

Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Assam State Biodiversity Board

The 17th Meeting of the Assam State Biodiversity Board was held on 11th March 2016 at the Conference Hall of the Chief Secretary, Assam, Dispur.

A list of those present in this meeting is at Annexure-A.

At the outset, the Board felicitated its New Chairperson Shri V. K. Pipersenia, IAS, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam. Also felicitated were new Official Members, the Principal Secretary to Department of Environment & Forests Shri Sanjeeva Kumar, IAS and Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department and Fisheries Department, Sri M. C. Jauhari, IAS.

The Chairperson welcomed everyone present in the Meeting and requested for the proceedings to begin.

Before taking up the Agenda –wise discussions, a publication of the Board ‘Common Spiders from select Protected Areas of Upper Assam’ was released by the Chairperson. Thereafter, a documentary in Assamese language prepared by the Board on Biodiversity and its significance was screened. While appreciating the content and quality of the documentary, the Board desired that some more similar documentaries be commissioned by the Board and an English version of the present documentary also be released. It was suggested that orientation meetings of Eco-Development Committees around all of Protected Areas be organized wherein this documentary be shown.

In addition a suggestion was made that a 15-20 minute documentary depicting richness of biodiversity of the State shall be prepared for release during the forthcoming visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, U.K. in April 2016

Agenda-wise discussions were initiated by the Member Secretary and following views / decision were taken:

Agenda-1:

1. The minutes of the 16th Board meeting held on 17th December at Manas National Park were approved.

Agenda-2: The Board was informed that:

1. Under the Biodiversity Research Associate Program, so far 47 Fellowships have been awarded and that at present 22 Associates are working with Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) assisting them in preparation of Peoples’ Biodiversity Registers (PBRs). A fresh batch will be selected for assisting BMCs with their accounts and Annual reports.

2. Following proposals of the Board are still under process with the Government:
 - i. Amendment to the Assam Biodiversity Rules-2010.
 - ii. Organizational structure and draft Service Regulation of the Board: it was suggested that the board shall workout long-term contractual engagements for its present needs of human resource.
 - iii. Notification of threatened taxa: it was suggested that a detailed protocol be adopted by the Board for making recommendation for any taxa as threatened species and similarly an arrangement may be made by the Department of Environment & Forests for taking a view on the recommendations of the Board.
 - iv. The Board requested Principal Secretary- Environment and Forest, to expedite the Amendment of the Assam Biodiversity Rule, 2010.

Agenda-3: The Board was informed that:

- a. 187 BMCs have been constituted at *Anchalik Panchayat* level in the State till date. The remaining 2 BMCs for Demoria AP and Rani AP would be constituted within two weeks' time and the formation of BMCs in the Autonomous Councils was in process. It was suggested that the matter be taken up actively and if required meetings of the concerned authorities with the Chairperson be convened at the earliest.
- b. Six PBRs have been completed and vetted by the Technical Support Group of the concerned district; 18 Draft PBRs are ready and work is continuing at 99 BMCs.
- c. The Projects undertaken by the board were in progress and their current status is as follows:
 - i. *Inventory and Documentation of Insect Fauna of Assam*: 4th Quarterly Progress Report has been received and the Final Report would be ready for publication in about a year.
 - ii. *Documentation of Wild Edible bio-resources of Central Assam*: The Project has been completed and the final report would be published in a couple of months.
 - iii. *Study on Fish Diversity of Brahmaputra River*: 4th Quarterly Progress Report has been received and the Final Report would be ready for publication in about a year.
- d. The consultancy work assigned by the Power Grid Corporation of India for Assessment study of proposed 132 KV S/C West Phileng- Marpara Transmission Line under the scope of "North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP)" in Mizoram, had been completed and the Draft Final report submitted.
- e. English version of Documentary on Biodiversity of Assam shall be released within a month's time.

- f. The Grant received by the board from NBA was Rs. 6.0 lakh. The release of Grant-in-Aid of Rs 50.0 lakh for 2015-16 by State Court was under active consideration with the Finance Department.
- g. Accounts of the Board for the financial years 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 have been audited by the AG Assam. The Chairperson desired accounts for the FY 2015-16 be completed and placed before the Board in the month of May 2016 and thereafter be placed to the AG for audit. Assessment may be made about the requirement of funds for opening 3 months & balance be put in Fixed Deposit.

It was also suggested that the Board shall shift its account to any scheduled Bank that offers better interest rates for a Savings Account and some funds that are not likely to be spent within coming 3 months shall be put into term deposits.

- h. The Board participated in two events recently, namely the Vibrant North East held on 19th & 20th February 2016, at Khanapara, Guwahati and National Science Fair, 2016 on 28th & 29th February, 2016, at AEI Ground Chandmari, Guwahati.

