

ECOLOGICAL FAUNA AND FLORA HABITAT SURVEY

**Ipelegeng, Schweizer-Reneke,
North West Province**



Branches and foliage of *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) at the site.

Photo: Reinier F. Terblanche.

DECEMBER 2020

Compiled by:

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(M.Sc Ecology, *Cum Laude*; Pr.Sci.Nat, Reg. No. 400244/05)

ANTHENE ECOLOGICAL CC

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I) SPECIALIST EXPERTISE

SYNOPTIC CV: REINIER. F. TERBLANCHE

Reinier is an ecologist and in particular a habitat specialist with an exceptional combination of botanical and zoological expertise which he keeps fostering, updating and improving. He is busy with a PhD for which he registered at the Department of Conservation Ecology at the University of Stellenbosch in July 2013. The PhD research focuses on the landscape ecology of selected terrestrial and wetland butterflies in South Africa. Reinier's experience includes being a lecturer in ecology and zoology at the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus (1998-2008). Reinier collaborates with a number of institutes, organizations and universities on animal, plant and habitat research.

Qualifications:

Qualification	Main subject matter	University
M.Sc Cum Laude, 1998: Botany: Ecology	Quantitative study of invertebrate assemblages and plant assemblages of rangelands in grasslands.	North-West University, Potchefstroom
B.Sc Honns Cum Laude, 1992 Botany: Taxonomy	Distinctions in all subjects: Plant Anatomy, Taxonomy, Modern Systematics, System Modelling, Plant Ecology, Taxonomy Project, Statistics Attendance Course.	North-West University, Potchefstroom
B.Sc Botany, Zoology	Main subjects: Botany, Zoology.	North-West University, Potchefstroom
Higher Education Diploma, 1990	Numerous subjects aimed at holistic training of teachers.	North-West University, Potchefstroom

In research Reinier specializes in conservation biology, threatened butterfly species, vegetation dynamics and ant assemblages at terrestrial and wetland butterfly habitats as well as enhancing quantitative studies on butterflies of Africa. He has published extensively in the fields of taxonomy, biogeography and ecology in popular journals, peer-reviewed scientific journals and as co-author and co-editor of books (see 10 examples beneath).

Reinier practices as an ecological consultant and has been registered as a Professional Natural Scientist by SACNASP since 2005: Reg. No. 400244/05. His experience in consultation includes: Flora and fauna habitat surveys, Threatened species assessments, Riparian vegetation index surveys, Compilation of Ecological Management Plans, Biodiversity Action Plans and Status quo of biodiversity for Environmental Management Frameworks, Wetland Assessments, Management of Rare Wetland Species.

Recent activities/ awards: Best Poster Award at Oppenheimer De Beers Group Research Conference 2015, Johannesburg. One of the co-authors of Guidelines for Standardised Global Butterfly Monitoring, 2015, Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network, Leipzig, Germany (UNEP-WCMC), GEO BON Technical Series 1. Awarded the prestigious Torben Larsen Memorial Tankard in October 2017; one is awarded annually to the person responsible for the most outstanding written account on Afrotropical Lepidoptera. Lectured as Conservationist-in-Residence in the Wildlife Conservation Programme of the African Leadership University, Kigali, Rwanda, 9-23 February 2019. Reinier won a photographic competition which resulted his photograph of the Critically Endangered *Erikssonia edgei* (Waterberg Copper) being on the front cover of the Synthesis Report of the National Biodiversity Assessment (2018) prepared by SANBI.

EXPERIENCE

Lecturer: Zoology 1998-2008	Main subject matter and level	Organization
Lectured subjects	- 3 rd year level Ecology, Plantparasitology - 2 nd year level Ethology - <i>Master's degree</i> Evolutionary Ethology, Systematics in Practice, Morphology and Taxonomy of Insect Pests, Wetlands.	North-West University, Potchefstroom and University of South Africa
Co-promoter	PhD: Edge, D.A. 2005. Ecological factors that influence the survival of the Brenton Blue butterfly	North-West University, Potchefstroom
Study leader/ assistant study leader	Six MSc students, One BSc Honn student: Various quantitative biodiversity studies (terrestrial and aquatic).	North-West University, Potchefstroom
Teacher 1994-1998	Biology and Science, Secondary School	Afrikaans Hoër Seunskool, Pretoria
Owned Anthene Ecological CC 2008 – present	- Flora and Fauna habitat surveys - Highly specialized ecological surveys - Riparian vegetation index surveys - Ecological Management Plans - Biodiversity Action Plans - Biodiversity section of Environmental Management Frameworks - Wetland assessments	Private Closed Corporation that has been subcontracted by many companies
Herbarium assistant 1988-1991	- Part-time assistant at the A.P. Goossens herbarium, Botany Department, North-West University, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991 (as a student).	North-West University, Potchefstroom

10 EXAMPLES OF PUBLICATIONS OF WHICH R.F. TERBLANCHE IS AUTHOR/ CO-AUTHOR

(Three books, two chapters in books and five articles are listed here as examples)

- HENNING, G.A., TERBLANCHE, R.F. & BALL, J.B. (eds) 2009. *South African Red Data Book: butterflies*. SANBI Biodiversity Series 13. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria. 158p. ISBN 978-1-919976-51-8
- MECENERO, S., BALL, J.B., EDGE, D.A., HAMER, M.L., HENNING, G.A., KRÜGER, M., PRINGLE, E.L., TERBLANCHE, R.F. & WILLIAMS, M.C. (eds). 2013. *Conservation Assessment of Butterflies of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland: Red List and atlas*. Saffronics (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg & Animal Demography Unit, Cape Town.
- VAN SWAAY, C., REGAN, E., LING, M., BOZHINOVSKA, E., FERNANDEZ, M., MARINI-FILHO, O.J., HUERTAS, B., PHON, C.-K., KŐRÖSI, A., MEERMAN, J., PE'ER, G., UEHARA-PRADO, M., SÁFIÁN, S., SAM, L., SHUEY, J., TARON, D., TERBLANCHE, R.F. & UNDERHILL, L. 2015. Guidelines for Standardised Global Butterfly Monitoring. Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network, Leipzig, Germany. GEO BON Technical Series 1.
- TERBLANCHE, R.F. & HENNING, G.A. 2009. *A framework for conservation management of South African butterflies in practice*. In: Henning, G.A., Terblanche, R.F. & Ball, J.B. (eds). *South African Red Data Book: Butterflies*. SANBI Biodiversity Series 13. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria. p. 68 – 71.
- EDGE, D.A., TERBLANCHE, R.F., HENNING, G.A., MECENERO, S. & NAVARRO, R.A. 2013. Butterfly conservation in southern Africa: Analysis of the Red List and threats. In: Mecenero, S., Ball, J.B., Edge, D.A., Hamer, M.L., Henning, G.A., Krüger, M., Pringle, E.L., Terblanche, R.F. & Williams, M.C. (eds). *Conservation Assessment of Butterflies of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland: Red List and Atlas*. pp. 13-33. Saffronics (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg & Animal Demography Unit, Cape Town.
- TERBLANCHE, R.F., SMITH, G.F. & THEUNISSEN, J.D. 1993. Did Scott typify names in *Haworthia* (Asphodelaceae: Alooideae)? *Taxon* 42(1): 91–95. (International Journal of Plant Taxonomy).
- TERBLANCHE, R.F., MORGENTHAL, T.L. & CILLIERS, S.S. 2003. The vegetation of three localities of the threatened butterfly species *Chrysothrix aureus* (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae). *Koedoe* 46(1): 73-90.
- EDGE, D.A., CILLIERS, S.S. & TERBLANCHE, R.F. 2008. Vegetation associated with the occurrence of the Brenton blue butterfly. *South African Journal of Science* 104: 505 - 510.
- GARDINER, A.J. & TERBLANCHE, R.F. 2010. Taxonomy, biology, biogeography, evolution and conservation of the genus *Erikssonia* Trimen (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae). *African Entomology* 18(1): 171-191.
- TERBLANCHE, R.F. 2016. *Acraea trimeni* Aurivillius, [1899], *Acraea stenobea* Wallengren, 1860 and *Acraea neobule* Doubleday, [1847] on host-plant *Adenia repanda* (Burch.) Engl. at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, South Africa. *Metamorphosis* 27: 92-102.

* A detailed CV with more complete publication list is available.

II) SPECIALIST DECLARATION

I, Reinier F. Terblanche, as the appointed independent specialist, in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations (as amended), hereby declare that I:

- I act as the independent specialist in this application;
- I perform the work relating to the application in an objective manner, even if this results in views and findings that are not favourable to the applicant;
- regard the information contained in this report as it relates to my specialist input/study to be true and correct, and do not have and will not have any financial interest in the undertaking of the activity, other than remuneration for work performed in terms of the NEMA, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended) and any specific environmental management Act;
- I declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work;
- I have expertise in conducting the specialist report relevant to this application, including knowledge of the Act, Regulations and any guidelines that have relevance to the proposed activity;
- I will comply with the Act, Regulations and all other applicable legislation;
- I have no, and will not engage in, conflicting interests in the undertaking of the activity;
- I have no vested interest in the proposed activity proceeding;
- I undertake to disclose to the applicant and the competent authority all material information in my possession that reasonably has or may have the potential of influencing - any decision to be taken with respect to the application by the competent authority; and the objectivity of any report, plan or document to be prepared by myself for submission to the competent authority;
- I have ensured that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the specialist input/study was distributed or made available to interested and affected parties and the public and that participation by interested and affected parties was facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties were provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments on the specialist input/study;
- I have ensured that the comments of all interested and affected parties on the specialist input/study were considered, recorded and submitted to the competent authority in respect of the application;
- all the particulars furnished by me in this specialist input/study are true and correct; and
- I realise that a false declaration is an offence in terms of regulation 48 and is punishable in terms of section 24F of the Act.

