

INTERNET ARTICLE

Gauteng Water and Sanitation kick-started Water Month in style.

07 March 2022

On Friday, 04 March 2022, Gauteng DWS joined hands with Gauteng Department of Agriculture), and Rural Development (GDARD), City of Ekurhuleni, Rand Water and SANBI kick- started the Water Month in Merievale Bird Sanctuary, Nigel.

In March, the Department of Water and Sanitation contributes to the global advocacy around World Water Day, led by UN-Water, on 22 March. The month of global action provides a platform for organisations and communities to stand together with one common voice, calling for change.

It is for this reason that, all spheres of government commemorate the World Wetlands Day, in style.

Ms Matilda Gasela, Head of Department from GDARD addressed community members during the commemoration of the annual global Water Month campaign. She said the campaign helps ensure that water issues become a top priority, and that the vulnerable and most marginalised groups are not left behind.

“We have to make every second count, and work together, to realise a better future for all”, she said.

South Africa is a water scarce country, and most water in many streams is has been polluted. Both droughts and floods are common. In this regards, wetlands play a vital role by removing toxic substances and sediment from the water, while also improving downstream water quality and the overall health of communities.

She added that wetlands are not isolated features in the landscape but are part of the water cycle of an ecosystem. Water connects the wetlands to rivers, lakes, dams and ultimately the sea.

“Rehabilitation of our water bodies ties well with this effort to involve the youth in the care of our wetlands. We do take advice from our universities on using herbicides that do not undermine the biological control of our water bodies,” said Magesela.

Wetlands are able to reduce the severity of droughts and floods by regulating stream flow. They also help to purify water and provide habitat for many different plants and animals. Besides these indirect benefits to society, wetlands provide many direct benefits in the form of resources such as fibre for making crafts as well as recreational opportunities. However, lack of community awareness on the value and benefits of wetlands often leads to their transformation by humans.

Duduza Primary School Leaner Panashe Godo said, sometimes, without knowing, we do things that harm our water supplies. When we use too much fertilizer or pesticide on lawns, gardens or fields, some of it can end up being washing into rivers and lakes. Once there, it can hurt fish and other animals. It also can make water unsafe for us to drink. Harmful chemicals can soak deep into the ground and pollute water that is found there. Even things like old paint or motor oil can be harmful if you dump them down the drain or pour them onto the ground. In the end, these things find their way back into our water.

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“We appreciate this opportunity because it helps us to understand the value of water, understand water sources throughout the environment and the dependency that humans and animals have on water supply”, he concluded

KHULEKANI NGCOBO

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