



Alternatives India

**VIKALP** sangam

[vikalpsangam.org](http://vikalpsangam.org)

To: The Chairman  
Uttarakhand State Biodiversity Board  
Dehradun

9 November, 2021

Sub: Biodiversity Heritage Site at Devalsari

Dear Sir,

We are writing as the underlisted organisations and individuals from Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Kashmir, and Pune who gathered for a West Himalayan Vikalp Sangam (Alternatives Confluence) at Devalsari (Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand) on 21-24<sup>th</sup> October, 2021. This is a forum to bring together initiatives that are combining livelihood enhancement, people's empowerment, ecological conservation, and other aspects across the West Himalayan region.

During the Sangam gathering we visited the forests, farms and other habitats of the Devalsari area, and saw first-hand its rich biodiversity. We also learnt that the Van Panchayats and gram panchayats of 6 villages along with the local youth group Devalsari Paryavaran Sanrakshan Evam Takniki Vikas Samiti have proposed the area as a Biodiversity Heritage Site, vide letter to you on 13 January 2021.

Noting the importance of this area for biodiversity and for people's livelihoods, noting also that there are a number of threats to these from road construction, fire, and illegal activities, we strongly support the proposal of the local communities to declare this a BHS. We would also like to point out that as per the Biological Diversity Act 2002 and the guidelines on BHS issued by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest, the local community has to be central to the proposal, planning, and protection of the BHS. Already the community has shown its ability to conserve the area, e.g. in the Sreedev Suman Titli Park and the Van Panchayat forests. The governance and management of the BHS should be in the hands of the 6 villages that have proposed it, with appropriate and necessary support from agencies like the Forest Department and the State Biodiversity Board.

We urge the community proposal on BHS to be urgently processed. We are ready to help further in the process, if necessary.

Thank you, sincerely,

(Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh, [ashishkothari@riseup.net](mailto:ashishkothari@riseup.net))

On behalf of:

Beej Bachao Andolan, Titli Trust, Devalsari Paryavaran Samrakshan Evam Takniki Vikas Samiti, Shramyog, Pawalgarh Prakriti Prahari, South Asian Dialogue on Ecological Democracy, Astha Jan Kalyan Evam Vikas Samiti, Mausam, Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti, Zanskar Conservancy Movement, Camp Hornbill, Avadaz Agro, Snow Leopard Conservancy – India Trust, Kalpavriksh, School for Rural Development and Environment, People's Science Institute, Equations, Travellers' University

Copy to:

Shri Rajiv Bhartari, Head of Forest, Uttarakhand  
Dr. Vinod Mathur, Chair, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai