

**Guidelines regarding establishing
Community Nature Conservancy**

**Government of Maharashtra
Revenue and Forest Department
Government Circular No.: WLP 0315/ CR 56/F-1
Mantralaya Mumbai - 400032**

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In Maharashtra State 20.04% geographical area is under forests. As per the National Forest Policy of 1988, it is imperative that 33% of the state's geographical area should have forest cover to ensure ecological balance, conservation of natural heritage and for sustainable ecosystem services. As such for the conservation of our natural resources it is necessary to have 5% of the geographical area under Protected Areas.

The Government of Maharashtra has created network of 58 Protected Areas with 6 National Parks, 48 Sanctuaries and 4 Conservation Reserves. The total area covered under Protected Areas is 10068.42 sq. Km. (3.27% of the total geographical area). To increase this area to 5%, more Protected Areas (PA) need to be created, but due to the pressures of development projects and the opposition of the local people towards the rules and regulations of the Wildlife Protection Act, it has become difficult to declare additional Protected Areas.

Due to human deaths, cattle killings, crop depredations man- animal conflict has become even more serious in the adjoining areas of Protected Areas. The Government does provide monetary compensation for such loss, but this has its limitations. As a solution, the private farm owners living in these areas should be given a choice of profitable use of their farmlands as an alternative to farming. There is scope to engage the local people in eco-tourism by taking advantage of the presence of wildlife in the Protected Areas. If eco-tourism can provide livelihood to the local people, the objective of the protection of forests, wildlife as well as the interests of the farm owners can be achieved. For this, instead of traditional farming, if activities like natural regeneration, fodder development for wildlife habitat development are encouraged, the wild animals will naturally be attracted to such areas. If a few facilities for tourists are created without defying the rules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972, eco-tourism can be a very strong alternative to traditional farming and can compensate for the monetary loss of the farmers. The villagers can participate in this nature conservation either individually or in a form of co-operative. Implementing the concept of Community Nature Conservancy (CNC) on pilot basis was under consideration of government. The following general guidelines are being issued to encourage eco-tourism and nature conservation works through Community Nature Conservancy.

Guidelines:-

Promotion for use of private lands for wildlife habitat

1) The land owners can voluntarily use their lands either individually or through a co-operative for tree plantation/ fodder development/nature conservation. They can

develop proper wildlife habitat which will provide protection and food for wild animals. However it is essential that, only indigenous tree species are planted.

2) The private companies or corporate groups can undertake such conservation projects on the private lands in Tiger Reserves and adjoining areas of Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks under jurisdiction of Field Directors. In case they need financial support from the Tiger Conservation Foundation, the project will have to be implemented in partnership with a local individual and provide 80% of the jobs generated through such projects to the local people.

3) Out of the total vehicle entry quota of the concerned TR/ NP/ Sanctuary combined quota not exceeding 10% of the total can be reserved for these Community Nature Conservancies, which have partnered with the local people or owned by the locals/community.

4) While developing wildlife habitat, the natural water resources should be protected and in case of drinking water shortage, new natural source of potable water can be developed.

5) In order to ensure the natural way of life of the wild animals, area should be properly managed. However use of artificial means like keeping baits and salt licks to attract wild animals is prohibited.

6) The Conservancy management will be allowed to use the currently available roads and nature trails available in buffer areas of TR or adjoining territorial forest division areas for their tourists, but building new roads or trails is prohibited.

7) Priority will be given to the local nature conversationalists while selecting beneficiaries for the ongoing developmental works under Eco Development Programme, Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Jan-Van Vikas Scheme and eco-tourism development schemes.

Tourism and hospitality services:

8) Home stays and other tourist facilities can be developed in accordance with the prevailing laws and regulations and with due permissions from the concerned authorities. Only the limited area with buildings within the community nature conservancy can have chain link fencing and the rest of the area has to be kept free for the wild animals to move around.

9) Treatment of sewage water and using it for the tree plantation is compulsory. The wet garbage and eatables will have to be disposed off only by way of compost and the plastic garbage should be recycled.

Steps to be taken for the wildlife security:

10) Any act which will endanger the wildlife directly or indirectly is strictly prohibited.

11) The conservancy owners or the management will be solely responsible for any act on their part which will breach the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and similar relevant Acts & regulations. The conservancy owner or the management should immediately report any wildlife hunting, killing or and death of any wild animal in their area to the concerned forest officers of that specific area.

12) The conservancy owner or the management should on weekly basis report to the forest department any sighting or presence of any carnivores on their conservancy area.

