

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

INDEX

IN

RESPONSE AFFIDAVIT

(On behalf of the Respondent No. 2 i.e. Principal Chief Conservator of
Forests/HoFF, Uttarakhand, Dehradun)

IN

O.A. No. 1122 OF 2024 (Suo-Moto)

News Item titled "देहरादून: उत्तराखण्ड के 104 वर्ग किलोमीटर जंगल पर कब्जा...
सैकड़ों पेड़ काटे, वन विभाग की भूमिका सवाल में" appearing in Amar Ujala dated
22.08.2024

.....(Suo-Moto Application)

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Dated: 22/04/2025

Anjali Rajput
Panel Counsel
Government of Uttarakhand

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22.08.2024

.....(Suo-Moto Application)

1. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, through its
Regional Office, Integrated Regional Office, 25, Subhash Road,
Dehradun-248001.
2. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Uttarakhand, 87, Rajpur Road,
Dehradun-248001

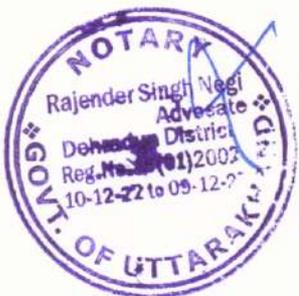
.....Respondents



Affidavit of Dr. Dhananjai Mohan,
aged about 59 years, S/o Sh. S. S.
Rajput, presently posted as Principal
Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF),
Uttarakhand, Dehradun.

(Deponent)

1. That the deponent is posted as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Uttarakhand, Dehradun. The above captioned matter has been registered by this Hon'ble Tribunal taking *suo-moto* cognizance on a news item published in 'Amar Ujala' news-paper and while hearing the matter on 02.09.2024, the deponent has been impleaded as Respondent No.2 in the above captioned matter as such he is competent to swear the present affidavit.
2. That this Hon'ble Tribunal, after the course of the hearing, vide its order dated 13.01.2025 had passed certain directions to the MoEF & CC, Government of India. The relevant part of the said Order dated 13.01.2025 is being quoted here for kind perusal of this Hon'ble Tribunal:
"6. No positive action in the reply of the MoEF&CC with respect to the effective steps for the removal of encroachment from the forest is indicated. Counsel for the MoEF&CC seeks time to look into the issue and file a fresh response".
3. That the State Government and Forest Department has been vigilant on the issue of encroachment on the Forest land. For last around two years, the Government had also launched an intensive drive since April, 2023 to remove the encroachments from the forest land across the State and appointed a Nodal Officer for the said purpose.
4. That in compliance to the above directions passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal and the subsequent directions issued by the MoEF&CC, Government of India, the deponent has directed the Chief Conservator of Forests, Van Panchayat who is also a Nodal Officer, Encroachment removal drive, to furnish a detailed Action Plan for removing the encroachment from the forest Land. The Nodal Officer, vide his letter 22.04.2025 had furnished a detailed Action Plan on the subject matter.



Copy of the said report is being annexed and marked herewith as ANNEXURE-1.

5. That the deponent is a responsible Government servant having the highest regard for the Hon'ble Tribunal and orders passed by them. The deponent has always made his sincerest efforts to carry out the orders passed by this Hon'ble Tribunal in its letter and spirit and shall continue to do so in the future as well.

DEPONENT

VERIFICATION: -

I, Dhanjai Mohan do hereby solemnly affirm and verify on oath that the contents of the above affidavit in paragraph nos. 1-3, 5 are true to my personal knowledge and those in paragraph nos. 4 are based on the perusal of records and those in paragraph nos. are based on legal advice. Nothing material has been concealed and no part of it is untrue. So help me God.

Place: Dehradun

DEPONENT

I, Avnish Gupta, Legal Assistant, Forest Department, Uttarakhand, Dehradun, do hereby declare that the person making this affidavit and alleging himself to be Dr. Dhananjai Mohan is the same person who is known to me from the papers produced by him before me in this case.

IDENTIFIER



Solemnly affirmed before me on this day of 22 April, 2025 at Dehradun at about 9.30 AM/PM by the deponent who has been identified by the aforesaid person.

I have satisfied myself by examining the deponent who understood the contents of this affidavit.

The person has signed in my presence on the affidavit.

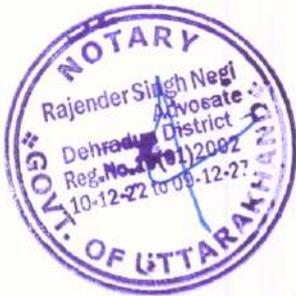
NOTARY/OATH COMMISSIONER

[Handwritten signature]

RN. 1994
22/4/25

This affidavit is sworn before me by
Shri. Dr. Dharmraj Mohr
who is identified by Shri. [Signature]
at Dehradun on 22/4/25

[Signature]
(Rajender Singh Negi)
Advocate & Notary, Dehradun



कार्यालय प्रमुख वन संरक्षक, वन पंचायत उत्तराखण्ड देहरादून।

85, राजपुर रोड, देहरादून 248001, फोन नं० 0135-2740926, e mail- pccfvp-forest-uk@nic.in

(मुख्य वन संरक्षक नोडल अधिकारी वन भूमि अतिक्रमण हटाओ अभियान)

सेवा में,

प्रमुख वन संरक्षक, HoFF
उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून।

विषय: माननीय राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण में योजित वाद संख्या 1122/2024 News Item tilted देहरादून: उत्तराखण्ड के 104 वर्ग किलोमीटर जंगल पर कब्जा.....सैकडो पेड काटे, वन विभाग की भूमिका सवालों में appearing in Amar Ujala dated 22-08-2024 के सम्बन्ध में।

सन्दर्भ: इस कार्यालय की पत्र संख्या-विभि-26/15/2024 PCCF VP-FOREST DEPT

महोदय,

उपरोक्त विषयक संदर्भित पत्र के क्रम में आज दिनांक 22 अप्रैल 2025 को प्रमुख वन संरक्षक HoFF उत्तराखण्ड के साथ उनके कार्यालय में प्रमुख वन संरक्षक, पर्यावरण एवं अपर प्रमुख वन संरक्षक विधि प्रकोष्ठ की उपस्थिति में Uttarakhand Action Plan For Forest Land Encroachment Removal पर विस्तृत चर्चा की गई। चर्चा के उपरान्त बैठक में लिए गये नियर्ण के कम उक्त एक्शन प्लान में संशोधन कर फाईनल एक्शन प्लान संलग्न कर आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु प्रेषित किया जा रहा है।

संलग्नक— Uttarakhand Action Plan for Forest Land Encroachment Removal की प्रति

भवदीय,

Digitally signed by
Parag Madhukar Dhakate
Date: 22-04-2025
13:00:05

(डा० पराग मधुकर धकाते)
मुख्य वन संरक्षक, वन पंचायत एवं
सामुदायिक वानिकी/नोडल अधिकारी
अतिक्रमण हटाओ अभियान,
उत्तराखण्ड देहरादून।

पत्रांक / तददिनांकित।

प्रतिलिपि— निम्न को सूचनार्थ एवं आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु प्रेषित—

1. अपर प्रमुख वन संरक्षक/रीजनल ऑफिसर, भारत सरकार पर्यावरण वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, 25 सुभाष रोड, देहरादून।
2. प्रमुख वन संरक्षक, पर्यावरण, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून।
3. अपर प्रमुख वन संरक्षक, सर्तकता एवं विधि प्रकोष्ठ, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून।

संलग्नक— Uttarakhand Action Plan for Forest Land Encroachment Removal की प्रति

डा० पराग मधुकर धकाते)
मुख्य वन संरक्षक, वन पंचायत एवं
सामुदायिक वानिकी/नोडल अधिकारी
अतिक्रमण हटाओ अभियान,
उत्तराखण्ड देहरादून।



UTTARAKHAND FOREST DEPARTMENT

ACTION PLAN FOR FOREST LAND ENCROACHMENT REMOVAL



Action Plan For Forest Land Encroachment Removal

Introduction

Uttarakhand, India's 27th state, was carved out of Uttar Pradesh on November 9, 2000. Nestled between **28°44'–31°28' N latitude** and **77°35'–81°01' E longitude**, it comprises **13 districts** across a **53,483 sq.km** expanse. The state's terrain is predominantly mountainous, characterized by snow-clad peaks, steep slopes, and fragile ecosystems. Its strategic location borders **Himachal Pradesh (northwest)**, **Tibet/China (north and northeast)**, **Nepal (east)**, and **Uttar Pradesh (south)**, with natural boundaries formed by the **Tons, Yamuna, and Kali rivers** and the **Indo-Tibetan watershed**.

Ecological Significance

Young and Fragile Himalayas:

- The Himalayan ranges here are among the world's youngest (40 million years old), making them ecologically vulnerable to **earthquakes, landslides, and erosion**.
- Contrasts sharply with India's ancient peninsular mountains (1,500–2,500 million years old).

River Systems:

- Four major rivers—**Ganga, Yamuna, Ramganga, and Sharda**—originate here, sustaining downstream water supplies for **drinking, agriculture, and hydropower**.

Biogeographic Zones:

- **2B Western Himalaya**: Alpine meadows and temperate forests.
- **7B Shiwaliks**: Tropical and subtropical regions, now heavily degraded.

Administrative and Demographic Overview

- **Administrative Units**: 13 districts, 78 *Tehsils* (subdivisions), and 95 community development blocks.
- **Population Growth**:
 - **Human**: Surged from 2.5 million (1951) to 8.5 million (2001).
 - **Livestock**: Increased from 3.8 million (1972) to 4.9 million (2003).
- **Economic Dependence**: Agrarian and pastoral economies drive heavy reliance on forests, exacerbating ecological strain.

Environmental Challenges

Deforestation and Degradation due to Encroachment on forest land:

- **Siwalik Hills:** Once forested, now ecologically degraded, and pushing forested landscapes to higher altitudes.
- **Land Use Pressures:** Population growth, Encroachment on forest land and livestock grazing accelerate soil erosion and habitat loss.

Climate and Rainfall:

- **Temperate to Tropical Climates:** Alpine zones experience cold temperatures, while plains are tropical.
- **Annual Rainfall:** ~1,550 mm, critical for sustaining river systems and agriculture.

Strategic and Conservation Imperatives

Soil and Water Security:

- Vital for preventing downstream floods and maintaining agricultural productivity in northern India.

Biodiversity Conservation:

- Protect endangered species and diverse ecosystems, from alpine meadows to subtropical forests.

