

Environment Quarterly

Kwartaalike Omgewingsverslag • Tikologo ka Kotara • Mupo nga Kotara



**Gqeberha schools on
tree-planting mission
Minister launches historic
garden in Thohoyandou**



forestry, fisheries
& the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



2022 environment CALENDAR



JANUARY

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FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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02 February
03 March
21 March
23 March
22 April

World Wetlands Day
World Wildlife Day
International Day of Forests
World Meteorological Day
Earth Day

MAY

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14 May
22 May
05 June
08 June

World Migratory Bird Day
International Day for Biological Diversity
World Environment Day
World Oceans Day

17 June
18 July
31 July
September

Desertification and Drought Day
Nelson Mandela Day
World Ranger Day
National Arbor Month

SEPTEMBER

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16 September
19 September
07 -11 September
21 November

International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
International Coastal Clean-up Day
South African National Parks Week
World Fisheries Day

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About the back cover image:

Storms River mouth in the Tsitsikamma National Park

The Tsitsikamma National Park is a protected area on the Garden Route, Western Cape and Eastern Cape, South Africa. It is a coastal reserve well known for its indigenous forests, dramatic coastline, and the Otter Trail.

On 6 March 2009 it was amalgamated with the Wilderness National Park and various other areas of land to form the Garden Route National Park. The park covers an 80 kilometres long stretch of coastline. Nature's Valley is at the western end of the park, and the main accommodation is at Storms River Mouth. Near the park is the Bloukrans Bridge, the world's highest bridge bungee jump at 216 metres.

The word "Tsitsikamma" originates from the Khoekhoe language tse-tsesa, meaning "clear", and gami, meaning "water", referring to the clear water of the Tsitsikamma River.



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Editorial: Act now against climate change



Dear Valued Stakeholder,

It is an honour to welcome you to the first edition of Environment Quarterly in the financial year 2022/23. With all restrictions of the National State of Disaster having been lifted, life is starting to get back to normal and as government, we still urge people to get vaccinated as the first line of defence against the Corona Virus.

When KwaZulu-Natal was hit by devastating weather storms in April this year, concerns around climate change and its impacts in the country grew to new levels. As the world celebrated World Environment Day on the 5 June, the department visited the City of Durban to promote education

and public awareness around the vital issue of climate change and encourage individual actions such as saving electricity and planting indigenous trees to help to reduce the impacts of climate change.

The collaboration was a roaring success, working in collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, eThekweni Municipality, and other stakeholders. Read our cover story on page 6 and go to www.dffe.gov.za to learn more about what each of us can do about climate change. We all have a role to play to ensure a greener and cleaner South Africa.

Speaking in the National Council of Provinces on the occasion of our Department's Budget Vote Speech, Deputy Minister Makhotso Sotyu announced that government had approved and adopted the implementation plan of the Commercial Forestry Masterplan, and the Greening Plan of planting 10million trees over the period of 5 years, starting in the Financial Year 2019/2020. As part of that programme, Deputy Minister Sotyu led the transfer of three plantations to communities in the Eastern Cape.

In support of the Good Green Deeds Programme whose effort is to champion a clean South Africa, Minister Barbara Creecy introduced the national

waste management fleet to various municipalities. The fleet will assist municipalities to improve their waste collection services and minimise illegal dumping. Read more on this ground-breaking initiative on page 15.

This quarter, we also feature essential projects that have been developed as part of the South African Green Schools Programme which is funded by the department. Learners and teachers alike share the good change that items such as boreholes, enviro-parks and water tanks at the schools have changed their lives for the better.

With June being Youth Month, the department focused on the investments we are making towards advancing young people. We look at the personal journeys of bursars and interns that have been with the department and how they have improved their skills and knowledge in relation to their environmental careers. Read more on page 10.

We hope you enjoy the read and encourage you to Act Now against climate change.

Albi Modise

Head of Communications & Advocacy

Meet our team

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Albi Modise

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Find more information on: www.environment.gov.za or call 086 111 2468

What can you do about Climate Change?

Reduce the number of journeys you make by car. Use public transport, ride a bike, join a car-sharing club or walk.

Act Now!



To learn more about Climate Change visit: www.dffe.gov.za

#GoodGreenDeeds

#ClimateChangeActionNow

#OnlyOneEarth

#ClimateCrisis



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Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Good Green Deeds Easter Activation

By Veronica Mahlaba, Tshegofatso Ndhlovu, Salome Tsoka

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment ran a Green Easter, Good Green Deeds awareness campaign over the Easter long weekend from 14-18 April 2022 to encourage motorists travelling along the country's major national roads to stop littering while travelling and to take care of their environment.

Stationed along various Shell, Sasol and Engen petrol stations on the N1, N2, N3, N4, N12, officials from the Department engaged the public by giving them reusable bags and refuse bags for their waste while also educating them about the 4Rs, proper waste management and the importance of working together to keep South Africa clean.



Above: The DFFE team stationed at the Shell Ultra City petrol station in Middelburg in Mpumalanga.



Above: DFFE employees at the Sasol garage in Zebediela in Limpopo.



Above: Members of The United Zionist Apostolic Church participating in the DFFE Green Easter weekend campaign at the Shell Ultra City in Knysna.



Above: Taxi drivers at the Shell Ultra City Montrose, Harrismith were encouraged to throw litter in the refuse bags while travelling during the Good Green Deeds Easter Activation.



Above: Good Green Deeds Mascot, Billy Bin was a hit with the young ones at the Engine Garage one stop in Wine Lands, Cape Town.



Above: Our DFFE team at Shell Ultra City in Midrand were hard at work ensuring that all travellers including the children took home with them the Good Green Deeds message.

Enviro highlights this quarter

By Veronica Mahlaba, Tshegofatso Ndhlovu, Salome Tsoka



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy and the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Ravi Pillay with volunteers from different organisations including the 3 spheres government came together for a Good Green Deeds Beach Clean-up at Blue Lagoon in Durban on 29 April 2022.



