

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL
BOARD FOR WILD LIFE**

DATE: 6th April, 2005.

**VENUE: 403, Paryavaran Bhawan,
New Delhi**

The fourth meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wild Life (NBWL) was held on 6th April 2005 under the chairmanship of Thiru A. Raja, Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forests.

In his welcome address, the Chairperson reiterated the very fruitful discussions in the meeting of the National Board for Wildlife chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 17th March 2005 and the decisions taken therein. Hon'ble Minister stressed the importance of wildlife as an index in the overall health of the eco system and the urgent need for convergence of conservation measures and developmental needs. He urged the members to deliberate on the heavy agenda for the meeting and strive to ensure a balanced approach while dealing with the developmental needs of the various States.

The list of members and participants is at **Annexure-I**.

The Member-Secretary informed the Committee that 2 members, namely Smt. Maya Singh, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and Shri S.C Sharma had requested for leave of absence which was granted by the Chairperson.

At the outset, Ms. Dilnavaz Variava desired that the site inspection reports should be circulated to all the members at least one month before the day of the meeting, comments incorporated and circulated. She also desired that at least 50 percent of the time in the meetings of the Standing Committee of NBWL should be dedicated to proactive conservation issues including discussions on the Wild Life Action Plan and not merely on developmental (de-reservation) proposals. The frequency and length of the meetings may also be increased. The Member-Secretary requested the members to send agenda proposals for such discussions. However it should also be kept in mind that these meetings provided the only forum for taking up developmental issues. The Secretary, Environment & Forests also mentioned that the members could propose agenda items for the meetings well in advance so that the same could be included in the forthcoming meetings.

The meeting thereafter continued with discussions on the Agenda items:

Agenda Item No.1

**Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee of
National Board for Wild Life held on 25th August, 2004.**

The Member-Secretary informed that as per set procedure, the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th August 2004 were circulated to all the members. Comments were received from Shri Ravi Singh only, which were incorporated into the Minutes and circulated to all the members. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th August, 2004 were taken on record.

Agenda item no. 2

Action taken report on the recommendations of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wild Life in its meeting held on 25th August 2004.

2.(a) Denotification of Salim Ali City Forest National Park, Jammu & Kashmir

MoEF had identified the Regional Laboratory of CSIR at Jammu for monitoring the discharge of effluents in wildlife habitats and the Dal Lake. However since no comments from CWLW, J&K have been received, the Committee decided to defer the matter to the next meeting.

2 (c) (i) Diversion of 30.76 ha from Neoradehi Sanctuary for construction of Nirandpur tank Project.

Site inspection report has been received. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Since the reservoir has already been constructed with due permission from GOI and considering the benefits of water impounding for both human consumption as well as wildlife, the project proponents should be allowed to impound the water.
2. To minimize damage to standing trees on account of impoundment, the water level should be maintained at the minimum, based on a viable ratio of irrigation potential and submergence, which should be ascertained by the project proponents.
3. To recover the cost and prevent theft, as a special case, only the teak trees in the submergence area should be selectively permitted for felling after a fresh enumeration. No other species should be permitted for felling considering their habitat value.

Hence the proposal is permitted subject to the prior calculation and intimation by the project proponents of the water level to be maintained as in (2) above. Further the State Govt is directed to identify suitable area for addition to the sanctuary in lieu of area submerged.

(d)

3. Diversion of 91.701 ha of forest land from Askot Sanctuary for Dhauliganga Intermediate Stage Power Project by NHPC.

Diversion of 175.05 ha of forest land from Askot Sanctuary for Goriganga Stage III A Power Project by NHPC.

The site inspection report by the Committee consisting of Dr R.B. Lal, Shri S.C Sharma, Shri Ravi Singh and Shri B.S.Bonal has been received. The major concern of the committee was the impact of constructing a power house in an environmentally fragile area given the already visible negative impacts of the Dhauliganga project, the effect on the fish varieties which are already declining, the effect of the broadening of the road and increase in the carrying capacity of the bridges and the effect of limestone mining resulting in increased pressure on the landscape and sanctuary periphery. BSI and ZSI in their reports have mentioned that the execution of the proposed projects by NHPC would not have much impact on the wildlife of the sanctuary and permission may be granted. However these Institutes based their findings mainly on the lower reaches of the sanctuary, which do not have much wildlife and face value of the diversion appears to be negligible.

