



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Illegal sand mining threatens the environment

11 September 2019

The Department of Water and Sanitation in KwaZulu-Natal (DWS KZN) hosted a stakeholder engagement workshop on illegal water use activities through sand mining on 10 September 2019 at Zululand South African Police Service (SAPS) Cluster Offices, in Ulundi.

The aim of the workshop was to educate, create awareness and encourage compliance with members of the South African Police Service (SAPS), Traditional Leaders and Municipalities.

Participants during the workshop were also urged to be vigilant of illegal water use activities through sand mining.

“With this workshop, the DWS hopes to improve the understanding of the impacts on unlawful water use through sand mining. Abiding by the law and authorisations will assist in achieving our vision of equitable and sustainable water use” said DWS KZN Deputy Director Compliance Monitoring & Enforcement Zanele Msimang during her presentation.

Msimang added that the number of unlawful sand mining operations is on an increasing trend and the operations tend to congregate within close proximity, resulting in detrimental cumulative impacts on the water resources that even exceed the assimilative capacity of the water resource.

“Even though it has been difficult to regulate the area due to threats, reports of on-going unlawful water use activities through sand mining continue to come in,” Msimang explained.

KwaZulu-Natal is currently facing unlawful water use activities through sand mining in areas such as Phongola, Illovo, uMvoti, uMdloti, uMhlathuze, Umfolozi and uMgeni Rivers. The DWS has found that community leaders often give permission for sand miners to mine sand in rivers without obtaining the necessary environmental authorisations.

“Unlawful water use through sand mining activities is causing numerous and serious problems such as the disruption of potable water supply and the pollution of water resources.

As a result, excessive in-stream sand mining lowers the bed of the river which then leads to river banks instability and erosion. It also threatens the integrity of near-by formal structures and bridges.” Msimang continued.

The Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement Directorate has been set up within the Department to curb water transgressions, to ensure the protection of all water resources in the country and to ensure compliance with water legislation and enforcement where noncompliance is identified.

The Department’s mandate is met through different enforcement actions on transgressors who use water outside of the authorisations received or even without authorisations.





## water & sanitation

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