BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

11TH
EASTERN HIMALAYAN
NATURENOMICS™ FORUM
2023

18th & 19th December
Guwahati, Assam

INSIGHTS

FOREWORD

11TH
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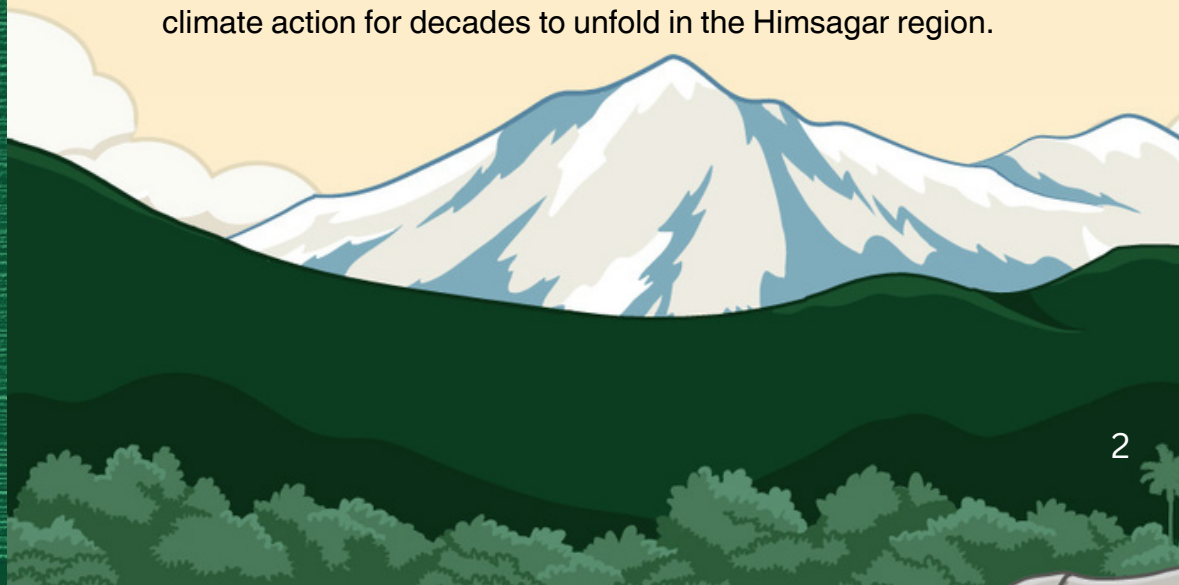**EVOLVING VISIONS: FROM ASIAN ELEPHANTS TO ECOSYSTEMS**-

When we initially set out on this journey, our focus was centered on a single emblematic species - the Asian Elephants. Over a decade and a half of continuous learning, filled with both successes and failures, we came to the realization that to instigate significant change, we must broaden our perspective. Our mission evolved to encompass all species that contribute to the cohesion of the Eastern Himalayan region. This shift compelled us to reimagine the Eastern Himalaya and its future, prompting us to adopt a systemic approach. The grand forest systems that span the Eastern Himalayan region became the focal point of The Great People's Forest of the Eastern Himalaya.

FACING CATASTROPHIC SHIFTS: FROM UNSEEN FLOODS TO THE URGENCY FOR TRANSFORMATION

A decade and a half of fieldwork also visibly brought home the scale of the problem facing the vibrant communities and ecosystems of the Eastern Himalaya – and how little time was left to mitigate the worst damage. Farmers along riverine ecosystems were facing floods at times when there used to be none and at a level of destructiveness not previously seen. The magnitude of the problem facing Eastern Himalaya, its people and biodiversity is catacalysmic. But the opportunity for transformation is just as powerful.

THE WAY FORWARD INVOLVES

- Shedding light on the geographical importance of the *Himsagar region as the third pole.*
- This is a crucial juncture in history for us to establish and take a lead on biodiversity conservation, nature-based recovery, and sustained climate action for decades to unfold in the Himsagar region.

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1. Community Ownership:

- Communities are pivotal in forest conservation.
- Shifting from a beneficiary paradigm to ownership is crucial.
- Preservation and rewilding efforts can benefit from their knowledge of indigenous medicine, food, and livelihood.

2. Technology:

- Technology is essential for impact monitoring.
- Integrating communities into the technological mainstream is key.
- Leveraging generational community knowledge can scale the efforts of NGOs and civil society organizations, improving overall outcomes.

3. Renewable Adoption :

- Organizations, particularly in sectors such as cement, manufacturing, and steel, must comply with the Energy Consumption Act 2022.
- Mandated to maintain a specific proportion of their energy demands from renewables like solar. Non-compliance may lead to penalties.
- Promote renewable energy and its integration with technology for enhanced efficacy.

4. Valuation of Natural Resources:

- Prioritize the valuation of natural resources. Implement systems to calculate the financial value of forests and land.
- Measure the contribution of forests to climate change and the costs associated with forest loss, floods, heatwaves, crop loss, and erratic climate.

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5. Human-Elephant Interaction:

- Shift conversations around human-elephant conflict to focus on interaction rather than conflict.
- Leverage technology to build early warning systems, minimizing damages and loss of life when elephants enter human-inhabited spaces.

6. Waste Management:

- Address the main challenge in waste management, which is segregation.
- Establish effective processing and repurposing of waste as a raw material through proper segregation.
- Encourage businesses to take the lead in setting up collection centers and taking responsibility for collecting and recycling waste from their manufactured products. Explore alternatives like bioplastics to minimize plastic damage.

7. Watershed Management:

- Collaboration between downstream and upstream communities is essential for securing watersheds.
- Working together on afforestation and restoration can safeguard fisheries and paddy fields, ensuring livelihoods are protected.

HIGHLIGHTS

of

Day 1

Session - *The Great People's Forest Opportunity*

Participants at the Forum

Forests can absorb 20% of carbon, required to reach climate goals

Session - *How is AI and Technology Being Leveraged To Accelerate Ecological Innovations?*

Session - *Rewilding Bhutan*

HIGHLIGHTS

of

Day 1

Session - In the Melody of Interdependence

Session - Unveiling New Horizons and Reflecting on COP28

Session - The Power of Youth

Session - In Conversation with the Youth Fellows

HIGHLIGHTS of Day 2

Session - Sports as an Enabler for Climate Neutrality

Session - Leadership Address : Back to Basics

Session - Harmonizing Ecosystems: Land, Forests and Conservation of Asian Elephants

Session - Redefining Waste Management

HIGHLIGHTS

of Day 2

Naturenomics Pavilion

THE GREAT PEOPLE'S FOR
Session : Why Nature Capital Investment

Session : Enhancing Watersheds Through Ecosystem and Natural Resources Management

Session : Decarbonizing Energy for Ecosystem Preservation

HIGHLIGHTS of

Youth Corner

Understanding the Greater Adjutant Stork

Engagement with the youth

Launch of Relearn 'ABCD'

Registration for the Forum

ANNOUNCING
EASTERN HIMALAYAN
NATURENOMICS FORUMS 2024

1. **Annual Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum 2024 :**

   26th & 27th November 2024

2. **Regional Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum 2024 :**

   February - September 2024
   (Dates to be announced soon)

3. **Detailed Report - Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum 2023 & Balipara Foundation Awards:**
   January 2024