

Water absorption trenches to protect forest land

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Project taken up under Vana Sanjeevani initiative

In order to minimise man-animal conflicts and to put an end to encroachment on forest land, the Forest Department has dug water absorption trenches to a length of 160 km along the border of forests in the Vijayawada, Mylavaram and Nuzvid ranges of Krishna district. The trenches have indirectly helped recharge an estimated 13 lakh cubic metres of groundwater since early 2017. Nearly 100 km of trenches were dug in 2017 alone. Of the targeted additional 100 km this year, a stretch of 60 kilometres of trenches has been dug by early July. The Forest Department has taken up the project under the banner of 'Vana Sanjeevani'. "The trenches have been planned along the forest that borders with revenue and private land. Primarily, they have come up along the border of the Kondapalli Reserve Forest", Vijayawada in-charge Divisional Forest Officer Ramachandra

Rao told The Hindu. The trench is three metres wide and three metres deep, which the wildlife cannot cross to enter human habitat.

"Trees on the forest area border are being spared as the tree itself serves as the border. The trench will become a robust evidence in deciding the border of the respective forest, apart from preventing encroachments. We are able to recover the



encroached forest land by planning the trenches," Mr. Rao said. The Nuzvid, Vijayawada and Mylavaram forest ranges have been witnessing hunting of deer and blackbuck during summer, when wild animals come out in search of water. "The experiment of the water absorption trenches is yielding results in multiple ways — recharge of groundwater and conservation of wildlife. About 13 lakh cubic metres of groundwater has been recharged owing to the trenches, as per our study", he said.

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