

1 **DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

2 No. 2013 - \_\_\_\_\_:

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6 **SUBJECT: REVISED GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCING THE**  
7 **ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF BUFFER ZONES**  
8 **FOR PROTECTED AREAS**  
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10  
11 Pursuant to Republic Act No. 7586, otherwise known as the National Integrated  
12 Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, mandating when necessary, the establishment  
13 of peripheral buffer zones for each protected area to protect them from harm, while providing  
14 communities with livelihood opportunities compatible with sustainable resource utilization  
15 and Republic Act No. 9729, otherwise known as the Climate Change Act of 2009 or an Act  
16 Mainstreaming Climate Change into Government Policy Formulation, the existing Guidelines  
17 for the Establishment and Management of Buffer Zones for Protected Areas under DENR  
18 Memorandum Circular No. 16 Series of 1993, is hereby revised.

19  
20 **Definition of Terms**

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22 Unless otherwise specifically stated, the following terms, whenever used in these  
23 Guidelines, shall mean the following:  
24

25 **Biodiversity** is defined as the variety of all forms of life, from genes to species,  
26 through to the broad scale of ecosystems.  
27

28 **Biodiversity-friendly agricultural practice or BD-friendly agricultural practice** is  
29 defined as the pattern of farming and fishing decisions and actions that sustainably use and  
30 conserve biodiversity and its components to satisfy the increasing human needs and sustain  
31 rural people's livelihoods while addressing the current threats that confront them.  
32

33 **Biodiversity-friendly enterprise/business or BD-friendly enterprise/business** refers to an  
34 economic activity that pursues wealth creation, conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use  
35 of biological resources, and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of natural  
36 resources (either as a platform or site of activities or as an input to production, e.g.  
37 agriculture, harvesting and processing of natural resources.  
38

39 **Buffer Zones** are areas outside the boundaries of and immediately adjacent to designated  
40 protected areas that need special development control in order to avoid or minimize harm to  
41 the area.  
42

43 **Climate Change-** a change in climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or  
44 variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period typically decades or  
45 longer, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity  
46

47 **Comprehensive Land-Use Plan (CLUP)** is the long term framework plan that defines the  
48 desired physical pattern of growth of a locality.

49

50 **Disaster Risk Reduction** - the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through  
51 systematic efforts to analyze and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through  
52 reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise  
53 management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

54

55 **Geological Hazards or Geohazards** are events caused by geological features and processes  
56 that present severe threats to humans, property and the natural and built environment.  
57 Earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcanoes and tsunamis are typical examples of such events.

58 **Protected Area Community-Based Resource Management Agreement (PACBRMA)** –  
59 an agreement entered into by and between the DENR and the organized tenured migrant  
60 communities or interested indigenous peoples in protected and buffer zone which has a term  
61 of twenty five (25) years and renewable for another twenty five (25) years.

62

63 **Survey and Registration of Protected Area Occupants (SRPAO)** - an activity undertaken  
64 as requirement for the establishment of the protected area. The activity is aimed to establish  
65 basic demographic data, ethnographic and tenure status of protected area occupants as well as  
66 provide basis for planning buffer zones and alternative livelihood activities.

67

68 **Tenured Migrant Communities** – group of persons who after the survey of the protected  
69 area occupants were verified to have been actually and continuously occupying a portion of  
70 the protected area for a period of at least five (5) years before the establishment of the same  
71 as such in accordance with the NIPAS Act and are solely dependent therein for subsistence.  
72 For the initial components of the NIPAS, the reckoning period of 5 years shall be June 1,  
73 1992 and for additional sites for inclusion in the NIPAS, the reckoning period shall be from  
74 the issuance of the Presidential Proclamation establishing the site as a protected area.

75

76 **Protected Area (PA)** – An identified area of land and/or water set aside by reason of its  
77 unique physical, aesthetic, and biological significance and managed to enhance biological  
78 diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation

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80 **Buffer Zone Management Plan (BZMP)** – A basic long term framework plan for the  
81 management of an established buffer zone(s)

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83 **Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups** - those that face higher exposure to disaster risk and  
84 poverty including, but not limited to, women, children, elderly, differently-abled people, and  
85 ethnic minorities.

