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No. PDI/PAR/CUL/2/13

9 February 2016.

Dear Feng,

Please find enclosed three copies of the State of Conservation Report on the Great Himalayan National Park. A soft copy has already been sent to you.

Best regards

Yours sincerely,

(Rakesh Adlakha)

Mr Feng Jing,
Chief of Asia-Pacific Section,
World Heritage Centre
UNESCO Secretariat
Paris.

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Ministry of Environment, Forest
and Climate Change
Government of India

**State of Conservation Report (SoC) of
Great Himalayan National Park Conservation
Area (GHNPCA), India (N 338)**

**RESPONSE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE
COMMITTEE DECISION 38 COM 8B.7**

Submitted by
State Party: India
to
UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris

January, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Party	India
State, Province or Region	Himachal Pradesh
Name of Property	Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA)
Criteria under which property is nominated	Criterion x: <i>To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.</i>
Response to the Committee Decision 38 COM 7B.65	<p>Executive Summary on the State of Conservation of the GHNPCA property</p> <p>The State Party submits that all three units of the inscribed property (Great Himalayan National Park, Sainj and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuaries(WLS)) of the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA) are currently being managed, protected and monitored at a level which meets WH Operational Guidelines. The management, protection and monitoring applies equally to the redefined single area including Sainj and Tirthan WLS. Further, the inscribed property is precisely the “larger and contiguous nominated <i>property</i>” that Section 4.2 Boundaries recommends.</p> <p>The State Party reiterates that the 2006 rationalization of boundaries of Protected Areas Network in the State of Himachal Pradesh (HP) refers not only to Sainj and Tirthan WLS but also to Pin Valley NP, Khirganga NP and the others. The May 2015 meeting of State Board for Wildlife has taken cognizance of these recommendations of UNESCO and has initiated the process of merging Khirganga National Park with GHNPCA. This process would soon be done for other PAs adjacent to the GHNPCA. This affirms commitment to the concept of larger and compact conservation area representing the biological diversity of sensitive Western Himalayas.</p>

	<p>The current GHNPCA, now the Inscribed Property, is clearly the catalyst for this much broader vision, <i>which is to create the largest possible fully-representative and pre-eminent conservation area in the Western Himalaya i.e. the Western Himalayan Conservation Jewel</i>. This jewel would take its rightful place alongside the Central Himalayas' WHS Sagarmatha and the tentative WHS Jigme Dorji for the Eastern Himalaya. Although this larger "<i>conservation jewel</i>" goal may be realized over a period of time, it now has a much better chance of being accomplished for its World Heritage Site status.</p> <p>The State Party has welcomed participation of ICIMOD and the newly established UNESCO Category 2 Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia-Pacific Region in India in a wider-scoped comparative study. As to the commitment of ICIMOD, there has been a significant contribution for the preparation of nomination document, supplementary information and response to the Referral points.</p>
<p>Name and contact information of official local institution/agency</p>	<p>Organization: Himachal Pradesh Forest Department</p> <p>Address: Shri B.S. Rana, IFS, Director, Great Himalayan National Park, Shamshi, District Kullu, Himachal Pradesh – 175126 (INDIA)</p> <p>Tel: +91-1902-265320 (O)</p> <p>Fax: +91-1902-265320</p> <p>Email: dirghnp@gmail.com, bsrana61@gmail.com</p>

1. BACKGROUND

The World Heritage Committee on the basis of the decision adopted at the 38th Session in 2014 requested the State Party India vide decision 38 COM 8B.7 (**Annexure-I**) to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1st December, 2015 'a detailed report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property, on the implementation of the above and updates of the financial situation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016'. Accordingly, the response of the State Party to decision 38COM 8B.7 is given below.

2. **PARA 4: Requests the state party to:**

- a. expedite, in accordance with legislated processes, the resolution of community rights based issues with respect to local communities and indigenous peoples in the Tirthan and Sainj Wildlife Sanctuaries, including in relation to the phasing out of grazing in the Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary,**

The State Party took this matter to the Himachal Pradesh State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) in May 2015 (Annexure 2). As per provisions of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, the SBWL, under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh considered this matter and decided that the Sainj and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuaries (WLS) will not be notified as National Parks so as to avoid any relocation of three villages in the Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary. However, this matter needs approval of the Standing Committee (SC) of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). The State of Himachal Pradesh has undertaken a state-wide exercise of Rationalization of the Boundaries of Protected Areas under the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of Hon'ble the Supreme Court of India. Hence, the ultimate approval will be of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The Park administration is making efforts to involve the villagers of three villages in Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary in Park management activities and phasing grazing out in the Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary.

It may please be recalled that the combination of the Great Himalayan National Park, Sainj and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuaries plus a buffer zone to the west of the park since 1998 have been known as the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA) in response to recommendations by the Wildlife Institute of India. GHNPCA was inscribed as a World Heritage Site at the Doha meeting of World Heritage Committee in June 2014, and the inscribed property consists of the 754.4 sq km GHNP, the 90 sq km Sainj WLS and the 61 sq km of Tirthan WLS that totals to a total extent of 905.4 sq km. The 265.6 sq km buffer zone (Ecozone) is not part of the nominated property but is directly associated with it in all management aspects.

The National Park category under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 (WLPA) provides for strict conservation of GHNP without any biotic disturbances (akin to IUCN Category II). Similarly, both Sainj and Tirthan WLS under the WLPA are designated to protect, propagate, and develop wildlife or its environment in areas of ecological and zoological significance (akin to IUCN Category IV). Thus, together with its buffer zone, the GHNPCA reflects a management entity, which is fully consistent with IUCN protected area management categories. The entire GHNPCA including the GHNP, Ecozone and Tirthan and Sainj WLS are managed under a single Management Plan and administered by a single Director.

Although a great deal of information on the condition and management of all three components of the redefined property and its buffer zone has already been supplied, for ready reference here are a few key points:

- GHNP was constituted in 1984 and formally declared a National Park in 1999 after all legitimate rights of local residents were extinguished, with compensation following a due process of law.
- Sainj and Tirthan WLS were established in 1994 along with the Ecozone (buffer zone); Sainj WLS comprises of three villages whose 120 residents use local resources; Tirthan WLS has no human settlements but is subject to traditional seasonal grazing.

- The two sanctuaries were designated for inclusion in GHNP in 2010 and are currently undergoing the consultative process of resolving rights of any residents.
- The Ecozone's 160 villages/15,000 residents are dependent on natural resources; extensive programs to provide alternative livelihoods including participation in ecotourism are already in place; these communities are engaged in participatory conservation governance of the area.
- Each unit of the GHNPCA has distinct management objectives reflected in the GHNP Management Plan. For example GHNP, as an IUCN Category II area focuses on protection of resources while managing ecologically sustainable tourism; Sainj WLS's priority is management of three villages within its boundaries to minimize their impacts on biodiversity; Tirthan WLS regulates the non-resident shepherds to minimize impacts of grazing by sheep and other livestock.

b. Continue, in consultation with communities and stakeholders, longer term plans to progressively increase the size of the property, in order to increase integrity and better provide for the conservation of wide-ranging species, through extensions of other surrounding protected areas potentially including the Rupi Bhabha Wildlife Sanctuary, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga National Park and The Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary;

The State Party discussed amalgamation of Khirganga National Park into Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA) in the State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) in May 2015. As per provisions of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, the SBWL, under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh considered this matter and decided that the Khirganga National Park should be merged with the GHNPCA. The formal notification of this process is underway.

