

19th Meeting of the Standing Committee of State Board of Wildlife on 22nd February, 2017 at 2.00 pm at Barbet Board Room, Forest Secretariat, Deorali.

The 19th meeting of the Standing Committee of State Board of Wildlife was held on 22nd February 2017 in the Forests Environment and Wildlife Management Department under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Forest Minister -cum- Vice Chairperson, SBWL Shri Tshering Wangdi Lepcha. List of participants is at Annexure I.

Meeting started with Member Secretary of the Standing Committee of the SBWL welcoming the Hon'ble Chairperson, the members and all other delegates and officials who were present in the meeting. He also briefed the participants about the details of last meeting and various agendas items to be discussed in this meeting. The agenda items were then taken up for discussions.

Agenda Item No 1:

Diversion of 0.531 ha. Forest Land for proposed re-alignment on the existing Lachung-Yumthang road to bypass heavy landslide between 14.00 km to 15.00 kms. in North Sikkim by 86 RCC (GREF), 99 APO.

The representative from the BRO was invited by the Member Secretary to present their proposal before the Committee. The representative stated that the old road between km 14 to km 15 in the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary was damaged by an avalanche in the year 2015 and requires realignment as the old road is prone to more landslides in the future and the revival of old road is uneconomical. He said that the old road shall remain as the sanctuary and no settlements will be allowed along the road.

The proposal was then taken up for discussions and the following conditions were laid down by the Standing Committee:

- i. *The boulders along the new road alignment can be used but the boulders along the old road alignment are to be left as it is and should remain undisturbed.*
- ii. *Except rock breakers no stone crusher machine or mixing plants are to be established or used in the sanctuary.*
- iii. *Construction activities within the Protected Area are to be completed within the timeframe of two months.*
- iv. *Muck dumping sites are to be demarcated outside the Sanctuary by the Forests Department and the area selected should not be fragile in nature.*
- v. *Except temporary labour camps no permanent settlements are to be allowed in the Sanctuary. The labour camps are to be removed after the completion of the road.*
- vi. *Botanizing of Rhododendron species along the road is recommended for which the involvement of BSI is proposed. The reassessment of Rhododendron species along the road is to be conducted and proper signboards are to be placed.*

Standing Committee of SBWL cleared the proposal alongwith the conditions prescribed above.

Agenda Item No 2:

Diversion of forest Land for providing drinking water to Sikkim University at Yangang from Barfung Khola to other sources by Water Security & PHE Department. Area involvement: PA=1.3218 ha. & RF= 0.73 ha.

The representative from the Water Security & PHE Department was invited by the Member Secretary to present their proposal before the Committee. The representative stated that there is no alternative water source in the area apart from the sanctuary. Three water sources have been identified i.e. Borfung, Changey and Peurey River. The water demand estimated for the Sikkim University is 13 lakhs liters per day. The project will be requiring laying of pipelines for a length of 10,500 meters and 1.2 meters width. It was also mentioned that 54 numbers of trees shall be felled.

The proposal was then taken up for discussions and the following conditions were laid down by the standing committee:

- i. *Pipe should be underground wherever possible.*
- ii. *For every interval of 2 Kms along the pipeline area, water holes & small ponds may be constructed for wild animals and birds.*
- iii. *Epiphytes w.r.t. 54 trees to be felled needs to be rehabilitated and maintained with the help of Botanical Survey of India and the Committee suggested Epiphytes Rehabilitation Centre within the Yangang town.*
- iv. *Water harvesting system in the campus is to be proposed and some part of water to be distributed to Yangang town.*
- v. *The location of Pressure break points are to be specified and intimated to the RO of the Sanctuary so that it can be used during forest fires..*
- vi. *Maintenance job for pipelines needs to be done only after obtaining permission from Sanctuary authorities.*

Standing Committee of SBWL cleared the proposal alongwith the conditions prescribed above.

Agenda Item No 3 & 4:

Diversion of 0.0259 ha of forest Land for Rural Water Supply Scheme from Tharey Khola Sribadam to Chingthang GPU.

And

Diversion of 0.433 ha of forest Land for Water Supply Scheme for SSB Stationed at Chittrey, Chewabhanjyang, Kalijhar and Torifuley (Indo Nepal Border) within Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary by Rural Management Development Department.

The representative from the Rural Management and Development Department was invited by the Member Secretary to present their proposal before the Committee.

The representative stated that there is shortage of water in the SSB stationed at Chittrey, Chewabhanjyang, Kalijhar and Torifuley and immediate need of water. There is requirement of water in Chingthang GPU as well. They presented their proposal area wise and said that there is no other alternative source of water apart from Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary.

They also said that there will be necessity of constructing protective walls along the pipelines at certain places wherein they will require using stones from the sanctuary.

The proposal was then taken up for discussions and the following conditions were laid down by the standing committee:

- i. *Use of stones is to be minimized in the Sanctuary while constructing protective wall.*

Standing Committee of SBWL cleared the proposal alongwith the conditions prescribed above.

Agenda Item No 5

Claim by Simic Gumpa Committee for rectifying and de-notification of land measuring 20.41 acres previously possessed by Gonam Gufa from the Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary situated at Simik-Aritar Block.

