

SANJAYVAN –ARAVALI CITY FOREST

Sanjay van is a part of Mehrauli/South central ridge of Delhi. The Delhi ridges are the continuation of 800 km long, ancient Aravali mountains (1500 million years old) spreading from Gujrat traversing through Rajasthan ,Haryana. and entering Delhi. The Mehrauli ridge has been under tremendous pressure due to ever increasing urbanization and development .To protect and develop this heritage into a green belt ,DDA in 70's carved this area of 784 acres now called Sanjay Van. It is tucked in adjacent to Qutub minar-& is clockwise surrounded by Qutub Institutional area ,Aurovindo marg,Mehrauli- Kishengarh and Aruna Asaf Ali marg.

One can approach Sanjay Van (a notified reserve forest as per the the 1994 notification under section 4 of the Indian Forest Act(1927) from Aruna Asaf Ali marg (entry near Neela Hauz next to CPWD building) or from Qutub Institutional area(behind International Management Institute &Rockland hospital) or from Aurovindo marg entry next to TB Hospital.

ATTRACTIONS

.This centrally located forest is an ideal place for long walks, jogging, cycling , yoga ,bird watching and jungle trails to observe the flora and fauna. With the recent push by DDA in its development , SV is getting popular day by day specially with school children on educational trips, and by nature lovers & bird watchers.

Working With Nature (WWN) an empowered citizen group in coordination with DDA is regularly bringing school children on conservation education to this forest which includes jungle trails, tree plantation, bird watching and jungle cleaning etc.

Tejendra Point 2011 A vantage point developed and inaugurated by Sh.Tejendra Khanna Lt. Gov. Delhi to commemorate 2011 International year of Forests. A 21 ft. high MACHAN has been erected to see the scenic beauty of this forest, observe flora, fauna and the magnificent view of Qutub minar, wall of LALKOT and BhulBhullaya .

11th century old ruins of the wall of Lalkot fort / Quila Rai Pithora (Prithviraj Chauhan) are on a height towards Mehrauli. One has to climb to reach the top of this wall to enjoy the magnificent aerial view of the ridge forest. Nearby on its periphery touching Mehrauli is Ashique Allah Dargah- Nazaria peer and an old well

FAUNA

The forest once the hunting range of Firozshah Tughlaque provides natural habitat for Blue Bulls, Golden Jackals , small lizards to big Lizard like Monitor, Snakes, small to big birds like Grey & Purple Herons and Peacocks. The brand ambassadors of insects the butterflies are fluttering every where in the forest. There are a variety of resident, passage migrant and migratory birds .Some of the rare birds recorded are Golden Orioles, crested pied cuckoos, Asian Paradise Fly catcher & Eurasian Sparrow Hawk. Sanjay van is a paradise for bird watchers & has potential of becoming a bird sanctuary. Besides the recent first sighting of a striped Hyena ,Asian Paradise Fly catcher has nested at SV after 35 years.

FLORA

Being a part of Aravali, SANJAY VAN is having tracks which are slightly elevated with rocky land form. This semi arid habitat encourages growth of thorny Acacias.

NATIVE TREES

The common native trees are Ronjh (*Acacia leucophloea*), Hingot (*Balanites roxburghii*), Bistendu (*Diospyros cordifolia*) and Jal (*Salvedora oleoides*). Desi Keekar (*acacia nilotica*), Khair (*Acacia catechu*) and Khejdi/Jhand (*Prosopis cineraria*) are left only a few in the forest. Among these trees are the stunted/ bushy growths of thorny Heens (*Capparis sepiaria*), Taint/Kareel (*Capparis deciduas*), Jungli Karonda (*Carissa spinarum*), & Ber (*Zizyphus mauritiana*) etc.

Sanjay van being controlled by the Horticulture Dept as such emphasis has been to plant ornamental trees mainly on road sides. Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*), Karanj/Papdi (*Pongamia pinnata*) & Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) have been planted extensively. Besides there are other few trees planted of Maharukh (*Ailanthus excels*), Chudel papdi (*Holoptelia integrifolia*), Gular (*Ficus racemosa*), Semal (*Bombax ceiba*) Siris (*Albizia lebbek*), Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*), Bargad (*Ficus benghalensis*) etc. There is a healthy growth of Bamboos planted along side the water .

To extend green cover the forest dept encouraged growing of Vilati Keekar (*Prosopis juliflora*) an exotic Mexican fast growing tree which does not need any looking after and has become the most dominant tree. The experiment has proved to be a disaster. Due to excessive and fast proliferation of *Prosopis juliflora* it has become the dominated tree and the forest has undergone severe degradation. It is pushing ground water level down , drying up surface soil, and is mainly responsible for killing native flora & making them extinct.

Sewage water and effluent discharged into the forest is a further assault to SV native flora and fauna which is so crucial in maintaining the ecological balance of South Delhi.

