

Field inspection report of Chief Conservator of Forest, Kothagudem circle in Ramavaram range of Kothagudem division for inspection of proposed diversion of 649.3014 Ha by SCCL for Venkatesh Khani Coal mine on 11-09-2020.

Inspected the proposed open cast mine site along with District Forest Officer, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Forest Divisional Officer Kothagudem, Forest Range Officer Ramvaram and SCCL officials. It was observed that the Venkatesh Khani Coal Mine is consisting of Goutham Khani Opencast Mine (GKOCP), Venkatesh Khani No.7 Under Ground and Padmavathi Khani No.5 Incline. As informed by SCCL officials, GKOCP will be closed in the year 2023, as per approved mine closure plan, hence the existing underground rights of Venkatesh Khani No.7 Under Ground and Padmavathi Khani No.5 Incline are now proposed to be converted in to open cast mining for which diversion is being obtained by user agency for 649.3014 Ha.

This area is falling in compartment nos,2,3,4,5 and 11 (part) of Ramavaram RF of penuballi beat of Ramvaram range of Kothagudem division, of Badradri Kothagudem Forest Circle. The proposed forest area is having good growth with canopy density less than 0.4 with a variety of NTS species viz.

1. Tuniki (diospyros melanoxylon)
2. Bojja (cymbopogan coluratus)
3. Chennangi (lagerstroemia parviflora)
4. Barduddi (millusa tomentosa)
5. Billudu chloroxylon swietenia)
6. Toggara (morinda tinctoria)
7. Tada (grewia tileaefolia)
8. Pusuga (schleichera oleosa)
9. Rella (cassia fistula)
10. Pedda pala (Manilkara hexandra)

SHRUBS

1. Guba tada (mallotus phillippensis)
2. Jaji (lythrum fruticasum)
3. Karanji (bradenia lucida)

Grasses


Potla gaddi and Pusa gaddi.

Further, it was observed that 110 Ha plantation was raised by SCCL in the year 2016 & 2017 in lieu of renewal for Kothagudem Mining Lease and this is also a part of this proposed diversion area, for which SCCL should take up planting of 110 Ha elsewhere or nearby RF so that green cover mandated by MOEF&CC in File No.8-227/85-FC in its condition VI, is complied with.

Further, it was noticed that user agency has not included 2.85 Ha (Already diverted for bore well) in the original diversion proposal, on verification it was informed that these areas were diverted earlier for other projects. But, SCCL officials were informed that as there

will be change in land use now and that this 2.85 Ha should also be included along with this proposal.

Further, it was seen that the proposed open cast mine's outer perimeter of 9 Km will have interface with forest. The adjoining Reserve Forest is a home for the Indian Gaur (Bison) *bos gaurus*, spotted deer, Chinkara, Mouse deer, Jungle cats, Reptiles, Jackals etc. Due to the opencast mining the natural habitat of the animals and the migratory corridors is disturbed and the chance of wild animals entering and falling in the opencast mine cannot be ruled out, hence it was suggested to SCCL during inspection to propose chain link and bio-fence like bamboo brakes over 100m length all along the perimeter having forest interface which will minimise the damage to the wildlife.


Chief Conservator of Forests/
Conservator of Forests,
Kothagudem Circle.

(3/5)



