



KARNATAKA FOREST DEPARTMENT

Office of the Deputy Conservator of Forest, Gadag Division, Gadag.

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Date: 04-12-2020

SITE INSPECTION REPORT

Subject: Online submission of application for forest clearance under section 2 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Proposal No. & Name: FP/KA/MIN/42366/2019: Sangli Gold Mine, Jalligeri Village, Shirahatti Taluk Gadag District.

Certified that I have inspected the proposed location of 39.90 Ha in Jalligeri Village Sy No: 45,49 & 50 of Shirahatti Taluk, Gadag District along with and RFO Shirahatti, DyRFO Kadkol section and other frontline staff on Dt: 02-12-2020 (Wednesday).

The location is proposed for Gold Mining. The locations of the proposed area to be diverted is surrounded by excellent natural regeneration of Mashavala, Udaya, Tere, Tuggali, Sandal, etc... species. The extent of the project is 39.90 Ha and is lying in the heart of the Kappattagudda Wildlife Sanctuary declared by the Government of Karnataka vide notification No: FEE 57 FWL 2019, Dt: 16-05-2019.

The area to be diverted is near to Kappatta Malleshwara Temple, highly rich in natural vegetation including a large number of highly valuable medicinal plants like Shatavari, Nelabevu, etc. and falls in the Block – I of the Kappathagudda Wildlife Sanctuary which is the largest and the most contiguous patch of forest in the fragmented sanctuary.

On inspection of the site, it is noted that the area is a true representative of the Kappathagudda landscape. It has almost all the species ranging from smallest grasses to tallest trees in respect of flora and small birds to big carnivore like leopards, hyenas etc. in case of fauna.

The location of the area which is sought for diversion by the user agency is the area where the natural environment can easily be affected or harmed if not given a special protection or not taken seriously. Because of the unique features, this area deserves to be defined as **"Ecologically sensitive area"**. Further, as the area is having growth of economically important tree species in the form of highly valuable medicinal plants and is vulnerable even to the mildest disturbances, it demands sensible and careful management. Thus, the area is considered to be **"Ecologically and Economically Important"**. The list of flora and fauna of the area suggest that this area is ecologically 'rich', 'valuable', 'unique' and 'irreplaceable, if destroyed.

Further, by virtue of their biological richness, they are potentially of high value to human societies, help in maintaining the ecological stability of the area and are significant in conserving biological diversity. The uniqueness of the services they offer to human societies are precious.

The location of the site is at Kappathagudda which is not only a pristine scrub forest but also supports several food webs and food chain including a large population dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. Kappathagudda Wildlife Sanctuary was declared rightly by the government in 2019 for the aforesaid reasons.

Being site specific, the village surrounding the exact site in question are as follows.

1. Mahalingapura Tanda
2. Attikatti
3. Attikatti Tanda
4. Jalligeri
5. Jalligeri Tanda
6. Kadakol
7. Doni Tanda.

Total population of Jalligeri village where the site is located is 1584 and population of Jalligeri Tanda is 1055. Total cattle population of Jalligeri Tanda is 1600. The total agriculture land in the Jalligeri village is 2411 Acre 33 Gunte. The village depends on the ground water and rain water for its water needs and is predominantly agricultural. The proposed area is a part of the catchment that provides water to the lake near the village which helps in recharging the ground water and also the utility and drinking water needs of the people and livestock of the village.

This human and cattle population is entirely dependent on Kappathagudda as it is the only source of water and fodder for these villages which forms the catchment

area of the streams and tanks in the village. If the ecosystem and soil is disturbed in the area, the huge human and cattle population that depends on the soil and water resources may suffer.

The list of flora and fauna suggests that this area is rich in Biodiversity and is ecologically rich, valuable, unique and irreplaceable if destroyed.

