

SITE INSPECTION REPORT

Proposal for diversion of 5.11 ha of forest land for operation of Bheleuguri Stone Mahal in Doboka Reserved Forest under Nagaon Division in favour of Md. Kamal Ahmed .

BACKGROUND OF THE PROPOSAL

State Government of Assam submitted the proposal for diversion of 5.11 ha of forest land for operation of Bheleuguri Stone Mahal in Doboka Reserved Forest under Nagaon Division in favour of Md. Kamal Ahmed to Sub Office, Guwahati, seeking forest clearance under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

As per the provision of the F(C) Act, 1980, the site inspection of this instant proposal was conducted by Deputy Inspector General of Forest (C) of this Regional Office, Shillong on 26.03.2024 along with the following officials of the State Forest Department and representatives of User Agency: -

1. Sri Suhas Tarachand Kadam, IFS, DFO, Nagaon Division.
2. Sri Debabrata Khanikor, AFS, Range Officer, Kathiatoli Range.
3. Sri Prabhat Baruah, Dy. Ranger.

Representative of the UA:

4. Sri Kamal Ahmed, LoI Holder.

This proposed diversion project is for extraction of stone and boulder to meet the demand of government infrastructure projects and employment generation.

1) The Legal Status of the forests land proposed for diversion

District	Forest Division	Area involved and its break up (ha)	Legal Status	Aerial distance of the proposed area from the nearest PA/WLS/NP
Hojai	Nagaon	Component wise break up (i) Mining Area - 4.14 ha (incl safety zone area 0.86 ha) (ii) Approach road - 0.11 ha Total: 5.11 ha	Doboka Reserved Forest	36.65 km from Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, 48.66 km from Kaziranga NP and 50.45 km from East Karbi Anglong WLS

- 2) Whether proposal involved any construction of buildings (including residential) or not. If yes details thereof:**
No.

- 3) Total cost of the Project at present rates.**
The total cost of the project is Rs. 367.00 Lakhs.

4) Whether forest area proposed for diversion is important from wildlife point of view or not.

The area proposed for diversion has tropical deciduous forest which is of moderately dense forest, however the area on the foot hill where the mines are located are degraded and affected by previous mines activity. As per discussion with the local officer, the proposed site does not harbor any important wildlife species though wild boar, Maca are occasionally seen nearby.

5) Vegetation

Sl. No.	Name of Forest Division	Name of RF /area involved	Total Nos. of trees to be felled including poles
1	Nagaon	Doboka	NIL revised to 19*

*It may be mentioned that the total number of trees affected by the project is given as NIL in the proposal. However after site inspection, it was seen that some trees are found in the proposed area. After re-enumeration, it is reported that 19 trees are within the proposed area. Details attached.

Effect of removal of trees on the general ecosystem in the area

There is removal of a few trees in the proposed site. The area is already mined and degraded, hence no significant adverse effect on general ecosystem of the area is expected.

6) Background note on the proposal

As given in the first paragraph.

7) Compensatory Afforestation:

The following equivalent forest land have been identified by the State Govt for taking up compensatory afforestation over double the area proposed to be diverted:

District	Name of forest Division	Range/ Location	Area in Ha	Financial outlay(Rs)
Dima Hasao	Dima Hasao (West) Haflong	MonglaiPhunglo Village under Garampani Range	5.11	Rs. 30,48,363.00 /-

-The undertaking for mutation and notification of the identified non forest land for CA site submitted along with Non encumbrance certificate for 500 bigas allotted to Forest Department for CA at Manglai Phonglo submitted. The area could not be visited due to paucity of time and the distance of the site from the proposed mine. The site if visited would require another approach from Meghalaya and hence could not be visited at this moment.

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

The CA site has been certified by the State Officers to be suitable from plantation and management point of view.

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

As per records available the land is free from encroachment and other encumbrances

Whether land for compensatory afforestation is important from religious and archaeological point of view.

No

Land identified for compensatory afforestation is in how many patches, whether patches are compact or not

The land identified for CA is in single patch.

