

Ministry of Environment and Forests

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Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) held on 20th January, 2006 in the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The 6th Meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) was held on 20th January, 2006 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forests. The list of participants who attended the meeting is at **Annexure-I**.

At the outset, Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forests welcomed the participants and informed that the awareness about Wildlife Conservation amongst the people has increased manifold with high level of expectations from the Ministry. He emphasized that judicious decisions on diversion proposals from protected areas is very important for maintaining the existing protected area network.

The Member Secretary informed the Hon'ble Chairman that Smt. Maya Singh, Hon'ble M.P. and Member of the Standing Committee of NBWL has sought leave of absence, which was granted by the Chairman. Thereafter, the meeting discussed the agenda items as follows :-

**Agenda Item No.1 : Confirmation of the Minutes of meeting of the
Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife
held on 4th October, 2005.**

The Member Secretary informed that as per the procedure, draft Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee of NBWL held on 4th October, 2005 were circulated amongst the Members. Comments from Shri S.C. Sharma and Smt. Dilnavaz Variava were received. The remarks on the comments of the Hon'ble members have been indicated in the agenda notes. The Minutes of the last meeting were taken on record after incorporating the remarks as indicated in the agenda notes.

Agenda Item No.2 : Action Taken Report on the recommendations made by the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife in its meeting held on 4.10.2005.

2(4) Guidelines for diversion proposals

Member Secretary informed that the comments of Ms Dilnavaz Variava have been received on the guidelines for diversion proposals. Shri S.C. Sharma and Shri Ravi Singh also informed about forwarding their comments on the guidelines. They were requested to send one more copy of their comments to the Wildlife Division for circulating among all the Members. Member Secretary informed that a Committee on Rationalization of Boundaries for PAs has already been constituted. This Committee may also have a look on these guidelines. Members Shri S.C. Sharma, Shri Ravi Singh and Ms Dilnavaz Variava desired that exclusive meeting for finalizing the guidelines may be held on a short notice.

2(5ii) Diversion of forest land from Pakke (Eaglenest Sanctuary), Arunachal Pradesh, for construction of road for the Army by the Border Roads Organization (I.A.No. in CWP 202/95)

The Committee unanimously decided not to recommend the proposal as it involves the area which is extremely fragile, steep and covered with virgin forests having tremendous floral and faunal value. Since another alternative is available, Army may upgrade the other existing Kalaktong-Shergaon-Tenga road to meet their requirement.

2(5 iv) Diversion of 43.74 ha of forest land from Kanchendonga National Park for construction of Toong-Chatten road by Border Roads Organization (I.A. No.788 in CWP 202/95).

After discussions and considering the requirement of Ministry of Defence and the fact that the proposed Toong-Chatten road is passing through the periphery of the National Park and is also required for management of the Park, the Committee recommended the survey work for construction of Toong-Chatten road by Border Roads Organization. However, all the necessary steps to protect the wildlife have to be taken by the project proponents in consultation with the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State while undertaking the work.

2(6 i) Diversion of 19.5 ha of forest land from Rajaji National Park for construction of charitable hospital by Raghendra Sewashram Samiti.

Member Secretary informed that Smt. Maya Singh has recommended this proposal while Shri Ravi Singh has not recommended the proposal in their inspection reports. The matter was discussed at great length. Representative of Raghavendra Sewashram Samiti was also called and asked to brief the Committee. He informed that the land was not required for the hospital as hospital was already operational. They planned to use the land to develop a garden. Since, there was difference of opinion among the members on the subject, Hon'ble Chairman, therefore, decided to go by majority's view. Majority of the members viz – Shri S.C. Sharma, Shri Ravi Singh, Ms Dlnavaz Variava and Shri Darshan Shankar were against the proposal. Therefore, the proposal was not recommended.

2(4 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 and 57 in WPC No.337 of 1995).

Member Secretary informed that the report of inspection committee consisting of Ms Dilnavaz Variava and Shri M.C. Malakar, CWLW, Assam has been received wherein the proposal has been recommended subject to compliance of 11 conditions detailed from (a) to (k) in the inspection report. The Committee unanimously agreed with the inspection report and recommended the proposal subject to compliance of the proposed conditions envisaged by the inspection team.

