

SOCIETY TO SAVE ROCKS

1236, Road No.60, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad-500 033.

Tel. No. : +91-40-23552923

e-mail: frauke@saverocks.org

www.saverocks.org

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QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

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Editors : Frauke Quader, Padmini B Patell

VENKATESHWARAGUTTA - WAS THE DESTRUCTION UNAVOIDABLE?



Venkateshwaragutta, a Rock Heritage Precinct near Shamirpet Lake, is a vast sheet rock that had amazing boulder formations. It is being cut and gouged out to accommodate a huge water reservoir for the incoming Godavari Water Project on top of the hill. The reservoir will have 7.5 acres of closed surface area and will be 10 m deep. It is supposed to become the biggest in India !

The beautiful boulder formations on top of the hill are gone. The temple of Sri Kshetrugiri Venkateshwara Swamy built around a cave and seven boulders has just so escaped the demolition.

All because of "We did not know that this is a Heritage Site."!!

We have heard this before, and we will hear it over again: And why did they (here: HMWS&SB) not know? In spite of rock enthusiasts screaming it out loud over many years now, Hyderabadis are just not used to rock areas being on a protected list, rocks having any value other than maybe building material, rocks forming a valuable part of our city environment and eco-system.

The Notification of Rocks under HMDA Heritage Regulations was published in the Gazette and in three newspapers (3 languages) and has been discussed extensively in the media. So it happens that another of the 25 Heritage Rock Precincts is being severely damaged. Could timely negotiations between the Water Board and the Heritage Conservation Committee have found an alternative? So far, permission has not been granted under Heritage Regulations. But the damage is done.

The marking by boards and plaques of notified rock formations and areas will help in protecting Heritage Sites. This has not materialized although being in the pipeline since the first appointment of a Heritage Conservation Committee more than a dozen years back. Negotiations are on with HMDA for our Society to take up the task – funding is the eternal problem, contributions are required (please check our Appeal on www.saverocks.org at "Help") !

Let us all do our bit to help prevent further damage to our Heritage Rocks!

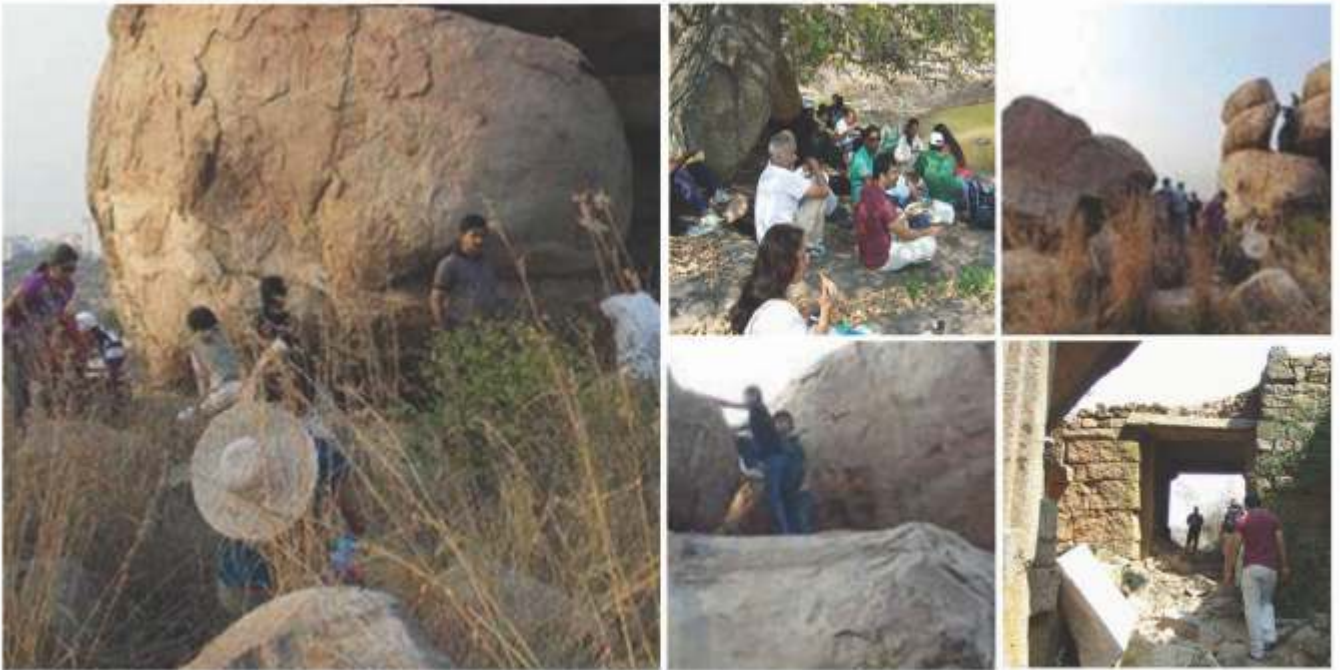
ROCK WALK: EXPLORING AND ENJOYING

Reflections of Y. Vijayanand upon doing Rachakonda Fort and Durgam Cheruvu walks.

Rock Walks take us to places where we would certainly not have considered going. We get to climb hillocks that have dried out shrubs all over. Sometimes the rocks we step on are wobbly and the shrubs thorny. Being out in the sun for hours makes us thirsty and sweaty. By the end it leaves us physically tired .