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## ARTICLE 1

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### GUIDING PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES and SCOPE OF THE POLICY

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#### Section 1. Concept and Guiding Principles of the Policy

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The protection and management of biodiversity and communities do not rely solely  
within Protected Areas (PAs); most species and even communities move across boundaries to

96 look for food, refuge and other services that the PA are unable or can hardly provide as a  
97 result of damage or destruction from natural variabilities such as climate change or from  
98 unsustainable economic activities therein.

99

100 Adjacent to PAs are neighboring lands comprised of forest and agricultural lands,  
101 open waters and public or private lands which may be unprotected but are capable of  
102 supporting such conservation and development needs. These are the areas referred to in the  
103 Policy as Buffer Zone.

104

105 A buffer zone aims to secure and stabilize the protected area's boundary and integrity  
106 while promoting the harmonious relationship between conservation of the natural  
107 environment and people development. In order for a buffer zone to deliver this important  
108 service, there is need for a clear guideline in its establishment and management.

109

110

## 111 **Section 2. Objectives of the Policy**

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113 It is the general objective of this Administrative Order to promote the establishment,  
114 and management of buffer zone that would serve to:

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116 a. provide additional protective layer to protected areas and biodiversity therein;

117

118 b. increase and connect fragmented habitats of protected species;

119

120 c. provide refuge to vulnerable communities from adverse impacts of climate  
121 change;

122

123 d. provide opportunities for an improved and secured economic well-being of the  
124 immediate communities that would motivate them in turn to protect and  
125 rehabilitate the protected area, and

126

127 e. host collaboration among national and government agencies, scientific and  
128 academic institutions, donor agencies, non-government and people's  
129 organizations, etc. for the strengthened management and protection of the  
130 protected area.

131

132

## 133 **Section 3. Scope and Coverage**

134

135 A buffer zone may be established for terrestrial, marine and wetland protected areas.  
136 The extent of the buffer zone shall depend on the following considerations.

137

138 a. Presence of potential threats such as, but not limited to, encroachment from  
139 adjacent communities and pollution from economic activities and other forms of  
140 interference or destruction;

141

142 b. Need of threatened or key wildlife species for additional habitat that extends  
143 beyond the protected area boundary;

144

- 145 c. Presence of ecological and geophysical features that could enhance the  
146 conservation of the protected area;  
147  
148 d. Need for additional protective functions, such as soil and water conservation and  
149 fire protection;  
150  
151 e. Size of the local community and the degree of their dependence on the resources  
152 in the protected area;  
153  
154 f. Need to provide sustainable use of land and resources for local communities and  
155 other stakeholders,  
156  
157 g. Presence of land and water resources such as grassland, brushland, agricultural  
158 land, forested land, fish pond, mangrove areas and other wetlands as well as  
159 reforestation and other conservation programs.  
160

## 161 **ARTICLE II**

### 162 **ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF BUFFER ZONES**

163  
164 The procedure (Annex A) for establishment of buffer zones shall be initiated and supervised  
165 by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) through the Protected Area  
166 Superintendent (PASu) in collaboration with affected communities, DENR, LGUs, OGAs,  
167 POs and other identified stakeholders organizations.  
168  
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#### 170 **Section 1. Criteria for Selection of Buffer Zones**