The State Party re-iterates its total commitment to the vision of a much-expanded Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, which would include Pin Valley and Khirganga National Parks, Rupi Bhabha Wildlife Sanctuary and Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary. In the context of documentation and study of global warming, an expanded, better studied and better protected GHNPCA would clearly be of even

greater value. The State party views the current GHNPCA as the “*keystone of the Western Himalaya’s Conservation Jewel*,” that jewel being the anticipated much-expanded GHNPCA. Noting the requirement of Decision 38COM B7, the State Party confirms that this integration shall be accomplished as we work towards increasing the World Heritage property area to the full complex, which would be roughly three times the size of the currently proposed area.

The inscribed GHNPCA is associated with a buffer zone, popularly known as the Ecozone, an area of 265.6 sq km inhabited by some 15,000 people in 160 villages. The Ecozone was established in 1994 to promote local ecologically sustainable development including ecotourism. The Park, the two wildlife sanctuaries, and the Ecozone are collectively referred to as the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA), a conceptual designation and *de facto* management unit of 1,171 sq km that recognizes that a wider and well-integrated Conservation Area has far greater conservation value than its individual parts. The boundaries of GHNP are also contiguous with the recently established (2010) Khirganga National Park (710 sq km), the Pin Valley National Park (675 sq km) in Trans-Himalaya, Rupi-Bhabha Wildlife Sanctuary (503 sq km) in Sutlej watershed and Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary (61 sq km). Together these four protected areas (PAs) add 1,949 sq km to the area around GHNP and its buffer zone, making the total contiguous protected area associated with the nominated property approximately 2,854.4 sq km (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Summary of the relationship of the nominated property to its buffer zone and adjacent contiguous/close by protected areas in GHNP (Map 1).

Area	Size in sq km	Size in Hectare	Notes
GHNP	905.4	90,540	This is the Inscribed Property
Ecozone of GHNP*	265.6	26,560	This is the buffer zone of GHNP *(not counted in total below)
Khirganga National Park	710	71,000	This National Park, contiguous with GHNP on its northern boundary, is in process of gaining full NP status
Pin Valley National Park	675	67,500	This National Park is contiguous with GHNP on its eastern boundary, also in process of gaining full NP status
Rupi Bhabha Wildlife Sanctuary	503	50,300	This sanctuary is contiguous with GHNP on its south-western boundary
Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary	61	6,100	This sanctuary is not contiguous with GHNP but lies close to its north-west boundary
Total contiguous/close by protected area	2,854.4	285,440	This is the extent of contiguous protected areas including GHNP but not including its buffer zone

It is emphasized that the expanded nomination would be submitted after completion of merger of all the above mentioned PAs into the GHNP, the inscribed property. The GHNP and associated Protected Areas lie within the overlapping boundaries of several major ecological zones and faunal regions, including (1) the dry deserts of interior Asia and the well-watered lowlands of the Indian plains, (2) the Indo Malayan and Palearctic Realms, (3) the high plateau of Tibet and the Himalayan peaks, and

(4) the catchments of the Beas and Sutlej Rivers, both significant tributaries of the Indus.

Because of its complex geography, overlap of multiple zones and its great variations in altitude, the current relatively small area of the GHNP and buffer zone encompasses a very large range of species of both plants and animals. These species span the subtropical to the alpine and include those characteristic of south-east Asian forests as well as those found across Siberia and the Asian steppes. Few ecological sanctuaries present such a variety of wildlife habitat and biological diversity in such a small area.

3. PARA 5: Commends the State Party and the range of stakeholders in the nominated property for their efficient and effective action to address concerns related to the property's integrity, protection and management, as previously raised by the World Heritage Committee;

Maintains the Best Integrity and Viability of Key Species:

The Park administration regularly interacts with the local community through Women Saving and Credit Groups (WSCGs) which are small production centres to enhance livelihood options of their members who belong to poor households who had their dependence on the Park's resources before 1999. The Park administration follows a very effective mechanism of communication through Group Organizers (a lady selected and trained in the matters of making of WSCGs and their functioning; usually one Group Organiser works with six to eight WSCGs and each WSCG has eight to ten members). The Park administration targeted these HHs to compensate their loss of incomes after final notification of GHNP in 1999. The WSCGs have been federated in their own NGO called Biodiversity Tourism and Community Advancement (BTCA). Thus BTCA is the umbrella organisation which facilitates Income Generation Activities in WSCGs including vermin composting, apricot oil sale, marketing of agricultural produce, and ecotourism for the male family members of these groups. The Park administration has developed rules that give priority to BTCA to earn incomes from ecotourism to benefit those who had a dependence on Park's resources before 1999.

The best protected populations of Western Tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*), Vulnerable Species as per IUCN (Vulnerable C2a(i)), occurs in the Park, supporting 400 individuals (which is 10% of the global population) in less than 1% (120 km²) of global distribution area (which is 21,600 km²). Similarly, a recent study reveals that GHNP offers the best protected habitat for Snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*); IUCN Endangered (C1, ver 3.1) in the context of climate change and future vulnerability.

It is further supported by the lowest level of human footprint and this advantage is significant when compared with similar elevations and ecological zones elsewhere. The configuration of the area is such that the habitats are buffered by protected habitats offering contiguity and long-term viability of the species. Species such as Snow leopard, Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), IUCN Vulnerable, Himalayan Tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), (IUCN Near Threatened), Himalayan musk deer *Moschus leucogaster* (IUCN Endangered), Blue sheep *Pseudois nayaur*, Western tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus* and Cheer pheasant *Catreus wallichii* (IUCN Vulnerable C2a(i)) have year-round habitat and a secure future in the inscribed GHNPCA.

Among other protected areas, the Pin Valley NP in India, adjacent to GHNP on the other side of the Great Himalayan Range, is an example of interior, trans-Himalayan areas and consists of high altitude desert, with many species in common with Tibet and central Asia. The fauna and flora are not at all comparable with those of GHNPCA, although some species are shared with the high altitude parts of GHNP. The adjacent Khirganga NP, and Kanawar and Rupi Bhabha WLS exhibit similar ecology to GHNP and support a very similar fauna and flora. Ultimately all of these sanctuaries/NPs form a single unit, with inscribed GHNPCA located at the centre, acting as source for these areas. In providing examples of intact or near-intact lower-altitude temperate forest, as well as extensive areas of alpine meadows, rich in medicinal plants, GHNPCA presents a unique example of a full altitude sequence for the Western Himalayas, possibly the only one available for several of the forest types represented.

