

Water problems in Umzinto set to continue

UMZINTO and the surrounding town under Umdoni Local Municipality will continue to experience consistent water shortages for a longer period if the poor rainfall persists, reports Ugu District Municipality.

Research conducted by Umgeni Water on historical rainfall trends over the past 25 years looked particularly at the mid south coast water works sites of Umzinto, Mthwalume and Craigeiburn. It showed 2010's rainfall to date has been the leanest year ever experienced.

"So far, about 226mm of a normal annual average of 1025mm or 22.1% of the normal annual average has been received. This was substantiated by sugar cane farmers who report that this year has been their worst in 25 years as far as rainfall goes," said Lindani Mzotho, Ugu District Municipality's acting senior communications manager.

The current dry spell may just be the beginning, or the first year, of what could be three to four years of low rainfall.

Monday's dam levels: EJ Smith Dam 13.1%; Umzinto River 22.7%.

Due to pumping constraints Ugu and Umgeni Water can currently supply ml per day. Mzotho said, "This

means there is a shortfall of about ml a day. The augmentation from the Craigeiburn and Mthwalume systems would have had the capacity in the past to satisfy this shortfall. The constraints and challenges with these augmentation options is related to the stability of the associated infrastructure (pump stations and pipelines), together with higher demands from new or additional supply areas that have been linked to these systems, has reduced the capacity of these transfer systems to provide relief for the Umzinto system."

On a positive note, according to Umgeni Water's Bruce Boyers, the Environmental Impact Assessment has been processed and a Record of Decision already received allowing the contractor to proceed with all haste with construction work on the emergency link between Ellingham Reservoir and the Umzinto Works.

He said, "Foundations for the pump station have already been poured and trenching and pipe laying along the first critical section is due to start shortly. Our target to get water to Umzinto remains December 15."

He said the average rainfall expected for October is around 113mm. To date, this October's rainfall has

been between 30 and 40mm.

According to Boyers, the average number of days of rainfall normally recorded for the months of October, November and December is around 12 days for each month. This gives hope of more rain and some relief before the pipeline is commissioned.

Save

Ugu therefore asks residents to save water as failure by any person to adhere to the restrictions will affect the normal supply. The community is also asked to report vandalism on the Ugu pipe bridges that supply water to Sezela, Bazley and Ifafa.

The acts of sabotage make efforts to provide relief very difficult and the police are looking for these criminals. An appeal was made at the Ugu water and sanitation portfolio meeting last week to scrap metal dealers not to buy from them, and to report suspicious scrap to the authorities.

Officials were asked to double their efforts to reduce the drought impact in a cost effective manner. Consumers are asked to harvest rain water where possible and ensure that any losses on their own internal plumbing is also fixed. Every drop counts!

(From Ugu District Municipality)

