



WWF

BOOKLET

ZA

2015



**COLLABORATIVE
WATER STEWARDSHIP
IN THE GREATER UMGENI
RIVER CATCHMENT**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UMNGENI RIVER CATCHMENT

The greater uMngeni River catchment (which includes the adjacent upper Mooi and Mvoti catchments) is home to more than five million people or 42.5% of the total KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) population.

The water in these river catchments supplies millions of people with drinking water and supports key production sectors such as industry, manufacturing, forestry and agriculture (e.g. dairy, pork, poultry and agronomy).

It has been estimated that some 20% of the gross national product of the country is generated within the uMngeni River catchment. On this basis the uMngeni system is recognised by many as one of the most important river systems in South Africa, and as the most important river in KZN. However, the system has been largely modified and degraded by human activities and is under increasing pressure to meet the growing water demands of the region.



**> 5 MILLION PEOPLE
LIVE IN THE GREATER
UMNGENI RIVER CATCHMENT**



8% OF OUR COUNTRY'S
LAND AREA PROVIDES

>50%

OF OUR SURFACE WATER

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WATER SECURITY CHALLENGES FACED

The 2015 World Economic Forum Global Risks report has ranked 'water crises' as the number one global risk by impact.

Closer to home, South Africa is one of the 30 most water-stressed countries in the world, with an average of just 495mm rainfall a year.

Additionally, only 8% of our country's land area provides more than 50% of our surface water. To add to the challenges, 2015 saw KZN and a few other provinces in the country experience a drought which could critically affect farming activities, livelihoods and local economies.

Due to the high level of dependencies on the water from the greater uMngeni catchment, it is essential that the river system and its catchment are retained in a healthy state. However, over the last 10 to 15 years there has been a steady decline in the quality of water resources

in the uMngeni and Mvoti Rivers. Umgeni Water (the main bulk supplier of potable water in KZN) reported that its expenditure on chemicals for raw water treatment increased by 21% in one year alone, from 2012 to 2013, equating to an additional R16 million, as a result of deteriorating water quality and price increases. Additionally, water demand has outstripped the uMngeni River system's ability to supply water to where it is needed, and therefore innovative catchment stewardship measures are urgently needed, besides the costly solutions of more dams and transfer schemes.

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES: WHY DO WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER ACROSS BOUNDARIES, SECTORS AND VALUE CHAINS?

WWF, in partnership with Mondi, is engaging and bringing together foresters, farmers, government and associated agricultural value chain role players to work together at a landscape scale to protect, restore and manage ecological infrastructure (i.e. rivers, wetlands and natural habitats), improve water governance and be more effective water stewards. These activities fall under the organisation's **Resilient Landscapes** work.

Studies have identified that, in general, the headwater areas of a catchment can provide up to 50% of the water flows in the river system. Considering the predominant land uses in the headwater areas and upper reaches of the uMngeni, Mooi and Mvoti catchments are commercial agriculture and forestry, WWF has embarked on a process of bringing agriculture and forestry role players together to identify and apply



Catchment stakeholders learning to identify a wetland

innovative solutions to manage their **collective water risk** through its Resilient Landscape work. The risk of not having access to sufficient water of acceptable quality can only be addressed with **collective action**. Water is the lifeblood that connects people in a catchment and is the common denominator that connects upstream and downstream users.

WWF is of the opinion that water stewardship is not just the responsibility of the land owner and is therefore seeking to work with the entire agriculture and forestry commodity value chains including retailers, financial institutions and insurance role players.

Many of these value chain role players are often common to more than one sector, hence the need to promote cross sectoral collaboration.