Name of Specialist: Reinier F. Terblanche



Signature of the specialist

Date: 11 December 2020

1 INTRODUCTION

An ecological habitat survey is required for proposed development at Ipelegeng, west of Schweizer-Reneke, North West Province, South Africa (elsewhere referred to as the site). Survey focused on the possibility that threatened fauna or flora known to occur in North West Province are likely to occur within the proposed development. Species of known high conservation priority that do not qualify for threatened status also received attention in the survey.

1.1 Objectives of the habitat study

- Surveys to investigate key elements of habitats on the site, relevant to the conservation of fauna and flora.
- Recording of any sightings and/or evidence of existing fauna and flora.
- The selective and careful collecting of voucher specimens of invertebrates where deemed necessary.
- An evaluation of the conservation importance and significance of the site with special emphasis on the current status of threatened species.
- Recording of possible host plants or foodplants of fauna such as butterflies.
- Literature investigation of possible species that might occur on site.
- Integration of the literature investigation and field observations to identify potential ecological impacts that could occur as a result of the development.
- Integration of literature investigation and field observations to make recommendations to reduce or minimise impacts, should the development be approved.

2 STUDY AREA

The study area is at Ipelegeng, west of Schweizer-Reneke, North West Province, South Africa. Site is situated at the Savanna Biome which is represented by the Schweizer-Reneke Bushveld vegetation type (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006). A brief overview of the vegetation type, which serves as an outline of the ecological context of the site, follows.

SVk 3 Schweizer-Reneke Bushveld

Distribution: Schweizer-Reneke Bushveld is located in the North-West Province of South Africa in an area to the east of Amalia in the west and from farming areas around Broedersput in the north to Never Mind (Christiana District) in the south. Altitude is 1250-1400 m (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

Vegetation and landscape features: Plains, slightly undulating plains and some hills, supporting open woodland with a fairly dense shrub layer, with trees *Acacia erioloba*, *Acacia karroo*, *Acacia tortilis*, *Searsia lancea* and shrubs *Acacia hebeclada*, *Diospyros lycioides*, *Grewia flava* and *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

Geology and soils: Andesitic lavas of the Allanridge Formation of the Ventersdorp Supergroup, sometimes covered with silcrete or calcrete of the Kalahari Group. Deep (0.9-1.2 m) sandy soils, with Hutton and Clovelly the dominant soil forms. Land Types: Ah and Ae and some Bc (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

Climate: Rainfall in summer with very dry winters. Mean annual precipitation (MAP) about 440 – 520 mm. Frost frequent in winter (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

Important taxa of the Schweizer-Reneke Bushveld listed by Mucina & Rutherford (2006): Tall tree: *Acacia erioloba*. Small trees: *Acacia karroo*, *Acacia tortilis* subsp. *heteracantha*, *Rhus lancea*. Tall shrubs: *Asparagus laricin*, *Diospyros lycioides* subsp. *lycioides*, *Grewia flava*, *Tarchonanthus camphoratus*, *Diospyros pallens*, *Ehretia rigida* subsp. *rigida*, *Gymnosporia buxifolia*, *Rhus tridactyla*. Low shrubs: *Acacia hebeclada* subsp. *hebeclada*, *Aptosimum decumbens*, *Chrysocoma ciliata*, *Gnidia polycephala*, *Pentzia viridis*. Woody climber: *Asparagus africanus*. Graminoids: *Anthepera pubescens*, *Digitaria eriantha* subsp. *eriantha*, *Heteropogon contortus*, *Stipagrostis uniplumis*, *Themeda triandra*, *Aristida congesta*, *Aristida stipitata* var. *spicata*, *Chloris virgata*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Eragrostis biflora*, *Eragrostis rigidior*, *Eragrostis superba*, *Eragrostis trichophora*, *Sporobolus fimbriatus*. Herbs: *Barleria macrostegia*, *Hermannia tomentosa*, *Hibiscus pusillus*, *Indigofera daleoides*, *Lippia scaberrima*, *Osteospermum muricatum*, *Pollichia campestris*, *Rhyncosia adenodes*. Geophytic herbs: *Dipcadi papillatum*, *Nerine laticoma*.

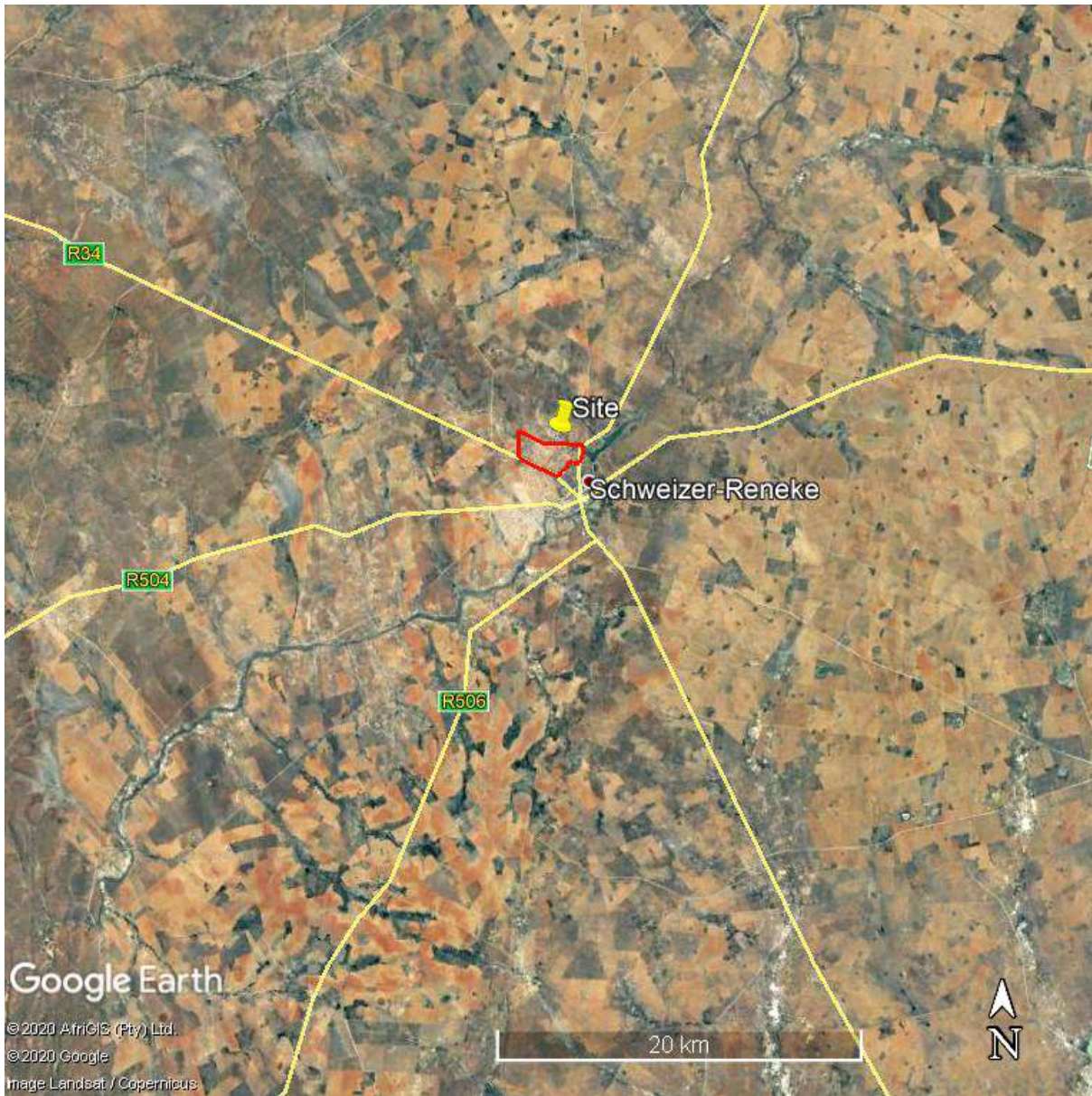


Figure 1 Map with an indication of the location of the site.

Map information were analysed and depicted on Google images with the aid of Google Earth Pro (US Dept. of State Geographer, MapLink/ Tele Atlas, Google, 2020).

3 METHODS

A desktop study comprised not only an initial phase, but also it was used throughout the study to accommodate and integrate all the data that become available during the field observations.

Surveys by R.F. Terblanche during October 2020 and December 2020 were conducted to note key elements of habitats on the site, relevant to the conservation of fauna and flora. The main purpose of the site visits was ultimately to serve as a habitat survey that concentrated on the possible presence or not of threatened species and other species of high conservation priority.

The following sections highlight the materials and methods applicable to different aspects or signs that were observed.

3.1 Habitat characteristics and vegetation

The habitat was investigated by noting habitat structure (rockiness, slope, plant structure/ physiognomy) as well as floristic composition. Voucher specimens of plant species were only taken where the taxonomy was in doubt and where the plant specimens were of significant relevance for invertebrate conservation. In this case no plant specimens were needed to be collected as voucher specimens or to be send to a herbarium for identification. A wealth of guides and detailed works of plant identifications, ecology and conservation is fortunately available and very useful. Field guides, biogeographic works, species lists, diagnostic outlines, conservation statuses and detail on specific plant groups were sourced from Boon (2010), Court (2010), Germishuizen (2003), Germishuizen, Meyer & Steenkamp (2006), Goldblatt (1986), Goldblatt & Manning (1998), Jacobsen (1983), Manning (2003), Manning (2009), McMurtry, Grobler, Grobler & Burns (2008), Pooley (1998), Retief & Herman (1997), Smit (2008), Van Ginkel, Glen, Gordon-Gray, Cilliers, Muasya & Van Deventer (2011), Van Jaarsveld (2006), Van Oudtshoorn (1999), Van Wyk (2000), Van Wyk & Smith (2001), Van Wyk & Smith (2003), Van Wyk & Malan (1998) and Van Wyk & Van Wyk (1997). Lists of species, species names and the conservation status of species were mainly sourced from Raimondo, von Staden, Victor, Helme, Turner, Kamundi & Manyama (2009) and updated versions of red lists and species from the Threatened Species Programme of SANBI and the Red List of South African Plants (sanbi.org.za).

