

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

SEPTEMBER 2008 VOLUME



Provincial RHP Champions Symposium 2008

Picture by: Ramogale Sekwele



Water Affairs & Forestry
Environmental Affairs & Tourism



*This newsletter is released every three months to keep you informed of what is happening on the NAEHMP.
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should you have any comments please send them to: sekwele@dwaf.gov.za*

From the RHP desk

The first Wetland IHI Phase I training will be held in Pretoria, DWAF Training Centre on 10-11 November, 2008. The training will be facilitated by Mark Rountree, who was the leader of the development of the Index, coordinated through DWAF, D: RQS. Contact Pumza Maseti (+27(0)12 808 9553 / MasetiP@dwaf.gov.za) or Ramogale Sekwele (+27(0)12 808 9614 / Sekweler@dwaf.gov.za) for more details. Only 20 seats will be allocated and candidates will be taken on a first come first served basis. We recommend that authorities who will be applying this Index receive training first, to help them assess applications where the Index has been deployed.

The CSIR will be handing over the RHP website <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/iwqs/rhp.html> administration and maintenance responsibilities to DWAF: RQS during the month of October, so please direct all queries and updates to Mike Silberbauer at +27(0)12 808 9605 / SilberbauerM@dwaf.gov.za. Please do submit information about your activities through for capturing onto the website. **Very special thanks goes to Wilma Strydom and CSIR for all the efforts put on the development and maintenance of the RHP website until the hand over and we hope for your continued support.**

Both the National Rivers Database manual and the Wetlands Index of Habitat Integrity Phase I manuals have been approved and are available on the DWAF website (<http://www.dwaf.gov.za/iwqs/rhp/naehmp.htm>). Hard copies of the latter can be obtained from DWAF D: RQS contact: Joyce Maluleka at +27(0)12 808 9552 / Maluleka.J@dwaf.gov.za.

Two members of the RHP team at D: RQS have left the unit, firstly **Mr Lungile Gaulana**, on a promotional transfer to DWAF: ESL Regional Office and **Ms Colleen Todd** to Clean Streams Consulting. Both will however still be doing related work and can be reached for help when needed. Ms Todd will also still be involved in the SASS5 Auditing for Gauteng Region. Also an announcement of another key RHP pillar **Dr Johan Engelbrecht**, the Mpumalanga RHP Champion, will be leaving MTPA on 31 October 2008 to join Golder Associates. We would like to express our sincere thanks for the support given by them to the programme and we trust that they will continue supporting us with their expertise.

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

Readers' column

Baakens River Adopt-A-River Programme

The Eastern Cape RHP Team has initiated the Adopt-A-River Programme with Kabega Primary School, within the Chris Hani District Municipal area. The School has adopted the Baakens River in Water Management Area 15. The Grade 6 pupils are taken to the Baakens River seasonally where they assess the ecological health of a river reach. The Kabeka Primary School has also invited other schools around the Baakens River to participate and it is expected that participation in the area will extend to other schools.



By Thulani Guzana: GuzanaT@dwaf.gov.za



Provincial Activities

North West

The North West team is responsible for biomonitoring in parts of four water management areas, the Crocodile (West) and Marico, Upper Vaal, Middle Vaal and Lower Vaal.

Activities that took place during July, August and September 2008 include:

Monitoring (SASS5, diatoms, and water quality) took place at selected sites in the western part of the Crocodile West during July.

The team organized and gave demonstrations and presentations at a River Health biomonitoring (SASS5, fish, diatoms, vegetation, and water quality) field day on 15 August in the Marico River.

The Ecological Reserve determination process is ongoing in the Crocodile (West) and Marico, Upper Vaal, Middle Vaal and Lower Vaal Water Management areas.

Joint SASS5 accreditation with Gauteng, in Gauteng, took place in August 2008.

Data capture and verification of data already captured for 105 sites and 277 SASS5 datasets collected since 2005 to the National Rivers Database.

For more information contact Hermien Roux
Cell: +27(0)82 4665966
Email: hroux@nwpg.gov.za

Limpopo

The LEDET team continues to enjoy a good working relationship with the two provincial universities, DWAF and SANParks.