171  
172 Any or a combination of the following criteria shall be used in selecting buffer zone  
173 for protected areas:  
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- 175  
176 1.1 ***Ecological Criteria***, include the potential of the site to protect the protected  
177 area by (1) serving as habitat for the survival of threatened species; (2)  
178 providing corridors for wildlife; (3) protecting the integrity of watersheds and  
179 tributaries; and (4) preventing floods, landslides, pollution, other ecological  
180 disasters including anthropological and climate change impact.  
181  
182 1.2 ***Economic criteria*** refer to the capacity of the area to provide a promising  
183 environment where biodiversity-friendly enterprise/business and agricultural  
184 practices may be demonstrated and applied to benefit communities therein;  
185  
186 1.3 ***Social Criteria*** include those conditions in the area that can a) enhance local  
187 communities' support and acceptance of the principles of buffer zone  
188 management, b) provide a safe ground for communities who face high  
189 exposure to disaster risk and poverty.  
190  
191 1.4 ***Institutional Criteria*** include the potential of the area to host partnerships and  
192 collaborative management mechanism among national government agencies,  
193 local government units, non-government or people's organizations, Indigenous  
194 Peoples, private sector and funding or donor agencies

195 **Section 2. Guidelines for Buffer Zone Establishment**

196  
197 2.1 . ***Preliminary Identification of Prospective Buffer Zone***

198  
199 The PAMB through the PASu shall identify prospective buffer zone  
200 areas using the Protected Area Management Plan, available forest resource  
201 maps, aerial photographs, ecological data gathered during the establishment of  
202 the protected area, and/or other technical references. These areas may expand  
203 or decrease depending upon the findings of subsequent studies and  
204 investigations.

205  
206 The same PAMB thru the PASu may simultaneously: a) identify and  
207 organize the Technical Study Group that shall carry out the multidisciplinary  
208 assessment, b) conduct public awareness campaigns and c) consultations in all  
209 phases.

210  
211 2.1.1 Organization of the Technical Study Group

212  
213 The Technical Study Group shall carry out the multidisciplinary  
214 assessment. It shall be composed of representatives from the DENR, affected  
215 communities and POs with a good track record of working in the area  
216 concerned, LGUs and appropriate scientific experts including sociologists.

217  
218 2.1.2 Public Awareness Campaigns

219  
220 The DENR shall conduct preliminary public awareness campaigns to  
221 inform all potentially affected parties and all concerned government agencies  
222 of any plans to establish a specific buffer zone(s). This is to ensure that the  
223 public understands the protected area and buffer zone concepts and the  
224 requirements for the establishment and management of the same. IEC during  
225 this stage aims to:

226  
227 2.1.2.1 Ascertain and assess community perceptions of buffer  
228 zone(s),

229  
230 2.1.2.2 Discuss the rationale of and process for the establishment of  
231 the proposed buffer zone(s) and the formulation of the  
232 corresponding management plan,

233  
234 2.1.2.3 Identify potential conflicts and develop strategies for  
235 equitably addressing them.

236  
237 2.1.3 Consultations

238  
239 IEC shall also be an inherent component of all phases of the buffer  
240 zone establishment process to guarantee the communities/ stakeholders full  
241 and informed consent as well as active participation in buffer zone  
242 establishment and management. Through consultations and dialogues, IEC  
243 should be able to:

- 245 2.1.3.1 Encourage public participation and collaboration in the  
246 identification and establishment of proposed buffer zones,  
247  
248 2.1.3.2 Review the process of participatory boundary delineation  
249 and demarcation,  
250  
251 2.1.3.3 Promote coordination with local government units and other  
252 departments/agencies,  
253  
254 2.1.3.4 Develop collaborative approaches between and among the  
255 DENR, local people and communities living within and  
256 adjacent to the proposed buffer zones and local  
257 administration units of the DENR and other government  
258 department or agencies concerned,  
259  
260 2.1.3.5 Establish process for further consultations and actions.  
261  
262

## 263 **2.2. *Multi-Disciplinary Assessment of the Prospective Buffer Zone***

264

265 The multidisciplinary assessment will consist of an Ecological and  
266 Climatological Study, Economic Study, Land-Use Assessment, and Socio-  
267 Cultural-Political Profiling. Based on this scope of study, a Technical Study  
268 Group shall be organized by the PASu through the PAMB with the  
269 involvement of the Provincial/Municipal Planning and Development Office of  
270 concerned Local Government Units and the Indigenous Cultural Community,  
271 where applicable.  
272