LIST OF WILD ANIMALS COMMONLY FOUND IN THE PROPOSED AREA			
Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Schedule of the WLPA, 1972
1	Stripped Hyena	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	Sch. I
2	Wolf	<i>Canis lupus pallipes</i>	Sch. I
3	Indian porcupine	<i>Hystrix indica</i>	Sch. III
4	Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	Sch. II
5	Jungle cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>	Sch. II
6	Common mongoose	<i>Herpestes</i>	Sch. II
7	Common langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>	Sch. II
8	Bonnet Macaque	<i>Macaca radiata</i>	Sch. II
9	Common Indian hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>	Sch. IV
10	Wild pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Sch. III
11	Four horned antelope	<i>Tetracerus quadricornis</i>	Sch. II
12	Pangolin	<i>Manis crassicaudata</i>	Sch. I
13	Fresh Water Crocodile	<i>Crocodilus</i>	Sch. I
14	Monitor lizard	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>	Sch. II
15	Indian Cobra	<i>Naja naja</i>	Sch. II
16	Rat snake or Dhaman	<i>Ptyas mucosus</i>	Sch. II
17	Indian Rock Python	<i>Python molurus</i>	Sch. I
18	Viper	<i>Viper russelli</i>	Sch. II
19	Blackbuck	<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>	Sch. I

Source: Information gathered during forest inventory (2011) and the results of the wild animal population estimation (Jan 2010)

List of Bird species commonly found in the Proposed Area

S.No	Common Name
1	Baya Weaver
2	Small Barbet
3	Black Drongo
4	Bulbul
5	Bustard Quails
6	Cattle Egret
7	Common Myna
8	Cuckoos
9	Common Dove

10	Kingfisher
11	Oriental Magpie Robin
12	Munia
13	Indian Roller
14	parakeets
15	Partridges
16	Indian Rock Pigeon
17	Stilts
18	Sun Bird
19	Koel
20	Large Wagtail
22	Red wattled lapwing
23	Peafowl
24	Pond heron
25	Jungle crow
26	Yellow throated sparrow
27	Tailor Bird
28	White backed vulture

Further, by virtue of the biological richness of the area, it is potentially of high value to the Human Society. It helps in maintaining the Ecological stability of the area. The uniqueness of services which the said area caters to Human Society is not only precious but also irreplaceable. Therefore it is also known as **“Shayadri of Eastern Plains of Karnataka.”**

Proposed area is having the tree growth of good number of species like Mashavala, Udaya, Tere, Tuggali, Sandal, Maddi, etc.,

Images from various sources like camera traps and individual observations of field staff during patrolling reveals the active presence of good number of wild fauna both herbivorous and carnivorous including species mentioned in schedule – I of Wild life Protection Act 1972 like Blackbuck, Indian wolf, Leopard, Four horned Antelope, etc..., species mentioned in schedule-II like Rhesus macaque, Chameleon etc..., and species mentioned in schedule-III like Spotted deer and Hyena. Other than these species there is good number of Amphibians and Reptiles as well as excellent number of birds including Schedule – I like Peafowl, Hornbills are found in these areas. This fragile Eco-system is also home to a variety of Butterflies, Moths, Beetles and other beneficial insects which bestow their contribution to the survival of the mankind in form of pollination and maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.

Field inspections reveals that there is a stratified distribution of animals across the slopes of the Kappathagudda, which is readily observed here. On top of the

hillocks four horned antelopes are found. On middle slopes Chinkaras can be seen and on foot of the hillock, Black bucks are seen often. This fact supports the stability of the ecosystem and the food web present in pristine Kappathagudda.

The valley in which the proposed area drains has been given due importance by declaring it a Medicinal Plant Development Area (MPDA) before it was declared as Kappathagudda Wildlife Sanctuary. A preliminary survey has revealed the existence of endangered flora like *Dolichandrone crispae*, a medicinal plant, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, small pocket of *Dalbergia latifolia*, profused natural regeneration of Sandal, *Aegle marmelos*, *Gardenia gummifera*, *Abrus precatorius*, *Butea superba*, *Lettsomia elliptica*, *Mukuna prurnia*, *Wagelia Spicata*, *Hemideguas indicus*, *Mimosa pudica*.