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy with the Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Ms Nomfundo Ntloko-Gobodo handing over a title deed to one of the land claimants present at the official opening of the 9th People and Parks Conference held at Sandton Convention Centre from 31 March – 02 April 2022. The theme was **Banking on conservation areas for rural development and economic recovery.**



Above: In a historic move, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Makhotsa Sotyru transferred three plantations, namely Makhoba, Lehana and Fort Usher, all measuring an estimated 362.31 hectares to three communities in the Eastern Cape on 30 June 2022. She handed over the plantations to the different chiefs, including Chief Lehana where they celebrated the occasion at the Lehana plantation in Mount Fletcher.



Above: The DFFE together with the South African National Biodiversity Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme hosted the 3rd National Ecosystem-based Adaptation Community of Practice Meeting in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal from 12 to 13 April 2022.



Above: President Cyril Ramaphosa introduces Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Barbara Creecy before she addresses the hundreds of people gathered for the Presidential Imbizo at the Dr Petrus Stadium in Bloemfontein in the Free State on 09 April 2022.

Durban marches for a greener future

By Veronica Mahlaba



Above: KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Ravi Pillay with Head of United Nations Environment Programme: South African Sub-regional Office, Dr Meseret Zemedkun marching with Durban residents to commemorate World Environment Day.

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Ravi Pillay with Head of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): South African Sub-regional Office, Dr Meseret Zemedkun were joined by a number of Durban residents who came out to march for a greener environment during the commemoration of World Environment Day, 05 June 2022 from South Beach to the Blue Lagoon Beach. People were chanting slogans and carried placards with messages to create awareness about the importance of preserving and protecting the environment.

The theme of World Environment Day 2022 is **Only One Earth**, highlighting the need to create transformative changes in our policies and choices to live sustainably in harmony with nature. This planet is our only home, and we must safeguard its finite resources.

Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy joined the environmental activists via an online video. She mentioned that World Environment Day comes in the aftermath of the recent flooding in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and parts of North

South Africa is a signatory to all three Rio Conventions, the government has undertaken to reduce our carbon footprint from 2025

West that resulted in the death of hundreds of people and destroyed homes, livelihoods and key infrastructure. The terrible events brought home to each of us that climate change is now part of our lived reality and it helps us understand the urgency of addressing our unsustainable development path.



About the contributor: Veronica Mahlaba

Ms Veronica Mahlaba is a Senior Communication Officer in the Communications and Advocacy Chief Directorate at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Ms Mahlaba has experience as a Lecturer in the Media Studies Department at a private college.

She further explained that scientific research states that all the critical ecosystems that sustain life on earth are under pressure from our unsustainable use of natural resources, and the irresponsible disposal of waste. A recent study by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) found that air pollution, much of it from the burning of fossil fuels, causes around seven million premature deaths around the world each year. Nutrients from farming, sediment from soil erosion and discarded plastic waste are polluting our rivers and coastal waters.

"The emphasis is clear, time is running out to ensure we protect critical eco-system services and ensure that our current use of natural resources does not threaten the safety and survival of our children and grandchildren. The South African government has significant programmes to combat climate change; prevent biodiversity loss; reduce pollution; manage waste more sustainably and restore ecosystem services," Minister Creecy said.

South Africa is a signatory to all three Rio Conventions, the government has undertaken to reduce our carbon footprint from 2025, by working with seven sectors of the economy, the government aims to achieve a low carbon economy and a climate resilient society by mid-century.

"Our architecture to advance both mitigation of greenhouse gases and support the development of climate resilience in all 44 district municipalities across our country is moving ahead. To ensure these ambitious targets have a sound regulatory environment to promote compliance by all departments and levels of government, our Climate Bill is currently before the National Assembly," further explained Minister Creecy.

Some of the interventions that Minister Creecy further mentioned:

- Currently 16.5% of the land and 14.5% of our sea is under some form of protection. The Protection Areas Expansion Strategy aims to increase the areas under protection by half a percent per annum. By 2036 the government hopes to ensure that 28% of the land and sea are under protection.
- This year government aims to invest of R2.2 billion in managing protected areas, restoring ecosystems, removing alien species and preventing wild fires. This will create at least 48 982 work opportunities in rural areas where few other economic opportunities exist.
- The White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Resources is on its way through the Cabinet system and will soon be released for public comment.

While at the gathering MEC Ravi Pillay expressed his excitement about the turnout of the people and the widespread representation of groups from people from the informal settlements, universities, and community organisations and from government. "There is no better appropriate place to observe World Environment Day than eThekweni in KwaZulu-Natal, primarily because of the devastating floods that which saw more than 450 lives lost, 6000 homes destroyed, as well as massive destruction to water, electricity, sanitation and telecommunications infrastructure. Nobody can dispute that the kind of floods we are getting is a direct impact of climate change. Part of the great work that we need to do is to create awareness of such," stated MEC Pillay.

UNEP: South African Sub-regional Office, Dr Meseret Zemedkun said that it was important that they come to create an awareness drive in eThekweni because of the floods that happened and to speak to the communities that were affected. "As people we need to work together and understand what climate induced disaster is, why we are having it and what kind of collective efforts we are going to make. As UNEP is South Africa, we are committed and ready to support the government in making sure that we reduce vulnerability and climate change effects. We want to really reverse the three planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity laws and pollution," Dr Zemedkun.

World Environment Day is UNEP's biggest annual event commemorated on 5 June, with an aim of galvanising positive environmental action. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1972, and was first celebrated in 1974 with a view to deepening environmental awareness and address concerns such as the depletion of the ozone layer, toxic chemicals, desertification and global warming. South Africa has adopted the entire month of June to heighten awareness of environmental issues through various pertinent activities.



Above: Head of United Nations Environment Programme: South African Sub-regional Office, Dr Meseret Zemedkun with some representatives from different eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality community organisations at the march held from South Beach to Blue Lagoon Beach.