2(4 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 WPC No.337 of 1995)

Member Secretary apprised the Members of the inspection report. It was informed that very small area i.e. 0.010490 sq. kms is involved for diversion and most of the activities were underground in the form of a tunnel without causing any disturbance to the Sanctuary. In this background, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal.

2(4v) Dereservation 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 WPC No.337 of 1995)

Member Secretary informed that the inspection in this case has been carried out by Shri Darshan Shankar and Dr. Asha Rajvanshi of WII. Shri Darshan Shankar apprised the Committee of their inspection report and informed that the proposed project was likely to cause all sorts of physical disturbances, disruption of animals movement and reduction in habitat quality influencing the hydrological and ecological features of this otherwise undisturbed wildlife rich area. The inspecting team, therefore, did not recommend the project. After detailed discussions, the Committee unanimously decided not to recommend the proposal.

2(4xi) Diversion of forest land from National Chambal Sanctuary, Rajasthan, for construction of 4 lane Kota by-pass by National Highway Authority of India.

The Committee was informed that the site inspection was carried out by Dr. R.B. Lal, IGF(WL), Shri P.R. Sinha, Director, WII and Dr. Sushant Choudhary, Professor, WII. Dr. Lal apprised the Members of the findings of their report. The inspection team in their report has recommended the alignment II on upstream of Kota barrage subject to the compliance of 12 conditions detailed in the inspection report. After detailed discussions, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal subject to compliance of all the conditions envisaged by the inspection team in their report.

2(4xvii) 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 Member Secretary informed that the project site in this case has been inspected by Shri B.C. Choudhary of WII and his inspection report has been received and circulated to all the Members. Since neither the project proponents nor the CWLW of the State was present in the meeting, it was decided to discuss this project in the next meeting.

2(4xix) Dereservation of forest land from Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka for the construction of Hogenekal Hydro Electric Power Project by National Hydro Electric Power Corporation Ltd.

It was informed that necessary inspection by the nominated persons has not been carried out. The Hon'ble Chairman desired that the inspection should be carried out and report be submitted at the earliest.

2(4 xxii) Rationalizing the boundaries of Balaram Ambaji Wild-life Sanctuary.

Member Secretary informed that this proposal would be considered by the Committee on Rationalization of Boundaries of National Parks and Sanctuaries.

2(3ii) Construction of Hydel Projects across the river Barapole within Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary in Kadagu District of Karnataka and Kanoor District of Kerala (I.A. in WP (C) No.202 of 1995 and 171 of 1996).

Since the comments have not been received from CWLWs of the concerned States of Kerala and Karnataka, it was decided to discuss the matter in the next meeting.

2(3 iii) Dereservation of 1 3.70 ha of forest land under Govind Vihar Wildlife Sanctuary of Naitwad Service Motor Road from 6 to 32 kms (I.A. No.88 of 2005 in WP (C) No.202 of 1995).

Member Secretary informed the Members that in this case, a report of CWLW, Uttaranchal has been received. In the report, the proposal has not been recommended keeping in view the richness of wildlife in the area. On the recommendations of the CWLW, the Committee unanimously recommended to reject the proposal.

2(3 iv) Dereservation of forest land fro rehabilitation of rural oustees under Tehari Dam Project, Rehabilitation Scheme (I.A.No.74 in W.P. (C) No.337 of 1995).

Member Secretary informed that a report from CWLW, Uttaranchal has been received in this context who has no objection for the dereservation of the forest area in question for rehabilitation of Tehri Dam oustees. He has also informed that this land do not fall in any protected area. On the background of the recommendations of CWLW, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal.

2(3 v) Dereservation of land comprised in the forest villages situated in the State of Chhatisgarh for conversion of forest villages into revenue villages (.A.No.75 in W.P. (C) No.337 of 1995).

Member Secretary informed that this proposal would be considered by the Committee for Rationalization of Boundaries of National parks and Sanctuaries.

