

Final Report to Save the Tiger Fund

Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation – Kudremukh

Project title: Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation (CLTC) Kudremukh (2003-0087-003)

Project Leader:

Niren Jain, Kudremukh Wildlife Foundation

Collaborators and other institutional partners :

Wildlife Conservation Society – India Program

Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore.

Karnataka Forest Department

Praveen Bhargav

Nagarahole Wildlife Conservation Education Project (NAWICOED)

Nature Conservation Guild, Chikmagalur

Wild Cat-C, Chikmagalur

Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore

Arohana, Mangalore

Project duration : Start date: July 01, 2003, End date: June 30, 2004

Reporting period : 1st July 2003 to 30th June 2004

Acknowledgements:

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Executive Summary:

Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation (CLTC) – Kudremukh led by Niren Jain of Kudremukh Wildlife Foundation is a continuation of the conservation and education efforts carried out during the past three years with support from Save the Tiger Fund.

The projects aims at reducing human pressures inside the park through mobilizing public support, tiger habitat consolidation through land purchase and voluntary resettlement.

Monitoring of the negative effects of mining including support for the study to estimate sedimentation in Bhadra river eco-system in the tiger habitat was provided under the project.

The families that were resettled during the previous year with support from Wildlife Conservation Society and Karnataka Forest Department, were provided support for availing land title documents, government housing facilities, etc. Several other families living inside the national park have come forward to be resettled outside the national park after the initiative undertaken during the previous year.

10 community awareness programs were organized under the project.

Description of activities:

Monitoring winding up of mining operations

In a case filed by Wildlife First the Supreme Court has directed that mining activities at Kudremukh must stop by the end of year 2005; a committee has been set up by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to monitor the winding up operations of the mining company and recommend suitable recovery programmes for the mined slopes. The project leader continues to collect information about the negative impacts of mining on the reserve and the follow up the implementation of the Supreme Court orders regarding notification of the mining area into the national park with forest department officials.

The project leader also held discussions with state government officials regarding the inclusion of the mined area into the national park according to the directions given by the Supreme Court.

Logistical support was provided under the project to the study on sediment discharge on the Bhadra River in Kudremukh reserve due to the mining operations. This study was carried out by Centre for Wildlife Studies in association with eminent hydrologist Dr.Jagdish Krishnaswamy of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment. The final report on the study has been formally submitted to the government for suitable action. The report has concluded that the small sub-catchment at Kudremukh comprising the mining area which is less than 6% of the total Bhadra River catchment is contributing 53-67% of the total silt load entering the Bhadra reservoir highlighting the negative effect of the mining activity on the river system in Kudremukh reserve.

Improve habitat quality

Information regarding monitor unscientific management practices like construction of check dams to store water in high rainfall rainforest areas, formation of roads, etc were critiqued by the project leader.

Habitat consolidation through voluntary rehabilitation

The families from Bhagwathi enclosure in Kudremukh reserve, who were resettled outside the reserve during the previous year with funding support from private donors, have been supported for obtaining their land title documents and also to avail housing facilities provided under the government schemes.

After the successful resettlement of the families from Bhagawathi, more families from the interior areas of the reserve have volunteered to be resettled outside the reserve. The project leader is working with the families willing to be resettled outside the reserve. Ten meetings have been held in this regard.

Since the forest reserves around Kudremukh are potential wildlife habitats and also form important watershed catchment for the major rivers taking birth in the reserve a formal proposal has been submitted to the Government the project leader to declare nearly 777 sq kms of forests around Kudremukh reserve as a wildlife sanctuary.

Mobilising public support

During the reporting period ten slide talks were conducted in schools and colleges. Nearly 2,300 students, 50 teachers and about 35 people from the regional community were reached through these education activities. Meetings were also held with other organizations working on wildlife conservation to build support for the reserve.

A workshop on wildlife conservation was held for adventure and nature conservation organizations in the area to enhance support for the reserve. A total of 20 enthusiasts participated in this workshop.

The project leader also held three meetings with local political leaders to educate them about the importance of Kudremukh reserve and its conservation.

Three features were written and six newsreports were generated during the reporting period about various issues concerning Kudremukh reserve.

Problems and constraints:

Due to the critiques made by the project leader about the unscientific management practices carried out in the reserve, the local officers have been non-cooperative regarding the project activities.

Goals/activities for the next year :

1. Follow up with respective authorities to initiate voluntary resettlement project of interior enclosures and also expand the private acquisition of vital enclosure through other donor agencies.
2. Continue conservation watchdog activities
3. Continue conflict resolution activity and counsel villagers to accept incentive driven resettlement packages, when offered.

Note: Many of the individuals/organisations/collaborators listed in this project report have offered their time/expertise/ intellectual support to the conservation process carried out under the project on a voluntary basis.