

# WWF SA ready to set off on 4th Journey of Water

WWF South Africa's fourth Journey of Water sets off Monday, 11 March, in the strategic catchment area of the Riviersonderend in Greyton in the Western Cape. Riviersonderend, part of the Boland Water Source Area, is one of 22 strategic water source areas in South Africa. It is the same river that feeds into the Theewaterskloof Dam, the largest dam in the Western Cape which holds 40% of Cape Town's water supply.



This year's journey, which aims to reconnect water users with their water source areas, includes celebrity participants such as actress Pearl Thusi and TV personality Claire Mawisa, corporate representatives and journalists. From 11-13 March the participants will hike, bike, paddle and zipline but will also experience an emotional and intellectual journey as they meet the water heroes on the ground working to address the challenges facing water as it makes its way from the high mountains to our taps.

## Three key focus areas of this year's Journey of Water:

1. The urgent need to clear alien invasive vegetation to improve water flow and secure biodiversity in our catchments. Estimates are that South Africa loses 1.4 billion cubic metres of water to alien invasive vegetation each year.

2. The many opportunities there are to develop a "catchment economy" in rural areas. Alien invasive clearance not only generates jobs but also supports local industries to process products such as biochar and mulch. There are also opportunities for restoration work through the cultivation and replanting of indigenous plants.

3. Finally, the "journey" will highlight the critical need for strategic partnerships involving many players, including landowners, government, non-profit organisations, communities and corporates, to address a crisis in governance in our water source areas.

## Crisis of governance

Says Christine Colvin, head of WWF-SA's Freshwater Programmes: "Our experience has shown that funding alone cannot secure our water future. We are facing a crisis of governance in our water source areas and this requires a governance solution. The need to secure our water source areas is of national importance.

"We have formed effective partnerships in landscapes such as the Riviersonderend and Breede River where stakeholders have been able to collaborate and get the job done together. And we've learned some important lessons about how to bring in additional resources to build and strengthen what we have on the ground."

Research shows that 10% of South Africa's surface area generates half of the water in our rivers yet most of these areas enjoy little or no protection. The Journey of Water aims to reverse this situation by creating awareness and reminding South Africans that "water doesn't come from a tap".