

# Increase in trespassing on 45 acres of urban forest in Wanowrie & Ramtekdi

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Pune: A large plot of forest land, spanning Wanowrie and Ramtekdi, managed by the Green Nandanvan Foundation, lies at risk of forest fires due to continuous trespassing as there are no boundary walls to protect it.

Many residents enter the forest throughout the day to dispose of waste such as old couches, mattresses, garbage etc. “We clean the entire patch daily. In case of large mattresses, we cut them up and transport them to a location, where we call PMC workers to pick them up,” said Sandeep Kamble, co-founder of the foundation.

A more severe problem persists with people entering the premises at night to indulge in drinking and merrymaking.

Volunteers of the foundation said they have sometimes collected 30 large bags of alcohol bottles from the area. Forest fires have often occurred from cigarette butts thrown carelessly, with the area facing at least five man-made fires, which destroyed 50 trees this year. “We are facing this problem because there are no boundary walls or gates,” said Kamble.

Around 50 volunteers from the foundation have been carrying out plantation drives in the area every morning along with the forest department since 2021. They have planted over 4,000 trees on 45 acres of forest land in Wanowrie and Ramtekdi.

Last year, several trees were damaged in forest fire.

The foundation has sent a written proposal to the forest department for putting up boundary walls to prevent trespassing as well as vehicles from entering the area“We have started the process of creating boundary walls across 25 spots in urban forests in city,” said Ashutosh Shendge, assistant conservator of forest.

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