

TAMILNADU FOREST DEPARTMENT

From
Thiru Sachin Tukaram Bhosale, I.F.S.,
District Forest Officer,
Nilgiris Forest Division,
Udhagamandalam – 1.

To
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
and Chief Wildlife Warden
Panagal Maaligai, Saidapet,
Chennai - 600 015

*(Through Conservator and Field Director
Mudumalai Tiger Reserve
Udhagamandalam)*

Ref.No.5044/2020/D1. Dated.07.10.2022

Sir,

Sub : Forest (Conservation) Act – 1980 – Proposal for diversion of 0.225 ha of Forest land in Udhagai Rural Extension –I Reserved Forest for approach road for construction of resort in Doddabetta at Udhagamandalam, the Nilgiris District – Proposal forwarded – Regarding.

- Ref 1. Online application uploaded by the User Agency –M/s Total Environment Habitat P.LTD ,No 4/41,Tuneri Main Road ,GCP Doddabetta Ooty ,The Nilgiris District –Proposal No.FP/TN/Road/26490/2017
2. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Panagalmaaligai, Chennai C.No TS3/15403/2019 dated 25.08.2022.

I submit that in the reference 1st cited the online Forest Clearance proposal has been received from the User Agency –M/s Total Environment Habitat P.LTD ,No 4/41,Tuneri Main Road ,GCP Doddabetta Ooty ,The Nilgiris District, under Section 2 Of Forest (Conservation)Act,1980 for diversion of 0.225 ha of the Forest land in Udhagai Rural Extension –I Reserved Forest of this division for formation of approach road for the construction of resort to a length of 250.00 m to a width of 9.00 m through the Udhagai Rural Extension –I Reserved Forest area from Thuneri Main Road in Udhagai rural village, The Nilgiris District to access patta lands for resort purpose.

The subject area was inspected by me along with the Forest Range Officer, Udhagai North Range on 04.09.2021 with the relevant records. During the field inspection it is noted

that the length of the road through forest is 250 m and a width of the road is 9.00 m to an extent of 0.225 ha of Forest land involved in this project. There are spontaneously grown 17 wattle trees, 2 blue gum trees, 3 Acacia melanoxylon, 4 cupressus and 4 shola trees (Quinine, Glochidion neilgherrense) standing in the proposed area.

The proposed project will lead to increase in movement of tourists & vehicles. It will lead to increase in disturbance to wild animals in the area and also may increase human-wildlife conflict. Therefore mitigation measures to reduce disturbance to wild animals and manage human-wildlife conflict are required. Hence it is to submit that the Human wildlife Conflict mitigation plan for approval. It is also request that mitigation plan may kindly be approve for further action.

This is for favour of kind perusal

Enclosure: As state above

Yours faithfully,
Sd/- Sachin Tukaram Bhosale
District Forest Officer,
Nilgiris Forest Division,
Udhagamandalam.

Copy submitted to The Conservator of Forests and Field Director Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Udhagamandalam, The Nilgiris District.

True copy / by order

Senior Draughting Officer

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[Handwritten date: 12/10/22]

WILDLIFE MITIGATION PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT OF APPROACH ROAD FOR CONSTRUCTION OF RESORT NEAR DODDABETTA AT UDHAGAMANDALAM

INTRODUCTION:

The proposal for formation of approach road for the construction of resort in Thuneri main road, GCP Doddabetta Ooty through the existing coupe road at Udhagai Rural Extension-I Reserved Forest in Udhagai North Range of Nilgiris Forest Division is received for approval under section 2 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of 0.225 Ha of forest area. In order to compensate the negative impact in lieu of the diversion of Forest land due to this project, a Wildlife mitigation plan need to be put in place considering the wildlife movement in the area, hence the following mitigation plan is proposed.

1.1 Project background

This particular stretch of the road is proposed for diversion by the user agency namely, M/S Total Environment Habitat Pvt Ltd, 4/41, Thuneri main road, Udhagai, The Nilgiris for construction of resort in their patta land located beyond this Reserved Forest. This coupe road is in use for a considerable time before and after enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 on annual lease rent basis. However in order to regulate such leases under the purview of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 permission under section 2 of the act is sought for.

1.2 Justification & Benefit of the project;

The project of formation approach road for the construction of resort in Thuneri main road, GCP Doddabetta Ooty through the existing coupe road is located in Udhagai Rural Extension-I Reserved Forest. Since the road is already existing in the Reserved Forest as a coupe road which is the only access for them to enter in their patta land. There is no alternative route /access to their patta land. Hence the project is located through the Reserved Forest. If the road is laid, it will be very useful to carry out regular activities in their patta land apart from the present requirement of construction of resort.

