

**Site Inspection Report of the Conservator of Forests and Field Director,  
Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, Erode**

Proposal No : FP/TN/ROAD/121598/2021

Name of the Project : Rehabilitation and Upgradation of Tamil Nadu - Karnataka Border from existing km 266.448 (Des. km 266+449) to Attagulipura at existing Km 290.706 (Des.km 288+800) of NH-209 in the State of Karnataka

Date of Inspection : 12-04-2023

Staff accompanied : Thiru. Devendra Kumar Meena, IFS, Deputy Director, Hassanur Forest Division, and Forest Range officer, Hassanur and Thalavady Ranges

The proposed site was inspected by me on 12.04.2021. The proposal was submitted by the User Agency to request prior permission under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, for diversion of 4.407 ha of forest land in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve for upgradation of an existing road.

The proposal is for a linear project, and it is proposed along the existing road of NH209 (now NH 948) and another connecting NH 948 with Thalavady town, passing through the Talamalai RF in Thalavady Range. During the field inspection of the proposed linear path, it was observed that,

1. The proposed length and area from the User Agency's first proposal varies slightly based on the situation on the ground. This is because a part of the road in Tamil Nadu was added to Karnataka State.
2. The diversions are proposed in two segments in Tamil Nadu Portion are ;

Sl. No	Chainage		Length (m)	Width required (m)	Side	Forest Area to be diverted	
	Start	End				Sqm	Ha
1	266.449	266.495	46	7.74	LHS	356.0410	0.0356
				7.70	RHS	354.3597	0.0354
2	277.385	280.265	2880	7.51	LHS	21,634.6859	2.1635
				7.79	RHS	22,431.2642	2.2431
Total Area						44,776.3508	4.4776

3. The proposal is to upgrade and realign of existing NH 209 by widening / improving / upgrading the existing single lane road from chainage 277.385 to 280.265.
4. The proposed land is in the Core Zone of the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.
5. The proposed stretch of land for diversion is in the vicinity of Bigiri Ranganatha Swamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve and located at the southern portion of the identified elephant corridor Chamarajanagar-Talamalai at Muddanalli. This corridor links the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve with the BRT Tiger Reserve.
6. The widening of the road from Chainage 277.385 to Chainage 280.265 will separate around 150 ha of the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) and a significant chunk of the BRT Tiger Reserve from adjacent contiguous forests of the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve. This may have negative consequences for wildlife and substantially increase human-wildlife conflict.
7. The STR and BRT Tiger Reserves are currently traversed by a National Highway Road. In the alternative analysis presented by the User Agency in its recommendation, increased speed (40–100 km/h) is cited as one of the advantages of the preferred route. As directed by the Honorable Madras High Court in W. P. No. 1830/2022, the speed restriction on NH 209 (now NH 948) passing through the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve is 30 kilometres per hour in the plain area and 20 kilometres per hour in the Ghat road area. Therefore, this gain is nullified.
8. Similarly, the Honorable High Court of Madras, in W.P. No. 1830/2022, prohibited 12-wheel or more-wheel vehicles from using the NH 209 road that passes through Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve. The Honorable Court has also restricted the entry of vehicles carrying loads in excess of 16.2 tonnes, including the vehicle's weight. As a result of the implementation of the High Court Order, the commercial vehicle fleet has been substantially reduced to 60–65 percent.
9. At present, three feeder roads connect NH 209 to the town of Thalavady. The existing road facilities are more than adequate to accommodate the current vehicle traffic.

Considering the above facts and circumstances, the proposal to divert **4,4776 ha** of forests in two portions of Talamalai RF is **not recommended**.

B.  20/4/2023

Conservator of Forest & Field Director,  
Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, Erode.