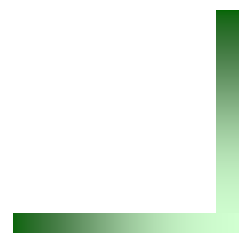


SITE STRATEGY FOR LAWACHARA NATIONAL PARK



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Prepared For:
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SITE STRATEGY: LAWACHARA NATIONAL PARK

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SITE STRATEGY: LAWACHARA NATIONAL PARK

1 Environment Scanning

Location

- Lawachara National Park is located in Kamalgonj Upazila of Maulavibazar District, about 160 km north east of Dhaka, well connected by the national highway.
- The Park has an area of 1250 ha and comprises forests of southern and eastern parts of West Bhanugach Reserve Forests within the Lawachara, Chautali and Kalachara Beats of Maulavibazar Range.
- The Park was notified in 1996 as per the wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act of 1974.
- Roughly 15% of forest cover is completely lost, and another 60% of its area thinned considerably due to illegal logging and fuel wood collection.
- Wild life has declined by roughly 80% and other forms of habitats have become extinct or are facing near extinction.

Settlements

- There are 18 settlements (villages) within the landscape covering 5 km from the forest boundary. Out of the 18 villages, 2 villages are located inside the forest inhabited by Khasia Adibashis. The largest called the “Magurchara Punji”, which has 40 households and the other called the Lawachara Punji has 23 households.
- There is also a Tipra Adhibasi settlement with 75 households located at the south west boundary of the Park.
- Rests of the villages are located at the north eastern boundary of the park inhabited by migrants from Comilla, Noakhali and neighbouring Indian state of Tripura and Assam; 4 are located just at the outskirts, and the remaining are one km away.
- The Park is also surrounded by 6 tea estates (see the Map of Lawachara in Figure -1).

Social Stratification

- There are 2255 households, including 138 tribal households, in the 18 villages.
- Nearly two thirds (65%) of the people are poor or hardcore poor and earn their livelihood as day labourer or fuel wood collectors, 5% are rich and the remaining 30% middle class.
- Among the tribal people, roughly 97% are poor or hardcore poor. Maximum concentration of poor is in Lawachara Punji (98%), Magurchara Punji (96%) and Dolubari (95%) followed by Bagmara (58%). 15% of local people are unemployed.

Stakeholders

There are 19 stakeholder groups. The key stakeholders are as follows:

- Poor people living inside the forest—Tribal People (Khasia, Tipra)
- Fuel wood/bamboo/house building material collectors (Women and Children)
- Illegal timber fellers
- Timber traders

- Sawmill owners
- Brick field owners
- Furniture shop owners
- Mohaldars
- Local Government representatives (Union Parishad members)
- Law enforcing authorities
- Labourers from tea estates
- Land encroachers

Local poor people including the ethnic forest villagers are dependent on forest for fuel, house building materials, fruits and vegetables. Roughly 200-250 people enter the forest to collect fuel wood, each carrying head load of 20-40 kgs. Besides, there are 5-6 organized gangs each consisting of 15-20 involved in illegal felling.

Mahaldars or Timber traders are basically rich and local influential people. They have legal license for timber trading, and to bid in FD auctions. There are about 10-12 Mahaldars in Criminal Bazaar and 15-20 at Banugach Bazaar.

Saw mill owners are also rich people. There are 9 sawmills in Kamalganj and about 12 in Srimangal. They buy illegal timber at a cheaper rate (Tk. 250 /cft compared to more than actual market price which is more than Tk. 500). The Sawmill owners encourage and instigate poor people for illegal felling guaranteeing purchase.

Livelihood

- Primary occupations of Khasia tribal people are betel vine cultivation and wage labour. The Tipras primarily depend on pineapple and lemon cultivation and wage labour.
- Major occupations of Bangalees are cultivation (65-70%), wage labour (10-15%), small business (3-5%). Secondary occupations are fuel wood collection (30%), wage labour (22%).
- The tea estates surrounding the western side of the park have large number of unemployed labourers, roughly 75%, who are also dependent on the forest.

