

REPORT

Forest Clearance Proposal Number: [FP/KA/OFC/149526/2021]

Project: Jio Digital Fiber Underground OFC Cable from Karkala to Sringeri through Reserve Forest in various villages of Chikmagalur and Udupi District.

User Agency: JIO DIGITAL FIBER PRIVATE LIMITED.

Introduction to the project:

The project is for Jio Digital Fiber Underground OFC Cable from Karkala to Shringeri through Reserve Forest in various villages of Chikmagalur and Udupi District.

Ecology of Project Site:

Kudremukh National Park is a magnificent landscape of least disturbed low altitude wet evergreen forests and shola-grassland biome in the Western Ghats. Kudremukh represents one of the world's major habitats and eco-systems and remains a signpost of tropical biological richness and thus declared as **one of the 34 biological hotspots of the world & one of the 13 global mega-biodiversity hotspots for conservation**. The undisturbed wet evergreen forests area of Kudremukh National Park holds one of the single largest contiguous populations of LTM in India and world. It is a representative of tropical wet evergreen forest holding the assemblage of three top carnivores like Tiger, Leopard and wild dogs.

Kudremukh is a living museum and a natural laboratory for research, education and training on biological diversity. Kudremukh is the fountain head of major rivers like Tunga, Bhadra and Netravathi rivers and catchment for many other minor rivers like Gurupura, Yenehole, Swarna and Seethanadi, which provides livelihood to the people of Karnataka & Andhra Pradesh through agriculture. Kudremukh is a unique evergreen forest Shola-grassland eco-system performs many regulatory functions of the biosphere in terms of biogeochemical cycles. It epitomizes the conservation attitude of the Indian government & their people. Kudremukh epitomize one of the successful conservation movement, depicting the political will of Karnataka government and Indian government towards conservation over the negative development. It forms critical link connecting protected area on the Northern & North-Western side to the protected areas on the Southern. Thus, it became vital corridor connecting many protected areas of Karnataka and maintains gene flow of long ranging wild animals.

Site Inspection Report and Impact of Project:

Site inspection was conducted by the undersigned along with ACF, field staff on 01.02.2022. during inspection, the required linear project area applied for under forest conservation act, runs along the alignment of National Highway 169 (from point Mala [N13.24678, E75.11475] to point S.K Border [N13.28422, E75.14210]) and then along the alignment of National Highway 169 (from Point S.K Border [N13.28422, E75.14210] to point Tanikod checkpoint [N13.36266, E75.19606]) within the used width limits of the said roads. Upon inspection it is found that the project does not require removal of any trees. Once the work is completed the area remains undisturbed and there are no lasting negative impacts of the project. The impacts are limited and restricted to the installation phase. Since the land required by the project (for laying optical fiber cable) is all along a public highway the impacts to forests is minimal. The UA shall ensure due care is given to keep all possible impacts or disturbance during the installation phase as minimal as possible.

Recommendation:

The project site falling within the jurisdiction of the Kudremukha wildlife division was inspected by the undersigned on 01/02/2022. The project will improve the mobile and internet connectivity of the region which is essential for its overall development. It is an important project with least impact on Kudremukha National Park. It is recommended that the forest land of extent 0.62451 Ha (total length of 20.817km * 0.3m wide) may be diverted for the project. (Note: 20.817km extent is indicated after excluding the length of road that passes through enclosure revenue land).



The following mitigation measures are proposed to protect the interest of wildlife during and after the execution of the project:

1. The work shall be restricted to day time hours i.e. between 6 AM to 6 PM
2. No structures shall be allowed for housing laborers engaged in the project activities for overnight stay at project site.
3. No rock breaking / blasting or use of explosives shall be allowed by the User Agency for project implementation.
4. User Agency shall not alter the alignment proposed at later stages as it will result in change in area under diversion.

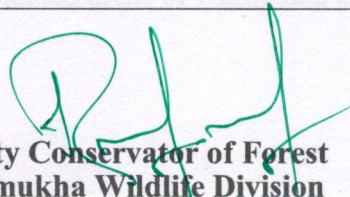
The implementing agency shall abide by the conditions laid down by the forest officials in charge of the project area in the interest of protecting and minimizing disturbance to wildlife during the work phase and after completion of the project. Undertaking submitted by the UA is attached with this.

The following suggestion is also put forward as an optional condition for consideration during further processing of the proposal.

- 1) It is a general procedure followed by the telecom companies to install short RCC pillars all along the alignment of the underground OFC at regular intervals like in the image attached below. (Fig.1)
- 2) Here in this case, the proposed OFC line passes all along the public highway through a National Park. Public awareness signage as many as possible on forest and wildlife along the public highways are always useful.
- 3) In light of the above it is opined that the user agency can be directed to modify their RCC pillar design which can incorporate the needs detailed in point 1 and 2 above. An illustrative model attached below for representative purposes. (Fig.2). Any other modalities in which the above described objective can be achieved is also acceptable.

	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Fig.1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Typical RCC pillar on OFC alignment installed by telecom companies. (Image from internet for representative purposes.)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Fig.2</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Proposed Modification allowing simultaneous display of forest and wildlife signage in protected areas. (Edited Image from internet for representative purposes.)</i></p>

Place: Karkala
Date: 03.02.2022


Deputy Conservator of Forest
Kudremukha Wildlife Division
Karkala

JIO DIGITAL FIBRE PRIVATE LIMITED

CIN: U64200GJ2018PTC105652

No.51, RMZ Icon, Palace Cross Road, Vasanthanagar, Bangalore 560052

02nd Feb 2022

To,
Deputy Conservator of Forest/Wild life warden,
Kudremukh,
Karkala.

Sub: Details of elements while executing the Optical fiber cable work.

Ref: The site inspection done by DCF Karkala and Range Staff of Kerekatte Wildlife on 01-02-2022.

With reference to the above subject, the information sought by DCF Karkala during their site inspection of laying of JIO OFC cable from Karkala to Shringeri are as follows:

1. We are executing the work through manual or HDD method and as per standards, policies and guidelines laid by the Forest Department and in the intervals of 100mtrs gap small pit will be made in order to lay the OFC cable by HDD Method and in inaccessible conditions like steep curves and slopes all along the ghat area manual work will be taken up.
2. Majority of the proposed work of laying of OFC cable will be done all along the Left side of the road as per the standards, policies and guidelines made by JIO Digital Fiber Private Limited But in the case of steep curves and slopes in ghat area, it will be carried out with a slight variation in alignment of OFC cable.
3. We are not at all using any explosive materials (like blasting of the Hard rock etc.,) for laying the OFC cable for proposed stretch. But in extreme conditions OFC cable will be laid by GI clamping of Cable to the existing side walls of the road.
4. While executing the work, 2 Ducts and one cable material will be used.

Kindly consider our requisition.

Thanking you,

For Jio Digital Fiber Pvt Ltd.,



(V V Babu)

Authorised Signatory