



NATIONAL AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAMME (NAEHMP)
RHP e-COMMUNICATION

JUNE 2009 VOLUME



SASS5 Training
Picture by: Christa Thirion



*This newsletter is released every three months to keep you informed of what is happening on the NAEHMP.
Visit <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/iwqs/rhp/ecomunication.html> for more information and
should you have any comments please send them to: sekweler@dwaf.gov.za*



From the RHP desk

The RHP Steering Committee Meeting was held on the 26th of May 2009 at Roodeplaat Training Centre and the attendance was not as high as anticipated but a lot of issues were discussed and actions allocated. This Committee is established as a requirement according to the Governance Chapter of the NAEHMP: RHP Implementation Manual to guide research and development of the Programme.

The uploading of the RHP data to the National Rivers Database is going well with almost 90% of all data received from KwaZulu Natal, Free State and Northern Cape Provinces captured to date. The data from all the RDM reserve work is not captured on the database yet but is available from Ramogale Sekwele. All practitioners who do not have time to load their information onto the Database are still encouraged to make the information available to RQS for capturing. If you wish to load your own data, the CDs and procedures for installation of the National Rivers Database are obtainable from Ms. Joyce Maluleka DWAF: RQS (+27(0)12 808 9552 or MalulekaJ@dwaf.gov.za).

A series of FETWater Training Rivers & Wetlands modules are being presented through University of Johannesburg and going well thus far; visit <http://www.uj.ac.za/FETWater/tabid/15609/Default.aspx> for more information. The next Module, on River and Wetland Management, will be held from 6-10 July, 2009. Please share with us your experiences of the training courses so that we can improve the courses to meet organisational, individuals and project needs.

Nearly all RHP data received from Provinces has been captured on the National Rivers Database. Problems have been experienced with about 4% of the data.

The next Wetland IHI Training will be presented sometime later in the year by DWA: RQS. The previous course was presented from 25-26 June 2009 in the Western Cape. For more information please contact Pumza Maseti (+27(0)12 9553/ MasetiP@dwaf.gov.za).

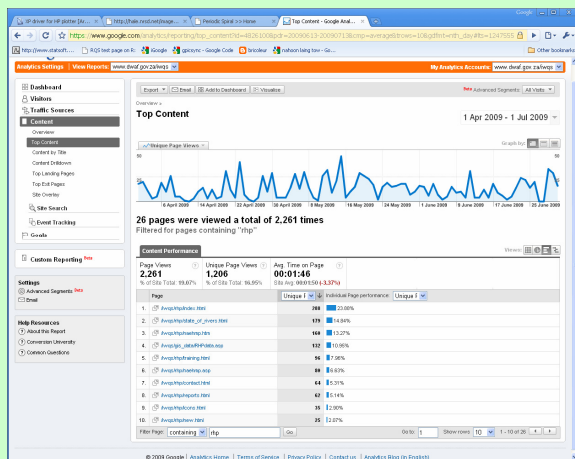
The RHP Provincial Champions Symposium will be held in Pretoria on 15-16 September 2009 in Pretoria. Due to several concerns mainly coming from most Provincial Champions and the RHP Steering Committee about the structure and purpose of this Symposium, we from RQS will finalise the new proposed change in consultation with SCM Members to ensure that we the Symposium addresses the issues of concern about the Programme as experienced currently.

We are pleased to announce the two new appointments in the Directorate: Resource Quality Service: **Dr Nadine Slabbert** joined RQS as the Director and **Mr Bongani Msimanga**, Deputy Director of the Sub-Directorate: Resource Quality Monitoring. Both took office on the 1st of June 2009.

Readers' column

Analytics RHP Pageview

This Figure shows the Internet activity on the River Health Programme web pages at RQS for the three months from 1 April to 1 July. The 1206 RHP unique page views made up 17% of the total Resource Quality Services website unique page view activity. Of these views, a quarter were for the old River Health Programme table of contents, 15% for the State of Rivers reports and 13% for the newer NAEHMP page.



In Google Analytics terminology, a "pageview" is a view of a page on the site tracked by the Analytics tracking code. If a visitor hits reload after reaching the page, this will be counted as an additional pageview. If a user navigates to a different page and then returns to the original page, a second pageview will be recorded as well. However a "unique pageview", as seen in the Figure, aggregates pageviews generated by the same user during the same session. A unique pageview therefore represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times.

By Mike Silberbauer:silberbauerm@dwaf.gov.za

Provincial Activities

Northern Cape

Two officials, one from Environmental Affairs & Nature Conservation and the other from DWA in the Northern



Cape have completed a survey of seven sites in the Lower Vaal River. In one instance, together with Frances Baard Municipality they took pupils of Holpan and Windsorton to the river in order to educate them

about water pollution. The activity was motivated by the need to educate people about the importance of conserving and protecting water resources at an early age as the government cannot do this alone.

For more information contact Peter Ramollo Tell: +27(0)53 807 7442/Email: pramol@half.ncape.gov.za or Sam Dywili Tell: +27(0)53 802 0500/Email: dywili@dwaf.gov.za

North West

The North West team is responsible for biomonitoring in parts of four water management areas: Crocodile (West) and Marico, Upper-, Middle- and Lower Vaal. The Department's name has changed and they are now the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Rural Development.

Activities that took place during the second quarter of 2009 include:

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April:

Most of the month was allocated to assistance and workshops for the Ecological Reserve determinations in the Crocodile (West) and Marico WMA. They did a rapid site on the Klein Marico River and the Ecological Importance and Sensitivity and Present Ecological Status determinations for the Marico area. This project is undertaken by Golder and Associates.