Various non-forestry activities in the area may lead to fragmentation of the already fragmented habitat which is dangerous to the food web and ecosystem stability of the Kappathagudda landscape. Because of this fragmentation, much more cases of man-animal conflict may arise and it may lead to straying of wildlife like leopards, wolves and hyena into surrounding human habitat.

Documentation by FRLHT found that there are almost 423 species of medicinal plants which are found in the area and are unique in every sense. Occurrence of such rare medicinal plants in such a huge quantity is really a boon for the people of Gadag. The area if left undisturbed can sustain its vegetation and the eco-restoration of the area is possible with scientific intervention.

The area surrounding the proposed site has been brought under the holds of JFPM and there are a number of local health practitioners called "Nati-vaidyas", practicing in these areas. They are dependent on the wealth of medicinal plants resources from this area for their bonafide livelihood.

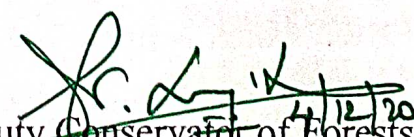
The whole landscape is the catchment area for Gadag and its surrounding villages and a source of water for the local populace. Moisture conservation activities taken up in the area under various schemes are not only beneficial for the rise in the ground water level and water retention capacity of the area, the green cover suppresses soil erosion which is likely to happen if the area is denuded. The area forms the ridge line of Kappathagudda hills which has been the catchment for the drainage of Shirahatti and Mundaragi Taluks of the Gadag District. Dambal, Majjur, Murudi, and Hirewaddatti minor irrigation tanks which are the lifelines of this locality entirely depend on Kappathagudda Wildlife Sanctuary for their water source which is likely to deplete if soil binding vegetation will be removed from the surrounding area.

The area hosts the Kappatha Malleshwar Temple in vicinity of 4 kms. Siddalingeshwar Matha in vicinity of 300 mts. There is a Daivi Vana around this Matha developed by Forest department in coordination with of local populace which serves as shelter & resting place for the pilgrims who come annually in a large number at the time of a "Vaarshika Jathre", the annual fair of the temple. There are lot of natural caves, which were once the penance place for seekers of the truth and are of highly religious and archeological importance.

The whole area is a valuable bio-diversity reserve (Annexure – 1) crucial for conservation of wildlife peculiar to the Deccan plateau dry scrub forests, with very good potential. It is also an important watershed for the surrounding agricultural tracts which are dependent on rain water runoff for their basic needs. It is the only lung space of the Gadag District which has a mere 6.9 % of forest cover. Though gold, which is of highly economic importance is available in small quantities scattered in Kappathagudda as per the reconnaissance survey done by RMML, it is to be noted that more than the removal of ore in the actual area applied, for the accompanying disturbance due to road construction, movement of the vehicles, noise and dust pollution and disruption to drainage due to blasting etc., will be of greater danger to the ecosystem. Moreover, with the unprecedented demand in ore market and the expectation of windfall gains more and more such applications will be filed, and cannot be refused on grounds of equity.

If the proposal is accepted under the wisdom of the Government, it may set precedence for denuding the nature, the mother earth for fulfillment of sundry wishes of mankind. Disturbing nature at the cost of destroying ecosystem and various food webs for meager profits may have irreparable damages to the locality, to name a few, droughts, degradation of environment, extreme weather conditions, pollution etc... and will not be spared by mother earth.

This irreversible damage to the wildlife and ecosystem values cannot be restored by a few humane interventions like soil and water conservation measures scattered here and there.


Deputy Conservator of Forests,
Gadag Division, Gadag.

*(The report submitted by the Range Forest Officer, Shirahatti and Assistant Conservator of Forests, Gadag is attached as Annexure – 1)