

READERS CORNER – submitted by Rob Childs

THE JUKSKEI RIVER IN LONEHILL

The Jukskei River forms the northern border of Lonehill. Do you know where it rises? You will be surprised!

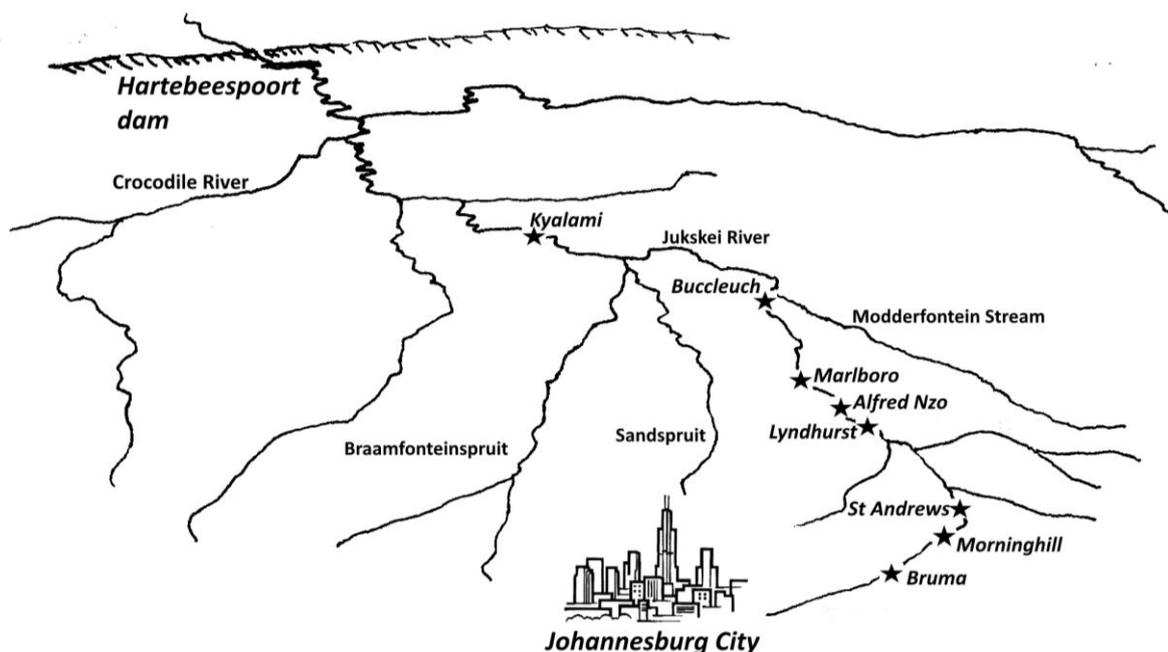
Some experts argue that the Jukskei rises in Harrison Street in downtown Johannesburg, where the Witwatersrand reaches its high point and separates the rivers running eastwards (like the Jukskei) and westwards. Think Civic Centre; Park Station; Johannesburg City Hall – all in Harrison Street. It begins as “rainwater runoff” and then meets the “Jukskei Eye”, a spring at Ellis Park.

Other specialists say that the Jukskei begins at Ellis Park! The original spring was on the former Doornfontein farm and produced 18,000 litres per hour! The spring has since disappeared.

Today the first you see of the Jukskei is in Bertrams where it emerges from a storm drain. From there the “river” flows through Bezuidenhout Valley and is via the Bruma “Lake” environmental catastrophe. The lake was drained in 2014.

It then meanders in a northerly direction through Bedfordview and Edenvale before flowing through Alexandra Township. It then turns northwest through Buccleuch, Leeuwkop Prison, Lonehill, Dainfern and Steyn City, before joining the Crocodile River just north of Lanseria.

The Jukskei River is fed by numerous streams before it gets to Lonehill. Its tributaries include the Modderfontein Spruit, the Braamfontein Spruit and the Klein Jukskei River. The Jukskei is shallow and nowhere deep enough for transportation.

