



**BREEDDE-GOURITZ**  
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

**3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER**  
OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019

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# Let's work together in this year to improve our water resource management

By Rudzani Makahane

**H**appy New Year to all stakeholders! By the way, when we discuss issues of water resource management everyone is a stakeholder and their inputs are valuable.

After a hectic year of 2019 where most parts of the Breede-Gouritz Water Management Area continued to receive less rainfall, one can only hope for a better rainfall in the New Year of 2020. The prediction of rainfall by South African Weather Services indicate that there is still significant uncertainty on the expected rainfall conditions for the rest of the summer period in most parts of the country. The Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency understand that this prevailing drought will be felt for years to come, especially in the rural areas where agriculture is the main generator of the economy. The socio-economic impact on farm workers and farming communities would be significant should the agricultural activity in the Western Cape collapse. BGCMA has interacted with water users in the previous year as part of compliance inspections, making follow-up to public complaints, awareness and rivers clean-up campaigns, meetings and through various forums. The message highlighted by all these efforts is that water is an increasingly scarce and valuable resource. The consensus is that the growing water scarcity and misuse of freshwater pose serious threats to sustainable development.

Competition among agriculture, industry and cities for limited water supplies is already constraining development efforts in many areas. As populations expand and economies grow, the competition for limited supplies will intensify and so will conflicts among water users. Despite water shortages, misuse of water is of major concern where

in the municipalities are not curtailing their supply in response to drought or in areas where farmers still depend on flood irrigation systems.

BGCMA encourage all water users conduct their activities with consideration to the three (Sustainability, equity and efficiency) guiding principles of the National Water Act (1998) which guide the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources.

- ▶ Sustainability means promoting social and economic development and at the same time ensuring that the environment is protected both now and for the future. The environment needs to be protected because it is where water comes from. If there is a good balance between using and protecting water resources then current and future water needs can be met.
- ▶ Equity means that everyone must have access to water and to the benefits of using water. Decisions to allocate water must be equitable (fair) to all people.
- ▶ Efficiency means that water should not be wasted. Water must be used to the best possible social and economic advantage.

During site inspection in various places in our area, it was identified that existing and modified instream structures (dams, weir, etc) were contributing to unnecessary conflicts between water users. Due to low flow in rivers, some of the impounding structured captures all the water and leave nothing for the environment and downstream users. All water users are reminded to take in consideration that lawful access to property where a water resource and/or watercourse bi-sects and/or are riparian to, does not permit the



upstream user preferential use of such water as it naturally arises at the intended point of impeding, diversion and/or taking.

As outlined in Part 3 on the NWA (1998), providing water resources of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the requirements of the Reserve (basic human needs and ecological Reserves) is the first priority. This means that no instream structure shall divert or impound all the water from the river at any given time.

BGCMA is committed to resolve matters of concern raised by affected water users and we will strive to reach consensus decision with all interested and affected parties. We will strive to address all complains timeously and satisfactory. However, we encourage all water users to be able to participate in water resource management by being able to resolve their own matters before they request intervention by BGCMA.

In addition, BGCMA does not have mandate to register servitude rights where water users (previous or current) agreed to provide access of conveyance pipelines to their neighbours who does not have direct access to water resource. However, schedule 2 of the NWA(1998) provide procedural matters regarding application for the award of a servitude claims to the High Court.

Lastly, kindly be advised not to use water without Authorisation from the Responsible Authority. Please note that it is an offence to use water otherwise than as permitted by the National Water Act, 1998.

# Rethinking Water Usage

By Eben Saal

John Sibanyoni, Geohydrologist and Acting Water Use Manager for the Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency, reflects on how South Africans have to start thinking differently about water.

South Africa has always been a water-scarce country, but recent events have focused the minds of all citizens on the pressing need to preserve water resources and to use water more intelligently.

One response at national level was to create nine Catchment Management Agencies. They have been tasked to protect water resources, allocate and regulate water use and to coordinate the activities of water users.

The Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency (BGCMA) is the southernmost of the catchment agencies and falls mostly in the Western Cape. The two largest rivers in the BGCMA's area are the Breede and Gouritz rivers. Their tributaries, as well as the catchments of the smaller coastal rivers, all fall under the agency.

BGCMA offices are located in Worcester and George which enable the agency to assist local authorities such as municipalities, local communities, Water User Associations (WUA), Irrigation Boards (IB), relevant stakeholders and other state organs and institutions.

## Change is needed

Among the steps that South Africa needs to take are changing the pattern of water usage so that less water is used, conserving water where groundwater recharges are feasible and focusing on capturing and storing stormwater in urban areas, according to John.

He also suggests that municipal budgets "have at least a hydrogeologist and an engineer for water supply." He adds, "Government needs to attempt to work with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are willing to assist in drought areas to avoid duplication of interventions." With regard to stormwater

management, John notes that, "Floods taking place in urban areas can be captured and purified in a designed system, namely Dual Porosity Filters (DPF membranes) then released into recharge zones or other usages thereafter."

John, who has an MSc Geohydrology from the University of the Free State and is a Certified Professional Natural Scientist with the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP), believes that the country and its citizens really needs to focus or engage in interventions such as those outlined above.

## Dry times

The drought afflicting the Karoo region is the result of a combination of factors, not limited to climate change and the lack of specialist skills in municipalities. The reliance on surface water as the sole supply of water is a key reason for the current situation, according to John. "As a result," he says, "less focus on groundwater or on a water-mix resulted in the country being prone to droughts; contingency measures worked only for a short time."

Dams in the Breede water management area (serving the towns of Worcester, Grabouw and Swellendam) have done relatively better than the Gouritz area, under which the Karoo falls. "The drought started around 2015 but it started to be felt from 2017," says John. The following towns located within the Karoo experienced the biggest challenges: Beaufort West, Laingsburg, Prince Albert, Ladismith and Oudtshoorn. "Most of those towns end up relying solely on groundwater or, in the case of Beaufort West, recycled water."

Catchment agencies are not responsible for the disbursement of funds but BGCMA has been directly involved in various initiatives for the implementation of drought relief. For example, BGCMA is participating in technical planning for the development of new wellfields for water supply in local municipalities such

as Beaufort West. Other activities that the BGCMA provides as assistance to local authorities include:

- ▶ Water scarcity and usage awareness campaigns
- ▶ Fast-track the finalisation of licence applications (the City of Cape Town was granted a drought emergency licence in two weeks as compared to the normal legislated time-frame of 300 days) • Media tours where BGCMA provides information on issues such as water usage and borehole registration.

## Licences and permits

Drilling a borehole does not necessarily trigger the need for a permit unless the following conditions exist: municipal by-laws require a specific permit; it is a delineated sensitive area; it is a wetland or riparian zone or a 1:100 flood line. A licence permit application is triggered for the taking of water (types include taking, discharge and storing) as defined by the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998). The licence process has four types of permits:

- ▶ Schedule One: General low volume, emergency use, should be consistent with domestic or household use with no commercial activities; no licence required.
- ▶ General Authorisation (GA): a permit for minimal commercial water usage in small schemes; a licence is required.
- ▶ Water Use Licence: a high-level permit which considers many aspects related to the economy, the ecosystem and basic human needs; a licence is required.
- ▶ Existing Lawful Use (ELU): This type of permit considers existing lawful use if water use was taking place prior to the NWA of 1998; registration required.

# Certificates of Achievements



# Premier Service Excellence Awards



# Global Hand Washing Day 2019 – “Clean Hands for All”

By Eben Saal

Sometimes we tend to take it for granted to wash our hands after going to the bathroom, before we eat or after touching our pets. Also, covering our mouths when we cough or sneeze is something that is often overlooked. However, it is important to do this daily to stay clean, healthy and germ free. In order to prevent germs from spreading from one person to another it is important to be aware of the following:

**Noroviruses** could get spread via contaminated food, water, and contact with contaminated surfaces. You could get norovirus from having direct contact with a sick person. Example in an event where one person is sick at home and spreading their sickness to other members at home, they all end up getting the same flu.

