



Environment Digest 38

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The Scarcity of Fresh Water, Exacerbated by Pollution

South Africa's scarce fresh water resources continue to decrease in quality due to an increase in pollution and the destruction of river catchments. These, in turn, have many causes: urbanization, destruction of wetlands, damming of rivers, deforestation, mining, energy generation, and agricultural activities.

<https://tinyurl.com/42kmrt4f>

Big Polluters

Factories, farms and industries have been identified as major polluters of dams and rivers. They dump chemicals, dirty used water, and liquid and solid waste directly into water systems that run alongside their operations; and also onto the ground where it gets washed off and is ultimately discharged into water systems.



Acid mine drainage pollution



Agricultural activities pollution

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8nst4m>

<https://tinyurl.com/5c8uw8xb>

Governance

Municipalities account for most of the inadequate collection and treatment of both solid waste and sewage. The ongoing spill of sewage into the Vaal River System is one typical example of such dysfunction.



The sewage contaminated Vaal River system

<https://tinyurl.com/5n82jpez>

<https://tinyurl.com/a4h89zbn>

Management

Pollution adds to the several high-priority problems that increase water scarcity in South Africa. It has to be assessed integrally with other key water-related issues such as droughts, floods, storage capacity and inter-basin transfers. Moreover, the high level of variability across the country for some of these issues is also of importance.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p93t45h>

<https://tinyurl.com/bdxzkkrs>

<https://tinyurl.com/49bymwk6>

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