

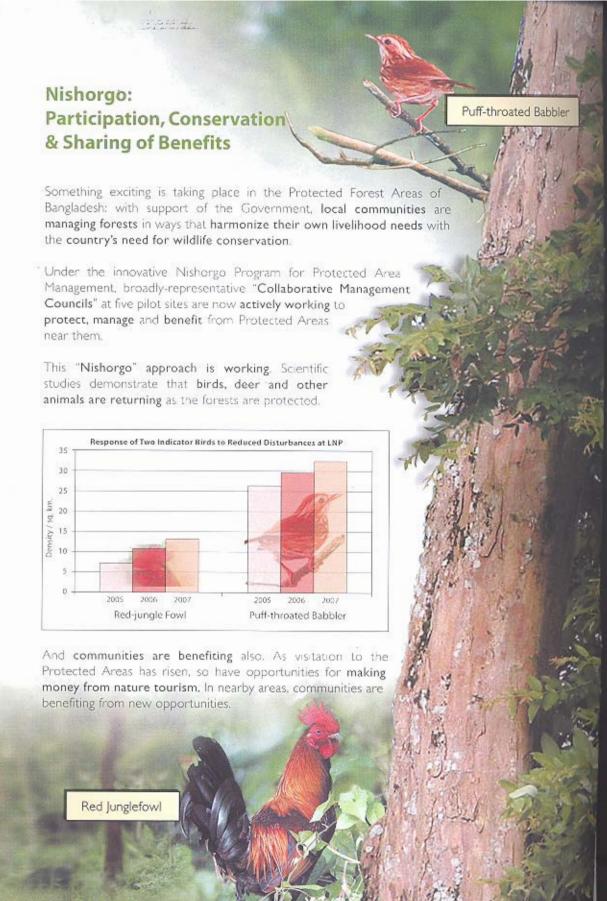
Community-Owned Nature Interpretation Center at Lawachara National Park

Saving Wildlife, Creating Opportunities



Nishorgo

Saving nature for future generations



The Unique Situation at Lawachara National Park

Ten kilometers to the east of Srimongal town, lies the Lawachara National Park. Home to the largest population of the critically endangered Hoolock Gibbon in Bangladesh, this small forest of 1,250 hectares and its buffer Reserve Forest of an additional 1336 ha. has been under intense pressure by corrupt loggers, businessmen and other nefarious interests, in an average month in 2004, mature hardwoods were stolen from Lawachara at a street value over 1 crore per month; or roughly US\$ 200,000.

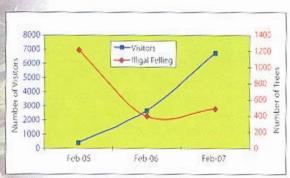
The forest was on the path of being lost. Animals

The Nishorgo Program is designed to change relations of power and control over Protected Areas like Lawachara, enhancing the role and benefits of a broader portion of the local population, ensuring inclusion of the poor, women and ethnic minorities.

such as Hoolock Gibbons were in rapid decline.

Hoolock Gibbon

The Lawachara National Park Community



As illegal felling has slowed at Lawachara, tourist visitation has responded. With the support of the Government and the local stakeholders, "Lawachara National Park Co-Management Council" and its executive "Co-Management Committee" was formed in 2005 as a response to the rapid degradation. These were made official by Government Gazette notification in 2006. The Council includes representatives of local resource user groups, ethnic

minorities, local NGOs, local Government (UP members), teachers, and more. The Council is chaired by the UNO and the Range Officer/ACF acts as the Member Secretary.

Once Council was formed, it soon began discussing the rapid loss of old trees. It was decided to organize day and night patrols of the forest, with local poor working as patrollers together with Forest Guards. The presence of the community in the forest immediately resulted in a dramatic

slowing of illegal felling. With the felling in check, the community turned its attention to activities that would improve livelihoods in ways that were more consistent with conservation.

Community Petrolling Group at Lawschara National Park Ethnic communities play an important role in conservation via the Council. At the Lawachara site, ethnic Monipuri, Khasia and Tipra citizens take part in decision-making. The Tipra community at northern Nishorgo sites are now selling high quality hand-loomed products for a sustainable income in a stall at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel and to urban corporate clients.

Nishorgo's partner NGO, RDRS has put in place the building blocks for sustained social change, creating 225 "Forest User Groups" of low income households from around the Park. The 27,000 family members of these User Groups are benefiting from increased investment in poultry, milk cow rearing, vegetable gardens, fuel wood species, and other improvements that generated 15 lakh income last year alone. RDRS has now financed establishment of micro-finance opportunities for these households and others from their own funds.

