

Tiger Research and Conservation Trust



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FINAL REPORT **Agreement F13APOO841**

Educating Local Communities for Mitigating Human - Large Carnivore Conflict & Conservation of Tigers & Leopards

In

Peripheral forested landscape of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur District, Maharashtra State, India.

Reporting Period – October 2013 – March 2015
Date – June 12th 2015

By:

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TIGER RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION TRUST (TRACT)

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Abbreviations used:

1. TRACT – Tiger Research and Conservation Trust
2. TATR – Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve
3. NTCA – National Tiger Conservation Agency
4. CCP – Corridor Conservation Program
5. SSS – Sangharsh Suraksha Samiti (Conflict-Protection Committee)

SUMMARY:

Chandrapur landscape has experienced very high conflict between people and large carnivores over the past 8 years. To mitigate this conflict that has resulted in attacks (fatal and injuries) on people by tigers and leopards, mitigating measures need to include active participation of and leadership within local communities.

Groups of 7-8 individuals in 70 villages with conflict were identified. These groups, (primary response teams) were sensitized in repeated workshops, drills about reasons for conflict and their responsibilities as individuals and community for mitigating it. These teams were trained in their response in a conflict situation and in creating awareness in their community.

497 local leaders trained in 71 villages with capacity to mitigate conflict locally. These teams have held meetings, worked for patrols and protection of wildlife and their community and addressed issues that lure predators towards their villages. Conflict cases with people in villages under program have reduced.

ACTIVITIES:

The buffer zone admeasuring 1100 sqkm and the forested corridor of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in the Chandrapur District of Maharashtra State have a reasonably high presence of large carnivores and the area has experienced frequent attacks by tigers and leopards on people and their livestock. Supported by National Tiger Conservation Authority, the Maharashtra State Government in collaboration with TRACT initiated the Corridor Conservation Project, and has taken measures to mitigate this conflict (2008-2011) in an area covering more than 8000 sq kms, though training to forest personnel, monitoring breeding tigress's and understanding reasons for conflict. High compensation has been paid by the government agencies to the victim but the reasons for this conflict clearly indicated that there was an urgent need to involve the local communities in this mitigating effort, as they are the largest stakeholders in this situation and the largest and most capable resource to manage this situation.

GOALS:

1. To reduce vulnerability of Local communities living on forest fringes
2. Conservation of Tigers and Leopards living beyond the boundaries of protected areas in human dominated Forests
3. To reduce attacks on humans by large carnivores and retaliation by people on wildlife & forest

OBJECTIVES:

1. Train individuals in conflict affected villages in issues of conservation, conflict mitigation and mob control
2. Form a network of these trainers to work on a landscape level to mitigate conflict
3. Create an Early Warning System for local communities

To achieve these objectives, TRACT in consultation with the State Forest Officials identified 71 conflict-affected villages in this landscape

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE: (October 2013 - March 2015)

Activity	Oct 2013			Jan 2014									Jan 2015					
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3
TRACT Team Training	x																	
Field Survey		x	x	x														
Villages selected					x													
Teams made						x	x	x										
Workshops 71 – Round 1									x	x	x							
Networking												x						
Manual													x					
Workshops 71 – Round 2													x	x	x	x	x	x
Surveys																		x

Training of the TRACT Team -

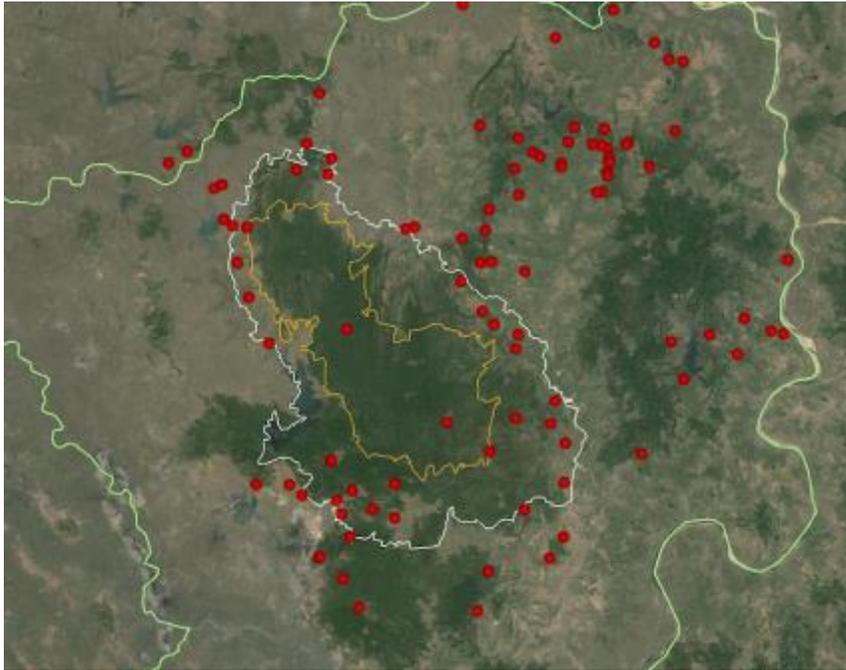
2013 October - Four local educated youth selected and engaged to be a part of the TRACT team. They were sensitized about the need for local participation, the present conflict situation, reasons for this conflict and the possible solutions to mitigate this, stakeholders in this conflict, role of individuals and the community for a co-existence of people and wild animals.