4. PARA 6: Recommends the States Parties to consider undertaking a regional comparative study with the possible support of the IUCN, other partners such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the newly established UNESCO Category 2 Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia-Pacific Region in India to assess the scope of ecosystems within the Himalayas and adjacent mountain regions with a view to identifying potential World Heritage candidate areas and boundary configurations in this region, including potential serial nominations / extensions;

The State Party submits to continue a regional comparative study with the support of the IUCN, other partners such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the newly established UNESCO Category 2 Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia-Pacific Region in India to assess the scope of ecosystems within the Himalayas and adjacent mountain regions with a view to identifying potential World Heritage candidate areas and boundary configurations in this region, including potential serial nominations / extensions.

The GHNPCA Park Director and local stakeholder community representatives recently participated in an “International Training Workshop on Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation in World Natural Heritage Sites for SAARC Countries” organized by UNESCO Category 2 Centre, Wildlife Institute of India in Dehradun. The Open Standards workshop brought together common concepts, approaches, and terminology in conservation project design, management, and monitoring in order to help practitioners improve the practice of conservation. The learning from this workshop has provided a structured approach and framework to apply from the stage of planning to implementation of conservation projects/interventions and will also guide improved project management and evaluation for World Natural Heritage Sites.

It is further emphasized that the Park management has been regularly consulting with ICIMOD and the Wildlife Institute of India on a range of management issues.

The collective evidence clearly demonstrates that GHNPCA is uniquely placed in terms of its habitat diversity and species compositions, and we believe that further study would only reaffirm this. However, we would welcome and participate in a comparative study which includes assessing the relative value of the anticipated much-expanded conservation complex including Pin Valley and Khirganga NPs and adjacent WLS. This we feel would be a more productive use of resources needed for additional comparative analysis, and contribute directly to the process of adding these other areas to an expanded GHNPCA World Heritage Site.

5. PARA 7: Requests the State Party of India to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2015, a report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property, including confirmation of progress on the above-mentioned requests, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.

It has been done as above.

Decision : 38 COM 8B.7

Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (India)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-14/38.COM/8B.Add and WHC-14/38.COM/INF.8B2.Add,
2. Inscribes the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, India, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (x);
3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area is located in the western part of the Himalayan Mountains in the northern Indian State of Himachal Pradesh. The 90,540 ha property includes the upper mountain glacial and snow melt water source origins of the westerly flowing JiwaNal, Sainj and Tirthan Rivers and the north-westerly flowing Parvati River which are all headwater tributaries to the River Beas and subsequently, the Indus River. The property includes an elevational range from high alpine peaks of over 6,000m a.s.l to riverine forest at altitudes below 2,000m a.s.l. The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area encompasses the catchments of water supplies which are vital to millions of downstream users.

The property lies within the ecologically distinct Western Himalayas at the junction between two of the world's major biogeographic realms, the Palearctic and Indomalayan Realms. Displaying biotic elements from both these realms, the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area protects the monsoon affected forests and alpine meadows of the Himalayan front ranges which sustain a unique biota comprised of many distinct altitude-sensitive ecosystems. The property is home to many plants and animals endemic to the region. The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area displays distinct broadleaf and conifer forest types forming mosaics of habitat across steep valley-side landscapes. It is a compact, natural and biodiverse protected area system that includes 25 forest types and an associated rich assemblage of fauna species.

The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area is at the core of a larger area of surrounding protected areas which form an island of undisturbed environments in the greater Western Himalayan landscape. The diversity of species present is rich; however it is the abundance and health of individual species' populations supported by healthy ecosystem processes where the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area demonstrates its outstanding significance for biodiversity conservation.

Criterion (x): The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area is located within the globally significant "Western Himalayan Temperate Forests" ecoregion. The property also protects part of Conservation International's Himalaya "biodiversity hot spot" and is part of the BirdLife International's Western Himalaya Endemic Bird Area. The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area is home to 805 vascular plant species, 192 species of lichen, 12 species of liverworts and 25 species of mosses. Some 58% of its angiosperms are endemic to the Western Himalayas. The property also protects some 31 species of mammals, 209 birds, 9 amphibians, 12 reptiles and 125 insects. The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area provides habitat for 4 globally threatened mammals, 3 globally threatened birds and a large number of medicinal plants. The protection of lower altitude

valleys provides for more complete protection and management of important habitats and endangered species such as the Western Tragopan and the Musk Deer.

Integrity

The property is of a sufficient size to ensure the natural functioning of ecological processes. Its rugged topography and inaccessibility together with its location within a much larger ecological complex of protected areas ensures its integrity. The altitudinal range within the property together with its diversity of habitat types provide a buffer to climate change impacts and the needs of altitude sensitive plants and animals to find refuge from climate variability.

A 26,560 ha buffer zone known as an Ecozone is defined along the south-western side of the property. This buffer zone coincides with the areas of greatest human pressure and is managed in sympathy with the core values of the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area. The property is further buffered by high mountain systems to the north-west which include several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. These areas also offer scope to progressively increase the size of the World Heritage property.

Human settlement related threats pose the greatest concern and include agriculture, localised poaching, traditional grazing, human-wildlife conflicts and hydropower development. Tourism impact is minimal and trekking routes are closely regulated.

Protection and management requirements

The property is subject to sound legal protection, however, this needs to be strengthened to ensure consistent high level protection across all areas. Tirthan and Sainj Wildlife Sanctuaries are designated in recognition of their ecological and zoological significance and are subject to wildlife management objectives, and a higher level of strict protection is provided to Great Himalayan National Park which is a national park. National parks under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 provide for strict protection without human disturbance.

The property's boundaries are considered appropriate and an effective management regime is in place including an overall management plan and adequate resourcing. The property has a buffer zone along its south-western side which corresponds to the 26,560 ha Ecozone, the area of greatest human population pressure. Continued attention is required to manage sensitive community development issues in this buffer zone and in some parts of the property itself.

The sensitive resolution of access and use rights by communities is needed to bolster protection as is fostering alternative livelihoods which are sympathetic to the conservation of the area. Local communities are engaged in management decisions; however more work is needed to fully empower communities and continue to build a strong sense of support and stewardship for the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area.

Included within the property is the Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary with 120 inhabitants and the Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary, which is uninhabited but currently subject to traditional grazing. The inclusion of these two Wildlife Sanctuaries supports the integrity of the nomination; however, it opens up concerns regarding the impacts of grazing and human settlements. Both these aspects are being actively managed, a process that will need to be maintained. The extent and impacts of high pasture grazing in the Tirthan area of the property needs to be assessed and grazing phased out as soon as practicable. Other impacts arising from small

human settlements within the Sainj area of the property also need to be addressed as soon as practicable.

