

Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People: Educating and Mobilizing Youths for Reducing Water Pollution and Sedimentation in Lakes of Pokhara Valley, Nepal

Pokhara valley consists of nine sub-tropical lakes, with high diversity of flora and fauna. These lakes are used for irrigation, drinking water, fishery and eco-tourism purpose. But the water quality of these lakes is degrading gradually by the intense human activities and their impacts. These lakes are plagued with multiple problems: sedimentation, eutrophication, pollution, encroachment and fish poisoning. The upstream catchments of these lakes have many degraded areas, which serve as sources of sediments in the water body. *Wetland Friends of Nepal* (WFN) has started healthy wetlands healthy people project since February 2008 to deal with these issues in its capacity.

Wetland Friends of Nepal and Toyota Motor Corporation are partners in this project to maintain healthy wetlands, healthy people and rich biodiversity in lakes of Pokhara Valley.

Objectives

The main objective of this project is to educate and mobilize the local youths for reducing water pollution and sedimentation in the lakes of Pokhara valley. It is expected that water pollution, soil erosion and invasion in the lake will gradually be decreased, and a good network of 'Friends of Wetlands' will be established in the area for long-term conservation activities.

Major Activities

- Local institution formation/identification and capacity building
- Demonstration of soil conservation, composting from Water Hyacinth and bamboo handicrafts promotion
- Conservation and pollution control
- Public awareness and wetland education
- Publication and dissemination
- Online networking



Achievements to Date

- Nine local conservation groups (= Friends of Wetlands (FOW) identified/formed
- One Wetland Friends of Nepal Network (WFN-Network) inception
- Two plants for compost preparation (from Water hyacinth) installed and experiment ongoing
- Two plants for preparation of fish feed for fish from Water hyacinth installed and experiment ongoing
- One nursery in the farmer's field established/maintained and supported
- Cultivation of coffee seedlings in farmers' fields
- Degraded sites around the lakes identified and mapped
- Different land rehabilitation structures constructed in four degraded sites (gully, stream bank, road side cutting and landslide)
- Cultivation of Napier seedlings in farmer's fields
- A report entitled 'Lakes in Pokhara Valley and Their Role in Maintaining Waterbirds' prepared
- Identification of degraded sites around five wetland sites and their mapping
- Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) removed from certain sections of the lakes periodically
- FOW members trained on wetland issues
- Creation of conservation awareness among Friends of Wetlands (FoWs) and local community on wetland conservation

Ongoing Activities

- Experiment on preparing compost and fish feed from invasive Water Hyacinth
- Establishment of solid waste disposal drums around the lakes
- Removal of invasive Water Hyacinth from the affected lakes
- Publication of extension materials and dissemination
- Conservation awareness campaign

For more information, please write to Project Officer - Mr. Mohan Kafle (mohan@wetlandfriends.org).