The recommendations of the Committee are:

1. The views of the National Institute of Geophysics and Wadia Institute of Himalayan Ecology, Dehradun should be obtained on the likely impact of the proposed project on Askot Sanctuary and the surrounding forests.
2. The safeguards being considered by NHPC should also be solicited.
3. If after examination of these reports, a final decision is taken to permit the project, it is recommended that the area of the sanctuary should be suitably increased to compensate any damage that may occur due to the projects. Wildlife Institute may be requested to conduct a detailed study for identification of suitable areas to be included in the sanctuary.
4. 5% of the project cost should be earmarked for the welfare of the local people, anti poaching measures and creation of additional infrastructure.
5. In view of the hardships being caused to the residents of the villages forming part of the sanctuary, the Committee also advises a pragmatic view and expeditious action to exclude such areas from the sanctuary. State Govt may be asked to take appropriate action in this regards.

2 (f) I.A. No 37 of 2003 in W.P. (C) No. 337/1995- Diversion of 48.385 ha (25 km) of forest land from Askot Musk Deer Sanctuary for laying 132 KV transmission line.

The site inspection report by the Committee consisting of Dr R.B. Lal, Shri S.C Sharma and Shri Ravi Singh has been received. The Committee recommends the construction of the proposed 132 KV transmission line subject to the following conditions:

1. 5% of the project cost or Rs 1 crore should be deposited for conservation works within the Sanctuary.
2. Felling of the trees by the Nigam should be minimum and be done under the supervision of the State Forest Department.
3. Compensatory afforestation of native species should be done by the Nigam in the adjoining areas as per guidelines fixed by the CWLW of the State.
4. Nigam should provide electricity on a priority basis within 1 year of the installation of the power generation system to the villages situated inside the Sanctuary from Galati to Jauljibi so that the pressure of fuel wood is reduced.
5. Nigam should get in touch with National Power Grid Corporation for adopting the guidelines being prepared for preventing electrocution of wild animals by the power lines.
6. Nigam should ensure that strict fire conservation measures are adopted in the right of way granted for the power line and security should be deposited with the DFO/ Park Director to ensure compliance.
7. It was further observed that the Nigam had constructed a power house in village Jumma, Tehsil Pithoragarh after 2000. Explanation may be called for since this may be in violation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and the Forest (Conservation) Act.

2. (g) Diversion of 3.98 ha of forest land from Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary, Rajasthan, for construction of *Kushalipura nallah*.

The Director Project Tiger made the presentation on site inspection carried out. The Committee recommended rejection of the proposal since it would be a violation of the conservation concerns and the Wildlife Protection Act. It was suggested that the construction of the water dams for the villages may be done under the eco development schemes.

2. (i). I.A. No. 33 of 2003 in W.P (C) No. 337/1995- Diversion of 46 ha of forest land from Radhanagari Sanctuary, Maharashtra for construction of Dhamani Irrigation project.

The site inspection was carried out by Shri S.C Sharma, Shri Ravi Singh and Dr Rajesh Gopal. The Committee was of the view that the submergence would create a water body which could be used by the wildlife of the area. A suitable area for inclusion in the Sanctuary in lieu of the diversion should be identified by the State Govt. The project proposal was recommended subject to the prior fulfilment of 5 conditions as laid down by the Committee. The compliance report should be given by the project proponents to the state forest department. CWLW, Maharashtra shall make recommendations to the Standing Committee for final clearance to the construction or otherwise.

2. (j). I.A. No. 35 of 2003 in W.P (C) No. 337/1995- Diversion of 146.26 ha of forest land from Dalma Sanctuary, Jharkhand for construction of Subarnarekha Multipurpose Irrigation Project.

The Committee comprising of Shri S.C.Sharma and Ms Dilnawaz Variava have submitted their report. Ms Variava gave a brief account of the inspection and recommendations made. The project as it has progressed so far has been executed in violation of the Forest Conservation Act and is not beneficial to the wildlife. However, since it was originally executed by Govt of Bihar and keeping in view the willingness of Govt of Jharkhand to take mitigatory measures, 8 pre-requisites were put by the committee for compliance before granting clearance to the project. The conditions are annexed at Annexure I.

The Members were of the view that these conditions should be fulfilled by the project proponents before final clearance could be granted by the Standing Committee.

2(4). Guidelines for Diversion Proposals

The draft guidelines have been framed by MoEF incorporating the comments of Shri Darshan Shankar. Members were also requested to communicate their comments within 2 weeks based on the draft circulated vide MoEF's letter no 6-3/2003 WL dt 27th Oct 2004. The members expressed the desire to review the draft before finalisation. Hence it was decided that the draft would be circulated to all the members of the Standing Committee before finalisation.

