

Environmental inspectors deployed to slurry polluted KZN rivers

Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs minister Barbara Creecy has deployed a team of environmental management inspectors to support a probe into the pollution of KwaZulu-Natal rivers from slurry dam breach. The team consists of inspectors with experience in dealing with pollution incidents.



Forestry, Fisheries and Environmental Affairs minister Barbara Creecy. | Source: [SAnews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)

In a statement, the department said the team would support the investigation into the spill of polluted mine waste water into river systems flowing through important conservation areas.

“On request from the province’s MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Ravi Pillay’s call for technical support, we have decided to deploy a team of EMIs from the DFFE to KwaZulu-Natal.

“The team will support the ongoing efforts to address the impacts of the spill that is affecting rural communities and the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi reserve as well as posing a risk to the iSimangiliso Wetland Park,” said Creecy.

Inspections commence this week

The department has been advised that more than 1.5 million litres of tailing materials flowed from a burst slurry dam at the Zululand Anthracite Colliery (ZAC) into nearby rivers, and surrounding land, on 24 December 2021.

MEC Pillay informed the Minister about the matter and requested officials from the DFFE to join the Joint Operations Committee (JOC) which was established to deal with this situation.

“DFFE officials are in the affected reserves today to view the extent of the damage caused as well as to evaluate the measures which have been implemented to mitigate the risks. They will also form part of the joint inspections by the multi-departmental JOC which are scheduled to take place in the week of 17 January 2022,” it said.



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Nokulunga Majola 14 Jan 2022



The DFFE team were expected to provide on-the-ground support and assistance to the Joint Operations Committee which is made up of government role-players, including the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, the Department of Water and Sanitation, EDTEA and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The JOC was set up to investigate the incident and oversee the steps that are being taken to mitigate the impacts of the spill.

“At this stage the department is not in a position to provide any additional information,” it said.

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