13) Proper care should be taken so that wildlife movement is not constrained and wild animals are not harassed by humans on CNC lands during day or night.

14) Proper care needs to be taken while using camera traps or installing CCTV cameras for monitoring wildlife movement or recording the animals coming to feed on the dead animal or coming near the domesticated animals on CNC lands. Such installations should not cause harm or endanger wild animals on CNC lands. It is compulsory to report all such installations to the concerned forest department of that area.

Financial Provisions:

15) The Field Director can accept donations for the Community Nature Conservancy projects undertaken on the private lands under their area of jurisdiction and also for the Wildlife Sanctuaries and National parks, which come under the jurisdiction of the said Field Director. However this has to be reported to the Governing Body of the concerned Tiger Conservation Foundation. In case of the overseas donation or from non-Indian entity, all the necessary permissions need to be taken from the concerned authorities and need to abide by all the rules and regulations laid down by FCRA and other applicable rules and regulations. No donation should be accepted from any individual or organization that has been found guilty under the forest or wildlife offence.

16) The Field Director can make provisions for the nature conservation and eco-tourism projects carried out in their area and include them in the annual budget of the Foundation and can implement it after getting approval.

17) The Field Director should at the beginning of the financial year, assess the donations that are anticipated during the said year, include them in their respective budgets and get the approvals from the Governing Body of the Tiger Conservation Foundation. In case any funds by way of donations obtained mid-year, which were not included in the budget of that respective year, then such donations can be accepted and used by abiding all the prevailing rules and regulations and can be reported in the immediate Governing Body meeting of the foundation.

18) The funds arising from the income of the Tiger Conservation Foundation should be used only for the benefit of the local people's conservancy project, but this is not compulsory in case of donations received specifically for the nature conservation by a Tiger Conservation Foundation.

19) If any entity needs funds from the Tiger Conservation Foundation, they should abide by all the guidelines laid down in this circular and enter into MoU with the Field Director. The said agreement will be approved by the Field Director.

20) The Field Director should assess the yield and income for last three years and get the anticipated per hectore income as per the current market rate from the agriculture department for the respective farmland owner / co-operative. Accordingly he can approve the compensation up to twice the amount of the loss of income of the respective farmland owner / co-operative that has given up farming and is using the land for the nature conservancy. Such compensation can be paid every year or a corpus amount can be invested and the compensation can be paid from the interest earned in form of annuity. After successful nature conservancy for a continuous term of ten years, such corpus amount can be paid to the land owner / co-operative only if they agree to the term that their land will be permanently available for the nature conservancy.

21) The Tiger Conservation Foundation will take regular assessment every year, of the activities undertaken by the land owner / co-operatives participating in the nature conservancy.

22) The Field Director has to submit assessment report of such nature conservancy activities to the Governing Body of the respective Tiger Conservation Foundation.

23) The Chief Wildlife Warden will take regular assessments of such nature conservation projects and will submit quarterly reports to the government.

This Government Circular of Maharashtra Government is available at the website www.maharashtra.gov.in. Reference no. for this is 201511031728572719. This order has been signed digitally.

By order and in the name of the Governor of Maharashtra.

Arvind Apte
Officer on Special Duty
Revenue and Forest Department

Copy forwarded to:

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2. Private Secretary to Hon. Minister (Forest), Mantralaya, Mumbai.
3. Chief Secretary, Maharashtra State, Mantralaya, Mumbai.
4. Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department, Mantralaya, Mumbai.
5. Additional Chief Secretary, Planning Department, Mantralaya, Mumbai.

6. Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries Department) Mantralaya, Mumbai.
7. Principal Secretary (Revenue), Mantralaya, Mumbai
8. Secretary (Relief & Rehabilitation) Revenue and Forest Department, Mantralaya, Mumbai.
9. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Maharashtra State, Nagpur.
10. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Maharashtra State, Nagpur
11. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Mumbai/ Nagpur/ Nashik.
12. Chief Conservator of Forests and Field Director Tadoba-Andhari / Melghat/ Pench/ Sahyadri Tiger Project
13. Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), All
14. Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Pune.
15. Conservator of Forests and Field Director Navegaon – Nagzira Tiger Project.
16. Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Nashik / Thane
17. Deputy Conservator of Forests (Territorial), All
18. Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)
19. Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries Department) Mantralaya, Mumbai.
20. All Desk in Forest Department, Revenue and Forest Department, Mumbai.
21. Select File Desk F-1