

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE STATE BOARD FOR WILDLIFE HELD IN THE
CONFERENCE HALL OF THE CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE, DISPUR ON 19.09.2015.**

Members present: List enclosed as Annexure 1.

The meeting started with the arrival of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam and Chairperson of the State Board for Wildlife, Assam. After the felicitation of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson and other dignitaries on the dais, the Members introduced themselves.

The Minister Environment, and Forest, Government of Assam & Vice Chairperson welcomed the chairperson, Dignitaries on the Dais along with all the members of the State Board of Wildlife present in the meeting. *dais*

With the permission of the Chairperson the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam, and Member Secretary SBWL presented issues listed in the Agenda for discussion.

(a) Leave of absence :

- (1) Sjt. Arun Phukan, MLA , Dispur, Guwahati-06.
- (2) Sjt. Tuliram Ronghang, CEM, Karbi Anglong, Autonomous Council, Diphu.
- (3) Sjt. K. Borgoyari, Dy. CEM & EM i/c Forest, BTC, Kokrajhar.
- (4) Dr. P.C. Bhattacharjee, Retd. Professor, Guwahati University.
- (5) Sri A.B. Goswami, Hony. Wildlife Warden, Guwahati.
- (6) The GOC, Eastern Command, Hq. 4 Corps, Tezpur.
- (7) The Director, Wildlife Preservation, Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.
- (8) The Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, Uttaranchal.
- (9) The Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkatta, West Bengal.
- (10) The Director, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkatta, West Bengal.

(b) Confirmation of the Minutes of the 7th Meeting of the SBWL held on 21.10.2014 :

The minutes of the 7th Meeting of SBWL was taken up for discussion. The minutes had already been circulated to all the Hon'ble Members of the Board by the Member Secretary. Since no comments were received from any member, as such said Minutes was confirmed.

(c) The action taken report on the recommendation of the 7th Meeting of the SBWL were circulated to all and were taken for discussion.

1. Expansion of M/S Assam Petrochemicals Ltd. (APCL), a Govt. of Assam undertaking.

- The project proposal has been submitted to the State Government for onward submission to the MoEF & CC Government of India. The proposal has been submitted to the MoEF & CC by the State Government.

2. Acquisition of land for 5 drill sites for exploration and extraction of Hydrocarbon at location falling within 10.K. M of Panidehing Bird Sanctuary PDAG, PDAH (4.34 Hac) and DSAD, DSAF and RJAA (11.86 hac) - A proposal by ONGC.

- The Expert Committee constituted on the direction of the Board submitted its report on 16.09.2015. The Expert Committee recommended drilling at DSAD, DSAF and RJAA sites.
- The sites PDAG and PDAH were NOT recommended by the Expert Committee.

(111)

3. Proposal for drilling by ONGC within 10 km from Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary.

- The Expert Committee constituted on the direction of the Board is yet to submit its report which is awaited. The SBWL asked the Member Secretary to request the committee to expeditiously submit its report.

4. Diversion proposals of North Eastern Coalfields, Coal India Ltd.

- The Expert Committee constituted on the direction of the Board is yet to submit its report which is awaited. The SBWL asked the Member Secretary to request the committee to submit its report expeditiously.

5. Diversion of 98.59 ha in Saleki PRF under Digboi Division for Tikok OCP Coal mining project by North Eastern Coal fields, Coal India Limited, Assam.

- The Expert Committee constituted on the direction of the Board is yet to submit its report which is awaited. The SBWL asked the Member Secretary to request the committee to submit its report expeditiously.

6. Proposal for diversion of forest land in Sabashpur USF within the district of Cachar in 4 laning of Balacherra-Harangajao section under East West Corridor Project from Km 244.0 to Km 274.5 of NH-54 (E)

- The project proposal has been submitted to the State Government for onward submission to the MoEF & CC, Government of India. The proposal has been sent to the MoEF & CC by the State Government.