Critical Missing Piece: No Single Point for Nature Tourist Arrival

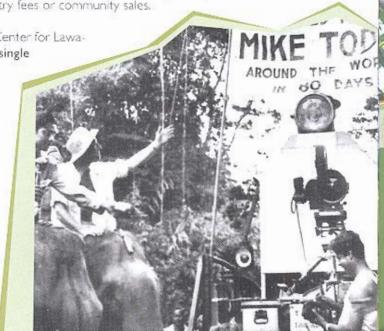
With increase in numbers, one piece is missing. As tourists arrive, it is very difficult to manage them because there is no single point of arrival. Arrival point is critical place at which the community can orient new visitors to the Park, provide basic information and sell entry tickets and informational brochures, books, t-shirts, and similar items in a controlled fashion.

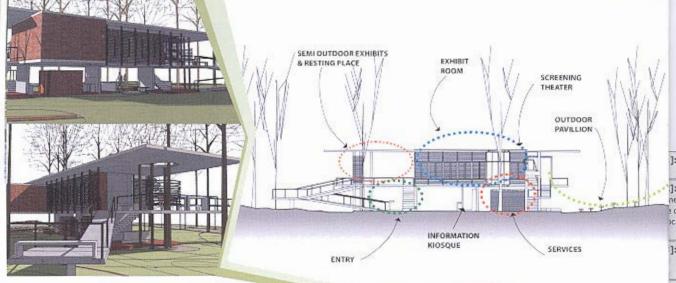
The lack of a single entry point translates into less control of tourist visitors, fewer opportunities to orient visitors about good forest behavior, — importantly — loss of income to the community from entry fees or community sales.

The planned Visitor Interpretation Center for Lawachara National Park is now the single

most critical step towards ensuring the sustainability of the community's efforts to conserve and benefit from the Park.

Important parts of the movie "Around the World in 80 Days" were filmed in Lawachara in 1954.





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National Architectural Competition – Bringing our Best Environmental Creativity into the Forest

Recognizing the need for a Visitor Interpretation Center for Lawachara, the Forest Department's Nishorgo Program – with assistance from three generous private construction firms and the Nishorgo Support Project – organized a national architectural competition in 2005 to design an innovative, nature friendly and community-focused Visitor Interpretation Center for the Lawachara National Park.

80 registrations were made. 32 participants submitted complete replica models, architectural drawing, along with conceptual explanation and rationale. The models and concepts were exhibited for a week at the National Museum, Nearly 11,000 people visited the exhibition, 60% of the visitors were graduate students.

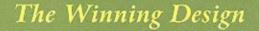
An eminent Jury of national and international judges was assembled under the auspices of the Institute of Architects of Bangladesh, and winners received a 1 lakh award.







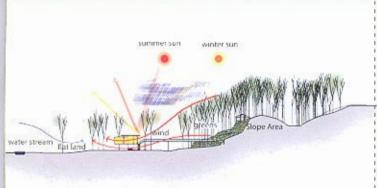
These three generous donors from the construction sector financed the National Architectural Competition

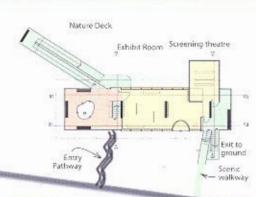


The winning design was submitted by three young architects of the firm Vitti Sthapathi Brindo, Ltd.. The building is fully integrated into the forest where it is to be built, functional, consistent with historical architectural designs from forest construction, and nature-friendly in its use of materials. The building was designed in harmony with the exsisting land-scape of Janaki Chara construction site. Not a single tree will be cut to construct the building.

The Jury's citation for the building captures its great value: "The design demonstrates appropriately how the Visitor Interpretation Center, a man-made structure, should relate to its surroundings for conveying the message of conservation of its site – the forest."







Raising Funds and Building the Center: Public-Private Partnership on Behalf of the Community

In most cases, the Government allocates construction money for infrastructure within the forest. But the special needs of National Parks such as Lawachara call for another model. A partnership of private individuals, associations and corporations is needed to support the conservation and livelihood improvement. As a leading example the Lawachara Visitor Interpretation Center will be built entirely from the contributions of individuals, associations and corporations of Bangladeshis and expatriates.