The native Aravali vegetation is under threat on account of extensive Vilaiti keekar (Pj) . This along with introduced ornamental trees have left it only in few pockets and account hardly 1/4th of Sanjay Van

RESTORATION OF SANJAY VAN BY DDA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WWN(Working With Nature) TEAM

From 2010 onwards DDA has launched a massive drive to revive this forest into its pristine form and make an Aravali city forest and a medicinal forest at Sanjay Van. On request of local citizens and bird watchers it is also being explored to make a bird sanctuary at Sanjay Van

With the direction and kind patronage of His Excellency Shri Tejendra Khanna, Hon.Lt. Governor Delhi, Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Vinod Rawat has been associated to work with DDA . AVM Rawat has organized a citizen group of locals under the banner of WORKING WITH NATURE for the revival of this green lung of Delhi in a scientific manner. Renowned ecologists Prof PS Ramakrishnan (JNU), Dr KS Rao , Head of Ecology, Delhi University , Sh Rajendra Singh, Magasaysay awardee, " Waterman" of Rajasthan and bird watcher Dr Surya Prakash of JNU are some of the advisors_of WWN.

Making of-ARAVALI CITY FOREST

To conserve native trees of Aravali region the existing species are being protected and spread to increase the forest cover. Aprox. a lac native trees have been raised in the last two and half years.

Also, native trees of this ridge forest which have become extinct or are on the verge of becoming extinct are being reintroduced. This includes recently planted hundreds of KHEJDI (*Prosopis cineraria*), DHAK (*Butea monosperma*), Kumpttha (*Acacia modesta*), Khair (*Acacia catechu*) and Desi keekar (*Acacia indica*) etc. Arrangement are in hand to plant other missing native Aravali trees like Dhau (*Anogeissus pendula*), Kulu tree (*Sterculia urens*), Salai (*Boswellia serrata*) etc

Spread of Vilaiti Keekar (*Prosopis juliflora*) and its further proliferation is being controlled by constant removal of its seed pods and young saplings. Open areas are being filled with native trees to avoid its intrusion.

ARAVALI MEDICINAL FOREST

The diversity of Medicinal plants is very rich in Delhi, therefore a Medicinal forest is being set up to aware the visitors and also to educate school children. 178 acres of Sanjay van, located behind TB hospital, once under cultivation & presently occupied by *Prosopis juliflora* and planted ornamental trees, is being transformed into medicinal forest. At present emphasis is to plant native medicinal trees. Dr Sudhir Krihna Sec. Min. Of Urban Development inaugurated this forest on Earth Day the 22nd April 2012. Some of the medicinal trees planted so far are of AONLA (*Emblica officinalis*), BAEL (*Aegle marmelos*), NEEM (*Azadirachta indica*), HINGOT (*Balanites roxburghii*), AMALTAS (*Cassia fistula*), ARJUN (*Terminalia arjuna*), BAHERA (*Terminalia bellerica*), SAINJANA (*Moringa oleifera*). GUM GUGGUL (*Commiphora wightii*) a very important medicinal tree much recommended by Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha (CCRAS) has been obtained from Rajasthan and planted.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND MAKING OF A BIRD SANCTUARY.

The noticeable achievement is the recent restoration & development of existing 5 inter connected water bodies, three semi dried filled with vegetation & last two polluted with incoming house hold waste water from Mehrauli. By using simple and innovative technique they have been transformed into filled water bodies flowing with much cleaner water round the year on way to Hauz khas lake. The improved BOD is fit to sustain Biological life & as such this water is now being used for watering the saplings. These water ponds are also a big step in attracting more birds, creating a big source of water harvesting and recharging water in and areas around. In future this created reservoir of water has a potential for its reuse at Vasant Kunj

There is a potential for improvement in local ground water for population living in vicinity. To exploit this potential simple inexpensive water harvesting structures are being made to arrest rain water and erosion of soil as guided by Sh Rajendra Singh the Magasaysay awardee. It will recharge ground water and in a few years time create water body underneath this protected forest and of JNU, thereby also recharging the adjacent Neela Hauz.

To work towards a bird sanctuary at Sanjay Van water bodies in and around are being revived. Cleaning and developing of water bodies, planting of appropriate bird friendly vegetation and introduction of fishes in ponds are some of the recent steps in this direction.

EDUCATION & LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

Sanjay van located in the heart of city with easy access and connectivity provides great potential for conducting conservation education. To exploit this, Working With Nature (WWN) group in coordination with DDA has been bringing at regular intervals school children for jungle trail, bird watching , planting of trees and for jungle cleaning etc. It gives a great sense of involvement amongst school children and locals to be a part of restoration & in making of an Aravali forest. From 2012 this facility is also extended to children with special needs , underprivileged and of not so rich schools of neighboring areas. M /S BRY AIR is supporting WWN group in this cause and also in creating awareness towards environment assists in organizing functions at Sanjay van on Earth Day (22nd April),Environment Day (6th June),Wild Life week(Nov 1st week), 2011 International Year of Forest etc.

WWN group-DDA is also encouraging locals to plant trees on special occasions like birth days, anniversaries etc. Ready made pits and plants are provided free of cost

COTACTS

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AT SANJAY VAN

WWN Team	Smt Devika Rawat (M-9810302370),
	Smt Mamta Shah.(M-9711425737)
	Air Vice Marshal(Retd.) Vinod Rawat
	Gp.Capt(Retd.). Vijay Kapur(M-9910643258)

PLANTING TREE AT SANJAY VAN	AD Hort Div iv
	SO Hort Div iv
	WWN Team

