

Protect our rivers, our natural heritage

RIVERS are the lifeblood of the nation. They provide us with water, the source of life and enabler of socio-economic development.

Rivers give life and provide a multitude of benefits for the communities around them. Our rivers provide us with water, food and places for recreational, cultural and religious activities.

This shows the close relationship between rivers and communities, making the need for clean and healthy rivers more than critical and it calls for their protection and preservation.

The importance of rivers in our lives led the UN to come up with a special day, World Rivers Day, to celebrate the importance of our waterways. It is celebrated annually on the fourth Sunday of September – this Sunday.

World Rivers Day is a celebration of the world's waterways and raises awareness on the importance of rivers and their conservation. It is a call to

reflect on the significance of rivers.

Rivers in virtually every country face threats, pollution being a big one. It compromises water quality, leading to waterborne diseases, the loss of crops, livestock and aquatic species and environmental degradation.

Pollution is mainly a man-made problem and poses a serious threat to the health of our rivers and to us. We have turned our rivers into a waste dump and thereby contribute to their degradation and destruction.

This calls for our active involvement to protect and ensure the health of our rivers for the benefit of our generation and future generations.

Let us adopt rivers, protect and keep them clean and healthy, as they provide us with water, the source of life. Also remember that rivers are a critical part of our cultural heritage.

THEMBA KHOZA | Mpumalanga Department of Water and Sanitation