

10 wetlands in Asola to conserve rainwater

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New Delhi: Officials at Asola Wildlife Sanctuary and south forest division, under the Delhi forest and wildlife department, have planned to conserve water this monsoon through refurbished wetlands.

According to the officials, the department, after a survey and mapping, expects to conserve at least 8 lakh crore litres of water by the end of this monsoon.

A report was prepared by the forest department on how they could achieve this aim. The officials have identified 10 major wetlands in south Delhi's forest areas.

According to the officials, there were already natural depressions and traditional wetlands at Asola and the southern ridge, and they started by recognising such traditional ponds.

"There are already check dams in the sanctuary which were made on a court order in 2020. Our focus has slowly shifted to increasing the water holding capacity of the sanctuary, as having proper water holding ponds in a wildlife sanctuary helps in protection and conservation of flora and fauna. In the long run, it will help us in raising the water table," a senior forest official said.

Many long-forgotten wetlands were also revived and their history was traced with the help of some villagers and retired forest officials.

"Giving the original or historic name to an improvised or refurbished pond also increases a sense of responsibility. We thus decided to name those ponds what they used to be called. In this series, we got names like Gummar Talab, Bhoru Talab, Naya Talab, Pulia Talab etc,"



The move is likely to conserve at least 8 lakh crore litres of water by monsoon-end

the official said.

According to the plan, the department aims at conserving 801.79 lakh litres of water through the wetlands and ponds. The areas these ponds span vary from 3,046 square metres to 4,915 square metres. Their depth is from 2.3-3.3 metres. The water holding capacity varies from 61.68 lakh litres to 98.72 lakh litres.

"Delhi has a variety of water bodies. However, over the years, most of the water bodies have either been encroached upon, or are heavily polluted or have silt, making them less functional. This is true for groundwater recharge," says a report that traces the existing status of the water bodies in the southern forest division using drone survey, GIS, remote sensing and physical surveys.

The report points out that a total of over 142 water bodies in Delhi's relatively small size have either been completely built-up (20%), turned into parks (9%), untraceable (4%), or filled with contaminated water (12%).