They were trained in public speaking, conducting awareness workshops for the selected teams in the villages, addressing other issues and ensuring a dialogue between the participating forest personnel and these teams of the community.

Base line Surveys for village selection -

TRACT has been working for conflict mitigation in this landscape since years and more than 135 conflict cases have been observed and monitored over years. These cases have been mapped and the area affected by conflict has been identified and reasons studied.

Conflict Map:



Map 01: Conflict cases in the landscape

With reference to this map, consultations were held with the forest officials in these areas, which include the buffer zone that surrounds the core of TATR and the peripheral forested corridors of Brahmapuri Division, that is in the forested corridor extending in the north-eastern direction connecting TATR to the Northern protected areas of Umrer Karandhla and Pench. Based on the cattle kill and past conflict data, 80 villages were identified.

Nov 2013 - Feb 2014: A survey was conducted in 80 of the most affected villages which continued to have presence of tigers and leopards near them to get a final list of 70 villages (49 in TATR buffer and 21 in Brahmapuri Division) for the program. An average of 20 families were surveyed in each of these 80 villages.

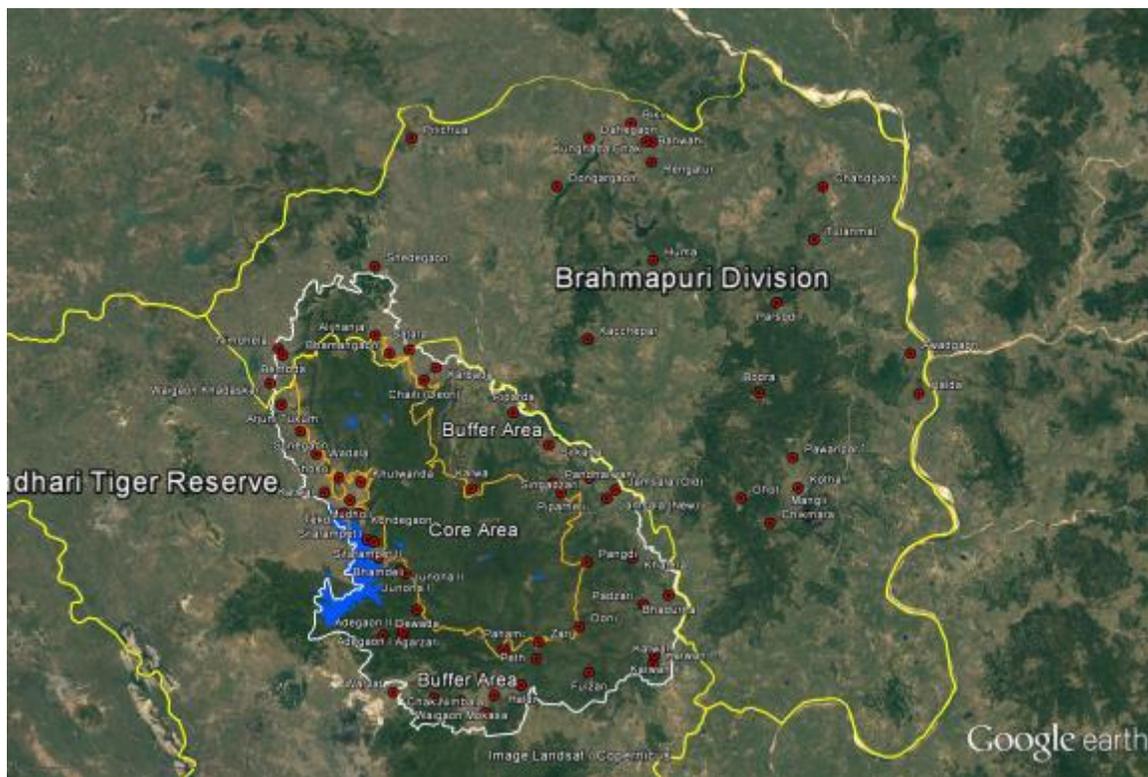
The criterion for village selection was presence of tigers or leopards, past conflict history and episodes of cattle kills by these carnivores. The list of villages is as follows:

