



LAST
WILDERNESS *foundation*

LAST WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

www.thelastwilderness.org





From the Founder & Director



To Supporters and Friends,

As we celebrate the 15th anniversary of Last Wilderness Foundation, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and accomplishment. Our journey has been marked by unwavering dedication to India's wildlife, forests, and people.

For the past fifteen years, we have strived to increase awareness about our nation's rich biodiversity, assisting individuals and organisations in their conservation efforts. We have also been actively involved in sustainable development initiatives, empowering communities and fostering harmonious relationships between humans and nature.

Initially a solo venture, the organisation has grown to become self-sufficient, thanks to the generous support of numerous individual and corporate donors. Our three-pronged strategy has been instrumental in achieving our goals. By focusing on community ownership, partnering with local government institutions, and building capacity at all levels, we have created a strong foundation for lasting conservation impact.

Today, as we reflect on our achievements, we are reminded of the countless individuals who have contributed to our success. Each person has played a vital role in our journey, from our dedicated staff to our supportive partners and the communities we serve.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring a thriving future for wildlife. We will continue to explore new avenues for conservation, advocate for more robust environmental policies, and foster a deeper connection between people and nature.

Thank you for being a part of our story. Together, we can build a world where wildlife and humanity coexist harmoniously.

Nikhil Nagle
Founder and Director

From the Director



To Supporters and Friends,

I am delighted to present the Annual Report 2023-24 for Last Wilderness Foundation, reflecting upon our collective efforts, accomplishments, and aspirations over the past year. As we navigate intricate landscapes and engage with communities, this report is a testament to the dedication and resilience of our team, partners, and stakeholders, who have stood firmly by our side.

In November 2024, we will celebrate our fifteenth anniversary. During this time, we have formed strong partnerships with the Government of Madhya Pradesh, especially with the forest department. Our projects cover human-inhabited and protected forest areas of Madhya Pradesh, focusing on ensuring safe wildlife corridors. We've had our share of successes and challenges since our establishment.

We have faced challenges from the communities we work with, but we have dedicated 15 years to building trust and rapport with the native forest communities. Many people who were previously non-cooperative with officials now cooperate with them. Our key initiatives, such as the Village Nature Awareness Programme and the Pardhi Education Program, have been operational for over a decade.

Similarly, our initiatives, like the Gram Rakshak, have been running for over five years, yielding significant results outlined in this report. It's uplifting to witness the progress of the children we've assisted as they become educated and thrive. Observing the positive impact of our interventions on the environment and the communities we work with validates our dedication. Each milestone and achievement reflects our shared commitment to wildlife conservation.

In the past year, we've made great strides towards sustainable coexistence with nature. We expanded to new areas like Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and conducted a successful recce visit at Ranipur TR, Uttar Pradesh. Our focus remains on intensifying efforts in all our existing project sites while transitioning to self-sustainable projects like the Alternative Livelihoods through Arts and Craft Programme at Kanha TR, empowering communities and reducing their reliance on forests.

Thank you for supporting LWF's mission to conserve wildlife, raise awareness, and foster a sense of stewardship for our planet's natural wonders.

Vidya Venkatesh
Director

A large, weathered reclining Vishnu statue is the central focus of the image. The statue is carved from a light-colored stone or wood, showing significant signs of age and weathering. It is positioned in a forest, with its head resting on a large, rounded stone pillow. The statue's arms are bent, and its hands are resting near its chest. The background is a dense forest of tall trees with green foliage, and a small stream or pool of water is visible to the left of the statue. The lighting is natural, suggesting daylight, with some shadows cast on the statue and the surrounding ground.

Bandhavgarh's Sheshaiya is a serene spot featuring a colossal reclining Vishnu statue, surrounded by ancient carvings and natural springs, nestled in the heart of the forest.

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About Us

Our Vision

An India with a vibrant and eternal natural heritage, which is respected and protected by its people.

Our Mission

To increase awareness about India's wildlife, forests, and people.

To assist various individuals and organisations (governmental or otherwise) in their battle to conserve their natural heritage.

To be actively involved in the sustainable development of villages and tribal settlements based in the peripheries of India's forests.

Our Objective

Ensure stakeholder participation in conservation efforts to create an inclusive model of conservation and reduce negative interactions between humans and wildlife.

To achieve our objective, Last Wilderness Foundation works on the following three-pronged strategy:

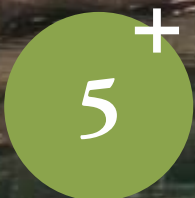
- Community focus and ownership
- Partnerships with local Government institutions
- Capability building at the community, institution, and internal organisation level

United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Last Wilderness Foundation work helps fulfil the following six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations:



Where we work



Protected Areas
Covered



Projects &
Initiatives



Villages
Covered

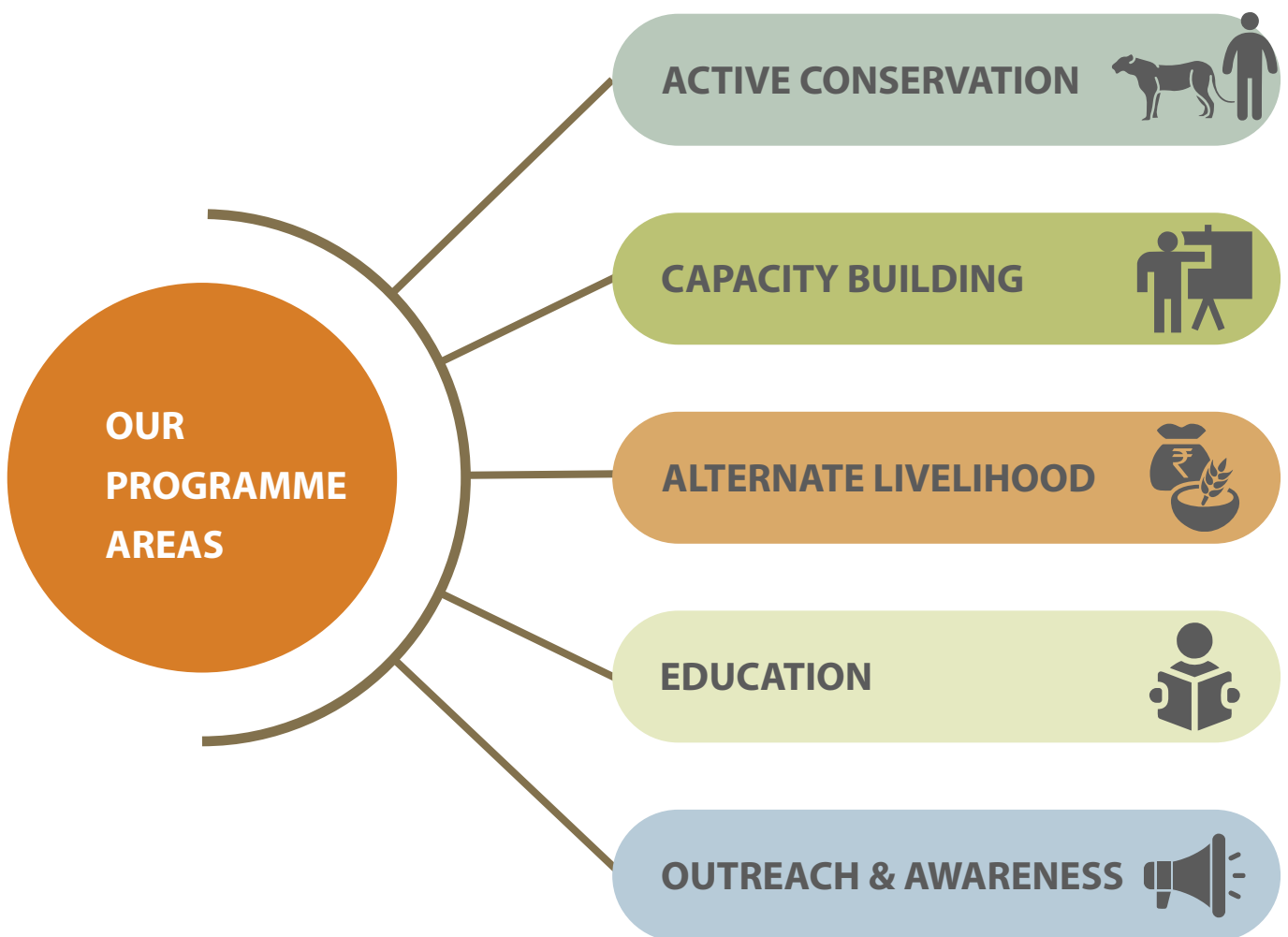


Lives
Touched

Our Program Areas

The Central Indian landscape have always been known for its biodiversity since time immemorial. Over the turn of this century, this landscape has also faced its most challenging time for wildlife conservation. Forest-dependent communities have a significant impact in any conservation endeavour being directly affected by any changes and are often marginalised. Last Wilderness Foundation works directly with these

communities around Protected Areas to facilitate holistic development, promote inclusive growth, and safeguard their cultural heritage. LWF supports the communities to become active stakeholders and develop a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their environment, resulting in increased awareness, sustainable resource use practices, and reduced poaching and illegal activities.



Year at a glance

Panna Tiger Reserve

Villages covered	50
Schools covered	34
Engagement Activities	121
People directly reached	3,800+
Lives Impacted	11,400+

Villages covered	30
Schools covered	32
Engagement Activities	138
People directly reached	2,600+
Lives Impacted	7,800+

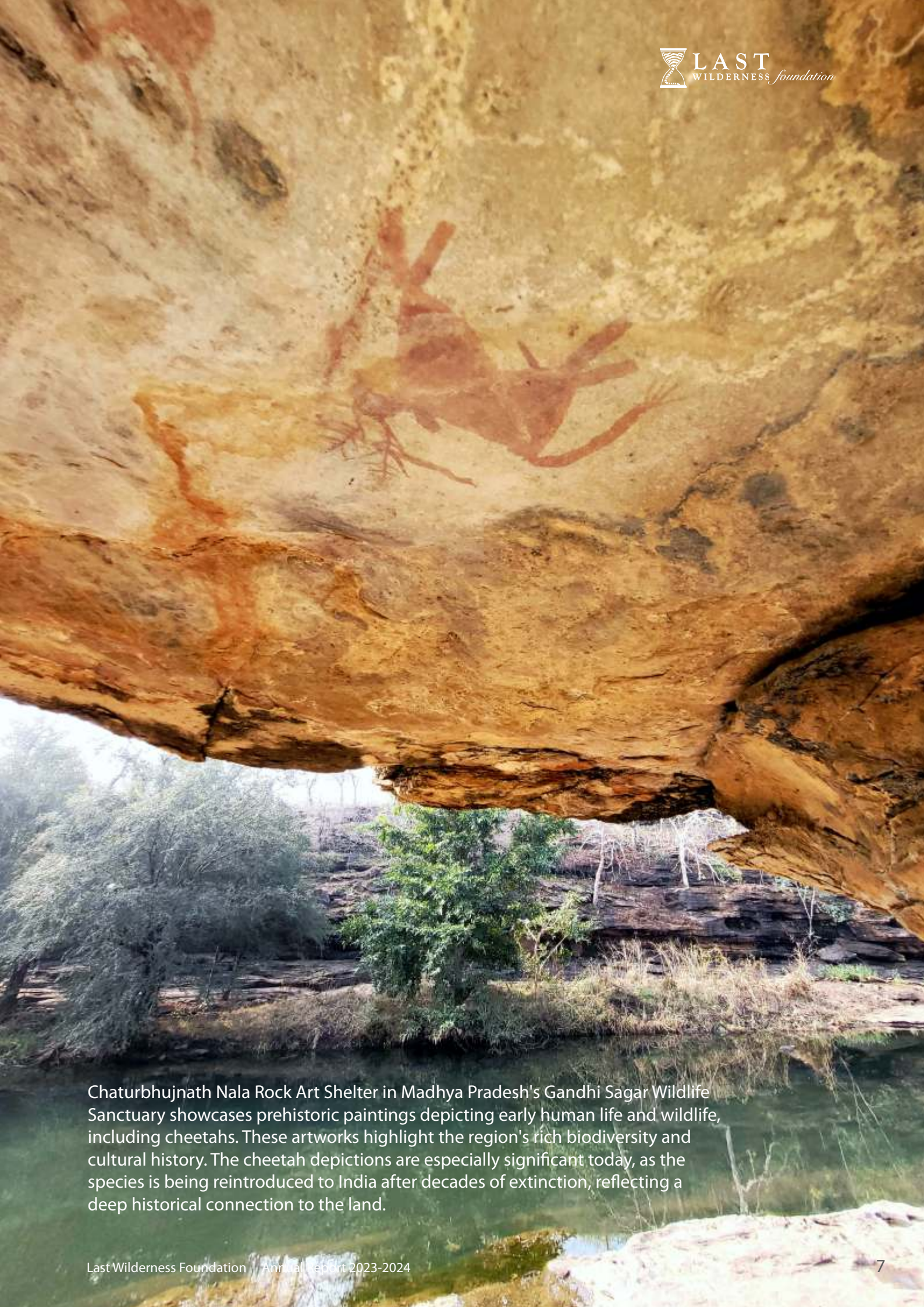
Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Kuno National Park

