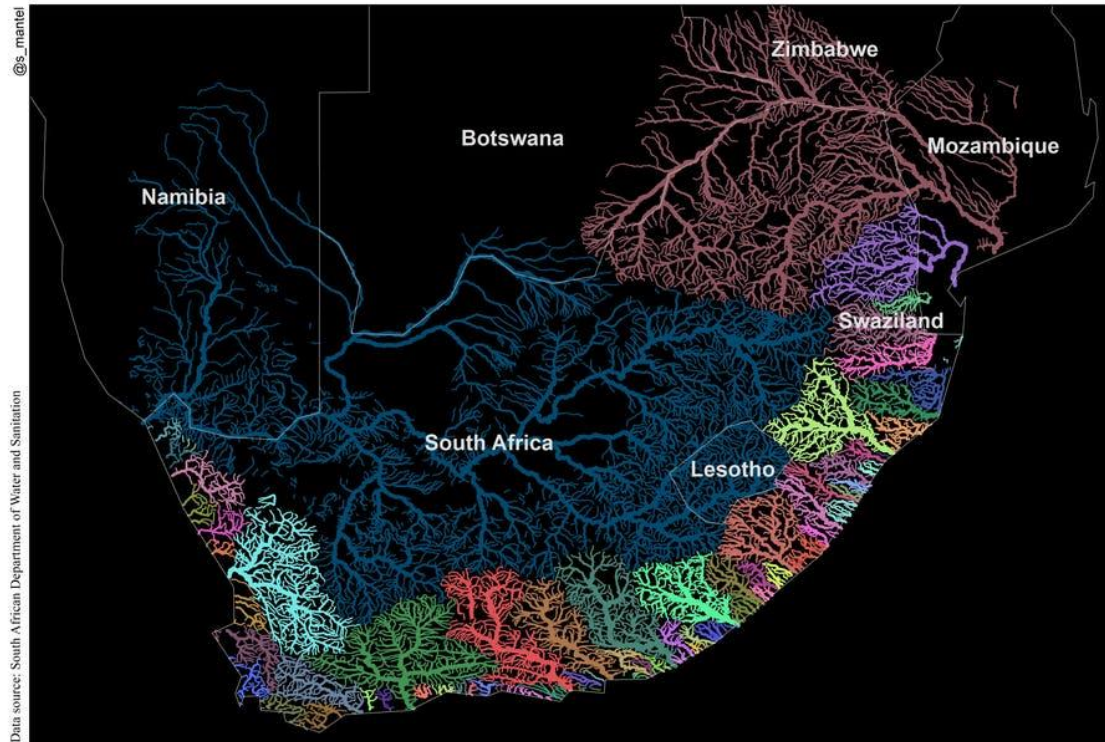




Adopt Moreletaspruit/ Neem Moreletaspruit Aan

Newsletter/Nuusbrief 25, July/Julie 2019

Catchments

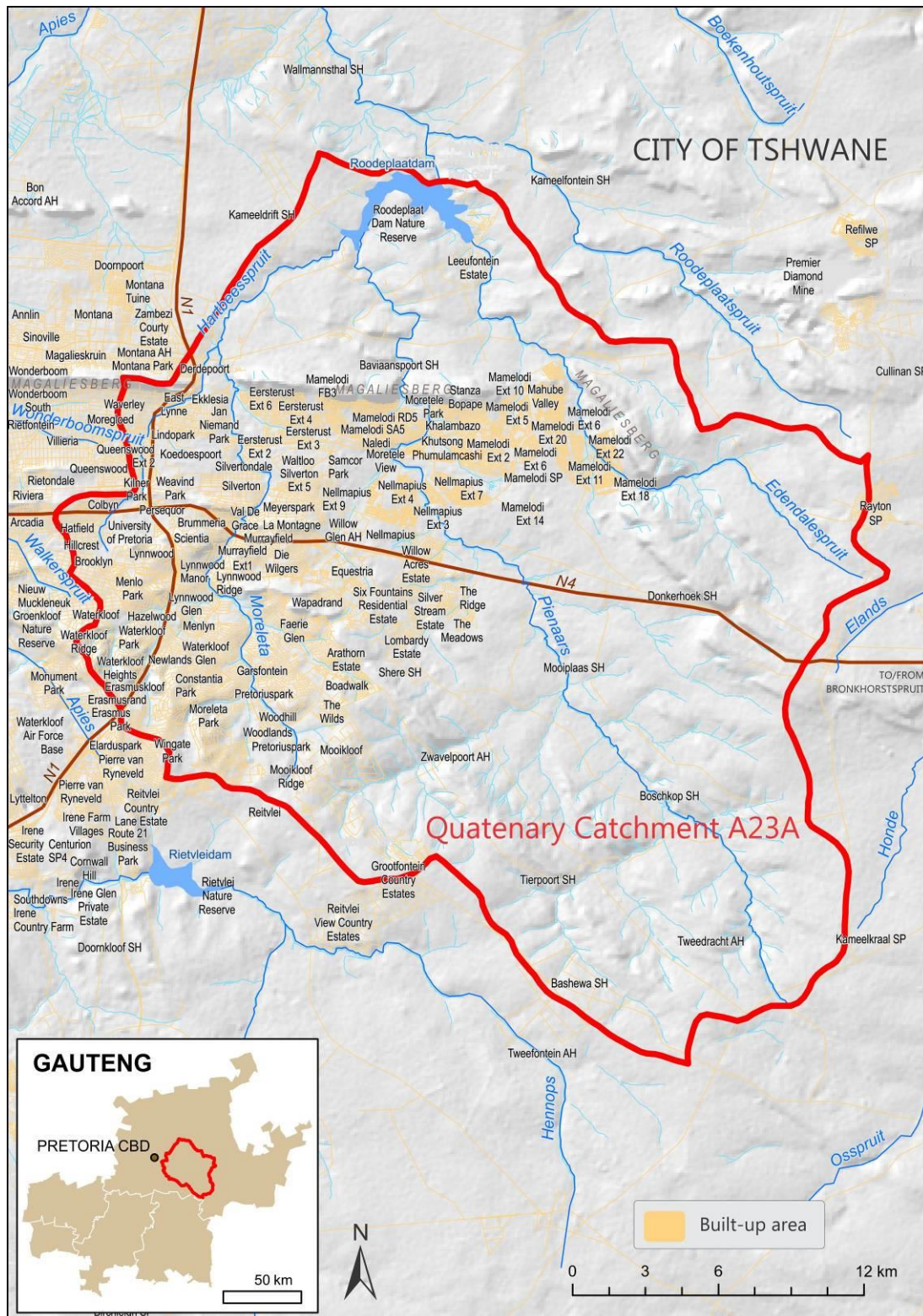


River basins of South Africa

This wonderful map of the rivers and catchments (river basins) of South Africa by Sukhmani Patel of Rhodes University went viral towards the end of 2018. People were fascinated to see how our rivers are interconnected and that virtually wherever we live, we live in a catchment area. Our Moreletaspruit is part of the larger Limpopo Catchment (in brown). The Moreleta flows north, into the Roodeplaats Dam. Some of the water flows out of the dam as the Pienaars River and flows north-west into the Crocodile West, and then it joins the Limpopo and flows east towards the Indian Ocean near Xai-Xai in Mozambique. No matter where we live in a catchment, our actions can have an effect on the health of the water in South Africa. Litter dropped in streets can flow through storm water drains or be blown by wind into the nearest stream. Pesticides, herbicides, artificial fertilisers, sewage spills or industrial pollutants can contaminate ground water or be washed by rain into rivers. Domestic water, once used, flows through sewers to waste water treatment works and is then released back into rivers so it is important not to use unnecessary contaminants in our bathrooms and kitchens. Water from the Roodeplaats Dam is treated and becomes drinking water for our northern suburbs.