4. Requests the State Party to:

- a) **expedite, in accordance with legislated processes, the resolution of community rights based issues with respect to local communities and indigenous peoples in the Tirthan and Sainj Wildlife Sanctuaries, including in relation to the phasing out of grazing in the Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary,**
- b) **continue, in consultation with communities and stakeholders, longer term plans to progressively increase the size of the property, in order to increase integrity and better provide for the conservation of wide-ranging species, through extensions of other surrounding protected areas potentially including the RupiBhabha Wildlife Sanctuary, Pin Valley National Park, Khirganga National Park and the Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary;**
- c) **Commends the State Party and the range of stakeholders in the nominated property for their efficient and effective action to address concerns related to the property's integrity, protection and management, as previously raised by the World Heritage Committee;**
- d) **Recommends the States Parties to consider undertaking a regional comparative study with the possible support of the IUCN, other partners such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the newly established UNESCO Category 2 Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia-Pacific Region in India to assess the scope of ecosystems within the Himalayas and adjacent mountain regions with a view to identifying potential World Heritage candidate areas and boundary configurations in this region, including potential serial nominations / extensions;**
- e) **Requests the State Party of India to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2015, a report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property, including confirmation of progress on the above-mentioned requests, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.**

FAX NO. 0135-2640117 - Att. Mr. Ajay Srivastava, IFS

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State Board for Wild Life (SBWL) Meeting Report
8th May 2015

Minutes of the Meeting of the State Board for Wild Life (SBWL), held in the Conference Room of the Armsdale Building, H.P. Secretariat, at 11 AM on 8th May 2015, under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Virbhadra Singh and the presence of the Hon'ble Forest Minister H.P., Shri Thakur Singh Bharmauri

The list of the members of SBWL, special invitees that attended the SBWL meeting is as follows:-

1. Shri Chander Kumar, Hon'ble Ex-Minister & Ex-MP as Non-Official Member of the SBWL
2. Dr. M.K. Ranjit Singh, Former Special Secretary of MOEF & Member NBWL, New Delhi as Non-Official Member of SBWL
3. Shri Vijay Bhushan, Former Secretary, DOT, N. Delhi as Non-Official Member of SBWL
4. Shri Kewal Singh Pathania, Hon'ble Vice Chairman of the HPSFDC Ltd. as Special Invitee of SBWL
5. Shri Ajay Bahadur, Hon'ble Ex.MLA and Chairman HIMFED, Special Invitee, SBWL
6. Shri Ramesh Chauhan, Chairman of the Khadi Board as Non-Official Member of the SBWL
7. Shri Arun Sen, R/O VPO Kuthar, District Solan, Non-Official Member of the SBWL
8. Shri Dev Raj, Former Chairman, Bharmaur, District: Chamba, Non-Official Member of the SBWL
9. Shri Ashish Dasgupta, Parwanoo, District: Solan, Non-Official of the SBWL
10. Shri Rohit Thakur, Kasumpti, Shimla, Non-official Member of the SBWL
11. Shri Dushyant Singh, Dhami, Shimla, Non-Official Member of the SBWL
12. Shri Kamlesh, Bharmaur, District: Chamba, Non-Official Member of the SBWL
13. Shri V.C. Pharka IAS, ACS(Tourism) & ACS to Hon'ble CM HP, Member of the SBWL
14. Shri Sanjay Kumar IPS, DG(Police), Member of the SBWL
15. Prof.(Retd.) Sudhir Mahajan, Special Invitee of the SBWL
16. Col. G.S.Mann, Representative of ARTRAC, Shimla, Member of the SBWL
17. Shri Mohan Chauhan IAS, MD Tourism & Secretary GAD, Member of the SBWL
18. Mr. Shekhar Massey, Director of Animal Husbandry, Member of the SBWL
19. Mr. Harsh Mitter IFS, APCCF & Representative of Wild Life Preservation, GOI
20. Shri S.P Mehta, Director of Fisheries, Member of the SBWL
21. Dr. Avtar Kaur Sidhu, Scientist, Representative of the Zoological Survey of India—Member of the SBWL
22. Dr. R. Suresh Kumar, Representative of the Wild Life Institute, Dehradun—Member of the SBWL
23. Shri Jasjit Singh Walla IFS, Pr.CCF & Chief Wild Life Warden—Member Secretary of the SBWL

The following did not attend:-

1. Shri Khub Ram, MLA Anni, Member SBWL
2. Shri Ajay Mahajan, MLA Nurpur, Member SBWL
3. Shri Mohan Lal Brakta, MLA Rohroo, Member SBWL
4. Shri Tarun Shridhar IAS, ACS(Forests), Member SBWL
5. Shri Sushil C. Srivastava IFS, Pr.CCF(HoFF), Member SBWL
6. Shri Amarjeet Singh, Himachal Birds, New Shimla, Non-Official Member
7. Shri Rattanjeet Singh, c/o Chapslee School, Shimla, Non-Official Member
8. Shri Kamal Dhaulta, Sanjauli, Shimla, Non-Official Member

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Shri S.D.Sharma, IFS, CCF(WL) North, Dharamshala welcomed the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Virbhadra Singh and the Hon'ble Forest Minister Shri Thakur Singh Bharmauri and the other dignitaries. He highlighted the efforts made by the Wild Life Wing to conserve wildlife and encouraged the members to offer their valuable suggestions and advice to further strengthen wildlife conservation in the State.

Shri Jasjit Singh Walia IFS, Pr.CCF (WL) & CWLW (HP) as Member Secretary of the SBWL, then presented the review of the last meeting held on 5th December, 2013 and also presented the new agenda before the SBWL.

ACTION TAKEN REPORT (ATR): ATR of the previous meeting held on December 05, 2013—Review thereof:-

AGENDA I: Regarding C/o Kashang HEP (243 MW) by HPPCL: The case was put up to the National Board for Wild Life, New Delhi and stands approved under Item no. 8 on 12-13/08/2014. The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) imposed condition/stipulation that 2% of the project cost would need to be deposited by the project proponent for undertaking measures for Conservation and Management of Wild Life of the Protected Areas. Project proponent has already been informed to comply with required stipulation.

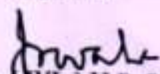
AGENDA II: Expansion of Clinker Unit at Rauri and Kashlog Limestone Mines of M/s Ambuja Cements: The case was put up to the National Board for Wild Life, New Delhi and stands approved under Item no. 3 & 4 on 12-13/08/2014. Stipulation incorporated was— The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) imposes condition that 2% of the project cost would need to be deposited by the project proponent for undertaking measures for Conservation and Management of Wild Life of the Protected Areas. Project proponent has already been informed to comply with required stipulation.

AGENDA III: Proposal of Jaypee Cements regarding augmentation of clinker capacity etc.: The case was put up to the National Board for Wild Life, New Delhi and stands approved under Item no. 7 on 12-13/08/2014. Stipulation incorporated was— The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) imposes condition that 2% of the project cost would need to be deposited by the project proponent for undertaking measures for Conservation and Management of Wild Life of the Protected Areas. Project proponent has already been informed to comply with required stipulation.

