

IT'S that time of the year again when we are reminded of the importance of keeping our water resources clean and healthy.

September 18 is World Water Monitoring Day, an annual international educational day to raise public awareness on the importance of the quality of water and issues of the pollution of water bodies. The primary objective is to educate and involve citizens in the protection of the world's water resources.

Water is life. The centrality of water in all aspects of life makes the availability of clean, healthy and quality water a basic necessity.

Pollution is a major risk to our rivers, streams, dams, wetlands and other water ecosystems.

Let's honour World Water Monitoring Day

It is disgusting that in some areas, people have changed water resources into waste dumping sites.

Waste materials such as papers, plastics, nappies, empty cans, unwanted clothes and all sorts of waste are dumped in the watercourses, unsightly and unhealthy to the watercourses and the environment.

Pollution translates to the loss of precious water, which we cannot afford as South Africa is a water-scarce and dry country.

The other major challenge in terms of pollution is sewer spillages, which poses a major risk to clean water resources and poses the risk

of water-borne diseases. It is crucial for municipalities to ensure that their waste water treatment plants are always well maintained and function optimally at all times, as sewer spillages are dangerous to the watercourses, the environment, animals and humans.

Pollution not only affects water quality and quantity, but also leads to flooding. The waste we dump in our water resources obstructs the normal flow of water leading to flooding, which leads to loss of property and life.

It is our responsibility to keep our water resources clean, healthy and pollution-free at all times. We now

have special days like World Water Monitoring Day to remind us of our responsibilities because we have become irresponsible.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has the Clear Rivers Campaign to encourage people to adopt watercourses and keep them clean and healthy, so let us join such initiatives and keep our water resources pollution-free at all times.

Let us be responsible communities and not wait for special days and programmes to make our water resources clean. Let us respect our watercourses and always ensure that they are protected and well taken care of for the current and future generations. | **BRIAN THEMBA KHOZA** Department of Water Affairs