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# Hennur mini forest an oasis in urban jungle but who will pay for its Upkeep?

By ET Bureau | Jul 20, 2016, 10.41 AM IST

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**BENGALURU:** With a 32-acre sprawl of greenery right in their midst, residents of HBR Layout are a proud lot. This is a luxury that most Bengalureans do not have.

The Hennur Lake Biodiversity Park that opened last week now faces the challenge of maintenance. Within days of its launch, the park is witnessing more than a thousand footfalls a day. Only two staffers have been deployed to look after the facility.

The [Forest Department](#), whose efforts turned a wasteland on a dry lakebed into a serene mini forest, is weighing various options to generate funds required for maintenance. "A nominal entry fee -Rs3 or Rs5 -will be introduced. This money will help us take care of maintenance," deputy conservator of forests (Bengaluru Urban) Dipika Bajpai said. "We're also counting on corporate social responsibility funds and participation of local RWAs."

The Biodiversity Park has 1,827 trees. The 39 species include jacaranda, sandalwood, rosewood, ficus, mahogany and terminalia. In addition, it has over 6,000 medicinal plants. This includes Scaevola Taccada, Polygonum Chinensis, Costus Specious among others that have known benefits for fever, cough, indigestion and skin diseases. Walkers and joggers have a 2-km long path with two pergolas.

"Another 1,200 trees will be planted in the monsoon this year," assistant conservator of forests (lakes subdivision) Harshavardhan PN said.

The mini forest is built on Hennur lake that no longer exists. Retired HAL employee George KX, 66, remembers that it was just plain land when he built his house in 1991. "This was originally a civic amenity land that spanned 67 acres. It is now down to 36 acres. We have struggled to save this space," said George, an active member of the HBR Layout Residents Welfare Association. Residents have suggested a monthly pass system to ensure better control over the park, he added.

The Hennur Lake Biodiversity Park becomes significant as urbanisation during the period from 1973 to 2016 has seen a 1005% increase in concretisation (paved surfaces), leading to 88% decline in vegetation and 79% reduction of wetlands, according to the Indian Institute of Science. "Geovisualisation of likely land uses in 2020 reveals a calamitous picture of 93% of Bengaluru's landscape being filled with paved surfaces and drastic reduction in open spaces and green cover," IISc ecologist TV Ramachandra said.

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


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

























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