All those who contribute will have a direct role in ensuring better livelihoods of the local community and the conservation of the Lawachara National Park. The Lawachara Visitor's Center will be a tangible model of what can be achieved when public and private interests work together on behalf of common goals.

Benefits to the Community from the Nature Interpretation Center

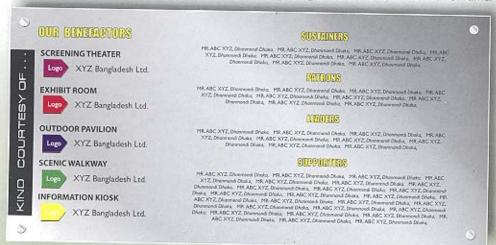
The Visitor's Center will benefit the community and the Park in a number of key ways:

Impact of New Visitor Center	Benefit to Community	
All visitors must pass through this entry point	Better control and tracking of visitors, and ease of enforcing visitor capacity limits	
Visitors will watch 11-minute Orienta- tion film	Better and more responsible behavior by visitors to nature and surrounding villages	
Visitors must register and obtain their entry ticket	Community 2007-08 revenue from entry and related fees estimated at 9 lakh	
Visitors can visit Park Store in Interpre- tation Center	Community 2007-08 sales revenue from 15 products (postcards, polo shirts, hats, books, etc.) estimated at 10 lakh	
Visitors can hire a local Eco-Guide, find a local Eco-Cottage or hire Eco- Rickshaw or bicycles	Community 2007-08 sales revenue estimated at 8 lakh	

Nishorgo estimates that this Visitor Interpretation Center will generate total primary and secondary economic benefits for the community and the Srimongal area of nearly 25 lakh Taka annually.

Recognition of Donor

Appreciation of donation will be acknowledge by engraving donor's name in the Wall of Fame:



Goals and Timing

The complete cost of the winning building including interior, plus nature-friendly landscaping in the immediate vicinity of Janaki Chara at Lawachara, is estimated to cost 87 lakh Taka, or roughly \$125,000. Fund-raising is now under way, with the goal of starting construction before the onset of rains in May 2008. Construction work will begin once the fund-raising campaign has reached 70% of targeted funds.

Apart from raising the money, complementary goal is to have broad and active participation of individuals, groups, young and old, so that the Lawachara Community-owned Visitor's Interpretation Center becomes a symbol of commitment to nature conservation and human development.

