

**MINUTES OF THE 1st MEETING OF NATIONAL WETLANDS COMMITTEE (NWC)
HELD ON 26.07.2018 AT MOEF&CC, INDIRA PARYAVARAN BHAWAN, NEW
DELHI**

The 1st meeting of National Wetlands Committee (NWC) was held on 26.07.2018 at 3:00 PM in Indira Paryavaran Bhawan under the chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC). The list of participants is annexed.

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed all the participants to the meeting and gave a synoptic view of the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 and the NWC constituted under these rules. This was followed by introduction of all the participants.

3. Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC gave a brief presentation about the genesis of the NPCA programme, wetlands conservation in the Country, Wetlands Rules 2010, Wetlands Rules 2017, functions of NWC, actions taken by States and UTs in compliance to Wetlands Rules 2017 and issues w.r.t East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW). Following this, agenda items were taken up.

Agenda 1

Permission for omission of five prohibited activities under Rule 4(2) of Wetland Rules, 2017

The first agenda item pertained to the proposals of Govt. of West Bengal for permission for omission of five prohibited activities of EKW under Rule 4(2) of the Wetlands Rules, 2017 i.e. *"The Central Government may consider proposals from the State Government or Union Territory Administration for omitting any of the activities on the recommendation of the Authority"*. The following are the permissions sought by the Govt. of West Bengal and the deliberations of the Committee on the same:

(i) Permission for sewage inflow in EKW

The Chairman desired to know about the status of sewage inflow in EKW from the representative of Government of West Bengal and also the presence of heavy metals in the food chain. The representatives of the Govt. of West Bengal apprised that only sewage is being discharged into EKW and heavy metals are present in the bone of fish (below toxic level) and not in the flesh. The expert members opined that industrial wastewater is also discharged into EKW and heavy metals are also found in gills and other tissues of the fish.

The Committee opined that the sewage inflow to the wetland cannot be stopped as it is the uniqueness of this wetland but regulation needs to be done. The amount of sewage entering the wetland should comply with the carrying capacity of

the wetland. Further, as the wetland is a source of food to large population, high human health risks are involved.

After due deliberations, it was decided that CPCB, if required along with SPCB, should immediately carry out a detailed study of EKW on the volume inflow of the sewage at point and non point sources, the water quality & hydrological parameters at various points and the impact of sewage on human health and ecology.

(ii) Permission for continuation of solid waste disposal in Dhapa area of EKW without conversion or filling up of any water body

Representative from Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) requested for extension of Dhapa landfill area so as to enable waste disposal of a large moving population commuting to the city everyday and that of the city dwellers. Chairman suggested segregating and treating the solid waste before disposing it off. KMC informed that plans for various waste segregation and treatment facilities have been conceived but could not be implemented due to shortage of available land.

The Committee recommended that the dumping of solid waste in Dhapa area of EKW needs to be strictly discouraged and an alternate site for segregation, treatment and disposal of the solid waste needs to be identified on top priority.

After due deliberations, it was decided that the State Govt. shall submit a detailed action plan along with remedial measures of dumping of solid waste within a period of three months.

(iii & iv) Permission for construction activities in settlement areas and Permission for public works in EKW areas without net loss of water body in the area

The Committee was informed that population living in the settlement areas of EKW are lacking proper civic facilities such as roads, schools, hospitals etc. Hence, it is necessary to provide civic amenities in the area, such as medical treatment facilities, roads and bridges, facilities for basic education, drinking water supply etc.

After due deliberations, it was decided that State Govt. shall submit specific plan for construction of schools, hospitals etc. based on the size of the population inhabited in the area.

(v) Permission for construction of elevated corridor over the EKW

West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corp. Ltd. (WBHIDCO) has proposed for construction of an elevated corridor over the EKW which was considered by the State Wetlands Authority and has been recommended by the

State Govt. for favourable consideration as a case of omission under Rule-4. The State Govt. representatives expressed their concern over increasing traffic congestion due to the development of new town area etc. which can be attended by the construction of this elevated corridor that will connect the southern part of Kolkata to Kolkata Airport through the Eastern Metropolitan bypass. Out of the total length of 7027 m of the corridor, 4757 m would be in EKW. No. of piers in EKW would be 192 covering an area of 1100 sq.m. It was informed by the State Govt. representative that an impact assessment study has already been conducted for the elevated corridor.

