

Forest deptt to afforest 9k hectares of degraded land

• *Plan to be submitted to National Authority of CAMPA for approval* • *Implementation expected from April 1*

Post by [Shafat Malik](#) on Monday, March 4, 2024



Srinagar, Mar 04: The Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department has announced a plan to restore the green cover of the union territory by planting indigenous trees on around 9000 hectares of degraded forest and non-forest land in the next financial year.

An official told Rising Kashmir that the plan is part of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), a flagship scheme that aims to compensate for the environmental damage caused by the diversion of forest land for developmental projects. The scheme is funded by the money received from various project proponents who use forest land for their activities, he added.

The Executive Committee of J&K CAMPA, headed by Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force finalized the Annual Plan of Operation (APO) for 2024-25. The APO was prepared by different implementing agencies, mainly the Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs).

The official said that under APO, the Forest Department will also undertake 75.39 lakh low-cost interventions such as patch sowing and dibbling to rehabilitate the degraded areas.

The department will focus on soil and water conservation measures by harvesting rainwater to improve the water availability and wildlife protection in the dry regions, the official said, adding that the department will also construct ponds, water harvesting structures, check-dams and other such facilities to store the rainwater.

The official further said that the APO has allocated Rs. 2923.58 lakh for the next year's plan, which also includes the rejuvenation of wetlands and restoration of habitats in protected areas. Another Rs. 978.00 lakh has been earmarked for the development of nurseries to produce

109.37 lakh quality plants for the afforestation drive. The department will also provide saplings to farmers and other stakeholders under the Tree Outside Forest (TOF) program, he added. One of the special thrust areas under the next year's CAMPA plan is the demarcation of forest boundary lines to secure the forest land from encroachment and illegal possession. The department will use modern techniques such as GPS and GIS to mark the forest boundaries and erect pillars and signboards to display the forest area, the official said. He further said that the J&K Forest Department has created a large number of man-made forests under the CAMPA scheme in the last few years. As per the third-party evaluation done in 2023, the overall survival percentage of the plantations has reached up to 65%, which is comparable to any good plantations on national standards, he added. The official said that the regeneration of degraded forests, augmentation of fodder to local communities, improvement of water regime through catchment area treatment plans, prevention of forest fires and removal of invasive species would be the priority areas for the next year's CAMPA plan. He also said that the generation of livelihood to local people would remain at the centre stage of the CAMPA implementation strategy. The plan will be submitted to the National Authority of CAMPA, Government of India, for approval and is expected to be implemented from April 1, 2024, he added.

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