

WHV – Western Ghats (Agumbe)

Western Ghats, India

 Natural property inscribed on the
World Heritage List since 2012

01/08/2016 – 14/08/2016



Older than the Himalaya mountains, the mountain chain of the Western Ghats represents geomorphic features of immense importance with unique biophysical and ecological processes. The site's high montane forest ecosystems influence the Indian monsoon weather pattern. Moderating the tropical climate of the region, the site presents one of the best examples of the monsoon system on the planet. It also has an exceptionally high level of biological diversity and endemism and is recognized as one of the world's eight 'hottest hotspots' of biological diversity. The forests of the site include some of the best representatives of non-equatorial tropical evergreen forests anywhere and are home to at least 325 globally threatened flora, fauna, bird, amphibian, reptile and fish species.

Project objectives: The project, for the first time implemented in the framework of the World Heritage Volunteers initiative, will focus on the conservation of biodiversity in the Agumbe Rain forest in the Western Ghats, which receives the second highest annual rainfall in the country. There is a need to prevent soil erosion and harvest the rainwater in order to increase the ground water level, and safeguard the purity of endemic forest.

Project activities: The volunteers will initially learn targeted skills to be able to identify the common flora and fauna of the rain forest, guided by the researchers of the Agumbe Rainforest Research Station. They will proceed to remove threatening species and plant endemic species with the support of the state's Forest department, using Indian traditional tools. They will also learn to build percolation pits as traditional harvesting methods that help preventing soil erosion and increasing ground water levels and the humus content of the soil. The volunteers will also prepare demonstration materials to be presented in schools and local community to guarantee outreach and active participation among the local inhabitants and to sensitize them to maintaining the biodiversity in the area.

Partners: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Shimoga, Forest Department Agumbe, and Agumbe Rainforest Research Station.