1.3 Details of the proposed approach road:

The components of the proposed road work consist of laying paver blocks over sand filling to required depth within the allowed length(250.00m) and width(9.00m) including P:C:C /R:C:C concrete kerb walls (in 1:2:4 mix) for holding the blocks throughout the entire length of the road under diversion with restoration of side drain. There is a felling of trees species namely 17 Wattle trees, 3 Bluegum trees, 3 Acacia melanoxylon, 4 Cupressus and 4 Shola trees (Quinine, Glochidion neilgherrense) involved in the project.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE FOREST AREA & LIKELY IMPACT OF PROJECT

2.1 Nilgiris Forest division

The geographical area of the Nilgiris District is 255201.65 ha, of which the district covers partly six revenue taluks namely, Udthagamandalam, Coonoor Kotagiri, Kundah, Gudalur and Pandalur. The Forest area of the Division is 527577.194 ha. This division lies in the cool and bracing hills. The Forests of the tract exhibit considerable variation in composition, quality and contrition due to altitude, physiography and biotic influence. The forest form continuous blocks besides scattered patches smaller in extent. The significant geographical location with wide range of topographic features, the marked difference in rainfall, the high intensity of solar radiation with significant diurnal range of temperature especially in cold months and mainly ground frost during winter are responsible for the richness, uniqueness and unusual diversity seen in the vegetation pattern of this division. The vegetation ranging with southern montane wet temperate forest, southern tropical broad hill forest, southern moist deciduous forest, and southern dry deciduous forest apart from grass land shola patches. This division is rich in wild life as well with elephants, tigers, leopards, sloth bears, sambar deers, spotted deers, black buck, jackal, Indian gaur, wild dogs, bears, Nilgiris langur etc.

2.2 Udhagai Rural Extension-I Reserved Forest:

Udhagai Rural Extension-I Reserved Forest is located in the Onnathalai beat, Denaducombai Section in Udhagai North Range of Nilgiris Forest Division in SF no 632 Udhagamandalam Taluk. The extent of the reserved Forest is 4.895 Hectares. The Reserved Forest was notified vide G.O No 210 Environmental & Forest Department dated 12.10.1999.

2.3 Major Habitat, Flora & fauna

This Reserved Forest contains many varieties of flora like spontaneous shola grout and Eucalyptus, Wattle etc. The habitat supports wild animals like Leopard, Indian Guar, Sambar Deer, Wild pig, Indian Porcupine, Barking deer, Black naped hare, Malabar Giant Squirrel etc. The movement of these wild animals are witnessed then and there. In this project area, there are trees species namely 17 Wattle trees, 3 Bluegum trees, 3 Acacia melanoxylon, 4 Cupressus and 4 Shola trees (Quinine, Glochidion neilgherrense), which are required to be felled.

2.4 Major activities involved in the road project

The components of the proposed road work consist of laying paver blocks over sand filling to required depth within the allowed length (250.00m) and width (9.00m) including P:C:C / R:C:C concrete kerb walls (in 1:2:4 mix) for holding the blocks throughout the entire length of the road under diversion with restoration of side drain.

2.5 Likely impact of the project on RF

There is no much negative impact anticipated due to this project in view of meagre area involved that too in the existing road. But the present project if completed with improved condition of road by laying paver blocks might have mobility of vehicles with its frequency which may cause disturbance to the adjoining forest and wild life and it is assessed that the impact due to which may have effect on and the following factors of conservation.

2.5.1 Road hits or Disturbance to Wildlife:

So far no wildlife accidents have been reported in the existing coupe road due to vehicles presently moving along this road. The up gradation of road may increase the risk of accidents due to mobility of vehicles.

2.5.2 Dust:

The Project shall generate lot of dust particles due to frequency of vehicles. This will cover the leaf surface and affect photosynthesis of plants within the radius of around 1 Km.

2.5.3 Noise:

Movement and operation of machineries and of transport vehicles shall generate some noise. Noise induces physiological and behavioural changes. No blasting should be done which will result in considerably less noise pollution.

2.5.4 Forest fire:

Due to increase in human activities, negligence etc. forest fire may take place. Fire is mostly anthropogenic in origin. This, in turn, may deprive wildlife of their cover and food.

2.5.5 Human-Wildlife Conflict:

This is a general impact where any development is undertaken in forest area. In this project also, the conflict is likely to increase due to improvement of this road.

All these perceived impacts/threats due to this project needs be removed through different measures in order to improve the habitat for wildlife so that their status can be enhanced and healthy environment is created. The required mitigation measures based on the above impacts, factors have been outlined as below.

3. PROPOSED WILDLIFE MITIGATION MEASURES

3.1 SAFEGUARD TO WILDLIFE PASSAGE

3.1.1 Speed breakers

At present, there is already a coupe road where this road is going to be upgraded with paver blocks. So when this road is converted into a Paver block road it may cause harm sometimes to wildlife movement there in. Hence, considering the shorter stretch of the project road, speed breakers shall be erected both at entry and exit and also in between over a length of 250 m road to reduce the speed of vehicles to prevent harm to wildlife.

