



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Berg Olifants Validation and Verification Process

26 May 2016

For various reasons, the management of water, our most precious resource, is becoming increasingly important. To ensure that water users receive maximum benefit from this resource, water use must be determined accurately and water allocated fairly (equitably). This is the aim of the National Water Act (NWA), 1998, which regulates the use of water in South Africa. The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is currently implementing a process to determine lawful water use in the Berg-Olifants water management area.

The benefits emanating from this survey include the following:

- Peace of mind that existing water use is lawful.
- Proof of lawful water use for various transactions, e.g. change in ownership (property transfers), and bank financing and contractual negotiations with clients.
- Assistance in understanding the connection between actual water use and accounts received for water management levies.
- Assurance that water users upstream do not illegally deplete the water resource.
- The establishment and maintenance of improved channels for communication with water management institutions.

As part of determining lawful water use, the DWS is currently, in terms of Section 35 of the National Water Act, in the process of confirming and verifying the following water usage in the priority catchment areas: taking and storage of water (which is considered to be two separate water uses) as well as commercial forestry.

The National Water Act states that all water that was used within the period October 1997 and October 1999 before implementation of the National Water Act as was authorised by law, shall be deemed an existing lawful water use. Attention will also be given to current water use and whether any increase in water use since the qualifying period was authorised.

Current farming water users will be invited to attend a specific open-day meeting where the process will be explained thoroughly.

Before the open-day meeting, each water user will receive a letter informing them of their determined water use. They will have an opportunity to make adjustments if necessary, with motivations, and to apply formally for verification of their water use. The open-day meeting is held to refine the information and to obtain further information from them. The date of the open-day meetings will be in the water user's letter and will also be widely advertised.

"Water is life, Sanitation is dignity"

END



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