Pushing enviro awareness in KZN

By Siyabulela Malo



Above: Fikile Kubheka, KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs advised pupils at Kusakusa Primary School to keep the school premises clean and environmental friendly.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs jointly led Environment Month education awareness activities in Durban from 1-3 June 2022.

eThekweni Municipality selected five schools from communities where environmental awareness was needed with the aim to bring change and leave a positive impact.

Intakemazolo Combined School in Hammersdale and AJ Mwelase High School in Lamontville were the first schools where environment month education awareness activities took place followed by indigenous tree-planting and the launch of environment clubs in both schools.

The second leg of the activities took place at Umzomuhle Primary School, Lindelani Primary School (Umlazi) and Kusakusa Primary School Ezimbokodwei in Amanzimtoti where pupils learned a great deal about

the importance of taking care of the environment. DFFE officials and other stakeholders delivered presentations on air and plastic pollution, illegal dumping, keeping the ocean clean, and as well taking care of the environment.

DFFE Forester, Mr Giff Lufuno urged pupils to take care of the environment and the importance of continuing to spread the message of keeping the environment clean for now and for those who will live in it future.

Kusakusa Primary School learner, Anga Cele adopted a tree and he named it Mbalenhle, which means 'Beautiful' in isiZulu. "Today I learnt a lot and we have been shown how to take care of the environment moving forward."



Above: DFFE Foresters demonstrated indigenous tree planting to pupils at Kusakusa Primary School in Ezimbokodweni, Amanzimtoti.



Above: DFFE Forester Mr Giff Lufuno encouraged Intakemazolo Combined School pupils to form Environment clubs at school and in the communities.



About the contributor: Siyabulela Malo

Mr Siyabulela Malo is a Media Relations & Editorial Services Intern in the Directorate : Communication Services in Cape Town. He holds a BA Communications Management Degree from the University of Fort Hare.

Endangered Species: A race against time

By Tshegofatso Ndhlovu

Every year on the third Friday of May, the world joins hands in celebrating World Endangered Species Day, a day that not only shines a light on the voiceless endangered species of the world but a day that also aims to create awareness around the protection and conservation of threatened and endangered species. This year we celebrated this day on 20 May 2022 under the theme: **Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration.**

Thousands of wildlife species continue to be in danger of being extinct as every second of life goes by. This is due to the increase in global warming, the impacts of climate change and the negative actions by humans. The conservation of endangered species is important because plants and animals maintain the health of an ecosystem. When a species becomes endangered, it's a sign that an ecosystem is out of balance and the consequences can be critical for all that live in it.

A look at some of the endangered species in South Africa:



The Riverine Rabbit

The Riverine is a nocturnal rabbit considered to be the most endangered mammal in South Africa found in the Karoo regions. With the current population at around 250, this rare rabbit is only found in the deep silt flood plains of seasonal Karoo Rivers and can't be found anywhere else in the world. The major threats to this rabbit's existence are habitat loss and degradation, hunting for sport and by farm workers, and accidental trappings.

The Black Rhino

With a population between 5,366 and 5,627, the black rhino has been listed as critically endangered since 1996. This beast of the wild can be found throughout southern and eastern Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. This species of rhino was the most numerous of the world's rhino species for much of the 20th century until it faced threat from the slew of poaching and clearing of land for settlement and agriculture.



The Knysna Seahorse

Considered to be a national treasure, the Knysna seahorse is the only endemic seahorse in South Africa and is one of only two endangered seahorse species in the world. This delicate sea creature is found only in three Southern Cape Estuaries namely; the Knysna, Swartvlei and Keurbooms Estuaries, all which are very important to the fishing industry of South Africa causing major industrial developments being the major threat of the habitat of this seahorse.

The Cape Vulture

One of the most underestimated species of animal in the world, vultures are important in the ecosystem as their main task is to clean up. They are the most threatened species of terrestrial birds. Only found in South Africa, the Cape Vulture continues to face extinction due to electrocution on pylons or collision with power lines and the loss of habitat.



About the contributor: Tshegofatso Ndhlovu

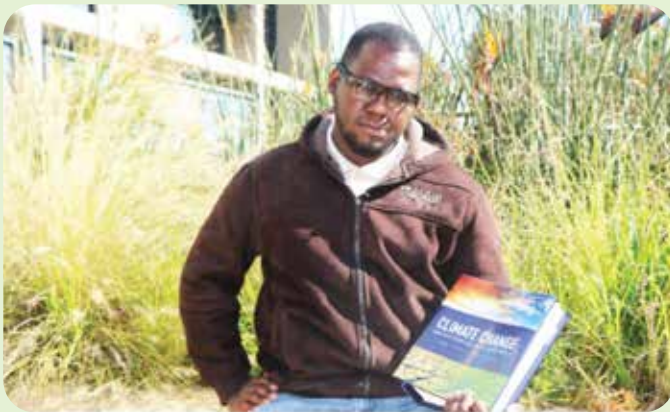
Mr Tshegofatso Ndhlovu is an Intern in the Communications and Advocacy Chief Directorate at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. He holds a diploma in Journalism from The Tshwane University of Technology. He is an avid Tennis Player who looks up to the Williams Sisters.

DFFE bursary and internships change lives

By Salome Tsoka, Tshegofatso Ndhlovu and Veronica Mahlaba

Every year, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) funds hundreds of academically deserving and previously disadvantaged young South Africans through the Department's bursary and internship programmes.

Established in 2010, the initiative offers bursary funding of up to R40 000.00 per annum for each recipient to pursue fulltime studies in various environmental sector related fields. Upon completion of their studies, the DFFE further offers the bursary recipients with an additional practical training through an internship programme for up to two years (24 months).



Above: Mr Seodisa has known from a young age that he wanted to be a Zoologist.

Mr Paulus Seodisa studied for a BSc Zoology and Human Physiology course which he completed in 2019 at the University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park campus.

