

# WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...



With all the rain we have had lately, it is hard to believe that South Africa is a water-scarce, semi-arid country, but it is. Unfortunately, even the little water we do have is often badly managed and used wastefully. Do you know that the average daily water consumption per person in Africa is 7 litres? That is the same amount used every time a toilet is flushed in our suburbs. We have all heard that “The current average daily water demand in the Msunduzi Municipal area is exceeding the current available sustainable supply” and, of course, all read about Ballito running out of water during the holiday season.

Are we changing the way we use water to ensure that the current supply is sustainable for the future?



The uMngeni River and the streams and rivers that feed it, supply our communities with water, but many are polluted with industrial waste, choked with alien vegetation and filled with sewerage. The uMngeni River supplies 1000 million litres per day of potable water to a vast area including Wartburg, Vulindlela, most of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The Midmar purification works distributes 220 million litres of water per day. We are one of the few privileged countries in the world where we can still open a tap and find drinkable water. To say the uMngeni is our life blood is no exaggeration.

Previously, as population density and urban growth in the area supplied by the uMngeni River increased, Mearns Weir was constructed on the Mooi River – water is diverted from the Weir by pumping and gravity into the uMngeni River system. Now, years later, water shortages are once again looming, as there is no longer enough water in this river system for everyone. The spring rove Dam is being constructed upstream of the Mearns Weir, in order to increase the amount of water caught and transferred into the uMngeni System.

The glaring question is – what happens when the Mooi River system no longer has sufficient water? What next? More dams on other river systems and more water transfer schemes? It is akin to robbing Peter to pay Paul. How long is this system sustainable? All we are doing is reshuffling the same water from one place to another, less here, more there.

By walking the length of the river, all 265kms, we hope to inspire people to appreciate this precious resource, take better care of it and use water wisely. If we don't, any idea of water sufficiency in future is pointless.

Source: <https://umngeniriverwalk.wordpress.com/2012/02/10/water-water-everywhere/>