

Foreword

The present Working Plan for East *Melghat* Division authored by *Shri M. K. Rao*, IFS, replaces the erstwhile Working Plans written by *Shri Sinha* and *Shri Bahadur* for the major area and for the part by *Shri Thengadi*. As the division itself came into existence in 1999, after re-organization of the areas under erstwhile South *Melghat*, East And West *Melghat* divisions, coupled with the unified control for the *Melghat* Tiger Reserve, the provisions from the Working Plans of all three divisions have been revised and put in the present form.

An overview of the results of past working and the data of statistics of growth and yield reveals that the forest of the area have improved largely, particularly the areas managed under Selection cum Improvement Working Circles and Protection Working Circles. The rich and varied forests of *Ghatang* and *Jarida* Ranges have retained their wealth to great extent despite increased biotic pressures and repeated fires. This appears to be possible for the reason that adequate safeguards were provided in the earlier Plans against over-felling and creation of openings. It is heartening to know that conservative approach for forestry management followed scrupulously by the planners in the past, keeping in view the fragility and sensitivity of *Melghat* forests in sustaining the unique ecological system in the region has been continued by the present Working Plan Officer. The added emphasis on management of N.T.F.P. and Wildlife in the area in the present Plan is likely to add impetus to much needed conservation efforts in the area.

Though the P.W. P. R. of the plan was approved prior to issue of guidelines for Working Plans by Government of India, in view of the directives of the Honourable Supreme Court, the work of revision in the present Plan has been taken up keeping fully in view the instructions contained in the guidelines and ensure that the Plan remains updated as per recent policies and guidelines in letter and spirit. The mandatory chapters on the Forests Protection, Wildlife, N. T. F. P. and J. F. M. would certainly bring more objectivity and focus in the management of forest of the area. The chapter on Teak Plantations and efforts to provide for suitable prescriptions for potential teak areas and old teak plantations would add to the wealth of forestry and serve better purpose for the local people in the area.

The present Plan has been prepared in the record time of about 12 months and that too largely through use of satellite data and know-how from agencies outside the State Forest Department. The ground truth verification of stock has also been attended to as far as possible despite lack of staff and other assistance from the field. The enumeration data has been analyzed adequately and compared with the data recorded in the previous plan, which attach objectivity to the system for resource survey. The comparison speaks very clearly about adequacy of the regeneration in areas where management has been effective. The pressure of over grazing and increased biotic interference in and around villages is also revealing and needs to be addressed adequately by the administration through the J. F. M. tool which is yet to establish its roots in the division and that has been highlighted in the relevant chapter.

Mr. M. K. Rao, Conservator of Forests (Working Plans), *Amravati* and his team deserve compliments for bringing this work into reality. I wish all the success for their efforts and I am sure that if the prescriptions given in the Plan are implemented properly, the forest and wildlife in the tract would be able to thrive and sustain its glorious past and the same would benefit the local people enormously.

Nagpur,
Date: June27, 2005.

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INTRODUCTION

The working Plan for East *Melghat* Division is the first plan of the area, after the reorganization of the divisions. It covers both Reserved Forests and Un classed Forests (compensatory afforestation areas) in charge of East *Melghat* Division.

The present East *Melghat* Division is formed by drawing and merging the part areas of erstwhile East *Melghat* division, West *Melghat* division, and South *Melghat* Division. Accordingly *Jarida* and *Ghatang* Ranges were managed under V. K. *Sinha* and B.S.*Thengdi*'s working plan till 2002-03. *Chikaldara* Range was managed under *Shailendra Bahadur* and B.S.*Thengdi*'s plan till 2002-03. The *Anjangaon* Range was managed under B. S. *Thengdi*'s working plan till 2002-03. The present plan replaces the above three plans and will be in force till 2014-15.

