant their ecological commitment is to the temptation of short-term interests, compared with leadership that rests on instrumental motivation.
2. Institutionalising an ecological commitment through the instrument of waqf *ta'bīd* makes the sustainability of conservation less dependent on a particular leader-figure than models relying on personal leadership influence.
3. The effectiveness of ecological trusteeship increases when the three layers, namely the normative, institutional, and communicative-educative, are present together, and weakens when one of them is absent.
4. Religious legitimacy through fatwa, daʿwah, and pesantren education strengthens community compliance with conservation rules beyond technocratic exhortation in the context of Muslim societies.
5. In waqf forest, the role of the nazhir as a collective ecological trustee mediates the relationship between the normative basis of khilāfah and the attainment of ecological, socio-economic, and spiritual maṣlaḥah.

These propositions mark an agenda long left fallow. Rather than borrowing the concept of ecological leadership as it stands from the management literature, the study of Islamic law can develop and test its own version, complete with a distinct normative foundation, institutional instrument, and measure of success. Waqf forest offers a concrete case for setting out on that agenda.

Conclusion

Islamic law can ground ecological leadership in an entrusted duty of care. *Khilāfah* and *amānah* explain the basis of that duty, while imāmah and riʿāyah connect it to authority and care. The classical necessities of life and property

already provide grounds to prevent serious ecological harm. The independent status of ḥifẓ al-bīʾah remains a contemporary juristic proposal. A collective duty may arise where effective harm prevention requires coordinated action, while a nazhir bears specific duties arising from the endowment and legislation.

Waqf forest can institutionalise ecological trusteeship when lawful title, the recorded purpose and duration of the endowment, the nazhir's statutory duties, and applicable environmental and land-use rules reinforce one another. The Bogor literature illustrates how agroforestry and collective management can give a conservation purpose practical effect. The framework connects this continuity to accountability to God, affected communities, and competent public authorities. Its ecological effectiveness depends on financing, professional management, participation, and monitoring over time.

Future research should test this framework through comparative fieldwork in Bogor and other Indonesian waqf forests. Longitudinal studies are especially needed to measure land-cover change, biodiversity, seedling survival, water and erosion indicators, maintenance costs, donor retention, household benefits, and the distribution of decision-making power. Interviews and participant observation should also examine whether vertical accountability actually shapes the decisions of nazhir and community members, and whether waqf perpetuity makes conservation more resilient across leadership transitions. Comparative research with ḥimā, social forestry, conservation easements, and public-trust arrangements would clarify which outcomes arise from waqf itself and which depend on broader governance conditions. Such evidence is necessary before ecological trusteeship can be generalised as a policy model.

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