Map of the Roodeplaat Dam Catchment, the A23A Quaternary Catchment, by Susan Booyesen of the University of Pretoria.

The catchments of the Moreletaspruit, Pienaars River and Edendalespruit together form this larger catchment.



The Roodeplaat Dam Rehabilitation Strategy

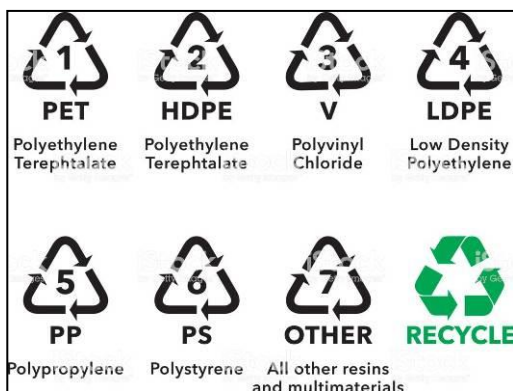
Members of our Forum have attended three workshops together with Talmar and other stakeholders to determine the problems and solutions.

If those of us who live or work within the A23A quaternary catchment would all work together to improve the state of the catchment, we will contribute towards a clean, healthy dam. Two of the biggest problems are sewage pollution and litter.



(Left) Many residents have illegally connected their gutters to their domestic drains. The sewers are not designed to cope with the sudden huge ingress of water when it rains and manholes overflow all along the rivers, polluting them with sewage. Now is a good time to ensure no rain water can enter your drains.

(Right) This horrible mess of litter next to the Moreleta at Solomon Mahlangu St was caused by residents who do not separate their waste at source and allow waste pickers to take rubbish out of bins and sort it at open spaces like this. If residents would separate waste and recycle glass, tins, paper, plastics and compostables themselves, this would not happen. At the very least, put a separated bag out for the waste pickers. Since about 99% of the rubbish we have to clean out of our rivers is plastic, it is useful to know your plastic symbols.



