

## To protect green cover, forest dept plans boundary walls along highways

Aditya Dev | TNN | Feb 11, 2016,

Agra: The UP forest department plans to construct boundary walls around forests on the sides of highways at a cost of Rs 35 crore. It also plans to get a survey of the forest cover in Agra done.

Supreme Court had earlier ordered the department to go ahead with its plan to plant around 12 lakh trees in two years in Agra and adjoining districts. Officials said protecting the trees is a far bigger challenge than planting them.

On May 8 last year, the apex court had ordered the department to plant 6.2 lakh saplings in the Taj Trapezium Zone by August 31, 2015, which the department has already completed. To ensure that the forest department does not wash its hand of the issue after the plantation drive, the court has asked it to monitor the trees' growth for next 10 years.

"We have sent a proposal to the government for approval. In this phase, highways in Chalesar side will be covered. The cost of constructing boundary walls around the entire forest area in Agra will be much more. Earlier, barbed wires were put up, but they are not found to be

very effective," said divisional forest officer KK Singh.

The official informed TOI that Greater Noida Development Authority has already initiated this project in areas located within its supervision, in a joint collaboration with the forest department. Similarly, boundary walls are being built around Kukrail Reserve forest, 9km from Lucknow. "Encroachment on forest lands and cutting of trees are major threats being faced by the forest department. High boundary walls will not only demarcate our lands from others but provide protection to green cover," Singh added.

The official said that the department is also trying to get a survey of forest area in Agra done, so that they are clearly identified and protected. "For this Remote Sensing Application Centre and revenue department will compare their records on forest land," Singh added.

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/To-protect-green-cover-forest-dept-plans-boundary-walls-along-highways/articleshow/50951294.cms>