

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application no. 513/2024

News item titled “10 wetlands in Asola to conserve rainwater” appearing in The Times of India dated 12.03.2024

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DATE: 05.12.2024  
PLACE: NEW DELHI

FILED BY  
  
JYOTI MENDIRATTA  
ADVOCATE

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**REPLY TO THE CAPTIONED MATTER ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 4  
I.E., THE DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FOREST (SOUTH)**

**MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:**

1. That the present application is pending before this Hon'ble Tribunal and now is listed for 06.12.2024.
2. That the present response on behalf of the Respondent no. 4 is being signed, verified and filed by Sh. Vipul Pandey, IFS who is presently posted as Deputy Conservator of Forest (South), Delhi. It is submitted that the undersigned is aware about the present application and the purpose of filing the application in official capacity.
3. That the present response is being filed in compliance of the order dated 27.08.2024 of this Hon'ble Tribunal in the present matter. That this Hon'ble Tribunal vide its order dated 27.08.2024, impleaded the answering respondent as Respondent no. 4 in the present matter and directed the answering Respondent i.e., Deputy Conservator of Forests to file its response to the subject matter of the present application. The relevant portion of the order dated 27.08.2024 reads as follows:

*"... 3. Learned Counsel for respondent no.1-Delhi State Wetland Authority seeks two weeks' time to file response. She has also submitted that DCF, South is the relevant authority. Hence, we implead respondent no.4 as under:*

***DCF (South) Division, South Forest Division near Dr.Karni Singh Shooting Range,***

*Tughlakabad, New Delhi-110044.*

*4. Let notice be issued to respondent no.4 for filing its response atleast one week before the next date of hearing.*

*5. List on 06.12.2024.”*

4. It is submitted that the answering respondent / Respondent no. 4 has dutifully complied with the order of this Hon'ble Tribunal.
5. That it is pertinent to mention here that the depletion of the water table during the summer peak season in the **Asola Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary** is a significant concern, as it leads to the drying up of majority of the water bodies in the area. That considering the aforesaid, the answering respondent, in the year 2023, sought permission from higher authority i.e., APCCF, Department of Forest and Wildlife, GNCTD and developed the no. of water bodies / ponds in southern ridge in the year 2024. Thereafter, the Deputy Conservator of Forest (South) took decisive action for the construction of 10 new water bodies in the areas of Maidan Garhi, Sahoopur, and Satbari. The construction of new water bodies is a strategic response to counter the issue in question, as these bodies will serve as vital reservoirs to:
  - a. **Recharge Groundwater:** By increasing the water retention capacity in these regions, the new water bodies will help recharge the groundwater table and slow its depletion.
  - b. **Improve Water Availability:** These water bodies will provide a more sustainable source of water for local communities, helping alleviate water scarcity.
  - c. **Support Ecosystem Health:** The addition of these water bodies will also help maintain local ecosystems and improve biodiversity by providing habitats for various species.

Further that the creation of these water bodies is a critical step toward improving water management in areas with fast-depleting groundwater resources.

6. That after obtaining the permission from the higher authority, a meeting was called with the other respondents via video conference to discuss the subject issue in detail. Further that on 11.06.2024, a joint visit was also conducted at Asola Wildlife Sanctuary by the respondents wherein it was observed by the respondents that 10 water bodies have been constructed in eco-friendly manner. In addition to planting shrubs and doob grass, stones are being utilized to stabilize the banks. Dredging, bund preparation, and planting tree saplings around the water bodies have all been finished in all ten water bodies. The copies of the photographs of the water bodies are annexed herewith as **Annexure – 1**.
7. That subsequently, the construction of water bodies is divided into two phases and the same are as follows:

**I. Phase 1: Initial Development**

- **Objective:** Establish foundational structures and begin water body construction in high-priority areas.
- **Locations:** Maidan Garhi and Sahoorestpur (areas with the most urgent need due to rapid groundwater depletion).
- **Activities:**
  - Site clearing and excavation for water body formation.
  - Installation of recharge mechanisms (e.g., percolation pits, check dams).
  - Ensuring water bodies have the appropriate inlets/outlets for water flow regulation.
  - Implementation of erosion control measures

**II. Phase 2: Expansion and Completion**


- **Objective:** Complete construction, ensuring all water bodies are fully functional and integrated into the surrounding environment.
- **Locations:** Satbari and additional areas of Maidan Garhi and Sahoorestpur.

➤ **Activities:**

- Finalization of water bodies' structural features (e.g., embankments, desilting arrangements).
- Testing and monitoring of water recharge effectiveness.