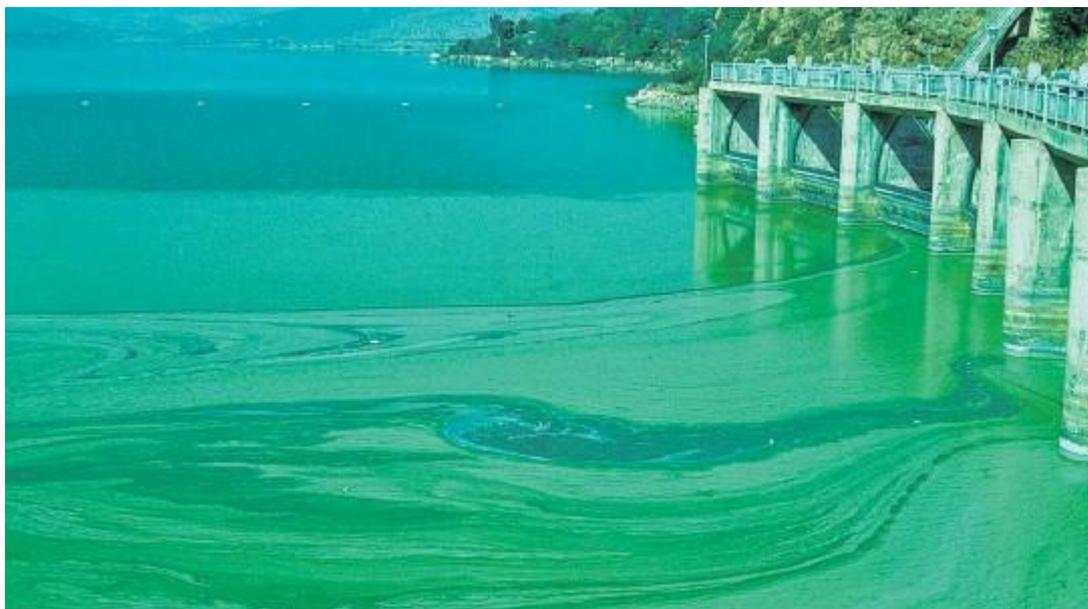


So, the Jukskei has “seen a few movies” by the time it gets to Lonehill!!!



The Jukskei is profoundly polluted by urban runoff. Lack of infrastructure maintenance allows raw waste to flow into the river daily. Cholera-causing bacteria have occasionally been found in the river.

Downstream from Lonehill, the river receives a large “inflow” from the Northern Waste Water Treatment Plant in northern Johannesburg. The Jukskei River is one of the largest contributing factors of the eutrophication problems facing Hartbeespoort Dam. “Eutrophication: the excessive richness of nutrients in a lake or other body of water, frequently due to run-off from the land, which causes a dense growth of plant life.” In simple English, algae love it, fish don't!

