

EVENTS

Release of quarterly magazine *Land, Water & People* and Geoheritage website



Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences released The Society of Earth Scientists quarterly magazine **Land, Water & People (First issue)** in his office on 27th January 2022. The release program was held in the presence of Prof. D. M. Banerjee, FNA; Dr. Rasik Ravindra, Chairman, SES; Prof. N. C. Pant, Delhi University and Dr. Akash Sondhi, Associate Editor. The program was organised in hybrid mode where large number of earth scientists across India attended the function. Dr. Ravichandran also released new website Guardians of Geoheritage- www.geoheritage.in, first of its kind on geoheritage of india.

Hulaskhera wetlands to be ecologically restored and developed as community reserve



Team of scholars and experts from the Forest Department at Hulaskhera wetlands, Lucknow

Hulaskhera wetlands at Mohanlalganj will be ecologically restored and developed as a community reserve. A learning visit to prepare the restoration plan of Hulaskhera wetlands, also known as KarelaJheel was organized by the Forest Department of Uttar Pradesh in partnership with the Department of Environmental Science, BBAU, The Society of Earth Scientists (SES) and WaterAid, India. The chief guest of the programme, Mrs. Mamta Sanjeev Dubey, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and chief wildlife warden of Uttar Pradesh in her speech stressed upon the need of conserving the wetland ecosystems at Hulaskhera and developing it as an ecotourism spot. The wetlands are nesting sites of many endangered and rare birds including those coming from outside India. A restoration map prepared by BBAU was also released by her. Later on an interaction session was organized with the local residents, farmers, research scholars and officials from the forest department for developing a restoration plan for this wetland. The event was presided by Mr. Kamlesh Kumar, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, tiger project and Mr. Neeraj Kumar, Chief Conservator of Forest, eco development, Uttar Pradesh. Dr. Ravi Kumar Singh, Divisional Forest Officer, Lucknow said that the wetlands are protected under Wetlands Rules, 2017, and a notified wetland gets legal protection against encroachment, dumping of waste, and discharge

of sewage. The restoration project would be undertaken by the Forest Department with the assistance and inputs from BBAU and local community. Walking trails, boating and other attractions would be also added for birders and nature enthusiasts. Prof. Venkatesh Dutta gave a talk on geological history of the landscape and said that the wetland was once upon a time part of the Sai river system which changed its course leaving the oxbow lake of around 125 acres. The area became an ecological hotspot for birds and aquatic animals. Later on, due to land use changes and farming activities, some parts of this wetland were lost. He emphasized the need of making this wetland as a community reserve and water sanctuary for protection and conservation. Prof. Naveen K Arora of BBAU said that due to rapid urbanization, climate change and intensive agriculture, an imminent threat is looming over these freshwater reserves. Globally around 76 percent of these wetlands are under threat from extinction, and we are losing them every year by a huge margin. February 2nd is celebrated as World Wetlands Day which was convened in the Ramsar city of Iran in 1971. Out of nearly 2400 wetlands of international significance, nearly 49 are in India and we call them Ramsar sites. They are among the major protected sites globally. With ten Ramsar sites in the state, UP holds the record of maximum number of such sites in the country. The event was attended by scholars from BBAU and experts from WaterAid namely Farrukh Rahman, Anjali Tripathy, and Dr. Shishir.