273 It is always desirable at this stage to review local development and  
274 investment plans, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) or Forest Land  
275 Use Plan (FLUP), Geohazard and Vulnerability Assessments, results of the  
276 Survey and Registration of Protected Area Occupants (SRPAO) and other  
277 plans and studies relevant to the nominated area for buffer zone.  
278

279 The Technical Study Group, through community consultations, multi-  
280 stakeholders meetings and focused group discussions and in reference to the  
281 thematic maps, shall finalize a set of guidelines for determining the necessity  
282 of establishing a buffer zone. This process shall be based on the findings of  
283 the multidisciplinary study in accordance with the consensus of the local  
284 communities residing within the proposed buffer zone(s).  
285

286 An important output from this phase shall be a set of thematic maps  
287 showing the different areas which have important ecological, economic,  
288 social, cultural or legal importance to the protection of the PA.  
289

### 290 **2.2.1. Production of Thematic Maps**

291

292 A base map of the area to include community mapping and a set of  
293 thematic maps, such as but not limited to, vegetative cover, land use,  
294 elevation, geology, hydrology, recent vulnerability and geohazard shall be

295 produced by the study team. These maps shall aid in determining the  
296 necessity of establishing a buffer zone for the area protected. Thematic maps  
297 concerned with ancestral domain, cultural issues, linguistic groups, etc. shall  
298 be produced in concert with affected parties/communities.  
299

## 300 301 **2.3 *Determining the Necessity for a Buffer Zone Establishment and Delineation*** 302

303 The PAMB through the Technical Study Group, shall analyze the necessity for  
304 a Buffer Zone using thematic maps and results from multi-disciplinary study and  
305 present this through community consultation for confirmation. The community  
306 consultation will enable the PAMB and Technical Study Group to draw all issues that  
307 have bearing on the establishment and management of a buffer zone.  
308

### 309 **2.3.1 Conflict Resolution** 310

311 The PAMB shall facilitate community negotiations and settlement of  
312 conflicting land and resource uses, utilizing indigenous or traditional  
313 mechanisms of the communities or other appropriate conflict resolution  
314 processes. Any PAMB member who may be a party to a land/resource use  
315 dispute or who have vested interests therein shall be excluded from  
316 participating in any decision making process involving the dispute.  
317

### 318 **2.3.2 Community Consensus** 319

320 The PAMB and community representatives shall decide or arrive at a  
321 consensus on the establishment of buffer zone using the criteria previously  
322 agreed upon and results of the multidisciplinary assessment. The proposed  
323 buffer zone option should then be presented on a map.  
324

## 325 **2.4 *Actual Designation of Buffer Zone*** 326

327 The objective of this phase is to actually designate and establish the buffer  
328 zone.  
329

### 330 **2.4.1 Public Hearing** 331

332 The PAMB shall conduct a series of public hearings to present the  
333 basic rationale for the establishment of the proposed buffer zone giving  
334 particular emphasis to such issues tenure and livelihood potentials. The  
335 hearings should also allow those present to state their views on the matter.  
336

337 The PAMB will notify the public thirty (30) days before the scheduled  
338 hearing through publication of the same in newspapers of general circulation  
339 and such other means deemed necessary in the vicinity of the affected land, to  
340 ensure that all affected LGUs, concerned national agencies, IPs, NGOs and  
341 POs are properly notified. Participants to the hearing may also submit written  
342 position papers on the issues they may wish to raise.  
343  
344

345 2.4.2 Revisions and Adjustments  
346

347 Pursuant to the resolution and settlement of conflicts and issues  
348 pertaining to the buffer zone, revisions and adjustments shall be made on the  
349 proposed buffer zone option.  
350

351 2.4.3 Designation of the Buffer Zone  
352

353 The adjusted map of the designated buffer zone shall be prepared and  
354 together with a draft Administrative Order of the designation shall be  
355 submitted to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for  
356 approval by the Secretary.  
357