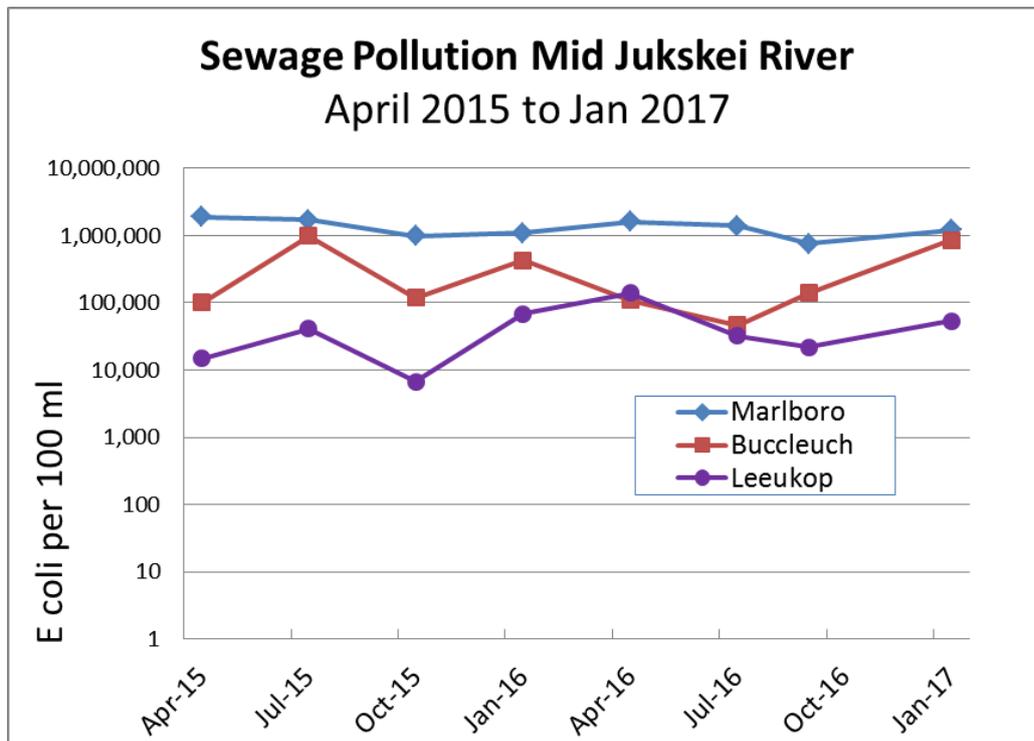


The banks of the Jukskei burst easily, especially in summer when rainfalls are the heaviest. This spells disaster for the residents of the Alexandra Township who build makeshift shacks along the river banks because of overcrowding and the need for access to water for washing, drinking, and cooking!



Monitoring of the health of the Jukskei shows that the river quality improves downstream from Alexandra. It never rises above the “Very Poor” ecological category, which is the lowest level.

The standard for treated sewerage is 1,000 E coli per 100ml. Lonehill’s Jukskei is probably at 10 times that level, and it exceeds the standard for drinking water by at least 100 times! It is categorically not suitable for any recreation, including canoeing.



Source: Edenvale River Watch

The Lonehill area was chosen by Iron Age Tswana for smelting because of the abundant ferricrete along the Jukskei River. Ferricrete is a concentration of iron salts in the soil, originating in the underlying granite.

On Saturday, 8 October 1853, one Pieter Jacobs Marais reported his discovery of alluvial gold in the Jukskei River on B.J. Liebenberg's farm, Bultfontein. The site was just north of the present Sandton – not far from if not in Lonehill! Marais was not the first person to discover gold in the area. Carel Kruger, who was hunting in the area, had discovered gold in 1834, while John Henry Davis, an English geologist, prospected with some success around Krugersdorp in 1852.

The discovery of the Witwatersrand Main Reef by the two brothers H.W. and F.P.T. Struben in 1886 led to the birth of Johannesburg.

Johannesburg is the only large city in the world that was not established adjacent to a major river. Or can you think of one? It is not one of the following!

Alexandria and Cairo; Egypt; Nile

Amsterdam; Netherlands; Amstel

Baghdad; Iraq; Tigris

Berlin; Germany; Spree, Havel

Brussels; Belgium; Senne

Budapest; Hungary; Danube

Buenos Aires; Argentina; Río de la Plata

Dublin; Ireland; Liffey

Kiev; Ukraine; Dnieper

Lisbon; Portugal; Tagus

London; England; Thames

Moscow Russia; Moskva

Paris; France; Seine

Rome; Italy; Tiber

Tokyo; Japan; Sumida

Vienna; Austria; Danube

Warsaw; Poland; Vistula

The Jukskei traditionally demarcated the boundary between the Northern Transvaal and Transvaal for sporting purposes.

The name “Jukskei” comes from the game played by Dutch/Afrikaner “transport riders” who drove ox wagons. They used items from their ox wagons for the game: wooden yokes (Dutch: yuk) to throw at a wooden pin (Dutch: skei) that was planted into the ground.

