



INTERNET ARTICLE

Encouraging learners to prevent the pollution of watercourses and cleaning Spelanyane stream as part of Mandela Month Clear Rivers Campaign

15 July 2024

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Mpumalanga Provincial Operations, Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency, Africa Green Earth Project and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency engaged learners and educators at Jabulani Primary School on an environmental public education awareness and also cleaned the Spelanyane stream as part of the Mandela Month Clear Rivers campaign on 12 July 2024.

Mr Themba Khoza from DWS-Mpumalanga outlined the importance of Mandela Month, especially Mandela Day and the Clear Rivers Campaign. "Mandela Day, the Mandela Day is mainly about doing good for others and the environment we live in. It is about volunteering one's services and resources for the good of others. The Department of Water and Sanitation came up with the Clear Rivers Campaign to encourage people to clean and adopt rivers and other water resources to ensure sustainable flow of clean and quality water for water security. South Africa is a dry and water scarce country, therefore it is important to always clean and keep our water resources healthy. Let us stop using our water resources as dumping sites. As a water scarce country, it is also important to use the available water wisely and sparingly. You are now water ambassadors, go out to your community and spread the message of water conservation and the protection of our water resources, especially from pollution as pollution negatively affects water quality and quantity", he said.

Water is life, and to ensure that water remains a source of life we need to keep our water resources free of pollution. We need to keep our water resources clean and healthy. Ms Sukanani Sinugo from the IUCMA engaged the learners and educators about the importance of healthy rivers, streams, dams, and wetlands and encouraged the learners to share the information with their friends and families in the community. "You must start by keeping your household and school environments clean and then keep the whole village clean and then our water resources will be clean and safe. Please tell your family members not to dump used disposable nappies in the streams, rivers and other watercourses. Let us all protect our water resources and keep the clean and healthy for their sustainable free flow", she said.

The learners were also reminded of the importance of fresh water for wildlife and the environment. "The pollution of our water resources is a serious problem for wildlife and the environment. Downstream we have Mthethomusha Game Reserve and the Kruger National Park; it is therefore that we ensure that the animals and the environment has access to clean and healthy water by protecting our streams and rivers from pollution. Let us prevent the

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pollution of our water resources and ensure that our livestock, wildlife and environment are striving”, stated Ms Zandile Nkosi from the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency. She further encouraged the audience to visit the parks and learn more about wildlife and the environment.

Mr Jack Magongo from Africa Green Earth Project encouraged the audience to assist them in keeping the area and the water resources clean and healthy by not dumping waste anywhere as they are collecting a lot of waste. “At inception of the Spelanyane project between January and March 2023, we used to collect about 50 bags per week, about one tonne per month. From April to November 2023, the volumes ranged between four and five tonnes per month”, he stated in relation to the waste they regularly collect.

The school principal, Mr Patrick Sambo the participating institutions for the educational awareness and the material that was provided and left for the school. “This material will assist us in our curriculum and also serve as a reminder that we must always protect our environment, especially our water resources”, he stated.

The second session entailed the cleaning of the Spelanyane stream under the bridge where some irresponsible community members dump their waste, especially disposable nappies. This activity was done by the officials from the participating institutions and members of the Africa Green Earth Project. As part of awareness creation, passersby and the nearby households were engaged and encouraged to adopt and protect the stream. The stream was left clean and free flowing, and the Africa Green Earth Project committed to monitor and continuously clean it to ensure the flow of clean and healthy water to downstream users.

Themba Khoza

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