**Airborne disease** gets spread through breathing, talking, coughing, sneezing, toilet flushing or any other activities which generates aerosol particles or droplets.

**Nosocomial infections** are considered to develop in a health care setting that is why it is important to wash your hands before and after visiting sick people, clinics or hospitals.





Keeping our hands clean is thus important because it is one of the obvious places where germs are hiding. Other common hiding places for germs include cell phones, keypads, tv-remotes, door handles and toothbrushes which are being placed too close to one another.

To raise awareness about the importance of washing one's hands and to educate our communities about the benefits of washing one's hands, the Institutional and Stakeholder Relations Unit of the BGCMA joined Department of Housing, Water and Sanitation in Beaufort-West on Tuesday, 15 October 2019 to celebrate Global Hand Washing day.

This day is being celebrated in South-Africa since 2008 and the purpose of this

day is to motivate and mobilize people globally to improve their handwashing habits.

The fun filled program of the day started off at the Hillside and Kwa-Mandlenkosi clinics where officials demonstrated to community members how to wash their hands properly. Officials highlighted the importance of washing your fingers, knuckles and also under your nails when washing your hands. Participants received free soap, and toilet paper afterwards.

Hereafter the team visited AH Barnard Primary school in Hillside and HM Dlikidla primary in Kwa-Mandlenkosi primary schools where more demonstrations was done for the grade six learners. After the demonstrations was done Ms. Margo Adonis from the Department of Water,

Sanitation and Human Settlements spoke to learners about bullying and school bullying, what it entails, its negative effects and the importance of not engaging in bullying.

Lastly, it was time for learners participate in the BGCMA's water saving tips board game and by playing the game opportunity was also created for Interns from the Department of Environmental Affairs to assist with the group facilitation of the learners. The aim with this game was to inform learners that although it is important to wash ones hands it is also important to keep in mind that Beaufort-West is a drought-stricken area so they should practice caution when doing so.

# BGCMA wishes you all many more years to come....

01 OCTOBER Kathleen Makgatho	05 OCTOBER Jan van Staden	13 OCTOBER Zanele Mngoma	14 OCTOBER Langa Twaise	16 OCTOBER Buyelwa Mzabela
22 OCTOBER Gerhard De Bruijn	23 OCTOBER Rudzani Makahane	25 OCTOBER Aureca Jansen	05 NOVEMBER Andiswa Sam	18 NOVEMBER Elistia Davids
20 NOVEMBER Zintle Mbuzi	24 NOVEMBER Ntombikile Booi	29 NOVEMBER Ogwang Okoth	20 DECEMBER Lynadia Haas	23 DECEMBER Fabion Smith

F	H	W	A	H	E	G	O	N	I	T	U	M	T	C
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A	D	W	O	C	R	O	M	I	X	A	K	I	O	C
S	C	M	I	E	R	E	A	L	E	L	E	Q	U	L
N	Q	H	A	X	I	T	T	B	G	C	M	A	E	E
E	E	S	I	C	O	H	G	H	C	I	N	A	M	A
W	F	E	D	E	W	E	L	E	I	H	E	M	B	N
Y	M	A	T	L	V	S	I	W	N	N	B	U	N	H
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A	D	R	N	E	R	E	M	T	Q	I	E	I	F	N
R	I	B	O	N	P	Q	E	E	A	R	U	R	M	D
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K	U	N	O	S	O	C	O	M	I	A	L	P	Q	O
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## WORD SEARCH

ACHIEVEMENT  
AIRBORNE  
BGCMA  
CLEAN HANDS  
EXCELLENCE  
GLOBAL  
NEW YEAR  
NOSOCOMIAL  
RETHINK  
RESOURCE  
WATER