

## **Progress in development of RMP for the Hartbeespoort Dam**

Media Release by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

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More than sixty (60) stakeholders participated in the second Technical Task Team workshop held by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) on 23 November 2007 at Amazingwe Lodge, Broederstroom to develop the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Hartbeespoort Dam. The RMP is one of a number of projects undertaken as part of the remediation programme of Hartbeespoort Dam.

Mr Cilliers Blaauw from DWAF who is responsible for the co-ordination of the development of the RMP, said the location and proximity of Hartbeespoort Dam makes it one of the most popular dams for recreation. He said "The stakeholders of the dam have to ensure its equitable use and the sustainability of the dam, therefore the participation of interested and affected parties in the development of this plan is of utmost importance". Although the DWAF will guide the development of the plan, the stakeholders have to identify their requirements and set their own objectives where after it will be measured against compliance with legislation. Mr Blaauw added that this means that the stakeholders will have to negotiate their own solutions. Although the DWAF is responsible for the water resource, the dam has to be managed through a joint initiative by those who own it, use it and who are its beneficiaries. Therefore it is important that partnerships are established.

Four main sectors are responsible for the development of the RMP and stakeholders participated according to the respective sector they represent, namely Industry (users of the dam), Landowners, Resource Managers and Government. The different groups identified their respective objectives, ranked them and intense discussions took place in this regard. Some of the objectives that were raised include access to and access control at the dam for both public and private use; the appropriate numbers to use the dam surface; regulation of the number of boats on the dam; the safety of boats, and water sport; safety and security around the dam; zoning of the dam in terms of its different uses; compliance with industrial norms and standards; establishing conservation areas; allocation of suitable alternative land in the area for low cost housing and establishing an approved process for future development in the area.

The next workshop will take place mid-January 2008 when the different concepts will be refined and detailed mapping of access points, recreation activities, safety standards etc will be done. It is expected that the first draft for public review will be completed by the end of January 2008.

Section 2 of the National Water Act (No 36 of 1998) informs the development of the RMP and it specifies that past imbalances must be addressed. The RMP must set out the strategies, objectives, plans, guidelines and institutional arrangements relating to the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the dam within the framework of existing relevant government policy. The RMP 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. Through the implementation of the RMP the use of the dam will be regulated.

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 might include but are not limited to 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.

Anyone who has an interest in Hartbeespoort Dam and who wants to be involved in this process should please contact Rachelle Seymore or Wilheminah Mosupye at (011) 254 4901 or e-mail them at

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