Villages covered	51
Schools covered	50
Engagement Activities	137
People directly reached	4,800+
Lives Impacted	14,400+

Villages covered	6
Schools covered	2
Engagement Activities	24
People directly reached	800+
Lives Impacted	2,400+

Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary



Chaturbhujnath Nala Rock Art Shelter in Madhya Pradesh's Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary showcases prehistoric paintings depicting early human life and wildlife, including cheetahs. These artworks highlight the region's rich biodiversity and cultural history. The cheetah depictions are especially significant today, as the species is being reintroduced to India after decades of extinction, reflecting a deep historical connection to the land.

The Team



Vidya Venkatesh, Director

Vidya Venkatesh is a veteran whose strategic mind and collaborative spirit have been instrumental in corporate and conservation realms. Following a successful corporate career, she transitioned into full-time wildlife conservation, driven by a deep-rooted passion for the natural world. With nearly two decades dedicated to this cause, Vidya is a champion of inclusive conservation. She has forged strong partnerships with tribal communities, working tirelessly to create harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife.



Gaurav Shirodkar, Deputy Director

Gaurav Shirodkar is a dedicated naturalist with over fifteen years of experience in wildlife and nature conservation. His passion was sparked by explorations of Sanjay Gandhi National Park, leading him away from laboratory work. With expertise in biodiversity and strong public engagement skills, he has become a prominent voice in conservation. Gaurav also captivates audiences through theatrical performances about the natural world. Since joining the Last Wilderness Foundation two years ago, he has significantly contributed to frontline conservation and organizational development.



Indrabhan Singh Bundela, Regional Coordinator

Indrabhan is a historian with a decade of conservation experience, including time with WWF-India and the Last Wilderness Foundation. His background in history drives his work in wildlife and natural heritage conservation. Skilled in navigating government protocols, he has successfully developed awareness programs for environmental stewardship. He aspires to progress to a program manager position within the company and enjoys reading and playing cricket in his free time.



Sitalaxmi, Finance Manager

Sitalaxmi is an experienced accounting professional with a post-graduate degree in Commerce and over twenty years of expertise in accounts management and bookkeeping. She is recognised for her dedication, meticulous organisation, and results-driven approach, particularly in financial analysis. Outside of her work with numbers, Sitalaxmi enjoys cooking and discovering new places.



Shyam Bihari Yadav, Field coordinator Kuno (South)

Shyambihari Yadav is a field coordinator at an NGO focused on uplifting the Moghiya and Sahariya communities through social and environmental initiatives. With a background in commerce and computer applications, he uses storytelling and film to promote forest conservation near Kuno National Park. Initially aiming for a military career, Shyam found his passion in community development. A talented singer, he incorporates music into his campaigns to inspire a connection to nature. He has transitioned from banking and dairy work to a rewarding career in community-based conservation.



Sonu Verma, Field Coordinator Kuno (North)

Sonu Verma from Sheopur district brings valuable experience to LWF, with nine years at WWF. He has honed skills in camera trapping, tiger tracking, and community engagement, and is skilled in training forest staff and conducting wildlife surveys. Passionate about wildlife, he also enjoys cricket, tiger tracking, and motorcycle riding. A natural leader, Sonu promotes education and fuel conservation within communities and is eager to grow at LWF.



Manish Rawat, Field Coordinator Panna

Manish Rawat, a field coordinator with LWF, lives in Panna, Madhya Pradesh. Born in Badausa, Uttar Pradesh, he completed his education in Madhya Pradesh, holding an MA in History, a PGDCA, and a B.Ed. Though he initially aspired to be a teacher and taught in private schools for several years, his passion for the environment led him to join Panna Tiger Reserve's Nature Camp in 2012. Manish enjoys teaching children, travelling, and meeting inspiring individuals. In the next 5-10 years, he aims to achieve significant milestones within LWF.



Nitin Barman, Field Coordinator Bandhavgarh

Nitin has a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and hails from the Tala range in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. He is a passionate and sensitive individual, earnest to learn about wildlife. That has helped him learn and grow more in a short span of time despite not having a degree in Biology. Within a year, Nitin has upskilled himself with the knowledge of biodiversity and wildlife. He is ambitious, resourceful, and sincere, which has helped him give his best in his role. He loves to play cricket and sketch in his leisure time.



Himanshu Singh Rathore, Field Coordinator Gandhi Sagar

Himanshu Singh Rathore from Gandhi Sagar No. 3, Mandsaur district, brings a background in hotel management and ITI certification in Computer Operations to the Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF). He previously worked as a restaurant manager at Lallu Ji and Sons Floating Festival. Introduced to LWF by Ananta Prasad, he has developed a passion for wildlife conservation. With hobbies like cricket and volleyball, Himanshu is dedicated to helping LWF excel in its mission.





Outreach and Awareness

Central India's rich biodiversity has been a hallmark for centuries. Yet, recent decades have brought unprecedented threats to wildlife conservation in the region. Indigenous forest-dwelling communities, often marginalised, bear the brunt of these environmental changes, who in turn become ever more dependent on the forests. Paradoxically, they are also the key to reversing this trend.

Last Wilderness Foundation is dedicated to empowering indigenous communities residing near protected areas in Central India. Our approach centres on holistic development, ensuring inclusive growth and preserving natural and cultural heritage. We encourage these communities to become active partners in conservation by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. This collaborative approach promotes environmental awareness, sustainable livelihoods, and reduced poaching and other illegal activities.

Forest Fire Awareness Initiative

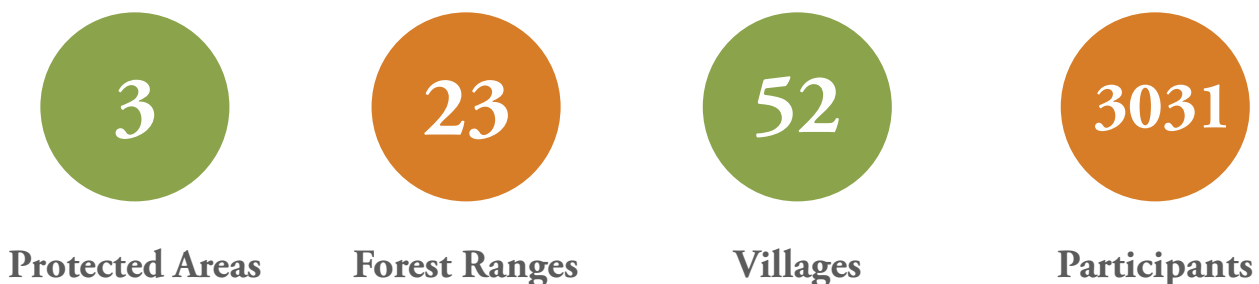
A collaborative approach towards ensuring ‘zero forest fires’



The increase in forest fires in India is linked to climate change, heat waves, and drier conditions, especially affecting dry deciduous forests during summer. The Indian State Forest Report (ISFR 2019) indicates that over 36% of forest cover is at risk, with nearly 10% heavily affected and 54% mildly affected by fires. Almost all forest fires are man-made, caused by accidents or deliberate actions and can cause significant damage to ecosystems, soil erosion, air pollution, and economic loss.

At LWF, we conduct forest fire awareness sessions and prevention workshops to minimize the impact of forest fires. Our community engagement program aims to raise awareness among villagers and includes movie screenings, presentations, discussions, nature games, and a jungle safari to foster compassion for wildlife and reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Reach of Forest Fire Awareness Programs



Panna Tiger Reserve

Forest Ranges 7 | Villages 18 | Participants 645



Due to the arid landscape, Panna Tiger Reserve is particularly vulnerable to forest fires in the peak summer months. Furthermore, small fires started by local villagers when cooking in fields are often a high-risk factor, despite protocols set out by the Forest Department.

Last Wilderness Foundation has been running a regimented Fire Awareness Camp to control these fires. Gram Rakshak, an initiative by LWF, plays a crucial role in the success of this program. Through workshops, games, presentations and forest safaris, this year the foundation has engaged over 600 villagers from over 20 villages around Panna Tiger Reserve in forest fire awareness activities.

This initiative is supported by Astral Foundation.



Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Forest Ranges 9 | Villages 17 | Participants 540

In Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR), the forest department has implemented innovative measures to prevent forest fires, going beyond standard practices like regular patrolling and creating fire lines. Recognizing that most forest fires are manmade, the department has focused on proactive community engagement and awareness campaigns.

A key initiative involves forest guards visiting villages on bicycles equipped with loudspeakers and posters to spread awareness about fire prevention and maintain consistent communication with residents. This traditional yet impactful method ensures that vital information reaches even remote communities. The BTR management has also partnered with the Last

Wilderness Foundation (LWF), civil groups, and other stakeholders to collectively prevent forest fires.

The LWF has played an instrumental role in conducting regimented Fire Awareness Programs, emphasizing the importance of preventing fires to protect the park's rich biodiversity. In a remarkable collaboration, LWF supported the forest department in organizing the "Mission – Zero Forest Fire Awards, Bandhavgarh 2024." This initiative honored forest department officers, guards, and Eco Development Committee members for their exemplary efforts in achieving zero forest fires during the fire season.



The impact of these efforts has been significant. No forest fires were recorded in the park's core zones during the fire season, and incidents in buffer zones were drastically reduced. Fires in buffer areas were swiftly controlled, preventing significant damage. These prevention efforts span over numerous villages in and around the park, including regions such as Pataur buffer and core, Panpatha buffer and core, Dhamokhar buffer, Manpur buffer, Khitauli core, and Tala core. Together, fostering a shared responsibility for protecting Bandhavgarh's forests.

This proactive, community-driven approach highlights the power of collaboration in conservation, ensuring the long-term health and safety of Bandhavgarh's ecosystems and its inhabitants.

Kuno Tiger Reserve

Forest Ranges 7 | Villages 17 | Participants 1846

The landscape of Kuno is dry, and the grassland is always under threat from forest fires. However, due to its remote nature and sparse population, the forest is relatively safer than other protected areas in MP.