Only numbers 1, 2 and 4 can be recycled. Numbers 3, 5, 6 and 7 are unlikely to be recycled in South Africa. Polystyrene is particularly bad and should be avoided. Remember that plastic will never break down into anything other than plastic. Even if 5 PET bottles are recycled into a T-shirt, whenever that T-shirt is washed it will shed plastic microfibres into the water. So until single use plastic is banned in South Africa, as has been done in many other countries,

we must try to avoid it as much as possible by taking our own reusable shopping bags and containers to shops and take-away outlets, using metal water bottles and tap water instead of bottled water and encouraging our favourite shops not to package products in plastic. Lobby our government to ban it as well. If we are to have a healthy environment, it is time we all understand that waste elimination is more important than waste management. The aim should be to have only small amounts of waste that will break down naturally into constituents that do no harm to the environment going to landfill sites.

Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot!

Launch of the Citizen Science Water Resource Monitoring Tool-Box

This event took place in Water Week on 20 March, hosted by the WRC, DWS and SANBI. Our previous chairman, Dr Anneli Kühn was honoured for her role in promoting citizen science. The tool-box was co-funded by the DST and WRC and developed by Mark Graham of GroundTruth and Jim Taylor of WESSA. It includes the Aquatic Biomonitoring tool (miniSASS), Riparian Health Audit, Water Clarity Tube, Transparent Velocity Head Rod, Wetland Assessment Tool, Estuary Tool and Spring Tool. Also, at this event it was announced that Dr Jacqueline King of Cape Town had been awarded the “water” equivalent of the Nobel Prize, the Stockholm Water Prize for 2019, for her immense contributions and for developing a world acclaimed tool-box for calculating the ecological Reserve. In layman’s terms, this involves ecohydraulic modelling to predict and mitigate impacts on river ecosystems if a dam or development should be built on a river.



(Left) Bonani Madikizela of WRC hands the publication to Mark Graham, Ndileka Mohapi, acting DDG of DWS and Jim Taylor. (Right) Jackie King (holding miniSASS net) and some of the 80 participants assembling for a group photo. Jackie King’s prize will be awarded in Stockholm in August. Photos: Jeannie du Plessis

Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum Evening of Free Talks on 11 April

Kerneels Esterhuysen of the CoT Utility Services Dept gave a presentation on waste water, including the water cycle and challenges. Johan Alberts of Talmar Impact Investments and Development gave a presentation on the long term strategy for the rehabilitation of the Roodeplaats Dam. The evening was well attended and we had good feedback, including this email: “Last evening was so enlightening. Once again it shows the mix of young innovation and older expertise and mentorship to make things happen...exactly what one wishes for running a country to move forward.

With appreciation for all you do to raise awareness”.

A big thank you to all who helped with organising, catering and the venue!

Water Quality Assessment shows slight improvement

Aquatic ecologist Colleen Todd carried out a SASS5 assessment in the Moreletaspruit in Garsfontein on 2 April to see whether the improvement noted in October 2018 had been sustained. There was a further slight improvement in the Overall Ecological Category from 57.1% (D) to 58.3% (C/D category).

Annual Guided Hike along the Moreletaspruit on 14 September 2019

The invitation to the hike will go out in mid August so look out for it as we limit it to 40 people. On 13 July, some of our members did a pre-hike to check the route.



(Left) In Faerie Glen NR; (Right) laying stepping stones at Brookside Bridge

WESSA Friends Groups/ Vriendegroepe

Vriende van Faerie Glen NR hou maandelikse aksies teen indringerplante. Hulle sal 'n geologieuitstappie met Adam Bumbay op 17 Augustus en 'n uitstappie met die Dendrologiese Vereniging op 7 September aanbied.

Vriende van Moreleta Kloof het twee uitstappies gereël vir kinders van Pathways. Hulle het hard gewerk om indringerplante te verwyder en het 'n donasie ontvang om die palisade omheining te herstel en rommelvalle te bou.

Friends of Colbyn Valley NR had an Open Day and AGM in June and a clean up for Mandela Day on 20 July.

Friends of Struben Dam are helping to upgrade the main gate and guard house.



Ecoglen Association has cleared paths and did a miniSASS assessment in April. The score was 5.7 which was an improvement on previous scores. (Left) Tilana de Meillon with the clarity tube – citizen science in action!

Friends of Serene Valley removed alien vegetation and had 3 clean ups for Mandela Day. A total of 106 bags of litter were removed. They will have a hack on 17 August and an Arbour Day event on 7 September.

Vriende van Skuilkrans het hul algemene jaarvergadering en 'n braai gehou.

Nuusflits om oor bekommerd te wees:

Aarde-oorskrydag: Op 29 Julie het die mensdom die punt bereik waar daar meer uit die natuur en natuurlike hulpbronne gebruik is as wat die aarde in 'n hele jaar kan hernu. Suid-Afrika het sy natuurlike kapitaal al op 8 Julie uitgeput.

Contact Details/ Kontak-besonderhede

DWS: Co-ordinator Adopt-a-River - Email: jafan@dws.gov.za

CoT: Nature Conservation – Tel: 012 358 1510. Email: AdeleneM@TSHWANE.GOV.ZA

Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum (Secretary: Carol Martin): Email: moreletaforum@gmail.com

Website: www.riv.co.za/ms

Facebook Group – Adopt-a-River Moreleta