

# INTERNET ARTICLE

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## Gauteng DWS and stakeholder's champions river clean- ups campaign for water conservation in Atteridgville

17 March 2022

Community members of Atteridgville in the City of Tshwane Metro participated in river clean- ups and water conservation awareness campaign on Wednesday, 17 March.

The campaign is headed by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in Gauteng, in partnership with Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Soulbent Project, Plastic SA and South African National Biodiversity Institute.

The river clean- ups and water conservation awareness campaign are part of the Water Month celebration programmes. This year's campaign is taking place under the theme for the World Water Day "Groundwater: making the invisible visible."

Groundwater may be invisible, but its impact is visible everywhere. Out of sight and under our feet, groundwater is a hidden treasure that enriches our lives. Almost all of the liquid freshwater in the world is groundwater. As climate change gets worse, groundwater will become more and more critical. We need to work together to sustainably manage this precious resource. Groundwater may be out of sight, but it must not be out of mind.

The pertinent question is, has South Africa done enough in matters pertaining to the provision of water and what are the rights and responsibilities that come with water?

DWS's Ms Tebogo Mashiane said the need for improved water and sanitation services remains a huge challenge across the country, particularly for those living in informal settlements. She said there are great vulnerabilities within these marginalised areas due to poverty or non-existent basic social service provision.

Ms Mashiane also mentioned that inadequate water and sanitation services in those poor areas deprive residents of adequate health and more importantly, their dignity.

"Have you ever noticed the litter that is piling up in our local river or stream? It takes away from the beauty and safety of the waterway. Well, we can do something about it. By leading a waterway clean-up effort with others in our community, we can help in making our rivers or streams a safer, healthier place for wildlife and people," she said.

She said tons of trash ends up in our nation's rivers and streams every year. The pollution it's more than just an eyesore; it contaminates our drinking water and threatens the life of all who depend on it.

During the clean-up, Ms Mashiane also conducted a miniSAS training which aims to determine how polluted or how the stream is.

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“This is a cheaper and easy method of generating scientific data on the river health and can be utilised by anyone. The importance of applying miniSAS tool as part of the WWD celebration, is to make our people aware that we have micro invertebrates in the streams that can be used as indicators of general water quality,” she added,

Ms Mashiane explained that the water conservation campaign is of particular importance in the community as residents need to understand the water challenges that are facing their area and the country.

“Today, we are happy that we have empowered our community members with skills such as river monitoring skills and also shared critical information on water resources management. I would like to encourage all of us present today, to share this information with our families and friends.” She concluded.

**KHULEKANI NGCOBO**

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