

Water is critical for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the alleviation of poverty and hunger, and is indispensable for human health and well-being.

UNITED NATIONS

PEOPLE NEED WATER, WATER NEEDS NATURE

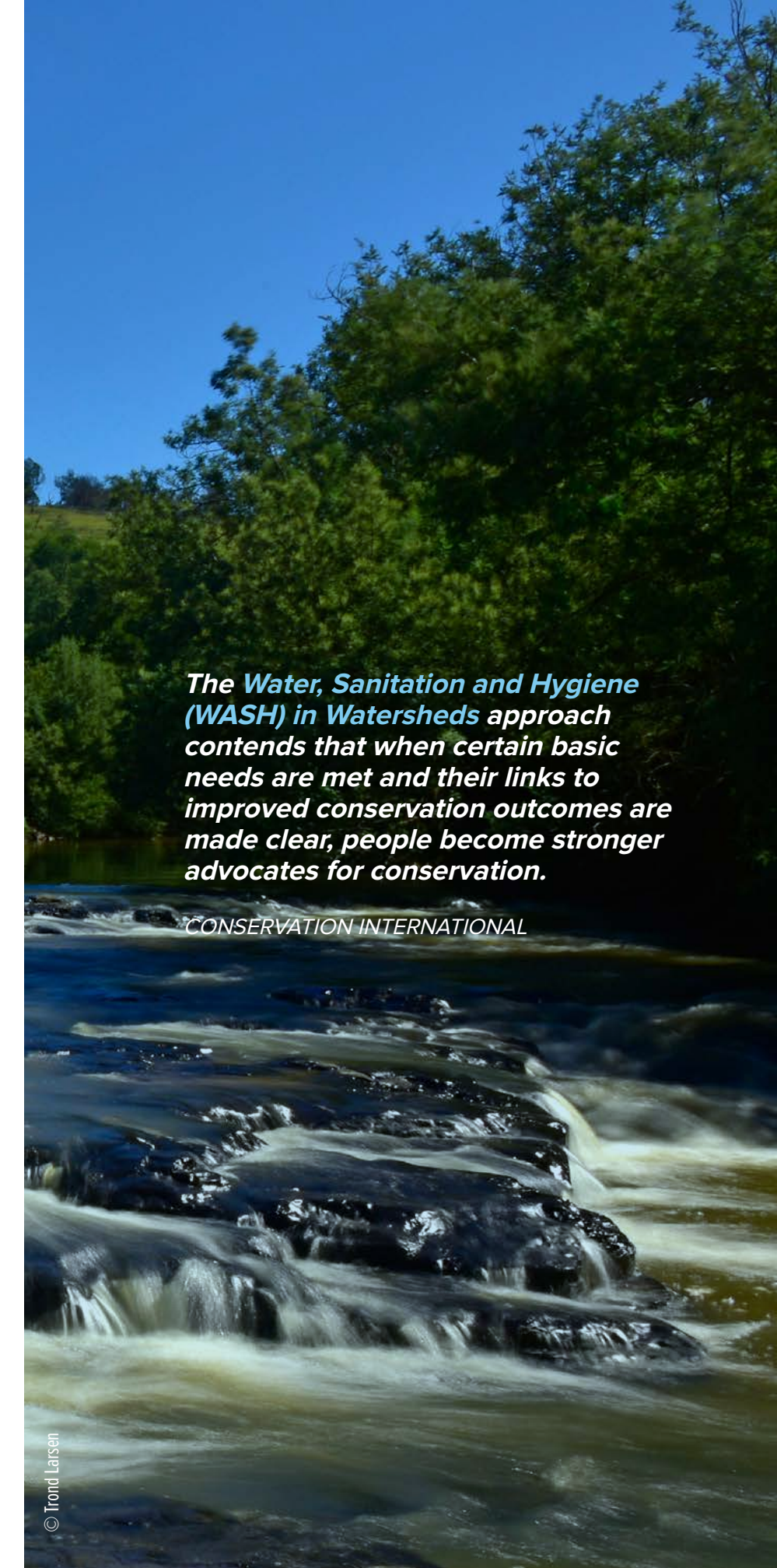
Human and environmental health is unattainable without access to fresh water. Although this is true across the globe, nowhere is it more important than in areas where service provision is inadequate, and people rely directly on natural resources to meet their needs.