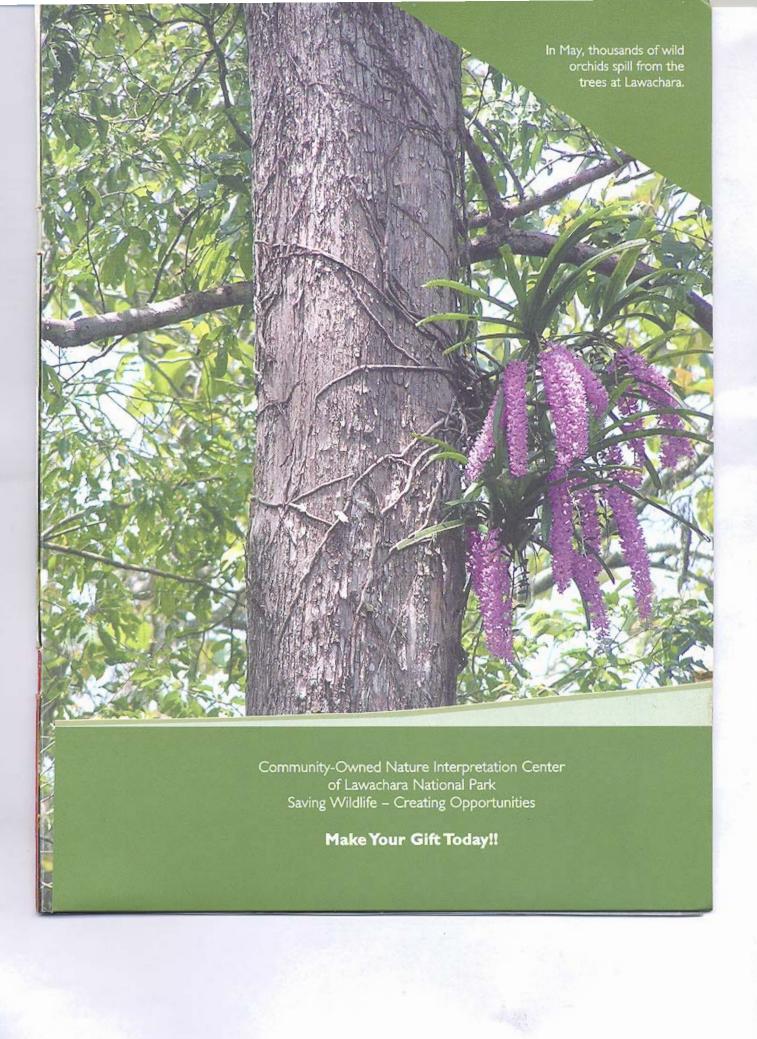
How to Make a Gift

If you'd like to make a check, write it to:

RDRS Bangladesh - CONIC

Bank Account: 1510100765250001 BRAC Bank Limited, Uttara Branch House - 01, Road - 15, Sector - 03 Uttara, Dhaka - 1230

Or drop it to the Nishorgo Support Project. If you have any questions about the giving process, kindly contact Nishorgo's Public-Private Partnership Coordinator, M. Quamrul Ahsan, at quamrul@irgbd.com or call at 88-02-98873229, cell 88-0171-3191357.



www.nishorgo.org



Nishorgo Support Project

House 68, Road No 1, Block I Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh Tel: 987-3229, 987-1553, Email: ctrf@irgbd.com



A Project of Forest Department Ministry of Environment & Forests Funded by USAID



If I make a donation for the Nature Interpretation Center, am I giving to the Government?

No. Your donation will be deposited to a special account of RDRS, who will use it under guidance of the Nishorgo Support Project to complete construction of the building and facilities that will belong to the Co-Management Committee. The Government will not directly or indirectly receive funds from donations.

How do I know that the Forest Department will not take over the building in the future?

The Government has recognized the Lawachara Co-management Council and Committee through gazette notification without any closing date. The Center will immediately become a central means of capturing financial revenue and directing it to the local community. Once it becomes established that the Visitor Center has a central role to play in improving livelihoodds, it is extremely unlikely that Government would be allowed by the Committee to take over the building. Furthermore, the MoU will explicitly prescribe this possibility.

Who will build the building?

RDRS, with technical guidance from USAID's Nishorgo Support Project, will coordinate construction of this building. Nishorgo Support Project and RDRS will work with the winning architect (Vitti Sthapoti Brindo) to identify a short-list of qualified Contractors, amongst which a careful bidding process will be undertaken. The Chief of Party of Nishorgo Support Project will sit on this selection panel.

What will be included on the grounds other than the Interpretation Center itself?

The Nature Interpretation Center will be constructed at the Janaki Chara area of Lawachara. Trees will not be felled during construction at this 1.2 hectare site, where local species will be included in a natural landscaping allowing tourists to prepare for their visit to the Park. A parking area will be included for cars and buses, and natural walkways around the site will be included.

Who will be responsible for maintenance of the Visitor's Center in future years?

As the building will belong to the Committee, building maintenance must be considered. The fund-raising plan and budget include 5 lakh Taka to be set in a special interest bearing maintenance account to cover maintenance for the first five years, after which it is assumed that the Committee will be sufficiently solvent from its operations to set aside maintenance costs.

Donated Funds Management

A trusted and established non-profit organization -- Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS) -- will receive, manage, and account for all donated funds. RDRS is a member of the Nishorgo Support Project implementing team, with Terms of Reference including support to the local stakeholders of Lawachara National Park.

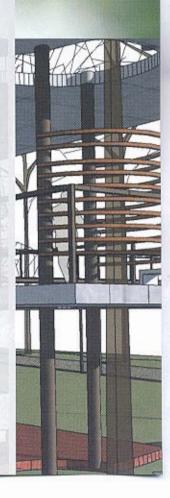
RDRS is equally trusted by the government and private organizations. RDRS will also oversee construction and ensure that standards are maintained.

Technical Direction, Management and Communication

As a subcontractor to USAID's implementing team, led by IRG, the RDRS team will work under the leadership and guidance of Mr. Philip J. DeCosse, Chief of Party of Nishorgo Support Project (NSP) and employee of IRG. RDRS will also liaise with Mr. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad, Nishorgo Support Project Project Director, Forest Department or his designate.

Responsibilities of RDRS

RDRS, in consultation with IRG and the Forest Department, will be responsibile for receiving, recognizing and accounting for all donations to the Interpretation Center. RDRS will also be responsibile for managing and monitoring that the approved designs (architectural, construction, electrical, plumbing etc.) for the Center are adhered to during implementation. A more detailed listing of RDRS's role in managing donated funds is shown on the next page.



