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GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
FORESTRY, WILDLIFE & FISHERIES
DEPARTMENT

Dated Lahore, the 18.03.2013

NOTIFICATION

No. SOFT(Ext)IV-2/99-V. In exercise of the powers conferred under section 76 of the Forest Act 1927 (XVI of 1927), Governor of the Punjab is pleased to make the following rules:

1. **Short title and commencement.**-(1) These rules may be cited as the Punjab Village Forest Rules 2013.

(2) They shall come into force at once.

2. **Definitions.**-(1) In these rules:

(a) "Act" means the Forest Act 1927 (XVI OF 1927);

(b) "Collector" means the officer incharge of the revenue administration of a district;

(c) "Committee" means a village forest committee;

(d) "Divisional Forest Officer" means the Forest Officer incharge of a forest division;

(e) "forester" means the Forest Officer incharge of a forest block;

(f) "Forest Guard" means the Forest Officer incharge of forest beat;

(g) "Government" means Government of the Punjab;

(h) "nursery" means the place of a village forest over which seedlings are raised on beds or in containers for use in plantations;

(i) "plan" means the Management Plan drawn up for a village forests;

(j) "plantations" means all or any tree planted at the cost of the Government or through community in any village forest and shall include plants and trees naturally grown in such forest;

(k) "Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer" means a Forest Officer incharge of a forest sub-division or forest range;

(l) "tehsildar" means the officer incharge of the Revenue administration of a Tehsil and shall include an Additional or Naib Tehsildar;

(m) "village" means a revenue estate as defined in the Punjab Land Revenue Act 1967(XVII of 1967); and

(n) "village forest" means a village forest notified under section 28(1) of the Act.

(2) A word or expression used but not defined in these rules shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Act.

3. **Committee.**-(1) The management of every village forest shall vest in a Committee called the village forest committee comprising of local community members, representative of the Forest and Revenue Departments of the Government.

(2) The Government or an officer authorized by the Government shall constitute a Committee consisting of twelve members including at least one woman member.

(3) The term of office of the non-official members of the Committee shall be five years.

(4) The committee shall elect one President, one Secretary with majority vote of the total members.

(5) The Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer shall conduct election of the President and Secretary of the Committee and the Divisional Forest Officer shall notify the result of the election.

(6) The President shall chair all the meetings and in his absence the Secretary shall preside a meeting of the Committee.

(7) The Secretary shall maintain the financial and other records of the Committee.

(8) Subject to the quorum of seven members, a Committee shall take a decision with two third majority votes of the members present and voting.

4. Functions of Committee.-(1) The Committee shall suitably demarcate the boundaries of the village forest with the help of the forester and maintain the demarcation marks in good condition.

(2) A person shall not collect, cut, convert or remove wood or other forest produce from the village forest except under the permit issued by the Committee in the form appended to these rules.

(3) The Committee shall return the used up permit books to the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer along with an abstract of forest produce sold on that account.

(4) A member of the village community shall, subject to permit and on payment, be entitled to the forest produce from the village forest for his personal bona fide use or consumption but not for transfer.

(5) The Committee shall be responsible for the proper distribution of forest produce amongst the members of the village community and shall formulate necessary principles keeping in view the following guidelines:

- (i) the minimum requirements of the members of the village community for building and agricultural purposes have to be worked out by the Committee and the distribution be made accordingly on the basis of the available produce, before meeting their demand for other purposes;
- (ii) as regards supply of firewood, the forest produce shall be apportioned among the families keeping in view their real requirement;
- (iii) removal of produce shall be sustainable without causing permanent damage to the forest stand and shall be according to prescriptions of the approved management plan.

(6) The Committee shall regulate grass cutting in the village forest by alternate closing and opening of areas under the approved management plan.

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(7) The Committee may impound the cattle that enter in the village forest contrary to these rules and release on payment of fine fixed for the purpose.

(8) There shall be a management plan prepared for the management of every village forest which shall, amongst other things, contain the following items:

- (i) duration and validity of the management plan;
- (ii) physical and legal description of the area and the rights of the members of the village community;
- (iii) distribution of responsibility in establishment, protection, management, financing and harvesting of the plantations;
- (iv) agricultural practices;
- (v) conditions for protection; and
- (vi) principles for distribution of benefits.

(9) The Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer shall draw the management plan and the Committee shall scrutinize such management plan.

(10) After the scrutiny, the President of the Committee shall forward three copies of the management plan to the Divisional Forest Officer for approval and after according approval, the Divisional Forest Officer shall return one copy of the plan to the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer and another copy to the Committee.

(11) Different management plans may be prepared in the aforesaid manner in respect of lands situated in the village forest in different villages.

