

Action sought against builders dumping construction debris inside Shola forest

STAFF REPORTER

UDHAGAMANDALAM

Local activists have called for strict action against builders dumping construction debris into a stream and a native forest patch in Muthorai Palada near Udhagamandalam.

They alleged that the waste was being dumped into the stream by local builders, despite complaints made by local residents to the Doddabetta village panchayat.

“Construction wastes such as cement, mortar, brick and paint are being dumped into the stream for the last few months by people at night. It is blocking the water flow and could lead to localised flooding during spells of heavy rain,” said R. Ganesh, a resident of Muthorai Palada.

G. Janardhanan, president of the Ooty Public Awareness Association, said that this was not the first time that construction waste was being dumped near Udhagamandalam town. “For many years, the area surrounding the Ooty Lake was being



Construction waste dumped along a culvert over a stream near a reserve forest in Muthorai Palada near Udhagamandalam. ■ ROHAN PREMKUMAR

used as a dumping ground for construction waste. After a wall was built around the lake a few years ago, other areas near town are being used for dumping garbage,” alleged Mr. Janardhanan.

“Construction waste can have hazardous substances, which when dumped in streams could lead to increased water toxicity, affecting wildlife,” added Mr. Janardhanan, who said that the area where the waste was being dumped also had

one of the few remaining patches of native Shola forests close to Udhagamandalam town. “This area has quite a lot of biodiversity, which too can be affected,” he said.

T. Mariappan, another resident, said that the forest department, the local body as well as the police need to work together to stop trucks transporting construction waste. “Offenders should be fined heavily, to act as a deterrent,” he added.