Agenda-4 & 5: New Projects/Studies to be taken-up by the Board:

1. Assam Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan: the Terms of Reference have been finalized and works would be assigned to the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
2. Study on Wetland of Assam: Proposal for constitution of an Expert Group was approved with suggestion for inclusion of more eg. Department of Education, HOD of Botany, Zoology Department of Gauhati University, representative of Assam Agriculture University, and representative of Aranyak, TERI Members. The scope of work and methodology was also approved. It was suggested to take a report from NESAC or ASTECH regarding the member of wetlands & then do ground truthing.
3. Study on invasive Alien Species: the proposal was approved. It was suggested that collaborative pilot program with WWF for treatment of select Wetlands of Assam be taken up

Agenda-6: The following matters placed before the Board were ratified:

1. Research Permissions granted by the Board: the following:
 - i. Dr. Farishta Yasmin, Associate Professor, Nowgong College: Access to bio-resource (Cryptogramic Flora) in protected areas of Assam.
 - ii. Ms Dipti Thakuria, PhD Research Scholar, Gauhati University: Access to bio-resources for study 'Diversity of dragonflies' in Rani Garbhanga RF, Assam.
 - iii. Dr. Parimal Roychoudhury, Principal Investigator, College of Veterinary Sciences & AH, CAU, Mizoram: Viral metagenomic profiling of native and migratory aquatic birds of North-Eastern states to unravel influenza virus ecology harbored in them".
2. Expenditure incurred by the Board: (since last Meeting)
 - a. State Grant: Rs. 7,99,171/-
 - b. NBA Grant: Rs. 2,35,644/-
 - c. APFBC Fund: Rs. 3,49,464/-

3. Shifting of Office of the Board from Rehabari to Aranya Bhawan at Panjabari. It was suggested that the new premise be developed immediately for shifting of office. The fixtures at Rehabari, Paryatan Bhawan, Guwahati premise be left with the ATDC.
4. The delegation of financial powers to the Member Secretary was raised from present Rupees one lakh to Rupees five lakh by the Board.

Agenda-6: Other Issues taken up for discussions:

1. Sustainable Development Goal: Role of the Board: the Chairperson suggested that a detailed analysis be done for each of the Goals and Actions of the SDG Vision document of the Assam, for determining the goals where in the Board can be associated & outlining actions that can be initiated by the Board.
2. Regarding Green Roads it was observed that the Board shall organize orientation and sensitization programs for the civil engineers of the government so that impact of construction activities on environment can be minimized.
3. It was suggested that the Biodiversity Board shall coordinate plantation activities in the State for ensuring that such plantations are not against the larger interest of biodiversity conservation and that only quality planting material is used in plantation activities. The Board may establish accreditation facility for seedlings.

Agenda-7: The next Board meeting was scheduled for the first fortnight of May 2016 at the same venue, Dispur, Guwahati.

The meeting ended with thanks from the Chair to all present.

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(V. K. Pipersenia, IAS)
Chairman, ASBB

Some photographs of 17th Board Meeting



**List of Members/ Invitees present in the 17th Meeting of Assam State Biodiversity Board
11th March, 2016**

Sr.	Name	Designation	Contact No.	E-mail Id
Official Members				
1	Shri V. K. Pipersenia, IAS	Chief Secretary-Assam & Chairman, ASBB	0361-2261120	cs-assam@nic.in
2	Shri Sanjeeva Kumar, IAS	Principal Secretary, Environment & Forest Department- Assam	0361-2237236	sanjeeva.k@nic.in
3	Shri M.C. Jauhari, IAS	Principal Secretary, A H, VETY., Dairy & Fishery Department-Assam	8800093861	
4	Shri Simanta Thakuria, IAS	Commissioner & Secretary, Finance Department.	9435149743	
5	Shri A. Hussain, IAS	Commissioner & Secretary, P & RD Dept, Assam	9435103675	ahmedtwothousand@yahoo.com
6	Shri S. K. Das, ACS	Director- Fisheries Dept. Assam	9864324712	assamfishery@gmail.com
7	Smt. S. I. Rashid, IAS	Secretary- Agriculture Department, Assam	9435557697	
8	Shri H. N. Tahbilda, ACS	Assistant Director, Agriculture Department-Assam	9435554367	
9	Shri A. K. Johari, IFS	Member Secretary-ASBB	8876565345	johari60@yahoo.com
Ex- Officio Members				
10	Dr. Anil Kr. Goswami	Member- ASBB	9864021714	akgoswami@gmail.com
11	Dr. P. C. Bhattacharjee	Member- ASBB	9435148702	bhattapc@gmail.com
12	Shri R. C. Goswami, IFS (Retd.)	Member-ASBB	9435044818	rcgoswami37@gmail.com
13	Dr. Sarat Borkataki	Member-ASBB	9435063014	saratdipika@gmail.com
Special Invitees				
14	Shri M. Das Sarkar	Joint Director, Finance Dept. (EA)- Assam	9435348242	
15	Shri D. Mathur, IFS	PCCF & HoFF- Assam	9435525094	pccfassam@gmail.com
16	Shri B. Brahma, IFS	PCCF (Social Forestry), Assam	94350077396	
17	Shri S. S. Rao, IFS	Addl. PCCF (HRD), Assam	9435347483	
18	Shri S. K. Srivastava, IFS	Addl. PCCF (Planning), Assam	9435080510	
19	Dr. Ranjana Gupta, IFS	Addl. PCCF (Wetlands) Assam	8876565344	ranjanagupta2001@yahoo.com
20	Dr. Alka bhargava, IFS	Addl. PCCF (RE & WP), Assam	9435568923	alka_b87@yahoo.com