

Project Update: August 2011

From 20 April to second week of July 2011. 35 villages have been visited and delivered presentation to local user groups about sustainable watershed management, participatory resource conservation and large river conservation. These visits to 35 villages of whole Washim district were very good learning experiences for RSG team. During this expedition a lot of things about people's perception about nature conservation, their priorities and issues has been documented, which will clear our vision about practical conservation work. During these visits a few selected villages have been identified where more energy can be invested

3 May 2011. One-day workshop with the village youths and students of Wadgav village has been conducted. The Wadgav village is situated at the bank of river Adan. In future conservation activities will be carried out with the youth of this village.

13 May 2011. At Dhamani Khadi village National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) sponsored watershed development work is going on. However, there was too much discrimination with the labourers' wages provided much lower as compared to standard wages. We have made complaint of this to regional commissioner and the discrepancy has been solved by the authorities.

23 May 2011. In order to involve the students of the Bembla basin in the RSG work we have collaborated with PARYAWARAN MITRA (Friends of Environment) Program of Center for Environment Education (CEE) Pune, Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) Govt. of India and ArcelorMittal group. Two-day workshop with the CEE staff people arranged at Karanja Lad. In this workshop strategy to involve schools and generation of capacity building material for students has been discussed.

A nursery of the 75,000 plants has been developed as mentioned in the RSG booster proposal. The plants consist of local available fruits, timber, fodder, fibre, and fuel species. The nursery is successful venture as shown 65% survival rate of saplings.

An abstract to the conference "Planet Under pressure" to be held in March 2012 at London has been selected. The paper is in joint collaboration of Caroline Sullivan, Southern Cross University, Australia; Anuradha Bhat, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, India; Ian Harrison, Conservation International, USA; Anne-Hélène Prieur-Richard, DIVERSITAS, France and Myself. The title of the paper is "Conservation of freshwater ecosystems: towards sustainable management for future generations." Going to attend this conference in March 2012 to London. The abstract can be access here: http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net/session_sullivan.asp.

22 Jun 2011. Mumbai. Dr. Nilesh Heda and Praful Bangavkar (one of our RSG associates) visited Environment Department, Govt. of Maharashtra. We had discussion with honorable state minister of Environment Mr. Sanjay Devatale regarding various issues of the wetland

conservation. Government of Maharashtra is providing financial support to SAMVARDHAN (an NGO to which RSG recipient attached).

5 July 2011. One-day workshop on the village study and its linkages with the river conservation has been arranged. Village heads and youth from the 15 villages attended the workshop. The area of jurisdiction of each village comes under river basin; if the eco-restoration activities carried out in such village area then ultimately the goal of river conservation will be achieved automatically. However, such village eco-restoration work should be systematic considering ecological setting of area. Thus, systematic study of village environment is needed. Keeping this concept in mind we were invited people from many villages of Bembla river basin and initiated work of ecological study and preparation of the village level eco-restoration work. Especially students and village youths has been targeted for this work.

15 July 2011. New Delhi. I have presented about our experience in the linkages of river conservation with the MGNREGA at National Conference on Water Conservation. The conference has been held at Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi. The conference has been arranged by Tarun Bharat Sangh and National Youth Forum.

16 July 2011. Visited *Tarun Bharat Sangh*, Rajasthan work area and got practical feedback about practical ways of the river conservation. I am developing a river study syllabus for the students. I have provided guideline for the same. In Rajasthan state Raman Megasese award winner Rajendra Singh rejuvenated eight rivers to their natural state.

18 July 2011. Had meeting with secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India regarding nature conservation. The ministry is sending a team of the expert to our area to observe the work done during the first and second RSG.

23 and 24^h July 2011. Discussion meeting. *Waingangā Abhyas Gat* WAINGANGA STUDY GROUP is informal group of the people working to ensure the sustainable life. Two-day workshop regarding various issues of the wetland conservation, village level eco-restoration, and sustainable livelihood has been arranged. People from many districts of Vidarbha region has been gathered and attended this meeting. The work done during RSG 1 and 2 has been presented during this meeting and need of kind of similar kind of efforts has been appealed by me.

25 July 2011. One day field work with Mr. Pawan Mishra and Dr. Deelip Gavande has been done in UMA river basin to analyse the eco-restoration work done by the labour of KAJALESHWAR village. The labourers planted 90,000 plants in the land of forest department which is adjacent to river UMA.

30 July 2011. During first and second RSG labourers of Kajaleshwar village has done tremendous work of the river conservation and earned good livelihood out of this. Considering this and to do future planning and plant distribution one-day programme arranged. The programme has been attended by about 300 labourers, local assistants, and local GRAMSABHA

members and so on. This was very much fruitful programme and foundation of the future river conservation planning has been laid in this programme. The labors have been felicitated by providing them cotton scarves. About 2000 nursery plants have been distributed to the local people.

1 August 2011. A 1-day meeting with the villagers of the Vilegav village has been arranged. RSG team member Mr. Ganesh Sawarkar took lead in the arrangement of this meeting. The Vilagav village is the village of the farmers situated at the bank of river Bembla. The participatory maps have been prepared during this visit and future study of the village has been decided. Here MGNREGA labor prepared nursery of 30,000 plants and did eco-restoration work in the summer.

2 August 2011. Two members of our RSG team have been selected for the Graduate volunteer course conducted by Rural Commune, Mumbai, and SNDT women's university Mumbai. They have to work for 1 year on one of the facets of RSG project and submit a project. Rural Commune will provide them monthly stipend and travel allowance.

4 August 2011. One-day field work with the labourers of the Dhamani village has been arranged to analyse the eco-restoration work done by the labor. Most of the structures developed by the villagers have been in good quality with water filled during the monsoon rain. After the field visit discussion meeting has been held with the people.

5 August 2011. Discussion meeting with district deputy collector Mr. Shailesh Hinge has been arranged to discuss various issues related to wise implementation of the NREGA. We also visited to Ground Water Survey Department to collect maps and good quality minor basin maps have been collected.

8 August 2011. Two people of the RSG team Mr. Ganesh Sawarkar and Shahu Bhagat have visited Water and Land Management Institute, Aurangabad and got inputs regarding sustainable irrigation and collected library books from the same.