The involvement of RDRS will include the following areas:

- Open a separate Bank account (current) to receive funds from individual and corporate givers. All expenses relating to the construction and monitoring works shall be made from that account.
- Maintain proper accountability of each and every transaction made from this account, keep records for audit purposes and make monthly reconciliation of accounts.
- Provide appropriate human resources from Nishorgo Project funds to implement and oversee all activities.
- Identify key elements for pre-qualification of contractors and shortlist of potential bidders. Organize competitive bidding process through appropriate procedures, keep track of number of bid documents sold and number of bidders responded.
- Conduct bid evaluations of technical and financial components; ensure that equal and fair considerations are given to all participant bidders and that the most qualified bidder is selected.
- 6) Ensure that the successful proposal is in full conformance to the approved technical designs and specifications and that environmental guidelines are adhered to.
- Make payments to the selected contractor as per contract and performance.
- Engage engineering firm to monitor that the approved design, specified quality and quantity of materials are provided.
- Receive, manage and store non-cash donations (i.e. cement, bricks, iron rods etc.). Arrange for proper protection from damage and timely distribution for using in the construction works.
- Monitor work progress of the scheduled works, share ideas and concerns with the concerned officials and discuss probable solutions.
- Oversee that the monitoring firm prepares and submits quarterly work progress reports to Nishorgo Support Project (NSP).
- 12) Inform NSP and the Forest Department if any deviation between the approved work specifications and actual or slow work progress is noticed or any intervention needed to expedite the work completion.
- RDRS shall remain accountable to NSP for all costs incurred in relation to the proposed construction and monitoring works;
- 14) Retain copies of all relevant documents and technical records for audit purposes if required.
- Quarterly work progress report will be posted on the website www.nishorgo.org

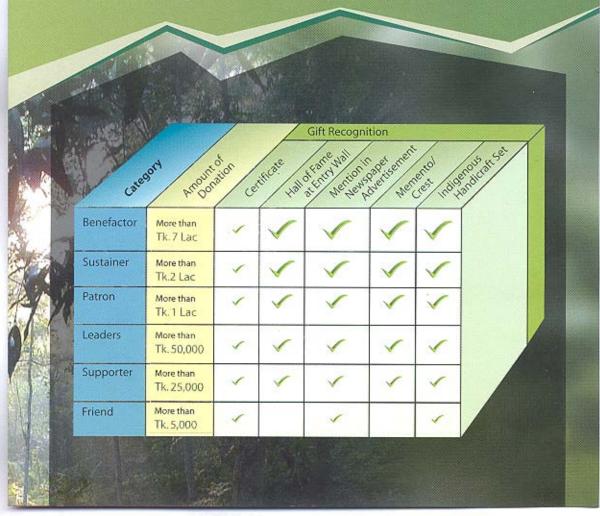


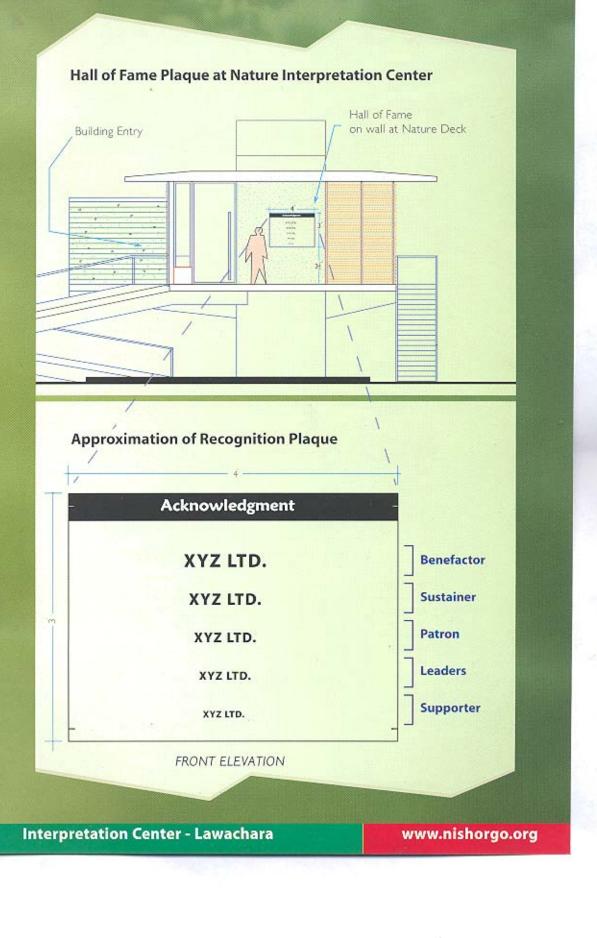
Gift Recognition

Gifts both small and large for the Interpretation Center will be welcomed and recognized. We encourage associations, nature clubs and other social groups to make donations in addition to corporate givers.

