

Wildlife Conservation Plan of OFC cable of Reliance JIO

Kalimpong Forest Division for construction of JIO OFC Cable

General Information:

The Kalimpong Forest Division comprises of the entire reserved forest areas of Kalimpong District and excluding the area under Neora Valley National Park which had been handed over to Wild Life Wings of Forest Directorate. The forest area of this division situated between 26°52' to 27°11' North latitude and 88°26' to 88°53' East longitude. The Division is bounded on the north by Sikkim and Bhutan, on the east by the Jaldhaka River, on the south by the Jalpaiguri District and on the west by the Teesta River. The head quarter of the Division is at Kalimpong Town which is having an average altitude of 1219 meters ASL.

An area of 36,435.793 Ha. of reserved forests is under the jurisdiction of this Division. There are nine territorial Rivers viz, Kalimpong Range head quarter, Pankhasari Range with headquarters at Algarah, Chel Range with headquarters at Chunabhati, Neora Range with headquarters at Gorubathan, Noam Range with headquarters at Manabari, Samsing with headquarters at Samsing, Jaldhaka Range with headquarters at Jhalong, Lava Range with headquarters at Lava and Loleygoan Range with headquarters at Loleygoan.

The terrain is mostly mountainous, the elevation varying from 91 mts to 2300 mts. Only few square miles of area which form a narrow belt on the southern portion of Chel, Neora and Jaldhaka Range area having flat terrain. The general terrain consists of numerous valleys, the slopes of which vary considerably from moderate to precipitous. The general trend of the main river is from north to south but there are many subsidiary streams with large valleys. The direction of the hills is therefore, vary variable affording every possible aspect.

Forest Composition in RELIANCE JIO selected area:

The area selected by Reliance JIO under Kalimpong Forest Division consisting of a combination of Tropical Evergreen and Dry Deciduous Forest which shows immense species richness spread over distinct ecological habitats which can be manifested by the diversity of the plant species spread across the region. The lower hill forests covering a greater part of the area are mainly deciduous but change to evergreen species where rainfall exceeds 160 inches annually. The aspect also introduces modification of the forest composition.

Major Fauna:

The specific patches of the forest area are rich in wild fauna of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. Around 13 species of fish, 15 species of amphibians, 60 species of reptiles, 138 species birds and 42 species of mammals have been recorded in and around this area. The major fauna found in this area are Leopard, Leopard cat, Fishing cat, Marbled cat, Chinese pangolin, Civet, Barking Deer, Wild Boar, Peacock, Rhesus macaque, Indian hare, Himalayan crestless Porcupine, Thar, Ghoral, Serow, Himalayan giant squirrel, Mongoose, King cobra, the Common Cobra, Kraits, Vipers etc. Besides that, around 360 sqkm of Kalimpong Forest Division supports a healthy population of rare and endemic wild animals. Because of diversity of vegetation, climate and altitudinal zonation, the forest areas of Kalimpong have wide range in the varieties of Wild Life.

Wildlife management sites of Kalimpong:

The Habitat of the wild animals is already affected by human settlement and National Highway No 10. The project of IRCON escalates more trouble to the biodiversity of the area if not managed properly. The underground excavation and muck disposals will not only block the movement in the natural path of Wildlife but will also have serious effects on the degradation in the quality of wildlife habitat. To minimize the impact of the project, a plan of habitat improvement activities is important and hereby proposed.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PLAN (AROUND 3 % OF PROJECT COST)

Sl No.	Activity Proposed	Quantity	Rate	Amount
1	Improvement of existing forests through improvement/MS Cutting	5	18000	90000


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