

Workshop on Master Planning for Zoo Education held at WII, Dehradun

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A workshop on “Master Planning for Zoo Education” was held at the Wildlife Institute of India, (WII) Dehradun from 15-18 December 2014, hosted by Wildlife Institute of India and coordinated by Centre for Environment Education CEE, Ahmedabad and sponsored by Central Zoo Authority. Zoo Directors and education officers from Arignar Anna Zoological Park-Chennai, Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park-Tirupati, Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park-Patna, Sikkim Zoological Gardens, Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park-Darjeeling, Kanpur Zoological Park, TATA Zoological Park-Jamshedpur, National Zoological Park-New Delhi, Manipur Zoological Gardens, Mahendra Chaudhary Zoological Park-Chhatbir, Pt. G.B. Pant High Altitude Zoo-Nainital, Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park-Ranchi, Sundarvan-Ahmedabad and Malsi Deer Park attended the workshop.

On 15 December, the workshop was inaugurated by Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, WII in the presence of Shri. B.S. Bonal, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority (CZA). Dr. Bitapi C. Sinha, Course Director welcomed the participants. Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, WII gave inaugural address. Mr. B.S. Bonal, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority was the keynote speaker and he spoke on “Role of CZA in Conservation Education, and interpretation in Zoos”. Dr. Anupam Srivastav gave vote of thanks. Then various sessions begun. At first, Dr. Bitapi C. Sinha gave a talk on “Review of Conservation Education and interpretation programmes in Indian Zoos”. She appraised the current conservation education programmes happening around the zoos in India.

There was a detailed discussion on finalization of the Zoo education plan format, and setting of goals



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Participants listening to talk

and objectives of the plan. In this format an introduction about the zoo education master plan, SWOT analysis, education mission, objectives and goals of the particular zoo, visitor profiling, resource inventory, strategies, eco calendar and what kind of activities can be done during the year were included. Shri. B.S. Bonal, Shri. P.C. Tyagi, Dr. Bitapi C. Sinha and Shri. B.C. Choudhury handled the session. This gave a

synopsis to the participants, how to develop an education master plan and based on this an individual assignment was given to them to develop their own zoo education master plan. The participants worked vigorously on their assignment and presented during the workshop, which was one of the main objectives of this workshop.

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Workshop participants working on developing zoo education master plan assignment

Ms. Meena Nareshwar, Senior Programme Coordinator, Zoo Education and Interpretation, CEE, gave a detailed talk and discussed CEE's Master Education Plan for Zoos of India including – profiling zoo visitors – understanding visitor motivations & development of a visitor survey questionnaire. Need for Visitor Profile Survey: developing visitor study profile/questionnaire/survey forms for the diverse target audiences visiting zoos to design and develop effective and appropriate educational and interpretation programmes for the different target groups visiting zoos. Followed to this Shri. P.C. Tyagi and Dr. Bitapi Sinha conducted a critical review of interpretative signage in Indian zoos and how to develop and design a message and media to suit audience preference.

On 16 December, Shri. Sivakumar, Sundarvan gave a presentation on "Effective Communication techniques in conservation education and interpretation, including use of online media". Different walk of people visit zoos. Hence, effective communication, using diverse tools is vital to reach all section of visitors effectively. Considering above factor, various tools to reach different kind of audience were discussed. Sundarvan – A Nature Discovery

Centre and Mini Zoo located in Ahmedabad was taken as a case study. Variety of education activities carried out at this facility and its impacts were shared with the participants.

Use of internet is very prolific and social network usage is increasing every year in tremendous rate. Hence, using online media to reach different target group is unavoidable. Information on zoos that use social media successfully to reach wide range of audience was also discussed in the session.

Ms. Meena Nareshwar gave a presentation on Range of Effective Communication techniques in conservation education and interpretation, including use of online media-Nandankanan Zoo as a case study. Using a variety of media, techniques, technologies and medias CEE's interpretation programmes seek to convert the visits of people to natural and cultural heritage sites into an educational opportunity. They enhance the nature experience by providing on-site information through signages and exhibits, create a strong impact and go a long way towards increasing public commitment to the cause of conservation. Increasingly, interpretation is also emerging as a vital tool that helps to impress

on visitors the critical link between environment and sustainable development.

For the Nandankanan Zoo, CEE designed and developed the Interpretation Centre, where visitors can see, understand and appreciate the efforts of the Zoo, what goes on Behind the Scenes, know about Veterinary care, Zoonotic diseases and the Zoo Hospital. Actual equipments used have been displayed at the Centre. There are also panels, models and interactives on the rich Biodiversity of Orissa and Conservation issues.

Shir. R. Marimuthu, Zoo Outreach Organisation gave a talk on "Planning and designing of zoo outreach programmes". This talk includes the role of zoos on education, the importance of zoo education for conservation of species, the values of zoo education stated in World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy WZACS, National Zoo Policy 1998 and Recognition of Zoo Rules 2009, why your zoo need separate education policy or plan, the basis for zoo education i.e. living animals, formal and informal education, how could zoos engage their visitors in their education activities both formal and informal, three point for process for planning an education programme- investigate, implement and evaluate; types of learning, conducting an education programme around species and events, examples of species and event based programmes, elements of developing a



Conservation education games were also taught

programme-functions, materials, partners; few case studies of ZOO's education programmes on species as well as events, how to get media's help and samples of ZOO's various education kits. Further, he talked about how to design creative education materials with examples. Then Shri. B.C. Choudhury gave a talk on "Vandalism and its management in Zoos". He talked about various kinds of vandalism in the zoos and zoos how could the zoo management control the vandalism both for the animals welfare and the property of the zoo.



Visit to the Malsi deer park for evaluation exercise

On 17 December, the participants were taken to Malsi Deer Park for on the spot evaluation exercise. The Park Director explained about the proposed new master plan of the park. Then participants were divided into groups and given assignments to evaluate the park entrance, the effectiveness of the signages, visitor amenities, and enclosure design. They went around the park with the resource persons and finally submitted their evaluation results. This was a very good practical exercise for them to evaluate a captive facility.



Mr. S.C. Sharma, Former Member Secretary, CZA distributing certificates

Afternoon session was held at WII campus. Further they worked on the zoo education master plan. In the meantime, Mr. Marimuthu taught few education games and also developing media matrix index for good education programme. Developing Message-Media Matrix is crucial for designing and developing effective education and interpretation programmes. Thematic Interpretation methodology should be used in developing Interpretive Programmes. Thematic interpretation aims to make it easy for visitors to form strong meanings and connections by interpreting through the purposeful delivery of themes – main or take-home messages. It delivers themes to identified audiences via selected

communication media, such as exhibits, signages, multimedia techniques brochures, signs or a film, in a strategic manner. One or two participants presented their zoo education master plans.

On the last day 18 Dec, participants worked on the assignment of preparation of their zoo education master plan, they consolidated their assignment and presented their plan. Then a panel discussion was held on constraints for effective implementation of Zoo education Master plan and the way forward. Mr. S.C. Sharma, First Member Secretary of CZA participated in the valedictory.

The participants were to consult with their individual Zoo authorities and then send their

final Zoo Education Master Plans to CZA. Ms. Meena Nareshwar thanked CZA and WII for drawing on CEE's expertise on developing zoo education master plan for the Zoos. Certificates were distributed to all the participants.

