

Karnataka Forest Department invites volunteers to meet people in fringe villages of Protected Areas and to discuss with them about their problems, what they expect from forest department and other departments, what is their perception about forest staff, about conservation and protection of forests and wildlife, etc. and to create awareness about conservation and give feedback to the department about their perceptions and needs.

It has to be initially a general discussion about them and their day-to-day routine and strengths, weaknesses, problems etc. Slowly conversation can move towards awareness about conservation and convincing them about need for conserving their own forests for more rain, more storage of rain water underground, perennial water in rivers, better environment, mitigation of climate change, availability of medicines, food, industrial raw materials, etc. and saving the biodiversity and endangered species from extinction.

- That forests belong to them and the people and it's their duty to protect forests and wildlife from fire, hunting, snares, theft, encroachment, etc. No individual should destroy or knock away the common property belonging to all. This will help us ensure that there is no fire in most of our areas and hunting becomes a taboo. We have to befriend the locals so that they have faith in department and help with conservation and protection. This is the easiest way to conservation.
- Educate the villagers why forests and wildlife have to be conserved and why the animals and forests have a right to live is necessary. That Forest officers conserve the forests for people only and that they do not own the forests needs to be made clear to the villagers and that its people own the forests.
- Volunteers should also speak about Human-Animal Conflict. Why animals have a right to live on this planet. We were all created on this planet to live. Imagine some other superior animal killing us to extinction, which we are doing to others.
- Fire can kill many small species, insects, reptiles, etc. They have a right to live too. People should protect forests from fire. Fire causes major damage. It affects rains and causes drought and ultimately crops fail.
- Volunteers should educate people about wild life laws. How tough most offences are.
- Then about illegal electrification of fences. This kills animals and the owner will be arrested and put in jail. Why resort to such tactics when the

Department is giving crop damages ex-gratia, Cattle kill compensation, etc. Educate them.

- That farmers can avail 50% subsidy for solar fencing for crops. All paddy fields / coffee estates can be covered with solar fence jointly.
- Then to educate not to put snares or not to hunt as it can put such people in jail.
- People may contact Forest Department helpline 1926 or concerned DCF or RFO's mobile phone so that they can inform about hunting, fire, snares, smuggling, fresh encroachment, etc. It is assured that the identity of informer will be totally kept secret.
- Volunteers can also educate them about the Forest Department, our schemes for benefit of people, etc.
- Volunteers can identify landless labour for allocation of 2 acres land to each beneficiary which can be passed on to SC/ST Corporation, which will provide land to eligible candidates.
- Volunteers can also Identify SC/ST youth who can be trained as drivers, given licence and help buy taxi on 50 %subsidy and balance 50% loan from Social Welfare Department, which will be a very good income generating activity.

Volunteers will be invariably be accompanied by one of our staff i.e. FG /DyRFO /RFO/ACF/DCF to accompany them.

Department is very happy to learn that some fringe villagers have shown interest in volunteering to accompany Department officials to spread the message of conservation and protection from fire in other Haids of Nagarahole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves.

All such volunteers are most welcome.

Looking forward to winning with people for conservation.

For further information and registration, please contact:

Toll Free No: 1926

PCCF Wildlife: 08023345846

Email: pccfwl@gmail.com