WeForest
Making Earth Cooler

India

Khasi Hills

Mid-year report 2021

Supporting Khasi communities to regenerate their forest

Nestled in the Khasi Hills in northeast India, forest-dependent villages across 12 different Hima (districts) are restoring forests with the support of the KSKHAWUM Welfare Society and WeForest.

This year will be the last that active restoration takes place, since we have completed our targets. From 2022, WeForest will be monitoring the sites until 2025.

During the first six months of 2021, tree planting took place in the final 50 ha of the original project area in the East Khasi Hills and in 150 ha in the more tropical north. This means we're well on our way towards meeting our 2021 target to restore the final 350 ha (305 550 trees) through Assisted Natural Regeneration techniques managed by local communities.

Our goals for the Khasi Hills project:

2021 goal:

Bring a final
350 ha
305 550 trees
under Assisted Natural Regeneration

By the end of 2021:

3150 ha
2 623 950 trees
under ANR and managed by the local communities

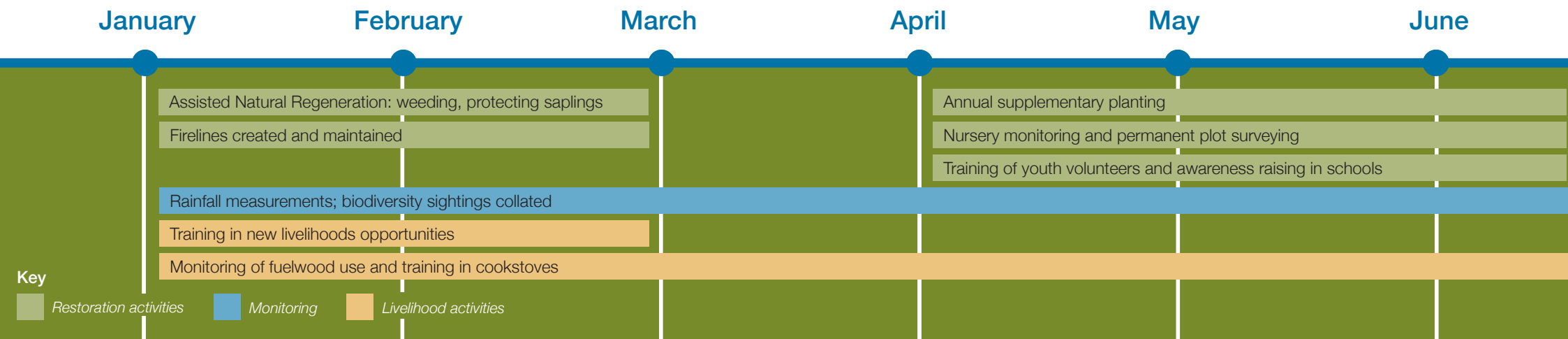
What's new in Khasi Hills?

Recent highlights from the field

Thankfully, in 2021 the team has been less restricted in their movements than during the lockdown of 2020 and are making good progress. Throughout the first half of the year, 50 000 seedlings have been raised in the nurseries, and mapping, silvicultural activities, planting and monitoring continued to take place. The project has brought 2784.48 ha (representing 2 319 472 trees) under Assisted Natural Regeneration so far. We're aiming for a total of 3150 ha by the end of the active restoration phase of the project, which will be this year.

The team was happy to resume meetings with village leaders and community members to discuss restoration site selection and raise awareness about the project, and conduct training in alternative livelihood development. 121 people learned the basics of rearing pigs, which are better for the forest than grazing

Support to the Self-Help Groups was able to continue with COVID-19 measures in place



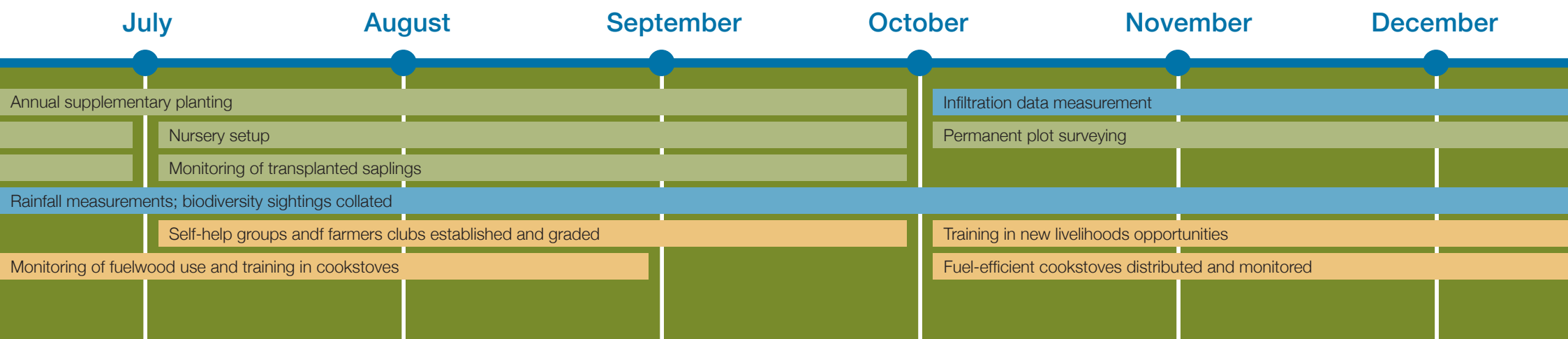
5500 trees were planted on World Environment Day

cattle, because they can be raised in homesteads. Another 50 focused on mushroom cultivation. Other families received fuel-efficient cooking stoves to reduce pressure on firewood from the forests.

In February, the project was even able to hold its first Self-Help Group “Meet and Fest” of 2021. These regular get-togethers, attracting at least 100 people, are a great way to showcase the impact of the project and celebrate the most successful activities.

By May, strict lockdowns were being enforced once again in certain areas. These prohibited movement between districts, as well as gatherings of people. Nevertheless, the project was able to celebrate World Environment Day on June 5th by planting over 5500 trees in ANR areas and Community Forests. Community members came together to make the planting a success, as many of the project staff staying in the capital city of Shillong were still under lockdown.

By the end of June, the team was given permission to travel to project areas and resume data collection, monitoring and meetings. COVID-19 measures are still in place, and the project distributes masks and carries out meetings and office work remotely when possible.



What's next?

- Tree planting in the Ri Bhoi sites in the north will continue.
- Participatory Rural Appraisals in the new villages that have joined the project will assist the communities in visualizing the benefits and challenges and develop a plan to preserve forested areas and regenerate degraded ones.
- Distribution of temperate fruit trees saplings and monitoring of those still to be distributed.
- Distribution of mushroom spawn to the families engaged in mushroom cultivation.

Stay up-to-date with our interactive Khasi Hills map, and check out the photos on Flickr.

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How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators. Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of beneficiaries, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our **Why and How** webpage for more information.