



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Heavily polluted Rietspruit River restored to its former glory**

08 August 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation's Gauteng Provincial Office joined hands with various stakeholders to stem the tide of rising levels of pollution of the Rietspruit River in Everton in Sebokeng on Friday, 04 February 2017.

The cleanup campaign is part of DWS's annual Clear River Campaign which takes place during the month of July. The month has been designated to encourage the public to follow in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela by contributing 67 minutes of their time towards the betterment of the country.

The campaign saw a number of like-minded stakeholders taking part in the cleanup campaign. These included the Emfuleni Local Municipality, Rand Water, Phaphamang Environmental Organisation and Emthonjeni Awareness Centre.

Uppermost for the department, the campaign is to serve as a platform to mobilise communities and other business organisations to be actively involved in the protection of natural resources. Linked to this imperative is to encourage ongoing education and awareness on the importance of water resources through a collaborative approach.

The Rietspruit River, which passes through Evaton Township, was excessively polluted with all manner of foreign objects, including solid waste and constant sewers pillages that resulted in the overload of the sewer system.

The actual cleaning up was preceded by a door-to-door campaign in an effort to drum up support for the campaign. During this, information was disseminated on the impact of river pollution both on the public and the aquatic ecosystem. The community was also informed of their role on the protection of the water resources.

Members of the community acknowledged their role in the pollution of the river, promising to work with government to ensure zero tolerance towards acts of pollution.

Evaton resident Annah Mathye deplored the state of the river, cautioning that the environment was not conducive for children and the elderly.

"We are tired of the smell that comes from the stream. It must be cleaned. We are ready to work with the department on the clear rivers initiative," said Mathye, who rolled up her sleeves to clear the rubbish from the river.

Emthonjeni Awareness Centre's Child and Youth Care Worker, Nelisiwe Khondolo was excited to be part of the river cleanup campaign and commended the initiative.

"The state of the river is life-threatening, especially to small children. Initiatives like these could help to empower people about their role in the protection of the water resources," said the concerned Khondolo.



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The Adopt-A-River Coordinator from the Department of Water and Sanitation, Tebogo Mashiane, welcomed the collaboration between the participating stakeholders and reiterated the importance working together to deal with pollution.

“Thank you for your contributions, the department cannot do this alone. Let’s continue to protect our water resources for the current and future generations,” appealed Mashiane.

**Lucky Makgarengi**