



This section provides a detailed account of the way in which the historic Save the Western Ghats Movement of 1987/88 was resurrected. Bringing life into a campaign whose vitality was decreasing with the advent of new problems was a massive task. But this was done with the vision of carrying forward the change, which the initiating movement had aimed to bring about.

The Resurgence of the Sahyadri Campaign

Save The Western Ghats March which started more than 25 years ago, is till date considered to be one of the pioneering civil society movements, which aimed at redefining, questioning and building up grassroots activism in order to promote conservation and protection of natural resources as well as livelihoods. But, those heady, activist days have been followed by an ill fated slumber, while unmitigated destruction of the Western Ghats continued.

A handful of people made it a point to start again, to reignite. In 2009, it happened again in Goa with unprecedented enthusiasm and participation, in an organic way which led to a concerted decision that this endeavour should never be lost again. Kotagiri located in the heart of the Nilgiris biosphere reserve in the Western Ghats was decided as the next venue.

Since 2009 a group of experienced activists and conservation practitioners came together to revive the 'Save the Western Ghats Movement' that had been initiated in 1987-88 with Save the Western Ghats March. This group worked hard in 2009 to organize an annual meeting of civil society representatives from Western Ghats and could mobilize about 200 organizations and individuals. All participants of Goa expressed the need to meet once a year and to have a space for dissemination and exchange of views and ideas. The group that revived the Save the Western Ghats in 2009 was informal and organically evolved to knit together the civil society groups from Western Ghats. The group continued meeting and soon inducted few more committed individuals to take this noble initiative further. This meeting has been supported by Both Ends, The Netherlands and hosted by Peaceful Society Goa.



Save the Western Ghats Group 2009

Reinitiating and instilling enthusiasm and vigour into a famed Social Movement which had faced decline in the recent past was a tedious task for the small group of people who had taken up the responsibility upon themselves. The group responsible for reigniting the movement in 2009 in Goa, consisted of the following people,

Mr. Kalanand Mani

Mr. Pandurang Hegde

Dr. Lata Anantha

Mr. Sudhirendar Sharma

Mr. Beejay Krishnan

Mr. Pratim Roy

Ms. Carmen Miranda

Mr. Madhu Ramnath.

Road to Kotagiri 2010



After Goa 2009, the SWG group continued to work together to develop a strong network of Civil Society Organizations and provide a platform through annual meetings .To continue the effort and to form a strong group lobbying for Western Ghats, the second annual meeting was organized by the group in 2010 at Kotagiri in Tamil Nadu. Keystone Foundation from Nilgiris volunteered to organize the 2010 SWG meet. Before this meet the SWG group met a few times, with their own resources and designed the programme. The group also was constantly working for lobbying and advocacy the Western Ghats and issues of this ancient mountain system at government level and had many meetings with the then minister of Environment & Forest Mr. Jairam Ramesh. As a result he accepted the invitation to attend the Kotagiri meet as a Chief Guest.

This meeting was a milestone, as it was in this meeting that Mr. Jairam Ramesh announced the formation of Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel. Later from March 2010 to August 2011 the Save Western Ghats Group supported and worked closely with the WGEEP. The Kotagiri meet was supported By Swallows India –Bangladesh and organized by Keystone Foundation.

Save the Western Ghats Group 2010

After the success of the Kotagiri meet in 2010 and with the milestone achievement of the establishment of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, the Save the Western Ghats Group in 2010 started working towards greater goals with more support and involvement of the various stakeholders and civil society groups of the Western Groups. The members of the Save the Western Ghats group in 2010 consisted of,

Mr. Pratim Roy

Mr. Beejay Krishnan

Dr. Latha Anantha

Mr. Sudhirendar Sharma

Mr. Pandurang Hegde

Ms. Carmen Miranda

Dr. Archana Godbole



Engaging the Youth --- Moodbirdri 2011

It was encouraging to see action at policy level in the form of WGEEP process for Western Ghats. There is a growing concern about connecting youth to the



cause of Western Ghats. Appropriately therefore the annual conclave of 2011 was for the youth. The SWG meet 2011 was organized by Prakriti, Karnataka. Young participants from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra participated in this conclave. The experienced practitioners tried to pass across their message to the youth and tried to invoke the importance of the youth joining hands for saving The Western Ghats. The Moundbird meet was supported by Swallows India Bangladesh, Keystone Foundation and organized by Prakriti, Shirsi.

Save the Western Ghats Group 2011

In 2011, The Save the Western Ghats group consisted of the following members,

Mr. Pratim Roy
Mr. Beejay Krishnan
Dr. Latha Anantha
Mr. Sudhirendar Sharma
Mr. Pandurang Hegde
Ms. Carmen Miranda
Dr. Archana Godbole
Mr. Rithwick Datta
Mr. Gauri Shankar
Mr. Samir Mehta
Ms Amruta Kurane
Mr. Hartman De'Souza
Ms. Suprabha Sheshan
Mr. Somnath Sen

Celebrating 25 years of Save the Western Ghats March: SWG Meet 2012

Through the strong network of civil society groups working in Western Ghats, and many collective actions like contribution to WGEEP process , sharing expertise, few collaborative programmes it was thought to commemorate the



spirit of Civil society that began 25 years ago . The meeting in Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra therefore is to rejuvenate the spirit of Civil Society for Western Ghats and bring together people who initiated this long time ago. Collective action, collaborations and long term partnerships are extremely important, therefore many will share their concerns, approaches, success stories and knowledge which they gained while working in Western Ghats. The meeting is hosted by Applied Environmental Research Foundation and supported By Critical Ecosystems Partnerships Fund.

Save the Western Ghats Group 2012

2012 marks the coming together of various groups, old and new, to mark the 25th year of the Save the Western Ghats movement which was initiated in 1987/88. This year, the group consists of the following members,

Mr. Pratim Roy
Dr. Latha Anantha
Mr. Pandurang Hegde
Ms. Carmen Miranda
Dr. Archana Godbole
Mr. Rithwick Datta
Mr. Samir Mehta
Ms. Suprabha Seshan
Mr. Somnath Sen
Mr. Jayant Sarnaik
Ms. Parineeta Dandekar
Ms. Bhakti Nephrititi
Mr. Madhu Ramnath
Ms. Snehlata Nath

SWG group is a loosely knit group managing to bring groups and people together, but we are not interested to formalize that into an institution. The team members are passionate and committed about the Western Ghats. Each one so far has specific interests with lot of leadership qualities. As and when



required, we have contributed to the process. Most importantly the inputs and involvement is voluntary.

*The best thing thus far in the group has been its spontaneity, camaraderie, responsiveness, mutuality, and initiative and comfort levels shared amongst the members. Though we have worked on an agenda and tasks, the response has been voluntary. Within the core, there have been `mini core' wherein two or more have grouped together to pursue something with others being supportive. Though there have been no guidelines and yet there have been unwritten norms. Our sense is that each one has been aiming at a goal though the routes to reach it have been different. **Let that be!***