For a couple of months before the beginning of summer, Kuno's regular outreach programme is transformed into a programme specifically targeted to spread the word about the ills of forest fires. Every evening, in the village's common spaces, the show begins with the fire awareness songs produced by LWF during the last fire season, culminating in a discussion on preventing forest fires.

This initiative is a part of the Conservation Programme - Kuno National Park, supported by Dalmia Charitable Trust.



Scan to watch the video

Community Outreach Initiative

An inclusive approach to wildlife conservation



The Community Outreach initiative by Last Wilderness Foundation embodies an inclusive approach to wildlife conservation, focusing on local communities as key stewards of biodiversity. By fostering awareness, training, and sustainable livelihood opportunities, the initiative aims to strengthen the bond between conservation efforts and community welfare. It empowers individuals with knowledge and

resources, encouraging them to engage actively in preserving their natural habitats. This approach not only protects wildlife but also promotes a harmonious coexistence, recognizing that the communities living alongside these ecosystems play a pivotal role in conservation. The initiative ultimately strengthens both ecological and social resilience, contributing to a sustainable future for people and wildlife alike.

4

Protected Areas

134

Schools

138

Villages

35,400

Lives Impacted



Kuno Tiger Reserve

**Villages 51 | Schools 50 | Village and School visits 1340 | Outreach Activities 137
Snakebite Prevention Sessions 18**

Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) has been dedicated to inspiring marginalized tribal communities, including the Moghiya, Sehariya, and Bhil, in the region surrounding Kuno National Park. By engaging regularly with community leaders, elders, youth, and children, LWF has built a strong foundation of trust, which has enabled effective mobilization efforts and improved access to government benefits and resources.

In the past year, LWF has visited over 50 villages or deras around the national park and established active partnerships with more than 30 of these communities. Their work prioritizes children's education, promoting awareness about wildlife conservation, and supporting the implementation of government schemes to

enhance social security and livelihoods.

A particular focus has been on building connections with the Moghiya community. Through trust-building initiatives, LWF has strengthened relationships with the Moghiya youth and children in schools and hostels, empowering them to take an active role in their communities. This programme embodies LWF's commitment to fostering sustainable development, wildlife preservation, and empowerment among the region's most underserved communities, creating a pathway for holistic growth and conservation.

This initiative is a part of the Conservation Programme at Kuno National Park, supported by Dalmia Charitable Trust.



Panna Tiger Reserve

**Villages 50 | Schools 34 | Village and School visits 925 | Outreach Activities 121
Snakebite Prevention Sessions 28**

In addition to the intensive Fire Awareness Workshop at Panna—which engages over 600 individuals annually from more than 20 villages—our team conducts regular visits to additional villages throughout the year, with a special focus on schools, to promote Nature Education and Awareness. Over the past year, we have reached 50 villages and 34 schools, conducting a total of 925 village visits and 121 programs in schools, strengthening our conservation message and building community awareness.

The Gram Rakshaks (refer to page 56), local guardians trained by our team, play a crucial role in extending our outreach. They influence over 35 villages, particularly in the territorial forests outside the Tiger Reserve. These regions, which

are important wildlife corridors, frequently experience human-wildlife conflicts due to their proximity to wildlifel habitats. The Gram Rakshaks actively help spread awareness and conduct outreach within their areas, assisting in the mitigation of potential conflicts between local communities and wildlife.

The Outreach and Awareness Initiative in Panna is carried out under different projects reaching out to a much wider audience, supported by DCB Bank and the Astral Foundation, also includes 22 Fire Awareness sessions and 28 Snakebite Prevention workshops, essential to fostering safe and informed communities. Together, these initiatives contribute to creating a harmonious environment for both people and wildlife, ensuring sustainable coexistence.





Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Villages 30 | Schools 32 | Village and School Visits 99 | Outreach Activities 138

Since 2011, we have conducted outreach and awareness programs in and around the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. The conflict between humans and wildlife presents a significant challenge for communities in the reserve's buffer area, which encompasses 96 villages. This conflict involves encounters with tigers, sloth bears, wild boars, herbivores, and, more recently, wild elephants from neighbouring states.

To address this issue, we have been engaging in dialogue with community members and school children in the most affected buffer zone villages. In recent months, we have conducted outreach activities in Rohaniya, Mardari, Dhamokhar, Parasi, Khitauli, and Panpatha. During these visits, our team interacted with

villagers and forest department ground staff, gathering information about the increasing elephant-conflict issues in Panpatha Wildlife Sanctuary.

We conducted wildlife conservation outreach and awareness programs with 32 schools for BTR students. These schools are in the Panpatha buffer and core, Manpur buffer, Dhamokhar buffer, and Khitauli core. A total of 1321 students participated in these programs, with another 545 participating in the Anubhuti (Madhya Pradesh Forest Department) program, locally supported by the LWF team.

Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd supports this initiative.



Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary

Villages 6 | School 2 | Village and School visits 24

Introducing Cheetahs to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary has sparked concerns among the local pastoral communities, who rely on the sanctuary lands for livestock grazing. Last Wilderness Foundation has initiated a Community Conservation Program to address these concerns and facilitate a harmonious coexistence.

The program aims to foster understanding and cooperation between wildlife authorities, local administrations, and local communities, reduce pastoral communities' dependency on sanctuary lands, and promote sustainable practices and biodiversity restoration.

The project's first step is to build trust and strengthen relationships, and we have been holding regular meetings and dialogues with communities, the forest department, and other

stakeholders. We will prioritise collaborative problem-solving and conflict resolution. To better understand the social structure, educational capacities, income groups, and primary needs of our stakeholders, a baseline survey has been designed and executed at Gandhi Sagar. This understanding will help us chart our next steps, prioritise the issues at hand, engage with the community as a whole and without regional bias, and implement potential solutions that are locally accepted. Until March 2024, 285 households from 2 villages participated in the survey.

Regular outreach and awareness activities have commenced.

Dalmia Charitable Trust supports this programme.







Education Initiatives

Providing quality education to tribal and other forest-dependent communities not only empowers individuals but also fosters sustainable development within these communities. This holistic approach ensures that tribal youth are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world while preserving their rich cultural heritage.

Wildlife conservation is a long-term process. Therefore, LWF believes in educating the next generation of forest-dependent communities as an investment in building sustainable and inclusive conservation efforts. By empowering the next generation with knowledge, skills and awareness, LWF intends to inspire students to become advocates for conservation within their communities and beyond. Community involvement and participatory approaches in designing educational initiatives can enhance their effectiveness and relevance.

Moreover, education can open doors to diverse career opportunities beyond traditional livelihoods, allowing tribal youth to explore professions in healthcare, technology, environmental conservation, and more. This diversification improves their socio-economic status and contributes to the broader society by bringing unique perspectives and talents to various fields.

Kuno Forest Community Education Initiative



Kuno National Park

Schools, Hostels and Anganwadis 50 | Students engaged 1800 | Students enrolled 305



Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) is dedicated to supporting the education of children from tribal and forest-dependent communities around Kuno National Park by ensuring their enrollment and retention in local schools and hostels. Recognizing that the nomadic lifestyle and seasonal migration of these communities often disrupts school attendance, LWF has implemented targeted efforts to maintain educational continuity.

Since the project began, a key focus has been securing social security documentation for families, allowing children to access government-supported educational facilities. However, retention remains a primary challenge, as many families travel for work, pulling children out of school for extended periods. To address this, LWF fosters consistent engagement through regular school and home visits, activity-based learning, and parental encouragement, building community trust in the value of continuous education.

In Kuno, LWF collaborates with over 17 schools across 15 villages, including the Moghiya, Sehariya, and Bhil communities. As a result of these efforts, more than 200 Moghiya children were enrolled in schools in 2023, with over 1,800 students actively engaged in regular learning activities. Through frequent visits, LWF facilitates interactive games, quizzes, and nature-themed arts activities, motivating children to attend school year-round. Additionally, outdoor programs, documentary screenings, and environmental events like World Environment Day have further encouraged regular attendance, helping to reduce dropout rates and enrich the educational experience for these communities.

This initiative is part of the Community Conservation Programme - Kuno National Park, supported by Dalmia Charitable Trust.



Number of Games and Sports equipment distributed in schools

Schools benefitted	18
Games/ Sports equipment	29
Teaching Learning Material (charts, pen/pencils, notebooks, white board)	156
Blankets	100

Games distributed



Social Security

Our work focuses on building strong connections with target communities, particularly forest tribes that often feel disconnected from mainstream society and may lack awareness of government schemes. LWF addresses this by voicing community concerns to local authorities, encouraging dialogue between villagers and the government. This fosters collaboration, helping officials understand local issues while familiarizing communities with necessary procedures.

Having been active for over a decade in areas such as Panna and Kanha, LWF has developed strong bonds with local communities, leading to miraculous achievements. One of them is that members of the Pardhi tribes in Panna have abandoned weapons and adopted other means of income.

To assist individuals in adopting alternative means of livelihood, we encourage them to apply for government schemes. The Government of India, along with the state government of Madhya Pradesh, offers multiple schemes that provide subsidies to farmers and help them develop diverse sources of income. LWF assists villagers in obtaining social security by helping them acquire essential documents. Our target communities often lack education and information about government initiatives, and many do not possess basic documents such as Aadhaar cards, caste certificates, and birth certificates. LWF educates them about various government programs and assists them in applying for these benefits. In the past year alone, LWF has helped around 750 individuals obtain the necessary documents and apply for government schemes.

Here is the data of the documents facilitated in the villages of Kuno National Park.

Documents facilitated	Count
Aadhar Card	406
Birth Certificate	90
Caste Certificate	45
Ration Card	47
Ayushman Card	88
Samagra ID	31
E-shram card	42
Total	749

Pardhi Education Programme



Panna Tiger Reserve

Schools, Hostels and Anganwadis 50 | Students engaged 1800 | Students enrolled 305



The Pardhi Education Programme under Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) addresses the critical need for education among the Pardhi community, historically linked with hunting and marginalised in society. Recognizing the importance of education in offering a dignified future, LWF has facilitated initiatives to empower Pardhi children through academic opportunities.

The program supports students from kindergarten through higher education by addressing significant challenges resulting in a high dropout rate post-8th grade due to but not limited to, limited resources at existing hostels, social stigma, migration due to livelihood, lack of social security, neglect by the system and more. Initiatives like the student sponsorship program,

started in 2020, connect individual donors with students, covering educational and living expenses. Currently, the entire Pardhi Education Programme is funded by Morningstar through their Corporate Social Responsibility funds, with additional help from many individual donors. Our Anganwadi programme is supported by the Stree Trust.

This has led to tangible progress: 16 students, supported through these sponsorships, are now pursuing higher education with hopes of becoming change-makers within their community. Even during the pandemic, funds ensured continued learning through extra classes facilitated by local teachers.

Today, Pardhi Education Programme runs under the following four sub-programmes,

- **Pardhi Hostel Support**
- **Pardhi Education Center**
- **Anganwadi Adoption Initiative**
- **Pardhi Higher Education Support**

Sustained efforts for another decade are vital for integrating the Pardhi community into mainstream society while encouraging sustainable livelihoods away from traditional hunting practices.

Supported by Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd., Stree Trust and individual donors.

Students impacted through the Pardhi Education Program

Students graduated until March 2024	5
Number of students receiving nutritional supplements	74
Number of students receiving additional tuitions	158
Number of students supported in Primary School	53
Number of students supported in Middle School	11
Number of students supported in Secondary School	8
Number of students supported in Grade 11 & above	3
Number of students supported through Pardhi Education Centre	84
Number of students supported through Anganwadi Adoption	45



Pardhi Education Programme

Pardhi Hostel Support



Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) has supported Pardhi education for 15 years, working to foster trust, social security, and access to consistent schooling. A key hurdle in educating Pardhi children is their migratory lifestyle, which often disrupts schooling.