3.2 Mammals

Mammals were noted as sight records by day. For the identification of species and observation of diagnostic characteristics Smithers (1986), Skinner & Chimimba (2005), Cillié, Oberprieler and Joubert (2004) and Apps (2000) are consulted. Sites have been walked, covering as many habitats as possible. Signs of the presence of mammal species, such as calls of animals, animal tracks (spoor), burrows, runways, nests and faeces were

recorded. Walker (1996), Stuart & Stuart (2000) and Liebenberg (1990) were consulted for additional information and for the identification of spoor and signs. Trapping was not done since it proved not necessary in the case of this study.

Habitat characteristics were also surveyed to note potential occurrences of mammals. Many mammals can be identified from field sightings but, with a few exceptions, bats, rodents and shrews can only be reliably identified in the hand, and then some species need examination of skulls, or even chromosomes (Apps, 2000).

3.3 Birds

Birds were noted as sight records, mainly with the aid of binoculars (10x30). Nearby bird calls of which the observer was sure of the identity were also recorded. For practical skills of noting diagnostic characteristics, the identification of species and observation techniques Ryan (2001) is followed. For information on identification, biogeography and ecology Barnes (2000), Hockey, Dean & Ryan, P.G. (2005), Cillié, Oberprieler & Joubert (2004), Tarboton & Erasmus (1998) and Chittenden (2007) were consulted. Ringing of birds fell beyond the scope of this survey and was not deemed necessary. Sites have been walked, covering as many habitats as possible. Signs of the presence of bird species such as spoor and nests have additionally been recorded. Habitat characteristics were surveyed to note potential occurrences of birds.

3.4 Reptiles

Reptiles were noted as sight records in the field. Binoculars (10x30) can also be used for identifying reptiles of which some are wary. For practical skills of noting diagnostic characteristics, the identification of species and observation techniques, Branch (1998), Marais (2004), Alexander & Marais (2007) and Cillié, Oberprieler and Joubert (2004) were followed. Sites were walked, covering as many habitats as possible. Smaller reptiles are sometimes collected for identification, but this practice was not necessary in the case of this study. Habitat characteristics are surveyed to note potential occurrences of reptiles.

3.5 Amphibians

Frogs and toads are noted as sight records in the field or by their calls. For practical skills of noting diagnostic characteristics, the identification of species and observation techniques Carruthers (2001), Du Preez (1996), Conradie, Du Preez, Smith & Weldon (2006) and the recent complete guide by Du Preez & Carruthers (2009) are consulted. CD's with frog calls by Carruthers (2001) and Du Preez & Carruthers (2009) are used to identify species by their calls when applicable. Sites are walked, covering as many habitats as possible. Smaller frogs are often collected by pitfall traps put out for epigeal invertebrates (on the soil), but this practice falls beyond the scope of this survey. Habitat characteristics are also surveyed to note potential occurrences of amphibians.

3.6 Butterflies

Butterflies were noted as sight records or voucher specimens. Voucher specimens are mostly taken of those species of which the taxa warrant collecting due to taxonomic difficulties or in the cases where species can look

similar in the veldt. Many butterflies use only one species or a limited number of plant species as host plants for their larvae. Myrmecophilous (ant-loving) butterflies such as the *Aloeides*, *Chrysoritis*, *Erikssonina*, *Lepidochrysops* and *Orachrysops* species (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae), which live in association with a specific ant species, require a unique ecosystem for their survival (Deutshländer & Bredenkamp, 1999; Terblanche, Morghental & Cilliers, 2003; Edge, Cilliers & Terblanche, 2008; Gardiner & Terblanche, 2010). Known food plants of butterflies were therefore also recorded. After the visits to the site and the identification of the butterflies found there, a list was also compiled of butterflies that will most probably be found in the area in all the other seasons because of suitable habitat. The emphasis is on a habitat survey.

3.7 Fruit chafer beetles

Different habitat types in the areas were explored for any sensitive or special fruit chafer species. Selection of methods to find fruit chafers depends on the different types of habitat present and the species that may be present. Fruit bait traps would probably not be successful for capturing *Ichnestoma* species in a grassland patch (Holm & Marais 1992). Possible chafer beetles of high conservation priority were noted as sight records accompanied by the collecting of voucher specimens with grass nets or containers where deemed necessary.

3.8 Rock scorpions

Relatively homogenous habitat / vegetation areas were identified and explored to identify any sensitive or special species. Selected stones that were lifted to search for Arachnids were put back very carefully resulting in the least disturbance possible. All the above actions were accompanied by the least disturbance possible.

3.9 Limitations

For each site visited, it should be emphasized that surveys can by no means result in an exhaustive list of the plants and animals present on the site, because of the time constraint. Surveys were conducted during October 2020 and December 2020 which includes an optimal time of the year to find signs of animals such as invertebrates, signs of habitat sensitive plant species and vertebrate animal species high conservation priority. Weather conditions during the surveys were favourable for recording fauna and flora. The focus of the survey remains a habitat survey that concentrates on the possibility that species of particular conservation priority occur on the site or not. It is unlikely that any more visits would reveal information that would change the outcome of this assessment both in terms of ecosystems of special conservation concern or suitable habitats of species of particular conservation concern. Visits that were conducted therefore appear to be sufficient to address the objectives of this study.

4 RESULTS

Table 4.1 Outline of main landscape and habitat characteristics of the site.

HABITAT FEATURE	DESCRIPTION
Topography	The area proposed for the development is on gentle (flat) and moderate slopes.
Rockiness	Low rocky ridges are present at the northeastern part of the site.
Presence of wetlands	No wetlands appear to be present at the footprint proposed for the development. A narrow non-perennial river, with its active channel and riparian zone, is present at the northern part of the site. An in-channel dam, the Wentzeldam, is present at the northeastern part of the site.
Vegetation	<p>Vegetation at most of the site is visibly degraded and cover of vegetation in many areas is conspicuously poor. Vegetation at an informal rubbish dump site is transformed. Some areas have been cleared, exposing soil. Fairly large patches of disturbed savanna still remain at the site. <i>Vachellia hebeclada</i> occurs in many clumps at visibly disturbed areas with noticeable poor plant cover.</p> <p>Indigenous trees at the site include <i>Vachellia erioloba</i> (Camel Thorn), <i>Vachellia hebeclada</i> subsp. <i>hebeclada</i> (Candlepod Thorn; shrub-height at site), <i>Vachellia karroo</i> (Sweet Thorn), <i>Tarchonanthus camphoratus</i> (Camphor Bush) and <i>Grewia flava</i> (Velvet Raisin; shrub-height at site). The indigenous shrub <i>Asparagus laricinus</i> (Wild Asparagus) is found at disturbed places at the site. Indigenous grass species include <i>Eragrostis lehmanianna</i>, <i>Eragrostis superba</i>, <i>Aristida congesta</i>, <i>Pogonarthria squarrosa</i>, <i>Heteropogon contortus</i>, <i>Melinis repens</i> and <i>Tragus berteronianus</i>. Indigenous forb species and shrublets include <i>Bulbine narcissifolia</i>, <i>Barleria macrostegia</i> and <i>Berkheya onopordifolia</i>. Herbaceous shrub <i>Gomphocarpus fruticosus</i> is also at the site. Dwarf shrubs and shrublets at the site include <i>Felicia muricata</i>. The widespread succulent <i>Aloe grandidentata</i> occurs at several places at the site.</p> <p>A number of alien invasive weed species are present at previously cleared and perviously cultivated areas. These alien invasive weeds include <i>Argemone ochroleuca</i> (Mexican Poppy), <i>Gomphrena celosioides</i> (Globe Amaranth), <i>Schkuhria pinnata</i> (Dwarf Marigold), <i>Tagetes minuta</i> (Khaki Weed), <i>Conyza bonariensis</i> (Flea Bane), <i>Datura ferox</i> (Large Thorn-apple), <i>Datura stramonium</i> (Common Thorn Apple), <i>Richardia brasiliensis</i> (Mexican Richardia), <i>Acanthospermum australe</i> (Prostrate Starbur) and <i>Xanthium spinosum</i> (Spiny Cocklebur). The succulent alien invasive plant species <i>Cylindropuntia imbricata</i> (Umbricate Prickly Pear) is conspicuous at the site.</p> <p>Riparian zone along the active channel contains indigenous tree species such as <i>Vachellia karroo</i>, <i>Searsia pyroides</i>, <i>Searsia lancea</i>, <i>Diospyros lycioides</i> and <i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>. Indigenous grass species such as <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> and exotic grass species such as <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i> are also present at the riparian zone. Alien invasive herb species such as <i>Oenothera rosea</i> and <i>Rumex crispus</i> are present at the riparian zone/ fringes of the dam. <i>Persicaria</i> species (Knotweeds) occur at the permanent zones of the watercourse.</p>
Signs of disturbances	Vegetation at most of the site is visibly degraded and cover of vegetation in many areas is conspicuously poor. Vegetation at an informal rubbish dump site is transformed. Some areas have been cleared, exposing soil. A conspicuous high frequency of alien invasive weeds occurs at disturbed areas, in particular at hitherto cleared places.
Connectivity	There is little scope for most of the site to be part of a corridor of particular conservation importance, excluding the watercourse (with its bufferzone) and the low rocky ridges. Non-perennial river at the northern part of the site, as well as the low rocky ridges at the northeastern parts of the site are corridors of particular conservation concern.



Photo 1 Degraded area at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 2 Extensive dumping area at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche



Photo 3 *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) at extensive dumping area at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 4 Patch of savanna that remains at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche



Photo 5 Narrow and defined active channel at northern parts of the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 6 Low concrete wall where road crosses at the northeastern parts of the site, resulting in impoundment of water near an inlet of the Wentzel Dam.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche



Photo 7 Area where water is captured owing to low concreted wall and elevated road.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 8 Low rocky ridge at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche



Photo 9 Soil that is seasonally inundated, at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 10 Branches and foliage of *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche



Photo 11 *Vachellia hebeclada* (Candlepod Thorn) occurs in many clumps at some parts of the site, especially where disturbances are evident.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 12 The widespread indigenous *Gazania krebsiana*, at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche



Photo 13 The succulent alien invasive plant species *Cylindropuntia imbricata*, at the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche.



