



State Wetland Authority Kerala (SWAK)

4th Floor, KSRTC Bus Terminal Complex,
Thampanoor, Thiruvananthapuram-695001

Ph: +91471-2326264(Off); (Dir, Env't & Climate Change)
E-mail: swak.kerala@gmail.com swak.envt@kerala.gov.in



PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEMBER SECRETARY

(Present: Mir Mohammed Ali IAS)

No. SWAK/A1/210/2019

Dated. 21.10.2019

Sub:- Constitution of Wetland Mitra for wetlands coming under the limits of State Wetland Authority Kerala

Preamble

Wetlands are the integral part of our life. They are not only source of water but also play a vital role for supporting life of aquatic plants and animals. Wetlands play important role in ground water recharging, biodiversity, climate change and flood control. They are critical habitat for domestic and migratory birds. They fulfill livelihood needs of the nearby residents too. But due to regular anthropogenic activities and misuse they are in the stage of degradation. In order to address these Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India has taken special initiative to restore the wetlands across the country which is under pollution stress, tourism pressure etc.

As part of the transformative ideas within the 100 days programme of the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has enlisted initiating restoration of 100 wetlands for recognizing the critical role of wetlands in ensuring food, water and climate security of our country. Four wetlands namely Vemband-Kol, Sasthamkotta, Ashtamudi and Vellayani have been selected for the restoration programme from the State of Kerala.

Four prolonged approaches has been envisaged to initiate restoration of these wetlands. Firstly, creation of a rapid baseline to determine extent of wetlands and its zone of influence, key biodiversity and ecosystem service values and major threats. Secondly, constituting a citizen network- 'Wetland Mitras' to enable participation of local stakeholders in wetlands conservation and its wise use. Thirdly, a simple yet effective monitoring mechanism to be designed to assess the status of wetlands and effectiveness of management. Finally, a management plan to be drawn to ensure that the

full range of biodiversity and ecosystem service values of wetlands are maintained now and into future.

A nodal officer has to be designated for each of the identified wetlands. The Member secretary, State Wetland Authority Kerala has designated Dr. John C. Mathew (Environment Programme Manager), Er. Kalaiarasan P. (Environmental Engineer), Dr. Jude Emmanuel (Environmental Scientist), Dr. Lakshmi P. M. (Environmental Scientist) from Directorate of Environment & Climate Change as Nodal officers for Vembanad-Kol, Ashtamudi, Sasthamkotta and Vellayani respectively.

The nodal officer for each wetland may constitute a wetland mitra network by following steps:

- a) In liaison with Panchayat or Urban Local Body functionaries, draw up a list of local community members/entities who can be part of the Wetland Mitra network. The efforts ought to be such that it encourages suitable expansion of the network.
- b) Call an open meeting at the district headquarters, district forest office, municipality office or a suitable venue including wetland site itself especially ensuring that the people identified above should participate. A person/ entity attending the said meeting and desirous of being a Wetland Mitra can also be included in the network.
- c) At the meeting, the purpose and objectives of Wetland Mitra network shall be presented to the communities and seek nomination.
- d) While constituting the network ensure a fair representation of all stakeholders; preferably, half of the members are women.
- e) Issue an office order through the office of concerned wetlands manager/ nodal officer on the concept of Wetland Mitra network, initially for a period of three years.
- f) Make the nominated members aware of their role and responsibilities as a part of wetland mitra network.

In view of the reasons explained, the Member Secretary, State Wetland Authority Kerala are pleased to accord sanction for the constitution of Wetland Mitra as per the terms and conditions stated below:

Wetland Mitra

'Wetland Mitra' is conceived as an informal, voluntary and non-statutory network of concerned citizens to foster and promote community engagement in wetlands conservation and management efforts. An effective 'Wetland Mitra' network is poised to enable wetlands managers to gain access to local views, rights, and capacities for supporting wetlands management. The network is also aimed as a communication and outreach vehicle for promoting awareness on the value of wetlands, and management and conservation efforts. By involving themselves within the Wetland Mitra network, citizens gain an opportunity of shaping wetlands management by bringing onboard indigenous and local knowledge, and views of diverse stakeholder groups. As a Wetland Mitra network member, the communities also built their capacity on various dimensions of wetland management. Participation of local communities is thus crucial for success of wetlands conservation and management effort.

