

Forest Department Conducts Daylong Workshop on Ecotourism

11 April 2021

Jammu: Forest Department today conducted a daylong workshop on “Ecotourism: Status and Prospects” for formulating strategy to develop the Ecotourism in entire Jammu and Kashmir.

Commissioner Secretary Forests, Ecology & Environment, Sanjeev Verma, was the Chief Guest on the occasion while as Rehana Batul, Secretary Tribal Affairs; P.K. Singh, PCCF/ Director, Soil & Water Conservation; Dr. Mohit Gera, PCCF Forest Department; Suresh Gupta, Chief Wildlife Warden; Sarvesh Rai, CEO CAMPAA; Asaf Mamood Sagar, Director FRI; Vasu Yadav, Managing Director J&K Forest Development Corporation; Frankoi, Director Forest Protection Force, Director Tribal Affairs, Director Tourism Jammu and Officers from Forest, Tribal Affairs, Tourism and Rural Development Panchayat Raj Departments while also present in the workshop.

Speaking on the occasion, Sanjeev Verma suggested to scale up creation of Ecotourism opportunities in J&K as the natural beauty of landscape offers huge potential for it. He added that due priority will be given to develop this niche segment of tourism for Nature lovers.

He also said that the Forest Department should explore the collaboration with other departments like Tourism, Rural Development & Panchayat Raj and Tribal Affairs for developing Ecotourism here.

The Commissioner Secretary also insisted on Capacity Building of staff and communities to take up the management of Ecotourism and related activities. He also advised the department on likely adverse impacts of Ecotourism activities to ecology and culture of the area.

He asked them that all stakeholders must ensure a “Win-Win” situation where Nature lovers are able to appreciate Wilderness of area with the involvement of Forest dependent communities facilitated by Forest Department.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mohit Gera highlighted the enormous Ecotourism potential of J&K which can provide livelihood opportunities to Forest dependent communities including tribals and other traditional forest dwellers. He also discussed salient features of Government of India draft ecotourism policy as well as draft policy of J&K.

Dr. Gera highlighted that the main objectives of these policies are to utilize Ecotourism as a tool for conservation with the beneficial involvement of local communities for providing environment friendly ecotourism to Nature Lovers, Wildlife enthusiasts, Youth, senior citizens and other serious ecotourists.

He impressed upon the regulation of ecotourism in a manner that maintains the ecological and cultural integrity of the area. He said that Forest Department has already developed few Ecotourism and camping sites like DKG in Rajouri. More such sites are being developed in Bangus valley Kashmir, Sukrala Devi in Jammu region, Panagar in Basohli to provide ecotourism opportunities to visitors.

PCCF also said that the department is planning to develop Ecotourism in “society mode” with the involvement of PRIs wherein facilities like nature camps, Home-stays and eco-friendly accommodations could be developed for various kinds of ecotourism activities.

Suresh Kumar Gupta on the occasion gave a detailed presentation on trekking routes which will be operational from 1st May, 2021. He informed that with the recent approval of 7 trekking routes by the government, a total of 18 trekking routes will be made available for ecotourism.

He also informed that some ecofriendly facilities will also be provided en route for trekkers who shall be accompanied by a guide considering the safety of the tourists.

Conservator of Forests, West Circle Rajouri gave a presentation on ecotourism initiatives on Dera-Ki-Gali in the West Circle and DFO Billawar, explained the ecotourism activities taken up by the Forest Department at Sukrala Devi.

Source: <https://indiaeducationdiary.in/forest-department-conducts-daylong-workshop-on-ecotourism/>