Photo 14 Alien invasive *Oenothera rosea* at the riparian zone at the northern parts of the site.
Photo: R.F. Terblanche

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF PLANT SPECIES OF PARTICULAR CONSERVATION PRIORITY

4.2.1 Plant species of particular conservation concern according to the red list of plants

Table 4.2 Threatened plant species of the North West Province which are listed in the **Critically Endangered** category. The list here follows the most recent updated red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Status:	Resident at the site
	Global status or national status indicated	
<i>Brachystelma canum</i>	Critically Endangered	No
<i>Brachystelma gracillimum</i>	Critically Endangered	No

Table 4.3 Threatened plant species of the North West Province which are listed in the **Endangered** category. The list here follows the most recent updated red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Status:	Resident at the site
	Global status or national status indicated	
<i>Aloe peglerae</i>	Endangered	No
<i>Brachystelma discoideum</i>	Endangered	No

Table 4.4 Threatened plant species of the North West Province which are listed in the **Vulnerable** category. The list here follows the most recent updated red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Status:	Resident at the site
	Global status or national status indicated	
<i>Brachycorythis conica</i> subsp. <i>transvaalensis</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Brachystelma incanum</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Ceropegia decidua</i> subsp. <i>pretoriensis</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Ceropegia stentiae</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Ledebouria atrobrunnea</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Marsilea farinosa</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Melolobium subspicatum</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Prunus africana</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Rennera stellata</i>	Vulnerable	No
<i>Searsia maricoan</i>	Vulnerable	No

Table 4.5 Near Threatened plant species of the North West Province. The list here follows the most recent updated red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Status:	Resident at the site
	Global status or national status indicated	
<i>Adromischus umbraticola</i> subsp. <i>umbraticola</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Ceropegia turricula</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Cineraria austrotransvaalensis</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Cleome conrathii</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Delosperma leendertziae</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Drimia sanguinea</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Elaeodendron transvaalense</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Kniphofia typhoides</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Lithops leslei</i> subsp. <i>leslei</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Nerine gracilis</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Sporobolus oxyphyllus</i>	Near Threatened	No
<i>Stenostelma umbelluliferum</i>	Near Threatened	No

Table 4.6 Plant species of the North West Province which are not threatened and not near threatened but which are of particular conservation concern and listed in the **Critically Rare** category (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). The list here follows the most recent red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Conservation status	Resident at the site
<i>Gladiolus filiformis</i>	Critically Rare	No

Table 4.7 Plant species of the North West Province which are not threatened and not near threatened but of which are of particular conservation concern and listed in the **Rare** category (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). The list here follows the most recent red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Status:	Resident at the site
	Global status or national status indicated	
<i>Brachystelma dimorphum</i> subsp. <i>gratum</i>	Rare	No
<i>Ceropegia insignis</i>	Rare	No
<i>Frithia pulchra</i>	Rare	No
<i>Gnaphalium nelsonii</i>	Rare	No
<i>Habenaria culveri</i>	Rare	No

Table 4.8 Plant species of the North West Province which are not threatened and not near threatened but which are of particular conservation concern and listed in the **Declining** category (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). The list here follows the most recent red list of South African plant species (Raimondo *et al.* 2009). No = Plant species is unlikely to be a resident at the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Status: Global status or national status indicated	Resident at the site
<i>Boophone disticha</i>	Declining	No
<i>Crinum bulbispermum</i>	Declining	No
<i>Crinum macowanii</i>	Declining	No
<i>Drimia altissima</i>	Declining	No
<i>Eucomis autumnalis</i>	Declining	No
<i>Gunnera perpensa</i>	Declining	No
<i>Hypoxis hemerocallidea</i>	Declining	No
<i>Ilex mitis</i>	Declining	No
<i>Pelargonium sidoides</i>	Declining	No

4.2.2 Plant species of particular conservation concern: protected species

Table 4.9 Tree species of the North West Province which are listed as **Protected Species** under the National Forests Act No. 84 of 1998, Section 15(1). No = Plant species is not a resident on the site; Yes = Plant species is a resident at the site.

Species	Conservation status	Resident at the site
<i>Boscia albitrunca</i> (Sheppard's tree)	Protected	No
<i>Sclerocarya birrea</i> (Marula)	Protected	No
<i>Vachellia erioloba</i> (Camel Thorn Tree)	Protected	Yes

4.3 ASSESSMENT OF VERTEBRATE SPECIES OF PARTICULAR HIGH CONSERVATION PRIORITY

4.3.1 Mammals of particular high conservation priority

Table 4.10 Threatened mammal species of the North West Province. Literature sources: Friedman & Daly, (2004), Skinner & Chimimba (2005), Wilson & Reeder (2005). With mammal species which normally needs a large range their residential status does not implicate that they are exclusively dependent on the site or use the site as important shelter or for reproduction. No = Not recorded at site/ Unlikely to be resident at the site. Yes: Recorded at the site/ Likely to be resident at the site.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be found based on habitat assessment
<i>Chrysoxalax villosus</i> Rough-haired golden mole	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Cloetis percivali</i> Short-eared Trident Bat	Vulnerable/ Near-threatened	No	No
<i>Diceros bicornis</i> Black rhinoceros	Critically Endangered	No	No
<i>Lycaon pictus</i> African wild dog	Endangered	No	No
<i>Loxodonta africana</i> African elephant	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Mystromys albicaudatus</i> White-tailed mouse	Endangered	No	No
<i>Neamblysomus julianae</i> Juliana's Golden Mole	Critically Endangered	No	No
<i>Panthera leo</i> Lion	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Rhinolophus blasii</i> Blasi's Horseshoe Bat	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Smutsia temminckii</i> Ground Pangolin	Vulnerable	No	No

Table 4.11 Near threatened mammal species known to occur in the North West Province. Literature sources: Skinner & Chimimba (2005). No = Not recorded at site/ unlikely to be resident at the site. Yes: Recorded at the site/ Likely to be resident at the site.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be found based on habitat assessment
<i>Ceratotherium simum</i> White Rhinoceros	Near threatened	No	No

Table 4.12 Data deficient (or uncertain) mammal species of the North West Province. Literature sources: Skinner & Chimimba (2005). No = Not recorded at site/ unlikely to be resident at the site. Yes: Recorded at the site/ Likely to be resident at the site.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely be a resident at the site
<i>Myosorex varius</i> Forest shrew	Uncertain	No	No

4.3.2 Birds of particular high conservation priority

Table 4.13 Threatened bird species of the North West Province. Literature sources Barnes (2000), Hockey, Dean & Ryan, P.G. (2005) and Chittenden (2007). No = Not recorded at site/ Unlikely to use site as breeding area or particular habitat on which the species depends. Yes = Recorded at site/ Likely to use site as breeding area or particular habitat on which the species depends.

Species	Common name	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to use site as breeding area or habitat
<i>Aegypius tracheliotos</i>	Lappet-faced Vulture	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Anthropoides paradiseus</i>	Blue Crane	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Tawny Eagle	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	Kori Bustard	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	Grey Crowned Crane (Mahem)	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Eurasian Bittern	Critically Endangered	No	No
<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	African Marsh- Harrier	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Crex crex</i>	Corn Crane	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>	White-bellied Korhaan	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Lesser Kestrel	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Geronticus calvus</i>	Southern Bald Ibis	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Gorsachius leuconotus</i>	White-backed Night-heron	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Bearded Vulture	Endangered	No	No
<i>Gyps africanus</i>	White-backed Vulture	Vulnerable	No	No

<i>Gyps coprotheres</i>	Cape Vulture	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	Pink-backed Pelican	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	Martial Eagle	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Rhynchops flavirostris</i>	African Skimmer	Endangered	No	No
<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Secretarybird	Vulnerable	No	No
<i>Sarothrura ayresi</i>	White-winged Flufftail	Critically Endangered	No	No
<i>Tyto capensis</i>	African Grass-Owl	Vulnerable	No	No

* Though some of the above bird species that roams over large areas may occasionally be found at the site, the site does not appear to be a habitat of particular importance to these birds, and these birds also do not use the site as breeding area.

Table 4.14 Near threatened bird species of the North West Province. Literature sources Barnes (2000), Hockey, Dean & Ryan, P.G. (2005) and Chittenden (2007). No = Not recorded at site/ Unlikely to be particularly dependent on the site as breeding area or habitat. Yes = Recorded at site/ Likely to be particularly dependant on the site as breeding area or habitat.

Species	Common name	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to use site breeding area or habitat
<i>Certhilauda chuana</i>	Short-clawed Lark	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>	Chestnut-banded Plover	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Black Stork	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Pallid Harrier	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Eupodotis caerulescens</i>	Blue Korhaan	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	Lanner Falcon	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Glareola nordmanni</i>	Black-winged Pratincole	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Marabou Stork	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Mirafra cheniana</i>	Melodious lark	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Yellow-billed Stork	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	Lesser Flamingo	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	Greater Flamingo	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	Greater Painted-snipe	Near threatened	No	No
<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Caspian Tern	Near threatened	No	No

* Though some of the above bird species that roams over large areas may occasionally be found at the site, the site does not appear to be a habitat of particular importance to these birds, and these birds also do not use the site as breeding area.

4.3.3 Reptiles of particular high conservation priority

The following tables list possible presence or absence of threatened reptile or near threatened reptile species in the study area. The Atlas and Red List of Reptiles of South Africa, Lesotho and South Africa (Bates, Branch, Bauer, Burger, Marais, Alexander & de Villiers, 2014) has been used as the main source to compile the list for assessment.

Table 4.15 Threatened reptile species in North West Province. Main Source: (Bates, Branch, Bauer, Burger, Marais, Alexander & de Villiers, 2014). No = Reptile species is not a resident on the site; Yes = Reptile species is found to be resident on the site.

