

Bridge money 'spent on thugs' hiding spot'

By **ORIS MNISI**

ANGRY residents have accused the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works of being responsible for deaths on the Mutlumuvi River.

They claimed the department spent the money meant for a bridge to link Thulamahashe and Kumani, near Bushbuckridge.

The residents said in 2012, the department used money meant for a bridge to construct culverts, which ended up becoming hiding spots for thugs.

In January, a 69-year-old man drowned after floods swept her away following the heavy rains caused by cyclone Eloise.

On Monday, 1 February, three men were rescued from a car trapped in the flooded river.

Teacher Lunghisa Makamu (27), Mpumalelo Nxumalo (32) and Andrew Khosa (35)



The deadly Mutlumuvi River between Thulamahashe and Kumani.

Photo By Oris Mnisi

were trapped in the car for almost three hours. Car owner Cheldeny Mandlani (23) and Lucky Nyathi (32) managed to escape.

Department spokesman Mxolisi Dhlamini said: "We have noted reports of the incident with great concern and would like to convey our sincere condolences to the family of the deceased as well as the community at large. Planning and design of the Kumani Bridge has been in progress for the past few months. However, the process was hampered by budget cuts as a result of the Covid-19 intervention strategy.