What made you study the course that you did?

PS: From a young age I always had a great interest in animals and how they interacted with their natural environment. Every Sunday on SABC 3 there was always a National Geographic documentary about animals. As I grew up that keen interest developed into a scientific fascination.

I have always known what I wanted to study in varsity and when I finally got the opportunity the field felt like home. Even during our field work study the outdoors in the wild felt so comforting I knew I had to achieve my dream of becoming a Zoologist.

What section do you work in?

PS: I am based in the Local Government Support Unit, in the Environmental Programmes Branch.

The initiative is one of the ways the DFFE endeavours to bridge the gap between academic study and competent performance in the workplace. The participants are placed in various divisions within the Department, where they receive practical and relevant work experience.

The Department has awarded a total number of 380 bursars since 2010. Let's hear what the journey has been like from some of our bursars.

How has being a bursar assisted you in your career?

PS: I received exposure to the environmental management side of things, seeing how the natural environment in our local communities is in dire need of intervention from environmentalists at large. Traveling to most of the provinces and working side by side with Local Government Support (LGS) officials,

I have gained experience for an entry level Control Environmental Officer, this includes knowledge in Environmental Management and Governance, Waste Management, Air Quality Management, Climate Change and Coastal Management.

What have you learned from working for the Department?

PS: I have learned how government structure function, the chain of command and the importance of the cooperation of the three spheres of government (national, province and local). I also learned the government language, as a science graduate I am used to a very different language.

Would you recommend your field of study to someone else and why?

PS: Yes, I would recommend my field of study especially to black people. I have observed that the fight for a healthy and clean environment and the protection of the natural environment still has a long way to go. It is an exciting field and you learn new things everyday.

Where do you see yourself and your career in the next 5 years?

PS: Being a qualified Control Environmental Officer, and working towards my Masters and PhD to be a professional scientist.



Above: Ms Nape Mothapo works in the Chief Directorate: International Governance and Resource Mobilization, Climate Change and Air Quality Management.

Ms Nape Mothapo went to the University of Limpopo and studied a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental and Resource Studies and completed in 2019.

What made you study the course that you did?

NM: I pursued a Degree in Environmental Management because I was interested in establishing my knowledge between people and the natural environment and the impacts of these interactions. I further majored in Sustainable Development, as I realised that we need to conserve our resources so that the present and next generations can also have their needs met.

What section do you work in?

NM: I work in the Directorate Sustainability Programme and Project, in the Chief Directorate International Governance and Resource Mobilization, Climate Change and Air Quality Management.

How has being a bursar assisted you in your career?

NM: Being a bursar allowed me to be a part of the DFFE internship programme, which has helped me gain more knowledge in my field and to develop both my professional and soft skills.

What are your functions?

NM: I provide technical and administrative support to the coordination of green research, development and policy interventions as well as the implementation of catalytic green economy sector programmes.

What have you learned from working for the Department?

NM: I have learned that being knowledgeable about the job is key for success within the Department. In addition, opportunities for skills development will be presented, and one must be willing and eager to take them up.

Would you recommend your field of study to someone else and why?

NM: Yes, I would. Because I believe that humanity will always rely on the environment and its resources and thus people need to understand the planet.

Where do you see yourself and your career in the next 5 years?

NM: In five years, I see myself permanently employed in a Control Environmental Officer position where I will be fully excising my skills. I hope to have also completed my second Master's Degree in my field.



Above: DFFE Bursary recipient, Mr Thimothy Nthite currently works in the Chemicals and Waste Management Branch as an intern.

He went to the Tshwane University of Technology where he completed his National Diploma in Analytical Chemistry in 2019.

What made you study the course that you did?

TN: I chose to become a chemist because I am an analytical thinker, I like to plan my work and am passionate about modern science theories and innovation. I believe there is a vacuum or high demand of work that has to be done in the Chemistry field especially as we approach the Forth Industrial Revolution.

How has being a bursar assisted you in your career?

TN: It prepared me physiological to the prospects of being a government official in future. It also gave me enough time to familiarize myself with the Waste Act and other necessary regulations used in the Chemical and Waste Management Branch as well as the other branches in the Department. It also contributed to my confidence as I got the opportunity to also attended workshops or meetings within the Department when invited.

What section do you work in?

TN: Currently I'm serving in the Licensing Directorate and I'm planning to serve my second year in the Hazardous Waste Management Directorate from August 2022.

What do you do or your functions?

TN: I'm an Environmental Officer. I screen waste management license applications and reports which stipulates whether the waste management facilities are compliant with the license conditions. I assist in with site visits, monitoring committee meetings, as well as waste management licence reviews for relevant facilities all over South Africa.

What have you learned from working for the Department?

TN: I learned that government is responsible for a lot of work which many citizens are not aware of. As an official in the Department, I have drafted a Licence for Hendrina Power station and have also been responsible as a case officer for the Waste Management Licence Review for the Interwaste- Maluti Waste Management Facilities. This internship program has helped me to understand the interaction between private sector and government.

Would you recommend your field of study to someone else and why?

TN: Yes, but one will need to find a balance. I did Analytical Chemistry, so Chemistry is the mother of all Science and Engineering related courses from environmental, health, water, engineering and many others. It is up to you as an individual to decide which other field you would like to specialize in. It is either you wait for opportunities or create them by being innovative.

Where do you see yourself and your career in the next 5 years?

TN: I see myself as a DFFE permanent employee with a very good salary, being involved in educating my community about waste, and personally being involved in the business side of waste.



Above: Ms Florence Sebati says that working for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the environment has opened her eyes to the different spheres of government and how they all work together to better the lives of South Africans.

Ms. Sebati holds a Bachelor of Science honors in environmental management from the University of South Africa.

What made you study the course that you did?

FS: My love for the environment is what drove me to studying a BSc in Environmental Management. I knew that studying this course would expand my knowledge on environmental laws while also equipping me with the processes of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

How has being a bursar assisted you in your career?