Local Power Structure

- There are in total 35 important people who have control over the community people and even over local administration. Most influential persons include; The MP of Srimangal Vice Principal Shahiduddin, Mr. Golam Kibria Shafi, UP Chairman of Kamalganj, Chairman of Srimangal, (has tremendous influence over villagers of Birainpur, Ibrahimpur, Bharaura and Jackchara tea estate bastis), Siddique Mia, Pourashova Chairman Modhu Mia, Sirajul Islam, and Gadison Phila, Minister Magurchra Khashia Punji).
- Union Parishad is the lowest level local government entity. The representatives come from local elite and play an important role in mediating local conflicts and distributing resources that are channeled through the local government.

Encroachment

- Forest Department allocated 1.2 ha of land to each forest villager for betel leaf cultivation; however, they are using more land now. The inside villagers have also established 19 ha of agricultural land in low lying areas between the hills adjacent to their villages.

- An area of 556 acres of land outside the park has also been encroached by people of Languarpar, Bagmara and Chatakchara villages

NGO Intervention

- Several NGOs operate and provide micro credit. The notable ones are BRAC, ASA and Grameen Bank. IGAs for which credit is provided include, among others, small business, fish culture, poultry, livestock, etc.

2 Key Problem Areas Needing Strategic Intervention

- Massive illegal felling through the involvement of local elite: brickfield owners, timber traders, sawmill owners, brick field owners, furniture shop owners, mohaldars and other stakeholders provide impetus to such illegal felling.
- Destruction of forest regeneration due to cutting of young timber trees during fuel wood, bamboo, and building material extraction.
- Forest Department's inability to protect forest
- Poor image of the Forest Department
- Persisting poverty (over 95% among the tribal people and 58% among Bangalees).

3 What Makes Lawachara Unique?

- The Park is relatively small and has good trails for hiking.
- The forest has the rare Hulok Gibbons and other small animals and primates. It also has a large number bird species and could serve as excellent place for bird watching.
- It is in close proximity to Dhaka and well connected by the national highway network. It takes only three and half hours to reach from Dhaka and two hours from Sylhet by road and hence has good potential for nature tourism.
- The Park has number of tea estates bordering its western side. The tea estates also pose severe problem as unemployed labourers act as key force in forest depletion.
- There are two Khashia communities inside and a Tipra community just adjacent to the Park. There is also a Monipuri community located just outside the boarder of the Park. These ethnic people have unique culture and tradition. Monipuri community is famous for its dance and handloom products. .
- Culturally, people are very conservative and the religious leaders exert great influence on every facet of life. Women are severely repressed.
- A number of communities are located next to the Park. Most of the people are poor. Most exploitation of the Park resources, particularly fuel wood, and valuable timber such as teak, is carried out by people from these communities.

4 Objective

Motivate and mobilize different stakeholders and poor people of the community within the defined landscape and take, in collaboration with the Forest Department, collective actions to reduce resource extraction by over 90% so as to ensure regeneration of green cover and restoration of bio-diversity. Also

promote alternative income opportunities for poor people to reduce dependent on the forest for their livelihoods.

5 Key Strategic Interventions

A. Social Mobilization and Improved Local Governance of PA

People's support, cooperation and participation are now considered imperative for protection and conservation of forest and biodiversity. NSP is trying to mediate and forge partnership between the community people and the Forest Department (FD) through Collaborative Management, involving participation of various sections of the community having stake on the forest in some form or other and sharing with Forest Department authority, responsibility and decision making related to forest and bio-diversity conservation. Co-management also demands community empowerment. NSP is also undertaking various awareness raising and social mobilization interventions using various tools to make people understand and realize the short-term and long-term disastrous environmental impact of indiscrete resource extraction on their lives and livelihoods and other life forms and roles they need to play to avoid such disaster.

B. Enhanced Esteem, Importance and Performance of Forest Department

For the Collaborative Management to take root and function on a sustainable basis, it is essential for the FD to break its isolation and be proactive in interacting with and involving community people to protect forest and conserve biodiversity. NSP is trying to forge this through joint activities and other supportive interventions. This will not only dispel the negative image of the FD but will also bear long term impact on forest protection and bio-diversity conservation.

