

Breathing life into Bandipur forest through seed balls

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After a massive fire destroyed the flora and fauna of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in February, several organisations and groups have keen to revive the greenery Bandipur by throwing seeds balls in the forest area. In lieu of this, workshops were held in Bengaluru on how to make seed balls, which the groups planned on throwing inside the forest area.

But this is something that is not allowed by the Karnataka Forest Department, as the seed balls can affect the bio-diversity of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Warning that funds are being collected for such drives for self-gain, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Sridhar Punati says, “Lantanas (a genus of about 150 species of perennial flowering plants) have been completely destroyed by the forest fire. We have already procured bamboo seed balls that will be thrown into the forest area where there is no vegetation. This exercise will be done by the forest department itself. The planting of any other trees will destroy the biodiversity of forest. The nature of the forest is such that it will

revive itself without much human interference. We have come across many groups that are raising funds in the name of reviving Bandipur, which is just for self gain. An official order from the Karnataka Forest Department will be issued in this regard.”

T Balachandra, field director of Bandipur Project Tiger, reiterates this, and adds, “We have procured the bamboo seeds and are waiting for a couple of spells of rain to begin sowing them. Our intention is to provide fodder by growing bamboos. We are not allowing any private parties to throw seed balls inside the forest areas.”

Priti Rao, founder of Soil and Soul, who is associated with one such workshop to revive Bandipur, says that what they planned on doing isn’t wrong, because the plan was never to penetrate deep into the forest. “We didn’t plan to go deep inside Bandipur to throw the seed balls; it can be done on the road side as well. It is humans who have created boundaries — fire doesn’t have boundaries. There are many areas surrounding Bandipur that are lying barren and don’t come under the reserve forest. This is where we plan on throwing the seed balls,” she says.

Phaneesh K, project manager of Ragi Kana, which recently held a seed-ball making workshop, says, “We conducted the workshop earlier this week, but we didn’t charge participants for this. We haven’t raised funds in the name of reviving Bandipur.”

Source:<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/spotlight/tossing-seed-balls-inside-bandipur-will-affect-biodiversity-of-the-forest/articleshow/69026508.cms>