FS: Getting the bursary brought huge relief to my life, it came at a time when paying for my fees was a huge struggle, as I was doing contractual work which was not paying me enough to cover my fees.

What do you do or your functions?

FS: My duties include the processing of waste management applications and integrated environmental authorizations and the reviewing of license variations applications.

Getting the bursary brought huge relief to my life, it came at a time when paying for my fees was a huge struggle.

What have you learned from working for the Department?

FS: Working for this department has not only taught me government processes, but it has also opened my eyes to how all the different government departments work together in bettering the lives of South Africans. Working here has also instilled in me an ability to work in teams with people from all sorts of backgrounds that differ from mine.

Would you recommend your field of study to someone else and why?

FS: Yes I would, simply because the environment sector is very broad and is filled with a lot of opportunities. Also, the beauty of working in this field is that it allows you to make a difference in people's lives.

Where do you see yourself and your career in the next 5 years?

FS: I see myself holding a position as a control environment officer.

WASTE PICKER INTEGRATION

WHO IS A WASTE PICKER?



A waste picker is someone who collects re-usable and recyclable materials from residential and commercial waste bins, landfill sites and open spaces in order to revalue them and generate an income.

WHAT IS WASTE PICKER INTEGRATION?



The creation of an official recycling system that values and improves the present role of waste pickers, builds on the strength of their informal system to collect and revalue materials, and includes waste pickers as key partners in its design, implementation, evaluation and revision.

7 STEPS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT WASTE PICKER INTEGRATION



1. Prepare
2. Partner
3. Plan
4. Enable
5. Institutionalise
6. Implement
7. Revise

These can be used by industry, municipalities or even NGOs

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF WP INTEGRATION:



1. Economic:

- Saves municipalities between 300 million-R750 million in landfill airspace (waste-pickers guideline)

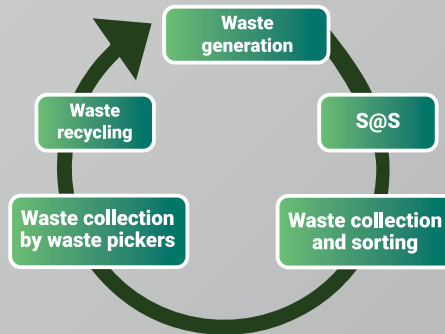
2. Environmental:

- Reduces the use and extraction of virgin material through substitution of recyclables
- Extends lifespan of landfills
- Reduces the need to allocate more land for landfill sites

NO WASTE PICKER INTEGRATION



WASTE PICKERS INTEGRATED INTO THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



WASTE PICKER INTEGRATION PRINCIPLES:



1. Recognition, respect and redress
2. Value waste pickers' expertise
3. Meaningful engagement
4. Build on what exists
5. Increase Diversion and Cost effectiveness
6. Evidence based
7. Enabling environment
8. Improved working conditions and income
9. Compensation for services and savings
10. Holistic integration



Minister Creecy launches historic garden in Thohoyandou

By Salome Tsoka



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy received a gift from Khosi Muraga Mphaphuli on behalf of Chief Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli of the Mphaphuli Royal Council to signify the historic occasion.



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy and Chief Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli of the Mphaphuli Royal Council planted a tree at the Royal House to signify the historic launch of the botanical garden.

In a monumental move for people and for nature, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Barbara Creecy launched the first national botanical garden in Thohoyandou in Venda on International Biodiversity Day on 22 May 2022 which was celebrated around world under the theme "Building a shared future for all life".

The Thohoyandou National Botanical Garden is the eleventh such garden in South Africa and will bring a wealth of benefits to biodiversity as well as the vast communities in the area and the Limpopo province as a whole.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Creecy said an estimated 200 temporary job opportunities would be created through the establishment of the garden with R20 million being secured from the Department's Environmental Programmes and an additional R20 million in funding coming from the National Department of Tourism to assist with the garden's development and its promotion as a tourism destination.

"This wonderful partnership puts the relationship between people and nature at the forefront. It conserves our rich biodiversity heritage for present and future generations and it ensures community development. This is what we mean when we call for a new deal for people and nature," Minister Creecy said.

In establishing the gardens, the Department considered the benefits to the surrounding community and involved the community in the design and naming of the structures in the garden.

Speaking on behalf of his Royal Highness Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli of the Mphaphuli Royal Council, Khosi

Muraga Mphaphuli said they were over the moon about this historic event.

"The Mphaphuli community with all its leadership structures are very happy that the garden has been upgraded to the national status today. We are over the moon about this. This has the potential to bring a lot of income to our people through tourism and other related activities," he said.

The Vhembe region in Thohoyandou is known for its rich biodiversity with much of it not only being unique but also including threatened floral species. These species and more will be conserved in the garden and displayed for educational and scientific research purposes.

The garden will also host workshops for traditional leaders and healers to raise awareness around sustainable harvesting of medicinal plants, with students from the University of Venda and learners of Mphaphuli Community also benefiting from these educational programmes.



Above: The Mphaphuli community in the Vhembe District Municipality came out in numbers to celebrate the launch of the Thohoyandou National Botanical Gardens



About the contributor: Salome Tsoka

Ms Salome Tsoka holds a BA Degree in Journalism from the University of Johannesburg and has been writing for as long as she can remember. She is a Senior Communication Officer in the Chief Directorate: Communications at the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

Fleet to tackle waste

By Salome Tsoka



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy cuts the ribbon to officially launch the national waste management fleet worth R44,5 million.



Above: Minister Creecy led a clean-up campaign with the newly launched fleet in the Mulemzi village.

Waste management in the country is set to improve significantly following the launch of the national waste management fleet worth R44,5 million by the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Barbara Creecy in Limpopo on 23 May 2022.

