

## **Bangalore techies head to the jungles every weekend to save them**

**By Maitreyee Boruah**

Bangalore, Jan 30 (IANS) A group of young techies, entrepreneurs and corporate executives in this IT eagerly wait for the weekends to pack rucksacks and head for forests to conserve flora and fauna.

Fifty young men in their early thirties have formed a Kenneth Anderson Nature Society (KANS), in memo hunter-turned-naturalist and author Kenneth Anderson, who wrote extensively on forests of South India.

KANS was set up on Gandhi Jayanti Day (Oct 2) in 2008 after the group members joined a Yahoo! g [kennethanderson@yahoogroups.com](mailto:kennethanderson@yahoogroups.com), started by nature lovers across the world.

"Flora and fauna have been hugely damaged in the state due to large scale deforestation. Moreover, we a fans of Anderson and decided to do something for the cause of conservation," Hari Somashekar, directc and awareness, KANS, and a freelance sales consultant for IT and services companies, told IANS.

As a first step, the society started conservation efforts in the jungles of Denkanikota taluk, which is 5! Bangalore in Krishnagiri district of neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

The jungles are spread across 1,200 sq km. In fact, a number of stories by Anderson were set in the place, which was once teeming with tigers, elephants and leopards. Along with Pennagram reserve fores in neighbouring Dharmapuri district, it forms a forest land of approximately 2,400 sq km, with the Cauve one side.

"We want to convert the entire area into a protected wildlife sanctuary," said Hari.

Rampant encroachment of the jungles has turned it into a war zone between man and elephant, as the are home to wild elephants.

"Since our society was formed, we have been conducting awareness drives among the local people importance of saving and protecting forest land and its inhabitants. Recently on Jan 10, we also gifted 46 of the Denkanikota forest range uniform kits, which included sweaters, caps, shirts, pants, foo accessories," said Hari.

Since the formation of the society, the members regularly travel to the Bandipur and Nagarhole Natio Karnataka. Sharing the same ecological features, Nagarhole and Bandipur together cover about 1,500 which 500 sq km has been demarcated a "Wilderness Zone".

The Nagarhole National park is situated at a point connecting Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Bandipu the first few forests to be designated as a tiger reserve under Project Tiger.

Both are home to elephants, deer, leopards, tigers, wild pigs and sloth bears, to name a few.

"The highway (passing through these parks) has led to the death of a number of animals," rued l Acharya, president of the society and managing director of Dhithi Infoserve Pvt. Ltd, a company the software solutions.

"As a part of our awareness drive, we stand right in the middle of the road, stop the vehicles anc pamphlets espousing the cause of safety of animals. Along with distributing pamphlets we also explain to how important it is to save the animals," said Hari.

They also paint the roads to alert vehicle users that animals cross the road both during day and night.

"Seventy percent of drivers whom we stop patiently listen to us and promise to be more alert. Thirty pe bother to stop their vehicles. We are confident that our awareness drive will soon bring some tangible re Hari.

Ask what drives these young men to spend their weekends in jungles when their peers spend time in mov pubs, Sunil Gaikwad, a member of the society, puts it succinctly: "love for the forests".

(Maitreyee Boruah can be contacted at [m.boruah@ians.in](mailto:m.boruah@ians.in))

Indo-Asian News Service