Species	Threatened Status	Resident at site	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be found based on habitat assessment
<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i> Nile Crocodile	Vulnerable	No	No	No

Table 4.16 Near threatened reptile species in North West Province. Main Source: Bates, Branch, Bauer, Burger, Marais, Alexander & de Villiers (2014). Though *Homoroselaps dorsalis* has not yet been recorded from the North West Province, its presence in some areas of the Province is anticipated. No = Reptile species is not a resident on the site; Yes = Reptile species is found to be resident on the site.

Species	Threatened Status	Resident at site	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be found based on habitat assessment
<i>Homoroselaps dorsalis</i> Striped Harlequin Snake	Near threatened	No	No	No

4.3.4 Amphibian species of particular high conservation priority

Table 4.17 Near threatened amphibian species in North West Province. No = Amphibian species is not a resident on the site; Yes = Amphibian species is found to be resident on the site.

Species	Threatened Status	Resident at site	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be found based on habitat assessment
<i>Pyxicephalus adspersus</i> Giant Bullfrog	Least Concern (IUCN) Remains a species of particular conservation concern.	No	No	No

4.4 ASSESSMENT OF INVERTEBRATE SPECIES OF PARTICULAR CONSERVATION PRIORITY

4.4.1 Butterflies of particular conservation priority

Table 4.18 Threatened butterfly species in North West Province and Gauteng Province. Sources: Henning, Terblanche & Ball (2009), Mecenero *et al.* (2013). Invertebrates such as threatened butterfly species are often very habitat specific and residential status imply a unique ecosystem that is at stake.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Residential status at the site: Yes confirmed, Highly likely, Likely, Medium possibility, Unlikely, Highly unlikely
<i>Aloeides dentatis dentatis</i> Roodepoort Copper	Endangered	No	Highly unlikely
<i>Chrysoritis aureus</i> Golden Copper	Endangered	No	Highly unlikely
<i>Lepidochrysops praeterita</i> Highveld Blue	Endangered	No	Highly unlikely
<i>Orachrysops mijburghi</i> Mijburgh's Blue	Endangered	No	Highly unlikely

Table 4.19 Butterfly species of the North West Province and Gauteng Province that are not threatened and not near threatened but of which are of particular conservation concern and listed in the **Rare** category (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). No = Butterfly species is unlikely to be a resident at the study area; Yes = Butterfly species is a resident at the study area.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Residential status at the site: Yes confirmed, Highly likely, Likely, Medium possibility, Unlikely, Highly unlikely
<i>Colotis celimene amina</i> Lilac Tip	Rare (Low density)	No	Highly unlikely
<i>Lepidochrysops procera</i> Savanna Blue	Rare (Habitat specialist)	No	Highly unlikely
<i>Metisella meninx</i> Marsh Sylph	Rare (Habitat specialist)	No	Highly unlikely
<i>Platylesches dolomitica</i> Hilltop Hopper	Rare (low density)	No	Highly unlikely

4.4.2 Beetles of particular conservation priority

Table 4.20 Fruit chafer species (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Cetoniinae) in the Gauteng Province and North-West Province which are of known high conservation priority.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be resident based on habitat assessment
<i>Ichnestoma stobbiai</i>	Uncertain	No	No
<i>Trichocephala brincki</i>	Uncertain	No	No

4.4.3 Scorpion species of particular conservation priority

Table 4.21 Rock scorpion species (Scorpiones: Ischnuridae) species that are of known high conservation priority in the Gauteng Province and North-West Province.

Species	Threatened Status	Recorded at site during survey	Likely to be resident at site based on habitat assessment
<i>Hadogenes gracilis</i>	Uncertain	No	No
<i>Hadogenes gunningi</i>	Uncertain	No	No

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Habitat and vegetation characteristics

An outline of the habitat and vegetation characteristics is given in Table 4.1.

5.2 Plants

Extinct, threatened, near threatened and other plant species of high conservation priority in North West Province are listed in Tables 4.2 – 4.8. Protected tree species are listed in Table 4.9. The presence or not of all the species listed in the tables were investigated during the survey. None of the Threatened and Near Threatened plant species are likely to occur on the site.

One plant species, *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) that is not threatened but listed as Protected tree species occurs at the site. In terms of a part of section 15(1) of the National Forests Act No. 84 of 1998, no person may cut, disturb, damage or destroy any protected tree or possess, collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in any other manner acquire or dispose of any protected tree, except under a license granted by the Minister. *Vachellia erioloba* is numerous at some areas at the site. A Camel Thorn Tree Forest or large camel thorn trees (>10 m) such as at Kathu and Witsand in the Northern Cape Province, are absent at the site. If the development is approved it is likely that some Camel Thorn trees (*Vachellia erioloba*) should be removed, in which case a permit should be applied for.

5.3 Vertebrates

5.3.1 Mammals

Table 4.10, Table 4.11 and Table 4.12 list the possible presence or absence of threatened mammal species, near threatened mammal species and mammal species of which the status is uncertain, respectively, at the site. Literature sources that were used are Friedman & Daly (2004), Skinner & Chimimba (2005) and Wilson & Reeder (2005). Since the site falls outside reserves, threatened species such as the black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and the African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) are obviously not present. No smaller mammals of particular high conservation significance are likely to be found on the site as well.

5.3.2 Birds

Table 4.13 and Table 4.14 list the possible presence or absence of threatened bird species and near threatened bird species at the site. With bird species which often have a large distributional range, their presence does not imply that they are particularly dependent on a site as breeding location. Therefore the emphasis in the right hand columns of Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 are on the particular likely dependence or not of bird species on the site.

Literature sources that were mainly consulted are Barnes (2000), Hockey, Dean & Ryan, P.G. (2005) and Chittenden (2007). No threat to any threatened bird species or any bird species of particular conservation importance are foreseen.

5.3.3 Reptiles

Table 4.15 and Table 4.16 list the possible presence or absence of Threatened and Near Threatened reptile species on the site. Main Source used for the conservation status and identification of reptiles are Bates, Branch, Bauer, Burger, Marais, Alexander & de Villiers (2014). Alexander & Marais (2007) as well as Tolley & Burger 2007) give useful indications of distributions, habitats and identification of the reptile species. There appears to be no threat to any reptile species of particular high conservation importance if the site is developed.

5.3.4 Amphibians

No frog species that occur in the North West are listed as Threatened species (Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered) or Near Threatened species according to IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group (2013). Table 4.17 lists *Pyxicephalus adspersus* (Giant Bullfrog) as Least Concern globally. According to the Biodiversity Management Directorate of GDARD (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) (2014) there are no amphibians in Gauteng that qualify for red listed status (red listed here indicates a category of special conservation concern such as threatened or near threatened). Suitable habitat for Giant Bullfrog at site appears to be absent.

5.4 Invertebrates

5.4.1 Butterflies

Studies about the vegetation and habitat of threatened butterfly species in South Africa showed that ecosystems with a unique combination of features are selected by these often localised threatened butterfly species (Deuschländer and Bredenkamp 1999; Edge 2002, 2005; Terblanche, Morgenthal & Cilliers 2003; Lubke, Hoare, Victor & Ketelaar 2003; Edge, Cilliers & Terblanche, 2008). Threatened butterfly species in South Africa can then be regarded as bio-indicators of rare ecosystems.

Four species of butterfly in Gauteng Province and North West Province combined are listed as threatened in the recent butterfly conservation assessment of South Africa (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). The expected presence or not of these threatened butterfly species as well as species of high conservation priority that are not threatened, at the site (Table 4.18 and Table 4.19) follows.

5.4.1.1 Assessment of threatened butterfly species

***Aloeides dentatis dentatis* (Roodepoort Copper)**

The proposed global red list status for *Aloeides dentatis dentatis* according to the most recent IUCN criteria and categories is Endangered (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). *Aloeides dentatis dentatis* colonies are found where one of its host plants *Hermannia depressa* or *Lotononis eriantha* is present. Larval ant association is with *Lepisiota capensis* (S.F. Henning 1983; S.F. Henning & G.A. Henning 1989). The habitat requirements of *Aloeides dentatis dentatis* are complex and not fully understood yet. See Deutschländer and Bredenkamp (1999) for the description of the vegetation and habitat characteristics of one locality of *Aloeides dentatis* subsp. *dentatis* at Ruimsig, Roodepoort, Gauteng Province. There is not an ideal habitat of *Aloeides dentatis* subsp. *dentatis* on the site and it is unlikely that the butterfly is present at the site.

***Chrysoritis aureus* (Golden Opal/ Heidelberg Copper)**

The proposed global red list status for *Chrysoritis aureus* according to the most recent IUCN criteria and categories is Endangered (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). *Chrysoritis aureus* (Golden Opal/ Heidelberg Copper) is a resident where the larval host plant, *Clusia pulchella* is present. However, the distribution of the butterfly is much more restricted than that of the larval host plant (S.F. Henning 1983; Terblanche, Morgenthal & Cilliers 2003). One of the reasons for the localised distribution of *Chrysoritis aureus* is that a specific host ant *Crematogaster liengmei* must also be present at the habitat. Fire appears to be an essential factor for the maintenance of suitable habitat (Terblanche, Morgenthal & Cilliers 2003). Research revealed that *Chrysoritis aureus* (Golden Opal/ Heidelberg Copper) has very specific habitat requirements, which include rocky ridges with a steep slope and a southern aspect (Terblanche, Morgenthal & Cilliers 2003). Owing to a lack of habitat requirements and ideal habitat the presence of the taxon is highly unlikely.

***Lepidochrysops praeterita* (Highveld Blue)**

The proposed global red list status for *Lepidochrysops praeterita* according to the most recent IUCN criteria and categories is Endangered (G.A. Henning, Terblanche & Ball, 2009; Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). *Lepidochrysops praeterita* is a butterfly that occurs where the larval host plant *Ocimum obovatum* (= *Becium obovatum*) is present (Pringle, G.A. Henning & Ball, 1994), but the distribution of the butterfly is much more restricted than the distribution of the host plant. *Lepidochrysops praeterita* is found on selected rocky ridges and rocky hillsides in parts of Gauteng, the extreme northern Free State and the south-eastern Gauteng Province. No ideal habitat appears to be present for the butterfly on the site. It is unlikely that *Lepidochrysops praeterita* would be present on the site and at the footprint proposed for the development.