Dubbed as the yellow fleet, the new vehicles will go a long way in assisting struggling municipalities with improving household waste collection, illegal dumping and landfill site management.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Creecy highlighted that while the country has made great strides in improving waste management across the country since the dawn of democracy in 1994, almost a third of households still did not have access to regular household waste removal services.

This has unfortunately led to many households creating their own solutions to waste management which often results in illegal dumpsites.

“As we know, many of our municipalities are struggling to provide regular and consistent waste collection services. Once dumpsites develop, these are not regularly cleared and a number of our landfills do not meet regulatory compliance standards.”

“To improve waste management in municipalities, the department is assisting in the development of their integrated waste management plans, and training on sustainable waste management practices,” Minister Creecy said.

Minister Creecy launched the yellow fleet in the Mulemzi village in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, Limpopo where she also handed over a compactor truck and a skip loader, which are both valued at more than R5 million to assist in waste collection and the processing of waste at landfill in the municipality.

During the launch, Minister Creecy also handed over a compactor truck and truck loader backhoe, also known as a TLB both valued at nearly R4 million to the BaPhalaborwa Municipality.

The initiative follows efforts made by the Department in which it worked together with the National Treasury and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to change the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Policy to allow municipalities to access this grant to fund their yellow fleets.

To highlight and raise awareness on the amendments of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Policy, the department has used R42.4 million of our own money to provide 22 vehicles to 19 municipalities across the country. The vehicles include skip loader trucks, front end loaders, compactor trucks and other trucks required to transport waste within these areas.

Other municipalities which will benefit from this initiative include the Mbombela, Bushbuckridge, Masilonyana, Matjhabeni, Matzikama, Merafong, Makana, the West Rand, Dannhauser, Dawid Kruiper and Moses Kotane municipalities.

Speaking at the launch MEC for Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Mr Thabo Mokone acknowledged the waste problems within the various municipalities in the province and said more will be done to tackle these environmental issues in the area.

To further celebrate the launch, Minister Creecy led a clean-up campaign with the new fleet where she was joined by the National Assembly Chairperson of Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Ms Faith Mutambi, MEC Limpopo Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism-Mr Thabo Mokone, the Mayor of Collins Chabane Cllr Maluleke as well as the Mulemzi Village Chief Vho-Thovhele Ramovha and his committee.

DFFE Supports Limpopo Schools to go Green

By Veronica Mahlaba

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has partnered with Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) to pilot the South African Green Schools Programme (SAGSP) for environmental education and awareness. The country and the world at large has serious environmental concerns such as pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss etc. This has triggered great concerns about the relationship between humanity and the environment.

Speaking to DFFE's Assistant Director: Development Communication, Campaigns and Awareness, Ms Morwesi Ramotse, explained that the need to continuously heighten environmental awareness on environmental issues and also promote actions that seek to minimize damage on the environment is vital.

As part of the SAGSP initiative, learners from at least 105 schools in and around Limpopo province showcased their projects that focus on environmental conservation. Schools with outstanding projects were awarded prizes ranging from R35 000.00 to R100 000.00. These funds were channelled towards small-scale projects that support meaningful learners' action on environmental issues in their respective schools.

The Environment Quarterly team travelled across Limpopo province to see what projects the different schools decided to implement to enhance their environmental activism for the benefit of the environment, school and surrounding communities.

RAMAAHLO PRIMARY SCHOOL

During the SAGSP, Ramaahlo Primary School was awarded the Blue-Crane Award worth R50 000 towards their mini-scale projects. The area that the school

is situated in has a problem of accessing water. The school principal, Ms Kholofelo Lesete said they were excited to be awarded with projects done in her school.

"The school didn't have water. We used to draw it from a nearby crèche, so that our learners can at least have something to drink. With the prize we installed a borehole that is 90m deep in the school premises. After we got the borehole, we erected free standing water saving taps around the school so that our learners can have access to water across the school for drinking and washing their hands."

"These taps also limit the amount of water a learner can use at a time. This water then gets drained towards the medicinal trees that are planted on the school's premises that the community uses for healing different ailments," Principal Lesete explained.

She further explained that they also erected water tanks for rain water harvesting to assist them with the water challenge and for water conservation.

Talking about the water challenge that the school faced, grade 7 learner, Mr Masete Setata said it is well known that water is precious and we can't live without it. "As such, we need to conserve water as all living organisms need water. We need to take care and use it wisely. As a school we have rain water harvesting, utilise the water recycling method which is using grey water to water our plants and trees. As learners we use water bottles for drinking water, instead of drinking directly from the taps," explained Mr Setata.

Below: The Dry Enviro-Park the school created with the prize they received from SAGSP.





Above: The water saving taps that the school installed to conserve water.

Another learner from grade 6, Mr Lesley Mahlape spoke about the importance of having the borehole as it helps the school to plant more trees around the school. "Apart from making our surroundings beautiful, trees provide us with oxygen, without it we will die. They serve as shade to prevent sunburn and cancer. Trees serve as windbreakers and prevent soil erosion. Trees also provide us with food in a form of fruits," Mr Mahkoe said.

The school has an orchard that has lemons, oranges and papaya to supplement the learners' nutritional needs. The school uses the water pumped from the borehole to water the trees. They also sell the fruits from these trees in the community as a way to fundraise for the school.

DIKGABJE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school had a waste management challenge where litter from snack wrappers, cold drinks, in class papers, office paper, leftover food, old, school desks, plastic bag etc. was affecting school grounds and areas outside of the school.

To address the waste management challenge, with the prize the school won, they decided to create a Dry Enviro-Park. The Deputy Principal, Ms Magdalene Senong, explained that they converted an area that was filled with waste into a park where learners can sit and have their lunch. "We got rid of alien invasive plants and replaced them with indigenous plants. We also created a sorting area, to make it easy for everyone to throw away waste and for cycling. The level of waste has been reduced at the school and as a result a positive behavioural change and attitude towards the environment in the school and the community," Ms Senong said.