NSP is also trying to enhance the knowledge and social skills of field level staff-members of FD through need-based training, exposure visits and workshops.

C. Economic Alternatives for Local Households

Mere motivational efforts are not likely to make much impact on the behavior of people living in and around PAs and are fully or partially dependent on forest for their livelihoods unless alternative income generating opportunities are created. In all sites, NSP is trying to expand income opportunities for poor people who are mostly dependent on forest for their livelihoods through providing grant money on different trades. To enhance income opportunities for the larger section of the community NSP is trying to promote eco-tourism, which, with increased flow of tourists, will create demands for different products and services, that people around could provide and earn income.

Demand for fuel woods both for consumption in households and enterprises prompts hundreds of people to go inside the PAs to collect fuel wood that they can easily sell and earn income. The demand is likely to increase in the future due to demographic dynamics and increased developmental needs. One of the major areas that NSP has particularly focused on is promotion of alternative energy both for households and enterprises particularly in brickfields.

D. Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core

Once the community is empowered and catalyzed protection of the PA is less likely to be a problem since the members of the Co-management Council/ Committee are likely to, by themselves, evolve modalities to perform the task. Until such community empowerment takes place some mechanisms have to be evolved to protect the forest. One of the mechanisms that NSP and FD have initiated is paid patrolling by selected community people in one of the PAs and has earned significant success in arresting tree felling. NSP and FD are now trying to promote volunteer patrolling through the initiatives of the Co-management Council/Committee. They are also trying to motivate the beneficiaries of the buffer zone plantation to organize patrol groups to protect the Core Area.

E. Local Participation in Monitoring Impact

There is need for local people to get actively involved in monitoring of actual progress made in the protection of PAs. Apart from observation by NSP and FD staff during their regular field visits, council members will be motivated to initiate the process following certain criteria.

6 Programmatic Interventions

A. Social Mobilization and Improved Local Governance of PA

1. Develop Collaborative Management Structure

- 1.1 Hold four Co-Management Council meeting over the next six months.
- 1.2 Scrutinize and finalize Council members' list.
- 1.3 Share the constitution with Council members
- 1.4 Form Co-management Committee
- 1.5 Share the site strategy with the committee members
- 1.6 Finalize the Constitution and the site strategy incorporating comments from Council members and Forest Department
- 1.7 Hold one-day orientation workshop for co-management council and committee members on biodiversity conservation and co-mgmt approach.
- 1.8 Hold organization management and leadership development training of Committee Members
- 1.9 Post of minutes of each council meeting in NSP and FD's Range and Beat Offices.
- 1.10 Organize exposure visit for FD and Council members

2. Promote Broad Based Social Mobilization, including Women and Ethnic Minorities

- 2.1 Hold a day-long workshop with Ethnic stakeholders from Magurchara, Lawachara and Dolubari
- 2.2 Stage 2 popular theatre shows and 2 folk song performances on forest and bio-diversity conservation at Dolubari and Baligaon (including patrolling groups)
- 2.3 Organize 2 video clip shows on forest and bio-diversity conservation for community mobilization at Kalapur and Tilagaon (including 10 FSP groups)
- 2.4 Organize specific awareness building programmes such as Rallies , Meetings, Essay writing, Art Competitions and Cultural Programs during the observance of three national days (21st February, 26th March, and 16 December) at Srimangal and Kamalgonj
- 2.5 Hold meeting with Sawmill Owners
- 2.6 Give orientation to Imams on bio-diversity conservation

- 2.7 Build rapport with other NGOs operating in the areas and identify and implement actions to leverage extended social movement by networking with them.
- 2.8 Organize hiking and rallies with scouts and school students for awareness building

B. *Enhanced Esteem, Importance & Performance of FD*

3. *Develop Strong Collaboration Between the FD and NSP*

- 3.1 Hold monthly co-ordination meeting with FD and NSP staff (Every 2nd Wednesday).
- 3.2 Ensure participation of FD staff at Co-management Council/Committee meetings
- 3.3 Ensure involvement of FD official in trainings, meetings, workshops and other AIG activities
- 3.4 Share with FD all essential reports, work plans and publications and display those at NSP and FD Range Offices
- 3.5 Hold awareness raising meetings in collaboration with the Forest Department staff
- 3.6 Maintain a close coordination and information sharing while visiting forest areas

