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Proceedings of the 2nd State Steering Committee on Wetlands organized under the Chairmanship of Sh. Sudripta Roy, IAS, Chief Secretary, to the Govt. of H.P-cum-Chairman, State Steering Committee on Wetlands in the Committee room of the Chief Secretary in the Ellersillie Building of H.P Secretariat, Shimla-2 on 29-04-2013 at 11AM.

The State Council for Science Technology and Environment, H.P, Shimla organized the 2nd State Steering Committee on Wetlands under the Chairmanship of Sh. Sudripta Roy, IAS, Chief Secretary to the Govt. of H.P-cum-Chairman on State Steering Committee on Wetlands on 29-04-2013 at 11:00AM in the Committee Room of Chief Secretary in Ellersillie Building of H.P Secretariat, Shimla-2. The list of participants attending the 2nd State Steering Committee on Wetlands is enclosed at Annexure-I.

At the outset of the meeting Dr. S.S. Negi, Member Secretary (EC), State Council for Science, Technology & Environment, H.P, Shimla welcomed the Chairman and other members for participating in the 2nd State Steering Committee meeting on wetlands. Thereafter, Dr. S.S. Negi, Member Secretary (EC), started presentation on the Action Taken report of the decision taken in 1st State Steering Committee meeting held on 15-06-2012 point wise. He informed that the revised Comprehensive Action Plans for management of the wetlands have been prepared by the H.P Forest Department.

Sh. R.K. Gupta, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Department of Forests, H.P informed that the H.P Forest Department has prepared Comprehensive Management Action Plans for five Wetlands namely Pong Dam, Renukaji, Chandertal (Ramsar Sites), Rewalsar and Khajjiar Wetlands (National Wetlands). Thereafter, Sh. Praveen Thapalyal, Addl. Pr.CCF (Wild Life) presented before the house Comprehensive Management Action Plans prepared for Chandertal, Pong Dam, Renukaji and Khajjiar. Sh. Praveen Thapalyal informed the house that the Management Action Plans have been prepared by holding consultative meetings with the Stakeholders of the wetlands. In the Comprehensive Management Action Plans emphasis have been laid for monitoring and management of the water quality of the wetlands.

Renukaji Wetland

The activities proposed under the Comprehensive Management Action Plan for Renukaji wetland are for soil moisture conservation, education and awareness, research monitoring and for learning events which amounts to Rs.501.30 Lacs (Rs. Five Crore One Lac and Thirty Thousand) only. It was suggested that soil moisture conservation activity may be included in the habitat improvement of the water body. The proposal of the Management Action Plan was approved.



Pong Dam

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The Management Action Plan about Pong Dam has been estimated to be Rs. 235 Lacs (Rs. Two Crores and Thirty Five Lacs) only in which activities namely Eco Development, Environmental Education & Interpretation, Research & Monitoring and Habitat Improvement have been proposed.

Sh. Sudripta Roy, Chairman, pointed out that human bird conflict is existing at the wetland which required to be intervened through awareness generation at the wetland regularly.

Sh. Sudripta Roy, Chairman, opined for dovetailing the Tourism department scheme for development of tourism at the Pong Dam wetland. Sh. Devesh Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, Mandi informed the house that local Panchayats can be involved in promoting tourism activity which can become a source of income generation activity for the local stakeholders of the area. Poaching is required to be checked at the Site.

Sh. Gurcharan Singh, Director, Fisheries Department said that breeding season of fish is in the months of June, July & August and migratory birds come after October and remains there up to March every year. Funds are required for seeds stocking at the wetland. Fishermen require alternate arrangement for their livelihood during the breeding season. The proposal for Management Action Plan for Pong Dam was approved.

Chandertal Wetland

A proposal for total amount of Rs. 78.50 Lacs only has been prepared for the management of Chandertal wetland for carrying out the activities namely livestock and wetland management, education and awareness, research & monitoring and learning events. It was observed by Chairman that camping should be at least 200 metres away from the wetland. Livestock should be vaccinated visiting the wetland area and pastures around during the summer. The proposal for Management Action Plan for Chandertal was approved.

