



RHP NATIONAL

RHP Planning Workshop

The minutes of the RHP Planning Workshop, held in February 2004, was distributed to all who attended the workshop in February this year. This document will be available on the RHP website (<http://www.csir.co.za/rhp/>) soon.

RHP Website

The website is again being updated regularly. Provincial Champs, please send us photos of events / field trips and reports that you would like to be viewed on the website. Your contributions can be sent to Thabo Sekonyela (Tsekonyela@csir.co.za).

RHP: National Coverage Phase

One of the main outcomes of the Planning Workshop was that the design of the RHP has to be reviewed and revised in order to:

- expand the scope of the programme to link with the health monitoring of other freshwater ecosystems (e.g. wetlands and estuaries);
- “formalise” the programme as a national monitoring programme, and;
- align the programme with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry’s (DWAF’s) *Strategic Framework for National Water Resources Quality Monitoring Programmes and 5-year monitoring plan* (copies of these draft documents are attached and will be available on RHP-website soon). Please read both document as complimentary to each other. The Framework document gives a generic approach to monitoring in South Africa, levels of monitoring, roles and responsibilities, while the 5-year plan gives details regarding the roll-out of the framework over the next five years. These documents have been recommended for use by DWAF Head Office, Clusters, Regional Offices/CMA’s and any other stakeholders in monitoring.

DWAF developed the framework to ensure that national water resource quality monitoring programmes comply with the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) and are implemented. The framework is to serve as a basis for reviewing the design of current programmes and for designing new programmes. A description is also given of the roles and responsibilities of



the different tiers of water management institutions with respect water resource quality monitoring. The framework should, in particular, clarify how NATIONAL monitoring programmes fit into the bigger scheme of water resource quality monitoring. Brendan Hohls at DWAF's Resource Quality Services (RQS) can be contacted for more information in this regard at: Tel: (012) 808 0374 or hohlsb@dwaf.gov.za and Eberhard Braune (012 336 7860) or Bonani Madikizela (012) 808 0374 for the 5-year monitoring plan.

The revision of the RHP's design will be addressed during an Inception Phase which is currently under way and which will take place over the next approximately eight months. It is envisaged that the outcomes of this Inception Phase will be presented at the annual Provincial Champions Meeting which is provisionally proposed to take place during February / March 2005.

RHP PROVINCIAL

Herewith feedback received from the Provincial champions. Many exciting things are taking place in all our provinces. Thank you to all the provincial champs and teams for the great effort and for keeping all the initiatives going!

Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape team is undertaking their first State-of-Rivers Report initiative which is done for the Buffalo River. The team held a stakeholders meeting towards the end of May which was followed by their first technical team meeting in East London. This initiative is being driven by Pumza Gasa-Lubelwana from the DWAF, Eastern Cape Office.

The Umtata River is next up for ecological assessment and talks with Unitra and the Mtata Catchment Forum for assessment and monitoring are in progress. An aerial Survey of the Umtata River was done by Neels Kleynhans in March of this year.

Free State

The Free State completed their first SoR report for the Free State Region River Systems, in March this year, together with a fun poster and a SoR poster which was translated into seSotho, English and Afrikaans. This SoR report was launched during Water Week.



Gauteng

Since the publication of the SoR for Southern Gauteng Rivers in March 2003, all effort has been focuses on biomonitoring of the Upper Crocodile –West river system including the Pienaars River, Apies River, Hennops River, Jukskei River, Crocodile River, Bloubankspruit, Skeerpoort River, Magalies River and all their tributaries.

Some 44 biomonitoring sites in total were covered. Many of the sites were visited at least three times during different seasons. The results of these biomonitoring actions will be used in the SoR report for the Crocodile River-West Marico Rivers.

The SASS5 accreditation process was successfully introduced in Gauteng by the RHP team and three accreditation sessions were held to date. Participants from all sectors ie: Academics, field-biologists from Gauteng and other provinces as well as consultants have participated.

Of the 22 candidates who participated in the three accreditation days, a total of 10 have been accredited successfully while 12 have failed the accreditation test. Of the 12, one candidate has failed at all three attempts. The next accreditation session is planned for the last two weeks in November 2004, exact days to be confirmed.

SoR for Crocodile – West / Marico Rivers: All effort will be channeled towards the preparation and analyses of data for this report. Additional information regarding the Gauteng catchment is being gathered in preparation for the report.

From October 2004 onwards biomonitoring will once again commence in the Upper Vaal catchment until July 2006 after which preparation for the 2nd SoR poster for the Southern Gauteng Rivers will commence. This SoR is scheduled for publication in February 2007. At this point the first success or failure in terms of reaching the objectives for these rivers in terms of the ecological classes set and managed for these rivers, will be determined.

River forums still play a vital role in the success of the RHP as these forums are the meeting place of most of the critical stakeholders such as Local Governments and big mining houses. Monitoring and control of water quality and quantities are managed at these forums and action is taken at forum level to bring polluters to justice.



