

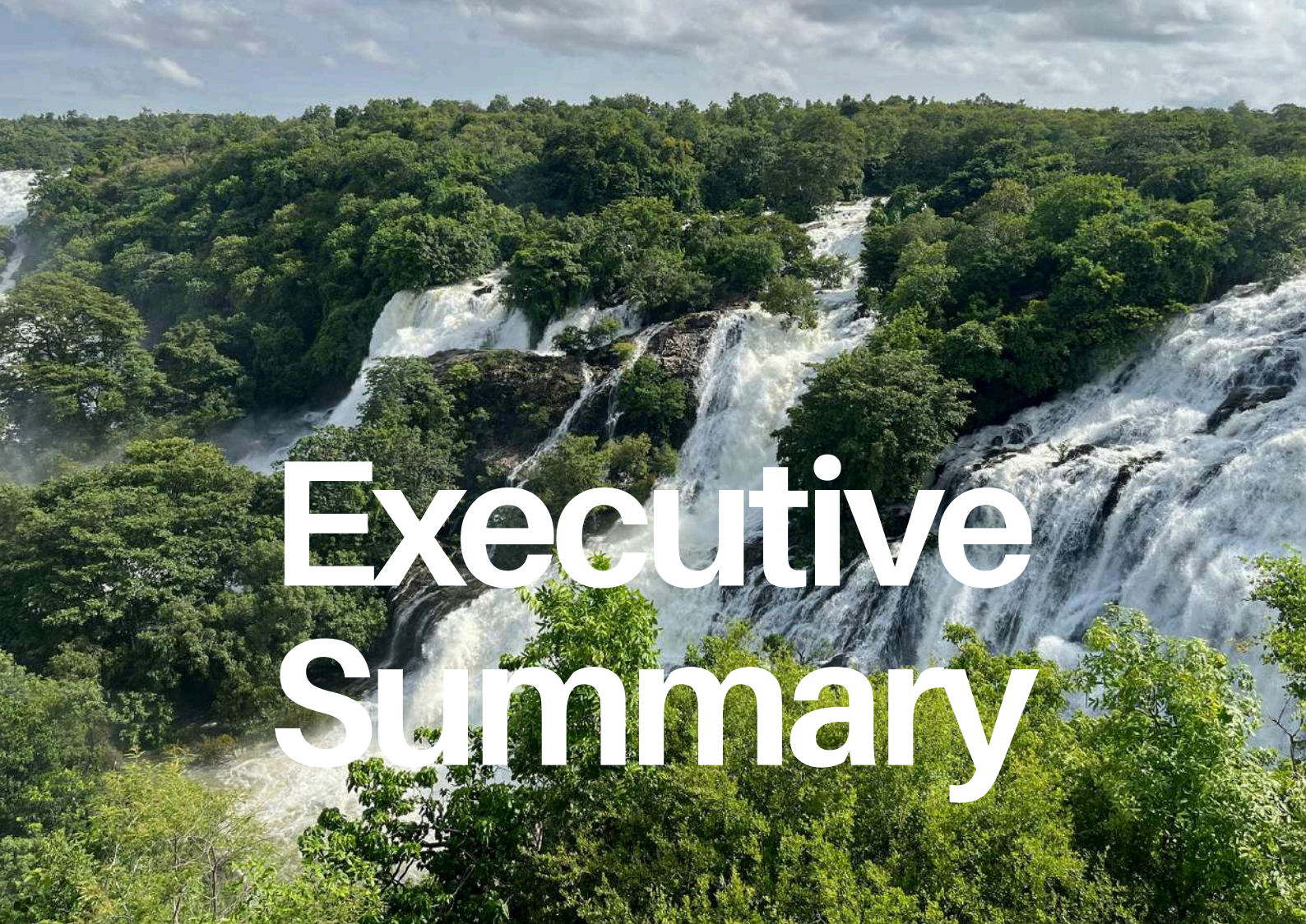


Rights of Nature Proposal

” Ghaggar River,
Ambala, Haryana, India

Team Ecovisionaries

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Executive Summary

The Rights of Nature movement reimagines the relationship between humans and the natural world. By giving ecosystems legal standing and recognizing them as living entities with intrinsic rights, humans are required to protect, restore, and respect nature's life processes. This proposal focuses on the Ghaggar River, a local ecosystem in Ambala, Haryana, threatened by pollution, water diversion, and deforestation. Inspired by Ecuador's constitutional recognition of Pachamama (2008) and New Zealand's legal personhood for the Whanganui River (2017), this proposal aims to:

- Recognize the Ghaggar as a living entity with rights.
- Create a Declaration of Rights for the Ghaggar River.
- Recommend actionable strategies for community-led protection and restoration.

This submission includes detailed research, ecosystem analysis, a personalized narrative from the river's perspective, and an Instagram-ready outreach strategy.

Rights of Nature: Global Context

2.1 Definition and Principles

- Nature is recognized as a living community with inherent rights, not property.
- Rights may include the right to exist, thrive, regenerate, and be restored.
- Humans act as guardians or representatives, advocating for these rights in courts, policy, and society

2.2 Case Studies

1. Ecuador

- Year :- 2008
- Legal Framework: Constitution of Ecuador, Articles 71-74
- Significance: First country to recognize legal rights of nature.
- Rights Granted: Existence, regeneration, restoration, and legal standing.
- Example: Vilcabamba River's protection against unsustainable mining practices.

