

RIVER HEALTH PROGRAMME

SUMMARY REPORT

Annual Champions Symposium

6 July 2006

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

Study Team

Mr Bonani Madikizela (DWAF, RQS)
Dr Neels Kleynhans (DWAF, RQS)
Ms Shamilla Jhupsee (DWAF, RQS)

Mr Mike Silberbauer (DWAF, RQS)

Ms Colleen Todd (DWAF, RQS)
Ms Christa Thirion (DWAF, RQS)
Dr Anneli Kühn (DWAF, RQS)
Ms Liesl Hill (CSIR, NRE)

Provincial Champions and representatives

Mr Mick Angliss (LEDET)
Mr Paul Fouche (University of Venda)
Dr Andrew Deacon (SANParks)

Dr Johan Engelbrecht (Mpumalanga Parks Board)

Mr Ramogale Sekwele (INR)
Mr Willem Grobler (DWAF: Free State)
Mr Piet Muller (GDACE)
Ms T Belcher (DWAF: Western Cape)
Ms Thulani Guzana (DWAF: Eastern Cape)
Ms Hermien Roux (DACET, NW)

Presenters

Dr Helen Dallas (Freshwater Research Unit, UCT)

Stakeholders

Mr Hugh Dixon-Paver (DWAF, KZN)

Mr Stan Rodgers (LEDET)
Ms Kululwa Mkosana (DWAF, EC)

Mr Daniel Masemola (DWAF, RDM)

Ms Sherral Enele (DWAF, NW)

Present

Ms Judy Carpenter (Minute-taker)

Apologies

Dr Rudi Pretorius DEAT
Ms Pumza Gasa- DWAF: Eastern
Lubelwana Cape
Dr Steve Mitchell WRC
Dr Chris Dickens INR
Ds Patsy Sherman CES
Ms Tharina Boshoff DACET: North West

Mr Petrus Venter DWAF: North West
Ms Gerda Venter DWAF: Free State

1. PROVINCIAL FEEDBACK

1.1 LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Mr Mick Angliss

Presentation "Limpopo Province 2006 – 2007 RHP" (Addendum 1)

Mr Angliss began his presentation with a brief overview of activities for 2006/2007.

1. Mogol River SoR Report:

- Project co-ordinator is Peter McMillan (CSIR)
- National Monitoring Sites and catchment areas toured in April 2006.
- Project is 75% complete.
- Report should be published August 2006 and launched in September 2006.

2. Write up the technical report for the Phalala River.

- Catchments survey completed May 2005.
- Technical report completed December 2005.
- Nominated for publication in December 2007.

3. Start the reports for seasonal rivers – Nwandezi, Nzhelele, Matlabas, Mogalakwene and Sand rivers.

- Nwandezi River survey aborted 2006.
- New survey will start with summer rains and possibly include the Nzhelele River.
- Technical report due March 2007.
- Matlabas will be surveyed and reported in March 2007.
- Project currently underway on Shingwedzi River.

4. State of the Environment Reporting:

- Second phase Limpopo SoE pending.

5. Capacity Building:

- Training undertaken in North West.
- 2 DWAF field officials attended field training.
- SASS accreditation course planned for 2007.
- Active development of VEGRAI.

6. Issues:

- Technical problems to access CSIR FTP sites for SoR reporting purposes.
- Outdated RHP information.
- Database photo and site inventory – unsure of where these should be located.

7. Conclusions:

- All eight perennial provincial rivers will be reported 2006/2007.
- Eight catchments in SoRR format complete 2007/2008, including Phalala.
- Work and approach to seasonal rivers by end 2006/2007.
- Products for 2006/2008 identified.

1.1.1 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

Question: What do you mean by getting to the river in five years? Is this the once-off survey?

Answer: No, all surveys will be completed. The original intention was to do one new catchment per year with a revisit every three years. However, we cannot get back for a revisit within the three years – possibly four to five years will suffice. Some changes kicked into gear because of some reserves being set and these will be identified as separate components for surveying and monitoring.

Question: One visit or three?

Answer: One visit to each site but a report on six sites at a time.

Question: What is the staff complement during surveys and do you have a lot of people available from your department?

Answer: No, our directorate is being shuffled about and at the moment we have a biodiversity management section and a monitoring section with several people and then the district offices. In the field, districts are involved and we will also get the people from Water Affairs involved. Anywhere from four to eight people will be involved

1.2 KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Dr Andrew Deacon

Dr Deacon gave a presentation on the Kruger Park River Health Programme (Addendum 2).

