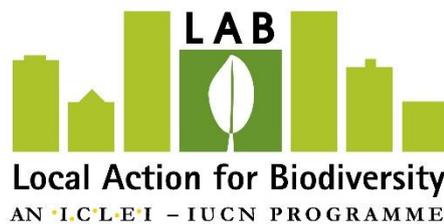


Waterberg District Municipality

Wetland Strategy and Action Plan

(2017- 2030)

Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB): Wetlands South Africa



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DISCLAIMER

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WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
WETLAND STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (2017- 2030)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AS	Africa Secretariat
BSP	Biodiversity Sector Plans
CARA	Conservation Agricultural Resources Act
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EMF	Environmental Management Framework
IAP	Invasive Alien Plant
ICLEI	ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LAB	Local Action for Biodiversity
LEDET	Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NEM: BA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act
NEM: PAA	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act
NEM: WA	National Environmental Management: Water Act
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NWA	National Water Act
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Initiative
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
SSP	Shared Services Programme
WDM	Waterberg District Municipality

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INTRODUCTION

South Africa is endowed with a rich wealth of biodiversity, which offers an immense opportunity to support the country's development path by providing many goods and services which contribute to municipal service delivery, water and food security and quality of life, especially under a changing climate.

The Waterberg District Municipality (WDM), situated in the north-eastern province of Limpopo, South Africa, has an estimated total population of 679 336. Majority of the District population are situated in and around Mogalakwena (307 682), Lephalale (115 767), as well as the Thabazimbi (85 234) local municipality areas respectively. The district comprises of 5 local municipalities namely Bela Bela, Thabazimbi, Lephalale, Mogalakwena, and LIM 368 Local Municipalities. Informed by its powers and functions, WDM doesn't and cannot provide basic services to inhabitants but coordinate supports in line with section 88(2) the Municipal Structures Act to its local municipalities. Within its scope of powers and functions WDM provides disaster management and firefighting services. WDM is a tourist destination of choice with beautiful tourist attractions such as the Makapans valley, Marekele National Park, Nylsvleiy Nature Reserve (RAMSAR site), Warmbaths Resort (Bela Bela) and many, private Game Reserves, etc.

Wetlands are exceptionally high value ecosystems that make up a small fraction of the country. Given their strategic importance for ensuring water quality and regulating water supplies, investment in conserving, managing and restoring wetlands are likely to generate disproportionately large returns. These important ecosystems also constitute irreplaceable natural infrastructure for managing water resources, as well as providing a range of other ecosystem services. Society cannot rely solely on complex and expensive engineering solutions to provide drinking water and to cleanse waste water. The ecosystem services provided by wetlands include their ability to improve water quality and contribute to the maintenance of base-flows in rivers and recharge underground water resources. In the context of climate change, with predicted increases in the variability and intensity of rainfall events, wetlands have the potential to play a more important role than ever before in mitigating extreme episodes such as floods and droughts.

The natural extent of wetlands in South Africa is low, and individual wetlands tend to be small, with approximately 300 000 remaining wetlands covering only 2.4% of the country¹, ultimately meaning that the consequences of destruction of these small wetland ecosystems are much greater as opposed to what it would have been if wetlands were larger ecosystems covering large space of land. It also means that managing and conserving the tiny proportion of the country's surface area covered by wetlands can make a big contribution to improving water quality and to enhancing resilience to climate change by improving flood and drought regulation.

In South Africa, natural resources from wetlands are often central to the livelihoods of people and natural biodiversity. These resources include water for agricultural, industrial and domestic use for both local and down-stream users. At the same time these wetlands and the resources that they supply are coming under increasing pressure, e.g. through extensive conversion to settlement and urban development.

Waterberg District Municipality is implementing the Local Action for Biodiversity: Wetlands South Africa (LAB: Wetlands SA) programme with support from ICLEI Africa Secretariat (ICLEI AS). The LAB: Wetlands SA project aims to ensure the protection of priority natural wetland resources, thus



enabling the supply of ecosystem services, and promoting resilient communities and sustainable local economies under a changing climate within South African local governments. Through the development of this WSAP, ICLEI AS will assist Waterberg District Municipality in identifying the gaps in management and assist with devising new and better wetlands management strategies going forward.