2(5) Trade regulation for wild medicinal plant taxa

Please refer to Agenda Item No. 3

5(i)

IA No 53 in CWP 337/1995 - Diversion of 0.1532 ha of forest land from Rajaji National Park for laying pipeline for drinking water by the Uttaranchal Pey Jal Sansthan Vikas Evam Nirman Nigam

Please refer to Agenda Item No. 4

5(ii)

Diversion of forest land from Pakke (Eagle Nest) Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh, for construction of road for the army by the Border Roads Organization (I.A No. in CWP 202/95)

The site inspection was carried out by Shri S.C Sharma, Shri R.M. Ray and Shri P. Subramanyam, Regional Deputy Director, Eastern Region was carried out and report has been received. Standing Committee accepted the report and recommended adoption of the alternate route. The representative from Border Roads Organisation expressed the undisputed concern of their organization for the environment. He however said that the

alternate route was not acceptable to the army due to security reasons and that the security concerns should over ride environment concerns. Hence it was decided that a sub committee would examine the issue along with the army and apprise the Standing Committee.

The other recommendations of the Committee were

1. Govt of Arunachal Pradesh and the Central Govt would provide funds for the scientific management of the Eagle Nest Sanctuary and implement the suggestions made by the scientists in their studies.
2. Govt of Assam may be asked to clear the encroachments inside the Sonai Rupai Sanctuary on a priority basis.

5(iii)

Diversion of 49 ha of forest land from Renuka Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh, for construction of Renuka Hydro Electric Project by the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board.

Shri Ravi Singh and Shri S.C.Sharma had done the site inspection and submitted the report. Shri Ravi Singh made a presentation on the report and highlighted the catastrophe that may be caused due to large dams. He suggested that the project authorities may explore the possibility of having a series of 2-3 smaller dams rather than a 148 m high dam. Alternative sites for construction of smaller dams with smaller heights on the Giri river downstream of the river Renuka may be considered. Hence the construction of the Renuka dam should be considered only after these 2 suggestions have been dealt with by the project authorities. The recommendations of the Committee, comprising of 10 conditions are annexed at Annexure II.

Hence the members recommended clearance to the project subject to fulfillment of all conditions specified in the site inspection report.

5(iv)

Diversion of 43.74 ha of forest land from Kanchendzonga national park for construction of Toong-Chatten road by the Border Roads Organization (I.A.No. 788 in CWP 202/95)

Since the response of the State Govt was not received, the members recommended deferring of the matter to the next meeting.

6 (i)

Diversion of 19.5 ha of forest land from Rajaji National Park for construction of charitable hospital by Raghavendra Sewashram Samiti

Please refer to Agenda item no 4

Agenda Item no. 3

Trade regulation for wild medicinal plant taxa

Shri Darshan Shankar was of the view that a long term research system should be put in place for long term threat assessment of priority species. A network of Institutes like The Medicinal Plants Board, BSI, WII, FRLHT, etc should be identified to systematize prioritization of taxa for long term assessment. The negative list committee should be reconstituted for advising on sustainable harvest. It was also suggested that 'wild medicinal plant taxa' should be replaced by 'wild plant taxa' to enlarge the scope of the proposed work.

Agenda Item no. 4

Fresh Proposals for Diversion/denotification of National Park/Sanctuary received for consideration by the Standing Committee

- i) Diversion of 5.68 ha of forest land from Mayureshwar Sanctuary for construction of Janai and Shirsai Lift Irrigation Scheme by the Irrigation Department (I A No. 36 & 57 in WP (c) No. 337 of 1995)**

The Chief Wildlife Warden made a detailed presentation on the project proposal. The Committee, after discussion, decided that an expert team comprising of the Mr M.C.Malakar, Chief Wild Life Warden, Assam and Ms Dilnavaz Variava would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

- ii) Diversion of 0.1532 ha of forest land from Rajaji National Park to lay a pipeline for drinking water along the bridle path route of Neelkanth Mahadev Temple by Uttaranchal Pey Jal Sansadhan Vikas Evam Nirman Nigam Ltd. (I A No. 53 in WP (c) No. 337 of 1995)**

The Committee, after discussion, decided that the said proposal could not be considered essential and therefore recommended its rejection.

- iii) Diversion of 62.46 ha of forest land from Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, for construction of a Dam for Bamangaon**

Irrigation Project by the Irrigation Department. (I A No. 54, 55 & 56 in WP (c) No. 337 of 1995)

The proposal was rejected by the members on the recommendation of the Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra.