Sustainable Development:

- Balance hydropower projects and tourism with ecological preservation.
- Strengthen community-led initiatives like Van Panchayats for forest management.
- The State does not have any tribal districts. As per the 2011 census, Uttarakhand has a population of 10.09 million, which is 0.83% of India's population. The rural and urban population of the State constitute 69.77% and 30.23% respectively. The Tribal population is 2.89%. The population density of the State is 189 per sq km, which is lower than the national average. The 19th Livestock Census 2012 has reported a total livestock population of 4.79 million.

Land Use Pattern

Land Use Types	Area (in 000' ha)	Percentage
Geographical Area	5,348	
Reporting area for land utilization	5,993	100.00
Forests	3,800	63.41
Not available for land cultivation	452	7.54
Permanent pastures and other grazing lands	192	3.21
Land under misc. tree crops and groves	388	6.47
Culturable wasteland	317	5.29
Fallow land other than current fallows	87	1.44
Current fallows	57	0.96
Net area sown	700	11.68

Source: Land Use Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, GOI, (2014-15)

Uttarakhand's Forests: Biodiversity, Community Stewardship, and Conservation Challenges

Uttarakhand boasts rich forest resources, classified under the Champion & Seth system (1968) into nine forest type groups and 43 distinct forest types. The state's physiography spans three primary zones: the Himalayas, the Shivalik range, and the Tarai plains. These forests are critical to the state's agrarian economy and pastoral communities, which rely heavily on forest resources for livelihoods.

A hallmark of Uttarakhand's Forest governance is its network of Van Panchayats, community-managed institutions established in 1921. Today, 11,217 Van Panchayats oversee 452644.29 hectares of forest land, promoting sustainable resource use.

According to Uttarakhand Statistics Reports for 2017-18, an area totaling 2,586,318 hectares of forest is under the jurisdiction of the Uttarakhand Forest Department,

Challenges of Encroachment on Forest Land

1. Ecological Degradation:

The Erosion of Nature's Foundation Deforestation and Habitat Fragmentation: This is the most direct and visible impact. Encroachers clear forest areas for agriculture, settlements, infrastructure (often unauthorized), and resource extraction. This leads to a direct loss of tree cover, which is vital for carbon sequestration, oxygen production, and climate regulation. Furthermore, it fragments contiguous forest areas into smaller, isolated patches. This fragmentation disrupts wildlife corridors, limits gene flow among populations, and makes species more vulnerable to local extinction.

Biodiversity Loss: Forests are hotspots of biodiversity, harboring a vast array of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic to specific regions like the Himalayas. Encroachment directly destroys these habitats, leading to a decline in species richness and abundance. Rare, endangered, and threatened species are particularly vulnerable. The loss of even a single keystone species can have cascading effects throughout the ecosystem.

Increased Human-Wildlife Conflict: As human settlements and activities encroach deeper into forest areas, the interface between human and wildlife populations expands. This inevitably leads to increased encounters, resulting in crop raiding by animals, livestock depredation, and even attacks on humans. Such conflicts often lead to retaliatory killings of wildlife, further exacerbating biodiversity loss and creating social tensions.

Soil Erosion and Land Degradation: Forests play a crucial role in maintaining soil stability. Tree roots bind the soil, and the canopy intercepts rainfall, reducing its erosive impact. Deforestation due to encroachment exposes the soil to direct rainfall and wind, leading to increased soil erosion, especially on the steep slopes of Uttarakhand. This results in land degradation, loss of soil fertility, siltation of rivers and reservoirs, and increased risk of landslides, particularly during the monsoon season.

Impact on Water Resources: Forests act as natural sponges, absorbing rainwater and releasing it gradually, regulating stream flow and recharging groundwater aquifers. Deforestation due to encroachment disrupts this hydrological balance. It can lead to reduced water availability during dry seasons, increased flooding during monsoons, and a decline in the quality of water due to increased runoff and sedimentation. This has significant implications for agriculture, drinking water supplies, and overall ecosystem health.

Special focus on Rivers & Water bodies: the illegal encroachment will be removed along rivers (Ganga and its tributaries, Gaula, Kosi, Dabka, Sharda, Bindal, Rispana, Kho, Nandhaur, Yamuna, Tons, Song, etc) and water bodies (Tumdia dam, Baigul dam, Sharda sagar, Nanakmatta sagar, Baur- Haripura etc)

Loss of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs): Forests provide a wide range of NTFPs, including medicinal plants, fodder, fuelwood, and other resources that are vital for the livelihoods of many local communities, particularly tribal and forest-dwelling populations. Encroachment often leads to the destruction or depletion of these resources, impacting the economic and cultural well-being of these communities.

Increased Risk of Forest Fires: Encroached areas, especially those with agricultural clearings or temporary settlements, can increase the risk of forest fires. These fires can spread rapidly into adjacent natural forests, causing extensive damage to vegetation, wildlife, and soil, and releasing significant amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

2. Social and Economic Issues:

Disrupting Livelihoods and Creating Inequities Resource Conflicts and Social Unrest: Encroachment can lead to conflicts between encroachers and traditional forest dwellers or local communities who have customary rights and dependence on forest resources. These conflicts can arise over access to land, water, and other forest products, leading to social unrest and even violence.

Impact on Traditional Livelihoods: For communities living in and around forests for generations, encroachment can disrupt their traditional livelihoods based on NTFP collection, small-scale agriculture within sustainable limits, and forest-based crafts. Eviction drives, while necessary to protect forests, can have severe economic and social consequences for these communities if not handled sensitively and with adequate rehabilitation measures.

Illegal Economic Activities: Encroached areas can sometimes become hotbeds for illegal activities such as timber smuggling, poaching of wildlife, and illegal mining. These activities not only cause further environmental damage but also undermine the rule of law and can be linked to organized crime.

Pressure on Public Resources and Infrastructure: Unauthorized settlements in encroached areas often lack basic amenities like clean water, sanitation, and electricity. This puts pressure on existing public resources and infrastructure in nearby legal settlements and can lead to the development of unsanitary and unsustainable living conditions.

Land Tenure Insecurity and Social Injustice: The issue of encroachment is often intertwined with complex historical and socio-economic factors, including landlessness, poverty, and lack of alternative livelihood options. Evicting long-term encroachers without addressing these underlying issues can lead to social injustice and further marginalization.

Impact on Tourism Potential: Uttarakhand's natural beauty and forests are key attractions for tourism. Encroachment and the resulting environmental degradation can negatively impact the aesthetic appeal of these areas, potentially harming the tourism industry and the livelihoods dependent on it.

3. Governance and Legal Challenges:

Gaps in the Protection Framework: Inadequate Legal Measures and Enforcement Challenges: While forest protection laws exist, their effective implementation and enforcement can be inadequate due to factors like inadequate staffing, insufficient funding, and improper infrastructure for monitoring and surveillance.

Difficulties in Boundary Demarcation and Mapping: In many areas, especially remote and mountainous regions, forest boundaries may not be clearly demarcated or accurately mapped. This makes it challenging to identify and prevent encroachments and can lead to disputes over land ownership.

Lengthy and Complex Legal Processes: Evicting encroachers often involves lengthy and complex legal battles. Encroachers may file counter-claims, seek injunctions, and exploit loopholes in the legal system, delaying or preventing eviction.

Political Influence and Patronage: In some cases, powerful individuals or groups with political connections may be involved in or provide patronage to encroachers, making it difficult for authorities to take impartial action.

Corruption and Collusion: Instances of corruption and collusion between forest officials and encroachers can facilitate illegal occupation and hinder eviction efforts. This undermines the integrity of forest protection agencies.

Lack of Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policies: Evicting encroachers without having well-defined and adequately funded rehabilitation and resettlement policies can lead to humanitarian crises and social unrest. Resettlement efforts need to be just, equitable, and sustainable, providing alternative livelihoods and ensuring the well-being of those displaced.

Data Gaps and Inconsistent Reporting: As highlighted by the discrepancies in encroachment figures in Uttarakhand, inconsistencies in data collection and reporting can hinder effective monitoring and management of the issue. Accurate and up-to-date data are crucial for formulating effective strategies to address encroachment.

Addressing the challenge of forest land encroachment in Uttarakhand requires a holistic and integrated approach that tackles the ecological, social, economic, and governance dimensions. This includes strengthening legal frameworks and their enforcement, utilizing technology for monitoring, ensuring transparent and accountable governance, actively involving local communities in forest protection, and addressing the underlying socio-

economic factors that contribute to encroachment through sustainable development and livelihood opportunities. The ongoing scrutiny by judicial bodies like the Hon'ble NGT and the Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court provides a crucial impetus for the state government to take decisive and effective action.

Forest Land Encroachment Scenario

Forest resources in Uttarakhand are administered by the Uttarakhand Forest Department (UKFD). Structurally, the UKFD includes distinct wings for wildlife, territorial operations, research, and van panchayats. Responsibility for the direct management of forest lands, which encompasses tackling problems like encroachment, rests with territorial forest officers. This crucial function is performed by staff across multiple cadres, ranging from Forest Guards and Foresters to Forest Rangers and Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs).

The Uttarakhand Forest Department is led by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) (PCCF (HoFF)). Operationally, the state is divided into two territorial zones, the Garhwal Zone and the Kumaon Zone, each overseen by an officer of at least the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) rank. Further decentralization includes seven territorial forest circles and three wildlife circles, each headed by an officer of at least the Conservator of Forests (CF) rank. Notably, a total of 34 divisions within the state have reported instances of forest land encroachment. At the grassroots level, the territorial forest administration comprises 288 forest ranges and 1486 forest beats.

The Uttarakhand Forest Department is divided into three primary zones: Garhwal, Kumaun, and Wildlife. Collectively, these zones span 2,520,155.924 hectares, of which 11,383.438 hectares are reported as encroached forest land. The Encroachment Ratio, expressed as a percentage, indicates the proportion of a division's total area that has been encroached upon. It's calculated by taking the total division area, dividing it by the total encroached area within that division, and multiplying by 100.

