

Umgeni Water fast tracks emergency water supply

AFTER the prolonged drought experienced along the KZN South Coast, the water supply to Umzinto is in jeopardy.

Umzinto Dam is only 18% full and the level is dropping rapidly. Umzinto and its surrounds are in grave danger of running out of potable water. To alleviate the situation, Umgeni Water has agreed to assist the Ugu District Municipality by installing a 250mm pipeline from Ellingham Reservoir to Umzinto Water Treatment Works. This will alleviate the potentially critical water shortage facing Umzinto.

Umgeni Water Management has fast-tracked this project and plans to have water flowing to the Umzinto Water Treatment Works before Christmas. The pipeline is about 5,8 km long and most of it traverses Ellingham Estate. An environmental rehabilitation specialist has drawn up an Environmental Management Plan that has been approved by the Department of Agriculture and Environment as well as the Department of Water Affairs under the emergency procedures.

"Originally Umgeni Water planned to follow the existing servitude, but this traverses areas of ecological significance. Umgeni Water then re-routed the pipeline to minimise the impact on wetlands and avoid two patches of indigenous forest. The new route

is mainly through sugar cane fields," said Ugu District Municipality's acting senior communications manager, Lindani Mzotho.

He said the installation of this pipeline requires a 20m wide working servitude on which all machinery operates.

"Topsoil is stripped and stored separate from the subsoil and this process is presently visible from the R612. Once the pipe is laid and the trench backfilled, the topsoil will be replaced," said Mzotho.

Co-operation

To have the water flowing by Christmas Ugu requires a high level of co-operation between all stakeholders. Umgeni Water, Ugu District Municipality, land owners, consultants and Cycad Pipelines who are installing the pipeline are working closely to ensure this project runs to schedule.

Management of Ellingham Estate and other farmers who's land will be impacted, are sensitive to the urgency of this project and have been extremely co-operative in allowing the work to get started without further delay. When the pipeline is completed, suitable erosion control measures will be implemented on the steep slopes and the entire area will be appropriately rehabilitated.

(From Ugu District Municipality)