Selected Villages in this program:

S.No	Buffer Village	S.No	Buffer Village	S.No	Brahmapuri Division
1	Karwa	26	Agarzhari	50	Pitichua
2	Pangdi	27	Adegaon	51	Chandgaon
3	Jamsala	28	Warwat	52	Tulanmal
4	Khatera	29	Mamla	53	Halda
5	Bhadurna	30	Waigaon(Mokasa)	54	Awadgaon
6	Padzari	31	Nimbada	55	Parsodi

7	Karwan	32	Chek Nimbada	56	Bodra
8	Katwan	33	Chek Borda	57	Banwahi
9	Pandharwani	34	Haldi	58	Bikli
10	Piperheti	35	Peth	59	Kunghada(Chek)
11	Shirkada	36	Zari	60	Rengatur
12	Piparda	37	Fuljhari	61	Huma
13	Sonegaon	38	Bembda	62	Pawanpar
14	Wadala	39	Waigaon	63	Kotha
15	Arjuni	40	Nimdela	64	Ghot
16	Ghosri	41	Kolara	65	Mangli
17	Mudholi	42	Deori	66	Chikmara
18	Khutwanda	43	Karbada	67	Kacchepar
19	Tekadi	44	Bamangaon	68	Shedegaon
20	Katwal	45	Satara	69	Dahegaon
21	Sitarampeth	46	Alizanza	70	Dongargaon
22	Kondegaon	47	Doni		
23	Bhamdeli	48	Pahami		
24	Junona	49	Singalzari		
25	Dewada				

Village Map:



Map 02: Villages in program for conflict mitigation

Selection of Village teams: Sangharsh Suraksha Samiti (SSS)

For the selection of the primary response team or the conflict mitigation teams in each village, the TRACT team first met the senior members in each of these villages and informed them about the program and the objectives. The pro and cons and the efforts required were discussed, and in consultation with them and the forest personnel, 7 individuals per village were selected to be a part of the team, which was named as the ‘Sangharsh-Suraksha Samiti’ (Conflict – protection committee)

At the request of the community, each team was made with 5 men and 2 women.

These 7 individuals were informed about their role within their community, the expectations from them in respect to time, effort and involvement, the training that they would be imparted with, the awareness they would need to create in their village, the need for them to be in dialogue with the forest guard and their responsibilities. With their oral consent in place, and in consultation with the forest department, dates for the workshops were decided.

March - May 2014: The TRACT team visited the villages again, finalized the teams, and discussed the workshop schedule with them, again briefing them about their roles and responsibilities.

WORKSHOPS:

ROUND 1 - for the Sangharsh Suraksha Samiti (SSS) – (Buffer and Brahmapuri Division)

June – July – August 2014:

The TRACT team worked through the months of June, July and 1st week of August 2014, conducting the first round of half day-long workshops with the village teams (SSS).

The workshops were conducted over 3 hours. The local beat guard, Forest Round Officer, Sarpanch (administrative village head), Forest committee members, police patil (village representative of the police), Village administrative committee (Gram panchayat) members and the selected individuals of the village teams (Sangharsh-Suraksha Samiti {SSS} or Conflict-Protection Committee) participated in the workshop.

It is worthwhile to mention that each SSS in all the 70 villages has one or two lady members who have volunteered to participate in this project.

The TRACT team of 4 trained personnel conducted these workshops with a pictorial presentation about the issues. TRACT team used power-point presentation prints, banners, brochures, old newspaper printouts and drills for their workshops.

The participants were primarily informed about ways to identify indirect signs of tigers and leopards near their fields and villages, reasons for conflict between humans and tigers/leopards, and how they can mitigate these individually and collectively as a community. They were then informed about their responsibilities to help mitigate this conflict.