4. *Build Capacity of Staff Members of the FD*

- 4.1. Conduct orientation for Range Officers and Beat Officers of Forest Department
- 4.2. Conduct orientation for Forest Guards of Forest Department
- 4.3. Conduct orientation for ACFs, SDFOs and DFOs
- 4.4. Organize exposure visit to outside country for Forest Rangers and Council members.

5. *Develop Positive Image of the FD*

- 5.1 Ensure supply of uniform to Forest Guards, Beat officers and Range Officers with FD and NSP logo
- 5.2 Published positive reports in local newspapers on every event
- 5.3 Spearhead FD officials in local meetings and NSP activities
- 5.4 Postering, distributing leaflets and doing wall paintings with messages to raise public awareness by the name of Forest Department

C. *Economic Alternatives for Local Households*

6. *Promote AIG for Poor Households*

- 6.1. Form new user Groups (12)
- 6.2. Establish linkage with FSP user Groups
- 6.3. Develop Community Development Schools (CDS)
- 6.4. Provide training and grant for cow rearing
- 6.5. Provide training and grant for poultry rearing
- 6.6. Provide training and grant for milk cow rearing
- 6.7. Provide training and grant for pig rearing
- 6.8. Provide training and grant for home gardening to group members
- 6.9. Provide training and Grant for Fish Culture
- 6.10. Monitor AIGAs

7. *Support Habitat Restoration, Tree Planting, Forest Regeneration and Homestead Forest Activities*

- 7.1 Identify members for buffer zone plantation (10 hectares)

- 7.2 Provide training and grant money for nursery development to 3 old and 3 new members
- 7.3 Provide 12000 seedlings to 600 households for plantation for homestead plantation
- 7.4 Assist in plantation for enrichment of the Core zone
- 7.5 Assist in plantation in public places within the Landscape

8. *Identify Alternative Energy Sources for Households*

- 8.1 Introduce improved chulas for economic energy consumption
- 8.2 Promote charcoal sticks for cooking

Facilitate Development of Eco-tourism as an Enterprise

- 8.3 Identify and develop picnic spot and develop public facilities as toilet
- 8.4 Hold meeting with Eco-Guides (Quarterly)
- 8.5 Arrange training for Eco-guides on Eco-tourism
- 8.6 Establish linkage with Monipuri handicrafts center in Baligaon village with Eco Guides
- 8.7 Establish linkage with Monipuri Community for cultural shows
- 8.8 Organize Lawachare week to promote Eco-tourism

D. *Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core*

9. *Establish Systems to Ensure That PA is Respected and Conserved*

- 9.1 Share PA management plan with the co-management council
- 9.2 Take initiative for Park boundary survey and demarcation
- 9.3 Take initiative to prepare maps based on the survey
- 9.4 Place appropriate sign boards
- 9.5 Arrange to control illicit felling, forest fire, grazing and poaching

V. *Local Participation in Impact Monitoring*

10 *Engage local Stakeholders in Monitoring Impact of Project*

- 10.1 Orient Council Member in NSP monitoring system
- 10.2 Build capacity of local Stakeholders in monitoring and data collection
- 10.3 Field vetting of community score card and reporting.
- 10.4 Cross cutting (Meetings, VIP Protocols, Report Writing)