Yet every month on a Sunday thirty to forty people put on their walking shoes and come together for a Rock Walk. There are members, regulars and many first timers among them. Men and women, joining in as families or individuals, from seven to seventy years of age.

What could be their reasons? Does the uniqueness of the cause attract them ? Is it the element of adventure? Or, do they come in just to break the routine ?



The walk kicks off after a short simple briefing. The route is fairly green and level on the way to uphill parts. The conversations drift toward the birds sighted, trees, water bodies and some city landmarks that come into view. On reaching the hillock, even if a little hesitantly everyone falls in line to go up.

Basically people enjoy the surprises and difficulties. Being outside their comfort zone keeps the mind and senses engaged and on the look out. They feel more alive and positive. In that frame of mind they quickly connect with one another.

Following in each other's footsteps stopping in our tracks to take in the views along the way or to click photos makes the gradual climb easy. When we are at a rough patch we can look to one of the committee members to offer us a hand or to guide us a bit.

Reaching a rock formation or the remains of a fort is of course the highpoint of the day's outing. Even if we have seen its miniaturised and framed form in pictures or videos, nothing really comes close to experiencing first hand. The aspect of anticipation and excitement adds to the wonder we feel and gets us involved in a physical kind of way.

Now we know how for varied groups of people a Rock Walk, month after month, becomes a fun day. Before we make our way back to town, chai and biscuits are passed around which everybody very obviously relishes.

EVENTS

PERMANENT ROCK PHOTO EXHIBITION



President N.Luther addressing the gathering



Visitors at the Exhibition

To acknowledge the contribution made by our member and Hyderabad's prominent photographer late M.Hasan a permanent exhibition of some of his rock photographs was inaugurated at Lamakaan which has been his residence, by President Narendra Luther on 18th January 2014. The Society is indebted to Mr Hasan as many of his photographs were used as promotional material for the rock cause. This was about the same time the Society turned 17.

ALL INDIA ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS' CONVENTION - President Luther and Frauke Quader gave a lecture on the history and the rock scape of Hyderabad respectively to students participating in the Convention held at Hitex, on the 28th of January.

CORPORATE ROCK WALK - An additional rock walk was organized to Fakhruddingutta for the Runaware company by Ravi Setlem on 30th January.

ENVIRONMENTAL NGO'S MEET

If one good thing has come about due to the disaster at Venkateshwaragutta it is the impromptu meeting initiated by the Society for Environmental NGO's of Hyderabad on 1st March 2014 at Lamakaan. Brainstorming about what can be done to prevent such destruction were Forum for a Better Hyderabad, Hyderabad Urban Labs and Great Hyderabad Adventure Club. The NGO's present acknowledged the problem and came up with ideas about how we can support each other. It was proposed to form an e-group to share issues and keep each other informed on environmental concerns. It was concluded that if all the NGO's get together for the common cause of safe-guarding the city's environment we will definitely have a stronger voice that carries more weight and better chances of timely action.

Rock Walks in April, May and June 2014

Date :	Place :	Time / Meeting Point:
Sunday April 20, 2014	Rocks at University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli	7.00 a.m. at Main Gate
Sunday May 18, 2014	Addagutta/Mahendra Hills	7.00 a.m. opp. St. Ann's High School Main Gate, S.P. Road, Secunderabad
Sunday June 15, 2014	Venkateshwaragutta near Shamirpet Lake	2.30 p.m. opp. St. Ann's High School Main Gate, S.P. Road, Secunderabad

Rock walks are conducted on the third Sunday of every month. They are widely announced in the press and social media, and of course on our website. Everybody is welcome. Walking shoes, a cap, long pants and a water bottle are a must. Please enrol a minimum of 2 days in advance with Ravi Setlem on 98662-41768 or with C.J. Rao on 98490-37240.

We welcome our new members:

Sri Aalana Kandula, Student	Vardhan Kale, Life
G. Uma Shankar, Life	Salil Joshi & Aparna Joshi, Life (Couple)
Darsh, Student	Dr. Dilip Kumar, Active
V.V.L. Narasimham, Life	Dr. M. Vijaya Lakshmi, Active
Yoav Daniel Bar-Ness & Astrid Tiefholz-Devine, Life (Couple)	Dr. Saraswathi B., Active

Managing Committee

President:	Narendra Luther	- 23399778	Members:	
Vice President:	Aparajita Sinha	- 9849655363	Padmini B. Patell	- 9912865299
Secretary:	Frauke Quader	- 9849936248	Dr. Sudheer Bhan	- 8106072537
Joint Secretary:	Amita Talwar	- 9849010704	Ravi Setlem	- 9866241768
Treasurer:	Sangeeta Varma	- 9849044624	Dr. Madhusudan Srinivas	- 8886516222

Membership Fees

Class	Admission	Annual Subscription
Active (Single)	Rs. 100	Rs.200
(Couple)	Rs. 100	Rs.300
Student	Rs. 100	Rs.100
Life (Single)	Rs. 2,000 for Life	—
(Couple)	Rs. 3,000 for Life	—
Institution	Rs. 10,000	—
Corporate	Rs. 50,000	—