



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEAKING NOTES FOR DEPUTY MINISTER

WILGE RIVER CELEBRATION, FRANKFORT 11 MARCH 2011

Program Director
Mayor of Mafube Municipality
Councilors
Representatives of the South African Breweries
Members of the media
Ladies and gentlemen

I feel gratified to be here today to take part during the Wilge River clean up. It is incumbent to each one of us to ensure that our rivers are always clean. Hence the Public Private Partnership - Let the River Flow Project.

The Department of Water Affairs launched and handed over the Let the River Flow Project to Mafube Local Municipality during the National Water Week celebration last year on 26 March 2010.

The project was initiated by environmentalist, Mr Peter Hawley, who upon visiting the Wilge River in Frankfort, was shocked by the huge amount of dead wood and debris in the river. This situation was worsened by the recent floods in February. Mr. Hawley then took it upon himself to try and find a solution to this problem in order to let the river flow again hence the name "Let the river flow". The South African Breweries (SAB) came on board, together with the Department of Water Affairs.

The debris collected behind the bridges and weirs have backed up for 500 meters, causing serious risks for the local inhabitants and the environment.

The key deliverables of the project include the mechanical clearing of all drift wood in the river and the clearing of alien vegetation from the river banks by Working for Water, to reduce the risk of future re-occurrence. All wood is transported to central locations within the townships for use as fire wood. The local township population relies heavily on wood for energy and domestic purposes.

The project has created 22 jobs for the locals and it is envisaged that it will create more opportunities.

The ultimate aim is to create sustainable, interactive projects to increase awareness of water conservation principles.

The Wilge River has also been officially adopted by the River Trust as part of the Adopt-a-River campaign and they are partnering with the Mafube Local Municipality on this portion of the river. The River Trust will strive to partner with other municipalities on other portions of the river with a view of expanding the project further.

Today we are here to witness the fruits of an integrated approach by both private and public sector. The key sponsor to this project, the South African Breweries, is celebrating their corporate social investment today by bringing the key personnel who are making all of this possible to the site. The importance of Supply Chain Management in any organization cannot be overlooked.

In conclusion I would like to thank each and every one of you for your contribution to the success of this project. I also call upon other private institution to adopt a river and be part of the River Health Programme.

I thank you.