Khajjiar Wetland

The Management Action Plan for Khajjiar was thereafter presented before the house by Sh. Praveen Thapalyal, Addl. Pr.CCF (Wild Life), that H.P that have kept a provision of Rs. 200 Lacs only for carrying out activities for landscape conservation, biomass removal and research monitoring. Sh. Sudripta Roy, Chairman suggested that Expert Committee be constituted for execution of dredging at Khajjiar wetland. It was suggested by Sh. Subhashish Panda, Director, Tourism Department, H.P that NEERI should be engaged for providing input for carrying out the hydrological studies at Khajjiar wetland.

It was observed by the members that the state of health of Khajjiar is not good and it is likely to vanish soon. The reasons for fast depletion of the wetlands are many but the livestock grazing in

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and around the wetland, horse riding income activity of the local stakeholders and tourists influx are the prime concern.

It was approved that State Council for Science Technology and Environment, H.P shall contact NEERI for preparing the Management Action Plan.

Rewalsar Wetland

Thereafter, Sh.H.V.Kathuria, Conservator of Forest, Mandi H.P presented the Comprehensive Management Action Plan prepared for Rewalsar wetland. He elaborated about the problems of Rewalsar wetland. Sewage inflow, overfeeding of fish, eutrophication, and siltation are the main problems at the wetland.

Dr. Gurcharan Singh, Director, Fisheries Department informed that Quality brood stock is there at Rewalsar wetland. The comprehensive management action plan prepared for Rewalsar wetland amount to Rs. 383.83 Laacs was approved.

Thereafter, Dr. S.S.Negi, Member Secretary (EC), State Council briefed the house about the Action Taken Report of the remaining issues of the 1st State Steering Committee Meeting on wetlands held on 15 June, 2012. It was informed that the Forest Department is using the facilities of Aryabhata Geo-informatics and Space Application Centre for broad geographical delineation of the wetlands, depiction of its zones of influence on maps including the detailed account of existing rights and privileges and current health of the wetlands. The Wetlands Atlas prepared by the State Council for Science Technology and Environment, H.P under the Project of Remote Sensing was shown to the Chairman and the members present.

The house was informed by Dr. S.S.Negi, Member Secretary (EC), that the State Council has received the proposal from Conservator of Forest, Mandi, H.P to utilize funds to a tune of Rs. 4.35 Laacs for management of Rewalsar wetland which would be submitted to MoEF, GoI, New Delhi for getting approval and subsequent release of the amount to Forest Department, H.P.

It was further informed by Dr. S.S.Negi, Member Secretary (EC), State Council that State Council for Science Technology and Environment, H.P would organize the co-ordination meeting with the representatives of the MoEF, GoI, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir at Shimla with regard to preparation of management Action Plan for Ranjeet Sagar wetland shortly.

Regarding the process for inclusion of new wetlands -viz- Bhriagu (Kullu), Seruvalsar Lake (Kullu), Nako (Kinnaur), Parashar (Mandi), Mani Mahesh (Chamba) and Chander Naun lake (Shimla) districts in the state, Dr.S.S.Negi said that the Wildlife Wing of Forest Department in consultation with other stakeholders has started the work in the state. He further informed that the proposal for constitution of Wetland Authority on wetlands of the State would be submitted for the consideration to the Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.

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The next agenda i.e. issue of merger of Wetlands Management Action Plan under the National Aquatic Eco-system Management as per the decision of the Ministry of Environment & Forest, GoI, with regard to funding at ratio of 70:30 pattern (MoEF & State Govt.) was brought to the information of the house and discussion for taking further decision by the Committee. Discussions were held with regard to the financial implications involved with regard to the comprehensive action plans of the wetlands presented for allocation of budget by the State Govt.

Sh. Sudripta Roy, Chairman, said that the State Govt. may commit Rs. One Crore allocation of state share for the current financial year i.e. 2013-14 on behalf of the State under the new pattern adopted for funding scheme adopted by the MoEF, GoI for execution of the approved Management Action Plan of the wetlands in the State. He further said that the comprehensive action plan for the current financial year i.e. 2013-14 may be finalized accordingly by the State Council for Science Technology and Environment, H.P for getting financial from the MoEF, GoI, New Delhi.

The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks to and from the chair.

Sudripta Roy
Chief Secretary, to the Govt. of H.P