LWF's Pardhi Education Programme has been consistently supporting the two Pardhi Hostels which were initiated by Panna Tiger Reserve over a decade ago as a support system to counter migration issues of the Pardhis, providing stable accommodations and ongoing resources, from educational materials to co-curricular activities.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, over 200 Pardhi students from all age groups received support

through LWF. All students (Class I-VIII) & (Class VIII upwards) benefited from Panna-based hostel facilities, along with access to remedial teachers. LWF also met the nutritional needs of these students, recognizing that non-vegetarian food is a dietary staple for the community. As the government aid is only for class I-VIII, LWF supports the entire expenditure of the students in class IX - XII.

Additionally, LWF has supported students' interest in sports, acknowledging their unique talent and enthusiasm. The organisation's support continues until students reach graduation and beyond, empowering them toward financial independence.

Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd. supports this initiative.

Material assistance provided in the Pardhi Education Program in Panna

Boys' Hostel

Materials	No. of units distributed
Mattress	8
Bedsheets	8
Blankets	8
Utensils	10
Tracksuit	32

Girls' Hostel

Materials	No. of units distributed
Blankets	50
Bedsheets	50
Towels	38
Tracksuits	38
Trunks	38
Buckets and Mugs	10



Pardhi Education Programme Pardhi Education Center Initiative



Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) launched the Panna Pardhi Education Programme to improve educational access for Pardhi children in Panna, Satna, Maihar and Katni Districts in Madhya Pradesh. This initiative established Pardhi Education Centres within various Pardhi deras (settlements) to introduce early education and instil discipline. These centres are managed by Pardhi alumni who act as community educators, using available resources to make learning accessible and culturally relevant.

To strengthen the educational foundation, LWF partnered with Columbia University to create a specialised book tailored for pre-primary Pardhi children. This teaching aid enhances learning by incorporating visuals and content relatable to the Pardhi lifestyle, encouraging early interest in academics. Columbia University faculty further

supported the program through a Train-the-Trainer workshop, equipping Pardhi educators with effective teaching methodologies and strategies for young learners.

These centres now serve as focal points for community-based education, providing a consistent learning environment for children from a nomadic background, which has traditionally posed a barrier to continuous schooling. By empowering Pardhi ex-students to lead the program, LWF promotes a sense of ownership and connection to education within the community, creating a sustainable model that aims for long-term, generational change. This initiative is part of LWF's broader effort to support the Pardhi community in moving toward stable livelihoods and away from dependence on traditional hunting practices.

Number of students at each PEC

Pardhi Education Center Location / Name	Number of Students
Gandhigram, Panna (Now merged with Aanganwadi)	45
Bhadanpur Pahad, Satna	16
Kupnaghat / Nunagarh, Panna	23

Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd supports this initiative.



Pardhi Education Programme Anganwadi Adoption Initiative



Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF) has adopted the Gandhigram Anganwadi Center in Panna under the Government of India's 'Adopt an Anganwadi' initiative, transforming it into a functional Pardhi Education Centre. This integration allows Pardhi children to attend classes at the Anganwadi alongside other local children, taught by a teacher from their own community. This arrangement has improved the students' focus, a previous challenge due to their migratory background, and has enabled them to make foundational academic progress, such as learning the alphabet and numbers.

The centre now serves as a bridge between the Pardhi and other local communities, fostering interaction that helps reduce stigma and encourage inclusivity. LWF has further supported the Anganwadi by providing essential teaching aids,

additional teachers, learning materials, equipment, utensils, and other educational resources. They have also enhanced the centre's physical infrastructure through renovations and beautification efforts, making it a more inviting and functional space for learning.

Encouraged by the success of this model, LWF plans to extend similar support to other Pardhi Education Centres in Panna and Satna districts. Through these initiatives, the foundation aims to create sustainable, community-led educational solutions that empower Pardhi children and build bridges within diverse community settings. This approach aligns with LWF's overarching goals of fostering sustainable education and livelihoods for the Pardhi community.

Individual donors support this initiative.

Pardhi Education Programme

Pardhi Higher Education Support



Last Wilderness Foundation's Pardhi Education Programme extends its support to Pardhi students pursuing higher education, focusing on those in Class 10 and beyond. Given the challenges of the community's nomadic history and limited educational opportunities, LWF's program aims to provide stability and resources to help students complete secondary school and continue to higher studies, often a significant hurdle for Pardhi youth.

Through its partnership with local hostels, LWF addresses practical needs such as accommodations and educational materials. For students in Class XII and above, LWF's Pardhi Higher Education Support plays a critical role in bridging gaps during breaks, offering skill-building courses and career guidance, particularly in technical trades, to prepare students for inde-

pendent livelihoods. Additionally, the Student Sponsorship Program pairs students with individual donors, covering expenses for tuition, hostel living, and personal needs. As of 2023, over 16 Pardhi students have benefited from this program, pursuing education with aspirations to contribute positively to their communities.

By providing sustained support and mentorship, LWF encourages Pardhi students to graduate and work towards financial independence. This initiative not only enhances educational access but also seeks to shift perceptions about the Pardhi community, promoting greater social inclusion. Through these efforts, LWF fosters empowerment and long-term change for Pardhi youth.

Individual donors support this initiative.

Pardhi Students' testimonials



Shakti Pardhi , Class XII

शक्ति पारधी शासकीय रुद्र प्रताप उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालय, पन्ना में अध्यनरत है और 12वीं की परीक्षा देने जा रहा है। उसकी उम्र 18 वर्ष है। इसके माता पिता का व्यवसाय मजदूरी करना एवम रुद्राक्ष माला और जड़ी बूटियों को फेरी लगाकर बेचना है। इसकी शुरू से स्कूल जाना बहुत पसंद है, पर माता पिता को रोजी रोटी कमाने बाहर भी जाना पड़ता है जिसकी वजह से इसे भी उनके साथ जाना पड़ता है, जिससे इसका स्कूल जाना छूट जाता है। इसका पसंदीदा विषय विज्ञान है। खेल में इसे क्रिकेट और कबड्डी खेलना पसंद है। शक्ति पारधी की इच्छा है कि वो पढ़ लिख कर पुलिस अफसर बने। पुलिस अफसर बनकर वह समाज को अपराध मुक्त बनाना चाहता है। पारधी समाज को शिक्षा से जोड़ कर वह अपने समाज में बदलाव भी लाना चाहता है।

Shakti Pardhi, 18, enjoys school but often misses it to accompany his parents to work. His favorite subject is science, and he loves playing cricket and kabaddi. Shakti aspires to be a police officer to help create a crime-free society and promote education in the Pardhi community.



Krant Pardhi, Class X

क्रान्त पारधी शासकीय रुद्र प्रताप उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालय, पन्ना में अध्यनरत है और 10वीं की परीक्षा देना है। उसकी उम्र 15 वर्ष है। इसके माता पिता का व्यवसाय मनहारी एवम रुद्राक्ष माला और जड़ी बूटियों को फेरी लगाकर बेचना है। इसको शुरू से स्कूल जाना पसंद है, पर माता पिता के साथ रोजी रोटी कमाने के चक्कर में इसे भी बाहर जाना पड़ता है, जिससे इनकी पढ़ाई बाधित होती है। इसका पसंदीदा विषय हिंदी है। खेल में इसे कबड्डी खेलना बहुत पसंद है। यह भी शक्ति पारधी के जैसे पुलिस वाला बनना चाहता है और अपने पारधी समाज को अपराध से दूर रखना चाहता है।

Krant Pardhi, a student in class X, is the son of hawkers who sell rudraksha beads and medicinal herbs. He likes to play kabaddi and dreams of joining the police force.



Ani Baheliya, Class IX

कु. आनी बहेलिया ने इस वर्ष महारानी दुर्गा राज्य लक्ष्मी विद्या मंदिर पन्ना में प्रवेश लिया है और कक्षा 9वीं की परीक्षा देना है। इसके माता का व्यवसाय मजदूरी और रुद्राक्ष माला आदि बेचना है। इसे स्कूल जा कर सहेलियों से मिलना अच्छा लगता है। इसका पसंदीदा विषय गणित और हिंदी है। खेल में इसे कबड्डी खेलना बहुत पसंद है। यह बड़े होकर वकील बनना चाहती है और अपने पारधी समाज को न्याय दिलाना चाहती है।

Kumari Aani Baheliya is a ninth-grade student at Maharani Durga Rajya Laxmi Vidya Mandir. She has a passion for Hindi and aspires to become a lawyer to advocate for the Pardhi community.



Jain Pardhi, Class X

जैन पारधी शासकीय रुद्र प्रताप उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालय, पन्ना में अध्यनरत है और 10वीं की परीक्षा देना है। उसकी उम्र 16 वर्ष है। इसके माता पिता का परंपरागत व्यवसाय खेती करना है। इसको भी स्कूल जाना अच्छा लगता है, इसका पसंदीदा विषय हिंदी है। खेल में इसे क्रिकेट खेलना बहुत पसंद है। यह पढ़ लिख कर डॉक्टर बनना चाहता है जिससे यह अपने समाज की सेवा कर सके। यह बड़े होकर पारधी समाज के बच्चों को शिक्षा से जोड़ना चाहता है। ताकि वे भी अपने आप को बदल सकें।

Jain Pardhi, 16, is studying in Class X and belongs to a farmer family. He wants to become a doctor and inspire others to study and transform their lives.