1. Current Activities:

- Crocodile River SASS.
- RVI Sabie River.
- Fish Sabie River – Venter Project.
- Golden sites – Luvuvhu River.
- VEGRAI testing.

2. Capacity Building

- SASS training – Mellon Foundation students.
- KNP botanist responsible for VEGRAI.

These activities were being undertaken in conjunction with Limpopo province and external researchers.

3. Current issues:

- None

4. Goals for 2006/2007:

- Database training.
- Biomonitoring of Olifants and Sabie Rivers.
- Biomonitoring in Marakele and Mapungubwe Rivers.

1.2.1 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

Question: When you say you are working closely with Limpopo province do you have any idea of which rivers Mpumalanga is targeting?

Answer: Initially we had very good communications but now our connections are not so good. Often Mpumalanga will concentrate on the south and KNP goes to the north and so we are out of sync. However, KNP surveys its rivers and submits the information to Mpumalanga when they want it.

Activities currently taking place were within the SANParks Management Plans, Department of Environmental Affairs. The presentation concentrated on Biodiversity Objectives, Water in the Landscape.

1.3 MPUMALANGA

Dr Johan Engelbrecht

Dr Engelbrecht gave a presentation on River Health Surveys for 2006 in Mpumalanga (Addendum 3).

Dr Engelbrecht informed the attendees that his office no longer fell under Mpumalanga Parks Board but now known as TPA.

1. The Komati River:

- Fish stocks on the river are threatened by the unnatural flow of the river.
- The river contains invasive alien fish species i.e. bass, trout and carp.
- The riparian belt has been invaded by wattle.
- Forestry activities have affected the catchment areas.
- There has been no effective management of the weirs which are a serious obstacle to fish movement patterns in the river. Annually thousands of fish die because of this mismanagement. In some parts of the river there is no flow pattern and in others, non-seasonal flow patterns.
- Agricultural and effluent pollutants are killing fish stocks.

2. Proposed plans of action:

- A flow management system will be implemented.
- Weirs will be partially or totally removed from the river system.
- Construction of fish ways will soon begin to allow for better fish movement through the river.

1.3.1 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

Question: Have you surveyed the river beyond the South African Border?

Answer: No, we have not as yet.

Question: Is this not an ideal opportunity for international co-operation?

Answer: Yes, cross-border contacts have been made in this regard.

Question: Is this not something that WAV should be involved in?

Answer: Yes, some of us will be involved in that as well and there is an option to be involved in river health as well.

Question: Are you not doing other rivers for RHP?

Answer: We are currently restructuring and don't yet know the size of our staff complement nor budget. If the budget is approved and we get staff, then we will be doing other rivers.

Question: Are you still planning on being part of river monitoring?

Answer: Yes, it is planned for but not budgeted for, yet.

Question: In terms of the data – where is it?

Answer: It is in report format. Everyone is afraid when it comes to using the Rivers database.

Comment: Dr Dallas will help with data management but must first receive some sort of co-operation from the office needing the assistance. She must be approached to help with the capturing of data on the Rivers Database.

1.4 KWAZULU NATAL

Mr Ramogale Sekwele

Presentation: "Institute of Natural Resources – RHP KZN Province (Addendum 4).

1. Mr Sekwele began his presentation by listing those organisations which are involved with the Institute of Natural Resources and RHP.

- Durban Metro.
- Forestry Industry.
- DWAF.
- Duse Umgeni Trust
- KZN Wildlife
- Umgeni Water
- External consultants.

2. Activities:

- Durban Metro monitoring program.
- Currently they are working on 67 sites and 18 catchment areas.
- RHP principles and diatoms are being applied.
- There are RHP surveys being conducted on some forestry industries, SAPPI, Mondi, Singisi and Mondi Shanduka.
- Intensive SASS, WQ&T working being done on Albert Falls and Nagle Dam.
- Work at fish sites is being done.

3. Events:

- Hosted one of the three WISA conferences.
- Mini-SASS day sponsored by WRC.
- Diatoms workshop.

4. Training and Audits:

- Training of forestry community liaison officers
- Engaging local communities on river issues.
- SASS audits.
- Ecstatus workshop 1 – 3 August 2006.