***Orachrysops mijburghi* (Mijburgh's Blue)**

The proposed global red status for *Orachrysops mijburghi* according to the most recent IUCN criteria and categories is Endangered (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). *Orachrysops mijburghi* favours grassland depressions where

specific *Indigofera* plant species occur (Terblanche & Edge 2007). The Heilbron population of *Orachrysops mijburghi* in the Free State uses *Indigofera evansiana* as a larval host plant (Edge, 2005) while the Suikerbosrand population in Gauteng uses *Indigofera dimidiata* as a larval host plant (Terblanche & Edge 2007). There is no suitable habitat for *Orachrysops mijburghi* on the site and it is unlikely that *Orachrysops mijburghi* would be present on the site.

Conclusion on threatened butterfly species

There appears to be no threat to any threatened butterfly species if the site is developed.

5.4.1.2 Assessment of butterfly species that are not threatened but also of high conservation priority

***Colotis celimene amina* (Lilac tip)**

Colotis celimene amina is listed as Rare (Low density) by Mecenero *et al.* (2013). In South Africa *Colotis celimene amina* is present from Pietermaritzburg in the south and northwards into parts of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the North West Provinces (Mecenero *et al.* In press.). Reasons for its rarity are poorly understood. It is highly unlikely that *Colotis celimene amina* would be resident at the site.

***Lepidochrysops procera* (Savanna Blue)**

Lepidochrysops procera is listed as Rare (Habitat specialist) by Mecenero *et al.* (2013). *Lepidochrysops procera* is endemic to South Africa and found in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). Owing to a lack of habitat requirements and ideal habitat the presence of the taxon at the site is highly unlikely.

***Metisella meninx* (Marsh Sylph)**

Henning and Henning (1989) in the first South African Red Data Book of Butterflies, listed *Metisella meninx* as threatened under the former IUCN category Indeterminate. Even earlier in the 20th century Swanepoel (1953) raised concern about vanishing wetlands leading to habitat loss and loss of populations of *Metisella meninx*. According to the second South African Red Data Book of butterflies (Henning, Terblanche & Ball, 2009) the proposed global red list status of *Metisella meninx* has been Vulnerable. During a recent large scale atlassing project the *Conservation Assessment of Butterflies of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland: Red List and Atlas* (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013) it was found that more *Metisella meninx* populations are present than thought before. Based on this valid new information, the conservation status of *Metisella meninx* is now regarded as Rare (Habitat specialist) (Mecenero *et al.*, 2013). Though *Metisella meninx* is more widespread and less threatened than perceived before, it should be regarded as a localised rare habitat specialist of conservation priority, which is dependent on wetlands with suitable patches of grass at wetlands (Terblanche In prep.). Another important factor to keep in mind for the conservation of *Metisella meninx* is that based on very recent discoveries of new taxa in the group the present *Metisella meninx* is species complex consisting of at least three taxa (Terblanche In prep.,

Terblanche & Henning In prep.). The ideal habitat of *Metisella meninx* is treeless marshy areas where *Leersia hexandra* (rice grass) is abundant (Terblanche In prep.). The larval host plant of *Metisella meninx* is wild rice grass, *Leersia hexandra* (G.A. Henning & Roos, 2001). Owing to a lack of habitat requirements and ideal habitat the presence of the taxon at the site is highly unlikely.

***Platylesches dolomitica* (Hilltop Hopper)**

Platylesches dolomitica is listed as Rare (Low density) by Mecenero *et al.* (2013). Historically the conservation status of *Platylesches dolomitica* was proposed to be Vulnerable (Henning, Terblanche & Ball 2009). However this butterfly which is easily overlooked and has a wider distribution than perceived before. *Platylesches dolomitica* has a patchy distribution and is found on rocky ledges where *Parinari capensis* occurs, between 1300 m and 1800m (Mecenero *et al.* 2013, Dobson Pers comm.). Owing to a lack of habitat requirements and ideal habitat the presence of the taxon at the site is highly unlikely.

5.4.2 Fruit chafer beetles

Table 4.20 lists the fruit chafer beetle species (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Cetoniinae) that are of known high conservation priority in the North West Province. No *Ichnestoma stobbiai* or *Trichocephala brincki* were found during the surveys. There appears to be no suitable habitat for *Ichnestoma stobbiai* or *Trichocephala brincki* at the site. There appears to be no threat to any of the fruit chafer beetles of particular high conservation priority if the site were developed.

5.4.3 Scorpions

Table 4.21 lists the rock scorpion species (Scorpiones: Ischnuridae) that are of known high conservation priority in the North West Province. None of these rock scorpions have been found at the site and the habitat does not appear to be optimal.

5.5 Ecological Sensitivity at the site

Ecological sensitivity at most of the site is medium. Ecological sensitivity at some of the conspicuously disturbed areas at the site, such as the extensive dumping area is indicated as low. Ecological sensitivity at the non-perennial active channel, in-channel dam and riparian zone, as well as the low rocky ridges and their buffer zones, is medium-high owing to the importance of these watercourses and low rocky ridges as conservation corridors in the larger area (Figure 6). Note that an existing dirt road with a concrete wall across the watercourse, a railway line as well as a tar road (R506) currently run across the area of medium-high sensitivity.



Figure 2 Indication the narrow non-perennial river and in-channel dam, at the site, as well as some main disturbances.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| — Light blue outline | Route of active channel at the site |
| — Darker blue outline and shading | Artificial Waterbody (In-channel Dam) |



Figure 3 Indication of non-perennial river and in-channel dam, with their riparian zones and buffer zones at the site.









- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|  | Light blue outline | Route of active channel at the site |
|  | Green outline and shading | Riparian zone |
|  | Orange outline | Outer edge of buffer zone |
|  | Darker blue outline and shading | Artificial Waterbody (In-channel Dam) |



Figure 4 Indication of non-perennial river (active channel, riparian zone, buffer zone), in-channel dam and low rocky ridges at the site.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|  | Light blue outline | Route of active channel at the site |
|  | Green outline | Riparian zone |
|  | Brown outline and shading | Low rocky ridges |
|  | Darker blue outline and shading | Artificial Waterbody (In-channel Dam) |

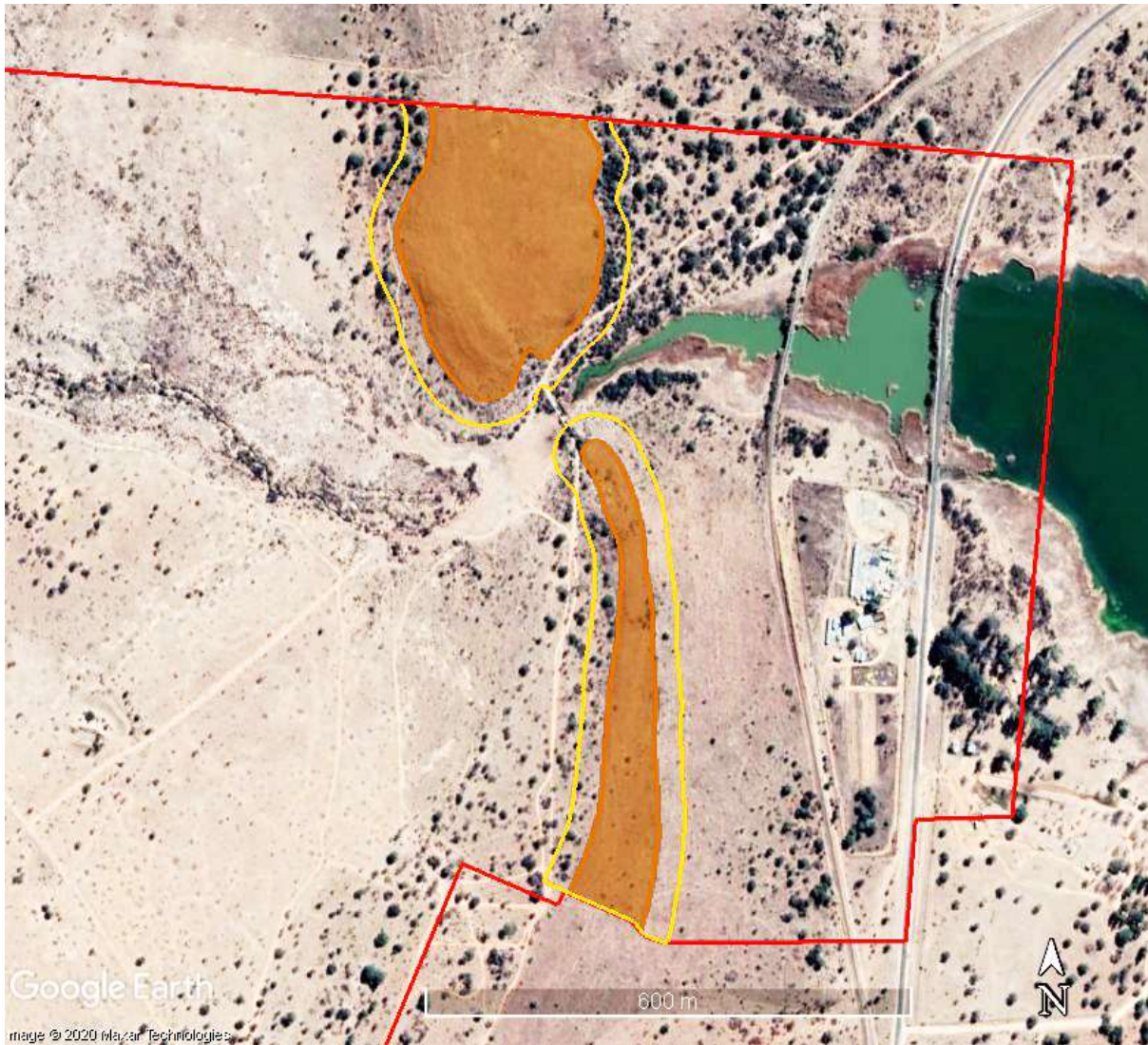




Figure 5 Indication of low rocky ridges and 30 m buffer zones at the northeastern parts of the site.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|
|  | Brown outline and shading | Low rocky ridges |
|  | Orange outline and shading | Outer edge of buffer zone |

