

Dredging News # 4

Dear POMA Clients and Stakeholders,

The High-level delegation from DEA: Oceans & Coastal did not come to Port Owen during the first week of December, as planned. Illness prevented some members from travelling and we agreed to meet with them in Cape Town, rather than wait for a new opportunity in the new year.

We met with Me Feroza Albertus, Acting Director, DEA, and ten other officials, representing DEA, DEADP and DAFF (forestry and fisheries).

POMA was represented by Derek Robinson, Briers van Rensburg, John Scudder, Sue Tonin (POMA ECO), Marius Diemont (Webber Wentzel), Pieter Badenhorst (Environmental Assessment Practitioner), Maria le Roux (Coastal Engineer) and myself.

- 1) There was no formal agenda, but POMA went with a formal PowerPoint presentation, providing all the detail of research projects, soil and water sampling, dredged volumes and permit applications and authorisations from the year 2000 to the present.

We spent time on highlighting the deficiencies in the so-called integrated processes encompassing the Berg River Integrated Development Plan, the Berg Estuary Management Plan and the Port Owen Marina Maintenance Management Plan.

- 2) The response from DEA: O & C was simple:
 - 2.1) Their policy does not allow for any pumped water to enter the Estuary.
 - 2.2) "Disturbed water" is not allowed back into the Estuary.
 - 2.3) They will only allow water with exactly the same quality as that of the water in the Estuary, back into the Estuary.
 - 2.4) We may dredge, but the solids and the water have to be dumped on land. The water may be returned after filtering to the above standard. Solids may be removed to approved dumping sites or, preferably, be used in alternative, useful applications.
 - 2.5) We were asked to apply our minds and approach them with alternative proposals early in the new year.

- 3) What is the Plan?

The POMA Board agreed on the following plan of action

- 3.1) We cancel the dredging contract with Santa Isabel (Pty) Ltd
- 3.2) We appoint an EAP (Environmental Assessment Practitioner)
- 3.3) We start with a complete suite of water and sediment sampling.

3.4) We urgently meet with the Berg River Municipality to look at alternative dumping sites.

3.5) We treat this as an engineering problem with an engineering solution.

4) When can we start dredging?

We now estimate that at least twelve months will be needed to come up with a solution and work through the application processes before we will be able to start clearing the waterways of silt.

We shall keep you posted and informed of all developments as we progress and ask you for your patience and support. This is not going to be easy, but if done properly, the problem will be solved forever.

POMA MANAGEMENT