Kumaon Zone					
Sl. No.	Name of the Circle	Name of the Division	Total Forest Area of the Division (Hectares)	Total Encroached Area (Hectares)	Encroachment Ratio (%)
1	Western	1 Haldwani	59578.8000	82.2200	0.1380
		2 Tarai East	82429.9200	5982.0800	7.2572
		3 Tarai West	34806.6260	2629.1500	7.5536
		4 Tarai Central	40496.9700	336.5932	0.8312
		5 Ramnagar	48736.9000	284.6294	0.5840
Sub Total			266049.2160	9314.6726	3.5011
2	North Kumaon	1 Bageshwar	66343.8200	147.8600	0.2229
		2 Pithoragarh	220034.1200	1.9804	0.0009
		3 Civil Soyam Almora	11108.0000	0.7443	0.0067
		4 Champawat	66097.2860	2.0340	0.0031
		5 Almora	61201.6400	4.4911	0.0073
Sub Total			424784.8660	157.1099	0.0370
3	South Kumaon	1 Nainital	60114.5700	16.8272	0.0280
Sub Total			60114.5700	16.8272	0.0280
Kumaon Zone Total			750948.6520	9488.6097	1.2635

In Kumaon Zone, the Western Circle, comprising divisions such as Haldwani, Tarai East, Tarai West, Tarai Central, and Ramnagar, exhibits the most significant encroachment challenges. While Haldwani boasts the largest forest area (59,578.8 hectares), its

encroachment ratio remains low (0.138%) due to its expansive coverage, remoteness and the presence of Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary. However, the Tarai divisions—East, West, and Central—show markedly higher encroachment ratios, ranging from 7.25% to 7.55%, suggesting concentrated pressure from human activities like agriculture or urban expansion along with unresolved policy issues like forest land transfer cases with Irrigation Department. Collectively, the Western Circle accounts for the highest encroachment ratio among the three circles (3.5011%), with a total forest area of 266,049 hectares and 9,318 hectares encroached.

In contrast, the North Kumaon Circle, which includes divisions like Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, Almora, and Champawat, demonstrates exceptional conservation success. All divisions here report negligible encroachment ratios, often below 0.01%, such as Pithoragarh's 0.0009%. This suggests rugged terrain that naturally deters encroachment along with stringent protective measures and low population pressure. The Circle's total forest area spans 424,784 hectares, with an overall encroachment ratio of just 0.0370%, the lowest in the zone. South Kumaon, represented solely by the Nainital division, mirrors this trend with a minimal encroachment ratio of 0.0280%, indicating stable forest governance.

Aggregating data for the entire Kumaon Zone, the total forest area stands at 750,948 hectares, with 9,488 hectares encroached, yielding an overall encroachment ratio of 1.2635%. While this figure appears moderate, it masks significant disparities: the Western Circle contributes over 98% of the zone's total encroached area, underscoring its status as a hotspot for intervention. The data implies that encroachment is not uniform but localized, driven by factors such as proximity to human settlements, economic activities, and administrative efficacy.

The analysis raises critical observations. Geographically, the Western Circle's Tarai belt likely faces encroachment due to its fertile plains and accessibility, making it prone to agricultural expansion. Meanwhile, North Kumaon's success may stem from its remote, mountainous terrain and well-enforced conservation policies in collaboration with local communities e.g. protected areas like the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary. Policymakers must prioritize targeted strategies for high-risk zones, including community engagement, anti-encroachment patrols, and sustainable land-use planning.

In conclusion, the Kumaon Zone's Forest encroachment patterns reveal a tale of two regions: the vulnerable Western Circle, requiring urgent mitigation, and the relatively pristine North and South Kumaon, offering templates for conservation. Balancing development with ecological preservation will be key to safeguarding this biodiverse region for future generations.

Garhwal Zone					
Sl. No.	Name of the Circle	Name of the Division	Total Forest Area of the Division (Hectares)	Total Encroached Area (Hectares)	Encroachment Ratio (%)
1	Yamuna	1 Mussoorie	39082.9300	49.3424	0.1263
		2 Chakrata	40470.9710	0.6433	0.0016

		3	Upper Yamuna	74397.1290	6.5212	0.0088
		4	Tons	62208.9700	2.6049	0.0042
Sub Total				216160.0000	59.1118	0.0273
2	Shivalik	1	Haridwar	39074.1100	49.8160	0.1275
		2	Soil Conservation Kalsi	23321.3000	25.9729	0.1114
		3	Dehradun	50481.9800	579.8000	1.1485
		4	Lansdowne	43342.9000	1.2414	0.0029
Sub Total				156220.2900	656.8303	0.4205
3	Garhwal	1	Rudraprayag	59867.2600	44.8700	0.0749
		2	Badrinath	134645.1000	937.0000	0.6959
		3	Garhwal	70161.8000	5.6121	0.0080
Sub Total				264674.1600	987.4821	0.3731
4	Bhagirathi	1	Tehri	143268.9000	26.2828	0.0183
		2	Uttarkashi	224380.5820	146.4414	0.0653
		3	Narendaranagar	62107.7000	3.6524	0.0059
Sub Total				429757.1820	176.3766	0.0410
Garhwal Zone Total				1066811.6320	1879.8007	0.1762

In Garhwal Zone, the Yamuna Circle, comprising Mussoorie, Chakrata, Upper Yamuna, and Tons divisions, exhibits the lowest encroachment ratio (0.0273%) among all the Circles. Mussoorie, the largest division with 39,082.93 hectares of forest, records a minimal ratio of 0.1263%, while Chakrata's ratio is exceptionally low (0.0016%). Upper Yamuna and Tons divisions also report negligible encroachment (0.0088% and 0.0042%), reflecting limited human interference. Collectively, the region's total forest area spans 216,160 hectares, with only 59.03 hectares encroached.

In stark contrast, the Shivalik Region—covering Haridwar, Soil Conservation Kalsi, Dehradun, and Lansdowne—faces the highest encroachment ratio (0.4205%). Dehradun division is the most affected, with 1.1485% of its forest area encroached, likely driven by urbanization, industrial growth, in-migration of outside Labour/Employees and agricultural expansion. Haridwar and Kalsi divisions report moderate ratios (0.1275% and 0.1114%), while Lansdowne maintains a remarkably low ratio (0.0029%), suggesting effective management. The region's total forest area is 156,220 hectares, with 657.06 hectares encroached.

The Garhwal Circle, encompassing Rudraprayag, Badrinath, and Garhwal divisions, shows a moderate encroachment ratio of 0.3731%. Badrinath division stands out with the second-highest ratio (0.6959%), possibly linked to pilgrimage-related infrastructure and tourism pressure. Rudraprayag and Garhwal divisions, however, report low ratios (0.0749% and 0.0080%), indicating stable forest governance. The region's total forest area is 264,674 hectares, with 987.43 hectares encroached.

The Bhagirathi Circle, covering Tehri, Uttarkashi, and Narendra Nagar divisions, records a low encroachment ratio of 0.0410%. Uttarkashi division faces moderate pressure (0.0653%), potentially due to developmental projects and possibly linked to pilgrimage-related infrastructure and tourism pressure, while Tehri and Narendra Nagar divisions report minimal ratios (0.0183% and 0.0059%). The region's total forest area is 429,757 hectares, with 176.28 hectares encroached.

Aggregating the data, the Garhwal Zone spans 1,066,811.63 hectares of forest land, with 1,879.80 hectares encroached, yielding an overall ratio of 0.1762%. While this suggests relatively effective conservation, disparities are stark: the Shivalik Circle accounts for 35% of total encroachment, driven by Dehradun's urbanization, while the Yamuna Circle contributes less than 3%. The Garhwal Zone's forest encroachment patterns reveal a complex interplay of geography, development, and governance, while Circles like Yamuna and Bhagirathi demonstrate effective conservation, Shivalik and Garhwal face urgent challenges from urbanization and tourism. Balancing economic growth with ecological sustainability will require localized strategies for removal of encroachment on forest land, robust monitoring mechanism, and community engagement to protect the zone's biodiversity and forest ecosystems for future generations.

Wildlife Zone						
Sl. No.	Name of the Circle	Name of the Division		Total Forest Area of the Division (Hectares)	Total Encroached Area (Hectares)	Encroachment Ratio (%)
1	Corbett Tiger Reserve	1	Corbett National Park	4707.0000	0.4000	0.0085
		2	Kalagarh Tiger Reserve	62672.6300	0.0000	0.0000
Sub Total				67379.6300	0.4000	0.0006
2	Rajaji Tiger Reserve	1	Rajaji National Park	85162.4600	3.4426	0.0040
		2	Govind Wildlife Sanctuary	95796.9000	0.0000	0.0000
		3	Gangotri National Park	239002.4000	0.0000	0.0000
Sub Total				419961.7600	3.4426	0.0008
3	Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve	1	Kedarnath Wildlife Division	135145.3500	9.0830	0.0067
		2	Nandadevi National Park	79908.9000	2.1020	0.0026
Sub Total				215054.2500	11.1850	0.0052
Wildlife Zone Total				702395.6400	15.0276	0.0021

Corbett Tiger Reserve Circle, spans 67,379.63 hectares and includes Corbett National Park and Kalagarh Tiger Reserve. Encroachment here is minimal, with only 0.4 hectares (0.0006% ratio) reported in Corbett National Park, while Kalagarh records zero encroachment. This near-pristine status likely stems from rigorous anti-poaching measures, community engagement programs, and the reserve's long-standing focus on tiger conservation. The data highlights Corbett's success as a model for protected area management.

Rajaji Tiger Reserve Circle with 419,961.76 hectares, comprises Rajaji National Park, Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, and Gangotri National Park. While Govind and Gangotri report no encroachment, Rajaji National Park accounts for 3.44 hectares (0.0008% ratio) of encroached land. This localized pressure may arise from its proximity to densely populated areas like Haridwar, where agricultural expansion or livestock grazing could encroach on forest boundaries. Despite this, the reserve's overall low ratio reflects effective protection in most Divisions, particularly in remote or strictly regulated zones like Govind and Gangotri.

Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve Circle, covering 215,054.25 hectares, includes Kedarnath Wildlife Division and Nandadevi National Park, with reported forest land encroachment of 9.08 hectares (0.0067%) in Kedarnath and 2.10 hectares (0.0026%) in Nandadevi National Park.

Aggregating the data, the Wildlife Zone spans 702,395.64 hectares of forest land, with 15.03 hectares encroached, resulting in an overall encroachment ratio of 0.0021%. While this indicates strong conservation efforts across the zone, disparities exist: Nandadevi accounts for 73% of total encroachment, whereas Corbett and Rajaji report negligible intrusions. The Wildlife Zone's encroachment patterns reflect a blend of conservation triumphs and localized challenges. Corbett and Rajaji exemplify how stringent protection and community engagement can preserve critical habitats, while Nandadevi highlights the pressures of tourism and development. To sustain these ecosystems, Uttarakhand Forest Department is prioritizing adaptive management strategies and balancing human needs with ecological integrity. By addressing hotspot areas and replicating successful models, the Wildlife Zone can continue to serve as a sanctuary for biodiversity in a rapidly changing landscape.

Forest land encroachment and Forest Cover Analysis

Forest land encroachment and forest cover exhibit a direct and negative relationship, fundamentally because the act of encroachment typically involves clearing existing vegetation, leading to an immediate reduction in the area covered by forests. Indeed, encroachment stands as a primary driver of both deforestation and the degradation of forest ecosystems. The clearing of land for various non-forest uses directly eliminates forest cover, and the associated activities, such as illegal logging, fuelwood collection, and overgrazing, further diminish the quality and density of the remaining forest. Moreover, encroachment often results in the fragmentation of extensive, unbroken forest areas into smaller, isolated patches. This fragmentation not only decreases the overall forest cover but also adversely affects biodiversity, the movement of wildlife, and the health of the ecosystem, rendering these smaller fragments more susceptible to further degradation and edge effects.

