

15 September declared River Clean-Up Day Let's keep our rivers and streams clean

Cape Town, 6 September 2021. As part of Clean-Up & Recycle SA Week (13-18 September), Wednesday the 15th of September 2021 has now been declared national River-Clean-Up Day.

Douw Steyn, Sustainability Director of Plastics|SA, explains that rivers and streams are an important part of South Africa's water network. Unfortunately, they are often badly polluted by chemicals, sewage, plastics and other visible litter caused by drains and water channels leading from roads as well as communities living in close proximity to the river banks and where there is no waste management system in place.

"Rivers are the arteries that carry water and life to areas all around the world. Not only do they sustain life, they also play a very important part in the water cycle and act as drainage channels for surface water. Unfortunately, they additionally transport litter that has been carelessly discarded many kilometres upstream down to the sea and into the marine environment," Douw explains.

South Africa has ten major rivers that cross the length and breadth of South Africa, namely the mighty Orange River in the Northern Cape/Free State), Limpopo River (Limpopo), Vaal River (Free State, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Northern Cape), Tugela River (KwaZulu-Natal), Olifants River (Limpopo / Mpumalanga), Gamtoos River (Eastern Cape), Great Kei River (Western Cape), Komati River (Mpumalanga), Great Fish River (Eastern Cape) and Molopo River (North-West).

"River Clean-Up Day has been launched in response to the many enquiries we've received from members of the public, municipalities and corporates who wanted to get involved in the International Coastal Clean-Up and World Clean-up Day, (Saturday, 18 September) but couldn't because they are based inland and far away from the ocean. Now everybody can make a difference and help to keep our oceans healthy, regardless of where they live," Steyn explains.

Plastics SA will be partnering with Durban Solid Waste Education and Waste Minimisation, Adopt-A-River, Green Corridor and Triple-P to clean the various rivers and stream in the Durban area, with various other river clean-ups that are similarly being planned around the country.

"We encourage communities around South Africa to get involved in River Clean-Up Day by removing litter from rivers, streams, canals and any inland water sources in their immediate area. By recycling the plastics that are removed, you not only protect the health of the rivers, you also keep plastics out of the ocean, support the efforts of waste pickers and help to grow the recycling industry. Every action, no matter how small, reduces the volume of plastic waste that reaches the ocean and ends up making a big difference to our environment and oceans," Douw concludes.

For more information, visit www.cleanupandrecycle.co.za or www.plasticsinfo.co.za

ENDS