



INTERNET ARTICLE

Gauteng DWS leads a clean-up campaign at Jukskei River in Alexandra

31 March 2021

On Wednesday, 31 March 2021, the Department of Water and Sanitation in Gauteng, embarked on a clean-up campaign on the banks of Jukskei River as part of Water Month celebrations.

The campaign was joined by different stakeholders: City of Joburg, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South African Social Security Agency, and non-governmental organisations such as Msezani Security, the Alex Peace Ambassadors, Shomang Sebenza Development Initiative, the Alex Rotarians and the Alex Men's Forum.

Jukskei River is an iconic river that flows in the City of Johannesburg and has a contaminated water course with high concentration of raw sewer and *E. coli*.

As Valuing Water is a global theme for this year's World Water Day, the clean-up campaign was meant to prompt a sense of protecting water resources among the community of Alexandra. It also conscientised communities to use water prudently and also prioritise their health and hygiene.

Ms Reshoketswe Malape, from Gauteng DWS's Water Services Support said the Jukskei River is one of the largest, most influential and iconic flowing waters in the city of Johannesburg. It originates near the city centre, passing through suburbia along the eastern edge of the city, and then becoming a tributary of the Crocodile River further downstream. Ultimately, its waters drain into the Indian Ocean.

"Being a well-known name to most people in the city, the Jukskei is as polluted as it is iconic. Despite not carrying plastic chairs and house debris (except in times of flood), it does carry an immensely high amount of raw sewage and resultant *E. coli*," said Ms Malape.

She said the arrangement by the DWS and community-based environmental organisations, that encourage communities to collect litter and promote health of Jukskei River is a relatively common occurrence. She further said with these initiatives, much of the worst pollution is reduced by the time the waters merge with those of the Crocodile River,.

"To effectively address this problem, the pollution sources must be targeted. Most clean-up operations organised through citizen efforts do exist and are run on an almost annual basis, but they always fade and don't target the source," warned Ms Malape.

Mr Thabo Mopasi, a member of the Alex Peace Ambassadors said water education and awareness helps individuals to understand where they fit within the cycle of water. He said the society needs to understand their role in the water cycle as it is a global phenomenon that knows no boundaries and connects everyone. He called for the communities to gain knowledge and understanding of the real value of water, be it in the protection of the resources, its conservation and management.

"Environmental education deals with the need to protect the environment because global warming, pollution, and many other issues are ruining our environment badly. We know the importance of a healthy environment, and we should take all the possible measures to keep our environment healthy. One of the most effective means to promote healthy environment is giving proper education to both old and new generations," said Mr Mopasi.

Mr Mopasi said environmental education and protection are crucial for the benefit of both the environment and humans, its importance cannot be overemphasised.



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KHULEKANI NGCOBO