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Panel clears 7 more proposals to begin CWH process

TNN, Nov 20, 2010, 02:58am IST

NAGPUR: The state-level committee on identifying [critical wildlife habitat \(CWH\)](#) on Friday approved seven wildlife sanctuary proposals, to initiate a process of public consultations before formally declaring these areas as CWH.

The committee met at the Van Sabhagriha, Seminary Hills, under the chairmanship of principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) DC Pant. Additional PCCF PJ Thosre, CCF AK Saxena, panel member and expert Kishor Rithe were present. The meeting was attended by more than a dozen wildlife officials.

On Friday, the committee approved seven proposals for CWH; including Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), Borivali, Tungareshwar, Kalsubai, Nandura-Mayureshwar, Naigaon-Mayur, Gautala and Medsi-Ramlingam Ghat. The subcommittees of these wildlife areas have been told to finalise the inviolate areas by February, after consultations with stakeholders.

In the last meeting, to speed up the process of relocating villages, a decision to form a subcommittee was taken for the first time. Respective CCFs and DyCFs are chiefs and member-secretaries respectively of the committees.

This was the committee's fourth meeting in the last three years. The last meeting was held on August 10, 2010, in which proposals for 13 sanctuaries were cleared for second stage of identifying CWH. The protected areas (PAs) included Bor, Tipeswar, Yawal, Aner, Phansad, Tansa, Koyna, Radhanagri, Katepurna, Dhyanganga, Painganga, Chaprala and Bhimashankar.

Pant stressed on the need for quick meetings as CWH deals with creating inviolate spaces for wildlife, including flagship species tiger. Demarcating CWHs will decide how many villages in protected areas are to be relocated and given benefit of resettlement package.

Eight areas, including three tigers reserves - Pench, Tadoba-Andhari and Melghat, and adjoining Wan, Ambabarwa and Narnala sanctuaries, and Gugamal National Park have already been declared as critical tiger habitats (CTHs). There are around 34 villages inside these PAs where people's rights need to be settled.

Committee member Rithe said [Forest Rights Act \(FRA\)](#) has given the opportunity to manage and protect the flagship species tiger, besides fullest protection to other wildlife.

After notifying CTHs two years ago, the state had initiated the process to declare CWHs. A minimum inviolate space of 800-1,000 sq km should be maintained to support a viable population of wildcats in tiger landscapes, based on tiger life history parameters, territory sizes and population viability analysis.

As envisaged in the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional [Forest Dwellers](#) (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, CWHs are to be declared by the Centre after consultation process by expert committees.

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