3.1.2 Dust control:

Dust generated due to activities and movement of vehicles during formation of road affects the wild animals and plants. This will be mitigated by sprinkling of water thrice daily on roads to keep the road damp. Sprinkling with water shall prevent the fugitive emission of dust.

3.3.3 Noise control:

Noise due to machine operation and vehicles is likely to disturb wildlife. This would be minimized to least possible level. This would be achieved by proper maintenance of machinery and use of efficient muffling devices.

3.3.4 Smoke control:

Generation of smoke adversely affects the flora and fauna. Effort should be taken by the user agency to use standard machineries and vehicles and no smoke generating activities will be carried out.

3.3.5 Fire control:

The accidental fires in the project area shall be extinguished immediately. Hence in project area no fire will be allowed to spread to any part including nearest vegetation. All precautionary measures should be taken by the User Agency at all times.

3.3.6 Erection of Awareness boards

In order to create awareness among the local people and to educate the importance of forest and its conservation, awareness boards are required along the road side especially at entry and exit points. At least 5 boards may be required in this stretch at entry and exit and in between the project road. The cost shall borne by the User Agency.

3.3.7 Creation of Water trough

In order to support for conservation including planting, fire fighting and drinking water for Wild life etc., in and around the project area, a water source is required for immediate water requirement. Hence it is proposed to create a water trough at suitable location decided by the District Forest Officer. This would improve the quality of the habitat by ensuring water availability for wild animals.

3.3.8 Disposal of waste

Since the approach road especially meant for construction of resort apart of their other routine purpose, after the road is laid there will be more number of tourists and other public will be visiting the resort. Due to increase number of tourists and their utility methods discharge of wastes will be quite possible and may sometimes alarm due to their negligence of cleanliness. In order to control and maintain the area clean and neat atmosphere, the user agency shall suitable waste disposal system with in their patta land at their cost. Prior approval of the District Forest officer shall be obtained for the operation of resort and other activities to ensure the disposal system is put in place and for effective monitoring.

3.3.9 Monitoring Expenditure

Since the proposed lease period has been sought for by the User Agency over a period of 50 years, the project throughout the lease period needs to be monitored by the department officers. In order to meet out the capital cost of vehicle, the user agency shall provide necessary funds.

4. GENERAL MITIGATION MEASURES FOR PROTECTION OF FOREST AND WILDLIFE

The following mitigation measures will be adopted during execution of the project for protection of forest and wildlife.

- a) Before start of work in the reserved forest, awareness campaign will be taken up by the User Agency in association with Forest Department to create maximum awareness among the construction workers regarding safeguard of forest and wildlife.
- b) No work shall be allowed at nights (i.e. between sunset & sunrise) in the forest area.
- c) No permanent labour camps will be set up inside the forest area.
- d) No nearby Trees should be damaged during the execution of work.
- e) To minimize the disturbance to wildlife, no new approach road will be constructed in the forest area. The project road under diversion will be utilized for carrying materials.
- f) Eco-friendly engineering practices in the construction works and due care be taken properly so as to avoid injury to wildlife.

- g) All pollution related aspects and waste management will be duly taken care during the implementation of the project.
- h) In addition to above, any other measures as envisaged by the District Forest Officer and as per provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 & Tamil Nadu Forest Act, 1882 will be strictly adhered to during execution of the project.

5. Budget requirements

For effective implementation of the mitigation measures as detailed above specific to safeguarding wildlife, financial implication needs to be addressed by the user agency in lieu of the forest land diversion for the project and to ensure the sustainable ecosystem on long term objective. The following budget requirement is arrived at to implement the above mitigation measures.

Rs in lakhs

Sl.no	Name of the component	Physical Qty	Unit cost	Amount
1.	Erection of Awareness boards	5 Nos	0.20	1.00
2.	Purchase of patrolling vehicle for monitoring including body modification charges of the vehicle	1 No	10.50	10.50
3.	Creation of water trough	Ls	8.00	8.00
4.	Provision for other incidental charges during the course of project	Ls	0.20	0.20
	Total			19.70

(Rupees Nineteen lakh Seventy Thousand only)

6. CONCLUSION

Mitigation measures are the essential requirement while according diversion proposals to the various agencies for ensuring sustainable ecosystem on long term basis for the cause of conservation and protection of forest habitat. In order to mitigate in case of any negative impact on the possible effect of the above said measures due to the project, a mitigation plan is to be put in place so that the entire lease period can be monitored irrespective of the area under diversion.

[Signature]
07/10/22
District Forest Officer
Nilgiris Forest Division
Udhagamandalam
4/10