

Praise for quality of Dusi water

NONDU NGCONGO

RIVER water quality during the recent Dusi Canoe Marathon was the best it's been in many years, earning the Municipality a pat on the back from an environmental watchdog.

Officials from eThekweni and their counterparts at the Msunduzi Municipality worked hard to prevent pollution of the river from sewage and stormwater systems ahead of and during the three-day race.

David Still, Chairman of the Dusi Umgeni Conservation Trust, said the two municipalities had "pulled out all the stops" to get their sewer systems in order.

"Staff from eThekweni Water and Sanitation's Pollution control Directorate made a special effort in the weeks leading up to the Hansa Powerade Dusi 2010, increasing the frequency and intensity of water quality monitoring. This helped their sewer blockage teams to respond quickly to any new blockages.

"The result was the best water quality paddlers have seen on the lower Mngeni during a Dusi Marathon for many years," said Still.

He quoted a report by Umgeni Water official Steve Terry which showed that water quality based on *E. coli* counts at various points on the Msunduzi and Mngeni on the race days (21 to 23 January) ranged from good to excellent.

"We are by no means out of the woods yet, but there is hope," said Still, praising the "open communication and transparency shown by eThekweni staff".

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe thanked officials for their efforts and called on staff to continue to do their best.

"I am extremely proud of

our staff. We want our citizens to drink clean water so they can be healthy," said Sutcliffe.

Health Unit Deputy Head of Pollution Control Support and Risk Management Siva Chetty said the water quality in the Mngeni River during the Dusi Marathon met national water quality guidelines. "This is excellent news as it shows that all the waste water treatment works in the Mngeni catchment, from Msunduzi through to eThekweni, were operating optimally.

"The downward trend in the water quality pollution indicators shows our efforts to curb pollution and provide the requisite services are bearing fruit," said Chetty.

Improving

He said that for some years now they had been working on improving river water quality in eThekweni.

"In some areas we are succeeding and in other rivers we are not doing as well as we would have liked.

Chetty said they were running a project which assigns colour codes to rivers, from blue, through to red, with blue indicating excellent and red unacceptable.

Results are published monthly online.

"We have identified possible sources of pollution: general diffuse sources such as agriculture, informal settlements, blockages, industries, treatment works, pump stations and storm water drains.

"We have a plan to address every one of these pollution sources over time.

"Each treatment works that discharges compliant effluent is a step forward, just as each informal settlement provided with sanitation services moves us forward," he said.

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