Discussions were held about the protection and focus on the wild animal in the conflict situation. They also discussed the role the team will play in mob control and safety of people and bystanders. The teams were sensitized about various situations that can happen, which can lead to conflict and how they need to react to these situations.

In addition to the 70 villages included in this programme, an additional 6 villages of Zaran range, situated in the southern forested corridor of Tadoba were also included in these workshops.

August 2014- The TRACT team worked through the 2nd week of August conducting Conflict Mitigation workshops in 6 villages of Zaran range with the Forest Department due to the constant attacks on people as well as Live stock in the area by a Tiger.

Discussions with the SSS teams during workshops:

More villagers wanted to be a part of this initiative and felt that their participation will be beneficial to the cause of mitigation and to themselves

Some felt that a quicker response to their emergencies by the forest department would help. They also voiced their concern about a lack of dialogue between the management and their community.

Reason for them agreeing to work on this cause without wages is to be able to help their community. The need to feel responsible, to be termed as a leader within their community and to bring about some change is an incentive for the to work for this cause.

Regarding the mitigating measures the team members:

1. Agreed that their changed code of conduct would help mitigate conflict
2. Expressed the need to have solar lights in their villages to dissuade carnivores from coming close
3. They need financial help for secure barns for livestock
4. They wanted the eco development committees in their villages as it ensures financial benefits to the village.

Conditions for working and work that they can do:

1. Raised the issue wages on the days of conflict where they will be needed to work for this through the day instead of going for their regular employment work.
2. Some villager teams wanted torches for their night patrols. They agreed to their responsibility in taking their effort forward and sensitizing their villagers by conducting monthly meetings and talking to villagers in the village centre and social gatherings.
3. They also agreed to record presence of large carnivores near their villages and fields as per the data collection protocol using indirect signs and direct sightings.

VISIT BY USFWS OFFICIALS:

Mr. Fred Bagley and Ms Cory Brown of the US Fish and Wildlife Services visited the project site for a project review.

They visited 3 villages at random and met the SSS teams in the presence of the Senior forest personnel and the forest guards. Mr. Bagley and Ms. Brown has discussions with the teams about their involvement and the project objectives.

A hand book 'Conflict Mitigation Manual' was released in the presence of Superintendent of Police, Chandrapur Mr. Rajiv Jain, with Deputy Conservator of Forest, Buffer zone Mr. Gajendra Narwane and Deputy Conservator of Forest Brahmapuri Division, Mr. Ashish Thakare with Mr. Fred Bagley and Ms. Cory Brown. This manual was handed over to the SSS teams of villages Ghosri, Mudholi and Tekadi.

WORKSHOPS:

ROUND 2 - for the Sangharsh Suraksha Samiti (SSS) – (Buffer and Brahmapuri Division)

Buffer villages - September - December 2014:

TRACT team has conducted the second round of workshops with all the 70 teams. Each team member was given a manual for his reference. The TRACT team explained each episode mentioned in the manual and their role in mitigating this conflict. Drills were conducted in each village to explain their basic protocol in and event of conflict.

Work done & issues raised by each team and feedback regarding the community's response to their work and effort was discussed. They voiced some demands for the work done by them along with some equipment and field gear they need to facilitate their work.

The TRACT team again sensitised the teams about the reasons for conflict, citing examples of cases that have happened in this landscape. The teams were updated about the needed mitigating measures to reduce attacks on them by large carnivores.

Equipment to Forest Personnel:

During the meeting with DCF Brahmapuri, discussions were held regarding the need to conduct this second round of workshops and a continuous hand holding with the teams. 50 Jackets were given to DCF Brahmapuri by TRACT. These were for the conflict mitigation teams of the forest department personnel to visibly segregate them in a mob situation.

Brahmapuri Division villages - January 2015- March 2015-

The TRACT team conducted the 2nd round of workshops in the villages in the Brahmapuri Division. They handed the manuals and sensitized them about the mitigating measures again.

FEED BACK FROM TEAMS-

The TRACT team has kept contact with this network of teams on a regular basis, conducting informal meetings with them. The feedback from the 2nd workshop was impressive, most of the teams were working in their villages to spread awareness and talk about Conflict situations within the villages.

In the span of the 3 months between the 1st and 2nd workshop the teams were responsive enough to call the TRACT team at any point of Wildlife movement, Attack, Injury, Sightings and other cases.

