

45/2013/10
GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
FOREST DEPARTMENT

Ref. No. 22818/2010/TI
Dated 28-12-2012

O/o The Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests
Aranya Bhavan, A.P., Hyderabad.



CIRCULAR No. 7 / 2012

Sri S.V. Kumar, IFS,
Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests
(Head of Forest Force)

To
Sub: FD- IT - Prohibition on the use of GIS layers for legal purposes-
Instructions issued - Regarding

Officers in the address entry are informed that Spatial databases of the Forest blocks and administrative boundaries were created during 1994 & 1996 using Mylar sheets on the 1:50000 scale maps (topomaps and working plan maps) by manual digitization process with the help of staff deputed by concerned Divisional Forest Officers to the GIS Cell. Similarly other layers like roads, villages, streams, water bodies, contours etc. were also created from other sources. These layers were updated from time to time. It is re-iterated that these layers are not accurate on account of various reasons like human error in correctly copying the maps, thickness of the pen used (it matters a lot), mis-match in the scales of the maps, not plotting of the old chain & compass surveyed areas correctly etc. Hence these layers have mainly been used for management purposes like monitoring of forest cover changes, selection of suitable for WHS, Plantations, Eco- Tourism & Forests Fire Risk Zonation etc. and not for any legal purposes.

It has been informed in the past also through series of letters clearly stating that these GIS layers based forest block boundaries are approximate in nature. Further many forest blocks are missing in the GIS layer as most of the Blocks notified after 1996 were not incorporated due to non-furnishing of the same by Field Officers. Therefore it was informed to all the Field Officers that the GIS layers based outputs, specially maps, should be used only for administrative, management and monitoring purposes and not for resolving the boundary disputes and legal matters. For legal purposes, only the original maps as per Forest Blocks notifications shall be relied upon and used. The above position was also reiterated several times while furnishing information of density of forest cover deduced based on satellite data as sought for FCA project related cases.

Notwithstanding above position, certain instances have come to the notice of the undersigned where in Divisional Forest Officers have issued NOCs to the parties stating that the "area in question" does not fall in the notified forests based on GIS layers and now facing disciplinary proceedings as these areas are inside the notified forest blocks based on original records.

Therefore all the Officers in the address entry are once again instructed not to use the GIS layers for any legal purposes nor issue any NOC based on it nor use it for resolving any boundary dispute. For these purposes only the original notified documents, i.e., Maps, Survey Field Books, Area Statements, Gazette notifications shall be utilized.

These instructions must be complied scrupulously. All the Officers are requested to acknowledge the receipt of this Circular by return post.

Sd/- S.V. Kumar
Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests

To
All the Circle Heads of T&WL Circles
All the Divisional Forest Officers (T, WL & State Silviculturists)
Copy to PCCF (WL) & CWLW, SplPCCF (FS), APCCF (FCA) and all the Senior Officers
in the Head Office for information and necessary action.
Copy to Stock File.
Copy to the Table of PCCF & HoFF for favour of information.

// t.c.b.o //

Superintendent

P.T.O