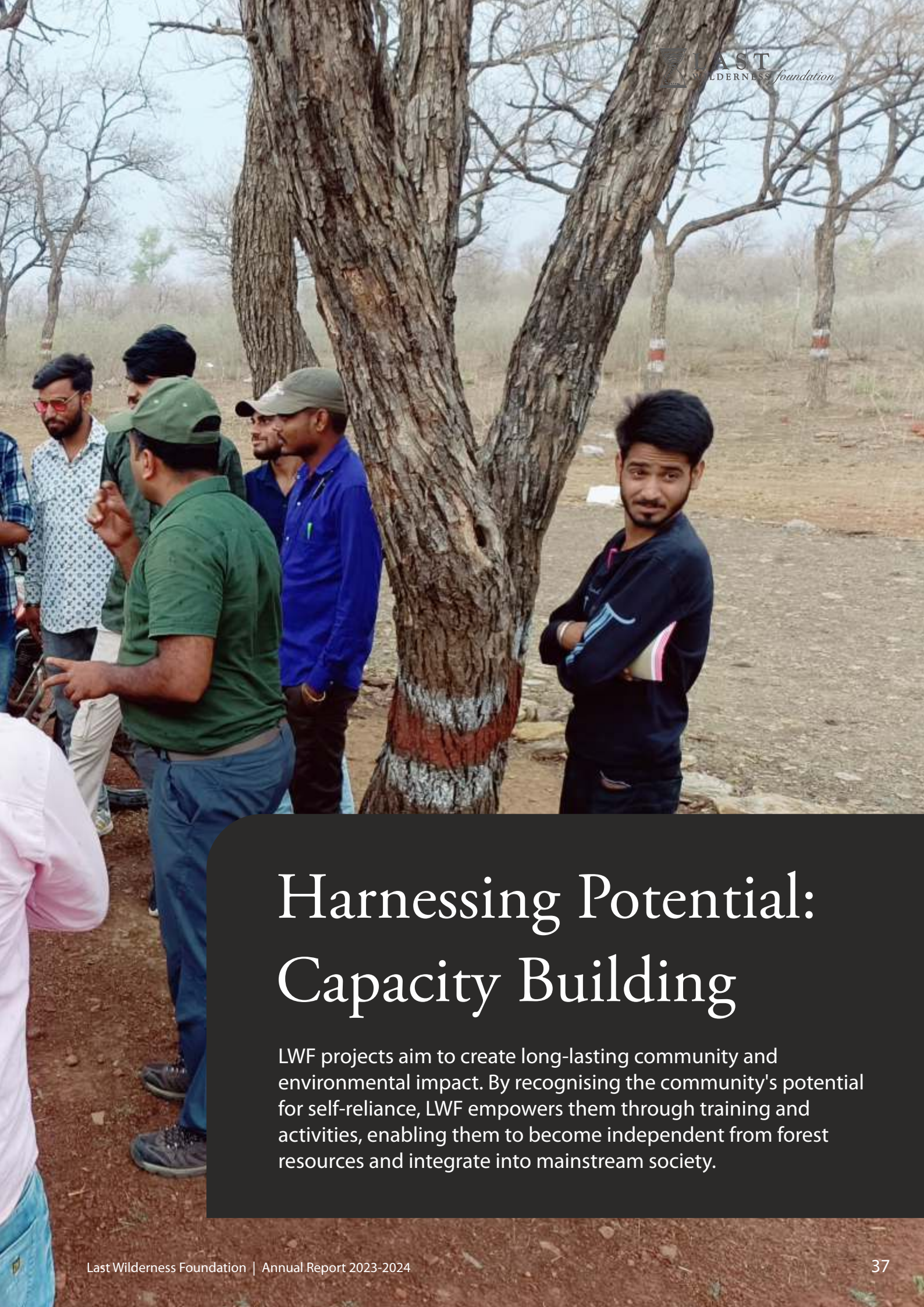


Mausam Pardhi, Class IX

मौसम पारधी शासकीय रुद्र प्रताप उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालय, पन्ना में अध्यनरत है और 9वीं की परीक्षा देना है। उसकी उम्र 13 वर्ष है। यह क्रान्त पारधी का छोटा भाई है। स्कूल जा कर इसे बहुत अच्छा लगता है, पर माता पिता के साथ रोजी रोटी कमाने के चक्कर में इसे भी बाहर जाना पड़ता है, जिससे इनकी पढ़ाई बाधित होती है। इसका पसंदीदा विषय विज्ञान और हिंदी है। खाली समय में इसे चित्रकला करना बहुत पसंद है। यह भी जैन पारधी के जैसे डॉक्टर बनना चाहता है और अपने पारधी समाज को अच्छी स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएं देकर समाज की सेवा करना चाहता है।

Mausam studies in class IX and enjoys going to school very much. He loves to draw and aspires to be a doctor and serve his community by providing good healthcare facilities.





Harnessing Potential: Capacity Building

LWF projects aim to create long-lasting community and environmental impact. By recognising the community's potential for self-reliance, LWF empowers them through training and activities, enabling them to become independent from forest resources and integrate into mainstream society.

Meri Beat, Mera Abhimaan Initiative



In a noteworthy alliance, Last Wilderness Foundation has partnered with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department to conduct an interactive 3-day workshop titled 'Meri Beat Mera Abhimaan'. This initiative was aimed at enriching interpersonal skills for the Forest Department personnel.

This phase of the program was meticulously crafted by LWF team with a clear focus on fostering robust interpersonal relationships within the Forest Department's ground staff and with the local villagers. It emphasizes the crucial role of mutual respect and affection between these stakeholders in creating a harmonious environment.

A sense of pride and ownership was instilled among the ground staff towards their respective beats and the villagers therein, and reciprocally among the villagers towards the ground staff. This approach was grounded in the belief that shared pride and affection would aid in creating a community-oriented conservation model.

The program was brought unto fruition with the assistance of the professional HRD trainers, expertise in understanding and developing human resource requirements. The collective effort of all those involved in the workshop underlines the importance of unity in conservation efforts. It provides an optimistic outlook for the future of conservation and community engagement.

The MBMA module aims to achieve the following with the participants

- **Skill Development**- listening skills, communication and problem solving
- **Behavior Change**- attitude, approach
- **Capacity Building**- conducting meetings, strengthening relationships
- **Teamwork**- inter-department, intra-department and with villagers
- **Gender sensitisation** & inclusivity

The workshop aimed to enable participants to answer important questions such as: "Who are my stakeholders? What level of trust is necessary to work effectively with each of them? What is the current level of trust? What steps can I take to enhance trust?" This activity allowed them to articulate the values and beliefs that have

shaped their lives and influenced their work.

During the workshop, the trainers helped the participants break ice within the group, get to know each other better, and bring out the important aspect of trust. It also focused on self-introspection and understanding one's strengths and limitations. Participants showed significant behavioural transformation, particularly in motivation and confidence. Initially struggling with public speaking, guards experienced a notable boost in self-expression by the workshop's end, thanks to effective communication tools. They became more enthusiastic about their roles and felt better prepared to engage with stakeholders and tackle grassroots issues. Overall, there was a clear improvement in their confidence and motivation levels.



Panna Tiger Reserve



Since the Meri Beat Mera Abhiman workshop in March 2023, the dedicated beat guards of Panna Tiger Reserve have strengthened their partnership with forest committees, focusing on cooperative forest management with local rural communities. Through these initiatives, local communities have become active participants in vital water management projects, enhancing water security for both wildlife and human settlements.

Improved forest fire management has been another key focus, with concerted efforts directed at prevention and quick response to minimise damage to habitats. Additionally, forest guards and community members have collaborated to ensure that the collection of minor forest produce is conducted sustainably, preserving biodiversity and supporting local livelihoods simultaneously.

Community support during seasonal patrols has also been invaluable, with increased vigilance helping to protect the forest against illegal activities. The dedication of forest workers, who consistently uphold the ideals of conservation, has set a benchmark in creating an exemplary beat—one that balances ecological integrity with sustainable resource use. This collaborative approach under the Meri Beat Mera Abhiman program has fortified the resilience of the Panna landscape, fostering both ecological and social well-being.

Kuno National Park



After our first batch was concluded at Panna, we incorporated the feedbacks from the participants, and the senior officers from Panna Tiger Reserve and conducted a second Workshop with the Forest department team of Kuno National Park. While, Kuno National Park rose to limelight due to the introduction of cheetah, this also meant efficient management of the park to ensure project success.

The workshop saw a participation of over 20 participants, including Beat Guards, Deputy Range Officers from Agra range, Dhoret Range, Sironi North Range and Moravan West Range of the Kuno National Park. Range Forest Officers from the mentioned ranges and various other ranges in the Park also made their presence and addressed the participants, and engaged in the activities.

Professional HR trainers Sunitha H and Harish S, who helped us design the programme from the very beginning, and make regional amends to it, led the training session at Kuno.

SDO, Shri Amit Rathore attended the workshop, addressed and motivated the participants. Shri Nikilesh Sharma RFO Agra Range, supported through the planning and execution of the programme. DFO, Kuno National Park, Shri Prakash Verma, not only attended the workshop between his extremely busy schedule, but also gave a wonderful address to the participants. His presence and his address motivated not only for the forest staff but also LWF team.

This initiative is a part of the Community Conservation Programme - Kuno National Park, supported by Dalmia Charitable Trust.

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve



Owing to the success of our previous MBMA batches in Panna and Kuno, the programme was also scheduled for the Bandhavgarh TR personnel.

We planned and conducted the programme with over 36 participants at Bandhavgarh Tiger reserve, in two batches of 18 each. To conduct this training, LWF obtained help from the professional trainer, Ms. Priya Venkatesh from The Naturalist School, who is a veteran in working with human resource trainings. The participants of the MBMA workshop included people of the rank of Beat Guard and Deputy Ranger, which was attended by the staff from all the 9 ranges of Bandhavgarh namely Manpur buffer, Dhamokhar buffer, Tala core, Panpatha buffer, Panpatha core, Pataur core, Kalwah core and Magadhi core, Khitauli core.

We would like to express our gratitude to Shri. L. L. Uyike, Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Field Director and Shri. Prakash Verma, Deputy Director, BTR for their unwavering support throughout the planning and execution of the program. Their presence served as a great source of motivation for all the workshop participants.

During the six days of the workshop, the trainers helped the participants break the ice within the group, get to know each other better, and bring out the important aspect of trust. They also discussed how it works in their daily lives, all this while we all played and enjoyed.

This initiative is a part of the Conservation Programme - Bandhavgarh, supported by Morningstar India Pvt. Ltd.

Betul Forest Division



The inaugural Meri Beat Mera Abhiman (MBMA) workshop was held in Betul, prompted by an unexpected request from Mr. Vejayanantham, the District Forest Officer of the Betul Forest Division. The workshop brought together around 30 participants, including beat guards, rangers, and Divisional Officers (SDOs), all eager to enhance their skills, knowledge, and commitment to forest conservation.

This three-day event combined both indoor and outdoor sessions. Participants engaged in a variety of activities, from skill-building exercises to field-based conservation strategies, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to manage their areas effectively. By using a mix of theory and hands-on activities, the workshop aimed to deepen understanding and build practical skills among the attendees. There was also a special session conducted on Gender sensitisation.

The final day allowed for interactive feedback, giving participants an open platform to share their experiences and suggestions. Feedback forms were also provided to capture detailed reflections on the sessions' effectiveness. The response was highly encouraging, with over 57% of attendees finding the sessions extremely beneficial, and an impressive 86% expressing high overall satisfaction.

This positive response underscored the workshop's impact and relevance, marking a successful debut for MBMA in Betul. Supported by Individual Donors, this workshop reflects a broader commitment to empowering forest personnel with the tools they need to protect wildlife and manage conservation areas with confidence.

This initiative was supported by Individual Donors.

Nature Guide Training Initiative



The Nature Guide Training Initiative at Kuno National Park, led by Last Wilderness Foundation (LWF), is a significant step toward empowering local communities and promoting sustainable wildlife tourism. With Kuno gaining prominence as a conservation and eco-tourism hub, this initiative equips local youth to take on critical roles as nature guides, linking livelihoods with conservation.

In 2023-24, LWF conducted comprehensive training sessions focusing on Kuno's rich biodiversity, wildlife behavior, and ecological significance. Participants were also trained in vital soft skills, such as communication and visitor engagement, ensuring they are well-prepared for opportunities in the growing wildlife tourism sector.

This initiative embodies LWF's belief that conservation flourishes when communities are active

stakeholders. By building capacities, it not only provides livelihood options but also fosters a deeper connection between the community and Kuno's natural heritage. As Kuno gains global attention, particularly with the reintroduction of cheetahs, these trained guides are poised to play a crucial role in shaping visitor experiences while advocating for responsible tourism practices.

The Nature Guide Training Initiative empowers participants to become ambassadors of Kuno's wildlife and champions of conservation. LWF takes pride in nurturing these future custodians, ensuring that wildlife tourism serves as a bridge between economic upliftment and sustainable conservation efforts. Through their work, these guides inspire harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife, paving the way for a more sustainable future.

Kuno National Park



Professional Nature Guides / Interpreters / Naturalists are the essence of an unforgettable nature tourism experience. To prepare for filling vacancies that will be available once tourism commences in Kuno, Last Wilderness Foundation has been training, shortlisting, and grooming local youth to become professional Nature Guides. The training was designed and executed by The Naturalist School, Bangalore.

