

current boundaries of parks and sanctuaries as a conservation imperative

- A little more effort would have made available some useful data relating to villages inside the reserves in the WWF vs GOI (writ petition no 337/95) case files, in the form of submissions to the Hon Supreme Court made by the various state governments
- The Science and research agenda despite noting generally 'the necessities of working in a broader landscape framework', fails to highlight the urgent need to secure crucial corridors in view of the dispersal needs of the wandering surplus tigers in a reserve

Opportunities

- Usher in a new conservation paradigm based on the principle of 'coexistence' and 'inclusion' against the existing 'hands off' and 'exclusion' which has clearly failed to secure the future of India's forests and its tigers
- Rapidly identify major forest and non-forest natural landscapes across the country and develop landscape scale management strategies in order that the inclusive coexistence agenda can be implemented with significant benefits accruing to tiger as well as local people.
- Bring about the long over due division of MoEF into separate departments of Environment and that of Forest and Wildlife
- Widen the constituency for the tiger to enable people from different walks of life to contribute meaningfully in securing its future
- Bring about the much needed revamping and upgradation of project Tiger directorate resulting in a much more professional steering of tiger conservation in the country
- Establish a functional and effective Wildlife Crime Bureau for combating crime against wildlife including tiger
- Strengthen reserve administration and promote innovative protection strategies
- Ensure accountability backed up by independent and transparent audits of tiger reserves
- Bring in additional resources to the reserves and the local people through tourism cess on hotels and by charging the users on ecological services like watershed security
- The core areas of the tiger reserves must be made inviolate. The real cost of relocation of 273 villages from the reserve cores is actually only Rs 480 crores (there doesn't seem any justification for the state to charge any cost of land for relocation as it as much

gains land within the reserves with added conservation returns) at an enhanced rate of Rs. 2.5 lakhs per family as estimated by the TTF. This is certainly an achievable task.

- Put to test the WII-PT developed new methodology for the estimation and monitoring of tiger population, its prey base and habitat on a countrywide framework. The role of the Wildlife Institute of India, WII in capacity building of the field units who would implement the suggested task is going to be critical. It would necessitate an urgent and sustained revitalisation of the WII itself from an unfortunate low it has suffered from systemic failure in recent times.
- Promote meaningful interdisciplinary research supportive of better management of protected areas and the development of landscapes surrounding them.
- Review the crisis in forestry services from front line to top line, the former requiring restoration of depleted cadres with infusion of local candidates and all across organized capacity building for the realization of paradigm shift in forest and wildlife management.

Threats

- The report remains unimplemented and forgotten with the 'newest' tiger crisis dying itself down with passage of time
- The 'vested interests' amongst the existing 'exclusive' tiger constituency succeed in rubbishing the report whereby its pluses get drowned in an ugly 'guards and guns' vs 'coexistence' mayhem.
- The MoEF succumbs to the bureaucratic indolence and fails to derive the maximum and timely benefit from the report
- Politics and events meriting greater national attention overwhelm the fate of the tiger and in turn ignore the recommendations of the report

Epilogue

The PM's task force has delivered. The state must now ensure that the threats as enumerated above are not allowed to junk the TTF report to the dustbin. It is an opportunity that must not be missed. Our 'national animal' can ill afford the luxuries of an inconsiderate state or the fancies of a few romantics. A clear-cut, feasible and sensible road map is in hand. Let us walk it. AMEN.

Final Announcement

National Symposium on "Wildlife Health and Husbandry Constraints"

Fourth Annual Convention of Association of Indian Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians
Collaboration: Assam Agricultural University, Guwahati & CZA, New Delhi
Venue: College of Veterinary Science, A.A.U., Khanapara, Guwahati, Assam, PIN: 781 022

Annual convention of the AIZ&WV and "National Symposium on Wildlife Health and Husbandry Constraints" are programmed to be held on 25th and 26th October, 2005 at College of Veterinary Science, Assam Agricultural University, Khanapara, Guwahati (Assam) with Cooperation of Assam State Zoo, Guwahati. The veterinary science professionals of Zoo and Wildlife Organizations, academic and research institutions are invited to participate, present their works/ observations/findings in the form of paper and on the aspects of wildlife health and husbandry management matters. The wildlife managers are also invited to participate and contribute.

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