7. Proposal for wildlife clearance for execution of the work "construction of 4 lane bridge over river Brahmaputra including viaduct and its approaches connecting Numaligarh on NH-37 and Gohpur on NH-52 under SARDP – NE in the state of Assam".

- The project proposal has been submitted to the State Government for onward submission to the MoEF & CC, Government of India. The proposal has been sent to the MoEF & CC by the State Government.

8. Clearance under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for locating 1 x 100 Mw Namrup Replacement Power Project at Namrup in the District of Dibrugarh 10 Km distance of Wildlife Sanctuary.

- The project proposal has been submitted to the State Government for onward submission to the MoEF & CC, Government of India. The proposal has been sent to the MoEF & CC by the State Government.

9. Proposal for notification of First addition to Manas National Park.

- The project proposal has been submitted to the State Government for onward submission to the MoEF & CC, Government of India. The State Government has sent the proposal to the MoEF & CC for necessary action.

10. Proposal for declaring part of Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary as satellite core of Nameri Tiger Reserve.

- Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary has been declared as Satellite Core of Nameri Tiger Reserve and the Government of Assam has issued notification on 18.06.2015 to this effect.

11. Proposal for Orang Tiger Reserve.

- The Proposal was submitted to the NTCA, Government of India for its in-principle approval/recommendation under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 by the CWLW, Assam vide letter No. WL/FG.35/Proposal Orang TR, dtd. 20.04.2015.
- The NTCA has given 'in principle' approval on 28.07.2015 subject to the condition that there shall be no overlap of areas between the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve and proposed Orang Tiger Reserve.
- The issue of overlap is being worked out and is expected to be finalized shortly.

New Proposals for the 8th Meeting of State Board for Wildlife, Assam.

Eight New Proposals were placed before the Board for its consideration.

1. Name of the Proposal:

Construction of New Broad Gauge Railway line from Mynaguri to Jogighopa, N.F. Railway, Jogighopa Project. [N.F. Railway]

Area:

Forest Land: 10.965 Ha

Land under NP/WLS: Nil

Location w.r.t. NP/WLS

The proposed railway line is located at a distance varying from 4.5 km to 6.5 km from the boundary of Chakrasila WLS outside ESZ.

Activity proposed:

Movement of freight and passenger train.

Recommendation:

The project recommended by the D.F.O Kokrajhar Wildlife division as it will have no adverse impact on Wildlife and Wildlife habitat in Chakrasila WLS.

The project is also recommended by the Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam.

The Project is recommended by the SBWL.

2. Name of the Proposal:

Diversion of 481.566 Ha (1190 Acres) Reserve Forest Land at Kalamati (Misamari) [Indian Army].

Area:

Forest land: 481.566 Ha. in Chariduar R.F.

Land under NP/ WLS: Nil

Location of Project site w.r.t. NP/WLS:

The site proposed is located adjacent to Sonai-Rupai WLS within its Eco- Sensitive Zone.

Activity proposed:

Ammunition Sub-Depot.

Recommendation:

D.F.O:

The proposal has not been recommended by the D.F.O, Western Assam Wildlife Division, Tezpur because of potential negative impacts of the proposed Ammunition Depot that may threaten the very existence of Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary and in the interest of Forest & Wildlife conservation.

Chief Wildlife Warden:

The proposal is not recommended because storage of explosive at the proposed site involves high degree of risk for Wildlife as the site is located adjacent to the Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Project is not recommended by the SBWL.

3. Name of the Proposal:

Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment Study for the proposed INDAdapt^G Project of Guwahati Refinery, Indian Oil Corporation Limited [IOC Ltd].

Area:

Forest Land: Nil

Land under NP/WLS: Nil

Location w.r.t. NP/WLS

The proposed project is located within the existing premises of Guwahati Refinery and within 10 km of Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary. It is also not located within the proposed ESZ of the Amchang Wildlife sanctuary.

Activity proposed:

INDA dept^G unit is being installed for reducing sulphur from gasoline to meet BS-IV specification.

Recommendation:

D.F.O, Guwahati Wildlife Division has recommended the proposal.

Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam has also recommended the proposal.

The Project proposal was deliberated by members of the Board who expressed concern about pollution. Considering the concern expressed by some members the Board recommended the Project proposal subject to clearance from the Pollution Control Board, Assam.

4. Name of the Proposal:

Revamp of INDMAX unit of Guwahati Refinery [IOC Ltd]

Area:

Forest Land: Nil

Land under NP/WLS: Nil

Location w.r.t. NP/WLS:

The proposed project will be located within the premises of Guwahati Refinery and will fall within 10km radius from the boundary of the Amchang WLS but it is outside the proposed ESZ.

Activity proposed:

Upgrading the project will upgrade low value feed stock to high value fuel

(114)

Recommendation:

D.F.O, Guwahati Wildlife Division has recommended the proposal.
The Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam has also recommended the proposal.
The Board has recommended the Project.

5. Name of the Proposal:

Application for Wildlife Clearance from Standing Committee of NBWL for drilling 7 (seven) numbers of wells in the vicinity of Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary [OIL].

Area:

Forest Land: Nil

Land under NP/WLS: Nil

Location w.r.t. NP/WLS:

Within 10km radius from the nearest boundary of the Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary.

Activity proposed:

Drilling for Oil and gas exploration and development.

Recommendation:

D.F.O, Jorhat Division has recommended the proposal subject to the condition that the user agency will strictly adhere to all the precautions against

1. Toxic contamination of agricultural land and ground water.
2. Noise Pollution
3. Fire hazard

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam has also recommended the proposal with the condition that environmental Laws will be followed.

The Board opined for constituting an Expert Committee to assess the impact of the Project on Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary and directed that the Expert Committee should submit its report within a fixed time.

6. Name of the Proposal:

Dirok Field Development Phase-I & II for Re entry and completion of existing wells, drilling development wells, commissioning of Gas Gathering Station (GGS) and Gas Processing Plant (GPP), and laying of underground gas pipelines in the Dirok field in onshore block AAP-ON-94/1, Tinsukia District, Assam by Hindustan Oil Exploration Company [HOEC]

Area:

Forest Land:

4.5 Ha for laying underground gas pipe in upper Dihing R.F and Digboi R.F.

Land under NP/WLS: Nil

Location w.r.t. NP/WLS:

The proposed project facilities including Gas drilling and Gas Gathering Station (GGS), are located in non Forest land mostly in Dirok Tea estate within 0.24 to 2 km distance from Dehing Patkai WLS.

(115)

Gas Processing Plant (GPP) at Golai will be located at about 8.5 km of Dehing Patkai WLS and the under ground pipeline will be located at a distance of 1.26 to 14 km from boundary of Dihing Patkai WLS

Activity proposed:

Gas drilling and field development, Evacuation of gas through GGS, setting of GPP and pipeline to evacuate natural gas from GGS to GPP and also from GPP to Kuchijan offtake and to Refinery of IOCL

Recommendation:

D.F.O, Digboi Division has recommended the proposal subject to condition that

1. The project proponent will work in close consultation with the D.F.O office to avoid man animal conflict in the areas and
2. Also contribute to the conservation needs of the DPWLS and the adjoining Wildlife Habitats
3. Financially support implementation of Wildlife management plan and Disaster management plan.

Chief Wildlife Warden has also recommended the project proposal involving Oil and Gas drilling sites and field development, GSS at Dirok site subject to the conditions

1. Effective measure against noise and light pollution
 2. Effective management plan for solid and liquid waste and organic waste generated.
 3. Reclamation of ground cleared, ponds/ditches/drain created and levelling of land
 4. Capping of Wells.
 5. Cumulative impact assessment of all activities by expert group and mitigation measures.
- Chief Wildlife Warden has not recommended GPP at Golai as the site may infringe elephant corridor.

Elephant corridor is a loosely defined area and cannot be demarcated on ground. The Golai elephant corridor is largely fragmented and industrial intrusion may aggravate the problem to irreversible proportion.