Activities Conducted:

- **Initial Training:** Conducted training sessions for over 70 local youths, introducing them to the basics of nature guiding.
- **Selection Process:** Utilized WhatsApp groups and periodic nature trails to identify and select promising candidates from the initial group.
- **Early Success:** Supported Sachin Gurjar, a

trainee from Moravan village, in securing a position as a naturalist with EVOKE group.

- **Certification Process:** Assisted 18 youths in submitting applications for Nature Guide Certification to the Kuno Forest Department.
- **Refresher Training:** Provide refresher training to the shortlisted 25 youths through The Naturalist School, culminating in the award of LWF certificates.

Next Steps:

- **Internship Opportunities:** Facilitate internship or work-exposure placements for select individuals at various resorts across Madhya Pradesh.
- **Skill Development Workshop:** Conduct a Skill India training certificate workshop for youths who complete a season of internship or work exposure.

Team LWF's Capacity Building @ Bannerghatta National Park

The LWF team attended a two-day residential capacity-building workshop at Bannerghatta National Park, led by experts from The Naturalist School and Jungle Lodges & Resorts, Karnataka.



◀ The LWF team thoroughly enjoyed the morning nature walk led by JLR's Chief Naturalist, Mr. Karthikeyan S. They spent the morning observing and discussing birds, spiders, insects, plants, and their fascinating interactions.



The LWF team participated in an engaging session on community interaction, led by LWF Regional Coordinator Mr. Indrabhan Bundela, fostering meaningful discussions and shared insights.





◀ Mr. Bundi introduced the team to citizen science, highlighting useful applications like Merlin, eBird, and iNaturalist for exploring and documenting biodiversity.

▶ Ms. Priya Venkatesh, founder of The Naturalist School and a professional trainer, conducted engaging sessions with the team, focusing on enhancing their soft skills.



◀ The day featured multiple classroom sessions, including team member presentations, sharing of best practices, and discussions on domain knowledge, fostering learning and collaboration.



◀ During their stay at Jungle Lodges, Bannerghatta, the LWF team visited the Bannerghatta Botanical Park and Butterfly Park, exploring the area's rich biodiversity and natural beauty.

▶ On their return journey, the team utilized the day exploring Bangalore, visiting iconic sites like Lal Bagh, Tipu Sultan's Palace, and other remarkable landmarks.





Livelihood Opportunities

Communities living around the forests especially the Protected Areas directly influence the environment through their traditional activities, involving forest harvests. In light of our increasingly modernising world and society, these traditional practices often result in negative interactions between humans and wildlife. LWF strives to protect India's pristine wilderness through modern and innovative conservation strategies for tribal communities. LWF strives to explore sustainable economic sources and assist the local communities to engage in practices that benefit the environment using their indigenous knowledge and skills.

Four of such initiatives, some initiated about half a decade ago, have now become community ventures that are self-sustaining and are proving to be steady bread earner the community. These include, Baiga Jewellery Initiative at Kanha and Walk with Pardhis, Camping with Pardhis and Wildpinesart at Panna.

You can help these ventures grow by supporting them through investments in the venture, buying any of these products or availing their services as showcased in the following pages.

Walk with Pardhis

Walk with the Pardhis

For bookings, write to us at
conservation@thelastwilderness.org

An initiative by



Supported by

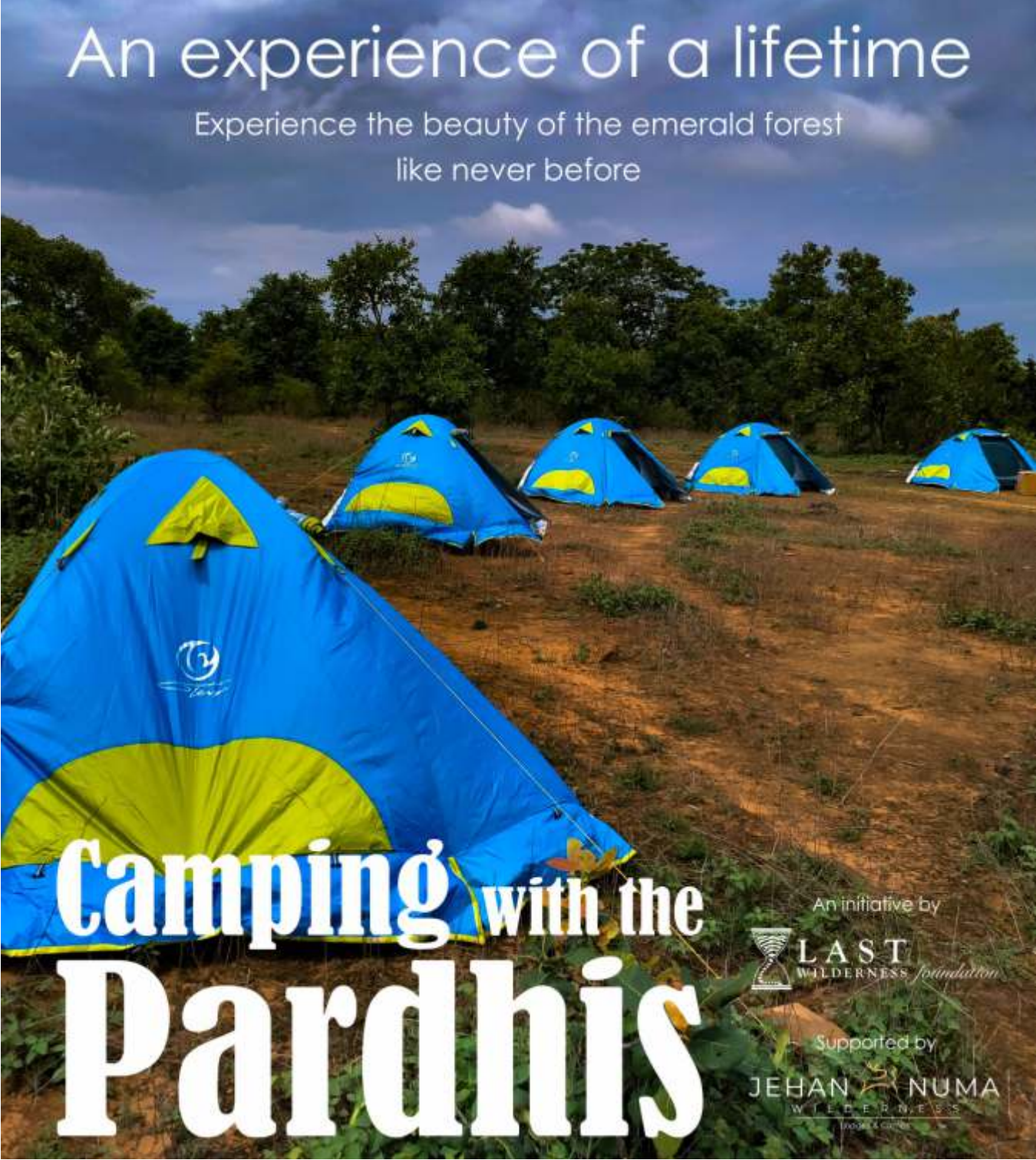


Explore the stunning wilderness of Panna with members of a nomadic hunting community and indulge in some spectacular stories from the forest with people whose knowledge of the land is as ancient as time.

Prepare for an unforgettable adventure! Embark on an immersive wilderness walk led by the Pardhi community and discover their ancient wisdom and deep-rooted connection to the forest. Listen to captivating tales from the heart of nature and reconnect with the wild like never before. A skilled Pardhi guide will take you on an exhilarating nature trail through Panna, offering a truly memorable experience.



Camping with Pardhis



An experience of a lifetime

Experience the beauty of the emerald forest
like never before

**Camping with the
Pardhis**

An initiative by
 **LAST**
WILDERNESS *foundation*

Supported by
JEHAN NUMA
WILDERNESS
Experiences & Guides

Join the Pardhis Camping experience at Panna Tiger Reserve for an unforgettable jungle adventure! Immerse yourself in the rich culture and ancient traditions of the Pardhi tribe. Enjoy storytelling by the campfire, savor traditional meals, and learn from skilled Pardhi guides trained by Jehan Numa Wilderness. This eco-friendly initiative not only offers an adventure but supports the Pardhi community through sustainable income, creating a meaningful connection with nature and culture.



Baiga jewellery



The Baiga tribes of Kanha are skilled in crafting jewellery from traditional stones and silver, a practice deeply rooted in their culture. Initiated in 2017, the Baiga jewellery project, with training and support from Last Wilderness Foundation and MP Tiger Foundation Society, has become self-sustaining. Today online websites, exhibitions and B2B bring these unique designs to the mainstream market, where they've found a growing customer base.



For placing orders, please write to conservation@thelastwilderness.org

Wildpines

Nature inspired handicrafts made by local artisans and tribal communities



Nature always find its way

These products have been made by the traditional hunting **Pardhi community** who have chosen to settle down, and explore a sustainable means of living.

By buying this product you not only contribute to their livelihood, but also play an important role in the protection of tiger and other wild animals in the landscape.

Community Partner  **LAST**
WILDERNESS foundation



Shop online at www.wildpinesart.com

Discover Wildpines, founded by Ms. Satakshi Singh, where traditional artistry meets modern design. With over 30 unique products - ranging from keychains and bags to jewelry and clothing—Wildpines creates captivating, artistic pieces. This venture provides sustainable livelihoods for over 10 Pardhis, enhancing their skills and fostering community pride through handicraft excellence.





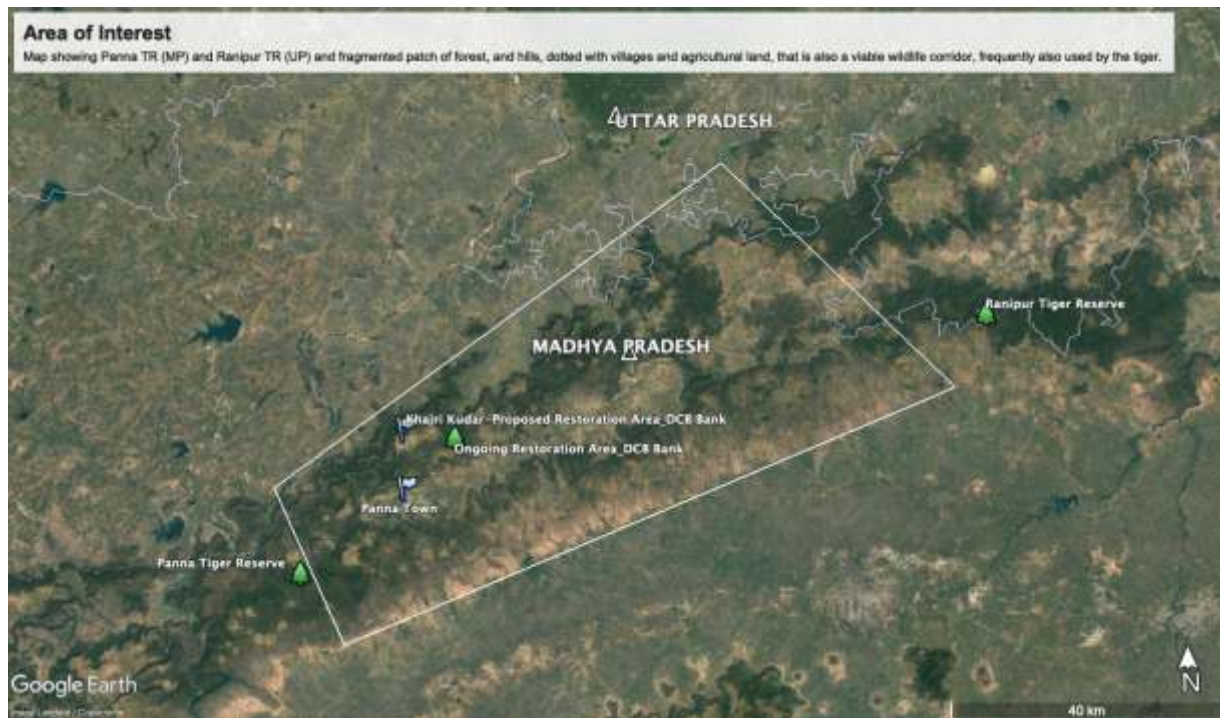
Active Conservation

Traditionally, conservation efforts in India have focused on protecting landscapes and biodiversity from an ecological standpoint, often overlooking or even undermining the interests of tribal communities who have lived in these areas for centuries, if not millennia. We believe that true conservation can only be achieved with the active involvement of local communities. Without their participation, conservation efforts are unlikely to succeed or be sustainable in the long run. For this reason, communities are our primary stakeholders in all on-the-ground conservation initiatives.

