



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
**RANGELANDS AND
PASTORALISTS**
2026



Concept Note

Grass Guards – IYRP 2026 Awareness Initiative (Tamil Nadu)

Duration: Started 15 January 2026 – 30 December 2026

(One-year state-wide awareness programme across Tamil Nadu)



Theme: “One Panchayat – One Rangeland / Grassland”

***Rangelands and grasslands are not “wastelands”
— they are the “green lungs” of our planet.***

About Grass Guards

Grass Guards is a volunteer-based environmental initiative working for the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of grasslands and rangelands in Tamil Nadu. The movement brings together students, youth, nature lovers, and eco-volunteers to safeguard open landscapes that are often neglected or wrongly labelled as wastelands.

Grasslands are vital ecosystems that support biodiversity, regulate water cycles, store carbon, and strengthen climate resilience. Yet, they remain among the most threatened and least understood ecosystems. Grass Guards aims to bridge this gap through citizen action and public awareness.

IYRP 2026 Context

During the **International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026**, Grass Guards will implement a **one-year; state wide, volunteer-driven awareness campaign** across Tamil Nadu, from **15 January 2026 to December 2026**. The initiative will translate the global IYRP message into local action by engaging **Panchayats, Schools, and Citizens** throughout the state.

Core Message

One Panchayat – One Rangeland / Grassland -- Every Panchayat can protect and regenerate at least one local grassland as a shared natural asset.

Objectives

- Protect existing grasslands from encroachment and misuse
- Restore degraded rangelands using ecological methods
- Build public awareness on grassland ecosystems
- Promote citizen stewardship of common lands
- Support long-term conservation of open habitats

Key Volunteer Actions

- Grassland mapping and documentation
- Protection and vigilance against dumping and encroachment
- Removal of invasive species (Prosopis, Lantana, Parthenium)
- Native grass reseeding and pasture regeneration
- Village meetings, school programmes, and nature walks
- Advocacy for grassland-appropriate restoration
- Local climate-resilient land actions

Implementation Approach

- Formation of village-level volunteer groups
- Periodic grassland action camps
- Collaboration with Panchayats and local bodies
- Technical guidance from ecologists and land experts
- Linkage with government land restoration programmes

Expected Outcomes

- Improved public understanding of grasslands as living ecosystems
- Panchayat-level responsibility for grassland protection
- Reduced misuse of open lands
- Community participation in regeneration efforts
- Strengthened citizen support for grassland conservation

Organised by

GRASS GUARDS (*A unit of Thozhuvam*)

8, NABARD–MABIF, TNAU (AC&RI),
Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Email: grassguards@gmail.com, Mobile: +91 98434 06111

Convenor: P. Kabilan, Pastoral Bio Economist, THOZHUVAM