



The Nishorgo Program and the Scouts: Possible Areas of Collaboration

Context:

Bangladesh have lost more than 50 percent of its forest cover within the last 30 years. Even the remaining forests are under relentless human pressure. Many of the most unique of these forests are found within our system of National Parks, Game Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries – collectively known as "Protected Areas".

To conserve the Protected Areas, Forest Department has created its Protected Area Management Program entitled 'Nishorgo'. The program is undertaken with the motto '*to save our nature for the future generation*'. The true beneficiaries of Nishorgo Program are the youth of this country. Even the name was selected from a nationwide competition arranged for school and college level students.

Nishorgo aims to conserve not just nature in general, but the system of Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Game Reserves) that should be securely guaranteed for the future generation of the country. In this effort, Nishorgo faces many obstacles, among the most important of which is lack of awareness of the very existence of a system of National Parks and Sanctuaries. Almost none of the young people in the country are aware that there are any Protected Areas in the country apart from the Sunderbans, and to a lesser extent,

Bhawal National Park. Unfortunately most of the urban youngsters growing up without knowing the nature. We want to integrate the youngsters with the Protected Area conservation activities and enable them to experience pristine forest areas.

Why would Nishorgo & Bangladesh Scouts work together?

The only way to save our unique biodiversity is to incorporate the future leaders by raising their awareness about our natural heritage. We all know that Bangladesh Scouts involve our youths throughout their formative years in a non-formal educational process in many aspects of nature conservation. Even camping under the open sky forms a bonding among youngsters and nature.

Together with Nishorgo Program, the scouts can actively take part in the Protected Area conservation of the country.

What is the Goal of Collaboration?

We believe that the most important potential focus of a partnership between Nishorgo and the Scouts is a heightened awareness amongst the young people of the country that:



- (1) A system of Protected Areas exists which is our pride,
- (2) It is under intense threat of permanent loss,
- (3) We must conserve the Protected Areas for a sustainable future
- (4) The Scouts can be a leader in raising this awareness for “Protected Areas”

In essence, we would hope that the Scouts of Bangladesh might become a “Charter Partner” of Bangladesh’s National Protected Area system.

What the Collaboration would achieve?

In this context, specific areas of collaboration might include the following:

Forest Department (FD)/ Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) may assist the Scouts in organizing nature educational events inside the National Protected Area system
FD/NSP may assist the Scouts in doing service work inside the National Protected Area System.

The Scouts may include National Protected Area System awareness materials in the own training materials. FD/NSP could assist in preparing these materials or orientation courses.

Scout Jamborees might include songs, games and activities focused on protection of the National Protected Area System. The scouts can hike in the Protected Areas and know the surrounding nature more closely.

The FD/NSP has identified 8 birds as key indicators of the health of our five pilot PAs. The Scouts could participate in bird awareness, bird census counts and bird observation, with training and orientation provided by the FD/NSP Team.

We want to utilize the zeal and energy of these young people for conserving the Protected Areas. Bangladesh Scouts also have its own set of program for saving the nature. So Nishorgo and Bangladesh Scouts authority can jointly design programs with the same objective of saving our beautiful forests.

