

India

Healthy forests, healthy people, healthy climate: An initiative for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods in the North Western Ghats

News from the Field

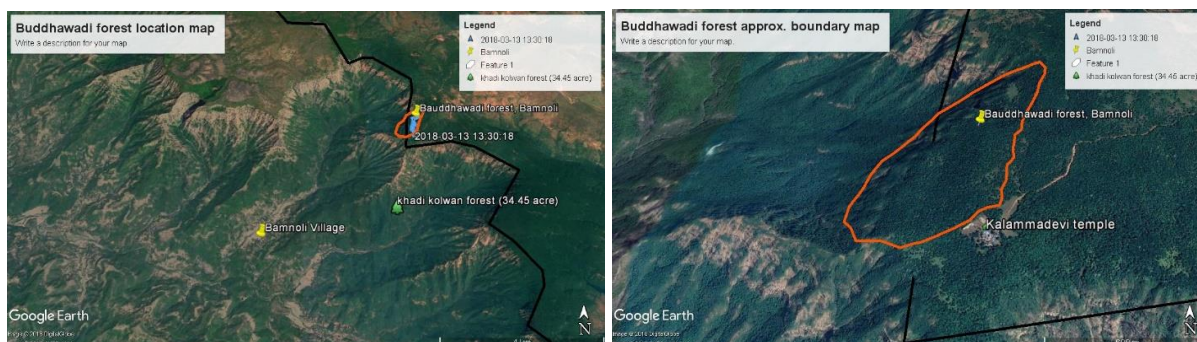
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Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF)
Conservation International

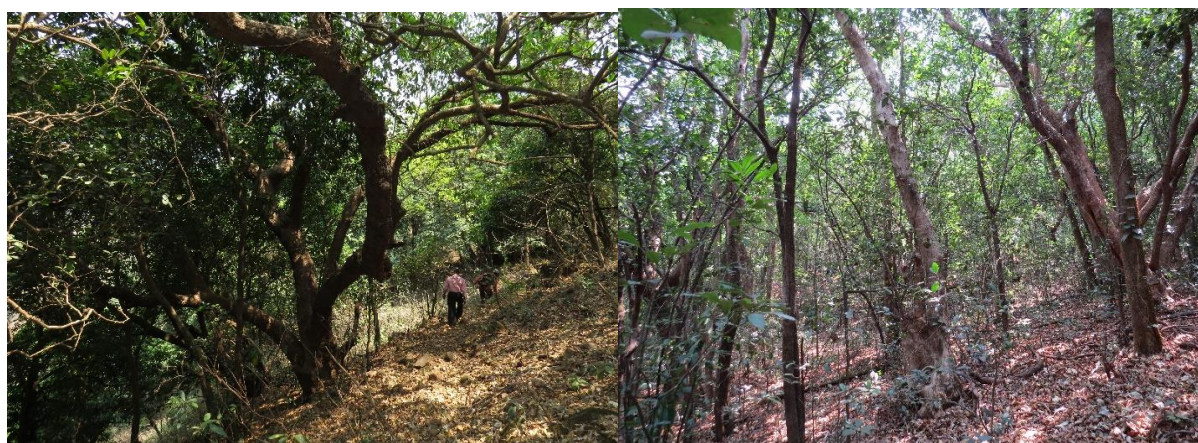
- * This project was carried out by the Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF), an Indian NGO

Conservation Agreements

The AERF team secured conservation of 153 acres of evergreen forest in the village of Bamnoli in collaboration with local community members. This agreement is unique as the forest patch under agreement is situated next to the Amba reserve forest and Sahyadri Tiger Reserve. We are expecting some interesting findings related to biodiversity in this forest in coming year. In addition, we also signed a conservation agreement for protecting 27 acres of private forest in the village of Umare. The total forest area brought under conservation agreements this quarter was therefore 180 acres.



Location of Bamnoli forest and boundary map



Forest canopy cover and gradient



Land owners signing a conservation agreement in the village of Bamnoli, Sangameshwar block

Activity 2- Energy profile survey, bio-stove demonstration and distribution

The AERF field team carried out a survey for preparation of an energy profile of the villages of Talwade and Wighravali this quarter. It was clear from the survey that the majority of the households in both villages depend on fuel wood collected from surrounding forest areas for satisfying their energy needs. In Wighravali, out of the 48 households surveyed 39 were totally dependent on wood for their energy requirements, while in Talwade, out of 53 households surveyed 46 were using wood for their household needs. The total collection of fuel wood was 7.2 tons a month in Wighravali and 8.4 tons a month in Talwade. It needs to be understood that villagers collect fuel wood an average of four months a year. These fuel wood volumes highlight the need and importance of a strategy to promote improved cooking stoves for reducing the pressure on forests and the loss of biodiversity in this region.



