

Site Inspection Report of the Divisional Forest Officer, Thrissur

The proposed land for diversion at Manapilly and Mannur Hill Reserve Forests in Puthur was inspected on 03.11.2018. The area falls under the jurisdiction of Mannamangalam Forest Station of Pattikkad range, Thrissur Forest Division. The proposed land of an area 136.86 Ha, is an isolated bit of forest land nearly 12 km from Thrissur town. The proposed bit is surrounded by human habitation throughout its boundary. Earlier the area was teak plantation spread in two Bits. The Bit 1 having an extent of 65.2953 Ha was felled and planted with Bamboo. The Bit 2 having an extent 71.5670 Ha was felled in the year 1960 and planted with Cashew. The Bamboo Plantation is in Manapilly Hill Reserve and falling in Puthur Village of Thrissur District. The remaining Bit 2 of 71.56 Ha, Cashew Plantation is a part of Mannur Reserve Forest and falls in Kainoor Village of Thrissur District.

The bamboo clumps of the area have now started to flower gregariously. Therefore the procedure for removal of the clumps is in progress. Care will be taken to remove the clumps before the ensuing dry season. When the bamboo clumps are removed the area will be an open patch of land. The activities of establishing the Thrissur Zoological Park, Wildlife Conservation and Research Centre is concentrated in an area of about 48 Ha in a patch of open land when the bamboo clumps are removed from the site. The area falls in the category of Open Forest, Eco Value Class I, while computing the Net Present Value of the site. The effective area under construction will be falling in about 18 Ha of this piece of land. The area, geologically is a dense Archean metamorphic material which is frequently and conspicuously exposed as black boulders and outcrops of considerable size.

Apart from Bamboo and Cashew, the area is having miscellaneous trees of *Tectona grandis*, *Xylia xylocarpa*, *Albizzia odoratissima*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Macaranga peltata*, *adina cordifolia*, *Ficus hispida*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Gmelina arborea* etc., which have come up as secondary growth.

The idea of shifting the present Thrissur Zoo at Chembukavu under the ownership of Museum and Zoo Department to another spacious location has long been a topic of discussion. The Thrissur Zoo at Chembukavu amidst Thrissur town is in a congested location of 5.26 Ha, with no scope of further expansion as per the norms and conditions of Central Zoo Authority. Presently there are about 511 animals of

64 species accommodated in the Chembukavu Zoo. The animals in the Zoo are therefore facing an acute shortage of space. Thus in the light of direction from CZA, the State Government decided to shift the Thrissur Zoo at Chembukavu to the new site of forest land identified by transferring the ownership to Kerala Forest and Wildlife Department. In the Working Plan of Thrissur Forest Division the proposed area is devoted for shifting the existing Zoo from Chembukavu and its establishment in Puthur Site.

The location is advantageous as the site ensures development of spacious enclosures following the rules and regulations of the CZA. The identified site is just within a radius of less than 15 km of the important scientific institutions like the Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi; College of Forestry, Vellanikkara and College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy. Thus it would be of immense advantage for the proposed Park to utilize the services of the mentioned scientific institutions. An alternative suitable site for shifting the animals from the Thrissur Zoo, Chembukavu could not be identified.

It is understood that the Project has adopted Green Design and Environmental Sustainability Aspects during its establishment and implementation Phases. The chief designer of the Zoo, Shri Jon Coe who is a world famous designer in the category of Zoo designing and DPR preparation. Shri Jon Coe has adopted 'Nature Immersion Techniques' while designing the Zoo. Animals are exhibited in open enclosures. Enclosure barriers like open moats, fences, walls etc, kept hidden from the sight of viewers by green belts. This is "landscape immersion", meaning the viewer feels as if seeing the animal in the same landscape without any artificial barrier. The proposed Zoo, which apart from being a place of visitor satisfaction through watching animals, has other main objectives of captive breeding, conservation and education purposes. The proposal is to undertake research and breeding of chosen endangered species of the Western Ghats (Lion Tailed Macaque, Nilgiri langur, Nilgiri Tahr etc.). The Zoo also proposes the introduction of lesser known fauna of Western Ghats and promotion of breeding and research on them. The Breeding and Research activities related to the wild animals in the proposed Zoo will be orientated towards restocking the endangered/threatened populations in their natural habitat of forest. It is therefore expected that the establishment of this Zoo will be beneficial in case of both Ex-situ Conservation and In-situ Conservation.


The proposed site of diversion of forest land comprises of three hillocks with undulating terrain dominated with Cashew and Bamboo Plantation interspersed

with few miscellaneous species. The Zoo proposes for a large scale afforestation programme and aims to keep nearly 85 % of land under green cover. There is plan to develop suitable rare and endangered forest tree species in the site through intensive management practices. About 10 lakh species consisting of trees, shrubs, water plants, ground cover and climbers are proposed to plant in the site. Thus there is every effort from the User Agency to enhance the Bio-diversity of the identified place. The Project ensures the construction of three number of rain water harvesting structures (2 structures of 500 sq m size and one of 8700 sq m size) in the site and four number of detention ponds in the Conservation Zone. This will naturally help in conserving water in the site.

Hence supporting the proposal for establishment of Zoological Park in the forest areas at Puthur this office has identified areas for Compensatory Afforestation Scheme. The User Agency being Kerala Forest and Wildlife Department as well as due to unavailability of land outside forest for Compensatory Afforestation, the following areas have been identified for CA:

| Sl No. | Location | Area (hectare) | Village |
|--------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Wadakkanchery Hills | 10 | Wadakkanchery |
| 2 | Mayanoor | 5 | Kondazhy |
| 3 | Nelluvai | 28 | Nelluvai |
| 4 | Kottakunnu | 9 | Varavoor |
| 5 | Mayannur | 8 | Kondazhy |

Due to the above reasons I strongly recommend the diversion of forest land for shifting the Zoo from Chembukavu and its establishment as Thrissur Zoological Park – Wildlife Conservation and Research Centre of at Manapilly and Mannur hill Reserves in Pattikkad Range, Thrissur Forest Division.


 Divisional Forest Officer,
 Thrissur