The preliminary working plan was prepared by *Shri G. P. Garad* and *Shri Vinod Kumar* and was approved by the state level committee on 10-3-2004, and communicated vide letter no.1261, dated 8-2-05. On the basis of the approved PWPR, the current draft plan has been prepared. The chapters of the draft plan have been prepared according to the National working Plan Code-2004. Accordingly, 5 mandatory overlapping Working Circles have been introduced. These are 1. Bamboo (Overlapping) Working Circle, 2. Wildlife (Overlapping) Working Circle 3. N.T.F.P. (Overlapping) Working Circle 4. J. F. M. (Overlapping) Working Circle 5. Forest Protection(Overlapping) Working Circle. In addition to this, new chapters on Forest fauna, Socio Economic Survey Report, Five Year Plans were added to the Draft Plan.

A new Chapter, Teak Plantation Working Circle has been introduced for the first time in the *Melghats* and all the old Teak Plantations will be thinned as per the schedule given in the appendix, irrespective of the coupe in which they are falling.

To preserve the *Melghat* ecosystem in perpetuity, conservative fellings have been prescribed. Earlier working was prescribed up to 45° slope and the same has been brought down to 25° slope.

The computerized inventory management system evolved by *Shri Dhabekar* ACF has been extensively used in analyzing the enumeration data obtained from the field by S.O.F.R. unit *Amravati*. The digitized maps have been generated in the office of C. C. F. W.P. *Nagpur* Geo-media Cell. The Inventory Management System has been hyperlinked to the digitized maps for easy accessibility of the data. Georeferenced Village Maps showing survey numbers and village boundaries and Soil Maps were obtained from the MRSAC and have been incorporated in the GIS. Slope maps were generated and have been incorporated in the GIS as a separate feature-class, which can be used extensively in the preparation of the treatment map of the coupes. In short, the entire coupe treatment map can be obtained from the GIS, which will be verified on the ground. Ground truth verification of the satellite Imagery of LISS III was carried out and crown density and forest types were derived from it.

I express my deep sense of gratitude for the valuable guidance and advice provided by *Shri Jwala Prasad*, Addl. P.C.C.F. (Production) and *Shri Ramanuj Choudhary C. C. F. W. P. Nagpur*. This plan is an output of their continuous guidance. *Shri Ramanuj Choudhary C. C. F. W. P. Nagpur* regularly reviewed and guided us to make the plan in a presentable form and helped us in procuring geo-referenced village maps. It was due to his continuous efforts, the plan was prepared in a short time. I also express thanks to *Shri Thapliyal R. F. O.* for his valuable cooperation in the preparation of G. I. S. Project of East *Melghat* Division.

I express my deep gratitude to R. R. S. S. C. *Nagpur*, especially Dr. *Shri Y.V.N. Krishna Murthy* head, R. R. S. S. C., *Shri S.S.Rao*, Dr. *Shri A.O.Varghiese* and Dr. *Ashish Sharma* who helped us in preparing the G.I.S. Project of East *Melghat* Division. It would not have been possible to complete G.I.S. Project of East *Melghat* Division in 6 months, without their cooperation. They not only trained our officers in arc info but also provided computer to prepare G.I.S. Project of East *Melghat* Division. In addition to this, Head R.R.S.S.C. *Nagpur* advised us to procure Geo referenced village maps and to register the village maps on panchromatic data for better accuracy of boundaries of the survey numbers. In short the cooperation of R.R.S.S.C. *Nagpur* cannot be explained in a few words. Similarly, I express my gratitude to Joint Director F.S.I. *Nagpur* and *Shri V. M. Naik* Scientist F.S.I. for their valuable cooperation in the ground truth verification.

I express my gratitude to C. C. F. (Territorial) *Amravati* and D.C.F. East *Melghat* Division and staff, for their cooperation in providing the data and assistance required in the field.

Shri R.S. Bhawar R.F.O., Working Plans Division, *Amravati* contributed immensely, in the analysis of inventory of enumeration data collected by the F. R. S. S. Unit *Amravati*. He also contributed in the preparation of G.I.S. Project, ground truth verification, typing and formatting of chapters and preparation of appendices. In short, he worked very hard and deserve special appreciation. In addition to him, *Sri S. B. Dhabhade*, Surveyor, *Shri Satish Mohakar* Surveyor, *Shri A.S. Giri* Surveyor worked hard, day and night to prepare the appendices and G.I.S. Project. I acknowledge and special appreciation to all the four officers for their contribution in the preparation of this working plan. The entire staff of this office worked untiringly and zealously.

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