5. Future Plans:

- WESSA Mark and INR non-solicited mini-SASS proposal.
- Usuthu/Mhlathuze WMR SoR report.
- Live web-based data collation.
- Increased provincial co-ordination.

6. Challenges:

- Changes in the original data collection format.
- SoR report emphasis.
- Resources.

1.4.1 QUESTION, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

Question: In terms of river health, what surveys are being done as directed by the DWAF:Regional office?

Answer: Regional office has not, as yet, issued any directives.

Question: With regards to Regional office, what resources are needed?

Answer: There is a serious lack of funding for resources and manpower. DWAF (RQS / KZN Regional Office) is requesting information with regard to which rivers were to be monitored so that the urgent need for funding can be addressed.

1.5 EASTERN CAPE

Ms Thulani Guzana

Ms Guzana gave a presentation on the Eastern Cape's River Health Programme on behalf of Ms Pumza Gasalubelwana (Addendum 5).

(See Summary Report day one 6th July 2006)

1. Ms Guzana began her presentation by outlining the Goals for 2006/7 which were:

- The production of the SoR for the Mthatha.
- Surveying of the Mzimvubu, Mbashe, Keiskamma and Bushman Rivers.
- Aerial survey of the Nahoon, Buffalo and Great Kei Rivers would be done.

2. Activities currently taking place:

- Monitoring of the Buffalo River.
- Site selections for 2006/2007.
- Preparing SoR for Mthatha catchment.
- Initiating biomonitoring of the Bushman's River.
- Liaisoning with local and district local government to implement river surveys.

3. Capacity Building:

- Currently the Eastern Cape RHP has three staff members.
- A Hydrologist will be joining the team in the near future.
- WQM and DWAF officials are seconded for field work.

4. Collaborating Organisations:

- DEAT is involved with work on the Mthatha River.
- MoU signed between RHP Eastern Cape and Walter Sisulu University whereby undergraduate students will participate in RHP projects.
- Daimlerchrysler, Amatola Water, Buffalo City Municipality are collaborating on the Buffalo River monitoring project.
- Buffalo River SoR is being done in conjunction with 2020 Vision for Water.

5. Issues:

- Staff shortages.
- Lack of funding and resources.

1.5.1 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

Question: Do you have any ideas as to when you are going back to the rivers to check on them after the first round of monitoring?

Answer: During the first week of August 2006.

Question: Do you first plan to monitor a river and then revisit afterwards.

Answer: Yes.

1.6 NORTH WEST

Ms Hermien Roux

Presentation "North West Provincial Report" (Addendum 6)

Ms Roux works with the Department of Agriculture and Conservation with her main focus being on aquatic monitoring. Ms Roux reported back on the North West's River Health Programme on behalf of Ms Tharina Boshoff.

1 Activities:

- 2005/2006 focused on the Marico and Molopo Rivers.
- 32 sites on the Marico and four sites on the Molopo were monitored.
- Aerial surveys were done on the Marico, Molopo, Upper Vaal, Schoon, Crocodile, Eland and Hex Rivers.

2. 2006 has been focused on capacity building as there is very little capacity available. Monitoring is taking place on:

- Upper Vaal during May as well as the Mooi, Loop and Wonderfontein Rivers.
- Crocodile River during June, along with the Elands, Laregan, Koster and Dwars.

3. Results:

- 2005 Marico and Molopo data will be transferred to the database.
- Contribute to seasonal study of diatom flora.
- Aerial surveys of selected rivers.
- Contribute SASS5 data for Mafikeng Local Municipality.
- Contribute to freshwater conservation plan for the Crocodile and Marico rivers.
- Training of staff.

4. Collaborating organisations:

- DWAF
- CSIR
- Universities of Venda and the North.
- Finnish partnering organisation.

5. Issues:

- Habitat degradation and destruction.
- Water abstraction due to economic activities.
- Pollution.
- Invasion of alien aquatic species.

6. Planned activities for 2006/2007/2008/2009:

- Continue biomonitoring.
- Survey each site twice a year.
- Focus on threats and remediation.

1.6.1 QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND COMMENTS :

Question: In terms of the funding from Finland, how was this achieved?

Answer: The Finnish government decided to look at different needs in the provinces and they identified the North West and its problems, particularly with water issues, as a worthy case to be funded.