Supporting Documentation:

This document relies heavily on two supporting documents: The Waterberg District Municipality Wetland Report (2017) and the Wetland Strategy and Action Plan Guidelines (2017).

These can be downloaded from <http://cbc.iclei.org/project/lab-wetlands-sa/>

1. WETLANDS IN THE WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

1.1. What is a Wetland?

“Wetlands are land which is transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems, where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water, and which land in normal circumstances supports or would support vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soil”.

National Water Act No. 36 of 1998.

In simpler terms, a wetland is a feature in the landscape which is saturated with water for a long enough period that the soil conditions change (mottling as a result of the anaerobic conditions) and the vegetation shifts to respond to these changes.



Figure 1 & 2: Mottled soils indicative of a wetland (left) and specially adapted wetland vegetation (right).

For more detailed information regarding wetlands within the Waterberg District Municipality. Please refer to the Waterberg District Municipality: Wetland Report (2017) which can be accessed here: <http://cbc.iclei.org/project/lab-wetlands-sa/>



1.2 The Value of Wetlands to the Waterberg District Municipality

All wetland types can be classified as high value 'ecological infrastructure' due to the large number of ecosystem services that they provide. Wetland ecosystem services can be classified into four separate categories namely 'provisioning services', 'regulating services', 'cultural services' and 'supporting services'. Provisioning services can be described as the products one can physically obtain from wetlands. Regulatory services can be described as the benefits one receives from the wetland. Cultural services are the nonmaterial benefits that one can obtain from wetlands. Lastly supporting services are the services provided that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services. Please refer to **Table 1** below for a description of the ecosystem services that wetlands within Waterberg District Municipality provide.

Table 1: Ecosystem services identified in the Waterberg District Municipality.

Ecosystem Service Type	Ecosystem Service	Description/ Case Study
Provisioning Regulatory	Food and medicinal plants	Communities harvest local plants and animals as a food source.
	Raw materials supporting local economies and livelihoods	Communities harvest reeds from the wetlands to make products they can sell for income
	Clean drinking water	Local communities use clean water supplied by the wetlands for drinking purposes (both human and livestock)
	Water storage and stream flow regulation	The local wetlands store stormwater runoff and slowly release the water as the water table drops. This contributes to sustained streamflow throughout the year.
	Flood attenuation and control	Wetlands and the associated plants absorb flood water and reduce the velocity of flood waters moving through the system. This contributes to the protection of infrastructure downstream.
Regulatory & Cultural	Erosion control	Wetland plants strengthen the banks of wetlands and thereby contribute to sediment stabilisation and soil retention within the catchment.
	Water filtration	Wetlands contribute substantially to improving water quality by modifying or trapping a wide range of substances commonly considered to be pollutants. This includes suspended sediment, excess nutrients, toxicants and pathogenic bacteria and viruses. This contributes to clean drinkable water downstream.
	Recreation	Recreation activities undertaken within the wetlands within Waterberg District Municipality bird watching,
	Tourism	The wetlands within Waterberg District Municipality, particularly Nylsvley, provide a diverse landscape and rich biodiversity that promote tourism within the district



	Social upliftment	The rehabilitation and maintenance of wetlands within the district provide opportunities for job creation for the local communities. These opportunities not only support local incomes but also include important skills development as well as environmental education.
Supporting	Nutrient recycling	Wetlands naturally slow down the flow of water, thereby promoting the deposition and retention of nutrients. These are then utilised by the microbial species living in the wetland habitat which are in turn eaten by larger species such as prawns and blood worms.
	Supporting habitat	A large variety of bird, fish and invertebrate species are dependent on the wetlands within Waterberg District Municipality for at least part of their lifecycle. Wetlands provide vital breeding and foraging ground for a variety of bird species as well as breeding, courtship and foraging ground for a variety of frog species.

It should be noted that the numerous ecosystem services provided by wetlands come at no cost to the municipality and as such, all that needs to be done to ensure continued provision of these services is to protect and maintain local wetlands. However, the inappropriate management of wetlands, can cause a loss of wetland area and subsequent loss of ecosystem services. This results in the municipalities having to invest in expensive infrastructure (e.g. water filtration plants or flood barriers) to ensure the same level of service delivery.