(12) The choice of the land for plantation and the species to be planted on such land shall be decided by the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer in accordance with the prescriptions of the management plan and in consultation with the Committee.

(13) For the purpose of implementation of the management plan, the Committee may divide the village forest into different compartments and work each of them on rotation in accordance with the management plan.

(14) Where any such plan in respect of any village forest is implemented, the Committee shall protect and manage the plantation and grazing of land in accordance with such plan.

(15) All nurseries, plantations and grasses raised by the Government in a village forest shall be protected against grazing, fire and pilferage by the Committee.

(16) The Committee shall implement the plans with the funds allocated by the Government or through self help basis by the village community.

(17) The sale proceeds of the forest produce realized by issue of permits from every village forest shall be deposited in the local fund of the village after deducting the expenses, if any, incurred by the Government for protection of such forests where the Committee failed to take up the protection responsibility.

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(18) All sums deposited under sub-rule (17) shall be strictly utilized in the development and management of the village forest as decided by the Committee and shall not be spent otherwise.

(19) Separate accounts for a village forest in respect of deposits made shall be maintained by the Committee which shall furnish half yearly returns to the Divisional Forest Officer indicating therein the quantum of forest produce sold and revenue realized.

(20) Detailed accounts relating to receipt and expenditure of the Committee shall be laid before it in every meeting of the Committee for scrutiny and approval.

(21) The accounts of the Committee shall be subject to audit by the Internal Audit Organization of the Forest Department with the funds deposited by the Committee in local account and a copy of the audit report pertaining to these accounts shall be laid before the Committee every year and also be submitted to the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer.

(22) The rate of payment to be made by the members of the village community for obtaining forest produce from the village forest for their own use shall be the same as prescribed for the respective forest divisions under the schedule of rates.

(23) The Punjab Forest Transit Rules shall not apply in cases of transit of forest produce from a village forest to the residence of a member of the village community and a permit issued shall be deemed to be a transit permit for the purpose of the said rules.

5. Acts prohibited in village forests.— Save as provided under these rules, a person shall not cut, lop or in any way injure, appropriate or remove any tree or any part thereof, which is grown in any village forest or knowingly or willfully permit or abet the cutting, lopping, injuring or appropriating or removing of the tree by any other person.

6. Meeting of the Committee.—(1) The Committee shall meet for deliberations as often as required but not less than once in every quarter of a year.

(2) The committee shall record the proceedings of every meeting in a book called the proceedings book to be maintained for the purpose and the proceedings so recorded shall be signed by the President of the Committee, who shall forward copies thereof to the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer and Tehsildar.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-rule (1), one third of the members of the Committee may request the President in writing to convene its meeting with at least seven days' notice to all members and, if he fails to convene the meeting, the forester may convene the meeting of the Committee.

(4) Where any resolution passed by the Committee is considered to be against the principles of forest conservation and protection by the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer, or is considered to be illegal or against the interest of the members of the village community by the Tehsildar, the Sub-Divisional Forest Officer or Range Officer or the

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Tehsildar may, with reasons, refer the resolution in question to the Committee for reconsideration.

(5) If on reconsideration of the matter, the Committee does not consider it necessary to alter its original resolution, the committee may refer the matter relating to forest conservation and protection to the Divisional Forest Officer, and if relates to any other case, to the Collector.

(6) The resolution passed by the Committee shall take effect after it is confirmed by the Divisional Forest Officer or the Collector.

BY ORDERS OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE PUNJAB

(Dr. Aamer Ahmed)

SECRETARY

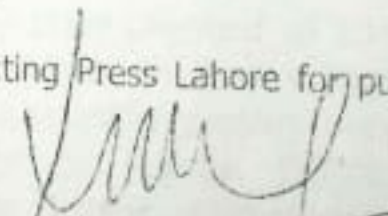
GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB

FW&F DEPARTMENT

NO. & DATE EVEN

A copy is forwarded for information and necessary action to:-

1. Secretary to Governor, Punjab.
2. Secretary to Chief Minister, Punjab.
3. All Administrative Secretaries in Punjab.
4. P.S. to Chief Secretary, Punjab.
5. All Commissioners in Punjab.
6. All District Coordination Officers in Punjab.
7. All Chief Conservators of Forests in Punjab.
8. All Conservators of Forests, in Punjab.
9. All Divisional Forest Officers in Punjab.
10. All District Officers (Forest) in Punjab.
11. The Superintendent, Government Printing Press Lahore for publication in the next issue of Provincial Gazette.


SECTION OFFICER (FOREST)

CC:

- P.S to Secretary FW&F Department.
- P.A. to Additional Secretary, FW&F Department.
- P.A. to DS(A), DS(P) & Director B&A (Forest), FW&F Department

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