
Andhra Pradesh is known as a River State, but recurring drought and expanding demands have resulted in a very disturbing water scenario. Inefficient use of surface water in canal commands is resulting in wastage of water, water logging and soil Stalinization of productive and barren lands. Indiscriminate use of ground water on the other hand is causing water stress in non-canal commands.


APWALTA - Authority was constituted vide GO.Ms No. 240, PR & RD Dept., dated 25-06-2002. For effectively implementing the Act, provision was made in GOMs No. 244, PR & RD Dept., dated 26-06-2002 for the constitution of subsidiary Authorities at District and Mandal levels.

For effective implementation of APWALTA-2002, the government, through GOMs No. 47, PR & RD Dept., dated 03-03-2003, took some important decisions and designated the following departments as implementing agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ground Water Department</td>
<td>Registration of Rigs, Sand Mining, Classification of ground water basins etc.,</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA &amp; UD Department</td>
<td>Construction of Rain-water harvesting structures, tree planting, permission for construction of new buildings etc.,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pollution Control Board</td>
<td>Prohibition of water contamination, Regulation on Ceiling on water use in any industry or commercial unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mines and Geology Dept., GW Dept., Revenue Dept.,</td>
<td>Monitoring Sand Mining in Water Bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Department</td>
<td>Granting permission for felling trees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GW, Forest, Pollution Control Board, RD, MA, Mines &amp; Geology, PR (Engg), Agriculture and APTRANSCO.</td>
<td>Officers of these departments at State, District and Mandal levels are designated for implementing and detection of offences regarding violation of the Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Commissioners and Village Assistants</td>
<td>Designated for registration of all existing wells and water bodies in the Municipalities and villages respectively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRO and Municipal Commissioner</td>
<td>Designated for issuing permission for digging new wells.</td>
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<tr>
<td>District Collector</td>
<td>Ex-officio Chairman for the District Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD DPAP / DWMA</td>
<td>Ex-officio member Secretary for the District Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO / Sub-Collector</td>
<td>Ex-officio Chairman for the Divisional Authority</td>
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EE, RWS - Ex-officio Member Convener for the Divisional Authority

Mandal Revenue Officer - Ex-officio Chairman for the Mandal Authority

Assistant Executive Engineer, RWS - Ex-officio Member Secretary for the Mandal Authority

- Fee for registering a Rig for 2 years is Rs. 1,000/-
- Fee for granting permission for digging a new well is Rs. 100/-
- Fee for felling a tree in urban residential and industrial areas is Rs. 50/-
- Fee for felling a tree in urban commercial areas is Rs. 100/-

In view of the indiscriminate drilling for bore wells, the ground water is fast depleting. Added to it, unscientific and reckless drilling has resulted in failure of bores leading to farmers incurring heavy losses. Keeping this in view, the government of AP have suitably amended the APWALTA Act and consequently, through GOMs No. 339, PR & RD Dept. dated 06-11-2004, comprehensive Rules-2004 are brought out for effective implementation of the Act.

The most important features of the recent amendment are the introduction of Single-Window Approach for speedy clearance of the applications for new bore wells and insuring all new borewells to assist the farmers wherever bore wells fail.

- **Single-Window Approach:** The farmers desiring to drill a bore well apply to the Village Secretary / MRO. The Mandal Authority (Tahsildar) takes the feasibility of electricity from the APTRANSCO and feasibility of water from the Ground Water Department. When both are feasible, the MRO accords permission for drilling of new agriculture bore/tube well.

- **Failed Bore well Compensation Scheme:** All farmers who obtain permission for drilling of new agriculture bore wells from the concerned WALTA authority are covered under this “Failed Bore well Compensation Scheme”. If any bore well drilled after securing necessary permission from the concerned authority is failed, the farmer will be eligible to get compensation up to Rs.10,000/-. All the cases will be settled by the Project Director of DWMA (Dist. Water Management Agency)

- Government has notified 4190 villages under APWALTA, banning further exploitation of ground water

According to the Act, the following are some of the important measures for protecting of ground and surface water and tree cover.

- All the existing wells must be registered with the Village Assistant on free of cost.

- The Urban and Local Bodies shall monitor the construction of water harvesting structures in all existing and new residential, commercial, public and open areas.

- Every Rig Owner, who desires to operate in the state, should register the Rig with the Authority by paying Rs. 1,000/- for every two years.

- The Authority may take-over any well for drinking water to local people whenever water scarcity arises.

- The Authority may prohibit / issue orders for shifting / closure of any industry on consumption of water or discharging effluents.

- No brick manufacturing should take place in areas where soil is prone to erosion and depletion.
• Sand Mining is prohibited in areas where it affects ground water. Sand mining is permitted in Godavari, Krishna and Penna rivers.

• Every house-hold should plant trees compulsorily.

• Industrial areas should plant trees as per AP Pollution Control Board.

• Tree felling is prohibited, but with permission from the Designated Authority for a charge.

• Tree plantation and protection in urban areas, road margins, canal banks, tank fore-shores and water bodies. At least 5% tree coverage in agricultural lands.

• Advise the Government on the legislative and administrative measures to be taken from time to time for the conservation of natural resources.

• Advise on economic measures to be taken by the government as initiatives or disincentives relating to taxes, levies, and fees or other charges to promote conservation of natural resources.

• Advise on strengthening public participation in conservation of natural resources from time to time

Penalties, Seizures and Appeals
• Any violation of the provisions of the Act is to be booked as an offence.

• The Designated Authority, such as MRO, may seize any instrument, machinery or any other movable property involved in committing offence. Machinery includes rigs, excavators, implements used / involved in the offence.

• A fine, not less than Rs. 1,000/- but may extend to Rs. 5,000/- may be imposed for contravention of this Act. The offence can be compounded with a sum of money not less than Rs. 1, 00,000/-.

• The Designated Authority which seizes machinery, serves fine or compounds the offence, reports in Form 7 to nearest magistrate and in Form 10 to the offender and District Authority.

• The fee / fine so collected is deposited in the APWALTA Fund.

• Appeals against the order of the Mandal Authority are made to the District Authority with in 30 days of the date of the receipt of such order. Appeals against the orders of the District are made to the State Authority with in 30 days from the date of receipt of orders from the District Authority. The decision of the State Authority is final and binding.