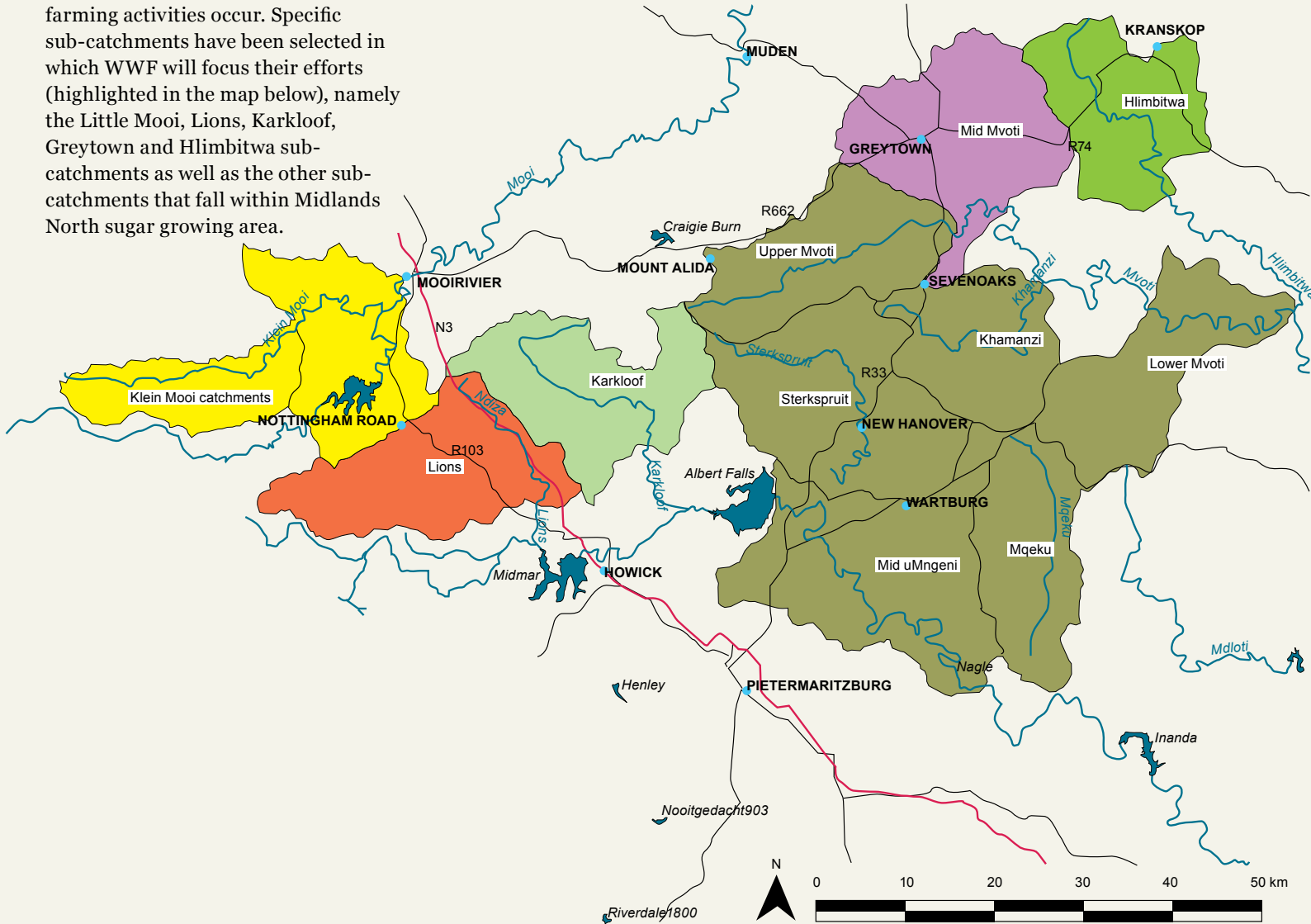
WHAT IS WWF AND ITS PARTNERS DOING?

The WWF-Mondi Wetlands Programme through its Resilient Landscape Approach (RLA) work is:

- **Bringing** people together in “safe spaces” through events such as field days, study tours and water security dialogues to share approaches, best practice methods and possible solutions to water challenges.
- **Supporting** innovative water stewardship practice at the farm level. This includes providing expertise for wetland & riparian management, and sourcing additional expertise for irrigation efficiency enhancements, and improved waste water management.
- **Connecting and engaging** value chain role players so that they can better understand their exposure to environmental and water risk, enabling them to determine what shared actions lead to improved environmental and economic sustainability of their business and the value chain.
- **Documenting** and sharing case-studies of the business benefits of strengthening water stewardship practices.

WHERE ARE WE WORKING?

WWF and partners are working in the Upper uMngeni and Upper Mvoti catchments, where commercial farming activities occur. Specific sub-catchments have been selected in which WWF will focus their efforts (highlighted in the map below), namely the Little Mooi, Lions, Karkloof, Greytown and Hlimbitwa sub-catchments as well as the other sub-catchments that fall within Midlands North sugar growing area.



For more info, please contact

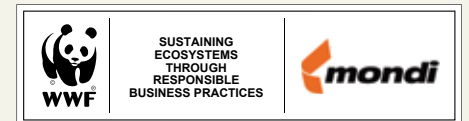
WWF Hilton office on (033) 3431464 or www.wwf.org.za (follow the Freshwater Programme link)
Staff responsible for the different areas include:

- Little Mooi catchment & Midlands North sugar growing area
Vaughan Koopman (083 - 228 7949, vkoopman@wwf.org.za)
- Karkloof and Lions River catchments
Susan Viljoen (074 - 114 0848, sviljoen@wwf.org.za)
- Greytown and Hlimbitwa catchments
Gareth Boothway (076 - 239 4267, gboothway@wwf.org.za)

ABOUT THE WWF-MONDI PARTNERSHIP

Through a global partnership launched in 2014 between WWF & Mondi and building on the success of the WWF Mondi Wetlands Programme (having worked in wetlands conservation since 1991), Mondi supports the development of the Resilient Landscape Approach – the ultimate objective of which is to have landscapes where sustainable production and functioning ecosystems are more resilient to threats such as climate change and poor land use management.

Mondi recognises that it has a role to play in promoting effective land and water stewardship practices in the catchments where it operates, and that we can achieve so much more if we work together to find solutions. Through a better understanding of how individual stakeholder risks translate into shared risk, we can better understand what shared action is required.



WWF's work in the uMgeni River Catchment

1991

The year that the very successful WWF Mondi Wetlands Programme was established.

5MIL

Number of people that reside within the Greater uMgeni River Catchment in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa



6

Number of sub-catchments where WWF and its partners are piloting and testing the Resilient Landscape Approach and strengthening water stewardship

495mm

South Africa's average rainfall per annum

20%

Total estimated gross national product of the country generated within the Greater uMgeni River Catchment



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.wwf.org.za