A grade 6 learner from the school, Mr Thabang Paledi stated that being in Dikgabje Primary School has taught him that he shouldn't throw litter on the ground. "The school has bins where we thro litter. We are able to sort and separate waste into tins, papers and plastic," said Mr Paledi.

Another young lady named Ms Lesedi Mojela also emphasized that by having the Dry Enviro-Park, the



Above: Mr Masete Setata in grade 7 picking some oranges from the schools orchard.

school is conserving water. "It is a place where we sit and have lunch and enjoy the shade from our indigenous trees, which don't need much water," Ms Mojela said.



Above: Learners proud to show off the sorting area and learning about recycling.

As the member of the School Governing Body, Ms Reginah Mashifane stated that they can see the difference that the SAGSP brought to the school. "The school is very beautiful and clean now. The learners take what they learn at school and even implement it at home", she said.

Deputy Principal, Ms Senong stressed the need and importance of having environmental education linked to curriculum as it responds to legislative mandate as stipulated in the constitution of Republic of South Africa, 1996 Act 108 of 1996 Chapter 2/4 which state, "Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being."



Above: The 90m deep borehole that supplies Ramaahlo Primary School with water.

Gqeberha schools on tree-planting mission

By Nwabisa Timeni



Above: Luthando Luvuyo's Special School's pupil is given a tree to plant. Learners were instructed to adopt a tree and give their tree a name. This gave tree planting a personal touch so that learners are encouraged to take care of their trees.



Above: Luthando Luvuyo Special School's pupil waters her tree after planting it at her school. Learners were instructed to look after their trees and ensure that their trees are well taken care of.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment led a Good Green Deeds Tree Planting campaign in Gqeberha from 25-29 April 2022.

A total of 42 trees were planted at seven schools in Gqeberha by Forestry officials. The schools visited during the Gqeberha schools programme were Luthando Luvuyo Special School (Campus 1 and 2), Happydale Special School, Papekuil Primary School, Merryvale Special School, Quest Special School and Cape Recife Special School.

Learners and educators shared their excitement about planting of trees at their schools. Learners were encouraged to plant the trees in honour of loved ones and to name their trees.

A learner from Luthando Luvuyo Special School expressed his excitement about planting a tree and still having to give his tree a name. He also mentioned how he hopes those who remain behind when he completes his schooling at Luthando Luvuyo Special School, will continue taking care of his tree.

"I'm glad you guys came to our school and showed us how to plant trees and I'll make sure to water my tree as much as I can. I hope that the other learners left behind or new learners coming to school will look after my tree once I leave the school, because I don't want my tree to die," said the learner.

DFFE's Senior Forestry Development Officer, Mr Bongani Finiza mentioned that planting trees is vital for the sustainability of the environment.

"We need to plant trees because trees are important for the environment and trees give us oxygen and provide habitat for the world's wildlife. As such, trees

also sustain the environment by improving air quality, conserving water and preserving soil," stated Finiza.

The 10 million trees Programme follows the call by President Cyril Ramaphosa for 10 million trees to be planted across South Africa over a five-year period which commenced in the 2021/22 financial year.

The programme aims to bring various stakeholders in the greening space to collaborate and plant at least two million trees on an annual basis.

The programme is led by the Forestry Management Branch assisted by other internal branches such as Chemical and Waste, Biodiversity and Conservation and Environmental Programmes.

The call by the President to plant 10 million trees was an echo call to enhance the greening initiatives as the result of the success of the initial commencement of the 10 million trees which was launched in 2007. This is to strengthen the forged relationship with stakeholders in a quest to green the country.

According to DFFE Official from Small Scale Forestry, Ms Nosipho Ndzimbomvu emphasised the objective of the 10 million trees programme will reduce the effects of climate change and enforce greening in schools and other areas.

"The purpose of the 10 million Trees Programme is to create sustainable settlements in South Africa to mitigate the effects of climate change and to provide food security. Moreover, one of the focuses of the programme is greening of schools and rehabilitation of environmentally degraded areas", said Ndzimbomvu.

Minister tips smart waste as potential economic driver

By Zibuse Ndlovu



Above: Minister Creecy handed over Waste Collection and Landfill Management Fleet to Merafong and Rand West Local Municipalities.

Communities are encouraged to take advantage of the latent economic spin offs that can be yielded from the effective management of waste. This was the message from the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy when addressing the community of the Merafong Local Municipality, in Gauteng on 30 May 2022.

"It is through effective management of waste that our country will realise its goal of a nature-based green economy. Where waste cannot be prevented, 40% should be diverted from landfill within five (5) years through reuse, recycling, recovery and alternative waste treatment: 25% of waste reduction in waste generation; and 20% waste reused in the economic value chain," said Minister Creecy.

Furthermore, Minister Creecy reminded the community of the importance of recycling, repurposing and reuse of old household items that do not need to be thrown away: "If we are successful at implementing these simple rules, we could create more jobs within the waste sector, and increase awareness and compliance around waste."

Evidently, waste and pollution are among the greatest threats to the health of the environment. As a result, government has accepted the responsibility to ensure that the required laws and policies are in place to address

waste issues. One of these has been the development and review of the National Waste Management Strategy, which is implemented in terms of the Waste Act

"A key pillar of the National Waste Management Strategy, published in 2020, is ensuring effective and sustainable waste services as we work to develop and grow a successful circular economy, in which citizens and municipalities look at waste in a new light," said Minister Creecy.



Above: The role of waste pickers, proper implementation of regulatory systems, job creation and the growth of small, medium and micro enterprises are key to the success of the recycling economy. **Image:** DFFE Stock Images.



About the contributor: Zibuse Ndlovu

Zibuse Ndlovu is the Assistant Director in the Communications and Advocacy Chief Directorate at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.

Review of Scientific Basis for Breaching of Mouth of Lake St Lucia Estuary

By Veronica Mahlaba



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy receiving the Review of the Scientific Basis for Breaching the Mouth of Lake St Lucia Estuary Report from a panel expert, Ms Sibusisiwe Ngcobo.

