



Environmental Crisis Over the Rivers in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand

| 27 Nov 2024

Why in News?

Uttarakhand, known for its pristine rivers and streams, is facing an **unprecedented environmental crisis**.

- Changing weather patterns, [climate change](#), and increasing human activities are pushing the state's 206 perennial rivers and streams toward the brink of drying up.

Key Points

- **Current Situation:**
 - According to a report by the [Spring and Rejuvenation Authority \(SARA\)](#), a staggering **5,428 water sources** in Uttarakhand are currently under threat.
 - Climate change experts at **SARA**, highlighted that **human intervention**, rather than natural causes, is primarily responsible for the **degradation of these water bodies**.
- **Establishment of SARA:**
 - In response to this crisis, the Uttarakhand government established SARA to investigate the state of its **perennial rivers and streams**.
 - This initiative aims to understand the **impacts of climate change** on these vital water sources.
 - SARA recommended all relevant state departments to collaborate and provide data on the condition of these water bodies. The findings have raised serious concerns within the government, prompting the need for urgent interventions.
- **Pilot Projects for River Rejuvenation:**
 - SARA has prepared a pilot project to revive five key rivers:
 - The **Song River** in Dehradun, the **Western Nayar** and **Eastern Nayar** in Pauri, the [Shipra River](#) in Nainital, and the **Gaudi River** in Champawat.
 - The **National Institute of Hydrology (NIH)** and **IIT Roorkee** have been assigned to study these rivers, with plans to extend the project to other rivers based on the findings.
- **Impact of Climate Change:**
 - The rise in temperature due to climate change has been more pronounced in **Tibet** and **the Himalayas** than in the rest of the world over the **past 150 years**.
 - This alarming trend is leading to significant environmental consequences, including the **drying up of water sources**.
 - Data from the **Water Resources Department** reveals that **288 water sources** in the state have less than **50%** of their original water levels remaining, with nearly 50 sources having less than **75%** of their water left.
- **Related Observations & Impact:**
 - Environmentalists and local officials have observed drastic changes in water levels and river courses.
 - In **Bhimtal**, the lake has started to resemble a plain, and similar crises are emerging across other rivers and water sources.
 - Climate scientists warn that climate change is causing mountains to crumble and rivers to either change their courses or wreak havoc during [floods](#).
 - In Haldwani, the water levels of the **Gaula and Kosi rivers** have dropped, creating a crisis

for drinking water and irrigation.



Uttarakhand's Grassland Conservation SOP | Uttarakhand | 27 Nov 2024

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The **forest department of Uttarakhand government** will prepare a **standard operating procedure (SOP)** to conserve grasslands in the [Upper Himalayan Region](#) of the state.

- This initiative aims to address the **increasing frequency of [landslides](#)** and **land subsidence** caused by both **natural and human activities**.

Key Points

- **Grassland Conservation Initiatives:**
 - **Dayara Bugyal**, a sensitive ecological area, has shown positive results from previous ecological restoration efforts. To extend these benefits to other grasslands, the forest department plans to develop a **SOP** for conservation.
 - This **SOP** will focus on reducing biological pressure and preventing further degradation.
 - So far, conservation work has been carried out on approximately **83 hectares of land across 22 grasslands** under the **Bugyal Conservation Scheme**.
- **Snow Leopard Conservation Center:**
 - During their visit, the officials also inspected a [snow leopard conservation center](#) under construction at Lanka near Gangotri.
 - The center is expected to be ready within a year, offering tourists an opportunity to experience the **natural environment** and **observe snow leopards** in their habitat.
 - [Gangotri National Park](#) has emerged as a significant **trans-Himalayan national park** over the past decade.

- The **Wildlife Institute of India** has recorded a substantial presence of **snow leopards** in the park, which was relatively unknown until recently.

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