- iv) **Diversion of 0.010490 Sq Kms of forest land from Dhauladhar Sanctuary for the Lambadug Hydro Electric Project located in Sub Tehsil Multhan of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh by Himachal Pradesh Electricity Board. (I A No. 63 in WP (c) No. 337 of 1995)**

The Committee, after discussion, decided that an expert team comprising of the Director, Zoological Survey of India and Shri Ravi Singh would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

- v) **De-reservation of 4.56 ha of forest land from Pench National Park and Tiger Reserve for the joining of Totladoh Dam Reservoir to Nallah through a Tunnel. (I A No. 66 in WP (c) No. 337 of 1995)**

The Committee decided to defer the matter to the next meeting. Comments of the Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra should be obtained prior to the next meeting.

- vi) **Diversion of forest land from Rajaji National Park for leasing out of the place for performance of philanthropic activities by the Mauni Baba Gufa and Anna Chhetra (I A No. 68, 70, 71 & 72 in WP (c) No. 337 of 1995)**

The Committee, after discussion, decided that the said proposal wasnot considered to be essential and therefore rejected.

- vii) **Diversion of 19.5 ha of forest land from Rajaji National Park for construction of Charitable Hospital by Shri Raghavendra Sewashram Samiti.**

The User Agency made a detailed presentation on the project proposal and assured that no construction would take place in the land diverted. The Committee, after discussion, decided that an expert team comprising of Smt. Maya Singh and Shri Ravi Singh would conduct site inspection and place a report before the Standing Committee.

- viii) **Diversion of 1.4693 ha of forest land from Ambaji Sanctuary for laying water pipeline for providing drinking water by Irrigation Department.**

The Committee, after discussion, decided that an expert team comprising of Shri Darshan Shankar and Ms Mita Banerjee would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

- ix) **Diversion of 2.25 ha of forest land from Jawahar Sagar Sanctuary for laying optical fibre cable by Telecom Department.**

The Committee recommended the proposal subject to the payment of 5% of the project cost, subject to a minimum of Rs 5 lakhs for betterment of the Sanctuary.

- x) **Diversion of forest land from National Chambal Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh, for construction of new bridge across river Chambal near Dholpur on NH-3 by National Highway Authority of India.**

The User Agency had made a detailed presentation on the project proposal. The permission for preliminary survey was recommended subject to the conditions enumerated by NHAI and as laid down in the earlier site inspection report by Shri S.C.Sharma and Dr. A. Rahmani. Funds would have to be provided by the project authorities for preserving the wildlife in the area. Compensatory afforestation would also have to be carried out by the project authorities.

- xi) **Diversion of forest land from National Chambal Sanctuary, Rajasthan, for construction of 4 lane Kota by-pass by National Highway Authority of India.**

The User Agency had made a detailed presentation on the project proposal. The Committee, after discussion, decided that a survey is to be made to study the above site and an expert team comprising of Dr R.B. Lal, BNHS and WII would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

- xii) **Diversion of forest land from Buxa Tiger Reserve, Mahananda Sanctuary and Jaldapara Sanctuary, West Bengal, for construction of 4 lane highway from Islampur to Assam Border of the East West Corridor involving NH-3 and NH-31 C by National Highway Authority of India.**

The members were concerned about the alignment of the proposed highway. Hence it was decided that a survey should be made to study the above site and an expert team comprising of Shri M.C. Malakar, Shri B.S. Bonal, Director, National Zoological Park, New Delhi and WWF (West Bengal) would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

xiii) Diversion of forest land from Jambughoda Sanctuary, Gujarat, for construction of approach road Babada Kuva-Mota rasaka-Lambhiya and Hanuman in Vadodra District.

The Committee, after discussion, decided that a survey is to be made to study the above site and an expert team comprising of Shri Darshan Shankar and Ms Mita Banerjee would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

xiv) Diversion of forest land from Maldhok Bird Sanctuary, Maharashtra, for construction of Belwandi Kothar Minor Irrigation by Irrigation Department.

The Committee, after discussion, decided that a survey is to be made to study the above site and an expert team comprising of the Shri M.C. Malakar, Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam and Ms. Dilnavaz Variava would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee. A representative from BNHS should also be included in the site inspection team.

xv) Diversion of forest land from National Chambal Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh, for conducting a survey for laying 765 KV transmission line by Power Grid Corporation of India.

The members recommended the permission for conducting the survey, subject to the conditions that the survey would be non intrusive and will not cause any harm to the habitat of the wildlife.

xvi) Diversion of 2.5720 ha of forest land from Matheran Eco-Sensitive Zone, Maharashtra, for carrying inhabitants of Matheran, Consumables goods and other people speedily to Matheran by Matheran Rope Way Pvt. Ltd.