The loss of forest cover due to encroachment has significant environmental consequences, particularly concerning carbon sequestration. Forests are vital carbon sinks, absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and storing it within their biomass and soil; deforestation through encroachment diminishes this crucial capacity, thereby contributing to the challenges of climate change. Furthermore, encroached areas and the edges of fragmented forests often face an elevated risk of human-induced fires, which can cause further destruction of forest cover and the release of stored carbon. Beyond carbon sequestration, forests play a critical role in regulating water cycles and preventing soil erosion. The removal of forest cover through encroachment can disrupt these essential ecological processes, potentially leading to decreased water availability, increased flooding, and soil degradation. Consequently, the expansion of non-forest activities into forest lands directly diminishes the extent of forest cover and initiates a cascade of negative environmental impacts.

According to Forest Survey of India's India State of Forest Report (ISFR-2023), the forest cover of Uttarakhand is mentioned below:

Forest Cover of Uttarakhand

(in sq km)

Class	Area	% of Geographic Area
Very Dense Forest (VDF)	5,266.58	9.85
Moderately Dense Forest (MDF)	12,517.63	23.40
Open Forest (OF)	6,519.62	12.19
Total	24,303.83	45.44
Scrub	412.88	0.77

Legal Status & Judicial Strategy for removal of forest land encroachment

In addressing the critical issue of forest land encroachment, a meticulously structured legal and judicial strategy is being implemented by the Uttarakhand Forest Department, aligning with the provisions of the Indian Forest Act 1927 (Uttarakhand Amendment 2002). The prioritization of encroachment cases is a data-driven process, leveraging a comprehensive divisional database. This database facilitates a nuanced assessment of each case, taking into account several key factors: the severity of the encroachment (nature and extent of damage), its current legal status (stage of litigation, existing orders), and the potential ecological impact on the forest ecosystem (loss of biodiversity, habitat degradation, impact on wildlife corridors, etc.). This multi-faceted prioritization ensures that resources are allocated effectively to address the most pressing and ecologically damaging encroachments first.

A specialized legal team is entrusted with the management of these cases at the designated Court. For each case, detailed information is meticulously maintained by the office of the Divisional Forest Officers, including the Case Number, the Year of filing, the precise extent of encroached forest land (in Hectares), and the parties involved. This granular level of detail is crucial for effective case management and tracking. Simultaneously, officers at both the Range and Divisional levels play a vital role in monitoring the progress of these legal proceedings, ensuring seamless coordination between field operations and legal actions. At the Uttarakhand Forest Headquarters, a dedicated officer at the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF-Legal Cell) level is tasked with managing and overseeing all legal proceedings related to forest land encroachment. This includes cases pending in various judicial forums, such as civil courts, ACJM courts, CJM courts, district courts, high courts, the Supreme Court, and the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The officer ensures coordinated monitoring and resolution of these cases across all levels of the judiciary to safeguard forest resources.

Central to the success of this judicial strategy are several key operational elements. The timely and accurate submission of all pertinent records to the court is paramount, ensuring that the legal team has all the necessary evidence and documentation to build a strong case. Furthermore, the expedited implementation of court orders, once issued, is given high priority to reclaim encroached land efficiently and prevent further damage. Underpinning these efforts is the need for clear, organized, and readily accessible documentation at all stages of

the legal process, facilitating transparency and accountability. Acknowledging the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by forest land encroachment, a structured mechanism for regular inter-departmental coordination has been instituted through the formation of a District Forest Protection Committee, chaired by the District Magistrate. This committee facilitates collaborative decision-making and oversight to address encroachment-related issues effectively. These crucial forums bring together representatives from the Uttarakhand Forest Department, the Revenue Department, the Police Department, and the Legal Department. This collaborative approach ensures coordinated action and information sharing throughout the entire legal and judicial process, from the initial identification of encroachment to the final resolution and implementation of court directives. This synergy is essential for navigating complex legal and administrative hurdles and achieving effective outcomes in safeguarding forest lands in accordance with the latest Indian Forest Act.

Operational Plan

The operational plan for the removal of encroachments on forest land is a multi-stage process that prioritizes accuracy, legal compliance with the latest Indian Forest Act, 1927 (Uttarakhand Amendment of 2002), and effective execution. The initial and foundational stage involves meticulous mapping and demarcation of the encroached areas. This is no longer a solely manual process but critically leverages modern geospatial technologies to ensure precision and legal defensibility.

These technologies include: Geographic Information Systems (GIS): For spatial data management, analysis, and the creation of detailed thematic maps illustrating the extent and nature of encroachment in relation to forest boundaries, land records, and ecological features.

Remote Sensing: Utilizing satellite imagery and aerial photography to provide a broad overview of the forest area and identify potential encroachment zones, enabling efficient targeting for ground-level verification.

Drone Mapping: Employing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) equipped with high-resolution cameras and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) sensors to capture detailed Ortho mosaics and 3D models of the encroached areas, offering unparalleled accuracy in boundary identification and assessment of the scale of encroachment.

Global Positioning System (GPS) Surveys: Conducting ground-based GPS surveys, to physically mark and record the precise boundaries of the encroached land, creating legally sound demarcation on the ground.

The data generated through these technologies will form the bedrock of the legal proceedings and subsequent actions. Following this precise identification, legal notices to show due compliance will be formally issued to the encroachers. These notices will clearly specify the encroached area, the legal basis for eviction under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 Uttarakhand Amendment of 2002, incorporating relevant sections of the latest amendments and Sections 61-65, which pertain to the summary eviction of unauthorized occupants and the disposal of

their property without the need for protracted civil suits, and provides a reasonable and legally mandated timeframe for voluntary eviction. The language of these notices will be unambiguous and will clearly outline the potential consequences of non-compliance, potentially including penalties or further legal action as stipulated in the updated Forest Act.

The cases are adjudicated at the Designated Court of the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), as empowered by the relevant sections of the Indian Forest Act. This designation streamlines the process for encroachment cases. Upon the issuance of summary eviction orders by the DFO Court, well-planned and robust eviction drives are being organized to ensure the physical removal of encroachments. The success of these drives hinges on effective resource mobilization, which encompasses several critical aspects:

Adequate Manpower Allocation: Deploying a sufficient number of trained forest department personnel, potentially including specialized teams for eviction and restoration.

Dedicated Budgetary Provisions: Allocating necessary funds not only for the initial mapping and demarcation but also specifically for the eviction operations (including transportation, logistics, and potential compensation as per the Act), subsequent restoration efforts of the cleared land, and the ongoing legal proceedings. The latest Forest Act might have provisions for funding such activities or penalties that can contribute to this budget.

Procurement of Necessary Equipment: Ensuring the availability of essential equipment such as vehicles, machinery for land clearing (if necessary and environmentally sound), communication devices, and safety gear for the eviction teams.

The approximate budget required to remove encroachment from one hectare of forest land can vary significantly and is based on several factors. It's challenging to provide a precise figure without detailed information about the specific situation. However, we can break down the potential costs involved

Factors Influencing the Budget:

Extent and Nature of Encroachment: Is it a few temporary structures or permanent buildings? Is there significant land clearing or cultivation? More complex encroachments will require more resources and time.

Terrain and Accessibility: Hilly or remote areas will increase transportation and operational costs.

Legal Processes: The stage of legal proceedings, the need for court appearances, and the complexity of the legal challenges will impact legal fees and the overall timeline.

Manpower and Security: The number of forest officials, administrative staff, and police personnel required for the eviction drive will affect personnel costs. Security arrangements, especially in sensitive areas, can add to the budget.

Machinery and Equipment: Depending on the type of encroachment, you might need excavators, bulldozers, transportation vehicles, and other equipment, incurring rental or

operational costs.

Demarcation and DGPS Mapping: Accurate mapping using modern technology like GIS, drones, and DGPS surveys has associated costs is being carried out for physical demarcation of boundaries which also requires materials and labor.

Contingency Funds: It's prudent to have a contingency fund to address unforeseen challenges or delays during the removal process.

Estimated Cost Components (per hectare)

Mapping and Demarcation: This could range from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000 or more, depending on the technology used and the complexity of the area.

Legal and Administrative Costs: This is highly variable depending on the duration and complexity of the court cases. It could range from ₹20,000 to several lakhs if cases are protracted.

Eviction Operations: This will depend on the manpower and machinery required. Costs could range from ₹50,000 to ₹2,00,000 or more, especially if significant structures need to be removed. This would include transportation, daily wages for labourers, fuel, and security arrangements.

Police Support: Costs for police deployment might involve allowances or logistical support, which can vary.

Contingency: A provision of 10-15% of the total estimated cost is advisable.

Ballpark Figure:

Considering the various factors, a very rough estimate for removing encroachment from one hectare of forest land in Uttarakhand could range from ₹1.5 lakhs to ₹5 lakhs or more. This is a highly indicative figure, and the actual cost could be significantly higher or lower based on the specifics of the encroachment.

Important Considerations:

This estimate does not include the cost of restoration of the encroached land after removal. Restoration costs can vary greatly depending on the extent of damage and the chosen restoration methods (natural regeneration vs. active reforestation), potentially ranging from a few thousand to several lakhs per hectare.

It's essential to conduct a site-specific assessment to determine the actual budget required. This would involve surveying the encroached area, assessing the type and extent of encroachment, understanding the legal status, and planning the operational logistics. Therefore, while a general range can be provided, a detailed budget can only be prepared after a thorough evaluation of the specific hectare of forest land in question. Finally, to ensure the safety and security of the eviction teams and maintain law and order

during the process, formal requests are being submitted to the Police Department for the deployment of adequate police personnel. Furthermore, local administrative support is being actively sought and obtained from the district authorities to facilitate logistical arrangements, coordinate with other relevant departments (e.g., electricity, water supply, if applicable to the encroached areas), and manage any potential social or administrative issues that may arise during the eviction process. This inter-agency coordination, potentially mandated or emphasized by the latest amendments to the Forest Act, is crucial for the smooth and lawful execution of the eviction plan and the subsequent protection of the recovered forest land.

