

**WeedBuster Week 2007 campaigns**  
**Media release by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**  
**11 October 2007**

The awareness against the spread of invasive alien plants in the Western Cape Region is reaching the targeted public domain. The *Working for Water Programme* of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry can confirm that young learners through the schools curriculum are receiving adequate information about the threat posed by invasive alien plants. Municipalities in the Western Cape as well as organized Labour and Civil Society Structures also have welcomed this useful awareness programme and are fairly convinced of the importance to educate and inform the broader public of this initiative.

**But the Department this week expressed its concern around the acceptance of this programme to Private-Land Owners.** Last year the Department's focus for WeedBuster Week (an awareness campaign set to educate, inform and equip the public on invasive alien plants) focused in the Southern Cape and the Cape Town Metro. This year, the Department is taking this campaign to the West Coast of the Region, using one of its implementing agents in that area (Cape Nature). This joint initiative is meant to plead with Private Land Owners to see the bigger picture about the threat posed by invasive alien plants:

- They area a fire hazard
- They threaten indigenous South African plants
- They can threaten an ecosystem in any given area
- Most of all- they suck chunks of water, aggravating the scarcity of our water situation.

The Department can confirm that the clearing of invasive alien plants close to the new Franschoek Dam has been a win-win situation. While freeing water to flow naturally to its intended source, adding to the Region's water saving campaign, it has also put bread on many tables for contractors and their employees employed by the Working for Water Programme. As the Department draws nearer to meeting Stakeholders later this month to possibly relax the water restrictions imposed three years ago, owing to a growth in demand for water, and a recent severe drought (1:100), the Western Cape Water Supply System (made up of all the major Regional dams) is over 100% full in over 10 years.

For more on this programme and how it can benefit you, call the toll free number: **0800 005 376**

Pictures of invasive alien plants are available on [www.dwaf.gov.za](http://www.dwaf.gov.za)

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