1.3 Threats to Wetlands within Waterberg District Municipality

Despite the huge benefits that wetlands provide in terms of ecosystem services, 50% of wetlands in South Africa have already been lost and 48% of the remaining wetlands are critically endangered and/or degraded. This loss is a direct result of deliberate draining of wetlands, development and expansion (both urban and agricultural) and pollution. Damage to wetlands results in increasingly limited functionality and subsequently a decrease in the ability to provide valuable ecosystem services.

Threats to to wetlands in the district are summarised below

- Sewage (Municipal infrastructure)
- Waste Disposal and/or Dumping
- Residential and Industrial Development
- Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs)
- Agriculture (cultivation, overgrazing and trampling)
- Cultivation: Commercial and Subsistence
- Livestock
- Irrigation
- Mining (sand, coal, open-pit mining)
- Fire/Burning
- Lack of awareness



2. GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

South Africa has an extensive legislative framework concerning the environment and biodiversity is considered in both development planning as well as national government priorities. This section outlines key legislation and policies as well as the governance structure within the Waterberg District Municipality which leads to the current wetland management strategy within the district.

2.1 Policy framework

Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of all South African legislation, policies and strategies pertinent for the management of wetlands within the Waterberg District Municipality. It is important to note that some of the legislation such as the National Environmental Management Act provides specific instructions regarding wetland management whilst other legislation indirectly supports management of wetlands such as the National Environmental Management: Waste Act.

Table 2: Legislation governing wetland management in the Waterberg District Municipality.

Legislation/policy/strategy	How it relates to wetlands
Legislation	
The Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative governance the right to a healthy environment.
The National Water Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water extraction and use.
The National Environmental Management Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Impact Assessments for site development.
The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of biodiversity and the formulation of a number of tools such as bioregional plans, and Threatened Ecosystem list that feed into land-use planning and EIAs.
The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of invasive alien species
The Municipal Systems Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of local governments and the requirements for IDPs and SDFs and disaster management.
Policies	
National Development Plan and associated Medium Term Strategic Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NDP sets out measures to protect natural resources in South Africa. Through the creation of the MTSF and associated 'Delivery Agreements', required outputs and targets are set.
Local and Provincial Development Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the green economy or the role of biodiversity considered?
Municipal planning	
IDPs	Overall strategy document for a municipality.
SDFs	Spatial translation (i.e. a map) of the IDP
Open Space Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demarcation of municipal Open Space areas.



Legislation/policy/strategy	How it relates to wetlands
Environmental Management Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map and land use guidelines for areas of environmental importance.
Strategies	
The National Biodiversity Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides biodiversity targets for South Africa.
National Water Resource Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks to protection and rehabilitation of wetlands.
Local or Provincial Climate Change Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where they exist, do they include biodiversity/wetlands as important for mitigation and adaptation?
Other	
Bioregional plans (draft or gazetted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) and Ecological Support Areas (ESAs).
Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a framework for spatial planning and land use management in South Africa. It sets out in its definitions that municipal planning is primarily the executive function of the local sphere of government and requires that biodiversity is adequately considered in spatial planning.
Disaster Management Amendment Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines how ecosystems should be considered in the updated Disaster Management Act.

2.2 Wetland management within the municipality

Environmental management within South Africa is the shared responsibility of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the 9 Provincial Governments as well as the District and Local level municipalities. Within Waterberg District Municipality however due to a lack of resources, there are significant capacity constraints for effective district wide environmental management.

2.3 Local and regional partnerships and programmes managing wetlands within Waterberg District Municipality

Partnerships are an important component in ensuring environmental management flourishes in the region, hence, why it is integral for the district and local municipalities to engage with organisation such as the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, Waterberg Conservation Forum, Nylsvley Nature Reserve (LEDET), Waterberg Conservancy, Working for Wetlands, Consultants working in the area, mines etc. Building working relations between these organisations is important for WDM in ensuring a sustainable natural state going forward

Numerous institutions have conducted work specifically related to wetlands. LEDET for example are currently embarking on a project where wetlands are being mapped, relates to specific wetlands having already been mapped so far. The information is extremely useful as it alludes to location and overall status of the ecosystem. This provides and acts as a good benchmark from which to write this report. It also gives an indication of where the municipality should focus its resources and energy and where partners can assist.