Maps with the details.

Submitted in SoI toposheet as well as soft copies of shape file along with proposal.

Total financial outlay:

Rs. 30,48,363.00 /-

- 8) Whether proposal involves violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 or not. If yes a report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials:**

Not involved.

- 9) Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Govt or not.**

No displaced person involved in this proposal.

10) Reclamation Plan

Mining plan:-

The Mining plan has been approved by Directorate of Geology & Mining, Assam on 23.08.2021 which is valid upto 20.02.2028.

The reclamation of the proposed mining area will be implemented as per the approved mining plan through Progressive mining closure and as per the conditions of the final Approval.

- 11) Cost Benefit ratio.**

-Not required.

- 12) EC**

Environment clearance granted by SEIAA Assam letter SEIAA 867/2021 dated 02.04.2022(at page 23/C-17/C). As per the EC, the recommended quantity of stone to be collected is 3,50,000 (Three Lakh fifty thousand) cu.m stone from the proposed location within a period of five (5) years & 70,000 (seventy thousand) cu.m stone from the approved mining site per year.

13) Recommendation of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests/State Govt.

The proposal has been recommended at all levels by the Govt. of Assam.

14) Recommendation of Regional Officer, Regional Office, Shillong along with detailed reasons.

The project is site-specific and the presence of stone is found in the proposed hillock and found nowhere in the nearby non-forest land. Considering the many infrastructure project of the state like highways, railways etc. the supply of boulders for the projects is essential. Hence, the project is recommended.

15) Regional Officer, Regional Office, Shillong shall give detailed comments on whether there are any alternatives examined for locating the proposal in non-forest land.

The proposal is site specific and boulders present here in the hillock of the RF are not prevalent in the nearby areas. The area has already been mined earlier also. In view of the high demand for boulders for various infrastructure project of the State the project does not have alternative site in non-forest area.

16) Utility of the proposal.

This proposed diversion project is for extraction of stone and boulder to meet the demand of government infrastructure projects and employment generation. The project is of great utility for the purpose of supply materials for the various infrastructure project of state including the ambitious Bharat Mala project of the Centre.

17) Whether land being diverted has any socio-cultural/religious value.

No social cultural/religious site is seen or reported to exist in the propose site.

18) Whether any scared grove or very old growth trees/forests exists in the area proposed for diversion.

No sacred grove or old growth forest/trees were found to exist in the proposed project site as the area has already been mine earlier.

19) Situation w.r.t. any Protected Area

- The proposed forest area falls within the notified Elephant Reserve and the Nodal Officer(FCA), Govt of Assam recommended the following measures:-
 - a. To adopt a comprehensive conservation measure to mitigate HEC. These should be funded from the collected cess of District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT).
 - b. A complete restoration plan should be worked out and executed from the cess of Mines & Mineral Developments Restoration & Rehabilitation (MMDRR) Fund.
 - c. Plans may be drawn up by the DFO concerned accordingly within 6 months of operation of the Mahal to be duly approved by the Chief Wildlife Warden.

- The State Govt informed that the Comprehensive conservation Plan for mitigation of Human Elephant Conflict and Wildlife Conservation Plan will be submitted before the final approval.

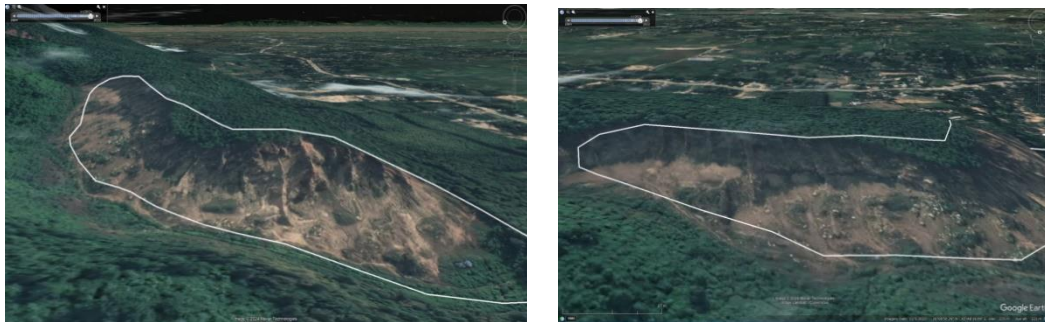
20) Whether the land under diversion forms part of unique eco-system.

