

## WORLD WETLANDS DAY CELEBRATION, 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb, 2011 IN PUNJAB

### Summary

World Wetlands Day (WWD) is celebrated on 2<sup>nd</sup> February every year all over the world to mark the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1971. WWD was celebrated for the first time in 1997 and made an encouraging beginning. Each year, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community take advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits by organising lectures and seminars, nature walks, children's art contests, rallies, and community clean-up days, media coverage, etc. This year Ramsar is also celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The theme for WWD, 2011 was 'Wetlands and Forests' especially chosen because 2011 is the UN International Year of Forests. Despite of being biologically diverse, providing freshwater and with many other 'services' including vital roles in carbon storage, they are often under threat from development, from drainage and conversion. Forests are vital to human lives as they ensure good quality freshwater availability. The health of wetlands is linked to the health of forests in the catchments because losing and degrading forests means losing and degrading wetlands. Other wise also forests play a critical role in human lives for water, food, livelihood through bio-resources, recreation, etc.

Punjab State Council for Science & Technology motivated Govt. agencies, educational institutions and NGOs to celebrate the World Wetlands Day all over Punjab. Advertisement was released on the occasion in leading local dailies in English and Pujabi to inculcate awareness among general public. The council also co-organized special awareness programmes to mark the day.

**Council** had organized an awareness workshop at its office on 02.02.2011. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Sh. Gurbaz Singh, Chief Wildlife Warden (CWW), Punjab. The workshop was well attended by approx. 30 participants including NGOs; school children from Gurukul Global School, Manimajra;

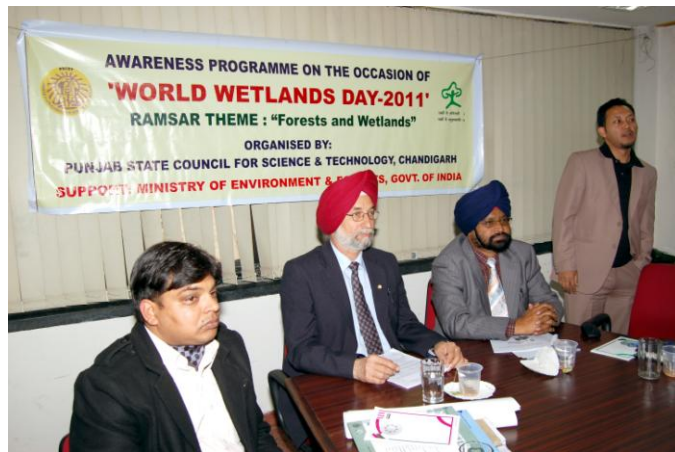
representatives of executing deptts like PRSC, Soil & Water Conservation, Agriculture, Forests & Wildlife Preservation, PPCB and some foreign students who had come to learn about environmental aspects of India. Workshop was



started with welcome remarks of Dr. S.S. Ladhar, Joint Director, PSCST. He reinforced the need for conserving our vital aquatic resources for sustainable future. He stressed on all round efforts to preserve and conserve natural resources.

He cited many examples for better understanding of the subject. Thereafter three presentations were given on different aspects of wetlands including conservation

efforts being done at State level, remote sensing studies of wetland ecology and wildlife & biodiversity by Sh. Vivek Sharma, Project Associate, PSCST; Dr. V.K. Verma, Scientist, PRSC and Sh. B.R. Kumar, Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), deptt of Forests &



Wildlife Preservation, GoP. Sh. Gurbaz Singh, CWW, Punjab gave very thought provoking lecture on water issues, wildlife and biodiversity. He interacted with the participating students and asked them to inculcate habits for protecting biodiversity and conserving natural resources like rivers, wetlands, etc. Mementoes were presented to experts and visiting delegates. An exhibition of handicrafts made out of water hyacinth (aquatic weed) fibre was also put up during the programme. The handicrafts were prepared by an NGO (SDSG

Foundation) based at Derabassi which included floor mats, baskets, photo frames, etc.

Pushpa Gujral Science City, Kapurthala in collaboration with PSCST organized an awareness programme on the occasion of World Wetlands Day, 2011 at



PGSC, Kapurthala.

The experts who spoke on the occasion included Dr. Rajesh Grover, Director, PGSC; Dr. M.S. Johal, Professor of Zoology, PU, Chandigarh and Er. Harpreet Singh, Project Associate, PSCST on various

aspects of wetlands, fish biodiversity, etc. On the occasion approx. 130 students from different schools participated in competitions like painting, etc. Boating activity and release of fish fingerlings was also carried out at manmade water body in the PGSC campus. Prizes were given away to winning students and the event was well covered in the press.



On this Day, various eco-clubs constituted in the schools under NGC Programme organized awareness and action oriented programmes. In all 519 schools organized 620 programmes. A gist of activities taken up on this occasion are as under :

<b>Sr.No.</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>No. of programmes</b>
1.	Awareness lectures, workshops	519
2.	Exhibition/seminar	4
3.	Bird survey	1
4.	Competitions (Model making, Essay writing, Chart making, quiz, poetry recitation, debates, etc).	59
5.	Rallies	2
6.	Cleanliness drives.	2
7.	Skits/Cultural programmes.	4
8.	Plantation	1
9.	Field visit to wetland	28
	<b>Total programmes</b>	<b>620</b>

Detailed reports have been received from 10 districts. Remaining districts have telephonically intimated that they have also organized awareness activities at the occasion. Brief report of activities taken up by schools and selected photographs as well as newspaper clippings is appended.

## DETAILED REPORT

Punjab State Council for Science & Technology had sent letters to all DEOs, DCs (Ropar, Kapurthala and Tarn Taran) and heads of executing departments to celebrate World Wetlands Day. The council also released an advertisement in "The Indian Express" and "Punjabi Tribune" on 02.02.11 to attract attention of general public to protect wetlands. A brief report on the activities of World Wetlands Day, 2011 is as follows:

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