We believe that true and lasting conservation can only be achieved through the active involvement of local communities, particularly those whose lives and cultures are deeply intertwined with the landscapes they inhabit. Tribal and indigenous communities possess invaluable knowledge and traditional practices that can enhance conservation strategies and ensure that they are more attuned to the realities of local ecosystems. By integrating their perspectives and wisdom into conservation efforts, we can develop solutions that not only protect biodiversity but also support the well-being and rights of the people who have historically been the guardians of these natural resources.

Critical Wildlife Corridor Conservation Programme Promoting Sustainable Coexistence

Panna TR (MP) - Ranipur TR (UP) wildlife corridor



The primary objective of the project is to reduce forest dependency of the local communities and in process ensure the long-term viability of the wildlife corridor between PTR and RTR. This is achieved through a multi-faceted approach that involves community engagement, habitat restoration, and alternative livelihood development, each intrinsically a part of each other.

Community Engagement: Connecting with the community is essential for long-term conservation. We conduct outreach sessions with local schools and adults, featuring interactive activities, nature games, and wildlife safari experiences. We celebrate events like Fire Awareness Workshop, National Wildlife Week, and Environment Day with villagers. Our efforts

currently involve multiple villages in the Panna TR - Ranipur TR corridor, including Khajri, Kudar, Dehlan Chauki, and Ranipur.

Reducing grazing pressures on the forest: A study revealed that village cattle roam freely in forests, competing with wild herbivores for resources, which reduces wild herbivore feeding areas and promotes invasive plants. Increased cattle presence raises predator interactions, risking both wildlife and herders. To mitigate these issues, a multi-faceted approach was taken including, erecting a protective wall along the forest boundary, Introducing a fodderland initiative and promoting stall feeding and Ensuring adequate water supply with local government support.

Exploring alternative livelihoods is essential for communities near wildlife, balancing traditional forest reliance with conservation. Solutions include promoting LPG instead of fuel wood, enhancing sustainable forest products, and developing dairy through stall-fed cattle. Capacity-building workshops, like the LPG Awareness Workshop in Khajri-Kudar, help alleviate concerns about using LPG. Increased LPG usage could decrease timber collection for cooking, while tools like Mahua nets and Amla poles may prevent forest fires and logging.

The project has made significant progress in reducing human-wildlife conflict and promoting sustainable coexistence in the Panna-Ranipur corridor. Continued support and implementation of future plans will be crucial in ensuring the success of the project and the protection of the wildlife corridor.

This Programme is supported by DCB Bank.



Gram Rakshak Initiative

Panna Tiger Reserve



The Gram Rakshaks play a vital role in forest preservation and community conservation efforts. They raise awareness about the negative impacts of harmful activities and conduct educational programs for youth on wildlife and habitats. Their efforts include collecting data on wildlife movements, reporting suspicious activities through WhatsApp, and conducting joint patrols with forest personnel, enhancing wildlife protection. Regular meetings with forest guards improve communication, aiding in response to incidents involving wild animals in the village.

The initiative has actively backed community development and upliftment efforts, including the distribution of educational materials. The Gram Rakshaks have been essential in executing fire safety drives, and the management of agricultural electric wires to prevent unfortunate incidents of electrocution and aiding in forest fire prevention and the preservation of biodiversity, and local villagers. The Gram Rakshaks have been at the forefront of water conservation initiatives, guaranteeing sufficient water resources for both humans and wildlife, especially during dry spells. The initiative has

encouraged sustainable farming practices, advocating against detrimental methods like snares and live wires.

The Gram Rakshaks have provided aid to villagers in procuring compensation for livestock lost to wildlife and have promoted cattle vaccination and insurance. Regular workshops have been held to equip the Gram Rakshaks with the necessary skills to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. The initiative has endorsed sustainable harvesting methods for non-timber forest products, such as mahua, awla, and chiroji.

The Gram Rakshak Program has emerged as a valuable tool in reducing human-wildlife conflict and promoting conservation efforts in the Panna Tiger Reserve. By empowering community members and fostering a sense of ownership over their local environment, the program has contributed significantly to the preservation of wildlife and the well-being of local communities. As the initiative continues to evolve, it is expected to play an even more vital role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the region's ecosystems.



This Programme is supported by Astral Foundation.

Reducing grazing pressures through Integrated Cattle Management

Kuno National Park



The region is home to tribal communities and cattle herders who have lived there for generations. The cattle herders own thousands of cattle, which rely on the Kuno forest for grazing. These cattle enter the forest daily to feed on the forest produce, including the moss, lichen, grass, leaves, and more, thus directly competing with the wild herbivores. The robust, bold and thousands of cattle easily displace the timid, shy and a tens of wild herbivores, thus causing reduction in feeding areas for the wild herbivores. Thousands of cattle grazing regularly puts pressure on the over-exploited producers - the local flora - and is replaced easily by the exotics like the Parthinium and Lantana, that the cattle do not graze on, but help in dispersal by simply walking through.

This constant frequenting in the forest also increases the chances of interaction with the predators in the forests, who are already finding it hard to sustain on the declining wild herbivores, and then to shift their attention on the cattles that come in everyday in herds. The cattle herder/s accompanying the cattle also become

targets, as they try to save their cattle from the mouth of the tiger.

Promoting Stall Feeding: Feeding cattle is a practical solution, requiring each owner and the community to create and maintain fodderland. We are helping the cattle herders avail the benefit of the government subsidy available to purchase male Murrah buffalo as a stud, in exchange of their assurance to implement stall feeding. The Murrah breed provided by the department integrates well with stall feeding.

To ensure and further encourage, grass seeds were distributed to kick-start this process, and initial helping hand, in the form of training to set up the fodder land and the stall feeding unit is also provided.

Through this initiative we intend to ensure that less cattle venture into the forest for grazing.

This initiative is a part of the Community Conservation Programme - Kuno National Park, supported by Dalmia Charitable Trust.



A group of children and adults are gathered outdoors in a lush green setting, looking up at a tree. A man in a blue and white checkered shirt is pointing at a branch. Several children, including a girl in a pink shirt and a girl in a light blue shirt, are also pointing and looking up. The background is filled with dense green foliage and a building is visible in the distance.

Conservation Engagement

It's crucial not only to connect with individuals who share our values but also to engage with sceptics and showcase our meaningful work. In addition to our regular outreach and education efforts in the field, we actively organise special days events in local schools and villages in partnership with the Forest Department. In today's increasingly digital world, social media plays a vital role in connecting with our supporters and engaging with online and offline audiences. We do this through various activities such as talk shows, pop-up stalls, panel discussions, and podcasts. Furthermore, we regularly share curated conservation content on YouTube, utilising its free platform for easy access.

National Wildlife Week

Kuno National Park and Panna Tiger Reserve

Data from previous years reveals a significant decline in student attendance as the school year progresses. Early in the year, many students are motivated to attend due to the availability of free resources and facilities. However, as winter approaches, attendance gradually drops. To address this, our team recognized the need to encourage students to stay engaged by offering additional incentives and activities that would foster consistent participation.

National Wildlife Week presented a valuable opportunity for this. Partnering with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, we organized a series of engaging co-curricular activities across 15 schools in the Kuno region and 7 schools in Panna. The events included drawing, quiz,

elocation, and running competitions, reaching 806 students in Kuno and over 400 students in Panna. Nature-based games like Snakes and Ladders, Bingo, and Domino—featuring themes on forest safety, animal identification, and food webs—added an interactive element to learning about wildlife.

We awarded certificates and prizes, including bags, water bottles, and compass boxes, to over 140 students for their enthusiastic participation. These activities not only boosted attendance but also inspired students to deepen their understanding of the natural world, creating lasting connections to conservation.





National Wildlife Week 2023 celebration in Kuno National Park

Activity	Kuno (N)	Kuno (S)	Total
Schools Enrolled	7	8	15
Student Engaged	356	450	806
Drawing competition	125	150	275
Quiz	125	170	295
Speech	106	105	211
First prize	14	25	39
Second prize	14	25	39

National Wildlife Week Celebration at Panna Tiger Reserve

School, Village	Participants	Winners
Pardhi Boys' Hostel, Panna	80	16
Pardhi Girls' Hostel, Kunjwan	59	13
Girls' High School, Rakseha	63	13
Girls' High School, Kunjwan	109	12
Girls' Higher Secondary School, Dwari	58	9
Girls' Middle School, Jardhova	29	9
Girls' High School, Dahlan Chauki	30	9
Total	428	81

World Environment Day



The UN adopted June 5th as “World Environment Day” in the first conference on the environment held in Stockholm in 1972. Since then, World Environment Day has been celebrated worldwide on different themes every year. We celebrate it by conducting various indoor and outdoor activities with villagers and school students across our project sites. This gives a chance to reach large groups of people in less time and engage them in playful activities. The participants are spread across different age groups, races and classes. It is a win-win situation as the villagers enjoy the events while we get a chance to do outreach. We collaborate with the local unit of forest department, schools and Gram Panchayats to conduct events and competitions. Last year, we celebrated it at Kuno National Park and Panna Tiger Reserve.

At Kuno National Park, the event included participants such as Cheetah Mitras, Nature Guards, members from the Moghiya community,

students, women's groups, and forest department employees. A rally was organised to spread the message of avoiding polythene plastic, and a nature guide provided information about trees, plants, and birds. Participants collected polythene and other plastic litter in the forest. The Cheetah Mitras emphasised the importance of wildlife conservation and encouraged tree planting.

At Panna Tiger Reserve, activities included a nature trail, breakfast, water conservation, a cleanliness campaign, tree planting, an exhibition, lunch, games, and an art display. Dignitaries highlighted the importance of environmental protection. Over 250 people attended the event, including rural men and women, students, local leaders, guides, environmentalists, journalists, and forest department officials. Key organizers were Mr. Indrabhan Singh Bundela, Mr. Manish Rawat, and Mr. Sandeep Yadav.



Accolades and Achievements



February 2023 – LWF conducted a talk for the IFS' Mid Career training programme at Jungle Lodges and Resorts, Kabini, Karnataka.



April 2023 - The MP Tourism minister, Smt. Ujjwala Thakur, felicitated the Pardhi community members at Wildpines at the G20 event in Bhopal.



July 2023 – LWF was a member in the committee for creating Madhya Pradesh's first 20-Year State Wildlife Action Plan that was released on 29th July 2023 (International Tiger Day) event at Bhopal by the Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan.



July 2023 - The National Commission for Women, in collaboration with RACE Lab, organised a Regional Seminar on 'Challenges Faced by Women from Denotified Tribes' at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Last Wilderness Foundation was honoured to be invited and represent 2 out of the 52 Tribes attending the event.