The land under diversion is already disturbed being on an already existing mining area (which is closed) and is not part of any unique eco-system.

21) Any other information relating to the proposal.

-Bheleuguri form one of the three mines viz., , Lankaijuri, Bheleuguri& Beldenga located nearby. As calculated from the DSS section, the distance of these mines are more than 500 meters from each other.

- The area which is being proposed is already mined area as seen on the field and as per GE. In the case of all the other mines, it is seen that the major area proposed for mining are on the rocky hillock from which the boulders/rocks could be mined. This is not the case in this proposal as maximum area is on the already mined portion.



Pics above shows the proposed area is mostly on already mined area.

- As per records it is seen that an area of 0.9 ha has been approved vide Regional Office Letter dated 26/09/2000. The area however appears to have been worked for more than 0.9 ha. Details of this may be seen at the monitoring report attached.

- It is observed that this area proposed is mined already and that it is planned for a supply of stone of 70,000 cum per year and 3,50,000 cum for 5 years, as indicated in the mining Plan. The quantity appears to be huge given that the area is already mined and some of the forest area which is included in the proposed area does not appear to have stones. It is feared that after 7.5 meters Safety Zone is carved out along the boundary of the proposed mine, the area left for mining may not suffice to meet projected production (350000 cum in 5 years) which may lead to mining from un-diverted area to meet the required target. State government should take utmost caution on this matter.

- Inside the proposed area, there is a PHE structure which appears to be abandoned. The DFO informed that the same is an illegal structure which was not granted by the Deptt.. DFO has confirmed that the structure is abandoned and with assurance of non-encumbrance for the diversion of the area.

- The area is already disturbed having been mined in the past. Yet, the surrounding areas some forests exist and presence of some wildlife, like common jungle fowl (call heard during site inspection), wild boar etc are reported.

- On visit to the site it is observed that though it was given on the proposal that no (NIL) trees would be affected, it was noted that the area does have some trees within its easternmost portion and on the northern hillside portion appear to bear trees. Though some of them may come under the Safety zone, the same is required to be reflected in the proposal.

The DFO, was requested to carry out re-enumeration of the area and the same has been submitted through the State Government letter eCF No 198419/202 dated 01.06.2024 submitted that total enumerated trees is nineteen (19 nos.) numbers of Teak trees out of which 11 trees are inside the safety zone of 7.5 meters of the proposed mining area and only the remaining eight (8) nos of Teak trees falling outside the safety zone are to be felled in this proposal.

In view of the above observations this proposal is recommended with general conditions and the following:

1. The number of trees to be affected which was earlier written as NIL, should be corrected to 19, and the number of trees to be actually felled to be 8 (after excluding those falling under the safety zone).
2. The boundary of the CA land, if not demarcated on ground, should be demarcated immediately to avoid confusion and possible encroachment.
3. **The State Govt has to ensure that the Safety zone is demarcated, afforested and kept intact throughout the operation of the mine.**
4. **In view of the proposed area being mined earlier and only a portion of the area is intact, State must ensure strict vigilance to ensure User Agency does not expand into the safety zone and beyond the proposed area to meet its production target of 350000 cum in 5 years.**
5. **Regular monitoring of the project by DFO, CCF/CF to ensure strict adherence to conditions and reclamation regime.**

Yours faithfully,



(W. I. Yabon)

Deputy Inspector General of Forests(C)
Sub Office, Guwahati

Photographs of proposed site of Bheleuguri Stone Mahal



Photos above show proposed site
(Site is degraded and the area was mined earlier).