

Press Release

Aaranyak trains 1500 forest personnel on GPS-GIS to boost conservation in NE

Guwahati, April 8: Use of Global Positioning System (GPS) has become very pertinent globally in sustained biodiversity conservation efforts and it is the need of the hour to have a huge pool of trained personnel in use of GPS and Geographic Information System (GIS) in forest forces across frontiers.

Country's premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) has, therefore, initiated a sustained efforts towards this end. In the last twenty years, about 1500 frontline forest staff including forest guards, foresters and even forest rangers have received hands-on trainings on the use of GPS in Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. The prime motivation behind the effort is to complement conservation of northeast India's rich natural heritage.

"Keeping in mind the importance on the use of GPS and GIS tools in conservation and development planning, Aaranyak launched its Geo-Spatial Technology and Application Division (GTAD) in 2005. GPS has proved in today's world as an important tool that has been assisting in mapping land use changes, navigation of aeroplane, ships, vehicles etc., and was proved helpful for older humans to track their locations in many countries. GIS tools has been playing key role in providing valuable data, information and insights through GIS-based maps to enable apt decision making," says Dr Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, CEO of Aaranyak.

Training on GPS helps forest personnel navigating through forest canopies, locating habitat as well as animals, collecting data/information from the field, tracking and tracing animal movements, determining boundaries and area measurements, plotting the information in map etc.

Moreover, the organisation have offered 23 regular training programmes to students, researchers, and other institutions and all these programmes are related to the conservation of forests and around 350 people have benefited from such trainings.

"The knowledge of Remote Sensing & GIS and especially use of GPS helps forest personnel in many ways like documentation or create inventories of spatial based information of habitat, animals' movements or sighting locations, which helps in better monitoring and surveillance, facilitate more informed, effective and timely based decision management. We in Aaranyak are always ready to disseminate this knowledge in this field to be utilised for the greater benefits of the biodiversity conservation.", says Arup Kumar Das who leads the GIS resource team in Aaranyak.

"It is a privilege to be able to support the custodians of our precious forest and its resources. In the technology-dominated age, RS-GIS technology is helping them monitor and study the natural resources in a more cost and time effective manner," says Madhumita Borthakur, a senior member of the GIS resource team in Aaranyak.

Members of Aaranyak's Geospatial Technology and Applications team also serve as guest faculty at various institutions to impart knowledge. Assam Forest School, Tata Institute of Social Science, Central Academy of State Forest Service Byrnihat are among these schools.

*Press statement issued by Dr Alolika Sinha, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
Contact No. 9435021312, Email ID: alolika@aaranyak.org*