

Workshop on the Hartbeespoort Dam RMP
Media release by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
12 September 2007

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) held a workshop on Wednesday, 12 September 2007 at Hartbeespoort to start a process of facilitating the development of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) by interested and affected parties that will ensure the equitable use of the water of Hartbeespoort Dam. This process is one of a number of activities undertaken as part of the remediation of Hartbeespoort Dam.

The RMP is a future based plan that will regulate the use of the dam in accordance with Chapter 2 of the National Water Act (No 36 of 1998). This plan must set out the strategies, objectives, plans, guidelines and institutional arrangements relating to the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the water resource within the framework of existing relevant government policy. In order to ensure the implementation of the RMP it will have to be aligned with the region's conservation plans, culminating in an integrated plan that will address biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage conservation, eco-tourism development and benefit flow management.

Mr Cilliers Blaauw, DWAF's Project Manager for the RMP said it is important that interested parties agree on the type and number of activities they would like on the dam, as well as the institution to oversee the implementation of the plan. The outcome of the process will therefore be a plan developed collectively by interested and affected parties and must be regulated by them. He made it clear that current legislation must be complied with and minimum norms and standards adhered to with the development of this plan.

The participants at the workshop represented residents, business, non-governmental organisations and national, provincial and local government. Participants at the workshop registered according to specific sector groups namely land-owners, users of the dam (industry), resource managers and government representatives. A technical task team has been constituted comprising sector representatives who will meet individually and work on their respective sector's needs as well as collectively to discuss multi-sectoral inputs and build understanding. The technical task team will meet in October 2007 to discuss the needs and expectations of each sector and start addressing specific issues required within the plan.

The project launch was the first step in a process to develop the RMP and it is envisaged that the final plan will be handed over to the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry towards March 2008 for consideration. The general public will however have two opportunities to review the draft RMP and provide comments on it. It is envisaged that the first draft will be ready for public review in November 2007 and the second draft in February 2008.

The RMP forms part of the Hartbeespoort Dam Remediation Programme, known as *Harties Metsi A Me* (My water), that has been initiated by the Department in conjunction with the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment (NWDACE) to improve the quality of water in the Hartbeespoort Dam.

The Remediation programme calls for the investigation of different aspects to improve water quality at the dam. Various activities have been identified which include controlling and removing algae on the dam, pre-impoundment and treatment options upstream of the dam basin, long term monitoring of the water quality, sediment removal and the reduction of the inflow of phosphates and nitrogen. The fish population is also being considered, restoring the shoreline vegetation as well as rehabilitating the wetlands.

For more information on the Remediation Programme contact Petrus Venter at tel. (012) 253 1026 or call the Department's toll free number at 0800 200 200. Anyone who wishes to register as a stakeholder may call Rachelle Seymore at tel. (011) 254 4901 or e-mail rachelles@zitholele.co.za.