



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Duzi River clean-up progressing well**

18 August 2019

The Department of Water and Sanitation in KwaZulu-Natal is investigating the Duzi River pollution due to a spillage that happened at Willowton Oil in Pietermaritzburg. The spillage has worked its way downstream into the Mngeni River and into the Inanda Dam.

Immediately on awareness being raised of the spillage, a Task Team was formed that will monitor the clean-up progress and ensure compliance with the environmental legislation including by-laws. The Task Team consists of EDTEA, DWS, Umgeni Water, Msunduzi Municipality, Managers of the clean-up companies and Willowton representatives (legal team, directors and spokesperson). The first meeting was held on the 15 August 2019

The first report from the meeting stated that there was a structural collapse of two (2) tanks, one was containing fatty acid, and the other tank contained caustic lime. The collapsed tanks crushed the crude oil pipe, resulting in the leakage of crude oil into the water resource. The report further stated that about 1600 tons of products was spilled within Willowton Group premises and flowed into the Baynespruit River through the storm water drains.

An Independent Environmentalist has been appointed to ensure compliance with all the environmental legislation and to submit all the reports required within the specified time-frames. Ground Truth as the PSP has been appointed to assess the impact on the water resources and to effect all the Best Practical Environmental Options remediation measures.

The Spilltech and Drizit clean-up companies were appointed to undertake clean-up of both the affected water resources and the operational area. The companies have managed to contain the spillage at Grimthorpe Bridge and the clean-up of the Duzi River is currently underway and progressing well.

Approximately one-hundred (100) people are currently cleaning different sections of the River from the Baynespruit, Msunduzi and further down to Inanda Dam.

Umgeni Water has released water from Henly Dam to dilute the spilled product that escaped from Baynespruit into Msunduzi River before the placing of blooms; the release of water was done on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019. The dilution managed to bring the pH down to 8.5 from 10.78. More improvement on the water quality results is expected as the clean-up progresses.

The Department has issued a directive on 16 August 2019 and departmental officials have formed part of the task team that is monitoring the clean-up to ensure relevant legislations are complied with. The Department is also discussing possible measures for implementation to clean the affected rivers and to prevent the migration of the spillage substance.





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Continued monitoring will take place in a form of water samples, site inspections and necessary meetings, with a report to be forwarded to the relevant Authorities. Bio-monitoring will also be undertaken on different points of the affected water resources.

The Department and Municipality would like to urge residents living upstream of the Duzi River, Mgeni River, Inanda Dam and surroundings to not use water from the resource until further notice. This will reduce exposure to the pollution as a result of the spillage.

**End**

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

**For more information contact Sputnik Ratau, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 082 874 2942**

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