The Government of Uttarakhand, through the Uttarakhand Forest Department, launched an intensive mission-mode campaign in April 2023 to remove illegal encroachments from forest lands. Field forest officers have been rigorously enforcing the provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 (with Uttarakhand amendments, 2002) to reclaim unlawfully occupied areas. These efforts align with directives from various judicial bodies, including compliance with orders from the Hon'ble Courts. Between April 2023 and March 2024, approximately 1,300 hectares of encroached forest land were successfully reclaimed across the state, reflecting a focused commitment to restoring ecological integrity and legal compliance. The details of the anti-encroachment drive is mentioned herein:

Details of Forest Land Encroachment Removal (in Hectares) under Anti-Encroachment Drive (April, 2023 to March, 2025)						
Kumaon Zone						
Sl. No.	Name of the Circle	Name of the Division		Total forest area of the Division	Total Encroached Area in the Division	Encroachment Removal under Anti-Encroachment Drive, Since April, 2023
1	Western	1	Haldwani	59578.8000	82.2200	30.3300
		2	Tarai East	82429.9200	5982.0800	214.0200
		3	Tarai West	34806.6260	2629.1500	532.9690
		4	Tarai Central	40496.9700	336.5932	105.7590
		5	Ramnagar	48736.9000	284.6294	1.5000
Sub Total				266049.2160	9314.6726	884.5780
2	North Kumaon	1	Bageshwar	66343.8200	147.8600	0.5000
		2	Pithoragarh	220034.1200	1.9804	0.5000
		3	Civil Soyam Almora	11108.0000	0.7443	0.0130
		4	Champawat	66097.2860	2.0340	2.2400
		5	Almora	61201.6400	4.4911	0.0030
Sub Total				424784.8660	157.1099	3.2560
3	South Kumaon	1	Nainital	60114.5700	16.8272	5.0000
Sub Total				60114.5700	16.8272	5.0000
Kumaon Zone Total				750948.6520	9488.6097	892.8340
Garhwal Zone						
1	Yamuna	1	Mussoorie	39082.9300	49.3424	39.3980
		2	Chakrata	40470.9710	0.6433	0.0100
		3	Upper Yamuna	74397.1290	6.5212	1.3600
		4	Tons	62208.9700	2.6049	0.5000
Sub Total				216160.0000	59.1118	41.2680

2	Shivalik	1	Haridwar	39074.1100	49.8160	27.2710
		2	Soil Conservation Kalsi	23321.3000	25.9729	48.2900
		3	Dehradun	50481.9800	579.8000	5.7200
		4	Lansdowne	43342.9000	1.2414	0.2098
Sub Total				156220.2900	656.8303	81.4908
3	Garhwal	1	Rudraprayag	59867.2600	44.8700	0.8150
		2	Badrinath	134645.1000	937.0000	247.5500
		3	Garhwal	70161.8000	5.6121	0.2100
Sub Total				264674.1600	987.4821	248.5750
4	Bhagirathi	1	Tehri	143268.9000	26.2828	11.8400
		2	Uttarkashi	224380.5820	146.4414	7.7400
		3	Narendranagar	62107.7000	3.6524	0.6800
Sub Total				429757.1820	176.3766	20.2600
Garhwal Zone Total				1066811.6320	1879.8007	391.5938
Wildlife Zone						
1	Corbett Tiger Reserve	1	Corbett National Park/RTRD	4707.0000	0.4000	76.8300
		2	Kalagarh Tiger Reserve	62672.6300	0.0000	20.0000
Sub Total				67379.6300	0.4000	96.8300
2	Rajaji Tiger Reserve	1	Rajaji National Park	85162.4600	3.4426	2.9300
		2	Govind Wildlife Sanctuary	95796.9000	0.0000	1.5800
		3	Gangotri National Park	239002.4000	0.0000	0.0000
Sub Total				419961.7600	3.4426	4.5100
3	Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve	1	Kedarnath Wildlife Division	135145.3500	9.0830	15.1600
		2	Nandadevi National Park	79908.9000	2.1020	0.0000
Sub Total				215054.2500	11.1850	15.1600
Wildlife Zone Total				702395.6400	15.0276	116.5000
Grand Total				2520155.9240	11383.4380	1400.9278

Kumaon Zone

The Kumaon Zone encompasses a total forest cover of 750,948.65 hectares, with 9,488.61 hectares encroached as of March 2024. Between April 2023 and March 2025, 892.83 hectares of encroached land were reclaimed through anti-encroachment drives. The Tarai belt, including divisions like Tarai East, Tarai West, and Tarai Central, emerges as a hotspot for encroachment. For instance, Tarai East Division alone accounts for 5,982.08 hectares of encroachment (7% of its forest cover), despite reclaiming 214.02 hectares during the reporting period. Agricultural expansion and population pressure appear to be primary drivers in these regions. In contrast, districts like North Kumaon report minimal encroachment (157.11 hectares) and removal (3.26 hectares), reflecting effective prevention in remote areas such as Pithoragarh and Bageshwar. The South Kumaon Division, particularly Nainital, shows moderate encroachment (16.83 hectares) but has successfully reclaimed 5 hectares, indicating targeted enforcement.

Garhwal Zone

The Garhwal Zone covers 1,066,811.63 hectares of forest land, with 1,879.80 hectares encroached as of March 2024. During the same period, 391.59 hectares were reclaimed. Encroachment dynamics vary significantly across districts. Chamoli District, for instance, faces the highest encroachment (937 hectares, primarily in the Badrinath Division), though

247.55 hectares have been reclaimed since 2023. Legal bottlenecks, however, persist, as all cases remain under judicial proceedings in multiple courts. Dehradun District reports 579.80 hectares of encroachment, driven by urbanization pressures, but only 5.72 hectares were removed during the recent drive. Similarly, Haridwar District has cleared 27.27 hectares of its 49.82 hectares encroached area, showcasing proactive measures. Success stories include the Soil Conservation Kalsi Division, which reclaimed 48.29 hectares, and the Upper Yamuna Division, where encroachment was reduced from 6.52 hectares to 4.31 hectares through phased evictions.

Wildlife Zone

The Wildlife Zone, spanning 702,395.64 hectares, reports 15.03 hectares of encroachment, with 116.50 hectares reclaimed during the reporting period. Notably, the Corbett Tiger Reserve has achieved remarkable success, clearing 76.83 hectares. Similarly, the Kedarnath Wildlife Division reclaimed 15.16 hectares, balancing conservation with pilgrimage pressures. Areas like Gangotri National Park and Govind Wildlife Sanctuary report zero encroachment, underscoring effective protection mechanisms. These successes serve as benchmarks for other zones, demonstrating the feasibility of high-efficiency removal strategies when combined with strict enforcement and community engagement.

The following actions are being implemented with priority to address Forest Land Encroachment issues:

- 1. Focus on Tarai Regions:** Intensify anti-encroachment drives in Kumaon's Tarai belt, which accounts for 85% of the zone's encroachment.
- 2. Community Engagement:** Strengthen Van Panchayats to reduce incentives for illegal occupation.
- 3. Judicial Strategies:** Fast-track court cases to resolve disputes, particularly in high-encroachment areas like Chamoli and Dehradun.

Uttarakhand's anti-encroachment efforts reveal mixed progress: while the Garhwal and Wildlife Zones show significant achievements, the Kumaon Zone's Tarai regions demand urgent attention. Legal delays and urbanization remain critical hurdles. Sustained enforcement, community involvement, and judicial efficiency are essential to preserving Uttarakhand's ecological balance amid developmental pressures. By addressing these challenges systematically, the state can ensure long-term conservation of its invaluable forest resources.

Policy matters concerning forest land encroachment, the rehabilitation of Van Gujjars, cases under Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act (IFA), expired forest lease cases, and pending forest land transfer cases under the Forest Conservation Act, along with issues related to Taungya forest settlements and Goth-Khatta arrangements, require resolution at the government policy level. Consequently, these cases necessitate focused attention.

Forest Encroachment Removal in Uttarakhand: District Wise Overview

The comprehensive overview of forest land encroachments and mitigation efforts across 13 districts in Uttarakhand is annexed and marked **Annexure-I**, highlighting district specific challenges and actions taken for forest land encroachment removal.

The current anti-encroachment initiative is continuous, and efforts to remove encroachments are currently underway and will proceed with the eviction of illegal occupants once the pending court cases reach a final verdict, in strict accordance with legal procedures. This marks an unprecedented large-scale and systematic anti-encroachment campaign specifically targeting illegally occupied forest land in Uttarakhand.

Comprehensive Restoration and Rehabilitation Plan for Recovered Forest Land

The phase immediately succeeding the removal of encroachments is of paramount importance: the restoration and rehabilitation of the affected forest land. This is not simply about planting trees; it requires a carefully considered and scientifically informed approach to reinstate the ecological functions and biodiversity of the degraded areas, potentially aligning with specific directives or enhanced mandates within the latest Indian Forest Act concerning ecological restoration.

The process commences with the meticulous development of site-specific restoration plans. Recognizing that each encroached area may have unique ecological characteristics and levels of degradation, a standardized "one-size-fits-all" approach is insufficient. These tailored plans will be based on thorough ecological assessments of the affected sites, considering factors such as existing vegetation, soil conditions, hydrology, and the potential for natural regeneration. A central tenet of these plans will be the prioritized use of native species that are indigenous to the local forest ecosystem of Uttarakhand. This emphasis on native flora is crucial for ensuring long-term ecological integrity and resilience, as these species are best adapted to the local climate, soil, and interactions with native fauna, thereby fostering a self-sustaining ecosystem. The latest Forest Act might include specific guidelines or incentives for the use of native species in restoration efforts.

Integral to these restoration plans are comprehensive measures for soil and water conservation (SMC). Encroachment often leads to soil erosion, compaction, and altered water flow patterns. Therefore, the rehabilitation of degraded areas necessitates the implementation of scientifically sound SMC techniques to stabilize the soil, enhance water infiltration, reduce runoff, and improve overall land health. These SMC works will be implemented as specifically prescribed in the relevant Working Plan for the forest division or as explicitly mentioned and directed by competent authorities, potentially incorporating best practices and guidelines outlined in the latest amendments to the Forest Act or related environmental regulations. Techniques might include contour bunding, terracing, gully plugging, vegetative barriers, and the creation of water harvesting structures.

Furthermore, the plan recognizes that the long-term success of restoration is inextricably linked to community involvement. This goes beyond mere consultation and encompasses the active engagement of local populations in the restoration efforts. This might involve employing local communities in planting activities, providing training in nursery management and sustainable forestry practices, and fostering a sense of ownership over the restored areas. The plan also emphasizes the promotion of community-based forest management (CBFM) approaches in suitable areas, empowering local communities to play a significant

role in the protection and sustainable use of the restored forests. Crucially, raising awareness among local communities about the ecological and socio-economic importance of forest protection and the multifaceted benefits of restoration will be a continuous and integral component of this strategy. The latest Forest Act might have specific provisions or a greater emphasis on the rights and involvement of local communities in forest management and restoration.