8. That it is pertinent to mention here that the 10 water bodies developed by the forest department / DCF (South) are functioning well and in good condition, which is promising for the local ecosystem. These water bodies are strategically located in three areas of the southern ridge, namely Maidan Garhi, Sahoorpur, and Satbari. The creation and maintenance of these water bodies help address the issue of low water levels in the region, providing a much-needed source of water to support both wildlife and surrounding communities. The significance of these water bodies is highlighted by their location in areas where the water table is low, meaning that they help replenish the groundwater, aid in local biodiversity, and contribute to sustainable water resources in the region. Additionally, these water bodies may play an essential role in improving the microclimate and preventing further depletion of the water table.
9. That it is pertinent to mention here that the Hindustan Times on 27.08.2024, published an article on "*10 water bodies at Asola Bhatti to store 80mn litres, recharge groundwater table*" and appreciated the positive work done by the answering respondent. The article mentioned that the construction of the water bodies started in November 2023 and was finished by June 2024. As soon as the monsoon arrived, these water bodies started to fill up, and now all ten of them are full. Because of the area's elevation and the contouring that was done, any rainwater that would have been flowing unchecked as surface run off is now directed into these water bodies. The copy of the aforesaid article is annexed herewith as **Annexure – 2**.

10. That it is humbly submitted that the answering respondent has the highest respect and regard for the orders of this Hon'ble Tribunal. The present response along with annexure(s) is being placed before this Hon'ble Tribunal for its consideration and further directions, if any.

  
**Answering Respondent / Respondent no. 4**  
**Dy. Conservator of Forest (South)**

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**AFFIDAVIT**

I, Vipul Pandey s/o Sh. Gajadhar Pandey aged about 35 currently posted as the Deputy Conservator of Forests (South), Department of Forests & Wildlife, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, the representative of the Defendant, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:

1. That I am the authorized representative of the Respondent no. 4 in the present case and as such I am fully conversant with the facts and circumstances of the case and competent to swear this affidavit.
2. That the contents of the accompanying response have been drafted by my counsel under my instructions and the same has been read over and explained to me and admitted to be correct. The contents of the same may be read as part of this affidavit as the same are not reproduced here for the sake of brevity.

  
DEPONENT

**VERIFICATION**

Verified at New Delhi on this 04 DEC 2024 day of December, 2024, that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct to my knowledge and belief. Nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

**ATTESTED**

NOTARY PUBLIC DELHI

**04 DEC 2024**



  
DEPONENT













{ **ECOLOGICAL PUSH** } TO STORE 80 MILLION LITRES OF WATER

# 10 water bodies created in Asola Bhatti in 9 months to recharge groundwater

**Jasjev Gandhiok**

htrreporters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi's forest and wildlife department has created 10 water bodies at south Delhi's Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary over the past nine months to collectively store around 80 million litres of water in an attempt to recharge the groundwater table, officials aware of the development said.

They said that the water bodies have been created at topographically strategic locations where water naturally accumulates.

"Work began in November (2023) to construct these water bodies and by June, had been completed. These water bodies began to fill up as soon as monsoon arrived and all 10 water bodies are now filled. The elevation of the area, along with the contouring done, means any rainwater that would otherwise go to waste earlier is now diverted to these water bodies," a senior forest official, requesting anonymity, said. In Delhi, most districts are



The water bodies have been created at topographically strategic locations where water naturally accumulates. COURTESY: ONKAR CHAUHAN

either tagged "semi-critical" or "over-exploited" by the Central

Groundwater Board (CGWB). In 2018, CGWB submitted to the Supreme Court that 15% of the groundwater in Delhi was at a depth of more than 40m or lower and parts of south and southwest Delhi were the most impacted, with water being found as deep as

80m below ground level.

The creation of these 10 water bodies has also been shared by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in a report to the National Green Tribunal (NGT). CPCB inspected Asola in June, on NGT orders seeking details of the revival of water bodies in Delhi, including at the sanctuary.

"The source of water of all 10 water bodies is rainwater and no artificial filling or recharge is proposed. No concrete construction has been used," CPCB said in its report dated August 23.

Onkar Chauhan, a forest department official who worked on the creation of water bodies and is also a geographic information system analyst and draughtsman, said a contour survey and geomorphological study of the area was done last summer to assess areas where water would accumulate. "We did a stream order analysis last year, both pre-monsoon and after monsoon. Waterlogging was also assessed in urban areas around the sanctuary to see if water could be diverted from there to these water bodies.. We began work in November and digging was completed by March and now, plantation is being done in the vicinity," Chauhan said. Over time, the official said they also plan to assess the impact of water bodies in terms of groundwater recharge.