Our investment in rangeland water security through land restoration and a WASH in Watersheds approach are focused on the water and sanitation needs of people and livestock, while supporting water conservation.

Impact of the programme

For the period July 2018 to December 2019, two catchments – the uMzimvubu and the Sand – benefited from improved land management activities. In the Mvenyane area of the uMzimvubu Catchment, four natural springs were restored, resulting in 140 people with better access to water.

Across both catchments, 2,879 people (including 1,575 women) were reached through WASH awareness home visits and 57 young people (scouts) were introduced to WASH concepts.



The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Watersheds approach contends that when certain basic needs are met and their links to improved conservation outcomes are made clear, people become stronger advocates for conservation.

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

WATER

WATER IS LIFE RESTORING SIDWADWENI SPRING

Sidwadweni was the first spring restored in Mabheleni village in Upper Mvenyane, Alfred Nzo District in the Eastern Cape. This is one of the areas in which the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has deployed National Resource Management teams to clear wattle infestations. The spring is a reliable source of water, even during dry periods, and in the rainy season the water is clear.

The removal of wattle in a 50-metre radius around the spring, together with the low-impact construction of water points by water monitors, improved access for community members to collect and use the water. Previously, members of the community previously scooped water from the stream. They can now fill their buckets and containers with clean water from holding tanks and pipes inside the fenced area. This simple structure saves time and energy spent on collecting water and reduces the risk of contamination from livestock or plant debris in the stream bed.

Two secondary ponds created below the protected spring area allow livestock to access water without contaminating the water source.

The Sidwadweni spring provides water for only a section of the village; a project to link another spring at the top of the Qongqothwane Mountain to existing municipal infrastructure (pipes and a reservoir) will secure a consistent source of water for the whole village. Initial discussions with the local municipality were positive and preparatory work has been completed.

This pilot project will lay the foundation for a more integrated approach to water service provision in the municipality – one that links environmental restoration directly to human well-being and service delivery.



ABOVE: Water monitors Sipehelele Mthambeka and Mzwanele Maqhashala

WATER

WALKING WITH WATER COMMUNAL WATER STEWARDSHIP

In the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region Conservation South Africa's focus is on educating local groups of young people through the scouts programme. In March 2019, scouts from Utah and Dixie villages in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region were taken on an outing to learn about water, sanitation and health. Facilitators used the CSA "veld sanitation toolkit" to guide the team on a rangeland hike to witness practical applications of veld sanitation and the negative effects of waste dumped into river channels and drainage lines. Fifty-seven scouts equipped with notebooks and pens, drinking water and healthy snacks, went on a five kilometre walk past eroded drainage lines filled with plastic that had been dumped upstream and brought down the river by recent rains. Conservation South Africa eco-rangers gave the scouts an overview of the rangeland restoration programme, Herding for Health. They learned about the importance of planned grazing and resting, which allows the grass to grow

and limits bare soil to enhance water infiltration. Good drainage reduces soil erosion and prevents runoff soil from ending up in rivers as silt. It also increases local groundwater, which villages rely on when municipal water infrastructures are not working.

A few weeks later the group went on a second rangeland water hike from the upper catchment area of the Sand River, where multiple tributaries merge with the main stream. They traced the river's course through urban areas like the Thulamahashe and Rolle settlements where there is evidence of water extraction, plastic pollution and small-scale river sand mining.

The final stop was Sabi Sand Wildtuin (game reserve) where the river enters the protected area of the Greater Kruger and is the lifeline for a diverse range of animals and plants many of which are threatened with extinction.

Each member of the group was given a water badge as a reminder that "People need Water, Water needs Nature".