AGENDA IV: M/s Sangrah and Bhootmarhi Lime-stone mines of Mr. V.K. Walia: The case was put up to the National Board for Wild Life, New Delhi and stands approved under Item no. 1 & 2 on 12-13/08/2014. Stipulation incorporated was— The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) imposes condition that 2% of the project cost would need to be deposited by the project proponent for undertaking measures for Conservation and Management of Wild Life of the Protected Areas. Project proponent has already been informed to comply with required stipulation.

AGENDA V (A): 18 Points/Issues raised by Mr Ashish Dasgupta, Member, State Board for Wild Life: A meeting of Sub-Committee was held on 14/08/2014 and also on 31-03-2015. Suggestions to make good staff shortage, faster mobility, improved equipment, communication are being attended to. The proposals are under active consideration.

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AGENDA V (B): Agenda raised by the DGP Police, with regard to resolution of 114 cases registered, pertaining to Wildlife; out of which 45 continued remaining—Joint/collaborative action is planned between the Police and the Forest Department.

AGENDA VI: Achievement of the Wildlife Wing with respect to various Conservation Projects and Programs, placed before the Board:-

- a. **Breeding program of Western Tragopan at Sarahan Bushahr:** The Board Members lauded the efforts of the Wild Life Wing for the successful breeding of the Western Horned Tragopan at Sarahan Bushahr (the project was started during 2003-04 with Rs. 4.93 crores funds from CZA GOI, the first captive breeding came about in 2005); the current population of the pheasants stands at : Males 13: Females 14; Total: 27; Year 2014: 6 chicks have been hatched and 5 have survived; Year 2015: Normal egg laying has started; Construction of New Aviary is on with the design approved by CZA— Estimates approved and Tendering process has been initiated. Tender published in Newspapers already and scheduled date for opening: 16th Mar, 2015. It was also discussed that the project of assisted reproduction for the Western Horned Tragopan is not desirable at the present moment.
- b. **Breeding Program of Himalayan Monal at Manali:** The CZA recommended undertaking the breeding of the Himalayan Monal, in the new Pheasantry, in 2008-09 and funds were made available through GOI, for Rs. 2.05 crores. The current population of the pheasants stands at—Males 12: Females 3; Total: 15. All the individuals available were rescued from the Wild; all individuals are being marked by leg rings for identification and paired for breeding; new aviary built at Manali is being prepared to house these captive individuals, which are currently kept in small, old enclosures not too suitable for breeding. Captive breeding with atleast two pairs is on. The Board Members appreciated the efforts of the Wild Life Wing with respect to the project.
- c. **Snow Leopard Project:** The total project was prepared for Rs. 5.15 Crores and is being implemented in the State for Snow Leopard Conservation, funded by the Government of India. Nature Conservation Foundation at Mysore and the Wild Life Institute, Dehradun are collaborating in the project. The project commenced during 2010-11 and is a 4 year project. Rs. 1.82 crores stand released by the GOI till 2014-15. Radio collaring of Snow Leopards is planned, during this year 2015. The Chairman and Members appreciated these efforts.
- d. **Cheer Pheasant Breeding at Chail (Kharlun):** The program was started during 2007-08, with CZA GOI funding support for Rs. 3.26 crores. Successful captive breeding of this species is going on, with the current population: Males 29: Females 30; Total: 59; In the year 2014, 19 chicks were hatched and 10 chicks survived; Species Recovery and Conservation Breeding Program has been approved by CZA and Rs 15.40 Lakhs have been released. Release strategy has been developed and birds would first be radio-tagged for post-release monitoring, possibly during 2016. The Board Members noted the efforts of the Wild Life Wing with respect to the project. Shri Vijay Bhushan, Member SBWL, reiterated early release of Cheer Pheasant from captivity to wild and early working of the required protocol.
- e. **Great Himalayan National Park as World Heritage Site:** Great Himalayan National Park stands already included as World Heritage Site by UNESCO, during June 2014. This was appreciated and welcomed by the members.
- f. **Vulture Recovery Program:** Three main vultures on the threshold of extinction—White backed, Slender billed and Long billed—already declared critically endangered species, by

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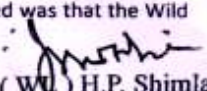
IUCN, for whom the project is being addressed—identification of nesting sites, opening of feeding stations at Nagrota Surian and Guglada, near Jwali. In-situ conservation program for Vultures was started during 2003-04. Upto 2012-13, more than 800 vulture chicks having been fledged. Diclofenac medicine, in veterinary use was found to be badly affecting the vultures; it stands banned, since 2006. Undercover surveys are also done by the staff to ensure the ban. Prof. Chander Kumar, Ex. Minister and MP and Member SBWL mentioned that Diclofenac the medicine is still doing the rounds, Director (Animal Husbandry) said that the medicine stood banned and was not in use—the varying stances calls for a fresh survey by the Animal Husbandry Department. Dr. M. K. Ranjit Singh said that the Diclofenac in human use can also be put to veterinary use. There is a need to remain vigilant about this drug which is proven deadly for vultures.

- g. **Monkey Menace Issue:** Sterilization program is effectively on—around 96,126 monkeys (till 19/04/2015) stand sterilized in seven Monkeys Sterilization Centres across the State. The eighth monkey sterilization centre is to be inaugurated soon, for use in Ishpur/Una. The MOEF & CC stands requested to allow EXPORT of monkeys and to declare the monkeys as VERMIN. Forest Divisions stand identified where monkey menace is high to enable local specific vermin declaration by MOEF & CC rather than a generalized declaration, covering the State. Two Van Vatikas are proposed to come up at Chintpurni (through CF Hamirpur) and Paonta Sahib (through CF Nahan); additionally implementation of Habitat Enrichment plan is being started in four forest divisions timely—these are Shimla, nahan, Bilaspur and Hurlpur where nurseries have already been set-up; the area identified would be suitably fenced and planted with herbs, shrubs and trees suitable for monkey rehabilitation. One monkey sterilization mobile unit and one ambulance are also on the anvil. Monkey Census is planned during June 2015, involving the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Wild Life Institute, Dehradun and other primate resource persons. The Hon'ble Chief Minister said that the sterilization program would show results soon in the near future and declaration of monkeys as vermin in infested local areas would help.
- h. **Capacity Build-up in Bird Ringing at Sairopa, GHNP:** The bird ringing activity (enables identification, study of movement, routes, habitats, growth, changes) was done for the first time, at Sai Ropa, associating experts, Dr Francis Buner and Mr Tim Walker—it was carried forward at Nagrota Surian, Pong Dam, during January 2015, followed by a workshop at Shimla. A permanent bird ringing station is envisaged at Pong Dam to study bird migration (1.36 lakhs migratory birds stand identified at Pong Dam).
- i. **Himalayan Brown Bear and Peafowl Ventures:** Feasibility of this project is being worked out for Upper Bharmour Area. A proposal in this regard was sent to CZA for endorsement, as also another program for Conservation Breeding of Peafowl at Indora; CZA-informed that the State can go-ahead with the project for Conservation Breeding of Brown Bear with its own financial support and man power—the project is on and the site is being explored. A project for walk in Aviary at Nurpur was prepared for mixed exhibit of birds, including Peafowl on which CZA has remarked that this should be proposed at existing Dhauladhar Nature Park Gopalpur and be made as part of the Master Plan.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA:

Additional Agenda 1: *M/s Rupin Hydro Electric Project (45 MW) in Tehsil Dodra, District Shimla* was put up to the NBWL and was approved on 21st Jan. 2015; stipulation incorporated was that the Wild

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Life Conservation Plan proposal was to be readied by Uttarakhand and H.P to be overseen by Wild Life Institute and shall be funded by project proponent and that it be ensured that no contamination of water comes about.