During 2008, the Limpopo team completed reports on the state of the Nwanedzi Catchment based on 2007 data.

A survey of selected sites in the Letaba Catchment was also completed and reports finalized. Data from the project was also used in a trial methodology to implement Ecological Reserve monitoring, under the steady guidance of Dr Kleynhans and Delana Louw.



A41Matl-MATLA in the upper Marakele National Park
Picture by: Mick Angliss

A study of the Matlabas River was completed in August. The survey was coordinated with Dr Andrew Deacon of SANParks in order to access sites within the upper Marakele National Park. The draft report will be completed this month.

In September, LEDET and DWAF (Polokwane office) organized a two-day river awareness course for DWAF personnel and LEDET interns. The course was based at Nwanedi Resort along the Nwanedzi River. There were 18 attendees in total and the event was considered a good success.

During October, a survey of selected sites within the Luvuvhu Catchment will commence and if rains permit, the survey will be completed by December.

For more information contact Mick Angliss at:
Tel: +27 (0)15 295 9300
Email: AnglissMK@ledet.gov.za

Eastern Cape

A Provincial Technical Task Team (PTTT) for the Eastern Cape River Health Programme, covering WMAs 12 and 15 was established on the 13th of August 2008. The function of this Task Team will be to meet quarterly to provide technical input and guidance to DWAF Eastern Cape to assist us in our mandated task of planning and running the River Health Programme for the province. Members of the PTTT include Albany Museum, DEDEA (Eastern Cape), Eastern Cape Parks Board, IWR (Institute for Water Research), Laughing Waters, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Rhodes University, Scherman Consulting and Water Sisulu University.

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These members have been identified as being or having been technically involved in one or other aspect of the River Health Programme, or having valuable experience and expertise to contribute to the running of the programme. The PTTT is a voluntary body.

In WMA 15,

The Team is currently working with the Albany Museum (Rhodes University) and the University of Stellenbosch in the Macro-invertebrates project that is being conducted in 11 rivers in the Tsitsikamma catchment. The project will run until 2010.

The Team is also working with Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University on the Biomonitoring of the Bushman's Estuary.

Other work includes involvement in the Rehabilitation of the Kouga Catchment Project (clearing of Black Wattle), where the Team is currently assessing the recovery of macro-invertebrates and water chemistry in the Baviaans River. In this project is done together with Rhodes University.

For more information contact Thulani Guzana at
Tell: +27(0)41 586 4884 or Email:
GuzanaT@dwaf.gov.za

Mpumalanga

All that we can report from Mpumalanga at this stage is the resignation of Dr Johan Engelbrecht from Mpumalanga Tourism & Parks Agency (MTPA). He has contributed a lot to the RHP in the province in the past and has been the Champion of the Programme in Mpumalanga for years. He has contributed exceptionally to the programme as a whole.

At the moment we are still discussing the draft MoU within the Province.

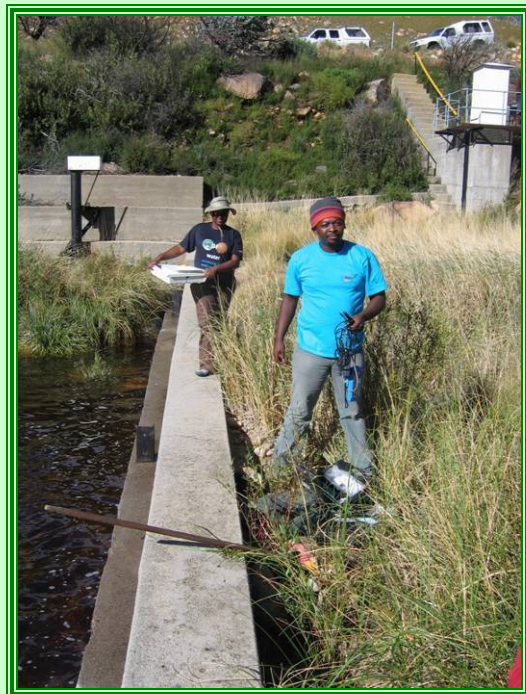
For more information contact Tolmay
Hopkins Tel: +27(0)13 759 7343 or Email:
HopkinsT@dwaf.gov.za