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy launched the report by a panel of experts which reviewed the scientific basis for breaching the mouth of the Lake St. Lucia Estuary at iSimangaliso Wetland Park, on 28 April 2022.

The mouth to the St Lucia Lake Estuary was artificially breached in January 2021 by the iSimangaliso Park Authority, following a multi-stakeholder Symposium in October 2020 to discuss the breaching of the St Lucia Lake which had been closed to the marine environment since 2014. At the time, the Wetland Park Authority explained that the purpose of the breach was to restore the nursery function of the system and to flush out the accumulated silt load originating from the uMfolozi and its catchments, on the advice of a scientific and technical task team.

An open letter written to the Minister from a group of concerned scientists citing environmental dangers stemming from the artificial breaching of the estuary mouth, which then prompted the Minister to appoint an independent, multidisciplinary panel of experts to investigate. Their work took place between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022, which included reviewing legislation and management plans, meetings with scientific experts as well as interactions with the communities including traditional leaders in the region.

Minister Creecy asked the panel to advise on the significance and impact of the artificial opening of the estuary mouth and how this relates to the implementation of the GEF 5 project interventions and the St Lucia Estuary Management Plan. Secondly to advise on the exceptional circumstances, as defined in the Estuary Management Plan, that lead to the decision to breach the mouth, including those of an environmental, social, and economic nature. Thirdly to advise on the impact of the mouth opening on the

functioning of the estuary system and the wetland system as a whole, as well as the associated environmental, social and economic implications and to develop guidelines for the immediate and ongoing management of the system.

Key findings of the review:

1. While the breach was contrary to the GEF recommendations that no artificial breaching should occur, The Estuarine Management Plan did permit limited breaching for ecological reasons. Accordingly, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority performed the breaching within the mandate as approved through their Maintenance Management Plan, authorised by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and in line with the prescriptions of related legislation. The panel found that there were many ecological reasons that would justify the breach including the prolonged closure of the system from the sea; the concern over accumulated sediment in the system; the presence of alien invasive species; a decrease in biodiversity within the system; and a decrease in the nursery function of the estuary.
2. Importantly, the review is critical that the Estuarine Management Plan makes no mention of socio-economic factors in its definition of exceptional circumstances, despite several social and economic concerns associated with a prolonged closed mouth state. I will say more on the absence of these important considerations later in my address. The Review adds that non-consideration of these factors contributes to community conservation conflict in relation to the management of the mouth as most stakeholder groups seem to require the St Lucia system to function in one specific state. However, it is important to note that St Lucia as a dynamic system cannot and should not be confined to one ideal state.
3. On the impact of the mouth opening on the functioning of the estuary and wetland system and whether the objectives of the breach were met, the Review found that the opening seemed to have a positive effect on the restoration of the nursery function of the system and that a number of marine fish for tourism and recreational fishing had been reintroduced. Other positive results included the return of megafauna to the mouth area and the shift from fresh to brackish water in the Lake.

Minister Creecy stated that the report noted that there was no observed or measured change in the removal of sediment, of common reeds and alien invasive species, no change in the loss of mangroves or in relief to small and large-scale farmers from back-flooding.

Recommendations by the Panel of Experts:

- In accordance with the MMP, maintenance breaching could continue in exceptional circumstances. However, the exceptional circumstances (ecological or social) for future maintenance breaching must be clearly defined before any further action. While it is clearly understood that the GEF report advises against breaching, it is practical and necessary to consider the effects of allowing the mouth to remain closed.
- The second key recommendation of the Panel is that iSimangaliso develop and intensify an in-house monitoring plan and build capacity to collect monitoring data. This includes both biodiversity monitoring and socio-economic data on effects of the system function. The Panel notes that future breaching should not take place without adequate ecological monitoring before and after the event, to ensure the most efficient breach in terms of the intended objectives as well as potential socio-economic reasons. Continued intensive monitoring would also allow for a more adaptive management strategy which is more suitable for the dynamic St Lucia system.
- To assist with relief to farmers in the uMfolozi-Msunduzi floodplain as a result of back-flooding, the report recommends clearing the Msunduzi and beach channel of vegetation and sediment to allow water to flow freely from the floodplain to the mouth. Also recommended is dune maintenance to limit encroachment of vegetation.
- The Panel also recommends urgent improvement in communication between the management of iSimangaliso and stakeholders including communities, with the aim of allowing stakeholders to better understand management decisions. This includes the translation of technical documents into an easily understandable format.

The Panel stated that moving forward, it is clear that the St Lucia Lake, protected and managed by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, can no longer be managed as an isolated system. Activities in the floodplain and catchment areas of the feeder rivers contribute to the health of the St Lucia system.

“As such, the Panel recommends the development of a comprehensive Reserve Determination of Ecological Water Requirements be developed,” explained Minister Creecy.

The Panel’s report includes both immediate and future work. Minister Creecy confirmed that the Department and the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority have committed to ensuring that the recommendations made by the panel will be implemented.

“This will be done in collaboration with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and sister government departments, including the Departments of Agriculture, Land and Rural Development, Water and Sanitation, as well as the District and Local municipalities. I have also requested that some of the members of the Panel have their terms extended by a period of six months to monitor and advise on the implementation of the recommendations,” Minister Creecy confirmed.

The Panel stated that moving forward, it is clear that the St Lucia Lake, protected and managed by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, can no longer be managed as an isolated system.



Above: Minister Barbara Creecy handing over the Review of the Scientific Basis for Breaching the Mouth of Lake St Lucia Estuary Report to the Chairperson of the Board of iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority, Prof Thandi Nzama.



Above: Floodwaters have opened the Mouth of Lake St Lucia. (Image by Chris Rattray Bateleurs)

Storms River mouth in the Tsitsikamma National Park,
Eastern Cape (Image by Flying for the Environment)

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