Additional Agenda 2: *Mining proposal of Sh. Mahinder Singh & Company at Paonta Sahib*— was put up to the NBWL and was approved on 21st Jan. 2015 with stipulation that there must not be any contamination of water and subject to realization of 2% of project cost for wild life management and conservation.

Additional Agenda 3: *Three proposals of Ambuja Cements were cleared on 12/08/2014*, subject to realization of 2% of project cost for WL management and conservation works. These were:-

- i) *Proposal for existing clinker plant at Rauri*
- ii) *Expansion of existing cement plant at Suli*
- iii) *Expansion of Kashlog Limesone Mining project*

Project proponent has already been informed to comply with the required stipulation.

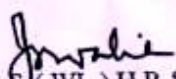
Additional Agenda: HON'BLE Chief Minister's Concerns:-

- a) **A Butterfly park is now planned to come up at Simbalwara (area is rich in biodiversity) instead of at Summerhill, Shimla**— This was endorsed by Hon'ble CM HP. Prof. Chander Kumar, Member SBWL, desired that another Butterfly Park be created near Nurpur.
- b) **Accredited Hunter List: Names of Shri Kirnesh Jung, Hon'ble MLA Paonta Sahib and Shri Ajay Bahadur, Ex. MLA Nahan stand included as accredited hunters.**
- c) **Drastic fall of House sparrow population:** A project has now been initiated by the Wildlife Wing, during February, 2015, in Shimla, to investigate the House Sparrow decline, in order to formulate conservation strategies for the long term survival of the species. Each sparrow in an identified colony is to be ringed with a metal ring and an additional color ring. The adult survival would be monitored by using mark-recapture data which shall help in understanding the population trends, hatching and fledging success.

NEW AGENDA ITEMS:-

AGENDA 1: Proposal to Construct Attargu-Sagnam-Mudh-Bhawa-Wangtoo Road to provide connectivity in border areas in Spiti and management of Rupi Bhawa WLS & Pin Valley National Park : Dr. M.K. Ranjit Singh, and Mr. Vijay Bhushan, SBWL members, wanted the proposal in much more details (impact assessment and debris removal and dumping), along with the map of road, with terrain it passes through. The road already stands approved by the State Government, during 2008, and only awaited go-ahead endorsement from the State Wild Life Board to be put up to the National Wild Life Board, New Delhi. The alignment of the road was decided after a detailed field survey and involves felling of least number of trees (381 of different classes) and would mean a saving of nearly 80 kms of distance, from origin (Attargu) to destination (Wangtoo). Now, the case is being put on hold, until the State Board for Wild Life members are satisfied with further details of the road case.

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AGENDA II: Proposal received from the Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Shimla, regarding the Construction of Ambulance Road from Dhalli Chowk to Durga Colony (Ward no. 18-Shimla)—part of which falls within Shimla Water Catchment WLS: This road only involves constructing of 100 meters and widening of 400 meters road with no tree felling involved. It involves only 250 sq. meters of Shimla Water Catchment Wild Life Sanctuary. The proposal was approved by the SWLB to be put up to the NWLB for approval.

AGENDA III: proposal of M/S Lafarge India Private Limited to establish 3 MTPA Cement Plants and 2 MTPA Clinker production units in Village DPF Ghanger, Tehsil Karsog, District Mandi, based on Alsindi Limestone Deposits: The project area falls within 10 kms radius of the Majathal WLS with no diversion of the Sanctuary proposed. Forest Clearance process is on though the Environmental Clearance of July 2014 stands revalidated by MOEF & CC. The members voiced concern regarding study by IIRD Shimla (which is not on accredited panel to impart impact assessment particularly from wild life point of view) got done by the Company itself; however they were assured that any such study has no bearing on the approval of the case which is studied by the Wild Life wing in its total entirety. Dr. M. K. Ranjit Singh, Member SBWL stressed the need to include hydrological and edaphic factors while conducting environmental impact assessment studies. He also raised concern about the adverse impact of cement plants on human health for study. The said proposal was put on hold to be endorsed by the SBWL for forwarding to NBWL for approval.

AGENDA IV: Proposal submitted by the Director General of Police, regarding setting up of a Wild Life Crime Control Unit in Himachal Pradesh: The proposal/case for setting up of the Wild Life Crime Control Bureau with headquarters at Shimla and sub-stations at Kinnaur, Kulu, Dharamshala and Chamba—the other sensitive zones, stands submitted to ACS(Forests) to the Government of Himachal Pradesh for administrative approval and working out logistics(mobility, communication, infrastructure, staffing etc.) in tandem with Forest and Police authorities. Members of the State Board for Wild Life like Mr. Ashish Dasgupta, non-governmental members requested that they (atleast 2 members) must also be associated in the deliberations to firm up the proposal.

AGENDA V: Proposals put forth by Mr. Vijay Bhushan, Member of the SBWL:

- (a) With respect to GHNP, the member was informed that 45 trap cameras were set up in GHNP(sensitive, vulnerable locations in ranges JiwaNal, Sainj and Tirthan) and excellent shots of animals were caught and available for viewing, including that of a Western Horned Tragopan. Smart phones would be procured to improve communication. To check poaching and any other illegal activity raiding teams stand constituted in the GHNP. Rolla barrier was being strengthened through additional staff to check any nefarious activity in the Park.
- (b) With respect to Pong Dam, a Society was being registered to regulate activities and develop the said areas, opening avenues of employment for the locals. Tourism works are nearing completion funded by ADB and executed by the Tourism Department. Hon'ble Former Minister and MP, Mr. Chandra Kumar, Member SBWL drew the attention of the Board to a Governmental Committee, under Chairmanship of Forest Minister, constituted somewhere in the late 90s and requested that its meeting be immediately held. With the coming up of an Interpretation centre and the repair of damaged boats, tourism was on the up-swing for the discerning eco-tourists. A bird ringing activity at Nagrota Surian and the census of

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migratory birds (1.36 lakhs at Pong) has brought Pong Dam Sanctuary, a Ramsar Site, into prominence.

- (c) With respect to Sarahan Pheasantry and breeding of the Western Horned Tragopan Pheasant the member was informed that the success story of breeding was being carried forward. No release plans for the pheasant is stipulated as of now, since the captive population size is small.
- (d) With respect to Cheer Pheasant breeding at Chail, the successful breeding was highlighted and it was informed that the protocol for release into the natural habitat was also being worked out and slated for 2016.