KwaZulu Natal

A great deal of biomonitoring work is taking place in KwaZulu-Natal, much of this linked to the RHP but only through the good will of those conducting the monitoring. Large biomonitoring projects that have taken place include:

- An Ezemvelo-KZN-Wildlife sponsored project to monitor a single "pristine" site from each of 50 river Ecoregions covering the entire province is nearing completion. This information is being used by the agency as part of their biodiversity conservation programme but in the process has provided the RHP with a most comprehensive set of Reference Site data. The monitoring that was done included SASS, fish, geomorphology (basic site information) and vegetation (using the Braun-Blanquet technique).
- The State of Environment report for KZN is currently being drafted and will use the above information to report on the rivers of the province. In order to complete the picture though, monitoring of impacted sites will also be done and added to the data that already exists for the province.
- The forest industry are really taking river biomonitoring to heart and have expanded their programmes in the past year. The index that they are finding most valuable is the IHI as this provides them with a useful picture of the entire river that can be actively used by management. Sappi have found this index particularly useful but have found it necessary to adapt the method to provide information that is of greater use to them.
- Umgeni Water continues to monitor most of the rivers in their operational area, now having a database that stretches well over a decade.

Good news is that the miniSASS project (which was a collaborative project developed by Umgeni Water, Wildlife and Environment Society of SA and KZN Wildlife as a low/appropriate technology tool for communities to be able to monitor the health of their rivers) was entered into the national Innovations for Development Awards (administered by the Institute of Inventors and Innovators) and won a gold medal. It was also awarded a bronze medal by the Farmers Weekly in the same competition.

Well done and congratulations to all involved!



Limpopo

The Limpopo biomonitoring team, have just returned from a two week monitoring exercise in the Marico and Crocodile West Water Management Area. The Catchment is being surveyed in a collaborative exercise with teams from Gauteng and North West Province. The Limpopo team, comprised of staff from Limpopo Environmental Affairs and the University of Venda, concentrated its efforts on that portion of the catchment within Limpopo Province and surveyed the Crocodile and Marico Rivers together with several tributaries. The results of the survey will be published in a joint State of River Report for the Water Management Area.

The Limpopo Team is currently planning a second survey of the Olifants River and tributaries, which will be completed by September 2004. In November, a full survey of the Phalala River Catchment is planned and it is expected that results will be published in 2005.

Training continues to be given to during each river survey and the provinces biomonitoring capabilities are growing steadily.

The public are actively engaged both during and after the completion of river surveys and there is growing awareness of the importance of our freshwater ecosystems.

North West

North West province, under Tharina Boshoff, is driving the Crocodile West / Marico Water Management Area SoR report which is due in March 2005. This initiative is a collaborative effort between the North West, Gauteng and Limpopo Provinces with CSIR, Environmentek being responsible for coordinating the contributions for the report and the actual compilation of the report. The team had their first stakeholder meeting during March this year which will be followed by a meeting with the mines in the catchment during June. Various field trips have been undertaken in three provinces since April and will continue until August. For more information on this initiative contact the three provincial Champions involved:

- 1) North West - Tharina Boshoff (tboshoff@nwpg.gov.za),
- 2) Gauteng - Piet Muller (pietmu@gpg.gov.za)
- 3) Limpopo – Mick Angliss (anglissmk@finptb.norprov.gov.za)



Western Cape

The RHP is steaming ahead in the Western Cape. Thanks to the collaboration between DWAF and the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board they now have a team of eight almost fully dedicated RHP team members. The third SoR report for the Western Cape on the Berg River is near completion and the team is hard at work on the data collection for a SoR for the Olifants/Doring system which should come out early next year. Data collection is also taking place on the Gouritz system for a SoR on that system to be produced later next year. There is a huge amount of interest and support for the RHP growing in the Southern Cape, with SANParks recently coming on board - a SoR for that area as well as the Overberg area are planned. In line with this the team is working on a communication strategy to ensure that the content of the SoRs reaches the right ears.

A Provincial RHP monitoring plan for the Western Cape (with schedules, roles and responsibilities) is planned to start in the second half of this year which will include identified reference sites. Parallel to this the team is also trying to get the Rivers_Database up and running for the province. A provincial SASS proficiency testing exercise will take place at the end of July this year.

For more information on the provincial initiatives

For more information on the different provincial initiatives, contact either the provincial champions (details below) or visit the RHP's website at (<http://www.csir.co.za/rhp/>):

Full Name	Telephone	E-mail
Mick Angliss LIMPOPO	(015) 295 9300/203	anglissmk@finptb.norprov.gov.za
Toni Belcher WESTERN CAPE	(021) 950 7140	belchea@dwaf.gov.za
Tharina Boshoff NORTH WEST	(014) 597 3597	tboshoff@nwpg.gov.za
Pierre de Villiers FREE STATE	(051) 400 7000	devilp@dtrea.fs.gov.za
Chris Dickens KWAZULU NATAL	(033) 341 1151	chris.dickens@umgeni.co.za
Johan Engelbrecht MPUMALANGA	(013) 235 1673	jseng@intekom.co.za



Full Name	Telephone	E-mail
Pumza Gasalubelwana EASTERN CAPE	(043) 722 3805	lpbelwp@dwaf.gov.za
Piet Muller GAUTENG	(011) 355 1487	pietmu@gpg.gov.za
Gerda Venter FREE STATE	(051) 430 3134	venterg@dwaf.ncape.gov.za

OTHER

FISH

Tables with expert ratings for SA freshwater fish species will be posted on the RHP website. These include intolerance ratings for species according to selected criteria that are used in river health assessments, as well as preference ratings for flow depth and cover preferences.

Any queries in this regard can be directed to Neels Kleynhans at kleynhansn@dwaf.gov.za.