7. Six Monthly Programme Implementation Plan and Staff Responsibilities

	Activities or Milestone	Timing						Site NSP Resources Allocated			Other Resources	
		Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	SF (132)	Fos (132x 5 = 660)	RC (~ 30)	FD Staff	Other NSP
A.	<i>Social Mobilization & Improved Local Governance</i>											
1.	<i>Develop Collaborative Management Structure</i>											
1.1	Hold four Co-Management Council meeting over the next six moths	x	x		x		X	4	20	4	SDFO/DF O/CF	LGCBS
1.2	Scrutinize and finalize Council members' list		x	x				1	5		1	LGCBS
1.3	Share the constitution with Council members		x	x				4	25			LGCBS
1.4	Form Co-management Committee		x	x				1	5	1	RO/SDFO	LGCBS
1.5	Share the site strategy with the committee members			x				4	25			LGCBS
1.6	Finalize the Constitution and the site strategy incorporating comments from Council members and Forest Department			x				2	15			LGCBS
1.7	Hold one-day orientation workshop for co-management council and committee members on biodiversity conservation and co-mgmt approach.			x	x			1	10	1	RO/SDFO	PAMS/LGCBS/TC
1.8	Hold organization management and leadership development training for Committee Member							1	10	1	RO/SDFO	PAMS/LGCBS/TC
1.9	Post minutes of each council meeting in NSP and FD's Range and Beat Offices		x					1		1		
1.10	Organize exposure visit for FD and Council members			x					5		RO/SDFO	COP

2.	Promote Broad Based Social Mobilization, including Women and Ethnic Minorities											
2.1	Hold a day-long workshop with Ethnic stakeholders from Magurchara, Lawachara and Dolubari				x			1	3	1	BO/RO/SDFO	AIGO MF&GO
2.2	Stage 2 popular theatre shows and 2 folk song performances on forest and bio-diversity conservation at Dolubari and Baligaon (including patrolling groups)		x	x	x	x		4	20	1	RO/SDFO	COO
2.3	Organize 2 video clip shows on forest and bio-diversity conservation for community mobilization at Kalapur and Tilagaon (including 10 FSP groups)					x	x	2	8			COO
2.4	Organize specific awareness building programmes such as Rallies , Meetings, Essay writing, Art Competitions and Cultural Programs during the observance of three national days (21st February, 26th March, and 16 December) at Srimangal and Kamalgong	x		x	x			3	20	1		
2.5	Hold meeting with Sawmill Owners			x				1	5	1	RO/SDFO	LC
2.6	Give orientation to Imams on bio-diversity conservation				x			1	2			COO
2.7	Build rapport with other NGOs operating in the areas and identify	x	x	x				2	15	1		COO

	and implement actions to leverage extended social movement by networking with them											
2.8	Organize hiking and rallies with scouts , Imams and school students for awareness building		x	x	x			2	15		BO/RO	COO

B.	<i>Enhanced Esteem, Importance & Performance of FD</i>											
3	<i>Develop Strong Collaboration Between the FD and NSP</i>											
3.1.	Hold monthly co-ordination meeting with FD and NSP staff (Every 2nd Wednesday)	x	x	x	x	x	x	6	30	3	RO/SDFO	COO
3.2	Ensure participation of FD staff at Co-management Council/Committee meetings	x	x	x				3	15			COO
3.3	Ensure involvement of FD official in trainings, meetings, workshops and other AIG activities	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	30	3		COO
3.4	Share with FD all essential reports, work plans and publications and display those at NSP and FD Range Offices	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	6	3		COO
3.5	Hold awareness raising meetings in collaboration with the Forest Department staff	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	12	1		COO
3.6	Maintain a close coordination and information sharing while visiting forest areas	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	6	1	BO	COO
4.	<i>Build Capacity of Staff Members of the FD</i>											COO
4.1	Conduct orientation for Range Officers and Beat Officers of Forest Department	x						1	3		SDFO/DFO	NSP Dhaka
4.2	Conduct orientation for Forest Guards			x	x			1	5		RO/SDFO	NSP

	of Forest Department											Srimangal
4.3	Conduct orientation for ACFs, SDFOs and DFOs									1	CF/NPC	NSP Dhaka
4.4	Organize exposure visit to outside country for Forest Rangers and Council members		x	x				2	12	1	SDFO	NSP Dhaka