AGENDA VIa: Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP): World Heritage Site: - Review of Intention Notification No. FFE-B-F(6) 11/2005, dated 28.07.2010, regarding merger of Sainj and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuaries in GHNP, in view of decision of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO, 38th Session at Doha (Qatar) on 23.06.2014 and amalgamation of Khirganga National Park in GHNP: The Board was informed/appraised that Sainj and Tirthan Sanctuaries would be retained as such and not be amalgamated with the Great Himalayan National Park—to allow local communities to continue sustainable activities in the area. SBWL members agreed and recommended the proposal to NBWL.

✓ **AGENDA VIb: Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP); a World Heritage Site: - Review of Intention Notification No. FFE-B-F(6) 11/2005, dated 28.07.2010, regarding merger of Sainj and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuaries in GHNP, in view of decision of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO, 38th Session at Doha (Qatar) on 23.06.2014, and amalgamation of Khirganga National Park in GHNP:** The Board was informed/appraised that Khir Ganga National Park was being amalgamated with the Great Himalayan National Park—an integrated single unit for effective management, administrative and executive control. SBWL members agreed and recommended the proposal to NBWL.

AGENDA VII: Change of proposed Status of Inderkila from National Park to Wildlife Sanctuary: The Board was apprised that Inder Kila was intended to be constituted as a National Park, during 2010, without appreciating the concern for the local communities and nomadic graziers—there is strong resistance and dissent to the idea, locally. Accordingly, it was proposed to review the intention notification for National Park and if found having substance, the case was to be initiated to make Inderkila a Sanctuary, instead. The Member of the State Wild Life Board member Dr. M. K. Ranjit Singh however voiced that the fauna found in the area was unique and the case to make Inderkila a National Park was strong. He was told that the review would establish the status of the tract—at present the case of it being a hot bio-diversity spot was in conflict with human issues voiced by the local populace. Dr. M. K. Ranjit Singh further said that a fresh exercise can be done by excluding some of the extended areas having rights and adding other areas without converting its status from National park to Wild Life Sanctuary. The SBWL suggested a relook at the proposal.

AGENDA VIII: Sh Ashish Dasgupta, Member, State Board for Wildlife (HP), voiced concern regarding man-animal conflict issues of big cats (leopard & tigers) and blatant killing/poaching in Anni and Arki areas: The Board expressed concern with cases of blatant killing/poaching of big cats/leopards and felt there was now a need to empanel Honorary Wild Life Wardens to check this menace. The exercise was on.

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ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS:

Additional Agenda Item No. I: Issue raised by Shri Vijay Bhushan, Member State Wild Life Board, in respect of Simbalbara National Park regarding having a full time Director: The Board appreciated the proposal of Shri Vijay Bhushan, Member State Board for Wild Life for giving project Status to Simbalwara National Park, under a Director/Deputy Conservator of Forests officer (located at Nahan or Paonta Sahib) to eradicate weeds, check poaching and systematic management and monitoring of the Park. Shri Ajay Bahadur, Special Invitee also said that this would also facilitate better management of Renuka Zoo and the proposed Butterfly Park at Simbalwara and the MSC at Paonta Sahib could also be supervised more effectively by this officer. The member Secretary informed that a proposal to work out feasibility for declaring the entire landscape encompassing Simbalwara NP, Kalesar NP in Haryana and Rajaji NP in Utterakhand as Tiger Reserve is being prepared, which will address the issues raised by Shri Vijay Bhushan, Member SBWL

Additional Agenda Item No. II: Proposal mooted by Mr. Ashish Dasgupta, Member State Board for Wild Life and endorsed by Prof. (Retd.) Sudhir Mahajan: Declaring eminent persons as permanent 'Special Invitees' and as Honorary Wild life Wardens: The names of 5 persons namely Shri Kirnesh Jung (Hon'ble MLA Paonta Sahib), Shri Ajay Bahadur (Ex-MLA Nahan), Shri Ramesh Chauhan (Already Member SBWL), Retd. Prof. Sudhir Mahajan (Already Special Invitee) and Shri Ashish Dasgupta (Already Member State Wild Life Board) found favor with the Board to be declared Honorary Wild Life Wardens. Shri Kewal Singh Pathania, stands declared as Special Invitee. There are other names suggested to be appointed Honorary Wild Life Wardens which are under active consideration of the Government---Their case would move from the Administrative Department to the higher authority for clearance first.

Additional Agenda Item No. III: Information sought by Prof. Chander Kumar, Ex-Minister, Ex-MP and Member State Board for Wild Life: (a) Funding issue by ADB for tourism activity in and around Pong was discussed in detail. No ADB funds came to the Wild Life Wing. The member was informed that a meeting is proposed involving ACS (Forests) & ACS (Tourism) to sort out infrastructural activity in and around Pong; NDC for land transfer was being pursued with BBMB authorities; Society is being registered to handle developmental works there at Pong and the need to have a Project Director, in the rank of Dy.CF to handle Pong works management; (b) Information regarding leopard man-eater cases and compensation was conveyed; (c) Suggestion regarding dwindling population of Saras cranes and need to institutionalize study for Swan area and its channelization was appreciated and study would be effected; (d) information was conveyed regarding the re-organization of wildlife sanctuaries. Protected Area Network area has increased from 12.86% to 15.07%; 775 villages stand excluded.

Other Items:

- a. Case of reduction of Serow population near Khajjar and Kalatop was raised by Prof. (Retd.) by Shri Sudhir Mahajan in Chamba---this would be studied
- b. Alpine pastures---rehabilitation work desired by Mr. Ajay Bahadur---proposal would be mooted
- c. Mr. Chander Kumar, Member was severely critical of the log hut construction by the Tourism Department at Nagrota Surian and wanted the choice of site to be re-examined.