Under this event, the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Welfare Department, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh introduced several Educational and Social Development Schemes for the betterment of such communities.



August 2023 - LWF team recreated the game 'Web of Life' for children and adults alike. This game is fun to play and informative at the same time. It demonstrates how organisms in an ecosystem interact with one another and how the absence of a few can disrupt this fragile system. Last Wilderness Foundation organised this activity, through which the children learnt about food webs and ecosystems, discovering many ways that plants and animals in a forest ecosystem are connected.



September 2023 - Kudos to the talented artist Ananya Sampath who not only shares her beautiful creations with the world but also contributes to the greater good. Their dedication to wildlife conservation is inspiring and a testament to the power of art for a cause. Thank you for making a positive impact through your creative and generous donation.



February 2024 - LWF is proud to share that our Director, Vidya Venkatesh, participated in a panel discussion at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, during the event "Reimagined India with Indigenous Thoughts," organized by @ngma_delhi. Graced by Union Minister Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, NGMA Director General Dr. Sanjeev Kishor Goutam, and other cultural luminaries, Vidya shared her insights from working with communities in Madhya Pradesh.

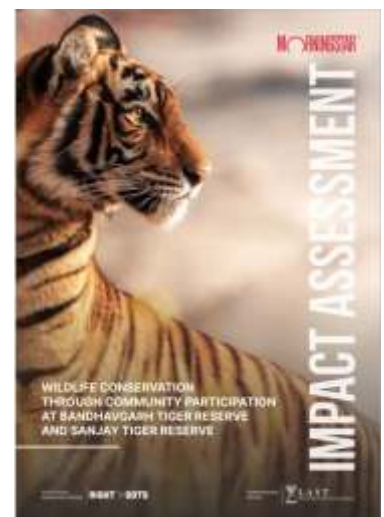


We are thrilled to announce that Last Wilderness Foundation won the Best Wildlife Conservation Project Award at the WTCA2024 event on 2nd March at SGNP , Mumbai for the Village Kids' Awareness Programme in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. On behalf of the entire LWF team, the award was received by Vidya Venkatesh, Director, LWF.

Impact Assessment Reports



LWF recently had its first Impact Assessment conducted by an external agency to evaluate the effects of two of its key projects. This assessment process examines how a project influences the community and its target beneficiaries. Use the QR codes to access the full report.



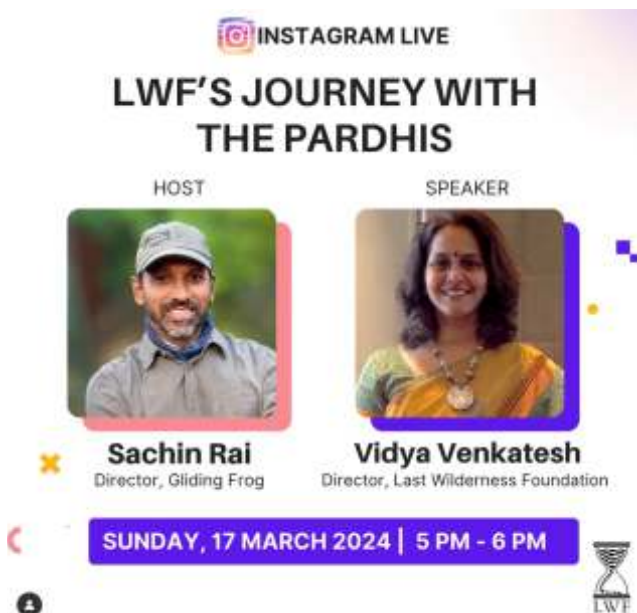
Insta Live Sessions



LWF conducted a Pardhi Education Fundraising Marathon with Shri. R Sreenivasa Murthy, Retired Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF, MP Forest Department). as the chief guest. The Pardhi students were represented by Pushpendra Pardhi and Priya Pardhi.



Mr. Sachin Rai conducted a session on "Forest Department's collaboration with the Pardhis" where the key speaker was Shri. R Sreenivasa Murthy, Retired, APCCF (MP Forest Department).



Sachin Rai, director of Gliding Frog, hosted a talk with Vidya Venkatesh to discuss LWF's journey with the Pardhis.



Gaurav Shiroadkar was invited to talk about the Pardhi History and their evolution in Panna, LWF work with the Pardhis, their current relation with the community of Panna, and their contribution to wildlife Conservation.

Media



An article on Baiga jewellery published in the Citizen in October 2023.



Article published on the art of jewellery making by the Baiga tribe published on the website of MP tourism

Pardhi Education Fundraising Campaign



SUPPORT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BY DONATING FOR THE PARDHI EDUCATION PROGRAMME







**ADOPT A
CHILD'S
EDUCATION**



**ADOPT AN
ANGANWADI**



**DONATE
LEARNING
MATERIAL**



**MONTHLY
CONTRIBUTION**



**SUPPORT
HIGHER
EDUCATION**

 www.thelastwilderness.org

 conservation@thelastwilderness.org

Last Wilderness Foundation is running a fundraising campaign to support the education of Pardhi students from classes IX–XII and for higher studies, aiming to help them pursue education and live dignified lives. Through this initiative, LWF aims to fund the education of at least 14 Pardhi students, covering educational costs, medical needs, nutritional needs, accommodation arrangements, and extracurricular activities.

All donors received a surprise gift hamper for their generosity.

Donate to make a lasting impact today



Financials

Last Wilderness Foundation (A Private Limited Company under Section 8 of The Companies Act, 2013) Balance Sheet as at 31 March, 2024 (All amounts are in Hundreds of Indian Rupees unless otherwise stated) (In '00)			
Particulars	Note No.	As at 31 March, 2024 Rs.	As at 31 March, 2023 Rs.
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Shareholders' funds			
Share Capital			
Reserves and Surplus	3	23,547	22,703
Current liabilities			
Other Current Liabilities	4	14,033	4,907
TOTAL		37,580	27,610
ASSETS			
Non Current Assets			
Property Plant & Equipment			
Tangible Fixed Assets	5	2,270	773
Current assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	6	35,054	26,470
Short term loans and advance	7	257	367
TOTAL		37,580	27,610
See accompanying notes forming part of the financial statements			
In terms of our report attached.			
For S. P Gupta & Associates		For and on behalf of Board of Directors	
Chartered Accountants			
(Firm Reg no 103445W)			
Sd/-		Sd/-	
(Preeti Parasrampuria)		(Nikhil Nagle)	
Partner		Director	
Membership No 131204		DIN: 02667236	
Mumbai		DIN: 05168000	
Date : 07/09/2024			



Last Wilderness Foundation (A Private Limited Company under Section 8 of The Companies Act, 2013) Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 01 April, 2023 to 31 March, 2024 (In '00)			
Particulars	Note No.	For the period ended 31 March, 2024	For the period ended 31 March, 2023
		Rs.	Rs.
INCOME			
Donations Received	8	92,784	66,820
Other Income	9	1,595	855
Total Income		94,379	67,675
EXPENDITURE			
Project Expenses	10	77,399	60,290
Establishment Expenses	11	15,587	5,128
Depreciation	5	550	107
Total Expenses		93,535	65,525
Excess of Income over Expenditure/ (Excess of expenditure over Income)		844	2,150
See accompanying notes forming part of the financial statements In terms of our report attached.			
For S. P Gupta & Associates Chartered Accountants (Firm Reg no 103445W)		For and on behalf of Board of Directors	
Sd/- (Preeti Parasrampuria) Partner Membership No 131204 Mumbai Date : 07/09/2024		Sd/- (Nikhil Nagle) Director DIN: 02667236	Sd/- (Vidya Venkatesh) Director DIN: 05168000

Ways to give to Last Wilderness Foundation

Become a Monthly Supporter:

A monthly contribution ensures that LWF consistently grows its far-reaching efforts to preserve our wilderness spaces in tandem with community members.

Stakeholder Liaison:

Help establish tie ups with institutions or organisations who can aid LWF in spreading awareness about community members, the on-ground challenges and the work being done to combat these issues. Such partnerships can also be used to showcase the skill sets possessed by community members in the form of products, the proceeds of which will go back to the community members.

Education Sponsor:

Support the supplementary needs of our educational projects by helping establish libraries, distribute winter uniforms and school supplies etc.

Sponsor a Student:

Support the education of a child by covering their top-to-bottom expenses for one academic year in mainstream education.

Support Our Heroes:

Equip frontline Forest Department staff with necessary resources that will aid protection measures.

Conserve While You Travel:

For your next holiday, opt for unique itineraries while visiting any of our featured tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh. You can get oriented with community members and engage in our on-ground conservation activities and projects. Immerse yourself in our various alternate livelihood projects like village walks, lunch/dinner with community members, camping, nature walks etc., in which 100% of the proceeds are given to community members. These can be arranged as family holidays or even corporate offsites.

Contact us!

To know more about our work and how you can contribute, please visit our website

www.thelastwilderness.org

and/or write to us on

conservation@thelastwilderness.org



The Way Forward



As they say, change is the only constant. Over the past one and a half decade, our organisation has evolved in various ways. We have not only built a deep bond with our target communities but also helped them transform their lives for the better.

Our dedication to wildlife conservation and wilderness protection remains steadfast as we move forward. We focus on working with the local communities and have expanded our focus on creating safe passages for wildlife in the constantly shrinking wildlife corridors especially between Bandhavgarh TR – Panna TR, Panna TR – Ranipur TR (UP), Bandhavgarh TR – Sanjay TR, and other territorial forests around Kuno NP and Gandhi Sagar WLS.

We believe in conservation through community participation, aiming to create a harmonious coexistence benefiting both wildlife and local communities. Our Gram Rakshak initiative directly engages communities, empowering them to become stewards of the land they inhabit. Moreover, we empower frontline staff through the Meri Beat Mera Abhimaan (MBMA) initiative, focusing on soft-skill training and enhanced communication for a more responsive approach to conservation challenges.

We are expanding our outreach and educational programs, fostering a sense of responsibility and love for nature, we aim to nurture future generations who are well-informed and passionate about conservation. We prioritize the knowledge and skill development of our team to keep them informed of the latest trends and contribute to organizational growth. Additionally, by collaborating with scientists and researchers, we are constantly innovating to tackle the challenges our ecosystems face. Enthusiastic volunteers from various walks of life bring fresh perspectives and energy to our projects. Their contributions are invaluable in conducting field surveys, community outreach, and habitat restoration activities. We understand that conservation is a multifaceted challenge that requires a holistic approach. Therefore, we are also addressing issues like forest fires, deforestation, and water scarcity, which directly impact wildlife and human communities alike. Through reforestation projects and water conservation initiatives, we strive to restore balance to these fragile ecosystems.

Our journey is one of hope, resilience, and collaboration. We are committed to listening to the voices of the communities we work with and adapting our strategies to meet their needs. Together, we can create a future where wildlife thrives alongside human development, where every individual understands their role in safeguarding our planet's natural heritage.

Join us in this mission. Together, we can make a difference, ensuring that the wonders of the wild are preserved for generations to come.

Gaurav Shirodkar
Deputy Director

Fuelling the movement

"If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together." - An African proverb

Enduring conservation is achieved through the support and cooperation of a broad range of extraordinary partners, that include governments, local communities, corporates, small businesses and individual donors.

We leverage the strengths of these associations to achieve what we have over the past year.



*Thanking all our partners, donors, volunteers and followers
for trusting & supporting us generously.
We look forward to interacting with each one of you
through our programmes every year.*



*With best regards,
Last Wilderness Foundation family*

www.thelastwilderness.org

Follow us on:



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