

**MINUTES OF THE DISCUSSIONS HELD BETWEEN SCIENTISTS OF  
KFRI AND THE SENIOR FOREST OFFICERS ON 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2018**

---

The meeting commenced at 9.30 AM in the Conference Hall of Forest Headquarters. The list of participants is attached.

At the outset, PCCF (FM) welcomed the participants. He referred to the presence of Dr.C.T.S Nair in the meeting, and his extraordinary ability for both hindsight and foresight, which should be effectively utilised by both KFD and KFRI. He also emphasised the need for strengthening true relationships between KFRI and KFD for the benefit of both. He said that the discussions were to be centered around areas of research/ collaboration useful to the department, as also the expectation of Forest Officers from KFRI, so that at the end of the discussions, it should be possible to shortlist those areas which are mutually beneficial. Interactions with KFRI should not be limited to KFDF projects, as is being done at present. KFRI can play an active role in selection of TSPAs, skill development of VSSs etc. PCCF (FM) said that this should mark the beginning of frequent meetings and meaningful discussions between KFD & KFRI.

Thereafter, HoFF in his opening remarks, mentioned about the privilege that Kerala has, in that the State has an exclusive institution (KFRI) to cater to the forestry research requirement of the State. Whether KFD had made full use of this exclusive privilege, remains a question. However HoFF felt that the interface should have been closer, deeper and more intense. HoFF stressed that an open exchange of views was expected in the ensuing deliberations.

Thereafter the participants introduced themselves.

Director, KFRI who spoke thereafter, referred to the fact that KFD is the major stakeholder of KFRI. He expressed his thanks to PCCF (FM) and HoFF for the help in the formulation of the Vision-Mission document of KFRI.

Dr.C.T.S Nair, former Director of KFRI spoke thereafter. He said that the meeting should be an initial discussion on what KFD wants from KFRI. The concerns of the Department require to be fully accomplished. It is also needed to formulate priorities on both long term and short term basis.

PCCF (FM) briefly dwelt upon the priority areas of Forestry during the 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan and the proposed National Forest Policy 2018. He then listed out and briefly spoke on 20 major challenges which had been identified as follows.

1. Discard "business as usual".
2. Landscape approach.
3. Condition of each watershed to be systematically monitored.
4. Regular monitoring of water quality & yield (seasonal and yearly changes).
5. Identifying and establishing/ securing wildlife corridors.
6. Re-locating settlements from inside forests to fringes.
7. Updating biodiversity registers.
8. Well thought out strategy for eco-tourism – Kuruva Island, pressure from VSS.
9. Realizing unutilised potential of TOF.
10. Comprehensive governance improvement - KFA, impeding regulations to be removed KPTGA.
11. Fire prevention, detection and suppression.
12. Innovative methodologies for valuation of forests and WL.
13. Measurement of outputs and outcomes.
14. Human-Animal Conflict: 2<sup>nd</sup> generation problems, misguided solutions, hesitant preventive structures, RRT, UAV.
15. Management of Invasive Species.
16. Sandal regeneration / protection: RFID.
17. Solid Waste Pollution : Sabarimala.
18. Community Resource Management Plans.
19. Technology demonstration sites – 3 sites of 500 to 1500 ha.
20. Marine National Park & Butterfly Park.

Dr.T.V.Sajeev, Scientist & Research Co-ordinator, KFRI thereafter made a detailed presentation of the Vision & Mission of KFRI. The vision of KFRI was a World Class Centre of Excellence in tropical forestry for humanity. To realise this vision, the Mission of the Institute has been set as "Undertaking inter and multi disciplinary Research in Tropical Forestry Research to answer fundamental questions on the working of nature and to address practical problems in management of the natural capital". In order to achieve this, KFRI will work on four major aspects.

1. Sustainable Management of Natural Capital.
  - Understanding the long term dynamics of forest eco systems with respect to biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, provision of ecosystem services and development of suitable management protocols.
2. Restoration of Natural Capital.
  - Understanding the process of ecosystem degradation, bio diversity loss and decline in ecosystem services and to evolve restoration strategy.
3. Enhancement of Forest Productivity and Services.
  - Developing methods and strategies for enhancing timber and non timber products in forestry and agro forestry systems in a suitable manner.
4. Human dimensions of forestry.
  - To explore the history and socio economic of forests in the context of indigenous people, policy, livelihood, tourism, governance, training, extension and economic valuation of ecosystem services.

All the aforesaid aspects were elaborately dwelt upon in the ensuing presentations.

Dr.C.T.S. Nair put in a word of caution to have an internal look into the available resources and technical capacity of KFRI to address the issues involved.

