

'Healthy wetlands mean a healthy community'

On Wednesday 2 February, the provincial Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), in conjunction with the Western Cape Wetland Forum, Cape Nature, provincial Department of Environmental Affairs, Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency, Farm Moreson, SANBI and other stakeholders celebrated World Wetlands Day at the Vyeboom Wetland near Grabouw.

World Wetlands Day is observed each year on 2 February to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands. It is also the anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands, which was adopted as an international treaty in 1971.

As part of the celebrations at

Vyeboom, various organisations engaged learners from Bissetdrift Primary School through interactive programmes such as:

- SASS sampling and macro-invertebrate identification which includes all the fish found;
- informative and interactive session on the water cycle and water filtration;
- presentation on wetland vegetation and biodiversity within wetlands and rivers; and
- an informative session on the surface and groundwater cycles.

In celebrating, DWS is saying the loss of wetland systems, such as the Vyeboom wetlands, will result not only in the loss of endangered fauna and flora of the Western Cape, but it will also increase the risk of harmful

climatic conditions, which could result in a reduction of quality and quantity of water.

The Vyeboom wetlands and ecosystem in their entirety are located upstream of the Theewaterskloof Dam, which supplies more than 50% of Cape Town's water supply. Just as important is the fact that this area is one of the three remaining areas left for the endangered Giant Redfin to live in.

The involvement of schools, such as Bissetdrift Primary in celebrating Wetlands Day, allows the community at large to become more aware of wetlands and keep them healthy.

Healthy rivers and wetlands mean healthy communities.

Malusi Rayi, DWS COMMUNICATIONS

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