River Health data (IHI, PES and progress reports) was provided to the RDM DWAF Directorate for work on the Crocodile River. Biomonitoring data was also provided to the University of the North West for diatom analysis. Some of the diatom analyses are now available.

Site visits to rivers to determine the flow conditions in the Crocodile West and Marico WMA: very high flows prevented SASS5 data collection.

Problems are being experienced with sewerage discharges at Zeerust in the Klein Marico River. Hermien Roux assisted, reported and investigated Klein Marico sewerage pollution and water quality issues (reports and letters to DWAF and Environmental Monitoring and Compliance division of (NWDACE). The problem has since been resolved as blocked effluent pipes caused the discharges.

May:

The most worrying issue and the major topic of discussion is the sewerage threat to the Barberspan bird sanctuary and Harts River from the Sannieshof sewerage treatment facilities. This is a very serious problem. Advice was provided regarding water quality monitoring programmes for the bird sanctuary.

For more information contact Hermien Roux Mobile: +27(0)82 466 5966/Email hroux@nwpg.gov.za

NAEHMP events and related matters

SASS accreditation in South Africa

SASS Training and accreditation was held from 15 -17 April 2009 at Sabie, Mpumalanga. Twenty four people,



including delegates from Namibia and Swaziland, attended the intensive training course. The course provided a practical introduction to the SASS5 method, and included presentations on safety, the National River Health Programme, identification of aquatic invertebrates, data analysis and reporting. A highlight of the course was analyzing samples collected from the Treur River, a pristine river with a high diversity of sensitive species. On the last day a short test was conducted where candidates had to

work on their own and collect samples from different biotopes and also identify samples from the Sabie River. The aim of the test was to give the students an idea of how much they have mastered and the amount of practice still needed for them to be competent in the procedure.

Delegates enjoyed themselves and no one fell in the river, despite high river levels. Anonymous comments received from the attendees include the following:

- *"I really enjoyed the course and the outcomes are what I expected."*
- *"It was good. I still need a lot of practice. It shows me how far I still have to go. I was surprised though to see that I had good marks"*
- *"Everything was great"*
- *"Everything was perfect"*
- *This was productive. It helped me to get my hands on practicing SASS. It will help me to properly do my work in Water Quality Assessments"*



Some more actions on this training check our website: http://www.dwaf.gov.za/iwqs/rhp/training/sass_training2009.html

By Rob Palmer:rob@nepid.co.za and pictures by Christa Thirion

Wetland Index of Habitat Integrity Training

The second training on the use of Wetland IHI for floodplains and valley bottoms was successfully conducted on 25-26 June 2009 at Clara Anna Fontein Lodge, Durbanville in Cape Town. Twenty participants from DWA Western Cape, Eastern Cape DEDEA, Cape Nature, Drakenstein municipality, City of Cape Town, WESSA, Freshwater Consulting

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Group and consultants attended the training. The first day of the training was characterized by background introduction



to the Wetland IHI and the modules within the index. The participants braved the cold and wet weather on the second day when they were taken into the field to do an assessment using the index on a floodplain wetland located on the Diep River catchment around Durbanville. Special thanks to the Presenter, the DWA Belville office for assisting in all arrangements and the participants. We hope this training has met your expectations. Should anyone have comments on this training please send them to Ramogale Sekwele (sekweler@dwaf.gov.za). The next training

will be conducted before the end of 2009/2010 financial year and further information about this will appear on the RHP website in due course.

By Pumza Maseti: masetip@dwaf.gov.za

FETWater: Module 3 Training

The monitoring of Rivers and Wetlands Module 3 offered by University of Johannesburg was conducted from the 4-8 May 2009 at Magaliesberg Training centre. The module dealt with the RHP component of the NAEHMP. The first three days were spent looking at the theory behind the monitoring of rivers and the use of different indices. Then a field visit was conducted on the fourth day so that candidates could put into practice what they had learned in class. On the last day students presented various topics assigned to them during the first day of class.

Module 5, which was supposed to be held on the 1-5 June 2009, was cancelled and a new date will be announced soon. Module 7 will continue as planned from 6-10 July 2009.

By Zinzi Mboweni: MboweniZ@dwaf.gov.za

Adopt-a-River Programme

Adopt-a-River Project Success Stories in Western Cape Region (Gouritz WMA): Eden District Municipality Initiatives and Tweekuilen Project.

1. Eden District Municipality Initiatives



Eden District Municipality (DM) has adopted Gwaing River, and they have a fixed schedule to monitor that river system. Schoolchildren undertake these monitoring events after school hours, as extramural activities.

Grant Lottering received a minister's acknowledgement in Parliament as a **2008 Adopt-A-River learner ambassador** in Western Cape. The

event was held in May 23rd 2008, during DWAF Minister's budget speech.

From 22-28 June 2008, the GLOBE 12th Annual International conference was held at the University of Cape Town. Eden DM's GLOBE schools attended, and four learners (Miss Heyley-Ann Prince, Mr Zolani Banda, Miss Candice Julius, and Mr Grant Lottering) presented on the State of the Adopt-A-River Program in Western Cape, representing the whole of South Africa.

2. Tweekuilen Project

At the phase where they already rehabilitated, they constructed a bird watching house, from where they count birds. They have confirmed that most of the bird species have returned after rehabilitation of that phase.

For more information contact Tovho Nyamande at: +27(0)12 808 9614 or NdiitwT@dwaf.gov.za

Adopt-a-River Programme: Phase II Project

The Phase II of the Adopt-a-River Programme: Design Phase is due for completion by end of August 2009. The products of this project will help guide implementers throughout the country on recommended processes to follow on implementing the Programme.

For more information on the project contact Ramogale Sekwele at: +27(0)12 808 9614 or sekweler@dwaf.gov.za