

SITE INSPECTION REPORT

Name of the proposal: Re-Diversion of 0.467 ha of Forest Land for construction of Link Road between two defense complexes (ARDE Pune, DRDO)

Officials from the Regional Office:

1. Dr. S. Senthil Kumar, IFS, DDGF (Central), Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur.
2. C. B. Tashildar, IFS, Assistant Inspector General of Forests (Central), MoEF&CC, Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur.

Officials from the State Forest Department:

1. Sh. N. R. Praveen, IFS, CCF, Pune.
2. Sh. M. Mohite, IFS, DCF, Pune.

Officials from the User Agency- Sh. A. Raju, Director, ARDE, Pune.

Date of inspection: 18/12/2024.

A. Legal status of the forest land proposed for diversion: Part of Reserve Forest that was diverted to ARAI vide MoEF&CC letter No. 8-15/2007-FC, Dt 24.07.2008 (FP/MH/OTHERS/1037/2007).

B. Item-wise break-up details of the forest land proposed for diversion:

Sr. No.	Item	Survey No.	Dimensions	Area
1	Construction of link road between two defense complexes in Survey No.102, at Village Kothrud, Tal. Haveli, Dist. Pune	102	1320 m x 3.5 m	0.462 ha.

C. Whether proposal involves any construction of buildings (including residential) or not. If yes, details thereof: No.

D. Total cost of the project at present rates: - Not disclosed.

E. Wildlife: Whether forest area proposed for diversion is important from wildlife point of view or not: No.

F. Vegetation:

1. Details of total number of trees to be felled: Nil
2. Effect of removal of trees on the general ecosystem in the area.- NA.

G. Background on the proposal: There exists an inspection path maintained by the Forest department, which is being proposed for further development as a pakka road. Previously, Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, New Delhi has given final approval for diversion of 55.74 ha. forest area to Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) for laying down of test track for lab under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 vide letter dated 24/07/2008 in which condition no.15 i.e. "The diversion of land may be done after considering the issue of ARDE also" was laid down.

The then Conservator of Forests, Pune vide letter dated 09/02/2009 gave permission to ARAI for non-forest use of the said land in accordance with the final approval for MoEF&CC vide letter dated 24/07/2008. Later Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) Maharashtra State revoked the said order passed by then Conservator of Forests, Pune for the reasons of non-fulfillment of condition no.15 in the final approval granted by MoEF&CC and also ordered user agency not to start any work over the said area and not to divert the said land to user agency until any further orders are passed by the State Government.

The Deputy Conservator of Forests, Pune Forest Division, Pune has taken one sided possession on 29/01/2019 of Village Kothrud Forest Survey No.102 area of 98.045 ha. out of 105.74 ha. excluding the 7.695 ha. area under possession of ARAI. On 01/06/2018, the Government of Maharashtra informed to the Secretary, Department of Defence, New Delhi about all the facts about forest land in Survey no.102 at Kothrud, Dist. Pune. In above letter para no.7 mentioned that "permission for re-diversion cannot be accorded without prior written consent of the primary user agency".

Regarding diversion of 55.74 ha. forest area to ARAI under Forest Conservation Act, 1980, The Nodal Officer has submitted report to the Government of Maharashtra vide letter No. Nodal/RS-II/ID-11293(S)/1308, dated 04/03/2021 for necessary directions / instruction regarding diversion of land to ARAI. The Government of Maharashtra has so far not issued any diversion order for the forest land in favour of ARAI and the area proposed for diversion (0.462 ha.) is a part of the same 55.74 ha. forest area for which Stage-II Clearance was given by the MoEF&CC, Govt. of India vide letter No. 8-15/2007-FC, Dt 24.07.2008 (FP/MH/OTHERS/1037/2007)

H. Compensatory afforestation: Not Applicable.

1. Whether land for compensatory afforestation is suitable from plantation and management point of view or not - NA

2. Whether land for compensatory afforestation is free from encroachments/other encumbrances. - NA.

3. Whether land for compensatory afforestation is important from Religious/Archaeological point of view- NA.

4. Land identified for raising compensatory afforestation is in how many patches, whether patches are compact or not- NA.

5. Map with details: Provided in the proposal

6. Total financial outlay: - Nil.

- I. Whether proposal involves violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 or not. If yes, a detailed report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials.- No.
- J. Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Government or not. Details be furnished specifically if rehabilitation plan would affect any other forest area by trans-locating outstees in and around the said forest:- NA
- K. Reclamation Plan: -NA
- L. Details on catchment and command area under the project: -NA.
- M. Cost benefit ratio: NA.
- N. Recommendations of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests/ State Government: Provided in the proposal
- O. Recommendations of Deputy Director General of Forests along with detail reasons: Separately attached
- P. Detailed comments on whether there are any alternatives routes/alignments for locating the project on the non-forest land: - Nil.
- Q. Utility of the project: The link road between two defense establishments would significantly restrict the defense related activities within a safe area. The public road that is currently being used to connect these establishments will not be exposed to the defense movements.
- R. Whether land being diverted has any socio-cultural/religious value. Whether any sacred grove or very old grown trees/forests exists in areas proposed for diversion: No.
- S. Situation w.r.t. any Protected Area: - No protected area is proposed for diversion.
- T. Any other information relating to the project: -
1. Photographs are attached.

Recommendation:

The proposal may be recommended subject to the following:

1. The User Agency shall provide uninterrupted access of the road to the officials of the Forest Department and their vehicles for attending to forestry-related activities, as the reserve forest is prone to forest fires.

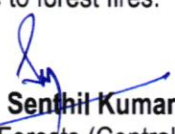

(C. B. Tashildar)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests (Central)

Proposal No.: **FP/MH/ROAD/144314/2021**

The proposal is recommended subject to the following conditions:

1. The User Agency shall provide uninterrupted access of the road to the officials of the Forest Department and their vehicles for attending to forestry-related activities, as the reserve forest is prone to forest fires.


(Dr. S. Senthil Kumar)
Deputy Director General of Forests (Central)
Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur

Photographs