To ensure the success and long-term sustainability of these ambitious restoration endeavors, a robust system for monitoring and evaluation will be established. This system will involve the regular tracking of restoration progress against clearly defined ecological indicators (e.g., survival rates of planted saplings, vegetation cover, biodiversity indices, soil health parameters, water quality). It will also involve evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented restoration measures to identify what works best in different ecological contexts. Furthermore, periodic audits will be conducted to critically assess the overall restoration outcomes, identify areas where improvements are needed, and proactively prevent future degradation of the restored areas. The data collected through this monitoring and evaluation system will be crucial for adaptive management, allowing for adjustments to the restoration strategies based on real-world outcomes and potentially informing future restoration efforts in line with the latest scientific understanding and any relevant provisions in the amended Forest Act.

Strategy for the Prevention of Future Encroachments

To proactively and effectively prevent future encroachments on valuable forest lands, a comprehensive and multi-layered strategy will be implemented. This strategy recognizes that merely removing existing encroachments is insufficient without addressing the underlying factors that contribute to such activities. The approach encompasses strengthened protection measures, proactive community engagement, improvements in land governance, and the leveraging of modern technological advancements, potentially aligning with enhanced mandates or stricter enforcement provisions within the latest Indian Forest Act. The first critical pillar of this strategy involves significantly strengthened protection measures. This entails:

Intensified Patrolling Efforts by Forest Personnel: Increasing the frequency, coverage, and effectiveness of ground patrols by well-equipped and adequately staffed forest personnel across vulnerable and high-risk forest areas. This involves specialized anti-encroachment drive with competent teams and improved communication networks for rapid response. The latest Forest Act might mandate specific staffing levels or training requirements for effective forest protection.

Strategic Establishment of Check Posts: Setting up strategically located and adequately resourced check posts along key access routes and forest boundaries to meticulously monitor the movement of people, vehicles, and materials into and out of forest areas, acting as a deterrent and facilitating early detection of potential encroachment attempts.

Strategic Utilization of Modern Technology for Enhanced Monitoring: Integrating cutting-edge technologies to augment traditional patrolling methods and expand monitoring capabilities over vast and often inaccessible forest terrain. This includes-

Drone Surveillance: Deploying Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) equipped with high-resolution cameras and thermal imaging capabilities for real-time monitoring, aerial surveys of forest boundaries, and early detection of unauthorized activities or new encroachment attempts.

CCTV Surveillance: Installing strategically placed Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, particularly at critical entry points, forest fringes bordering human settlements, and areas prone to encroachment, to provide continuous surveillance and record evidence of illegal activities. The data from these technologies will be crucial for timely intervention and potential legal action, possibly aligning with digital evidence admissibility standards in the amended Act.

Simultaneously, a proactive approach focusing on awareness and education initiatives will be launched to foster a sense of responsibility and discourage encroachment. This will involve:

Comprehensive Public Awareness Campaigns: Utilizing various media channels (print, electronic, social media, and traditional community outreach) to highlight the severe ecological, economic, and social consequences of forest encroachment, emphasizing the legal ramifications under the Indian Forest Act, and promoting the intrinsic value of forest conservation.

Organization of Local Workshops and Community Engagement Programs: Conducting interactive workshops, meetings, and awareness drives at the grassroots level to directly engage local communities, particularly those residing in forest-adjacent areas. These programs will focus on fostering dialogue, addressing concerns, and promoting collaborative stewardship of forest resources.

Educational Programs on Forest Boundaries and Land Rights: Implementing targeted educational programs to ensure that local communities have a clear understanding of legally demarcated forest boundaries, their rights and responsibilities concerning forest land, and the legal implications of encroachment under the prevailing forest laws, including any recent amendments.

Furthermore, addressing the systemic issues related to land governance is crucial. Significant improvements in land records management will be undertaken through:

Digitization of Existing Land Records and Forest Boundaries: Expediting the comprehensive digitization of all existing forest and revenue land records, creating a centralized and easily accessible database to enhance transparency, reduce ambiguities, and minimize the scope for fraudulent activities. This digital repository will facilitate efficient verification of land ownership and forest boundaries.

Enhanced Coordination between the Forest and Revenue Departments: Establishing robust and seamless coordination mechanisms between the Forest Department and the Revenue Department at all administrative levels. This inter-departmental collaboration is essential for the accurate and consistent recording of forest boundaries, the timely resolution

of land disputes, and the prevention of fraudulent land transactions that can lead to encroachments. The latest Forest Act might emphasize or mandate such inter-departmental cooperation.

Finally, fostering community-based management approaches will be a cornerstone of long-term encroachment prevention. This involves:

Empowering Local Communities in Active Forest Protection: Providing local communities with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to actively participate in the protection of nearby forest areas.

Providing Incentives for Conservation Efforts: Implementing tangible incentives (e.g., livelihood opportunities linked to sustainable forest use, access to non-timber forest products under regulated frameworks, recognition for conservation efforts) to encourage local communities to become active stewards of forest resources and dis-incentivized encroachment. This aligns with the growing recognition of the crucial role of local communities in forest conservation and might be a key focus of recent amendments to the Forest Act. By creating a sense of ownership and responsibility, this approach aims to make forest protection a shared community goal.

Comprehensive Reporting and Documentation Framework

A robust and transparent system for meticulous reporting and comprehensive documentation will be established and rigorously maintained throughout the entire lifecycle of this action plan, from its inception to the long-term monitoring of restored areas. This commitment to detailed record-keeping is crucial for ensuring accountability, facilitating informed decision-making, demonstrating compliance with the Indian Forest Act (including any recent amendments that might specify reporting requirements), and providing a clear and auditable trail of all actions undertaken. To ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of forest land encroachment removal in Uttarakhand, a dedicated officer at the Conservator of Forests (CCF) level has been appointed as the Nodal Officer for the anti-encroachment drive. This comprehensive documentation will encompass all facets of the action plan, including but not limited to:

Detailed Records of Legal Proceedings: This will involve maintaining a complete and organized archive of all legal documents related to encroachment cases. This includes the initial identification reports, survey maps used as evidence, legal notices issued to encroachers (along with proof of service), all filings and submissions made to the Designated Court of the DFO and any higher courts, court orders and judgments, and records of any appeals or subsequent legal actions. These records will be indexed and easily retrievable, potentially in a digital format as mandated or encouraged by the latest amendments to ensure transparency and accessibility to relevant authorities.

Comprehensive Accounts of Eviction Drives Conducted: For each eviction drive, detailed documentation is being prepared. This includes pre-eviction assessments, inventory of structures and property removed (with photographic or video evidence where appropriate), records of the personnel involved (Forest Department, Police, Revenue officials), logistical arrangements made, any challenges encountered during the eviction process, and post-eviction site assessments. These records serve as an official account of the actions taken

and will be crucial for addressing any future queries or legal challenges. To bolster the removal of encroachments from forest land in Uttarakhand, a Nodal Officer with the rank of Conservator of Forests (CCF) has been specifically appointed for effective implementation and monitoring of anti-encroachment drive.

Thorough Records of Restoration Efforts Undertaken: A detailed log of all restoration activities is being maintained for each site. This includes site-specific restoration plans, records of species planted (including quantities and sources), details of soil and water conservation measures implemented (including methodologies and materials used), community involvement activities undertaken (with records of participation and agreements), and photographic or other visual documentation of the restoration progress at various stages. These records are essential for tracking the effectiveness of different restoration techniques and for long-term monitoring. Regular reports summarizing the progress, challenges, and outcomes of the action plan are prepared and submitted to all relevant authorities at predetermined intervals (e.g., daily, monthly, annually). The specific recipients of these reports includes, but may not be limited to, the Divisional Forest Officer, the Conservator of Forests, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF, HoFF), the Government of Uttarakhand, relevant central government agencies, and potentially local administrative bodies in Uttarakhand.

Forest Integrity Enforcement: Photographic Record on Uttarakhand's Anti-Encroachment Campaign





कोसी नदी के किनारों से हटाए कब्जे

देहरादून, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता । वन विभाग ने वन भूमि पर धार्मिक अतिक्रमण हटाने के बाद रिजर्व फारेस्ट एरिया से गुजरने वाली प्रदेश की 23 नदियों के आसपास वन भूमि पर हुए अतिक्रमण के खिलाफ गुरुवार से बड़ी कार्रवाई शुरू कर दी। पहले दिन कोसी नदी के किनारे ये अभियान चलाया गया। जिसमें करीब 102 एकड़ वन भूमि से कब्जा हटाया गया।

अतिक्रमण हटाओ अभियान के नोडल अधिकारी सीसीएफ. डा. पराग मधुकर धकाते ने बताया कि पहले दिन तराई पश्चिमी वन प्रभाग के कोसी नदी के किनारे पर वन भूमि पर अवैध रूप से अतिक्रमण कर बनाई गई दुकान ,



तराई पश्चिमी वन प्रभाग में कोसी नदी के किनारे पर गुरुवार को अतिक्रमण हटाया गया।

मकान व अन्य अवैध निर्माण को हटाया गया। वहां जेसीबी की मदद से कच्चे और पक्के सभी प्रकार के अतिक्रमण हटाकर 102 एकड़ वन भूमि को अवैध अतिक्रमण से मुक्त किया गया है। इसकी पूरी रिपोर्ट व फोटो डीएफओ प्रकाश आर्य ने मुख्यालय को भेजी है।

डा. धकाते ने बताया कि शुक्रवार को अभियान में और तेजी लाते हुए अन्य नदियों में भी अतिक्रमण हटाया जाएगा। डा. धकाते ने बताया कि पहले चरण में 50 दिनों में उत्तराखंड में कुल 2102 एकड़ वन भूमि को अवैध अतिक्रमण से मुक्त किया गया है।

वनभूमि से कब्जे हटाने के लिए एक से फिर अभियान



एक्सक्लूसिव

■ ओमप्रकाश सती

देहरादून । राज्य में वन भूमि पर कब्जों के खिलाफ मुख्यमंत्री पुष्कर सिंह धामी के निर्देश पर शुरू हुआ विशेष अभियान एक अक्टूबर से फिर शुरू होने जा रहा है। पीसीसीएफ डॉ. धनंजय मोहन ने मंगलवार को सभी डीएफओ को अभियान शुरू कर कब्जाधारियों पर कड़ी कार्रवाई करने के निर्देश दिए।

वन भूमि से अतिक्रमण हटाओ अभियान के नोडल अफसर सीसीएफ डॉ. पराग मधुकर धकाते ने बताया कि बरसात व कोर्ट केस के चलते करीब छह माह से अभियान रुका था। अब पीसीसीएफ ने अभियान की समीक्षा कर उसे दोबारा नए सिरे से शुरू करने के निर्देश दिए हैं। इसके अलावा सभी

- पीसीसीएफ ने की वन भूमि से अतिक्रमण हटाओ अभियान की समीक्षा
- कब्जाधारियों पर और सख्त कार्रवाई के लिए डीएफओ को दिए निर्देश

