

Cycas Conservation Centers in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Western Ghats, India.

Three monthly report – II
Period Novmeber 2008– January2009

In this quarter the work on cycads continues with a focus on raising nurseries and building up the conservation centers. In the meantime the Cycas work in Keystone suffered a setback when we lost one of our key Cycas champions-Manikam of Velleri combei on November 18th 2008. His photo was featured in our previous report with a report on the activity in the Cycas house and the mobile phone that was given to him. On the evening of 18th Manikam was returning home from a visit to the forests. He had gone to get some bamboo to do the repairs for the Cycas house. There were elephants in the way and two of them were ready for attack. Manikam's friends who were with him escaped but Manikam could not run fast enough and fell. The elephants then kicked him around and he was trampled to death. He succumbed on the way to the hospital. The Cycas team and all of Keystone miss him a lot.



The Cycas house in Appankappu is ready for visitors. It is located on the banks of the river, next to a sacred grove and close to the Cycas nursery. The people of the village are very happy to see the work develop there. An official inauguration is being planned and we will be hosting education programs through the center.



5000 seeds in the Cycas nursery at Appankappu



Cycas house renovated and soon to be innaugurated



The Cycas plants that were out planted in the village of Samaigudal are looked after well by the villagers. They remember the plant being present in the valley but had not seen it for many years now. With the forest nurseries in their villages they raised more than 500 saplings which have been out planted and are being looked after by the people of the village.

Tree guard put around the cycas saplings planted in Samaigudal village lands.

Plans for a Cycas travel are building up. Saneesh is all set to board a train in February, for Andhra Pradesh and Orissa to capture the distribution and harvests of cycads of the area. Madhu Ramnath who is a close associate of Keystone's has been to these areas on work and brought back information on cycads and Saneesh is following those leads.

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