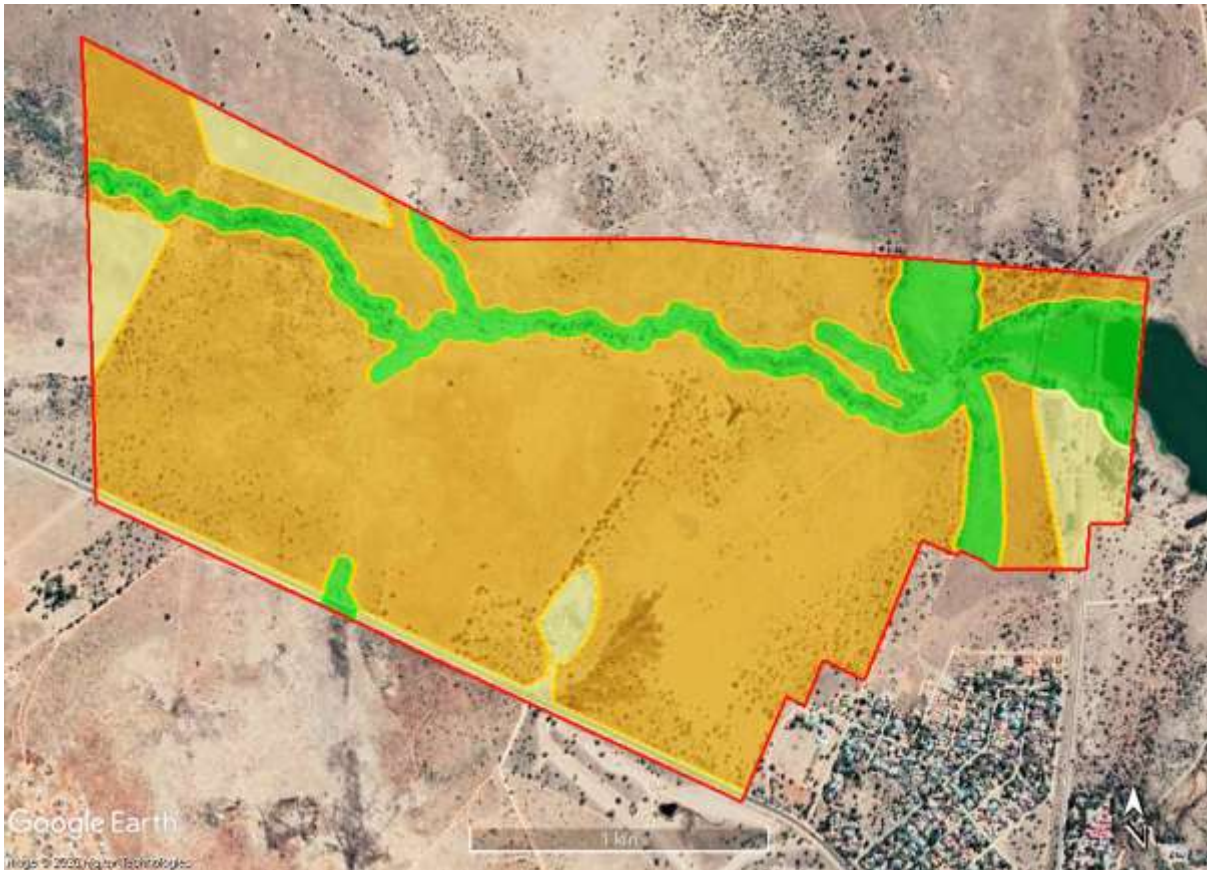






Figure 6 Indications of ecological sensitivity at the site.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  | Red outline | Boundaries of the site |
|  | Light yellow outline and shading | Low Sensitivity |
|  | Orange outline and shading | Medium Sensitivity |
|  | Green outline and shading | Medium-high Sensitivity |

6 RISKS, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Background:

Habitats of threatened plants are in danger most often due to urban developments such as is the case for the Gauteng Province (Pfab & Victor, 2002). Habitat conservation is the key to the conservation of invertebrates such as threatened butterflies (Deutschländer and Bredenkamp 1999; Edge 2002, 2005; Terblanche, Morgenthal & Cilliers 2003; Lubke, Hoare, Victor & Ketelaar 2003; Edge, Cilliers & Terblanche, 2008). Furthermore, corridors and linkages may play a significant role in insect conservation (Pryke & Samways, 2003, Samways, 2005).

Urbanisation is a major additional influence on the loss of natural areas (Rutherford & Westfall 1994). In the South Africa the pressure to develop areas are high since its infrastructure allows for improvement of human well-being. Urban nature conservation issues in South Africa are overshadowed by the goal to improve human well-being, which focuses on aspects such as poverty, equity, redistribution of wealth and wealth creation (Cilliers, Müller & Drewes 2004). Nevertheless, the conservation of habitats is the key to invertebrate conservation, especially for those threatened species that are very habitat specific. This is also true for any detailed planning of corridors and buffer zones for invertebrates. Though proper management plans for habitats are not in place, setting aside special ecosystems is in line with the recent Biodiversity Act (2004) of the Republic of South Africa.

Corridors are important to link ecosystems of high conservation priority. Such corridors or linkages are there to improve the chances of survival of otherwise isolated populations (Samways, 2005). How wide should corridors be? The answer to this question depends on the conservation goal and the focal species (Samways, 2005). For an African butterfly assemblage this is about 250m when the corridor is for movement as well as being a habitat source (Pryke and Samways 2003). Hill (1995) found a figure of 200m for dung beetles in tropical Australian forest. In the agricultural context, and at least for some common insects, even small corridors can play a valuable role (Samways, 2005). Much more research remains to be done to find refined answers to the width of grassland corridors in South Africa. The width of corridors will also depend on the type of development, for instance the effects of the shade of multiple story buildings will be quite different from that of small houses.

To summarise: In practice, as far as developments are concerned, the key would be to prioritise and plan according to sensitive species and special ecosystems.

In the case of this study:

Vegetation at most of the site is visibly degraded and cover of vegetation in many areas is conspicuously poor. Vegetation at an informal rubbish dump site is transformed. Some areas have been cleared, exposing soil. Fairly large patches of disturbed savanna still remain at the site. *Vachellia hebeclada* (Candlepod Thorn) occurs in many clumps at visibly disturbed areas with noticeable poor plant cover.

Indigenous trees at the site include *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn), *Vachellia hebeclada* subsp. *hebeclada* (Candlepod Thorn; shrub-height at site), *Vachellia karroo* (Sweet Thorn), *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* (Camphor Bush) and *Grewia flava* (Velvet Raisin; shrub-height at site). The indigenous shrub *Asparagus laricinus* (Wild Asparagus) is found at disturbed places at the site. Indigenous grass species include *Eragrostis lehmanianna*, *Eragrostis superba*, *Aristida congesta*, *Pogonarthria squarrosa*, *Heteropogon contortus*, *Melinis repens* and *Tragus berteronianus*. Indigenous forb species and shrublets include *Bulbine narcissifolia*, *Barleria macrostegia* and *Berkheya onopordifolia*. Herbaceous shrub *Gomphocarpus fruticosus* is also found at the site. Dwarf shrubs and shrublets at the site include *Felicia muricata*. The widespread succulent *Aloe grandidentata* occurs at several places at the site.

A number of alien invasive weed species are present at previously cleared and perviously cultivated areas. The succulent alien invasive plant species *Cylindropuntia imbricata* (Umbricate Prickly Pear) is conspicuous at the site.

Riparian zone along the active channel contains indigenous tree species such as *Vachellia karroo*, *Searsia pyroides*, *Searsia lancea*, *Diospyros lycioides* and *Ziziphus mucronata*. Indigenous grass species such as *Cynodon dactylon* and exotic grass species such as *Paspalum dilatatum* are also present at the riparian zone. Alien invasive herbaceous species such as *Oenothera rosea* and *Rumex crispus* are present at the riparian zone/ fringes of the dam. *Persicaria* species (Knotweeds) occur at the permanent zones of the watercourse.

Savanna at the site is represented by the Schweizer-Reneke Bushveld vegetation type (SVk 3) which is listed as a Threatened Ecosystem, Vulnerable, according to the National List of Threatened Ecosystems (2011). Terrestrial vegetation at the site has been modified and transformed at parts, in the past and most of the vegetation appears degraded. Some areas contain savanna in fairly natural condition. The scope overall, for the conservation of natural savanna at the site, is small.

No Threatened or Near Threatened plant or animal species appear to be resident at the site.

One plant species, *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) that is not threatened but listed as Protected tree species occurs at the site. In terms of a part of section 15(1) of the National Forests Act No. 84 of 1998, no person may cut, disturb, damage or destroy any protected tree or possess, collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in any other manner acquire or dispose of any protected tree, except under a license granted by the Minister. *Vachellia erioloba* is numerous at some areas at the site. A Camel Thorn Tree Forest or large Camel

Thorn trees (>10 m) such as at Kathu and Witsand in the Northern Cape Province, are absent at the site. If the development is approved it is likely that some Camel Thorn trees (*Vachellia erioloba*) should be removed, in which case a permit for removal would be imperative, and should be applied for.

Ecological sensitivity at most of the site is medium. Ecological sensitivity at some of the conspicuously disturbed areas at the site, such as the extensive dumping area is indicated as low. Ecological sensitivity at the non-perennial active channel, in-channel dam and riparian zone, as well as the low rocky ridges and their buffer zones, is medium-high owing to the importance of these watercourses and low rocky ridges as conservation corridors in the larger area (Figure 6). Note that an existing dirt road with a concrete wall across the watercourse, a railway line as well as a tar road (R506) currently run across this area of medium-high sensitivity.

There is little scope for most of the site to be part of a corridor of particular conservation importance, excluding the watercourse (with its bufferzone) and the low rocky ridges. Non-perennial river at the northern part of the site, as well as the low rocky ridges at the northeastern parts of the site are corridors of particular conservation concern.