Any individual, people, groups, institutions, etc. who can provide their time and services for the protection, management and beautification and rejuvenation of the wetland are Wetland Mitras. For this, it is our objective to identify such people and bring them together with a common purpose of conserving wetlands. For this purpose, the State Wetland Authority Kerala (SWAK), Directorate of Environment and Climate Change (DoECC) is registering the Wetland Mitra through the LSGs. Information can be obtained from the website of DoECC for registration.

Wetland Mitra - Roles & Responsibilities:

Key role and responsibilities of Wetland Mitra are as follows:

- a) Promote awareness on the relevance, values and functions of the wetlands (in general) & local wetlands, in particular, with local communities, students, resident welfare groups and other stakeholders.
- b) Promote/Build a team of Wetland Mitras & Volunteers for specific wetland & engage in its restoration, rejuvenation & management;
- c) Participate in wetlands management planning and implementation processes and bring on board stakeholder views.
- d) Promote consideration of wetlands in local development plans of Grama Panchayats and Municipalities, as the case may be.

- e) Alert authorities on any detrimental activities on wetlands such as encroachment, conversion, dumping of solid waste, discharge of untreated waste, release of non-native species and others.

To undertake the above roles and responsibilities, the members of Wetland Mitra network ought to:

- Make themselves aware of the relevance, values, functions and historical usage of specific wetlands by organizing/ participating in training workshops, outreach events, connecting with experts, self-reading and other mechanisms, as feasible.
- Make themselves aware of the government official responsible for management of specific wetland.
- Understand the wetlands management approach and key activities being undertaken or planned.
- Dedicate a part of their time towards promoting awareness on wetlands values and functions, sensitizing stakeholders/users for 'wise use' of the wetland resources, keeping watch and ward, and participating in wetlands management planning, implementation and monitoring activities.
- Understand that their role as a Wetland Mitra network member is completely on a voluntary basis, and does not confer any special rights or privileges.

Wetland Mitra selection process: -

- The person wishing to become a Wetland Mitra must fill the prescribed registration form (given in the website www.envt.kerala.gov.in).
- Wetland conservation work will be done by forming a group of Wetland Mitra on the basis of their qualification and speciality.
- Information related to the selection of Wetland Mitra will be given to them over email.

Essential Qualifications to be a Wetland Mitra: -

- a) Indian Citizenship.
- b) Work area or house near Wetland.
- c) Minimum age of 12 years at the time of registration.
- d) Should know Malayalam language and English language (desirable).

- e) Wetland Mitra should be politically neutral in wetland conservation activities.
- f) Willing to carry out the work of Wetland Mitra without any self consideration and financial benefit.

General information and directions:-

- Wetland Mitra will be given badges as a symbol of identity.
- Wetland Mitra has to work as per rules and regulation of Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017.
- Wetland Mitra has to follow departmental directions.
- Wetland Mitra need to follow all the directions and order of wetland rule.
- Working ability of Wetland Mitra will be assessed time to time.
- Duration of service of Wetland Mitra will be for 2 years which can be extended or reduced as per work.
- Wetland Mitra before leaving respective group have to give written information before 1 month.
- Department can take action against misconduct of Wetland Mitra and the person will be disqualified being Wetland Mitra.
- This is totally a non-profit voluntary work and the Wetland Mitra will not be given any honorarium.
- Department will not give any associated worker or travel facility, Wetland Mitra have to avail his/her own.
- They have to assure public participation to follow Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017 and if people do not obey the same has to be reported to the SWAK/Environment Department.

Sustaining the Wetland Mitra network

In order to sustain the network, the concerned nodal officers as well as the nodal department are encouraged to:

- a) Conduct workshops to make the wetland mitra aware of the current efforts for conservation and management of the wetland, as well as record their views on the current status of wetland, major threats and management needs.
- b) Build communication and outreach activities within your management plan and ensure involvement of the Wetland Mitra network.

- c) Proactively engage with the network during formulation and implementation of wetlands management plan, and share the results of major studies being taken up by various agencies.
- d) Proactively engage with the network during field visits.
- e) Suitably work out capacity building plan, funding plans through participatory approach so as to sustain restoration, rejuvenation and management of the wetland.

Sd/-

Mir Mohammed Ali IAS
Member secretary

To

1. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India
2. Director, National River Conservation Directorate
3. Principal Secretary, Department of Environment
4. Nodal Officers of the selected wetlands
5. Accountant General (A&E/ Audit), Thiruvananthapuram
6. Office Copy
7. Stock file

Forwarded /By Order

Thilakan Pm

Finance Officer