The 2nd workshop included discussions regarding the condition of Wells in the village and the vicinity- whether they are covered or not, the role and response of Department to their complaints and needs, how the TRACT team and Department responds at the time of Conflict, what are their expectations from the team.

The SSS team highlighted that they take monthly Conflict Mitigation meetings whenever there is a village meeting.

OWNERSHIP TO CONFLICT BY TEAMS: Independent efforts by the SSS teams:

1. Village Bhamdeli- the SSS team highlighted the fact that there was a lack of proper garbage disposal by the resorts and Home stays at the village, and the carelessly thrown garbage near the village was attracting ungulates, leopards and sloth bears due to which the waste attracted Leopards and Sloth Bears. The SSS team initiated to lodge a complaint with the Forest Department in writing and then the resorts were asked to have a proper pit or system for their waste disposal.

2. Village Mamla- Continuous movement of Tiger and Leopard was observed in the area. The SSS team called daily regarding the happenings in the village and henceforth the Dept has to enforce daily patrols in the area with the Guards and some forest watchers round the clock. The SSS team also participated in the Daily patrols.

3. Villages Tekadi and Arjuni- Drawing and Painting competition was organised by the school where the SSS team volunteered to organise the event and the theme for the competition was Co-existence and conflict mitigation.

Expectations of the Teams:

- (i) Regular patrols in the area by department.
- (ii) Earliest possible response from the Forest Guards at the time of any Attack resulting in Kill or Injury or Crop raid.
- (iii) The team needs shoes, torches and wages for the day they work.

Empowering the Teams:

The teams have been empowered with the information to mitigate conflict, a platform to work and to have a dialogue with the Forest personnel and TRACT.

Each village team was given a banner with the name of the village committee and the logo of TRACT, USFW and the State Forest Department. The second banner had details of mitigating measures and the required code of conduct in the local language. Each of the team members was given a blue jacket to be worn in any conflict situation and during meetings to make them visible. They were also given stationary, files, and pamphlets with information on code of conduct and information about TRACT.

The workshop was followed by snacks for the participant and wages for the 7-team members for the day of the workshop.

HAND BOOK / MANUAL for Conflict Mitigation-

TRACT in consultation with the Forest Officials has created a small Manual for these teams. This manual printed in the local Language, Marathi, has illustrations and basic information about the conflict situations that can arise involving them or in their village precincts and what are the precautions and the basic protocol to be followed by them in these situations to ensure that no harm is caused to the animals involved to the people and how to manage crowds till help arrives.

The Manual also has a list of contact numbers of all the concerned field personnel that need to be contacted in case of conflict.

STATE FOREST DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATION:

During this work the TRACT was fully supported by the State forest department. They extended full cooperation and participation along with free accommodation to the team. The Forest Guard and the Round officer participated in the workshops and a healthy dialogue and discussion of issues concerning protection to wildlife, conflict mitigation efforts, crop raid, cattle kill compensation etc was discussed.

The DCF Buffer and Brahmapuri stressed the need for the additional responsibilities that these teams can take. They indicated that these teams will be trained by the forest department further to facilitate documentation with cattle kill compensation and Crop raid issues.

The project has created a platform for a constant dialogue between the management and the local communities who are the largest stakeholders.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT:

S.No	Efforts and Achievements	
1.	Geographical area covered	Sq km 7000 (Approx)
2.	Villages under program	70
3.	Trainees trained	06
4.	Local leaders within community with capacity	490
5.	Meetings with Forest personnel	82
6.	Meetings with village administration	80
7.	Workshops	140
8.	Additional villages addressed in emergency	06
9.	Surveys conducted	02
10.	Families surveyed	1600
11.	People affected by program (approx.)	35000
12.	Forest personnel involved in program	85
13.	Conflict Mitigation Manual shared with	750 people



PIC 01: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village Banner



PIC 02: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Initial Village Meeting



PIC 03: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village Survey by TRACT team



PIC 04: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village Administrative meeting by TRACT team



PIC 05: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village meeting with Project leader



PIC 06: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village Workshop. Round 1



PIC 07: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village Team with TRACT personnel



Pic 08: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Village team, USFWS officials, Superintendent of Police & TRACT project leaders



Pic 09: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Mr. Fred Bagley distributing the Manual to the Forest Personnel



PIC 10: TRACT-USFWS.13-15. Mr. Bagley with team members & TRACT project leaders Poonam and Harshawardhan Dhanwatey