

NATIONAL AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAMME (NAEHMP)

RHP e-COMMUNICATION

January-March 2008 Volume



GDACE team: Piet Muller (left), Support Chavalala (centre) and Vuyokazi Mpumwana (right) scrutinizing the collected Macroinvertebrate samples from Klipspruit.



Water Affairs and Forestry
Environmental Affairs and Tourism



From the RHP desk

In recent years, there has been limited contribution in putting information to the general public through this communiqué and or the RHP website. This is mainly because those involved in RHP might not have been approached for contributions or simply they have been busy with other things than such little but valuable contributions. We would like to remind you all that the success of this programme is dependent on you and your continued contribution is very critical. The CSIR will still be continuing with the RHP web support and please send all your contributions to Ms. Wilma Strydom at: WStrydom@csir.co.za and also copy such to Mr. Ramogale Sekwele at: sekweler@dwaf.gov.za. Regional Head and or Champions should please make sure that information reaches us for inclusion.

A reminder to all role players who are planning to produce any RHP product in any particular year to liaise with DWAF:RQS, RHP office, to ensure that reporting is done in a standardized manner.

We are in the process of changing the RHP eCommunication look and you are encouraged to make contributions on to the different columns as indicated in the eCommunication No. 5: http://www.csir.co.za/rhp/ecommunication/rhp_e_com_Nov2007.pdf. Also your comments to improve this communiqué are welcome at: sekweler@dwaf.gov.za.

All participants are reminded to take Diatom samples during all their site visits and send the samples for analysis to Dr. Jonathan Taylor. Jonathan can be reached at: Jonathan.Taylor@nwu.ac.za or send samples to Jonathan's attention at: North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, School of Environmental Sciences, Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom, 2520.

The Rivers Database Manual is available on CD or can be downloaded from the web at: <http://www.riv.co.za/Rivers>. For a copy of the CD, contact Ramogale Sekwele at: Tel: +2712 808 9614 or Email: sekweler@dwaf.gov.za. Should users encounter any problems relating to installation and or use of the Database please contact Mr. Andrew Molteno: andrew@SoftCraft.co.za or Dr. Helen Dallas: Helen.Dallas@uct.ac.za. Please also report any difficulties that you may experience with the use of the Database and also compliments to Helen.

Two short courses of the FETWater Wetlands and Rivers training will be presented at University of Johannesburg 26-30 May 2008 (Module 1) and 1-5 September 2008 (Module 2). These two courses will hold credit for all participants as well as be credited towards a tutored master's degree in Zoology at UJ. For more information on the courses please contact Tahla Ross (Email: fetwater@uj.ac.za) or visit: <http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=www.uj.ac.za/zoology>.

Adopt-a-River Programme

The main aim of the Adopt-a-River programme is to create an understanding among all water users and in particular the previously marginalised communities, of the concept of IWRM and to encourage them to become actively involved in the protection and management of these water resources.

Phase I of the programme has been completed and the Draft Strategic Framework is available. Procurement for undertaking Phase II of the Programme has been completed and the process is under way for the design of the implementation plan. The Professional Service Provider (Linda Rossouw, email: lrossouw@mweb.co.za) appointed has been appointed to undertake Phase II of the Programme. This Phase is focusing on the design of the implementation plan of the Programme and quite substantial progress is been made. A workshop organised jointly by DWAF and WRC will be held on the 8th of May, 2008 where the idea will be sold to wider SA community and to further establish linkages with role players.

For more information contact Ramogale Sekwele (sekweler@dwaf.gov.za or 012 808 9614).

Special thanks from the RHP Team to you for all contributions made.

Readers column

Duzi-Umngeni Conservation Trust (DUCT)

During the recent DUCT (Duzi uMngeni Conservation Trust, see <http://www.duct.org.za/>) River Clean-Up Day held in KZN on the 15th September (as part of International Coastal CleanUp Day), various teams of volunteers (including some involved in the KZN PTT and River Health Programme) were involved in a clean up along a section of the Msunduze River through Pietermaritzburg. Just upstream from where a team had cleared the banks of over 50 bags of rubbish was seen this traditional Zulu pre-wedding ceremony ritual. It certainly added a different dimension to how rivers are seen and used by communities and makes the work being undertaken by the NAEHMP and volunteer groups such as DUCT more meaningful. As Nombuso Zondi (the lady taking the pictures in the photo) said afterwards "Thanks again for keeping our Duzi clean, it made the whole experience much more pleasant".



