

Media Release

1 March 2022

INITIAL ACTIONS TO MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENT AT WILGE RIVER, OLIFANTS RIVER AND INLET OF LOSKOP DAM ARE COMPLETE

Thungela Operations Proprietary Limited (the “Company” or “Thungela”) and the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) can confirm that the first phase of corrective measures to mitigate the impacts of the environmental incident, that took place at the Wilge River, Olifants River and Loskop Dam, has been successfully completed.

These measures included, containing the overflow, flushing the river system with water from the Bronkhorstspuit and Witbank Dam and collaborative clean-up efforts along the rivers system stretching 60km.

Two aerial surveys were conducted, on Friday, 25 February and Sunday, 27 February respectively. The first by a team of representatives from Thungela and the Department of Water and Sanitation and the second by the MTPA at Loskop Dam. The findings are encouraging.

The MTPA officials in charge, who are aquatic scientists, Dr. Francois Roux and Mr Andre Hoffman undertook a survey on Loskop Dam up to the inflow on Sunday 27 February and found that there were no signs of dead or dying fish following the flush of both Bronkhorstspuit and Witbank Dams. “The post-release clean-up was successful and no further clean-up actions have to be done at this point in time,” said Hoffman.

Additionally, results from independent water analysis indicate that the quality of the water has normalised to the baseline quality that existed prior to the incident. Based on these positive initial outcomes, farmers have been advised that they can commence with irrigation of their crops.

Thungela will continue with water monitoring requirements, screening for possible residual waste and will work with the MTPA should further clean-up operations be required.

The next phase of the remediation is underway with a risk assessment to define all impacts of the incident. A specialist biodiversity company has been appointed to ensure that the detailed rehabilitation plan includes medium- and long-term actions to re-instate the ecological integrity of the river and the re-introduction of fish species.

Speaking about the remediation efforts, Thungela CEO July Ndlovu says; “We are encouraged by the initial clean-up efforts and are fully committed to doing what is right and within our power as citizens of the Mpumalanga community. We continue to work with various biodiversity, environmental, water and health experts to inform the steps to remedy the effects of the pollution.”

Hoffman further added, “We are satisfied with the post clean-up in the reserve. On the reserve the incident was limited to the inlet to the Loskop Dam, and it has not affected the water or fish in the rest of the dam itself. Our team of scientists have seen a healthy presence of aquatic life including schools of vulnerable young fish at several locations in the dam. We invite tourists and members of the public to visit Loskop Dam and enjoy a memorable experience in Mpumalanga.”

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Editor’s note:

Thungela, which means “to ignite” in isiZulu, is a leading South African thermal coal business, focused exclusively on thermal coal production. It is one of the largest pure-play producers and exporters of thermal coal in South Africa based on aggregate coal reserves and marketable coal production.

The Group owns interests in, and produces its thermal coal predominantly from seven mining operations, namely Goedehoop, Greenside, Isibonelo, Khwezela, AAIC (operating the Zibulo colliery), Mafube Coal Mining (operating the Mafube colliery) and Butsanani Energy (owning the independently operated Rietvlei colliery) which consist of both underground and opencast mines located in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa.

Thungela’s operations are among the highest quality thermal coal mines in South Africa by calorific value.

Thungela also holds a 50% interest in Phola, which owns and operates the Phola Coal Processing Plant, and a 23% indirect interest in Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT). RBCT is one of the world’s leading coal export terminals, with an advanced 24-hour operation and a design capacity of 91 Mtpa.

Thungela is committed to operating in a sustainable way to ignite value for a shared future, to the benefit of the communities in which it operates, its employees, shareholders and society as a whole.