1.7 FREE STATE AND NORTHERN CAPE

Mr Willem Grobler

No Powerpoint presentation was given. Mr Grobler gave feedback on the Free State's River Health Programme on behalf of Ms Gerda Venter.

Mr Grobler said that he was responsible for the Upper Vaal area. However, his functions were severely hampered by a lack of staff and he was barely able to keep the unit functioning. In the Upper Orange area the university is assisting. All data is available and the focus now is to outsource assistance, at least until the end of the year, to help with the project. The biggest problems facing the water systems were the presence of blue and green algae which was contaminating the resource.

1.7.1 QUESTION, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

Question: What is the current staff component?

Answer: Only two staff members involved with River Health.

Question: Are you not getting assistance from the provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism?

Answer: No, none at all at this point.

Comment: There is a serious lack of commitment from DWAF at the top and DEAT. DEAT had asked for a breakdown of the staffing and money issues and hopefully within two or three weeks there will be an answer available as to exactly what DEAT can do to address the shortages.

1.8 GAUTENG

Mr Piet Muller

Mr Muller gave a presentation entitled "National River Health Program, Gauteng Chapter" (Addendum 7)

During 1999 to 2006 74 biomonitoring sites in three catchments had been established.

SoR poster reports for southern Gauteng rivers had been done in 2003. SoR reports for the Crocodile and Marico rivers (Gauteng) were done in 2005.

1. Activities 2005/2007

- Revisit Upper Vaal monitoring sites.
- Revisit Upper Olifants sites.
- Aerial video surveys had been done.
- Publishing of "Ecological State of Gauteng Rivers".
- SASS accreditation.
- Diatoms collected at 14 sites.
- Road show to local government environmental committees.
- Discussion and debate re managerial interventions.
- Provided local input into WRMS ITO.

2. Constraints and Issues:

- Staff turnover and loss of skills.
- Adverse climatic conditions had altered biodiversity sites.
- Change of land use through urban and industrial development.
- IT maintenance and infrastructure.
- Storm water management was a huge problem.
- Industrial waste in the water systems was problematic.
- Suikerbosrand River is of concern as there are plans for open-cast mining along its catchment area.
- Diamond and sand mining was planned along the Elands and Bronkhorstspuit rivers.

Mr Muller reported that the State of Rivers report is on track.

1.8.1 QUESTION, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

None

1.9 WESTERN CAPE

Ms Toni Belcher

Ms Belcher gave a presentation entitled "The RHP in the Western Cape" (Addendum 8).

She stated that the partnerships which had been established in the Western Cape remained the same.

1. Activities:

- Data collection, storage and mapping were ongoing.
- SoR and technical reporting was being undertaken on the Olifants, Doring, Sandveld rivers specifically and Overberg and southern Cape rivers generally.
- Activity books for grade 1 – 3 were being finalized.

- A link with CAPE was established for biodiversity planning, water use licensing, establishing reserves and classifications.

2. Capacity building:

- Adopt-a-River initiative.
- Information biomonitoring training
- Linkages and interaction with universities and nature conservation staff.
- Water Week.
- World Biomonitoring Day.

4. Goals for 2006/2007:

- Ongoing monitoring of national sites.
- Production of the Gouritz SoR and technical reports.
- Implementation of Adopt-a-River initiative in two/three areas.
- Training of new technicians.
- Undertake SASS quality assurance exercises.
- Initiate the Breede River SoR.
- Develop links with CAPE initiatives.

Ms Belcher reported that there was a strong possibility of securing funding from a Dutch organisation for the initiatives planned on the Breede River.

5. Issues:

- A lack of resources – funding and qualified personnel.
- Difficulties in maintaining partnerships.

2. FEEDBACK – WESTERN CAPE MAPS

Ms Helen Dallas

Dr Dallas gave a detailed presentation on the development of maps for the Western Cape. A similar approach was followed as for the national RHP site selection process. This presentation was in a format which could not be copied.

This presentation was in a format which could not be copied and attached hereto as an addendum.

LIST OF ADDENDUMS

PRESENTATIONS:

1. "Limpopo Province RHP 2006" Mr Mick Angliss, Limpopo Province
2. "KNP RHP Biomonitoring programme"
3. "Mpumalanga RHP 2006".
4. "KZN Chapter Jul 2006".
5. "The Eastern Cape".
6. "North West RHP".
7. "RHP Gauteng reportback".
8. "WCape RHP meeting."