

MEDIA RELEASE

SAVE THE FLAMINGO ASSOCIATION

For immediate release

11 July 2008

Raw sewage continues to flow into Kamfers Dam

Untreated sewage is still flowing into Kamfers Dam despite a sudden flurry of activity and earthworks at the Homevale Sewerage Works on Monday 7 July. After a letter demanding immediate rectification of the dire situation at Kamfers Dam from the Save the Flamingo Association to the relevant authorities, the Sol Plaatje Municipality reacted and commenced with earthworks at the Homevale Sewerage Works.

Ekapa Mining and various small contractors were called in to assist with the repair of the dysfunctional aeration ponds, peaking dam and clearing of solids in the effluent holding dam. A consultant who advised on the proper functioning and upgrading essential for the efficient operation of the Homevale Sewerage Works in 2004 was called in to provide further advice.

Until Friday 4 July, mostly untreated raw and toxic sewage was being discharged into Kamfers Dam, and this entirely unacceptable practice has become a direct threat to the survival of Kamfers Dam's flamingos. For several years the Homevale Sewerage Works has been completely hydraulically overloaded to such an extent that it has failed to achieve virtually any of its designed and desired effluent treatment capability.

On 9 July, while the ponds and dams are being cleared and repaired, the untreated and bacteria-infected sludge and water was being pumped out into the veld adjacent to the sewerage works, building up against the railway line, and flowing through a culvert into Kamfers Dam. This is clearly a contravention of the Water Act. This unacceptable temporary measure may have a severe impact on the railway line, and the result is the continued discharge of untreated effluent into Kamfers Dam. Until certain vital components of the sewerage works that filter out the grits and break down solids are functioning properly, the effluent leaving the sewerage works is not going to be close to the required environmental and water quality standards.

The repair and upgrading of the overloaded Greenpoint Sewerage Works is also becoming critical. The unacceptable practice of discharging partially treated sewage into the veld on neighbouring properties must be discontinued as soon as possible.

Before any new developments around Kamfers Dam can go ahead, including the first phase of the proposed Northgate development, the Homevale Sewerage Works must be fully functional and upgraded to cope with the current and any additional effluent produced by Kimberley.

Without a positive record of decision on an Environmental Impact Assessment, the Sol Plaatje Municipality cannot approve the rezoning of land for the Northgate development. Despite previous statements in the media that phase one of Northgate will go ahead, this development cannot take place until an authorisation is granted.

The Save the Flamingo Association would like to categorically state that it is pro-development in Kimberley, but as long as such developments do not take place at environmentally-sensitive localities. It is unlikely that the city can currently accommodate any new major developments because of the city's stressed bulk infrastructure. New developments should not be to the detriment of service delivery, and the maintenance of current infrastructure in Kimberley.

The Save the Flamingo Association will continue to monitor progress at the Homevale Sewerage Works to ensure that Kamfers Dam's flamingos are protected. The Association has had tremendous support with more than 5500 signatures on a petition on its website (www.savetheflamingo.co.za). The Association appreciates the support of concerned people from Kimberley, elsewhere in South Africa, and across the globe. By voicing their objections, these people have shown that the degradation of sensitive environments and threatened birds will not be tolerated. These assets are for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people of our fragile planet.

ENDS

For press enquiries contact: info@savetheflamingo.co.za

Photo: Raw sewage is being pumped into the veld, damming against the railway line, and flowing through a culvert into Kamfers Dam.