2(3 vi) Permission for transfer of 3.40 ha reserve forest land situated in Askot Wildlife Sanctuary on lease basis for the purpose of laying 0.60 M pipeline (I.A.No.77 in W.P. (C) No.337 of 1995).

It was informed that CWLW, Uttaranchal has recommended the proposal as this diversion of forest land would not adversely effect the wildlife and its habitat in that area. Considering these recommendations and the fact that permission has been sought for laying pipeline for drinking water, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal.

2(3 vii) Diversin of 78.165 ha of forest land from Pangolkha Wildlife Sanctuary, Sikkim for construction of road by the army (I.A.No.1029/2004 in W.P. (C) No.202 of 1995).

The CWLW, Sikkim informed that the matter has already been decided by Hon'ble Supreme Court in favour of the project proponents with certain conditions. The Committee decided to exclude this item from the agenda..

Agenda Item No.2(3 xvi) : Realignment of the Boundaries of Govind National Park in Uttaranchal.

Member Secretary informed that it would be considered by the Committee for Rationalization of Boundaries on Protected Areas.

2(3 xviii) Dereservation of 12.75 ha of already broken Forest Land from Kotgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Orissa for Mining by T.P. Minerals.

Member Secretary informed that the inspection report has not been received in this case. Ms. Dilnavaz Variava who was to inspect the site informed that the inspection has already been carried out and the report is under preparation and would be submitted at the earliest. The Committee decided to consider this proposal in the next meeting after receipt of the report.

2(1) Constitution of an Expert Committee to assist the Kerala Forest Department (KFD) to formulate a proposal for “Rationalization of PA Network in Kerala”.

Member Secretary informed that a Committee for Rationalization of Boundaries for National Parks and Sanctuaries has been constituted which would look into this matter.

2(2) Discussion on various points related to Wildlife Conservation in the country and Wildlife Action Plan.

Member Secretary informed that a status report on the National Wildlife Action Plan has been circulated among all the members for their information and comments, if any. He also informed that a Committee to monitor and evaluate the protected areas has also been constituted.

2(4) Diversion of land in the Hipora Wildlife Sanctuary in Jammu and Kashmir for the revival of Mughal Road.

Member Secretary informed that Shri Darshan Shankar and Shri B. Mazumdar, CWLW, Maharashtra have carried out the inspection of the area. The inspection report had been circulated among the members. Shri Darshan Shankar apprised the members of their inspection report and recommendations. The inspecting team had recommended the proposal subject to compliance of 17 conditions detailed in their report. The representatives of the State Government and CWLW who were present in the meeting informed that they were agreeable to the various conditions envisaged in the inspection report. In this background, the Committee unanimously decided to recommend the proposal subject to the compliance of the conditions mentioned in the inspection report.

2(5) Diversion of Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary area of 600.72 ha of the total forest area 1965.052 ha proposed for Durgawati Reservoir Project.

It was informed that inspection of Kaimur Sanctuary was to be carried out on 23-24 January, 2006 by Shri M.C. Malakar and Shri Ravi Singh alongwith the Regional CCF, Bhubaneswar. In this connection, Hon'ble Chairman directed that the State Government should be requested to make necessary security arrangements for the inspection team.

2(6) Exclusion of river from the Sanctuary limits, Assam.

This case would also be considered by the Committee on Rationalization of Boundaries of protected areas.

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 3 : FRESH PROPOSALS

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

Member Secretary informed that technical reports from Wadia Institute of Himalayan Ecology, Dehra Dun and National Institute of Geophysics, Hyderabad have been received in this case and have already been circulated amongst the Members. Considering the fact that the Members did not get time to go through the reports, it was decided to take up the project in the next meeting..

3(1) Permission for transfer of 0.4604 ha of reserve forest land situated within the Bindsar Wildlife Sanctuary for drinking supply.

Considering the recommendations of CWLW, Uttaranchal, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal subject to the conditions envisaged by CWLW in his recommendations.

3 (2) Proposal for reopening of the diamond mine and continuing mining operations as 275.963 ha of the Mining lease area comes under Panna (Gangau) Wildlife Sanctuary.