After due deliberations, the committee recommended that the impact assessment study report may be shared with the Committee members, who would provide their comments on the same to MoEF&CC within 15 days. The comments of the committee shall be forwarded to the Govt. of West Bengal within 15 days and accordingly a presentation shall be made by the State Govt. before the committee in its next meeting.

Additionally, the State Govt. of West Bengal was directed to submit a comprehensive Management Action Plan for EKW in three months time before the next meeting of NWC for taking decision.

Agenda 2

Inclusion of wetlands as legitimate and distinct land use category.

4. The second agenda item was regarding inclusion/designation of wetlands as legitimate and distinct land use category. Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC briefed about the subject matter i.e. recommendations of the earlier Central Wetlands Regulatory Authority (CWRA), inter-ministerial meeting convened, pursuance with Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW).

The member from DoLR clarified that the subject matter shall be examined by DoLR only if there is categorisation/classification of the land use. Further, the Committee noted that Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)/DARE may have some information/records in this regard which may be recognized for this purpose.

After due deliberations, the Committee recommended that MoEF&CC may pursue the matter with ICAR/DARE and DoLR based on the parameters required to define and classify wetlands. The process of inclusion in revenue records may be initiated with the 26 Ramsar sites of India.

The meeting ended with thanks to and from the Chair.

**List of participants in the 1st meeting of National Wetlands Committee to be held on
26th July 2018 at 3.00 P.M. in Kaveri Hall, IPB**

1. Shri. C.K.Mishra, Secretary, MoEF&CC - Chairman
2. Shri. A.K.Jain, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC - Vice-chairman
3. Shri. M.S. Negi, Additional Director General (Wildlife), MoEF&CC - Member ex-officio
4. Smt. Manju Pandey, Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC - Member ex-officio
5. Smt. T.Rajeshwari, Additional Secretary, MoWR, RD&GR - Member ex-officio
6. Dr. Alka Bhargav, Joint Secretary, (NRM/RFS), DAC&FW - Member ex-officio
7. Shri. Surendra Sompalle, Additional Chief Planner, MoUD - Representative from MoHUA
8. Shri Paresh Kumar Duria, TCP, TCPO - Representative from MoHUA
9. Shri. Mitter Sain, DDG, DoLR, MoRD - Member ex-officio
10. Shri S.P.S.Parihar, Chairman, CPCB - Member ex-officio
11. Shri R.M.Bhardwaj, Additional Director, CPCB - Representative from CPCB
12. Dr. Kailash Chandra, Director, ZSI - Member ex-officio
13. Dr. P.K Gupta, SCI-SF, SAC, ISRO, Ahmedabad - Member ex-officio
14. Shri B.B.Saikia, Director, EMDte, Central Water Commission- Representative from CWC
15. Shri. Guru Prasad, Deputy Director, EMDte, CWC - Representative from CWC
16. Shri. Dev Prakash Bankhwal, PCCF(WL), Assam - Representative from Assam
17. Shri Shyamal Tikadhar, APCCF (Wildlife), Gujarat - Representative from Gujarat
18. Dr. Uday Vora, CCF(Retd), Gujarat - Expert Member
19. Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, IWF, New Delhi - Expert Member
20. Dr. B.C.Jha, Principal Scientist (Retd.), CIFRI - Expert Member
21. Prof. Dr. P.S.N.Rao, Director, SPA New Delhi - Expert Member
22. Dr. Afroz Ahmad, Member (E&R), Narmada Control Authority - Expert Member
23. Shri. S. Mukherjee, Chief Env. Officer, Deptt. of Env., West Bengal
24. Shri Ananda Ganguly, Excutive Director WBHIDCO
25. Shri. Pradip Guha, A.G.M (Planning), WBHIDCO
26. Shri. Sanjoy Mitra, OSD, Kolkata Municipal Corporation
27. Shri Anirudha Paul, Scientific Officer, EKWMA
28. Smt. Rita Khanna, Scientist 'F', MoEF&CC
29. Dr. M. Ramesh, Scientist 'E', MoEF&CC
30. Shri. Chandan Singh Scientist 'D' MoEF&CC
31. Dr. Anu Chetal Research Associate
32. Pallavi Mukherjee Research Associate