The Board recommended for constituting an Expert Committee to assess the impact of the Project on Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary and directed that the Expert Committee should submit its report within a fixed time.

7. Name of the Proposal:

Dirok Field Development Phase-III for Drilling development wells, exploratory wells, commissioning of Gas Gathering Station (GGS), and laying of underground gas pipelines in the Dirok field and North Dirok in onshore block AAP-ON-94/1, Tinsukia District, Assam by Hindustan Oil Exploration Company [HOEC]

Area:

Forest Land: Nil

Land under NP/WLS: Nil

Location w.r.t. NP/WLS:

The proposed oil and gas developments wells as well as exploratory wells are located in non Forest land either in Dirok Tea garden or agriculture land at a distance varying from 0.30 km to 2.79 km from the Dihing Patkai WLS

Activity proposed:

The proposed activities include gas exploration and development, Gas Gathering station and Gas evacuation.

Recommendation:

D.F.O, Digboi Division has recommended the proposal subject to conditions that

1. The project proponent will work in close consultation with the D.F.O office to avoid man animal conflict in the areas and
2. Also contribute to the conservation needs of the Dehing Patkai WLS and the adjoining Wildlife Habitats
3. Financial support for implementation of Wildlife management plan and Disaster management plan.

Chief Wildlife Warden has also recommended the project proposal involving oil and Gas drilling sites and field development, GSS at Dirok site subject to the conditions

1. Effective measures against noise and light pollution
2. Effective management plan for solid and liquid waste and organic waste generated.
3. Reclamation of ground cleared, ponds/ditches/drain created and levelling of land
4. Capping of Wells
5. Cumulative impact assessment of all activities by expert group and mitigation measures.

The Board recommended for constituting an Expert Committee to assess the impact of the Project on Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary and Golai Elephant Corridor and directed that the committee should submit its report within a fixed time.

8. Wildlife Clearance for Upgradation and Improvement of Narrengi to Bhakatgaon section of State Highway-3.

The proposed road is under eco-sensitive zone adjoining to the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary and passes through the Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary for a length of 1.1 Km, formal proposal has been submitted by the PWD for wildlife clearance.

The Board has recommended the Project proposal should be revisited along with the concern Forest officers.

(d)Other matters:

Attention of the SBWL was drawn to following by the members with permission of the chair:

1. The issue of flooding of wildlife habitat particularly in Manas National Park due to water released by Bhutan Hydro Projects. The Chairperson was requested to take up the matter with the Bhutan Government. The Chairperson assured the members for taking the matter up with the Government of India.
2. Rehabilitation of Dodhia and Lyka Forest village of Dibru Saikhowa National Park to be carried out at an early date on which the Chairperson of Board directed the Member secretary to take up the matter with appropriate authorities for submission of Rehabilitation proposal.
3. The status of Reserve Forests and Proposed Reserve Forests and to take immediate action to notify the PRFs to RFs. The Chairperson directed that the matter be taken up expeditiously by Forest Department with Revenue Department.
4. The withdrawal of Intelligence cell, that was operating in Kaziranga National Park. Therefore, the members wanted the cell to continue their activity in and around Kaziranga National Park. The Chairperson has directed the Vice Chairperson to look into the matter and act accordingly.

- (119)
5. Uploading the Agenda and Minutes of meetings in Departmental Website so that the members can access the same easily for their perusal. The Chairperson agreed to the same.

(e). Comments from the Hon'ble Chief Minister & Chairperson of the Board:

The Hon'ble Chief Minister & Chairperson of the Board expressed satisfaction over the proceedings of the meeting. He said that the mindset has changed over the years in favour of wildlife conservation. He emphasized that the development is very much needed and that is possible by getting new technology which ensures that proper balance between development and environmental consideration is maintained.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the chair by the Member Secretary & PCCF, WL & CWLW, Assam.



(Tarun Gogoi)
Chief Minister, Assam
& Chairperson
State Board for Wildlife, Assam.