5.	<i>Develop Positive Image of the FD</i>											
5.1	Ensure supply of uniform to Forest Guards, Beat officers and Range Officers with FD and NSP logo				x	x					SDFO/NPC/CF	NSP Dhaka
5.2	Published positive reports in local newspapers on every event	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	9		RO/SDFO	COO
5.3	Spearhead FD officials in local meetings and NSP activities	x	x	x	x	x	x	2	9		RO/SDFO	COO
5.4	Posting, distributing leaflets and doing wall paintings with messages to raise public awareness by the name of Forest Department	x	x	x	x	x	x	2	15			COO, NSP Dhaka
III.	<i>Economic Alternatives for Local Households</i>											
6.	<i>Promote AIG for Poor Households</i>											
6.1	Form new user Groups (12)	x	x	x	x	x	x	6	60			MF&GO
6.2	Establish linkage with FSP user Groups	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	15	2		AIGO
6.3	Develop Community Development Schools (CDS)	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	15	1		AIGO
6.4	Provide training and grant on cow rearing	x	x					1	10			COO
6.5	Provide training and grant on poultry rearing			x				1	5			COO, MF&GO
6.6	Provide training and grant for milk cow rearing			X				1	5			COO, MF&GO
6.7	Provide training and grant on pig rearing			x				1	5			COO
6.8	Provide training and grant on home	x	x					2	12			AIGO

	gardening to group members											
6.9	Provide training and Grant for Fish Culture						x	1	3			AIGO
6.10	Monitor AIGAs	x	x	x	x	x	x	6	36	6	RO	AIGO

7.	Support Habitat Restoration, Tree Planting, Forest Regeneration and Homestead Forest Activities											
7.1	Identify members for buffer zone plantation (10 hectares)			x	x	x	x	2	8	1	RO/BO	AIGO
7.2	Provide training and grant money on nursery development to 3 old and 3 new members	x	x					2	8	1		
7.3	Provide 12000 seedlings to 600 households for plantation for homestead plantation						x	4	20	1	RO/BO	AIGO MF&GO
7.4	Assist in plantation for enrichment of the Core zone						x	4	15			AIGO
7.5	Assist in plantation in public places within the Landscape						x	2	4		RO/BO	AIGO
8.	Identify Alternative Energy Sources for Households											
8.2	Introduction of improved chulas for economic energy consumption				x			1	3			NACOM
8.3	Promotion of charcoal sticks for cooking				x							NACOM
	Facilitate Development of Eco-tourism as an Enterprise											
8.4	Identify and develop picnic spot and develop public facilities as toilet		x	x	x	x	x	2	5	1	SDFO	EDO, NSP Dhaka
8.5	Hold meeting with Eco-Guides (Quarterly)			x			x	2	4			EDO
8.6	Arrange training for Eco-guides on Eco-tourism					x		3	6	1		EDO, NSP Dhaka
8.7	Establish linkage with Monipuri		x	x				2	4			EDO

	handicrafts center in Baligaon village with Eco Guides											
8.8	Establish linkage with Monipuri Community for cultural shows		X	x				2	4			EDO
8.9	Organize Lawachare week to promote Eco-tourism				x			1	10			EDO, NSP Dhaka

<i>iv</i>	<i>Protection of the Landscape, Especially the PA Core</i>											
9.	<i>Establish Systems to Ensure That PA is Respected and Conserved</i>											
9.1	Share PA management plan with the co-management council		x	x				2	20	1	RO/BO	
9.2	Take initiative for Park boundary survey and demarcation											NACOM
9.3	Take initiative to prepare maps based on the survey											NACOM
9.4	Place appropriate sign boards											NACOM
9.5	Arrange to control illicit felling, forest fire, grazing and poaching	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	18	2	RO/BO	
9.6	Marking & Enumeration of Teak Trees		x	x	x			10	15		RO/BO	NACOM
V.	<i>Local Participation in Impact Monitoring</i>											
10.	<i>Engage local Stakeholders in Monitoring Impact of Project</i>											
10.1	Orient Council Member in NSP monitoring system											NACOM
10.2	Build capacity of local Stakeholders in monitoring and data collection											NACOM
10.3	Field vetting of community score card and reporting											NACOM
10.4	Cross cutting (Meetings, VIP Protocols, Report Writing)	x	x	x	x	x	x	6	18	3		
	Total							138	688	46		