

Lagoon blue again thanks to city man

BLUE LAGOON

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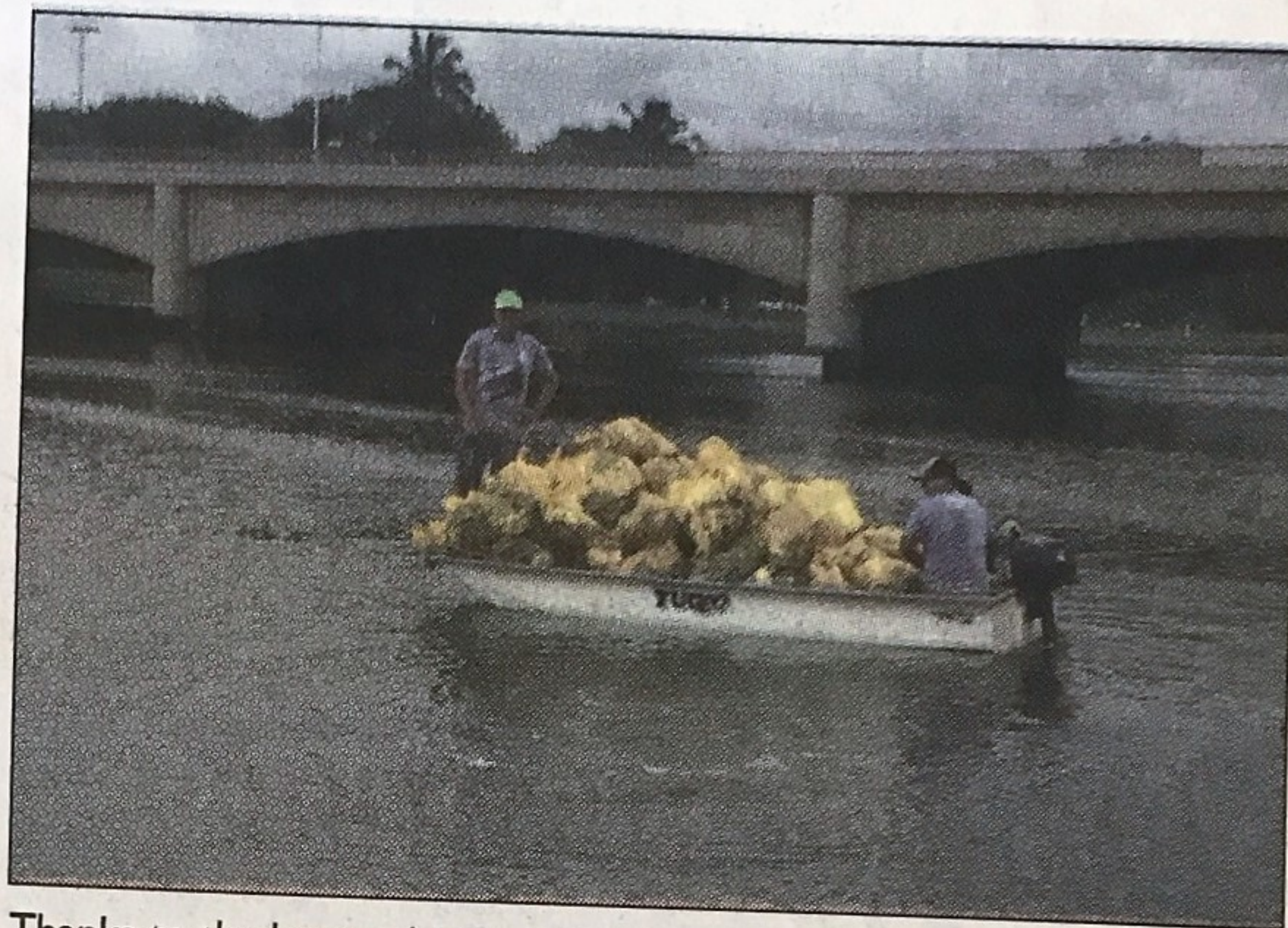
MORE people are becoming aware of the effects that plastic waste and filthy beaches have on our marine life, said Dale Johnson of the #CleanBlueLagoon movement.

What began as a small exercise in March 2016 after rubbish had accumulated at the Blue Lagoon/ Beachwood Mangrove areas with no action by the authorities, has turned into a full-blown movement.

It partnered with the Duzi Conservation Trust (Duct), the Durban Partnership against Plastic Pollution and Coast Watch to keep beaches clean.

"There are many plans and strategies being formulated to effect change and bring us to our vision of a clean river and minimal pollution flow into the ocean," Johnson said.

"On our first informal clean-ups, we had less than 10 people but through the #CleanBlueLagoon initiative we grew to about 25 on the first organised event. We collect anything from 80 to 200



Thanks to the boat, volunteers can transport all rubbish bags to the south bank for easy collection.



rubbish bags of general waste and five to 10 of recyclable waste."

He said volunteering was at the core of #CleanBlueLagoon.

"We are extremely pleased to see families as the little ones learn from a young age the devastation pollution causes."

But despite the success of the initiative, Johnson said there were still challenges. "The affected areas are difficult to get to. Vehicle access is impossible so every bag, bottle, condom, snuff box, shoe and other rubbish is collected by hand. We need more people to make an impact.

"The logistics of removing the rubbish is difficult but via Duct we have a boat that

transports it to the south bank for collection by Durban Solid Waste and Parks and Recreation."

A typical two-hour clean-up starts with a welcome and briefing of what goals needed to be achieved as well as tips.

There are wet and dry routes to the affected areas. Volunteers spread out, collecting anything from large refrigerator pieces to the tiniest polystyrene bubbles.

"I hate travelling over the M4 bridge looking east to the sea and seeing the rubbish. We have a sister group, #CleanBlueHarbour, at present with my vision of having groups spread out all over the Durban area."

● Next #CleanBlueLagoon is on March 18, 9.30am-11.30am.