

PRESS RELEASE

STATE APATHY



Don't hear...don't see...don't respond
to
Criminal Neglect of Water Bodies
In
Hyderabad

6th January 2014

SOUL has been initiating a process of drawing attention to the dismal state of water bodies in city of Hyderabad for last few years through engaging with the local administration - informing, suggesting and pressurising them to act to counter the neglect and serious damage that was observed. Detailed cases – painstakingly prepared with supporting documentary evidence were submitted to various government agencies **time and again** – *reminders were sent* and media was used to disseminate news about dismal situation on the ground. Various illegalities condoned by state agencies were also pointed out. However – the utter **apathy, insensitivity and disregard** for retracting the destruction of nearly 3000 water bodies of the city by **those who govern and control** this mismanagement - speaks volumes about the callous indifference of decision makers – both **political and bureaucratic**. Press conference will inform the media to contrast the ground realities of nearly 150 water bodies in the city that are on verge of extinction inspite of constant alerts by SOUL.



Citizens Initiative for saving water bodies in Hyderabad

WALTA ACT of 2002

Under the AP Water, Land & Trees Act, 2002 (WALTA), State WALT Authority, District WALT Authority and Mandal WALT Authority are responsible for water bodies in their jurisdiction. In spite of 11 years since the Act has been passed – no one is clear about -

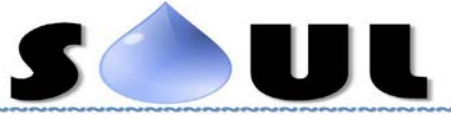
- **Who** is this Authority
- **Who** are the designated officers are as per Walta 2002
- **No effort** has been made to put this information in **public domain**
- No official effort has been made to formally **enlist cooperation of active civil society** implementation of this Act in spite of **specific provisions for the same**.

State presides over local administration while

- Durgam Cheruvu turns green!
- Hussain Sagar turns black!
- Chepala kunta is land-filled!
- Muskin cheruvu is sanctioned for change of land-use!
- Ramanthapur cheruvu is encroached!
- Malls and High-rises are constructed in Manikonda Jagir Cheruvu (Lanco Hills Lake)!
- Carcasses lie around Bum-ruk-n-ud-Dowla – a heritage water body!.
- Botanical lake is encroached for road widening – **inaugurated by Chief Minister with much fanfare!!!**
- Hyderabad Golf Association that is a non-govt. agency reduces Jamali Kunta from 13 to 2 acres in gross violating of Supreme Court directions – **under license from APTDC** –while “mysteriously” contempt case against such culprits does not come up for hearing for years !
- 25 % lakes disappear from government list – and are thereby rendered non-existent!
- Drinking water sources – Osman Sagar & Himayat Sagar - are plagued with rampant encroachments all around Maximum water spread at FTL boundary – **as per governments own information** - while government agencies observe **stoic silence!**
- **Lakes are converted into parks** in name of lake conservation and beautification!!!.....*to mention few of the glaring lake violations with commission and omission of authorities meant to protect the water bodies....*

ABSURDITY GALORE!! **Non-Governance at its Peak !**

Whilehapless lake championsshuttle from one official.... to anotherin the absence of jurisdictional definitions of lakes and lake authorities.... and for procuring mapsdocumentary support to fight encroachments and other blatant violations.... SOUL has been petitioning authorities for a robust reporting system and follow up mechanism on lake



SAVE OUR URBAN LAKES

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Citizens Initiative for saving water bodies in Hyderabad

violations...but our plea has fallen on deaf ears....message of the monkeys has been earnestly absorbed!

We DEMAND:

- 1- Implementation of WALTA 2002, with PUBLIC INFORMATION about 'Designated Officers'.
- 2- Stop fencing existing water spreads without prior demarcation of original FTL boundaries at maximum water spread area.
- 3- Present constitution of State WALT Authority, District WALT Authority & Mandal WALT Authority with their contact details to be put in public domain and well advertised in media..
- 4- 'Designated officer' and their contact details for redressal for the following lake violations:
 - Land use conversion from Water to Land
 - Construction permission inside water
 - Sewerage/Industrial Pollution to lakes
 - Sewage Treatment plants inside water
 - Encroachments of water
 - Fencing – as per irregular FTL boundaries
 - Lake Beautification – Parks /Paths
- 5- Make Violation reporting mechanism robust, and time-bound; place time-bound Action Taken Report in public domain
- 6- Proceed against the erring public servants and lake violators with punitive measures as a deterrent.
- 7- Clarify GO Ms. 125 I &CAD Dept dt 31.8.2000
- 8- Involvement of civil society representatives identified by them in WALTA authorities.

We as a people's collective look forward to have the WALT Act implemented 'immediately for getting the desired impact in the field'.

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