

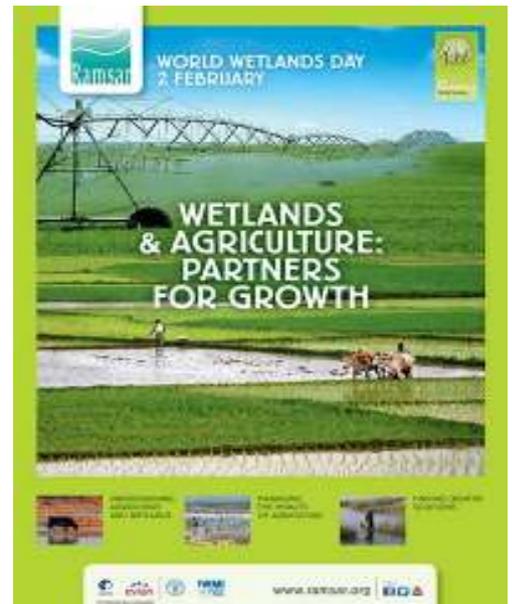


THE SWAZILAND NATIONAL TRUST COMMISSION (SNTC) CELEBRATES
WORLD WETLANDS DAY - 2 February 2014

Wetlands and Agriculture: Partners for Growth

2014 Wetlands Theme

We fully support and agree with this year's theme's (Wetlands and Agriculture: Partners for Growth) focus on the need for positive collaboration and partnership between the Water and Agricultural sectors, together with the wetlands national focal point, the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC). This close cooperation will forge long-term beneficial alliances on managing all wetland habitats as we culturally recognize them for the natural resources of importance used by the citizens to meet their everyday needs.



Management and Coordination of The Swaziland's Wetlands Programme

The Kingdom of Swaziland on 15 June 2013 completed the accession to the Ramsar Convention – *Convention on Wetlands of international Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat as adopted at Ramsar in 1971, and amended in 1982*. The SNTC as the newly appointed National Focal Point (NFP) on wetland conservation issues is eager to engage all stakeholders (government ministries, government parastatals, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, community based organisations, private sector businesses, etc) in order to strengthen the conservation management of our national wetlands which are targeted by the Ramsar Conservation.

National Wetlands Types

The wetlands found along our rivers and flood plains, swamps, bogs, vleis, and dams (manmade) serve as valuable natural infrastructure for agricultural purposes chiefly by providing reliable water and fertile soils. The risk from Agriculture's crop production demands land and water resources which threatens their continued existence. Furthermore, they are increasingly threatened by population growth, large-scale conversion together with development initiatives intended to alleviate poverty, and not least the climate change phenomena.

Precautionary approach to using wetlands for agricultural purposes

Wetlands are sensitive ecosystems requiring expert advice on how best to use them in expanding their agricultural production usage with minimum damage to the wetland resources within the wetland and to downstream areas. There is the need to develop specific legal and policy instruments guiding the use of the various wetlands types for agricultural purposes as has been observed in areas where they are being used. The review of existing laws that are biased towards conservation and protection needs to be undertaken so as to incorporate aspects of wise-use that were previously not explored.

National Wetland Stakeholders Invitation

We further invite the public and private stakeholders to further take advantage of our Environmental Education Centres within the SNTC Nature Reserves (Malolotja, Mlawula, and Mantenga Nature Reserves).



Local wetland setting with interactions from primary users and beneficiaries.