AERF team member during the survey. Fuel wood stack outside a house

In addition, the AERF field team conducted 11 demonstrations of bio-stoves across seven hamlets in the five villages of Katwali, Vighrawali, Talwade, Sayale, and Pur. During this quarter, the AERF team distributed 30 bio-stoves in the villages of Wighravali, Sayale, and Katavali.



Bio-stove demonstration in the villages of Talwade and Pur



Community members receiving the bio-stove from the AERF field team

Activity 3- Biodiversity survey of Anaderi forest

Supported by this project, the AERF field team completed a rapid biodiversity survey of private forest spread over 161 acres under a conservation agreement in the village of Anaderi. The survey found 105 plant species that include 58 tree species, 15 species of shrubs, 12 herb species, 16 species of climbers, and three grass species. The team was also able to document 18 species of mammals, 27 species of birds, 19 species of butterflies, and four species of ants. It clearly highlights the conservation significance that privately owned forests hold even today. It is evident that a detailed year-round survey will significantly increase the number of species of plants, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles found in this area.



The AERF field team during the biodiversity survey in Anaderi forest



Flowers of *Dillenia pentagyna* and *Fermiana colorata*

Activity 4 – Sustainable collection, processing and dispatch of FairWild-certified fruits

The AERF field team and registered collectors from Sangameshwar block collected 4,200 kg of fruits of *Terminalia bellirica* (Bibhitaki) from 12 FairWild-certified sites this quarter. By end of the quarter, the first consignment of 180 kg of Bibhitaki husk was dispatched to Bangalore. This season, 1,500 kg of certified Bibhitaki husk will be sold for export to the UK.



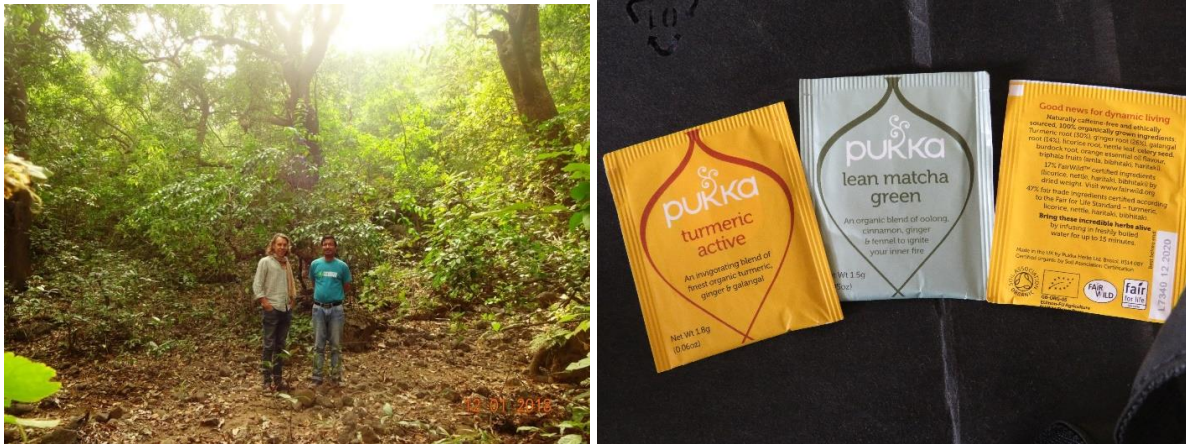
FairWild-registered collectors in the field, and women working at a processing center



FairWild-certified Bibhitaki husk packed and dispatched

Revenue Growth and Long-Term Conservation

In January 2018, the AERF team was pleased to welcome Sebastian Pole, the founder and Director of Pukka Herbs UK. Mr. Pole visited FairWild-certified areas and new sites in the northern Western Ghats to understand the potential for scaling up the FairWild-certified supply chain. He also shared news about the launch of two different teas having FairWild-certified ingredients sourced from AERF and Nature Connect, a private company established by AERF. Pukka Herbs is major buyer of FairWild-certified material from AERF and Nature Connect and Europe's leading herbal tea maker.



Mr. Sebastian Pole with Jayant Sarnaik in the field. Pukka tea sachets containing FairWild-certified material

AERF and NATURE Connect completed a pilot order of 300 kg of FairWild-certified Triphala and exported it to Pukka Herbs in the UK. Triphala is made from the fruits of *Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia bellirica*, and *Phyllanthus embellica* in equal proportion. Out of this, AERF has established FairWild-certified supply chains for *Terminalia bellirica* and *Terminalia chebula*. Nature Connect thus became only the second exporter of FairWild-certified material from India. The export will help generate higher revenues for the enterprise and communities and ensure long-term conservation of certified areas.



Consignment 300 kg of FairWild-certified Triphala sent to Pukka Herbs, UK

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