डीएफओ से उनके डिवीजन में कब्जे हटाने के खिलाफ कोर्ट में चल रहे केसों का भी विवरण मांगा गया है, ताकि उनका जल्द निस्तारण कर अतिक्रमण के खिलाफ कार्रवाई पूरी की जा सके। धकाते ने बताया कि सभी डिवीजनों में एक अक्टूबर से अभियान शुरू होगा। इस बार अतिक्रमण करने वालों पर और कड़ी कार्रवाई के लिए कहा गया है। साथ ही इनका पूरा सत्यापन भी कराया जाएगा, ताकि प्रदेश में वन भूमि पर अतिक्रमण को रोका जा सके।

वन भूमि से अतिक्रमण हटाने में कोताही पर सख्ती

हरजिले में बनने जा रही टीम औचक निरीक्षण के बाद मुख्यालय को देगी रिपोर्ट, इस आधार पर डीएफओ-रेंजर पर होगी कार्रवाई

एक्सप्लेसिव

■ ओगण्डा लती
देहरादून। जहाँ एक ओर योगेश मधुकर सिंह धामी के निर्देश पर वन मुख्यालय जंगलों में अतिक्रमण करने वाले लोगों पर सख्त कार्रवाई जारी है, वहीं अनेक अतिक्रमण हटाने में लापरवाही बरतने वालों पर भी सख्ती की जा रही है। इनकी निगरानी के लिए हर जिले में टीमों का गठन किया जा रहा है।

वन भूमि पर अतिक्रमण हटाने के लिए नोडल ब्युरो का सौंदायाफू डॉ. पराम मधुकर धकते ने बताया कि जल्द ही सभी जिलों में टीमों का गठन किया जाएगा। ये टीम योग-नीच रूप से वन भूमि पर अतिक्रमण का निरीक्षण करेंगी। इसके बाद अपनी रिपोर्ट देगी कि अतिक्रमण पर रेंजर और डीएफओ स्तर से कितनी उपायों कायम हुईं। कार्रवाई या होने पर डिप्टी डायरेक्टर का जिक्र भी इस रिपोर्ट में होगा, जिसे वन मुख्यालय को भेजा जाएगा, जहाँ से संबंधित रेंजर के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की जा सकेगी। अगर डीएफओ को लापरवाही भी धरमने आती है तो उनके खिलाफ कार्रवाई के लिए शासन को लिखा जाएगा।



नहीं दी जा रही है नए अतिक्रमण की सूचना

डॉ. धकते के अनुसार, 20 अप्रैल को तत्कालीन पीसीसीएफ विनोद सिंहल की अध्यक्षता में वीक गेटवेल और वीक कुमाऊ संग कॉन्सिडरेशन और अन्य एएके निर्देशों की बैठक ली गई थी। तब वर्ष 2020 के बाद से हुए अतिक्रमण, खासकर धर्मस्थलों के नाम पर अतिक्रमण विहित कर तीन दिन में रिपोर्ट मांगी गई थी। लेकिन, आज तक पूरी रिपोर्ट नहीं आई है।

अतिक्रमण के खिलाफ अभियान लगातार जारी है।

पर, कई जगह देखने में आया है कि विहित अतिक्रमण के खिलाफ कार्रवाई नहीं हो रही है। अब इसकी निगरानी के लिए जिलास्तर पर टीमें गठित की जा रही हैं, जो औचक निरीक्षण के बाद रिपोर्ट देंगी। इसके आधार पर लापरवाह अफसरों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई होगी।

04 हेक्टयर वन भूमि से बुधवार को अतिक्रमण हटाया राज्यभर में

■ 20 अप्रैल से अब तक 31 अवेध मंदिर और 294 मजारें तोड़ी गईं

अब तक 72 हेक्टयर भूमि से हटाया गया अतिक्रमण

राज्य भर में बुधवार को वन भूमि पर अतिक्रमण के खिलाफ अभियान में तेजी आई। डॉ. धकते के अनुसार, वन विभाग ने बार हेक्टयर वन भूमि से अतिक्रमण हटाया। 38 मजारों को हटाने के साथ दो अवेध मंदिर तोड़े गए। 20 अप्रैल से अब तक 72 हेक्टयर जंगल अतिक्रमण मुक्त कराया जा चुका है। इनके तहत 31 अवेध मंदिर, 294 अवेध मजारें तोड़ी गईं। दो गुरुद्वारों को नोटिस भेजे गए।

डॉ. पराम मधुकर धकते, नोडल अफसर

वन भूमि अतिक्रमण हटाने अभियान



दून में रिप रोड स्थित लाडपुर के जंगल में बनाई गई अवेध मजार को बुधवार को तोड़ते वन विभाग और पुलिस की टीम। • आ-दुलतान

लाडपुर के जंगल में वनकर्मियों ने तोड़ी अवेध मजार

देहरादून, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। वन विभाग की टीम ने बुधवार को रिप रोड लाडपुर में जंगल के बीच-बीच बने दशकों पुराने मजार तोड़ दी। वहाँ मजार को आड़ में जंगल को एक बोचा से ज्यादा जमीन पर करवा किया गया था। इसके अलावा वहाँ पहुंचने के लिए एक किलोमीटर लंबा रास्ता भी बनाया गया था।

सुबह करीब 11 बजे राकपुर रेंजर राकेश नेगी के नेतृत्व में टीम मजार

01 बीघा से ज्यादा वन भूमि पर था कब्जा

तोड़ने पहुंची। विरोध की आशंका के चलते एसओ राकपुर भी टीम संग पहुंचे। यह मजार जंगल के काफी अंदर बनाई गई थी, जिस कारण जेबीबी ले आना मुमकिन नहीं था। वनकर्मियों ने सबल, गैरी और फावड़े से मजार तोड़ी। तब वहाँ मजार से जुड़ा कोई आदमी नहीं

था। ऐसे में वहाँ नोटिस चरप किया गया कि अवेध मजार जंगल की जमीन पर बनी थी, जिस कारण इसे तोड़ा गया। रेंजर राकेश नेगी ने बताया कि पूरे इलाके में नजर रखी जा रही है कि कहीं और मजार शिफ्ट ना कर दी जाए। वन भूमि से अतिक्रमण हटाने अभियान के तहत अफसर डॉ. पराम मधुकर धकते ने बताया कि दून में अब तक 20 से ज्यादा मजारें तोड़ी जा चुकी हैं।

District wise Details of encroachments of Forest (in Hectares) in Kumaon Zone

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
1	Almora	171980	4.491123	The Almora Forest Division have effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 0.003 hectares of encroachments. Currently, actions are underway to identify and remove encroachments on forest land in accordance with regulations.	0.00261%
			0	Parts of Bageshwar Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Almora District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
			0.744338	The Civil Soyam Almora Forest Division have effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 0.013320 hectares of encroachments. Currently, actions are underway to identify and remove encroachments on forest land in accordance with regulations. A portion of the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary falls under the territorial jurisdiction of the Civil Soyam Almora Forest Division in Almora District, with no reported encroachments on forest land.	0.00043%
			0.00	Parts of Champawat Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Almora district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
			0	Parts of Nainital Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Almora district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
Total			5.235461		
2	Bageshwar	126267	147.86	Bageshwar Forest Division: According to Uttarakhand Forest Statistics 2007-08, the total encroached area of the division was 153.1552 hectares, and during that year, the division evicted 0.0990 hectares of encroachment. According to Uttarakhand Forest Stastics 2017-18, the division evicted 5.43 hectares of encroachment. Forest officials have periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling their legal responsibilities. Currently, there are 147.86 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.11710%
			0	Parts of Civil Soyam Almora Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Bageshwar district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. A portion of the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary falls under the territorial jurisdiction of the Civil Soyam Almora Forest Division in Bageshwar District, with no reported encroachments on forest land.	0.00000%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
Total			147.86		
3	Champawat	122416	2.034	Champawat Forest Division have periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities. As of now, a total of 2.24 hectares have been cleared of illegal encroachments as part of an ongoing anti-encroachment drive that began in June 2023. Currently, efforts are being made to identify and remove encroachments from forest land in accordance with regulations. Currently, there are 2.034 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.00166%
			68.00	Tarai East Forest Division has actively identified and removed encroachments from forest land from time to time while fulfilling their legal responsibilities. Currently, there are 68.00 hectares of forest land encroached. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceeding ongoing in multiple courts.	0.05555%
			0	Parts of Haldwani Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Champawat district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
Total			70.034		
			0	Parts of Almora Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Nainital district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
			82.22	Haldwani Forest Division has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicted 30.33 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 82.22 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations. Portion of Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary is also part of the territorial jurisdiction of the Haldwani Forest Division, with no reported encroachments on forest land.	0.02701%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
4	Nainital	304449	16.8272	In <u>Nainital Forest Division</u> , a total reported encroachment in 2007 was 59.9335 hectares, and in that year, a total of 0.0025 hectares was evicted from encroachment by the division. In 2009, 0.3755 hectares was freed from a total encroached area of 59.9310 hectares. In 2017, out of a total encroached area of 33.4865 hectares, 1.8823 hectares was freed from encroachment(Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2007-08: 2009-10: 2017-18). Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land, resulting in the eviction of 5.00 hectares of forest land from encroachment during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 16.82723 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations. <u>Naina Devi Conservation Reserve</u> is also part of the territorial jurisdiction of the Nainital Forest Division, with no reported encroachments on forest land.	0.00553%
			284.6294	<u>Ramnagar Forest Division</u> : The division has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling its legal responsibilities and has issued eviction notices to those occupying forest land. In recent years, effective actions have been taken by the division to prevent encroachment on forest land, resulting in the freeing of 1.50 hectares of forest land from encroachment during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 284.6294 hectares. Sitabani Conservation Reserve is also part of the territorial jurisdiction of the	0.09349%
			51.7532	<u>Tarai Central Forest Division</u> has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts, including authorized court/DFO court, the appellate court/CF court and Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 46.7418 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023.. Currently, there are 51.7532 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with laws.	0.01700%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
			2265.18	Tarai East Forest Division has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 37.62 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 2265.18 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.74403%
			1971.86	Tarai West Forest Division has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts, including authorized court/DFO court, the appellate court/CF court and Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 486.1846 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 1971.86 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations. Portion of Sitabani Conservation Reserve is also part of the territorial jurisdiction of the Tarai West Forest Division, with few encroachments on roadside forest land.	0.64768%
			0.00	Parts of Champawat Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Nainital district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
Total			4672.4698		
			0	Parts of Bageshwar Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Pithoragarh District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
			0	Parts of Civil Soyam Almora Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Pithoragarh district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
5	Pithoragarh	208075	1.980398	<p>Pithoragarh Forest Division: An encroachment of 1.681 hectares has existed since 1940. According to government order number 203/V.I.P/2001 dated 04.08.2001, proposals for the transfer of forest land under the Forest Conservation Act 1980 were formulated to regulate the aforementioned encroachment and sent to the circle office of the Conservator of the forest North Kumaon Circle Almora vide DFO Pithoragarh Letter No. 1371/28-2 dated 21.11.2002. These were forwarded to the office of the APCCF/Nodal Officer (FC), Dehradun, Uttarakhand. An encroachment of 0.02 hectares has existed since 1990. A case was filed in the court to evict the encroachment. On 17.06.2000, the honorable Uttarakhand High court passed a judgment against the Forest Department. A case was again filed in court for review and a decision in favor of Forest Department was issued by the Judicial Magistrate Didihat vide Letter Number 20/2001-02 dated 07.05.2008. Action is being taken to vacate the encroached area. An encroachment of 0.0075 hectares has existed since 1991. Regarding this, the honorable Uttarakhand High Court issued orders on 14.06.2007 to vacate the encroached area. In addition to the above, the 28 roadside encroachments are identified and efforts are underway to reclaim these land as per law. As of now a total of 0.5 hectares of area has been evicted in district of illegal encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023 and the efforts are ongoing to reclaim encroached forest land as per forest laws.</p> <p>The Askot Wildlife Sanctuary is also part of the territorial jurisdiction of the Pithoragarh Forest Division, with no reported encroachments on forest land.</p>	0.00095%
Total			1.980398		

