

LITTER BOOM TO STEM THE TIDE OF RIVER POLLUTION

A litter boom installed across the Ohlanga River over the long weekend, was put in place to lessen the volume of river pollution that flows down the river ending up in sea and on the beaches both north and south of the uMhlanga Lagoon.

Visible on the sea side of the M4 highway, and not to be mistaken for a fishing net, the litter boom has been installed to intercept floating litter; principally plastic packaging, which pollutes our oceans, river systems and beaches. This litter emanates principally from N2 and M4 Freeway stormwater runoff and from areas upstream.

The boom has been carefully designed to work with river currents, and prevailing winds, and to cope with flood conditions as well as to be as unattractive as possible to vandals. It is fully serviceable and will be cleaned as part of a roster set up by the uMhlanga Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP). Litter collected here will be recycled where possible or sent to landfill, and data on refuse collected will be used to inform a city-wide effort to stop ocean-bound plastic.

“Litter always covers our beaches after the rains and we had been looking at possible solutions to intercept some of it at the beach stormwater outfalls. Then we came across an article about litter booms that were successfully deployed on the Umgeni and Seekoeispruit River systems as part of an initiative by Durbanites Against Plastic Pollution (DAPP) and Durban Green Corridor (DGC), an eThekwinini supported NGO; to keep plastics out of our oceans.

We made contact and an immediate partnership was established, with DAPP and DGC providing the expertise and the UUST garnering community support and raise the required funds,” said Andrew Fraser, Chairman of the Upper Umhlanga Security Trust (UUST).

The UUST approached the uMhlanga UIP for support, part-funding and future cleaning. “Rivers and estuaries connect communities, with the environmental challenges faced by one have a knock-on effect on the other, so the idea of the boom was something we jumped at as a real support to our beach cleaning efforts,” said UIP precinct manager Dewet Geldenhuys.



Plastics SA, were also hugely supportive and engaged the support of one of their members, DPI Plastics, who generously donated the long length of hard pipe required. The local Umhlanga community initiatives of Park to Park, uMhlanga Manors and the UUST generously provided the balance of funding and the litter boom became a reality.

In celebration of World Oceans Day on Friday the 8th June, the collective will be officially opening the boom and on Saturday 9th June with a community beach/ lagoon clean-up. More details on social media to follow.

Local Litter Facts

- The uMhlanga UIP collected over 35 000 bags of refuse in uMhlanga Rocks in the first 5 months of 201 – with much of the litter washing up onto the beaches.
- The uMhlanga UIP teams up with eThekweni Municipality to attend to the daily cleaning of the uMhlanga beaches.
- The Clean Blue Lagoon team of volunteers have picked up over 7 200 bags of litter in 1 year, all at the mouth of the Umgeni River (Blue Lagoon)

Thanks once again to the various role players who made this possible, and so quickly at that.





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