



INTERNET ARTICLE

Communities unite to restore Hartbeespoort Dam for Mandela Day

25 July 2025

In the spirit of Mandela Day, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), together with Magalies Water, Madibeng Local Municipality, the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), Hya Maatla Organics and members of the local community, dedicated 67 minutes of goodwill to clearing the shoreline of Hartbeespoort Dam on 18 July 2025.

This activity formed part of the Clear Rivers Campaign, held under the theme, ***“South Africa is a water-scarce country: Clean up and protect our water resources.”*** The campaign is a call to action for communities to care for water resources such as rivers, wetlands, dams, canals and streams near their homes. While Mandela Day provided a symbolic platform for this collective effort, the Department encourages continuous participation throughout the year.

The Clear Rivers Campaign seeks to engage communities through collaboration and education, promoting awareness around the importance of protecting water resources. It fosters a spirit of volunteerism as a proactive way to conserve rivers, streams, wetlands and other ecosystems. It also recognises the connection between the health of aquatic environments and broader goals such as economic development and public health.

Speaking on behalf of the Department in the North West, Selby Matsheka affirmed the Department’s commitment to the Clear Rivers Campaign. He emphasised that meaningful change begins with individuals.

“The Department believes that true change begins at grassroots level with ordinary citizens taking extraordinary steps, whether by removing a single plastic bottle from the stream or educating others about water pollution,” he said.

Matsheka praised the diverse group of volunteers who participated in the Mandela Day event, calling them true champions of the rivers and guardians of future generations.

“Your actions not only restore the waterway but our shared dignity and hope. Let us use these 67 minutes, not as a limit, but as a spark to ignite lasting care for our rivers,” he added.

Malebo Matolong, Deputy Board Chairperson of Magalies Water, echoed this call and encouraged people to rise and take responsibility for the protection of water resources, rather than relying solely on government. She noted that the consequences of environmental neglect are becoming more visible and urged the people of Madibeng to redouble their efforts. She described the Clear Rivers Campaign as more than just an environmental initiative, it is a call for cooperation, unity and active partnership.

Ward 33 committee member in Madibeng Local Municipality, Lawrence Mothiba, expressed his appreciation for the campaign and stressed the importance of sustained action. He called

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for a continuous clean-up effort involving more people and more resources to tackle the pollution at Hartbeespoort Dam, which he described as vast and deeply affected.

Over the years, the Department has consistently mobilised all sectors of society to participate in clean-up activities across the country. It continues to urge communities, the private sector and civil society to take action in their areas, not only by cleaning rivers and streams but also by preventing pollution before it happens.

Katlego Bolokang

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