Shri S.C. Sharma apprised the Committee that this Diamond Mine was a public sector unit in operation even before 1980. It did not involve any fresh diversion of protected area. Taking into account these facts and the recommendation of CWLW, M.P., the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal subject to the compliance of the conditions given by the CWLW in his report.

3(3) Diversion of 0.3 ha of forest land for providing water supply to Sri Malai Mahadeshwara Temple, Karnataka.

Member Secretary informed that CWLW, Karnataka has recommended the proposal. Considering the recommendations of the CWLW and the fact that the area proposed for diversion is only 0.3 ha to be used for water supply, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal.

3(4) Permission to carry out survey for laying Narmada Irrigation Project pipeline in the boundaries of Ratapani Sanctuary, M.P.

Member Secretary informed that the CWLW, M.P. has recommended the proposal to carryout only survey for laying Narmada Irrigation pipeline in the boundaries of the Ratapani Sanctuary. The Committee unanimously recommended the proposal.

3(5) Diversion of 3267 ha of forest land for Indira Sagar (Polavaram Project) across Godavari river in Khamam Rajahmundry and Visakhapatnam Forest Circles, Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuary.

Member Secretary informed that the proposal has been recommended by the CWLW, Andhra Pradesh subject to two conditions mentioned in his report. The Committee after detailed deliberations decided that the project area should be first inspected by Shri Darshan Shankar, Member of the Committee with DIG(WL) and submit their inspection report before the next meeting of the Standing Committee. It would be discussed again on receipt of inspection report.

3(6) Permission to carry out laying power grid optical fiber in Ratapani Sanctuary.

Member Secretary informed that only 0.64 ha of forest land is proposed to be diverted for carrying out survey to lay power grid optical fibres. The CWLW, M.P. has recommended the proposal. After discussion and Considering the facts mentioned above, the Committee unanimously recommended the proposal.

3(7) Permission to carry out survey for Lower Kolaar Irrigating Project in the boundaries of Ratapani Sanctuary.

On the basis of recommendations of CWLW, the Committee unanimously decided to recommend the permission to carry out survey for Lower Kolaar Irrigation Project on the boundaries of Ratapani Sanctuary, M.P.

Agenda Item No.4 : Status Report on implementation of Wildlife Action Plan.

Member Secretary informed the Hon'ble Members about circulation of status report on Wildlife Action Plan and sought comments, if any, on the same.

Agenda Item No.5 : Policy and Procedure for Wildlife Research.

Dr. K. Shankar of W.I.I. made a presentation on the policy and procedure for wildlife research. Through the presentation, he apprised the Members of the existing wildlife research policy and recently prepared framework for carrying out wildlife research in the country. Members appreciated the policy and suggested that there should be provision for providing interim findings by Researchers to the State Wildlife Department on regular intervals as publishing of final report takes long time. These findings may also be displayed on the web site of the Ministry. An urgent need for capacity building of veterinarians to cater the needs of wildlife was also emphasized by Shri Ravi Siingh..

Agenda Item No.6 : Destruction of habitat of the highly endangered Jerdon's Courser.

Shri Ravi Singh briefed the Committee about the destruction of habitat of the highly endangered bird Jerdon's Courser. It was informed that the Jerdon's Courser is a critically endangered bird in the country. It is found only in a small patches of Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. He informed that construction of right and left canal of Telgu Ganga Project would cause irrevocable destruction of the habitat of this bird. Therefore, it is very necessary to take necessary steps to safeguard the habitat of this bird. All the members showed their concern for the conservation of Jerdon's Courser. It was decided to seek a report on the subject immediately from the Chief Conservator of Forests, Regional Office, Bangalore.

All the proposals recommended by the Committee are subject to the existing instructions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

OTHER ITEMS

Shri Darshan Shankar brought to the notice of Hon'ble Chairman about inordinate delay in reimbursement of TA bills from the Ministry. Hon'ble Chairman directed to issue standing instruction for making reimbursement of TA bills of the Hon'ble Members maximum within a fortnight from the date of the receipt of TA bills. He also directed to bring it to the notice of all the concerned.

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