

1.9km wall to protect Aarey forest

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MUMBAI: A boundary wall around the newly declared 812 acres of reserved forest in Aarey Colony will be built by the state public works department.

The 1.9km wall will separate the reserved forest from the rest of the Aarey Colony. The reserved forest area is already in the physical possession of the forest department that has posted four guards and a forester to guard the reserved forest from encroachment.

“We have already built two chowkies and another two will be constructed soon,” said G Mallikarjun, chief conservator and director, Sanjay Gandhi National Park. The reinforced concrete

wall to be built at a cost of Rs 3.3 crore is expected to stave off human encroachment on the reserved forest land. “It will be around 1.5 to 2 metres in height and will prevent slum encroachment. It will not hinder the movement of leopards. It should be ready by the year-end,” said Mallikarjun.

It is estimated that there are around 45 leopards in the national park and surrounding areas including Aarey Colony.