By Dr. Mark Graham (Ground Thruth Consulting)

Provincial Activities

Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape Team is organising the establishment of an RHP Technical Task Team sometime in mid to late 2008 and any contribution on issues to cover in such a

team are welcome. Please communicate your contribution to Ms. Pumza Gaza-Lubelwana: Lubelwp@dwaf.gov.za and copy Dr. Mandy Uys: m1aughingh2o@icon.co.za

For more information contact Kululwa at: Tel: +27 43 748 5340 or Email: Mkosank@dwaf.gov

Free State & Northern Cape

The Free State Province is working on moving most of the RHP responsibilities into the post of the Grassland Project which the incumbent will be housed in DWAF: Bloemfontein and also appointing a Professional Service Provider to help on the update of the Free State SoR development.

The Northern Cape team is currently gaining training and linking up with neighbouring colleagues to gain insight into the Programme.

A meeting will be held between DWAF:RQS and the Free State & Northern Cape PTT around mid 2008 to further strengthen the relation and to give support to the region.

For more information contact Gerda at: Tel: +2751 405 9201 and Email: venter.gerda@dwaf.gov.za

KwaZulu Natal

A meeting was held between DWAF: RQS and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to expedite the probabilities of

housing RHP Championship with EKZN Wildlife. Terms of References are being developed by DWAF:RQS to take the process forward.

For more information contact Ramogale Sekwele (DWAF:RQS) at: Tel: +2712 808 9614; Email: sekweler@dwaf.gov.za

Mpumalanga

The Mpumalanga Parks Board together with DWAF:RQS are looking at commissioning a production of an Inkomati SoR. A meeting is to be held in due course to explore possibilities and also to reinforce the RHP Technical Team in the Province. Ms. Tolmay Hopkins (Tel.: 013 759 7343) from DWAF Nelspruit Regional Office has been identified as a regional representative on RHP in the Province and she is already on talk with Dr. Johan Engelbrecht for involvement.

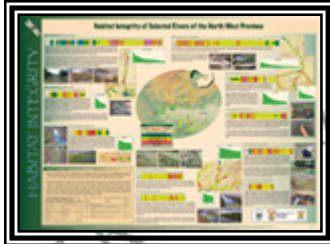
For more information contact Johan at: Tel: +2713 235 0796 or Email: jseng@lantic.net

North West

The North West Habitat Integrity has been produced and available from Ms. Hermien Roux (Mobile: 082 466 5966 / email hroux@nwpg.gov.za) or http://www.csir.co.za/rhp/state_of_rivers.html.

Progress on appointment of an RHP Champion in the Province has not been up to the expected speed. It is still expected from DACE to release the name in due course.

A meeting between DWAF:RQS & Gauteng RO and DACE was held on the 24th of January, 2008 to further



strengthen the working relation between DWAF:RO and DACE; and implementation planning.

For more information contact Hermien at: Cell: 082 4665966; Email: hroux@nwpg.gov.za

Western Cape

Ms. Tovho Nyamande of DWAF: Western Cape has been appointed as the Western Cape Provincial RHP Champion. The Cape Nature has filled several posts to fulfil the role of RHP through a contract with DWAF:RO in the Province. Cape Nature hosted the 2008 National Yellowfish Conference at Jonkershoek where the RHP focal person, Ms Nosie Ketse (email: nketse@capenature.co.za) in Cape Nature presented a high quality progress report in the Province. Proceedings of the conference will be available on the FOSAF website (www.fosaf.co.za) in due course or can be requested from the secretary Peter Ardene (Tel.: 083 457 7478 / 011 882 3051 or email: mwardern@mweb.co.za) when available.

For more information contact Tovho at: Tel:+2721 950 7124; Email: NdiitwT@dwaf.gov.za

Limpopo

In 2007, the Limpopo biomonitoring team completed a new survey of the Nwanedzi River to the north of the

Soutpansberg. The continued presence of the provincially scarce *Clarias theodora* (snake catfish) was confirmed in the 2007 survey of the Nwanedzi River.

Technical reports have been completed and it is hoped that posters relating to this survey will be published in 2008, using funding from the regional DWAF office.



Also in 2007, a third formal survey and report on the state of the Letaba Catchment was completed. Earlier surveys were reported on, in 2000 and 2003. The 2007 study complimented ongoing reserve monitoring projects in the Letaba Catchment and provided a further baseline for the proposed development of the new Nwamitwa Dam.

The Team is currently planning a third survey of the Luvuvhu Catchment and it is hoped that all reports will be completed by December 2008. The study will again supplement ongoing reserve projects and will be the first since the completion of the new Nandoni Dam. Earlier surveys were conducted in 1999 and 2003.

A joint survey of the Shingwedzi River, across the province and the Kruger National Park is nearing completion.

