

Workshop 1- Water, waste and wildlife

Date: 13/05/2019

Agenda:

- Water resources: Restoration
- Wildlife movement
- Waste
- Native seeds

Discussions:

- Introduction to all the above topics by Gokul

People who attended:

- Chandrasekar
- David
- Beeman
- Prakash Bettan
- Ritambhari
- Radha Muthiah
- Arun Bellie
- Pushparani
- K J Raju
- T. Jeeraman
- Thanvish
- Gokul
- Nayantara

WATER

- Water resources: identification of 50 sources done by keystone where panchayat member, Mohan Raj helped with identification
- Recharge areas around the springs and spring shed area to be revived to its natural state-Baptist colony as a model example
- Panchayat maps are needed to carry out restoration on Panchayat lands-Kotagiri ward maps
- Use of wetlands for cattle grazing
- Conflicts occurring in Rifle range wetlands
- How to scale up restoration efforts- Importance of community engagement in restoration work
- Raising of 30,000 saplings each year but not enough sites for restoration
- Wetland park- Plant native species- engage with the community- and create educational/awareness modules

- Rifle range and Kadakodu village are potential sites for restoration
- Drastic land use change in Wetlands in Horasholai and Kambaikadai.
- High volumes of waste is being generated and is being disposed off in wetlands
- Mechanics are setting shop near water bodies
- Catchment areas which serve as sources of recharge are usually privately owned
- People are buying land in upper catchment areas and are drawing water from wetlands
- Important to conserve water sources and grow native grasses as part of restoration
- Rifle range; (1) Good water source - need to improve the condition (2) Spread awareness about the importance of wetlands (3) Need to prepare a draft for each individual site (4) Need permission from the commissioner (5) Find out legal status of the wetland (6) Need to take into consideration the local communities' requirements and have sensitization workshops whenever necessary (7) Need to understand the existing sanitation practices of the community – document (8) Rifle range protection forum- small core group which works with NGO's, community and collector to start the rifle range wetland park project- start with a small patch of land so that people start participating (9) Meet with all stakeholders to initiate the protection of the wetland (10) Legal norms to be identified with the help of lawyers to figure out ownership of land (11) A meeting facilitated by Raju to address the above issues will happen on 3rd of June 2019 (date not confirmed)
- Kambaikadai -How to protect the quality of water- the people completely depend on the wetland
- Build a soak pit for individual houses
- Natural drains are getting blocked causing a lot of problem during storms
- People only care about their specific water source and do not care about other sources
- Try and identify self help groups – ward level- area wise
- Need to find methods to stop runoff water from contaminating the water source- works with the community to initiate a policy
- Should get contamination preference on the quality of water and soil- to identify result
- Quality test should involve the government, Ngo's, private bodies and forest department- involve all stakeholders and keep a meeting
- Shakthimalai tank has to be checked and safety has to be done-construction policy has to be clarified since there is only one scheme in Tamil Nadu- a new one is needed considering the difference in landscape between plains and hills- Tamil Nadu building rules and regulations for hill stations and plains
- The Darmona wetland issue needs to be addressed as all the waste from market and the bus stop end up here

WILDLIFE

- Introduction to the work done- Gaur monitoring, water monitoring and baseline surveys- by Chandrasekar
- Change in gaur routes due to changes in water, food and land use

- Land use changes on Milithane road has resulted in people and wildlife sharing the water source increasing human wildlife interactions
- Invasive plants are identified while monitoring water sources to help with restoration site selection
- Lantana has an ill effect on the ecosystem
- Awareness regarding co-existence between humans and wildlife needs to be increased
- It is very important to understand animal behaviour before intervening
- The forest department needs to carry out animal population surveys to get an idea of wildlife populations - documentation of population and diseases etc
- Monitoring 4 gaur herds, which have atleast 18 gaurs (depending on herds and time of year) as part of their herd, as part of wildlife monitoring to map out gaur movement
- Elephant entered Kotagiri town and will only keep coming up every summer- need to address this issue
- Wrong posts of leopard sightings on social media misleading people about the location of animals – awareness workshops need to happen

WASTE

- 7 tons/ day of waste generated in Kotagiri- 1.25 acres of land been allotted by the Panchayat as a landfill which is insufficient for the amount of waste generated
- Rivers and streams carry waste to water sources, further polluting drinking water
- The plastic ban has improved overall waste disposal in households
- There are 25 sanitary workers where each take about 500 kg of wet waste for segregation and processing
- 4-5 tons is generated by lodges and hotels alone, and the rest is from households
- Each ward should have a ward level representative which ensures segregation at source happens
- If the days of wet waste collection and dry waste collection are different, it may improve segregation practices
- There needs to be consistency with garbage disposal and collection
- Experimentation can start with a model village- which can be replicated in other villages based on trial