The User Agency made a detailed presentation on the project proposal. The report of the Monitoring committee report is to be studied. The gazette notification enlisting Matheran Eco-Sensitive area was to be obtained. The Committee, after discussion, decided that a survey should be made to study the above site and an expert team comprising of Ms.

Dilnavaz Variava and Shri R.M. Ray, PCCF, Karnataka would conduct site inspection and place a report before the committee.

- xvii) **Diversion of 84 ha of forest land from Nagarjun Sagar Tiger Reserve, Andhra Pradesh, for construction of Srisalam Left Bank Hydro Electric Scheme by Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation .**

The required area proposed for diversion is only 7.00 ha. Study on impact assessment on wildlife was recommended to be made by WII and report to be submitted to the Standing Committee.

- xviii) **De-reservation of 12.75 ha of already broken forest land from Kotgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa for Mining by T.P.Minerals.**

As no representatives were present, the members decided to defer the matter to the next meeting.

- xix) **De-reservation of forest land from Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka for the construction of Hogenekal Hydro Electric Power Project by National Hydro Electric Power Corporation Ltd.**

The total cost of the project is 300 crores. The firm power is 120MW (7 months generation). The members recommended that the opinion of Tamil Nadu has to be obtained before taking the final decision.

- xx) **De-reservation of forest land from Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala, for conducting reconnaissance survey and trial boring for construction of 4 lane road tunnel at 252/0 to 254/0 km of National Highway 47 in Thrissur District.**

Complete proposal not given by the project authorities. Hence the members were of the view that more details should be sent to enable the members to take a decision on the proposal.

- xxi) **Diversion of 12.675 ha of forest land from Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala, for upgrading solid waste management system, waste water treatment, improvement of trekking routes, construction of que complex, toilet and bathroom facilities.**

A detailed overview on the proposal was given by the Secretary (E&F). The comments of the Director (Project Tiger) who had made a site inspection were also given. It was assured by CWLW, Kerala that no other forest area would be affected. The members recommended that the State Govt should identify areas to be added to the sanctuary in lieu of the area being diverted. Compensatory afforestation would have to be done by the project proponents. Keeping the essential nature of the proposal and in

order to contain the effect only to the area requested for diversion, the members agreed in principal to the diversion proposal. However, one member of the Committee shall make a site inspection within a week and suggest safeguards. Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forests was authorized to incorporate safeguards in the permission granted to the proposal.

xxii) Rationalising of boundaries of Balaram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Gujarat gave a brief description about the proposal for rationalization of Balaram Ambaji Sanctuary. The Member Secretary informed that a separate Committee has been formed as per the decision taken during the 2nd meeting of the National Board for Wildlife held on 17th March 2005. The said Committee would look into the matters pertaining to rationalization of boundaries of National Parks/Sanctuaries in all the States concerned and, therefore, this proposal would also be considered then.

xxiii) Upgradation of existing road in forest settlement village Chikhalkuba in Gir Sanctuary, Gujarat.

Since the proposal involves mere upgradation of existing road, the members recommended permission for the project.

Agenda item No.5

Any other item with the permission of the Chair

It was suggested by the members that a corpus fund should be created to enable the Standing Committee to discharge its duties smoothly and for the purpose all the user agencies should contribute by way of 5% of the project cost.

It was also decided to hold the next meeting in July 2005. The exact dates would be finalized and communicated to all the members.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Annexure 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL BOARD FOR WILDLIFE New Delhi, 6th April 2005

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| 1. Thiru A. Raja, Minister of Environment & Forests | - Chairman |
| 2. Dr. Prodipto Gosh, Secretary (E &F) | -Member |
| 3. Shri Darshan Shankar, Director, FRLHT, Bangalore | - Member |
| 4. Ms. Dilnavaz Variava | - Member |
| 5. Shri Ravi Singh, WWF-India | - Member |
| 6. Shri. R.M Ray, Chief Wild Life Warden,
Government of Karnataka | - Member |
| 7. Shri. M.C. Malakar, Chief Wild Life Warden,
Government of Assam | - Member |
| 8. Dr. J.R.F. Alfred, Director,
Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata. | - Member |
| 9. Shri. R.P.S. Katwal, Addl. DGF(WL), MoEF | - Member
Secretary |

Officials from MoEF

1. Dr. Rajesh Gopal. Inspector General of Forests & Director, Project Tiger.
2. Dr. Alka Bhargava, Assistant Inspector General of Forests.
3. Shri S.K Chadha, Joint Director (WL).