The Joint Director (Wildlife) presented the case of land claim by the Simic Gumpa Committee. The said land falls under Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary. The Joint Director (Wildlife) said that the land was gifted to the Gumpa Committee by the King in the year 1927. During the year 1952 it was recorded as Simik Reserve Forests and later declared as Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary in the year 1982. In the year 1990, the Gumpa Committee had obtained land parcha from Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department.

Gumpa Committee had placed a joint representation to the District Collector in the year 1988 and to the Forests, Env and Wildlife Management Department for de-notification of the said land in the year 2010.

The proposal was then taken up for discussions and the following recommendations were laid down by the Standing Committee:

- i. *An independent committee of the SBWL is to be constituted to assess the concerned area and the impact of dereserving the land on the Sanctuary.*
- ii. *The members of the independent committee shall comprise of:*
 - a) *Chairman- Chief Wildlife Warden*
 - b) *Co-Chairman- Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)*
 - c) *Dr. Ghanashyam Sharma, The Mountain Institute India, Gangtok-Member*
 - d) *Dr. Dinesh Kumar Agrawal, Botanical Survey of India, Sikkim Himalayan Regional Centre- Member*
 - e) *One representative from Ecclesiastical Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim*
 - f) *One representative from Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Government of Sikkim.*
 - g) *One representative from WWF- Officer in Charge*
 - h) *Member Secretary- Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife East Division)*
- iii. *The report on the claimed area is to be submitted to the Standing Committee of SBWL within 3 months.*

Agenda Item No 6

Declaration of Kateng RF as Cycas Conservation Reserve (Cycas Pectinata).

The Principal Chief Research Officer, Forests, Env. and Wildlife Management Department said that the Department had conducted a survey in 2011-12 in South Sikkim and it was found that the status of Cycas Pectinata in the wild is critical. Subsequent studies were also conducted in 2015 and it was found that the plant being ancient has separate male and female trees which are few and are far from each other which cause difficulty in proper reproduction. It was also stated that, Kateng Reserve Forests is the last stronghold of the ancient tree Cycas Pectinata and the Departmental survey shows that there are less than 100 nos of trees left in Sikkim.

The proposal was then taken up for discussions and the following recommendations were laid down by the Standing Committee:

- i. *The actual area to be declared as a Conservation Reserve needs to be determined.*
- ii. *Situation with regard to any Rights to be documented and is to be submitted for Government approval.*
- iii. *Public hearing is to be conducted and recorded.*
- iv. *A complete proposal needs to be submitted to the Standing Committee for recommendation to the SBWL.*

Agenda Item No 7

Man & animal conflict- revising the rate of ex-gratia payment.

The Member Secretary presented to the Committee about the need to revise the rate of ex-gratia payment as there has been many incidences of man animal conflict in the State. He said that the present rates for human injury and casualty needs to be increased as the present rate does not suffice. However, he said that the rates for crop compensation can remain unchanged. After the discussions, the Standing Committee agreed for the review of rates for human injury and human death. The Committee recommended the following rates:

Sl. no	Type of injury	Existing rates	Recommended rates
1	Human injury (simple)	₹ 10,000/-	₹ 25000/-
2	Human injury (grievous)	₹ 50,000/-	₹ 1,00,000 /-
3	Human Death	₹ 1,50,000/-	₹ 4,00,000/-

Agenda Item No 8

Any other item with the permission of the chair

A. Declaring Closed Season for collection of specimens by researchers during breeding season of Fauna of Sikkim in WLPAs and Forest Areas

The Member Secretary presented to the Committee the proposal for declaring Closed Season for collection of specimens by researchers during breeding season to ensure conservation of our biodiversity in addition to studies for advance of science and academics. The proposal was then taken up for discussion. It was informed that the declaration may hinder research works on floral species as flowering time coincides with the breeding season

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and collection is usually limited to few specimens. It was discussed that distinction of floral and faunal category may be considered when imposing ban on collection of specimens. For Closed Season on lines of that for National Parks in other states it needs discussion with Tourism Dept. After discussion the following recommendations were laid down by the Standing Committee:

- i. The Closed Season for collection of Faunal Specimens by researchers is for part of the Breeding Season (during which most of the species would have time to breed, lay eggs and rear young to some extent), specifically:
 - a. Low – Mid-Altitudes (200-2400m): Mar-Apr-May and Oct-Nov
Remaining seven (07) months (Jun-Jul-Aug-Sep and Dec-Jan-Feb) can be considered for collection following permission of the Dept.
 - b. Mid – High Altitudes (>2400m): Jun-Jul-Aug (Peak breeding season for high altitude species). Remaining nine (09) months can be similarly considered
- ii. The collection of Floral specimens by authorised institutions like BSI may be considered as collections are usually limited to few specimens of each species unlike insects etc. which are trapped in large numbers or like amphibians which are already in global decline.

A. Preparation of planting pits by all the Departments.

The Chairperson suggested in the meeting that all the Departments should initiate avenue plantation activities. The Departments were directed to engage Muster roll labourers for digging of planting pits wherever possible for avenue plantation. He requested the officials of WL Sector to give priority in maintain wildlife habitat within PAs by planting indigenous fruit bearing species and grasses.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) to the chair and the participants.


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