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Citizen activists launch SOUL to save city lakes

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HYDERABAD: Concerned over the increasing pollution and encroachment of water bodies in the city, a citizens initiative called 'Save Our Urban Lakes' (SOUL) was launched here on Saturday by a group of citizen activists.

According to its members, the group plans to form individual lake level committees that will collaborate with the apex body, HMDA, towards preventing lake encroachments, industrial waste being dumped into these water bodies and also look into the garbage disposal in these lakes.

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"Currently, there are more than 90 volunteers working with us. Our biggest threats are encroachments and industrial pollution. We intend to start work at the 21 lakes that HMDA has identified as lakes that need immediate attention and then move on from there," said Umesh Verma, a core-committee member of Soul.

Save Our Urban Lakes has a help-line at 9052144621 and a website - www.soulhyderabad.org where citizens can report in any irregularities noticed at an urban lake.

Speaking at its launch, HMDA commissioner BP Acharya said there was an urgent need to conserve urban lakes for their vital role in combating climate change. A chapter on saving urban lakes will be included in the city's new masterplan, he added.

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