Surveys of some smaller rivers and tributaries are also planned for 2008.

For more information contact Mick at: Tel:+2715 295 9300; Email: anglissmk@ledet.gov.za

NAEHMP events and related

World Wetlands Day, 2008

World Wetlands Day is held every year on the 2nd of February, offering an opportunity to be part of a global celebration of wetlands and their value for biodiversity and human well-being. This annual event commemorates the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian City of Ramsar.



Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People was the theme set by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands for World Wetlands Day 2008. It emphasized the importance of well-functioning wetlands in ensuring human health and well-being by managing disease, by creating space for recreation and by providing clean water, food and medicine.

The Klip River system was the focus of World Wetlands Day 2008. The Klip River wetland plays an exceptionally valuable role in improving the quality of the water flowing through the system and into the Vaal River.

Several activities in the catchment are reducing the functioning of the wetland, creating a situation where not only is the wetland no longer able to purify water adequately, but it is also possible that much of the heavy metal pollution that has been stored in the peat for the past century will be released back into the water, with severe implications for downstream users.

In recognition of the value of the Klip River system and the implications of its degradation, a range of institutions have committed to improving the health of the wetland. The City of Johannesburg has committed funds for rehabilitating sections of the Klip River system, including the wetland, through its Mayoral Legacy Project. Working for Wetlands has identified the Klip River wetland as a priority for future rehabilitation work and is already active in the river's catchment. The system is also of high priority to the DEAT, GDACE, DWAF, as well as Rand Water and civil society groups.

This year's World Wetlands Day 2008 celebration was organized in partnership by the DEAT, DWAF, Public Works, GDACE, the City of Johannesburg, SANBI, Rand Water, Gauteng Wetlands Forum and Expanded Public Works Programme.

On January 31st 2008 the Klip River system was explored in detail, starting with a walk into the middle of a healthy section of the wetland near Lenasia, then moving to a site that is heavily degraded where the impacts of bad land use were able to be seen. A rehabilitation site was then visited where active rehabilitation was in progress.



DWAF: RQS in conjunction with GDACE, organized an exhibition at the degraded section of the wetland, showing biomonitoring results from a site on the Klip River, immediately downstream of the degraded wetland. This allowed for exposure to the River Health Programme, explaining its objectives and function. It also showed the effects of land use on the Klip River in terms of the local habitat and biota, as reflected in the poor SASS5 (South African Scoring System Version 5) scores obtained.

On February 1st Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Gauteng MEC for Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, Khabisi Mosunkutu and Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, Amos Masondo spoke about the value that healthy wetlands play in human well-being. Harrison Pienaar, Chief Director: Resource Directed Measures, Department Water Affairs & Forestry, gave a presentation regarding the Klip River in the context of integrated water resource management.

DWAF organized an exhibition as part of the second day's proceedings, highlighting the value of wetlands in the context of integrated water resource management.

By Colleen Todd (DWAF:RQS)

National Water Week, 17 – 23 March 2008

Monday 17 March saw the start of National Water Week. This annual event aims to highlight the value of our water resources in sustaining all forms of life and is captured in this year's theme, "Water: Sustaining Lives, Enabling Growth". Specifically, during National Water Week, the department aims to:

(<http://www.dwaf.gov.za/Communications/PressReleases/2008/NWW13Mar08.doc>)

- Raise awareness around the need to protect and conserve the country's water resources.
- Highlight the contribution that water makes to social and economic development.
- Highlight the role it plays in sustaining all forms of life in South Africa and the linkages between water services, water resource management, water quality management and water conservation and water demand management.
- 2008 being the International Year of Sanitation year and also being the year all South Africans will have access to functioning basic water supply, the focus will largely be on these two areas as well.

Minister Lindiwe Hendricks officially launched this year's event. Part of the launch saw 60 learners from Skeen Primary School learning about life in our rivers, using Mini-SASS (South African Scoring System), an assessment method aimed at identifying macroinvertebrate groups living in rivers and streams. Minister Hendricks was given a demonstration of the SASS method and also had an opportunity to identify macroinvertebrates collected. Due to the rainy weather, the sample collected was identified indoors at the Delta Park Environmental Centre. However, this did not deter the enthusiasm with which macroinvertebrates were identified by the learners. Learners also received information regarding life in our rivers and the need to protect and conserve our valuable water resources. The day was a huge success. The remainder of the week's events focused on environmental education, with various learner activities and learning opportunities presented by Working for Wetlands, Working for Water, Rand Water and Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation and the Environment, among others.

By Colleen Todd (DWAF:RQS)