3. DEVELOPING THE WATERBERG WETLAND STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Prior to the development of a WSAP, it was critical to undertake an extensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement process in order to gather all relevant information and inputs from key stakeholders for populating the WSAP, as well as ensuring critical stakeholder buy-in. In order to achieve this, as part of the LAB: Wetlands SA project, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and Waterberg District Municipality located and engaged with key stakeholders (provincial, district and local municipal officials within Waterberg District Municipality as well as representatives from local NGOs, private landowners and farmers) in three key ways namely through a Wetland Awareness Raising Workshop, one on one meetings which facilitated the development of a Wetland Report and at a WSAP Workshop in order to gather the required information for inclusion in the WSAP and secure stakeholder buy-in at the local level.

The Wetland Awareness Raising Workshop was undertaken at the Mokgalakwena Municipality Council Chambers, Mokopane in September 2015. WDM identified the district and local political leaders as key stakeholders to be made aware about the importance and opportunities of wetlands. All identified stakeholders were invited to the workshop which was then used to not only raise awareness of the value of wetlands but also to identify possible stakeholders who should also be included in the WSAP development process.

After the Wetland Awareness Raising Workshop, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and WDM co-developed a Wetland Report throughout the course of 2016/2017. The Waterberg District Municipality Wetland Report was a desktop study and aimed to include all the known information on wetlands within the municipality. One on one interviews were undertaken with key identified stakeholders and resulted in critical information being gathered for the report, which also resulted in critical 'gaps' in wetland management being identified that need to be addressed. This set the scene for the final stakeholder engagement – the WSAP Workshop.

The WDM WSAP Workshop was held in Thabazimbi from 21 to 23 November 2016. All stakeholders identified during previous engagements were invited to attend. During the workshop feedback on the findings of the Waterberg District Municipality Wetland Report were presented to the stakeholders, namely the critical ecosystem services the wetlands within Waterberg provide, the threats to these wetlands and the gaps in wetland management. This set the scene for the development of the WSAP.

The WSAP is outlined below and includes all identified issues as well as proposed solutions as developed by all stakeholders present at the WSAP workshop as well as those that contributed to the Wetland Report. The WSAP was developed with close reference to the ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability Wetland Strategy and Action Guidelines which are an ICLEI – developed tool freely available for download: <http://cbc.iclei.org/project/lab-wetlands-sa/>



4. WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY WETLAND STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (2017-2030)

VISION STATEMENT

“To create a healthy environment supporting the Waterberg community.”
“To create a healthy environment supporting the Waterberg community by providing sustainable constantly regenerating ecosystem services.”

VALUES

- ✓ *Sustainability*
Maintaining and managing the ecosystem wisely to sustain life forms sustainably.
- ✓ *Smart development* –
Socio economically and ecologically development through innovative technological systems that will enhance flagship projects and programs for environmental sustainability.
- ✓ *Forward Thinking*
- ✓ *Enlightenment*
Promote and encourage education and awareness regarding the environment
- ✓ *Stakeholder integration*
Public-private partnerships
- ✓ *Ethics*
- ✓ *Survival*



--

FOCUS AREAS (3 – 6 strategic interventions / priorities):

- | |
|--|
| 1. Education and Awareness |
| 2. Stakeholder engagement and partnerships |
| 3. Job creation and funding |
| 4. Research |
| 5. Programmes and projects |
| 6. Compliance and enforcement |

(S.M.A.R.T.) GOALS FOR EACH FOCUS AREA

FOCUS AREA 1: <i>Education and Awareness</i>	Goal 1.1: Develop a Waterberg Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy – in-line with the SA NDP 2030 by ?.
	Goal 1.2: Mobilise the sourcing of funding for the Waterberg Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy by?.
	Goal 1.3 Drive the Implementation of the Waterberg Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy.