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
6	Udhamsingh Nagar	42808	0	Parts of <u>Haldwani Forest Division</u> also falls with in jurisdiction of Udhamsingh nagar district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas.	0.00000%
			284.84	<u>Tarai Central Forest Division</u> has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts, including authorized court/DFO court, the appellate court/CF court and Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 59.017 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023.. Currently, there are 284.84 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.66539%
			3648.90	<u>Tarai East Forest Division</u> has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts, including authorized court/DFO court, the appellate court/CF court and Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 176.40 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 3648.90 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	8.52387%
			657.29	<u>Tarai West Forest Division</u> has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts, including authorized court/DFO court, the appellate court/CF court and Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 46.7840 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 657.29 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	1.53544%
Total			4591.03		
Grand Total			9488.609659		

96 Garhwal Zone

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
7	Chamoli	271011	937	Badrinath Forest Division have periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities. As of march 31, 2007 the total forest land encroached was 421.1902 hectares. Continuous efforts were made to evict encroached forest land from illegal occupation, as a result 7.8070 hectares, 22.0012 hectares, 0.86 hectares, 0.7550 hectares, 2.3417 hectares, and 1.1661 hectares, forest land was reclaimed from illegal occupation in year 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2016 and 2017 respectively (Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics). Furthermore, Eviction notices has been issued to those illegally occupying forest land. Currently, all cases covering 937 hectares of encroached forest area are under proceedings in the multiple courts including authorized court/DFO court and appellate court/CF court. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.34574%
Total			937		
8	Dehradun	161158	0	Portion of Tons Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Dehradun District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
			0.64327	Chakrata Forest Division has periodically removed encroachments. In the Year 2017-18 the division has evicted 0.0065 hectares of illegal encroachment on forest land. In 2022-23, a total of 2.66 hectares of encroachment on forest land was evicted by the division. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 0.01 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, a total area of 0.64327 hectares of forest land has been identified as encroached, and actions to remove these encroachments are in progress according to forest regulations.	0.00040%
			579.80	Dehradun Forest Division: Ongoing efforts to remove illegally occupied forest land resulted in the eviction of 0.3264 hectares in 2009 and 17.566 hectares in 2010, respectively (Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2009-10 and 2010-11).The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 5.72 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 579.80 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with forest regulations.	0.35977%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
			0	Parts of Haridwar Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Dehradun District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
			0	Parts of Narendranagar Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Dehradun District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
			25.9729	Soil Conservation Forest Division Kalsi has been consistently identifying and removing encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. The Forest Division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 48.29 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 25.9729 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.01612%
			0.26350	Mussoorie Forest Division has been consistently identifying and removing encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. Currently, there are 0.2635 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00016%
Total			606.67967		
9	Haridwar	58394	49.816	Haridwar Forest Division has periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, issuing eviction notices to those illegally occupying forest land. The encroachment cases are under judicial process with proceedings ongoing in multiple courts. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 27.271 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 49.816 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.08531%
Total			49.816		
			0.00	Parts of Rudraprayag Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Pauri District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. The division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
10	Pauri	339671	5.6121	Garhwal Forest Division – Forest Department officials have periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling their legal responsibilities. In recent years, the division has effectively acted to stop encroachments on forest land, evicting 0.21 hectares of encroachments on forest land during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 5.6121 hectares. The division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00165%
			1.2414	Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 1.2414 hectares. Currently, actions are underway to identify and remove encroachments on forest land in accordance with regulations. Lansdowne Forest Division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully clearing 0.20975 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023.	0.00037%
	Almora	171980	0	Parts of Garhwal Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Almora district, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. The division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
Total			6.8535		
11	Rudraprayag	114230	44.86999	Rudraprayag Forest Division have periodically removed encroachments from forest land while fulfilling their legal responsibilities, and eviction notices have been issued to those illegally occupying forest land. In the year 2019-20 total forest land under encroachment was 307.3683 ha., Rudraprayag forest division successfully removed encroachments from 25.2032 ha. of forest land. The inclusion of pending court cases in various courts in the 2020 report has led to discrepancies in the data. At Present, 8 cases are pending in the Hon'ble Uttarakhand High Court, covering a total area of 0.061758 hectares. There are encroachments of 44.86999 hectares on forest land at present, which are being identified and removed in accordance with law.	0.03928%
Total			44.86999		

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
12	Tehri	206439	0.00	Parts of Dehradun Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Tehri District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. The division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
			26.2828	Tehri Forest Division: According to Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports, a total of 0.9852 hectares and 0.107 hectares of forest land were evicted from illegal encroachment on forest land during the years 2008-09 and 2009-10 respectively (Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics 2008-09; 2009-10). In the year 2016-17, Tehri Forest Division has removed encroachments on forest land to the extent of 3.4870 hectares (Uttarakhand Forest Statistics 2016-17). The APCCF (PFM) collected data on forest land encroachments in the year 2019-20, as per their data, 1.0031 hectares of encroached forest land was freed from illegal occupation in the year 2019. The division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 11.84 hectares of encroachments on forest land during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 26.2828 hectares and efforts are being made to identify and remove encroachments on forest land in accordance with regulations.	0.01273%
			49.07890	Mussoorie Forest Division: A total of 8.8782 hectares, 8.7152 hectares and 0.0072 hectares of forest land were evicted from encroachment during the years 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 respectively. The APCCF (PFM) gathered data on forest land encroachments for the year 2019-20. According to their records, 1.6172 hectares of encroached forest land was freed from illegal occupation during that year. The Forest Division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 39.3981 hectares of encroachments during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, there are 49.0789 hectares of encroachments on forest land, which are being identified and removed in accordance with regulations.	0.02377%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
			3.65237	Narendernagar Forest Division: According to Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports, a total of 0.2184 hectares and 0.0180 hectares of forest land were evicted from illegal encroachment on forest land during the years 2007-08 and 2008-09 respectively (Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics 2007-08 and 2008-09). The division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 0.68 hectares of encroachments on forest land during the anti-encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 3.65237 hectares and efforts are being made to identify and remove encroachments on forest land in accordance with regulations.	0.00177%
			0.00	Parts of Rudraprayag Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Tehri District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. The division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling its legal responsibilities. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
			0	Parts of Uttarkashi Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Tehri District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
		206439	79		
			0.00000	Parts of Mussoorie Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Uttarkashi District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%
			0	Parts of Tehri Forest Division also falls with in jurisdiction of Uttarkashi District, with no reported encroachment on forest land in these areas. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.00000%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
13	Uttarkashi	303615	2.6049	Tons Forest Division: According to Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2007-08, the total encroached area of the division was 54.8300 hectares, and during that year, a total of 22.9943 hectares was freed from encroachment by the division. By March 31, 2008, out of a total encroached area of 33.1407 hectares, 14.3501 hectares were freed from encroachment. In 2016, the division took action to free 8.3899 hectares from a total encroached area of 17.7642 hectares (Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2008-09; 2016-17). A total of 4.78 hectares, 1.20 hectares and 0.805 hectares of land were evicted during the years 2017-18, 2019-20 and 2023-24 respectively. Division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling their legal responsibilities and effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 0.50 hectares of encroachment on forest land during the anti encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 2.6049 hectares.	0.00086%
			6.5212	Upper Yamuna Forest Division: According to Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2017-18, Upper Yamuna Forest Division evicted 28.8642 hectares of forest land from a total encroached area of 50.3552 hectares. A total of 9.2896 hectares, 1.9932 hectares, 2.1642 hectares, 0.162 hectares, 1.36345 hectares and 2.2103 hectares of forest land were evicted from encroachment during the years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2023-24, and 2024-25 respectively. Upper Yamuna Forest Division have periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling their legal responsibilities. The division has effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 1.36 hectares of encroachment on forest land during the anti encroachment drive initiated in June 2023. Between March and October 2024, the division successfully cleared 2.2103 hectares of encroached forest land. As of the end of October 2024, the remaining encroachment in the division stands at just 4.3109 hectares.	0.00215%

Sl. No.	Name of district	Total Forest Cover (in Hectares)	Total Encroachment upto March 2024 Districtwise (in Hectares)	Action taken for Removal of Encroachment Yearwise Districtwise	Percentage loss of forest as on March 2024 District wise
			146.441395	Uttarkashi Forest Division: According to Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2016-17, a total of 119.31 hectares of encroached area was identified in the division, of which 79.7530 hectares were freed from encroachment by the division that year. In 2017, a total of 80.5680 hectares were freed from the total encroached area of 119.3150 hectares in the division. (Source: Uttarakhand Forest Statistics Reports 2017-18). In the year 2020, a total of 38.74278 hectares of encroached forest land were freed from encroachment by the division. Division has periodically removed encroachments while fulfilling their legal responsibilities and effectively acted to prevent encroachments on forest land, successfully evicting 7.74 hectares of encroachments. Currently, the total area of encroachment in the division is 146.441395 hectares. Effective actions have been taken to prevent encroachment on forest land.	0.04823%
Total			155.567495		
Grand Total			1879.800725		
Note:- Division-level forest cover data is not available; therefore, district forest cover data published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) in India's State of the Forest Report 2021 has been used. Similarly, the percentage loss of forest as of March 2024 has been calculated with reference to the division.					