All gifts will be recognized! All Partners giving over 50,000 Taka will have their name engraved on the permanet "Wall of Fame" situated at the entrance to the Interretation Center (see schematic diagram below and on reverse). The Wall of Fame will include all donor Partners by name, where the font size of the name is in accordance with the size of the gift.

A full list of categories of Partners -- and the nature of their recognition -- is shown in the Recognition Matrix below.





Cost of Construction

The Community-owned Nature Interpretation Center will include 2,238 sq. ft of floor space and a scenic walkway of 514 sq. ft. Detailed construction cost breakdown is shown here, and includes not only the building but also landscaping and parking at the Janaki Chora sight and long-term building maintenance.

Partners seeking more public recognition may choose to donate one of five special sections of the building, as shown on the reverse of this sheet.

	Amount (Tk)
Description	
Fare Face Concrete Structure	2,007,113.78
I. Concrete Works (2100 bags Cement)	1,285,200.00
II. M.S. Rod works (254 quintal)	462,301.52
Plinth, Floor & Wall	1,169,976,05
Wooden Doors, Windows, Louvers and Kalling	228,861.55
	385,368.58
Electrical works	952,014.71
Parking, Walkway and Land development	50,400.00
Interior furnishing	849,556.47
Wooden Bridge, Landing Platform &	
Tetal Construction Cost (apprx.)	7,390,792.66
10tal Construction Cost (800,000.00
TV DVD Furniture & etc)	
Maintenance cost (5 years) (Lumsum)	500,000.00
Grand Total (apprx.)	8,690,792.66
	Description Fare Face Concrete Structure I. Concrete Works (2100 bags Cement) II. M.S. Rod works (254 quintal) Plinth, Floor & Wall Wooden Doors, Windows, Louvers and Railing Toilet and Plumbing works Electrical works Parking, Walkway and Land development Interior furnishing Wooden Bridge, Landing Platform & Steps for gradual Hiking Trail Total Construction Cost (apprx.) Equipment (Monitor, Multimedia, Screen, TV, DVD, Furniture & etc) Maintenance cost (5 years) (Lumsum)



These areas of the building & grounds provide uniquely high-visibility exposure for donor Partners. These are the only areas in the complex where Partner Corporate Logos may be exhibited to the estimated 80,000 annual visitors.

- I. SCREENING THEATER: All visitors to the Park will be required to watch a short (8-10 minute) orientation video in this air-conditioned Screening Theater. Our citizens need orientation not only about what they may see in the Park, but also about how to be responsible nature tourists. Financing of this Screening Theater offers a unique opportunity for corporate recognition.
 - Estimated Cost = 12 lakh
- 2. EXHIBIT ROOM: After purchasing their entry ticket, visitors will proceed to the Exhibit Room on their way to the Screening Theater. The Exhibits shown there can vary over time, but will in all cases help to educate and inform tourists. As visitors browse the Exhibit Room, they will see the Partner logo on the wall of the Room.
 - Estimated cost = 9 lakh
- OUTDOOR PAVILION: This natural outdoor amphi-theater will
 provide an idyllic spot for nature education programs, pre-hike orientation by Eco-Guides, or tour group orientation. As visitors enjoy nature here, they will be well aware of the generous contribution by the Partner.
 - Estimated cost = 7 lakh
- SCENIC WALKWAY: This 514 sq ft walkway leads from the Visitor
 Center to the nearby hill. Virtually all visitors will want to walk along
 this raised platform and then stroll on the hillside.
 - Estimated cost = 10 lakh
- INFORMATION KIOSK: All visitors are required to purchase entry ticket to the Park, and they will do so from this Information Kiosque. From this same location, visitors can see annotated trail guides, hire local Eco-Guides, obtain visitor information, or purchase a variety of local community products.
 - >> Estimated cost = 7 lakh