

MINUTES OF THE VAAL DAM RESERVOIR FORUM

Date : 28 January 2003

Time : 9:30 for 10:00

Venue : Earlybird Farm, Social Club

1. Welcome

Mario Augoustinos welcomed and thanked all present. He mentioned that there are 19 Water Management Areas (WMA) throughout the country. Vaal Dam Reservoir (VDR) catchment falls under the Upper Vaal Water Management Area (UVWMA). VDR is just down stream of the Grootdraai and Waterval Catchment. The initial scoping of the VDR forum was in 1998 in Standerton. The forum meetings play a major role in the integrated Water Resource management. Mario emphasised the importance of attending these meetings and asked the attendees to participate and bring forth their concerns.

2. CMA Process: Kavita Pema

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry initiated forums in 1995. The National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998) was promulgated in 1998 and requires that Catchment Management Agencies (CMA) be established. Forums are therefore used as the driving force to establishing the CMA's. There are currently 13 forums in the UVWMA. Each forum must have a management committee (FMC), which is responsible for managing all the forum activities. This committee manages everything that the forum needs to be done. All forums must have a charter and Terms Of Reference, which is then used as an admin tool. The charter must state the objectives and goals of the forum. Once the forum has agreed on it, it has to be signed by three members including the chairperson.

Mario: The VDR forum already has a charter, it will be distributed for comments. Once signed it can therefore be used as a legal tool.

Kavita: Through the FMC, a Catchment Executive Committee (CEC) is formed. There is a Reference Group (RG), which is a higher management committee. The Reference Group in the UVWMA has been elected and it will ensure the establishment of the CMA. The tasks Of the RG includes ensuring representivity, design a proposal for the CMA structure and to disseminate the information to the forums. Kavita mentioned that there is a lack of representivity for the previously disadvantaged. Representation is a major stumbling block but DWAF is looking at a disimbursment policy, which is not yet final.

Members of the FMC task team were elected. The following representatives were elected:

Agricultural : Mike Ludick
Industrial : Korf Stoltz and Johnny Rust
Local Council: Emmanuel Moenza
Water Services Provider: Thomas Gyedu-Ababio
Gold Mining: Len Rootman
DWAF: Lebogang Matlala and Kavita Pema

Representatives are also needed from the following: Eskom, Grootdraai office, Grootdraai forum, Waterval forum, CBO and NGO's. Mario was re-elected as the chairperson of the forum and Thomas chairperson of the FMC.

Lebo and Thomas were given the mandate to draw up the dates for the FMC meetings, which will be held on a six weekly basis.

3. **Water Supply: Carl Fest**

A presentation was made to give feedback on registration of water uses and the billing system. In 2000 DWAF required that all water users register their water uses. Authorisation of all water uses that require licences throughout the country is a considerable task and will take some time to complete. As an essential preliminary step towards licensing, and to enable the imposition of water use charges the Department undertook a countrywide process to register water uses. The registration process will ultimately capture information about the location and extent of all water Section 21 uses. However, because the water use charges under the pricing strategy may at present only be made for abstraction, storage and stream flow reduction activities (commercial Afforestation), registration has concentrated on these three water uses.

The formal period for water use registration closed at the end of June 2001, by which time some 50 000 users had been registered. The Department is satisfied that a sufficiently high proportion- more than 80% of the total number of these chargeable water uses has been registered to enable water use charges to be equitably made. The registration process will continue for as long as necessary to capture all water users, but now users may be liable for a penalty charge for late registration and risk losing their entitlements if they fail to register.

4. **Water Quality Status Of The Vaal Dam Reservoir Catchment: Thomas Gyedu-Ababio**

This Presentation gave an overview of what the water quality status of the catchment is. A report prepared by Rand Water was handed out at the meeting and a CD is available, DWAF will make extra copies for everyone.

Mario: People must understand why this is important and must be aware what impact is likely to elevate the level of a certain variable. For example high COD, NO₃ and PO₄ can be associated with sewage works. The forum must develop an integrated monitoring programme and for the purpose of Catchment Management look at variables that Thomas presented.

5. **Water Education Programme: Frans Matras**

The Department has embarked on the 20/20 vision for water education aiming at bringing environmental awareness to the school learners. At this stage the Department is targeting the grade 7 to grade 9 learners but later the tertiary level student will be included.

Mario: Wanted to know what is Frans's role in the VDR catchment in terms of WEP. He requested Frans to draw up an action plan for this forum stating what he plans to do to better the catchment in terms of WEP.

Thomas: Requested the forum to discuss Water Week. Choose an area where the activities are to be done.

Mario: Most people did not know about the Water Week therefore they should be given time to go back to their respective companies and find out what their companies are willing to offer for Water Week activities. Since most industries are in the catchment is in Standerton our focus for Water Week should be in Standerton. He also asked Thomas to brief the forum on what Rand Water is planning to do during Water Week.

Thomas: A jazz festival around the Vaal Dam has been planned. Municipalities and relevant stakeholders have been invited. A junior biomonitoring is also planned aiming at empowering the youth with this kind of knowledge so that they know which organisms indicate good water quality.

The Theme For this year's Water Week: Water Is Our Future.

6. **Closure**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 and a word of gratitude was extended to DWAF and Earlybird for making the refreshments and venue available. The next meeting is scheduled for 09 April 2003 at the same venue.