

Remediation Programme announced for Hartbeespoort Dam

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The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) in conjunction with the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment (NWDACE) is instituting a remediation programme to improve the quality of water in the Hartbeespoort Dam.

Work has already commenced to clear the dam of toxins and although the sewage spill into Hartbeespoort Dam a few weeks ago hampered progress, the Remediation team and Madibeng Local Municipality, responsible for water supply in the Hartbeespoort area, are working closely together to manage the effects of the spillage.

The Remediation programme calls for the investigation of different aspects to improve water quality at the dam. Various activities have been identified which include developing a Resource Management Plan of which the first public meeting is taking place on 12 September 2007 at the Hartbees Fisheries, 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. Hartbeespoort Dam has for a number of years already experienced unacceptable high levels of algae bloom which has a detrimental effect on the dam and its use. In order to improve the water quality at the dam, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) in conjunction with the North West Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment (NWDACE) appointed Rand Water as the implementing agent for the remediation of the dam.

Mr Petrus Venter, DWAF's Project Leader said that it is important that the remediation programme serves as a model for sustainable water resource management. "Through this project initiatives will be integrated that include physical, chemical and biological action plans to ensure the dam is free from toxins". Immediate plans for ensuring cooperation and coordination between the different parties involve a steering committee managed by NWDACE and establishing a high level intergovernmental forum. It is estimated that the cost for the remediation programme will be in the vicinity of R35m.

For more information contact Petrus Venter, tel. (012) 253 1026 or telephone the Department's Toll Free Number on 0800 200 200.