358 If PAMB or any appropriate management authority opts to elevate the  
359 designation through a Congressional Act, it may make use of the information  
360 from the result of the different processes undertaken in the first. Provided, that  
361 its use of the information is within five (5) years from the time of designation;  
362 otherwise, an updating is deemed necessary.  
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366 **Section 3. Guidelines for Management of Buffer Zone**  
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368 **3.1. Buffer Zone Management Plan**  
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370 Within one (1) year after the designation of the buffer zone, a site-specific  
371 Buffer Zone Management Plan (BZMP) shall be prepared by the PAMB; the BZMP  
372 shall be used as guide in the formulation of a five-year Implementation Plan.  
373

374 The Buffer Zone Management Plan shall be consistent with the management  
375 objectives of the established protected area. Buffer zone plans, if any existent, shall be  
376 an integral part of the Protected Area Management Plan (PAMP).  
377

378 The PAMB shall recognize in the buffer zone such management divisions  
379 (zones) as may be necessary/useful based on existing and planned land use and land  
380 classification around the periphery of the protected area. In so far as possible, the  
381 PAMB through the PASu shall take the lead role in promoting sound, sustainable  
382 development and conservation programs and projects in the buffer zone.  
383

384 Management and land use practices for buffer zones shall be prescribed in the  
385 BZMP to include identification and location where biodiversity-friendly agricultural  
386 practices as well as enterprises may be demonstrated, promoted and sustained.  
387

388 **3.2 Management Authority**  
389

390 The PAMB and the PASu or any appropriate or existing governing body, on  
391 behalf of the DENR, shall exercise authority in the designated buffer zone in  
392 cooperation with concerned LGUs, other government agencies, NGOs and POs. As  
393 Management Authority, it shall oversee the implementation of the Buffer Zone  
394 Management Plan.



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**3.3 Implementation of BZMP**

The implementation of the Buffer Zone Management Plan shall be undertaken through existing multi-sectoral or inter agency-committees in the area if any and/or through multisectoral collaboration among stakeholders.

**3.4 Tenurial Instruments**

The DENR, after due consultation with concerned stakeholders and appropriate endorsement of the PAMB, may enter into a PACBRMA and where applicable, Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) with organized tenured migrants and the qualified POs in accordance with Articles II, IV, VIII and IX of DAO 29-96, for the development and management of buffer zones. However, tenured migrants who have been resettled in a buffer zone shall have the priority over the benefits provided by the NIPAS Law.

A partnership arrangement with private land owners must be explored by DENR ideally thru any instrument like Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the ultimate objective of harnessing cooperation and collaboration of the sector in attaining the goals of the BZMP.

**3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of BZMP**

Using an established system of monitoring and evaluation, the DENR, through the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) shall conduct annual monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of BZMP. It shall submit its annual evaluation and recommendation to the Secretary of DENR.

**Section 4. Administration of Buffer Zone**

The PASu and/or the PENRO/CENRO as the representative of DENR shall administer the buffer zone. As such he shall (1) oversee the implementation of the Buffer Zone Management Plan, (2) liaise with all stakeholders and establish productive partnerships with and among local and indigenous communities and other stakeholders groups in planning, protection and management of the buffer zone, (3) document the processes and lessons learned from the management of the buffer zone for future planning.

**ARTICLE III  
FINAL PROVISIONS**

**Section 1. Funding** - The amount necessary to finance the activities leading to the establishment of the buffer zone of the nominated Protected Area shall be charged against the current year's appropriation and/or from the Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF). Thereafter, the sums necessary for the continued implementation of the Buffer Zone Management Plan shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

**Section 2. Effectivity** - This order shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in several newspapers of national circulation

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446 **Section 3. Separability Clause** - If any provision of this Order is held invalid, other  
447 provisions shall not be affected thereby.

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449 **Section 4. Repealing Clause** - Provisions of other DENR Administrative Orders,  
450 Memorandum Circulars or other official issuances not consistent herewith are hereby  
451 repealed or amended accordingly.

**RAMON J. P. PAJE**  
Secretary