Western Cape

In the Western Cape Province, members of the River Conservation Unit (RCU) at both Cape Nature and the Belville DWAF regional offices have been busy concluding a comprehensive survey of the Breede WMA. All seasonal SASS 5 data for this WMA have been collected from Autumn 2007 to Winter 2008. Although this has been completed, data for some of the indices are still incomplete or lacking. Therefore, these data will be collected during trips planned for the months of October to November 2008. Data for the

fish assemblage index are still lacking for about half of the 51 sites in the Breede WMA, while no index of habitat integrity (IHI) has been collected to date, other than that which is included in the Site Characterisation data sheets. Some data of this survey have already been presented at the joint Fynbos Forum/Arid Zones Interfaces 2008 conference which was held in Oudshoorn from 3-7 August 2008. This conference was also well attended by RCU members from both agencies.

Furthermore, all members of the RCU have been allocated to different Catchment Management Areas (CMAs) in the province and will henceforth be active and be involved in these CMAs. The CMAs in the Western Cape include the Berg, Olifants/Doom, Breede and the Gouritz WMAs. Additionally, the RCU now has a staff member allocated to estuarine issues. This RCU member will work closely with members of the C.A.P.E. Estuarine Management Programme and keep the rest of the team updated with regard to estuarine issues in their allocated CMAs.



Phil and Nosi preparing to do SASS at one of the Western Cape sites on the Molenaars River in du Toits kloof. Winter 2008.



Michael Radzilani doing the Geomorphological assessment for one of the Breede WMA sites on the Witte River in Bainskloof. Winter 2008. Note the high flow.



Dean Impson, Martine Jordaan, Shaun Marr (from UCT) and Koos (the farm manager) at a site on the Tradouw River outside Barrydale. They are preparing the electroshocker for a fish assessment on the farm Bronze Grove. Winter 2008



Nosi Ketse and Martine Jordaan discussing and identifying invertebrates for SASS at one of our Breede WMA sites on the Doring River in the Worcester-Villiersdorp area. Winter 2008.

For more information contact Jeanne Gouws Tel: +27(0)21 866 8014 or Email: jgouws@capenature.co.za

NAEHMP events and related

RHP Provincial Champions Symposium 2008

The RHP Provincial Champions Symposium 2008 was held at SANBI on 22-23 September and it was well attended by participants from all the provinces, including government officials, universities, consultants, SANParks & other conservation agencies, and the Inkomati CMA. The annual Symposium is an event where provincial implementers, the national custodians of the NAEHMP and other stakeholders get together to discuss developments, progress and issues relating to the programme at national and provincial levels, and share experiences and ideas relating to the operation and maintenance of the programme.



Delegates reported progress in provinces and a side meeting on the planning of Biomonitoring Course presentation was also held during day 1. Day 2 focused mainly on research and developments relating to the programme and decisions on the way forward which included, amongst others, establishment of the National Programme Coordinating Committee.

Top Right: Participants of the Symposium tackling issues even out of the formal session.

Above: Ms Tolmay Hopkings (DWAF: NLS) and Mr Morteza Fayazi exchanging ideas in the gardens during tea break.

By Ramogale Sekwele: sekweler@dwaf.gov.za

Adopt-a-River Programme

The Adopt-a-River Programme Phase II National Project is running smoothly and the size of the Stakeholder Database is increasing in an alarming rate. A meeting was held by the team members with WESSA and representatives from Duzi Conservation Trust (DUCT) where issues relating to training and inception of the programme, amongst others, were discussed. The next Project Study Team meeting is scheduled for early to mid December, and members will discuss progress and the way forward. Two internal DWAF meetings were held to discuss the launching of the Programme. Little progress has been made on this aspect as there is still the challenge of finding a Programme Champion in DWAF.

Ms Linda Rossouw (Phase II Project Leader) will be making a joint presentation on the Adopt-a-River Programme at the North American Lakes Management Society (NALMS) Conference in Chicago during the month of November, 2008 (<http://www.nalms.org/Conferences/2008Chicago/Default.aspx>).

For more information about the Programme please contact Ramogale Sekwele (sekweler@dwaf.gov.za or +27(0)12 808 9614).

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