



Last Wilderness Foundation

Progress Report

Protection of Wildlife Corridor via Reforestation and Alternative Livelihood Programme

Panna Tiger Reserve

Reporting Period

1 September 2021-28 February 2022

Submitted to

DCB BANK

Submitted by



Project Team

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Project Details

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			Programme, Panna Tiger Reserve
Date of report:	24 March 2022	Project Manager:	Vidya Venkatesh
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Progress

- Significant progress has been made on the development of the wildlife corridor, with the selected area being completely cleared of debris and the planned 1000m target was reached around the end of November. A chowkidar (watchman) has also been hired to monitor the wildlife corridor within the stonewall area, to ensure that no feral animals or grazing cattle enter into the area and destroy the newly planted trees and saplings.



Figure 1 community members making progress on the stone wall being built along the wildlife corridor

- The target of planting 32,000 Bamboo plants was completed, with an additional 2000 trees of differing varieties also achieved.

- Throughout the month of November, the field coordinator Indrabhan carried out baseline surveys in the village to gather information with regards to the pilot scheme of creating a community grazing ground. Indrabhan carried out surveys and documented the number of cattle owners in the village who would be beneficiaries of the scheme, along with cattle dependency. Furthermore, Indrabhan also liaised with the Sarpanch and other associated community members to finalize the formal agreement with a Mr. Harban Singh, the landowner of the plot (measuring 1 ha), upon which the pilot community grazing ground will be created
- Cleaning out of weeds and development of a boundary wall have already begun on the selected plot of land for the community grazing ground, where future work will involve building a boundary wall and planting fodder grass species. Eventually, once these grasses grow, they will provide fodder for his cattle, and any excess can be shared with other villagers too. The hope is that upon seeing the success of this pilot scheme, other villagers will be eager to adopt the same, thus reducing their dependency on entering the forest to graze their cattle and reducing the chances of negative animal conflict. Weed removal and field preparation is ongoing.



Figure 2 Villagers extracting honey as part of apiculture alternate livelihood scheme

- Seven selected villagers were provided with two 1-day trainings on apiculture in Chatarpur. Out of these, six are still part of the program and received five boxes of bees each (totalling 30 boxes), sometime around December. The apiculture component of the project is in full swing, where participants have been able to extract honey twice from these boxes, producing

a yield of nearly 20 kg. Currently, they are using the profits from their honey sales to feed the bees for a third yield sometime after the flowering season which is ongoing at the moment.



Figure 3 Fresh honey collected as part of apiculture alternate livelihood scheme

- Awareness efforts have been continued across the villages on how to avoid man-animal conflict, reduce their dependency on the forest, and to encourage villagers to adopt more environmentally friendly habits and alternative livelihoods. Indrabhan has conducted meetings with both villagers and with women from a local Self Help Group that have been assisting with the weed removal and field preparation of the community grazing grounds.
- Ground work for another alternative livelihood scheme involving the production and sale of handicraft goods hand-made by local women has also begun.

Challenges faced

On-ground team faced certain issues from local community members who were engaging in encroached cultivation on the same land that had been earmarked for the plantation drive. Indrabhan opened a dialogue with these community members and was eventually able to convince them to abandon their own private cultivations and become involved in the plantation activities.

Further to this, certain villagers were using the same grounds for open grazing for their cattle, and continued to do so even after plantation activities had been started in the area. This is an ongoing issue as these individuals are completely dependent upon these areas for grazing their cattle. However, Indrabhan is in continuous conversations with these people, educating them about the community grazing programme and trying to motivate them to adopt this programme for themselves so as to reduce their dependency on the open grounds.

Another issue being faced by the on-ground team is from feral animals that end up doing a lot of damage to special vegetation planted along the wildlife corridor. To prevent them from further damage, the Stonewall is being constructed. However, until it is completed and it fully seals off the area, future plans entail collecting up all the feral animals and taking them to a local cow shed.

Future Plans

- Continued monitoring of stonewall for incidences of feral and cattle entry for illegal grazing
- Continuation of beekeeping by villagers as a source of alternate livelihood
- Weed cleaning of the community grazing grounds will be continued. Once completed, fodder grasses such as Barseem, Napier and Deenanath will be planted on a trial basis to determine which grass grows best in the particular type of soil in the village. Once fodder grasses have grown, they will be harvested by local women who are part of an SHG established; this will provide a means of alternate livelihood for them, while harvested grasses will be distributed amongst cattle owners in the village, such that they may be incentivized to adopt the programme
- Vaccination drives for cattle will be commenced in preparation for the dairy/dairy product alternative livelihood program, which will be started once the community grazing ground component is fully functional and cattle are able to be fed extra fodder to increase their milk yield

End of Report