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- d. Mr. Vijay Bhushan, Member expressed concern regarding falling population of the Sarus Crane at Pong Dam and wanted this aspect studied. He was also critical of Nepali labor poaching activity in the GHNP. The CWLW promised to look into the aspects pointed out.
- e. The CWLW & Member Secretary of the SBWL informed that DNA profiling work is being taken up with the Wild Life Institute for leopards and brown bear.
- f. Felling of Rhododendrons for fuel-wood for road making in Chamba was raised by Mr. Ajay Bahadur, Special invitee as also FRH repair and water shortage (need for a bore well) at Simbalwara National Park. Both these issues would be examined. Mr. Ajay Bahadur, further added that plantations of exotic species like Eucalyptus, which were raised in the past, outside Simbalwara National Park and in the Deer Park of Renuka Ji Zoo must be discouraged.
- g. The pair of Lions to be brought in from Gujarat would go to Gopalpur Zoo while the pair of tigers from Karnataka would be housed at Renuka Zoo (after the enclosure design for tigers is approved by CZA, constructed and becomes operative)—as declared by the Hon'ble Forest Minister.
- h. Dr. Suresh of the Wild Life Institute wanted HP Wild Life wing to work on artificial breeding of Western Horned Tragopan—this did not find favour with the Board, especially Dr. M. K. Ranjit Singh, Member SBWL who commended the work of natural breeding centre Sarahan and wanted the said work to be augmented.
- i. Shri M.K. Ranjit Singh, Member State Board for Wild Life urged the Wildlife Wing to carry out population estimation of the Snow Leopard, Ibex, Serow, Western Horned Tragopan and monkey to enable a fair idea of our resource base, carrying capacity and planning of management strategies accordingly. He emphasised that there should be more focus on in-situ conservation rather than on ex-situ conservation.
- j. There were many questions raised and information sought on wild life and programs, sought by Shri Kewal Singh Pathania, Vice Chairman HPSFDC Ltd. which stood answered, incorporating added annexure, in the Agenda of the Meeting circulated.
- k. The CWLW informed that landscaping work was planned at Manali for the Van Vihar and the matter stood taken up with Chief Architect of PWD for needful. Further landscaping would also be done in the Chail Pheasantry and the Renuka Zoo.
- l. The CWLW promised a Leopard Sensitization workshop at Shimla, being organized (10th June 2015 slated)—resource persons identified—Mr. Steve Winter of National Geographic fame is being invited.
- m. The CWLW also informed the Board that a Snake park is proposed at Gopalpur, Interpretation centres are to come up at Bharmaur, Sarahan and Nagrota Surian and Improved logistics are being made available for the discerning tourists—FRH repair of Catchment Area, Kufri and Chail; Modern equipment procurement is on—light weight cages, tranquilizer guns, wireless sets, ultra-sound machines. Matter to mobilize rescue teams to handle man-animal conflict exigency and regular training of staff to operate tranquilizer guns was also being worked in.
- n. The case of a Directorate of Wild Life found favour with the Board Members. Mr. M.K. Ranjit Singh, Member voiced support and stressed that only wild life trained personnel must be posted in Wild Life Wing. Mr. Vijay Bhushan, Member SBWL, said that the Wild Life Directorate could be clubbed with the Fisheries and the Environment. Mr. V. C. Pharka IAS

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said that the proposal should be seen with respect to cadre management rules of the Service. Hon'ble CM said the proposal would be examined.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks, delivered by Shri Sat Pal, DFO (Hqrs.) to the Chair, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Virbhadra Singh and the Hon'ble Forest Minister Shri Thakur Singh Bharmauri and all the distinguished members, the special invitees and the supporting officers and staff.

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Community Based Ecotourism

Like most mountain regions, the Great Himalayan National Park faces the problem of being situated relatively remote and afar from the main markets for tourism, which are situated in urban agglomeration regions. The major challenge thus lies in creating links between predominantly urban consumers and predominantly rural remote mountain regions, provided that a sustainable development of mountain environments and their population is considered to be a desirable goal.

The Ecozone is an area adjacent to the Park, which contains villages that have historically had some economic dependence on the resources of the land incorporated into the Park. The formal designation of the Park boundaries and the resulting loss of the resources have economically impacted these villages.

In recognition of this adverse economic impact, various programmes have, and are being, developed by the state government of Himachal Pradesh, NGOs (non-government organizations), and the villagers themselves to create alternative sources of economic well-being. Ecotourism, one such program, offers rewards to both the visitor and the villagers and helps protect GHNP.

Key Elements of Community Based Ecotourism

- reflects modern mindset of conservation
- sensible tourism which could be one of the most effective conservation tools to help protect the wilderness of Himachal Pradesh
- strictly controlled tourism in specially demarcated tourism zones of forests/Protected Areas
- an educational tool for conservation
- encourages caring our own heritage
- need co-ordination in between the Forest Deptt. and Tourism Deptt. Of the state
- differentiates a nature lover from pleasure seekers
- sustainable tourism drive which can give a sense of achievement to the local communities, forest officials and ecotourist guides
- depends upon proper training and orientation programme for its key personnel
- emphasises that the Himalayan fauna and flora should not be subjected to stress and disturbances as this would seriously affect their behaviour and breeding ecology
- demands support from the general public, particularly local residents
- favours process-approach in place of blue-print approach: series of consultations and debates on ecotourism can be starting point; includes actual communities in whose midst such tourism will operate, wildlifers, and policy makers
- helps the tourist to allow the city to seep out of his/her system, while the wilderness seeps in
- abhors a situation where commerce replaces education and conservation
- while areas with negative impacts of tourism don't offer much to a discerning tourist who stops frequenting ruined destinations long before they are ruined, ecotourism or 'green tourism' or 'nature tourism' is facilitated by mutual cooperation/persuasion and not by command.

'Community Based Eco-tourism' Development Programme

The 'community based eco-tourism' (CBET) development programme in the GHNP ecozone is proposed with a long-term goal of conserving the rich cultural and ecological heritage of the Park, so that various benefits from this conservation endeavour, including the benefits by way of tourism, could continue to accrue to generations to follow.

- Promotion of community based ecotourism involving various categories of ecotourists such as nature lovers, students, teachers, others in the buffer zone of the GHNP.
- Development of infrastructure for sustainable community based ecotourism with emphasis on socio-economic development of the most-weaker sections of the community.
- Women's empowerment through Women's Saving and Credit Groups (WSCGs), and ecotourism related income generation activities.
- Networking for federating the community based ecotourism for securing collective economic and social gains.

Target Group/Tourist Profile

Ecotourism or CBET is meant for ecotourist, who are increasing in numbers. The following tourist profile, both national and international will be addressed through ecotourism programme:

- Student Groups from Educational Institutions.
- Groups from various professional organisations/ business concerns.
- Responsible tourists in family groups.
- Keen individuals/groups looking for trekking, adventure and exploring something new.

They include the following:

- Backpackers:** they rely mostly on local availability of food, shelter and other services, such as school children, NCC cadets, trekkers from Youth Hostel of India, some tight-budget foreigners
- Do-it-yourself Trekkers:** they come prepared with own food, tents, etc. A number of foreigners are in this category
- Pre-planned Trekkers:** their trip is pre-planned, organized and executed by a trekking agency.

Community Based Ecotourism (CBET)



CBET is part of livelihoods for the male members of the WSCGs in GHNP ecozone.



Briquettes & Basket Making Using Pine Needles



Catering to the guests is an integral part of Community Based Ecotourism at GHNP.



The local cuisine served in traditional style is very popular part of CBET

A Women Saving and Credit Group (WSCG) provides an opportunity for members to engage with each other, provide mentorship, share opportunities and advice.



Members of a WSCG in a field meeting in a medicinal plants nursery in Sainj Valley of GHNP.



Briquettes & Basket Making Using Pine Needles



Vermicomposting is one alternative source of livelihood by the members of WSCGs in GHNP ecozone.



Members of WSCGs with their collection of medicinal plants from GHNP ecozone.



Cultivation of medicinal plant with WSCG in ecozone



Members of WSCGs help each other in organising events to celebrate their achievements which in turn result in the Park's biodiversity conservation.

Map 1

