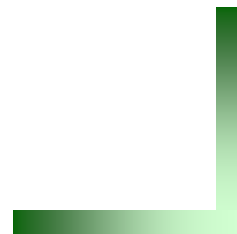


FOLLOW UP REPORT ON ELEPHANT HIKING AT CHUNATI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



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Follow Up Report on Elephant Hiking at Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

Pursuant to the planning of introducing Elephant Hiking at different Protected Areas under the Nishorgo Program, an exploratory trip was undertaken at the Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary. The aim of the trip was to identify suitability of introducing an elephant hiking opportunity in the area, identify locations for elephant trails, identify infrastructure development requirements, etc.

The DFO of Chittagong, Mr. Tapan Kumar Dey was the key resource person in providing insight to trail identification and infrastructure development for the program.

Trail Identification

According to the advice of DFO, an elephant trail has been earmarked near the half-hour walking trail at the Chunati WS. The trail starts at the same point of the walking trail, goes up the low hill and through the vegetation ends up south of the FD plantation area. The terrain is mostly uneven and provides a good view of the surrounding natural beauty. The trail would take about 40 minutes for the elephant one-way. This is not a circular trail and the distance between boarding and disembarkation point is about 150 meters.

Trail Improvement

The trail identified is undulating and requires some earthwork to be done. In certain places the path is very narrow and needs to be expanded by about 4 feet. In two places the road is broken and needs some work to straighten the path. Rests of the places are wide and smooth enough for the elephants to walk.

Visitor Infrastructure

There is enough space available at the beginning and ending point of the trail for parking. Boarding points needs to be set up at both starting and ending point of the trail. The DFO suggested construction of brick-made boarding area similar to those available at the Dulahazra Safari Park.

There also needs to be an information kiosk built for welcoming the visitors and collecting fees. A resting place and food corner can add up to better facilitation. Two billboards are to be erected near the elephant trails informing the visitors about the availability of the elephant ride.

Elephant Upkeep

There is an abandoned pond at the beginning of the trail that may be developed for elephant maintenance. Beside the boarding points, water tanks require to be built for supply of drinking water for the elephants. Also there needs to be a feeding area for the elephant next to the starting point.

The veterinary surgeons at Dulahazra Safari Park will be made available for providing medical support to the elephants. Two of them are already having some training on elephant treatment. However, they may require some additional training.

Food Requirements

To keep the elephants healthy, there needs to be a constant supply of food. While discussing with the mahout, it was revealed that each elephant will need at least 30 banana trees of 6 feet height every day. The DFO informed that the local stakeholders can be encouraged to supply the food by planting wild variety of banana trees around their houses. Initially, however, the banana trees may be required to be brought in from Ramu area.

Accommodation of Elephants

An area within the FD area needs to be identified to prepare the accommodation of elephants and the mahout. The DFO said that once the program is undertaken, he will arrange for identifying the place. However, the cost issue needs to be clarified as to how the construction charges will be shared.

Training for Mahout and Elephants

Since there is a shortage of mahout at FD, two persons will need to be trained to be mahouts for the elephants. Also, since the elephants has long been involved in logging, training needs to be given to them to handle tourists and hiking. The cost associated with the training is given in Annexure-1.

Collision with Wild Elephant

Consultation with the DFO and the mahout revealed that there is no apparent danger associated with collision with wild elephants. The domesticated elephants show signs of possible contact before hand and the mahout will immediately bring the elephants to safety.

Cost Involvement

There are certain costs associated with launching of elephant hiking. A breakdown of the costs is given in Annexure-1. Apart from these costs, there are monthly cost associated with the maintenance of the elephant that is given in Annexure-2

Annexure-1

Cost Involvement for Elephant Hiking-An Approximation

1) Infrastructure Development	
i) Water body restoration	: Tk. 50,000.00
ii) Riding Area (2 Nos)	: Tk. 75,000.00
iii) Trail Development	: Tk. 5,000.00
2) Elephant Accommodation Area	: Tk. 50,000.00
3) Elephant transportation to Chunati	: Tk. 30,000.00
4) Elephant and Mahout Training	: Tk. 30,000.00
5) Signboards	: Tk. 30,000.00

Total Initial Investment for Infrastructure Development Tk. 270,000.00

Annexure-2

Monthly Maintenance Cost for One Elephant

a) Mahout Salary	Tk. 6,000.00
b) Food for Elephant	
Banana tree (20 Pcs x 30 days @ Tk. 30)	Tk. 18,000.00
Rice (60 Kgs)	Tk. 1,200.00
Peas (60 Kgs)	Tk. 2,400.00
Molasses (30 Kgs)	Tk. 900.00
Glucose (30 pkts)	Tk. 1,200.00
Salt (3 Kgs)	Tk. 50.00
Others	Tk. 2,650.00
Total	Tk. 24,000.00

Total Monthly Cost for Maintenance of Each Elephant Tk. 30,000.00