FOCUS AREA 2: <i>Stakeholder engagement and partnerships</i>	Goal 2.1 Create stakeholder mapping by ?..
	Goal 2.2 Develop crucial stakeholder relationship approach) by ?..
	Goal 2.3 Develop a partnership framework by ?..
FOCUS AREA 3: <i>Job creation and funding</i>	Goal 3.1 Identifying funding in government to leverage on municipality budget to prioritize on environmental activities by ?..
	Goal 3.2 Create opportunities where community can participate by ?..
	Goal 3.3 Create environmental related projects through NRM, CBRM, and EPWP
FOCUS AREA 4: <i>Research</i>	Goal 4.1 Shape research agenda that research product and outcome serve vision of Waterberg by ?..
	Goal 4.2 Translate research agenda to the community. by ?..
	Goal 4.3 Build capacity at councilor level with regards to research by ?..
	Goal 4.4 Use combined influence to empower community
	Goal 5.1



FOCUS AREA 5: <i>Programmes and projects</i>	Establish specific needs for programs (wetlands, catchments, etc.) (situational analysis) by ?.
	Goal 5.2 Facilitate finding and resourcing of programmes and projects.
FOCUS AREA 6: <i>Compliance and enforcement</i>	Goal 6.1 Establish compliance and enforcement agency (Integrate compliance and enforcement). by ?..
	Goal 6.2 Monitor and Evaluate by ?..

HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA & GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Focus Area 1: Education and Awareness			
Goal 1.1: Develop a Waterberg Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy - in-line with the SA NDP 2030.	Study NDP concerning environment Education and Awareness. Formation of the committee Draw Terms of Reference for WDM Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy.	Committee	
Goal 1.2: Mobilise the sourcing of funding for the Waterberg Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy	Identifying key stakeholders Agreements for funding contributions Signing of MOU and appoint SP	Committee.	



HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA & GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Goal 1.3: Drive the Implementation of the Waterberg Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy	Educate Business Case cost benefits and analysis Extend venue chain Green Economy vs Investment. Curriculum linkage.	District and local municipalities.	Ongoing (Ideally every 36 months)
Focus Area 2: Stakeholder engagement and Partnerships			
Goal 2.1: Create stakeholder mapping	Identify and categorize Check status of the stakeholders for or against. Develop	S/E Task Team	
Goal 2.2: Develop crucial stakeholder relationship approach	Create database for stakeholders. Develop customer relationship management approach.	S/E Task Team	
Goal 2.3: Develop a partnership framework	Use monitoring and incentive tool Partnering on implementation of programmes and projects.		
Focus Area 3: Job creation and Funding			
Goal 3.1	Identify where this funding lies or locate and form partnerships with them		



HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA & GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Identifying funding in government to leverage on municipality budget to prioritize on environmental activities			
Goal 3.2 Create opportunities where community can participate	For a platform to inform community on available jobs and learnerships. .		
Goal 3.3 Create environmental related projects through NRM, CBRM, and EPWP	Identify international donors and organizations to fund the projects Involve local communities to participate in EPWP projects		
Focus Area 4: Research			
Goal 4.1 Shape research agenda that research product and outcome serve vision of Waterberg	Form partnership with University and private organizations that are currently running research.		
Goal 4.2 Translate research agenda to the community.	Use researchers to impact the information with the local community and students. Put research in libraries.		
Goal 4.3	Communicate complex topics to the community.		



HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA & GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Build capacity at councilor level with regards to research			
Goal 4.4 Use combined influence to empower community	Partner with private and government institutions to provide gadgets and install technology to be used for learning in schools and public facilities.		
Focus Area 5: Programmes and Projects			
Goal 5.1 Establish specific needs for programs (wetlands, catchments, etc.) (situational analysis)	Do situational analysis.	DoE District team (Waterberg)	31/3/2017
	Identify and package programs and projects.	LEDET, DEA	30/06/2017
Goal 5.2 Facilitate finding and resourcing of programmes and projects.	Cost programs and projects.	DEA and LEDET (Waterberg)	Gov. <30/9/2017
	Negotiate funding and resourcing (PPP).		BIZ < 30/11/2017
Focus Area 6: Compliance and Enforcement			
Goal 6.1 Establish compliance and enforcement agency (Integrate compliance and enforcement).	Identify compliance and enforcement policies that need to be put together. Establish the implementing agency.	Government	1 year
Goal 6.2	Monitor implementing agency.	Government	Throughout



HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

FOCUS AREA & GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Monitor and Evaluate.	Regulate the sector partners.	Implementing Agency	

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