

Let's take care of our rivers and waterways

ASIMBONGANA, Asimbonanga uMandela wethu laphe khona, laphe ehlezi khona. This is a song that is familiar to many South Africans. It praises the solid legacy Nelson Mandela left.

Madiba will go down in the history books as an activist who made sacrifices to fight for justice in the land.

How do we remember this selfless legend?

July is set aside to remember Madiba. Like other entities, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) celebrates Mandela's month through an environmental clean-up initiative called the Clear Rivers Campaign.

South Africa is a water-scarce country and rated the 30th driest in the world; with a rapidly increasing population. This is based on its average rainfall of 500mm compared to the world average of 860mm.

Our rivers, wetlands and the general ecosystem is threatened by excessive pollution. If we pollute the river in one place, we affect the condition of the water at a long distance downstream.

A river is able to clean itself best when it is healthy, but it is unable to do so when it is continually polluted.

The need for water security, particularly in the face of global climate change and a multitude of anthropogenic impacts affecting our rivers, calls for a national and unified approach to protect our rivers, wetlands and broader catchments.

For this reason, the Department of Water and Sanitation connects South Africans to their sources of water and the natural infrastructure through the Clear River Campaign.

The campaign is executed jointly with volunteers from NGOs, private sector organisations and individuals.

This supports the main objective of encouraging a responsible citizenry that participates and promotes healthy rivers and discourages pollution.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there are no anticipated cleaning initiatives. However, citizens are urged to continue to look after rivers.

For more information on the Clear River Campaign, visit www.dws.gov.za and click the link for Clear River Campaign.

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