



Miss Earth SA 2012 Tamerin Jardine with pupils from Mamelodi schools during the opening of the wetland at the Walter Sisulu environmental centre. PICTURE: THOBILE MATHONSI

Miss Earth unveils new man-made wetland

LALI VAN ZUYDAM

PUPILS in Mamelodi will now have access to a man-made wetland at the Jewish National Fund Walter Sisulu Environmental Centre for their research needs.

The wetland, built on the premises of the centre, was officially opened by Miss Earth 2012, Tamerin Jardine, on Tuesday and will serve as an educational resource for pupils in the area.

“It is important to educate the youth about the environment. Now they can see how a wetland works to purify water and they can apply it to their own environment,” Jardine said.

Tina de Waal, who manages the centre’s gardens, said more than 10 000 pupils visited the centre every year to learn about the environment and the influence of humans on nature.

“We developed this for the kids so they can learn about wetlands first-hand,” she said.

The wetland was still in its early stages and would develop to have rich vegetation and animal life, De Waal said.

The water in the wetland is circulated by a large submersible pump, powered by four solar panels. The bottom of the wetland was laid with special clay to keep the water from seep-

ing into the ground below.

Two large tanks hold rainwater to add to the water level.

“As you see it now, it is still in its raw form. The plants will grow and animals will come settle here. We will add indigenous fish later on,” explained De Waal.

The wetland was built in less than three weeks at a reduced price by landscaper Piet Uys.

“Right now the growing season is over. The plants will grow once the water is warmer in spring,” he said.

Pupils from many local schools attended the opening and the awards ceremony.

Awards for “greening” in schools

were handed over to the schools’ green clubs from the area.

Some of the winners included SOMAFSCO High School, Stanza Bopape Secondary School, Phateng Secondary School and Moretele Primary School.

Prizes included bags of compost and plants for the winning schools’ green clubs.

“You have the power to be green and make greener decisions for the future,” Jardine said in her speech.

The centre caters for pupils from local schools and runs environmental programmes for them. Facilitators from the community work at the centre to educate the pupils.