After deliberations and based on available resources and technical capacity, the following six key areas of primary concern to the department, were prioritised:

1. Managing Forests for Water.
2. Management of Human -Animal conflict
3. Eco-Tourism and carrying capacity.
4. Managing Forest Fires - different aspects.
5. Managing plantations for improved productivity.
6. Invasive species management

1. Managing Forest of Water.

Dr.R.V.Varma [former Scientist of KFRI and former Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board] made his observations, regarding the focal theme of 'Forest for Water'. His observation on the very poor undergrowth in the catchments of rivers and the 3 booklets brought out by CWRDM were highlighted. The necessity of a Hydrologist's involvement and the necessity to bring in the involvement of CWRDM for the next meeting was pointed out.

CCF, Southern Circle requested the four following priorities in the ensuing Research/ studies of KFRI.

- The suitability of the locations in forests for setting up water conservation structures.
- Evaluating the suitability of the existing structures.
- Identifying the ideal locations for setting up such structures.
- Identifying and prescribing suitable grass species for stabilising water percolation structures.

CCF, Central Circle referred to the requirement of a multi disciplinary team for Working Plan formulations and the inclusion of a scientific community for the preparation of Micro plans. Problems are also required to identified and studied region wise.

PCCF (SF) spoke on the necessity for the augmentation of Shola forests with regards to the focus on water. He expressed his apprehension whether any study had been done on the function of Sholas in water conservation.

Dr.C.T.S Nair remarked that clear preliminary guidelines and action oriented programmes are required from KFRI at ground level for addressing the priority areas of the KFD. For this, fragmented information requires to be collected and compiled. Watersheds are required to be classified and a water focused Forest Management prescribed, so that Forest Management is reoriented to ensure the clear and sustained supply of water. The most sensitive areas are to be focused upon.

HoFF remarked at this juncture that the study could be undertaken in consultation with expert agencies in the field. A system of monitoring quality and quantity and seasonality (off season flow to be included) of water is required to be devised.

## 2. Management of Human – Animal Conflict

To have focussed attention, identification and selection of hotspots are required. Dr. C.T.S. Nair suggested Aralam, Wayanad, Palakkad, Munnar and Kasaragod as the prospective sites for the study. Mitigative measures are also required to be suggested.

## 3. Eco-Tourism and Carrying Capacity

As regards the study on the assessment of the carrying capacity of Ecotourism sites, the guidelines for the management of current sites, emerging sites and potential sites would be required. The inputs allowable [structures / facilities] under each Ecotourism site need to be prescribed. Thirty sites are suggested to be taken up in the first phase.

## 4. Managing Forest Fires

As regards the study on the managing forest fires, it was suggested that the norms for monitoring different types of forest fires and its likely impact in monetary terms of potential loss on each forest type (ie. the damage costing for each forest area) is required. A clear strategy (management tool is also required to be

prescribed. The impact of fire on selected ecosystems shall also be included and effective management strategy on these selected ecosystems suggested.

5. Managing Plantations for improved productivity.

As regards the study on the improved productivity of plantations, Dr.C.T.S. Nair opined that a PoP for improving and sustaining the productivity of plantation is required.

6. Management of invasive species.

As regards the study on the management of invasive species is concerned, the meeting was informed that the research project has already been sanctioned to KFRI under KFDF, and the study has come out with the management tool for three out of ten invasive species selected under the project. Study for the management of the other invasive species is also under way. The management prescriptions are to be tested in the field, for which the labour inputs (for the trials conducted) has been requested from KFRI.

After detailed discussions, the following areas were shortlisted for the studies to be taken up by KFRI and the decisions taken are as follows.

### Decisions

1. Managing Forest for Water.

In consultation / collaboration with expert organizations in the field, prepare draft guidelines on how to manage a few selected medium sized watersheds so that the quantity, quality and availability (extended period) of water yield from forest is improved. This will be done over a period of next six months.

2. Management of the Human Animal Conflict.

Availing the services of national experts in the field, study the Human Animal Conflict issues in the selected hotspots and suggest short / medium / long term measures to address the issue. Time frame - 10 months.

3. Managing the Eco-Tourism Sites and Assessing the Carrying Capacity.

Assess the carrying capacity of the identified eco-tourism sites, assess the potential in the upcoming sites and train 100 Master Trainers to assess the carrying capacity. Time frame-6 months.

4. Managing the Forest Fires.

Study the impact of forest fires on sensitive areas, impact of fire protection measures on the eco-system, develop norms for assessing the loss due to fire and suggest appropriate fire protection measures for the different types of forests. Time frame-8 months.

5. Managing the Plantations for Improved Productivity.

Carry out a comprehensive study of the measures to be taken to get optimum productivity from the plantations the extent of which is to be brought down to the optimum level. This will include the criteria and indicators for selecting and maintaining such plantations (soil, silviculture, entomological, pathological, growth performance, water yield and other criteria). - Time frame 10 months.

In conclusion it was remarked by Dr.C.T.S. Nair that a good beginning has been made and that the process has to be continued and strengthened.

The meeting concluded with vote of thanks to the chairman at 2.15 PM.



**Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
&  
Head of Forest Force**

