

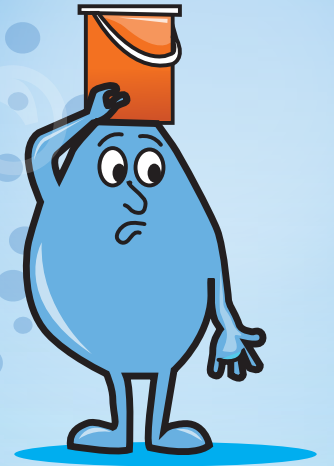


WATER MONTH MARCH 2021

WATER WEEK 15 -22

WORLD WATER DAY 22 MARCH 2021

Theme: valuing water - Water is life, sanitation is dignity.



Umgeni Water, will join the Department of Water and Sanitation and the rest of the world in the commemoration of the World Water Day (WWD) under the 2021 theme, “Valuing Water”. To heighten the awareness of this important day, Umgeni Water, together with its sector partners, will embark on a month-long commemorative educational activities. During the National Water Week from 15 to 22 March people are urged to commemorate water month by showcasing a consciousness in their respect for water and the value of this natural and precious resource in their lives.

World Water Day, will be celebrated on 22 March 2021. This day is a United Nations’ day to encourage people and bring focus on the importance of fresh water not only for domestic use but also how water is embraced to enhance religious, spiritual and cultural rituals. The South African sustainable development goal (SDG 6) seeks to raise awareness about the billions of people living without access to potable water and proper sanitation. This day is further about taking action to decisively deal with water and sanitation challenges facing the globe.



Every day should be a day of water awareness as various communities still encounter serious water shortages and challenges related to water supply, access to clean water and threats to water infrastructure. We need to be water aware, water wise and water safe daily. This year’s theme not only aims to reinforce people’s valuing of water in their lives but also aims to ensure that people around the globe advocate for behavioural change in the manner in which people consume and use water sources in their day to day lives.

The 2021 WWD comes during a challenging period as the globe is still struggling with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Water is at the centre of the fight against this pandemic as the World Health Organisation has consistently advocated for the washing of hands regularly with soap and water, as the most effective way of preventing the spread of this disease.

Water is the catalyst in eradicating poverty, promoting economic growth, creating employment opportunities and fighting global pandemics. Therefore, it needs to be valued and behavioural change is needed to ensure the protection of natural water sources as well as to stop water wastage and vandalism of water infrastructure. It also ensures healthy living and food security. Despite South Africa being a water scarce country, we can still have thriving and sustainable food gardens to grow our own food, reduce the carbon footprint, alleviate poverty and save money. Instead of using potable tap water, harvested rainwater

and re-used grey water must be used to irrigate gardens.

Clean water is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle. If you do not have access to clean, purified tap water, ensure that you either boil water taken from a river or stream or you disinfect by adding household bleach. Add a teaspoon of bleach to 25l of water, stir and leave to stand overnight before use to ensure that it is safe for human consumption. Pollution caused by improper disposal of faecal matter, soiled diapers and waste encourage flies and rodents which results in the spread of diseases. The best way to stop the spread of germs and diseases is to practice good health and hand hygiene. Climate change is a reality. It has brought about changing rainfall patterns, shifting seasons and extreme weather conditions such as droughts and floods that affect the availability of water. During flash flooding, roads flood due to blocked storm water drains. Stop littering along roadsides and manage waste properly.

To ensure sustainable water supply, dams are constructed along rivers to collect large volumes of water for purification. However, dams pose a threat to safety as a result of the depth of water and under currents. When water is released from dams, the large volume and speed of flow pose a danger to the lives of communities and livestock downstream. Communities should not collect dam water for domestic use. Also, only safe designated areas and bridges should be used to cross rivers and dams.

To help save water, the environment and money, remember the Rs:

REDUCE: Your daily usage of water and identify ways in which you can economize your usage of water.

RE-USE: Water wherever possible. Identify water that you can re-use elsewhere. Virtually all water coming out of a tap can be used at least twice.

REPAIR: Leaking pipes, taps and toilet cisterns. Conduct a water audit in your home and identify all the leaks where water is wasted.

REPORT: All leaking and broken pipes as well as illegal connections, vandalism to infrastructure and encroachment of servitudes to your local municipality. Be responsible.

So, be water wise and water safe. Leave only your footprints behind when you visit water sources for recreation or cultural practices. Remember, EVERY DROP COUNTS. If we save a little, together we can save a lot!

Think Water, think Umgeni Water.

Sources:
<https://www.dws.gov.za/campaigns/NationalWaterWeek2021>
<https://www.worldwaterday.org>



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