New Zealand

- Year: 2017
- Legal Framework: Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act
- Significance: Recognized Whanganui River as a legal person.
- Mechanism: Appointed guardians (human representatives) protect river rights.
- Outcome: Legal protection for cultural, spiritual, and environmental well-being

Lesson: Recognition combined with stewardship ensures long-term ecosystem protection.

Local Ecosystem: Ghaggar River

3.1 Geography & Hydrology

- Location: Originates in the Shivalik Hills, flowing through Haryana and Punjab.
- Length: Approx. 300 km in India.
- Tributaries: Tangri, Markanda, Kaushalya.
- Seasonality: Seasonal river with variable flow, often drying during summer.
- Ecological Role: Supports groundwater recharge, agriculture, and aquatic biodiversity.

3.2 Ecological Significance

- Habitat for fish, amphibians, birds, and riparian vegetation
- Connects ecosystems across villages and towns, creating biological corridors
- Seasonal floods naturally replenish soil fertility

3.3 Cultural & Historical Significance

- Celebrated in local folklore and festivals
- Historical settlement areas and rituals depend on river flow.
- Local communities associate it with spiritual and cultural identity.

3.4 Threats and Challenges

Threat	Cause	Impact	Proposed Solution
Pollution	Industrial and domestic waste	Water contamination, fish mortality	Clean-up drives, waste segregation, enforcement of anti-dumping laws
Water Diversion	Canals, dams, irrigation	Reduced seasonal flow, dried stretches	Sustainable water management, rainwater harvesting
Deforestation	Agriculture, construction	Soil erosion, flood risk, habitat loss	Riparian buffer zones, tree planting initiatives
Plastic Waste	Single-use plastics, litter	Choking of waterways, microplastic pollution	Community awareness campaigns, clean-up drives
Over-extraction of Water	Agriculture, industrial use	Lower water table, ecosystem degradation	Water-efficient irrigation, monitoring water withdrawal

Personal Connection

Growing up near the Ghaggar, I have seen both its beauty and vulnerability. It is not just a river; it is life, memory, and culture. Its health affects farmers, children, wildlife, and the community's well-being. Protecting it is deeply personal, it is protecting our heritage and future.

5. Imagining the River Speaking

"I am the Ghaggar. I have flowed for centuries, carrying your stories, nourishing your crops, and giving life to countless creatures. Today, I am weighed down by plastic, torn by neglect, and cut off from my natural path. Protect my waters, restore my banks, honor the life I sustain. Let me flow freely, for the farmers, the children, the birds, and all beings who call me home, and celebrate festivals with me."

Requests from the River:

- Clean, flowing water, free from pollution.
- Restoration of natural vegetation and wildlife habitats.
- Sustainable water management and community stewardship.
- Recognition of cultural and spiritual significance.



6. Declaration of Rights for the Ghaggar River

Rights of the Ghaggar River:

- 1.Right to Exist and Thrive: Clean water, natural flow, and support for all life along its banks.
- 2.Right to Restoration: Repair damaged banks, remove pollution, replant native vegetation.
- 3.Right to Representation: Human guardians act as voices in legal, policy, and community decisions.
- 4.Right to Protection: Prevent harmful activities, including over-extraction, pollution, and deforestation.
- 5.Right to Cultural Respect: Recognize and honor its historical, spiritual, and cultural significance.

Statement from the River:

"I am life, memory, and home. Respect me, care for me, and let me flow."

7. Community Action Plan

Objective: Protect and restore the Ghaggar River while involving local communities.

Action	Description	Stakeholders	Timeline
River Clean-up Drives	Remove plastic and waste	Schools, NGOs, volunteers	Monthly
Riparian Reforestation	Plant native trees along banks	Local government, volunteers	Year-round
Water Quality Monitoring	Test for contaminants	Environmental clubs, students	Quarterly
Community Education	Workshops, talks, and awareness	Schools, NGOs, local leaders	Ongoing
Policy Advocacy	Advocate for sustainable water	Local panchayats, NGOs	Annual

8. Learning from Ecuador and New Zealand

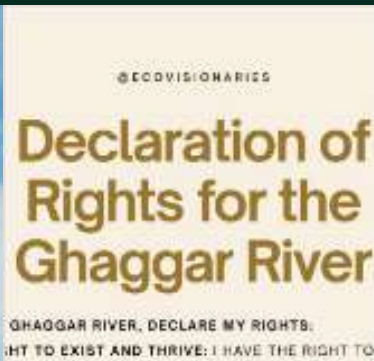
- Legal recognition gives ecosystems a voice in decision-making.
- Guardianship models blend law, culture, and science.
- Community engagement ensures long-term success.

Applying these ideas locally can empower the Ghaggar and build a sustainable, culturally aware river stewardship model.

9. References

- Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, Articles 71-74.
- Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act, 2017, New Zealand.
- Rights of Nature: A Legal Revolution Protecting Ecosystems, Mary Christina Wood, 2018.
- Field observations of the Ghaggar River, Ambala, Haryana, 2025.

Instagram Post:



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2 likes, 1 comments - eco_visionaries on October 23, 2025: "Inspired by Ecuador and..."

