



29 October 2018

Dear Rowing Community,

The Alan Francis facility at Roodeplaat dam is the only dedicated 2000m rowing course in South Africa. It hosts amongst others:

- Local schools training
- Local clubs training
- Local universities training
- Regional events for all above in all ages, classes and categories
- National events in all ages, classes and categories
- Canoeing training and events
- And of course it is the home base of the SA National squad

Plans are also in place to host some African and International events at Roodeplaat!

Water Hyacinth at Roodeplaat

As some of you may well have noticed at the past few regattas at Roodeplaat, we are experiencing a problem with the influx of water hyacinth onto the rowing course. The images below are from Saturday 27/10/18. This only shows the banks. And not the on course conditions!



GROA: Gauteng Rowing Officials Association

Chairperson: Andrew Strachan

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GRA: Gauteng Rowing Association

Chairperson: Greg Chamberlin

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Hyacinth in ideal conditions (as we are experiencing now) has the ability to double its' spread every 14 days! If left uncontrolled – we could end up in a situation as experienced in 2006! As in the image below.



Roodeplaat Dam

The Roodeplaat dam on-water usage is essentially divided into 2 main portions. The motorboat section utilises the Eastern portion of the dam (facing the water looking out at the finish below the finish line to the left), whilst rowing and canoeing use the South (start) to North (finish) portion of the dam.



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GRA and GROA are very active in trying to keep the water hyacinth under control in our portion of the dam. This is via a number of ways such as spraying to prevent seed generation, spraying to kill, and removal of the hyacinth from the water. This works pretty effectively. Unfortunately the power boaters don't do the same!

As a result – when we experience a strong North-East wind, alive and fertile hyacinth blows into the rowing area. Resulting in the course becoming littered with hyacinth, jetty's become clogged up with hyacinth and fertile seeds coming into the area.

Expert Involvement

We have engaged Rhodes University who are seen as the experts in the control of Hyacinth and have indicated to us that they are wanting to deploy an integrated hyacinth management solution.

This includes regular spraying of the hyacinth to prevent its growth, as well as the placing of a floating “boom” in the narrowest North-East section between the 2 portions of the dam (about 400m beyond the finish line). This will prevent hyacinth being blown onto the rowing course. There currently is a boom in place at the South end.

What is a “boom”?

The boom comprises of a thick cable being strung between 2 opposite banks at the narrowest portion. Pieces of foam about 1.5m in length and circular (square if easier available) in cross section (diameter +/- 25cm) have a longitudinal slit cut going to the centre. The slit is then opened and the cable inserted into it. The slit is then closed using long cable ties. The foam then acts as a float to keep the tensioned cable up on top of the water as well as forming a barrier to stop the hyacinth coming past. To complete the job, the boom needs a skirt to stop the hyacinth lifting the boom and going under it. A strip of plastic tarpaulin about 50 cm below the boom will work.

Whose responsibility is it?

Technically it is not the responsibility of GRA / GROA / ROWSA. However as we are doing it to maintain the course in good rowing condition we are willing to do it. We have had several commitments made by the Gauteng Dept. of Infrastructure and Development – however they have yet to do it. If we don't act soon we risk getting to a hyacinth problem as experienced at Hartebeespoort Dam!

What is required?

- 200m of steel cable 15mm diameter
- Clamps to clamp cable between large trees
- 180m of 1.5 m length high density foam cylinders (25cm diameter) / blocks 25cm by 25 cm. Preferably SPX33 material. As far as we can establish the only provider of this material is SONDOR Industries. Estimate Cost is R80,000!
- Long Cable ties. 1.1m length
- Tarpaulin skirt. 180m by 50cm.

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Our ask?

We are in need of the above listed materials / funds to purchase.

Please look at your business community, suppliers, customers, partners, whomever and wherever. Does anyone have any of these (overruns, excess supply, etc.) that they can donate to the project? Or does someone have leverage at SONDOR for better pricing / donation?

Cash Donations for this program are most welcome. We will have credit card facilities available at the Gauteng Champs regatta. If you could please come to the Officials area on any of the days during / after the regatta and ask for one of us. We can also accept cash / transfers!

If you are in any way able to assist (or have questions of any sort), please make contact ASAP.

Many thanks,

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