The following potential risks, impacts and mitigation measures apply to the proposed development:

6.1 Identification of potential impacts and risks

The potential impacts identified are:

Construction Phase

- Potential impact 1: Loss of habitat owing to the removal of vegetation at the proposed development.
- Potential impact 2: Loss of sensitive species (Threatened, Near-Threatened, Rare, Declining or Protected species) during the construction phase.
- Potential impact 3: Loss of connectivity and conservation corridor networks in the landscape.
- Potential impact 4: Contamination of soil during construction in particular by hydrocarbon spills.
- Potential impact 5: Killing of vertebrate fauna during the construction phase.

Operational Phase

- Potential impact 6: An increased infestation of exotic or alien invasive plant species owing to disturbance.

6.2 Potential impacts and risks during the construction phase

Classes of impacts for this study: Very High, High, Moderate, Low, Very Low

Aspect/Activity	Clearance of vegetation at part of the site for the development
Type of Impact (i.e. Impact Status)	Direct
Potential Impact	Clearing of vegetation at the proposed development. This will entail the partial destruction of habitat of medium and low ecological sensitivity.
Status	Negative
Mitigation Required	Non-perennial active channel, in-channel dam and riparian zone with 30 m bufferzone, as well as low rocky ridges with 30 m buffer zones are excluded from the development.
Impact Significance (Pre-Mitigation)	High
Impact Significance (Post-Mitigation)	Moderate
RISK	Following the mitigation measures a moderate risk of impact is expected.

Aspect/Activity	Removal of sensitive species
Type of Impact (i.e. Impact Status)	Direct
Potential Impact	Sensitive species: Presence of Threatened or Near Threatened Plants, Mammals, Reptiles, Amphibians and Invertebrates at the site appear to be unlikely. A Protected tree species <i>Vachellia erioloba</i> (Camel Thorn) is present at the site.
Status	Negative.
Mitigation Required	No specific mitigation measures for Threatened or Near Threatened sensitive species at the site apply at the site. Mitigation measures for Protected tree species if development is approved: Marking or avoidance of the <i>Vachellia erioloba</i> (Camel Thorn Tree) at the site.
Impact Significance (Pre-Mitigation)	High
Impact Significance (Post-Mitigation)	Moderate
RISK	A moderate risk of threat to any sensitive species at the site is anticipated.

Aspect/Activity	Fragmentation of corridors of particular conservation concern
Type of Impact (i.e. Impact Status)	Direct
Potential Impact	Non-perennial river and in-channel dam, as well as the low rocky ridges at the site are a corridor of particular conservation concern.
Status	Negative
Mitigation Required	Non-perennial active channel, in channel-dam and riparian zone with 30 m bufferzone as well as low rocky ridges with 30 m buffer zones are excluded from the development.
Impact Significance (Pre-Mitigation)	High
Impact Significance (Post-Mitigation)	Low
RISK	Following mitigation, a low impact risk is expected.

Aspect/Activity	Contamination of soil by leaving rubble/ waste or spilling petroleum fuels or any pollutants on soil which could infiltrate the soil
Type of Impact (i.e. Impact Status)	Direct
Potential Impact	Rubble or waste could lead to infiltration of unwanted pollutants into the soil. Spilling of petroleum fuels and unwanted chemicals onto the soils that infiltrate these soils could lead to pollution of soils.
Status	Negative
Mitigation Required	Rubble or waste that could accompany the construction effort, if the development is approved, should be removed during and after construction. Measures should be taken to avoid any spills and infiltration of petroleum fuels or any chemical pollutants into the soil during construction phase.
Impact Significance (Pre-Mitigation)	Moderate
Impact Significance (Post-Mitigation)	Low
RISKS	A low risk is expected following mitigation.

Aspect/Activity	Possible disturbance, trapping, hunting and killing of vertebrates during construction phase
Type of Impact (i.e. Impact Status)	Direct
Potential Impact	During the construction phase animal species could be disturbed, trapped, hunted or killed.
Status	Negative
Mitigation Required	If the development is approved, contractors must ensure that no animal species are disturbed, trapped, hunted or killed during the construction phase.
Impact Significance (Pre-Mitigation)	Moderate
Impact Significance (Post-Mitigation)	Low
RISKS	Following mitigation a low risk is anticipated.

6.3 Potential impacts during the operational phase

Aspect/Activity	An increased infestation of exotic or alien invasive plant species owing to clearance or disturbance where the footprint took place.
Type of Impact (i.e. Impact Status)	Direct
Potential Impact	Infestation by alien invasive species could replace indigenous vegetation or potential areas where indigenous vegetation could recover. It is in particular declared alien invasive species such as <i>Prosopis glandulosa</i> (Mesquite), <i>Melia azedarach</i> (Syringa) or alien invasive Australian <i>Acacia</i> species (Australian Wattles) that should not be allowed to establish. Once established these combatting these alien invasive plant species may become very expensive in the long term.
Status	Negative
Mitigation Required	Continued monitoring and eradication of alien invasive plant species are imperative. It is in particular declared alien invasive species such as <i>Prosopis glandulosa</i> (Mesquite), <i>Melia azedarach</i> (Syringa) and alien invasive Australian <i>Acacia</i> species (Australian wattles) that should not be allowed to establish.
Impact Significance (Pre-Mitigation)	Moderate
Impact Significance (Post-Mitigation)	Low
RISKS	Following mitigation, a low risk is anticipated.

6.4 Risk and impact assessment summary for the construction phase

Aspect/ Impact Pathway	Nature of Potential Impact/ Risk	Status	Spatial Extent	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Reversibility of Impact	Irreplaceability	Potential Mitigation Measures	Significance of Impact and Risk		Confidence Level
										Without Mitigation/ Management	With Mitigation/ Management (Residual Impact/ Risk)	
Clearing of vegetation	Habitat loss, loss of indigenous species	Negative	Part of site	Long-Term	Substantial	Very likely	Low	Low	Keep disturbance to less sensitive area. Avoid watercourse and buffer zone and avoid rocky ridges and buffer zones. Non-perennial active channel and riparian zone with 30 m bufferzone as well as low rocky ridges and 30 m buffer zones are excluded from the development.	High	Moderate	High
Loss of sensitive species	Loss of sensitive species (Note no Threatened species or Near-threatened species)	Negative	Site	Long-Term	Very low (No species anticipated)	Unlikely	Not applicable	Not applicable	No specific mitigation measures apply to Threatened and Near Threatened sensitive species at the site. Mitigation measures for Protected tree species: Marking or avoidance of the <i>Vachellia erioloba</i> (Camel Thorn Tree) at the site.	High	Moderate	High

Loss of corridors of particular conservation concern	Fragmentation of landscape and loss of connectivity	Negative	Site	Long-Term	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate	Demarcate and avoid watercourse and buffer zone. Non-perennial active channel and riparian zone with 30 m bufferzone are excluded from the development. Low rocky ridges and 30 m bufferzone are excluded from the development.	High	Low	High
Contamination of soil by spilling pollutants on soil which could infiltrate the soil	Soil contamination	Negative	Site	Long-Term	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate	Rubble and waste removal. Measures that avoid hydrocarbon (petroleum) spills to get into contact with the soil.	Moderate	Low	High
Disturbance or killing of vertebrates	Disturbance or killing of species	Negative	Site	Long-Term	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate	If the development is approved, contractors must ensure that no animal species are disturbed, trapped, hunted or killed during the construction phase.	Moderate	Low	High

6.5 Risk/ Impact assessment summary for the operational phase

Aspect/ Impact Pathway	Nature of Potential Impact/ Risk	Status	Spatial Extent	Duration	Consequence	Probability	Reversibility of Impact	Irreplaceability	Potential Mitigation Measures	Significance of Impact and Risk		Confidence Level
										Without Mitigation/ Management	With Mitigation/ Management (Residual Impact/ Risk)	
Increased infestation of exotic or alien invasive plant species	Loss of habitat quality	Negative	Site	Long-Term	Substantial	Likely	Moderate	Moderate	Monitoring and eradication of alien invasive plant species	Moderate	Low	High

6.5 Summary of risks and impacts

Ecological sensitivity at most of the site is medium. Ecological sensitivity at some of the conspicuously disturbed areas at the site, such as the extensive dumping area is indicated as low. Ecological sensitivity at the non-perennial active channel, in-channel dam and riparian zone, as well as the low rocky ridges and their buffer zones, is medium-high owing to the importance of these watercourses and low rocky ridges as conservation corridors in the larger area (Figure 6). Note that an existing dirt road with a concrete wall across the watercourse, a railway line as well as a tar road (R506) currently run across this area of medium-high sensitivity.

No Threatened or Near Threatened plant or animal species appear to be resident at the site. No other plant or animal species of particular conservation concern appear to be present at the site. One plant species, *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) that is not threatened but listed as Protected tree species occurs at the site. In terms of a part of section 15(1) of the National Forests Act No. 84 of 1998, no person may cut, disturb, damage or destroy any protected tree or possess, collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in any other manner acquire or dispose of any protected tree, except under a license granted by the Minister. *Vachellia erioloba* is numerous at some areas at the site. A Camel Thorn Tree Forest or large Camel Thorn trees (>10 m) such as at Kathu and Witsand in the Northern Cape Province, are absent at the site. If the development is approved it is likely that some Camel Thorn trees (*Vachellia erioloba*) should be removed, in which case a permit for removal would be imperative, and should be applied for.

The non-perennial river and in-channel dam (with active channel, riparian zone and buffer zone) as well as the low rocky ridges and their buffer zones are excluded from the development. Risks and possible impacts to the watercourses if the bufferzone is upheld, are not expected to be significant because excessive surface flow and erosion are not anticipated. There is no distinct indication that interflow plays an important role in the maintenance of the watercourse. The geomorphological setting and flow regime will not be impacted. Loss of any wetland animal or plant species are not expected.

Following the mitigations which will be upheld and planned footprint for development all the impact risks listed above are moderate or low.

7 CONCLUSION

- Vegetation at most of the site is visibly degraded and cover of vegetation in many areas is conspicuously poor. Vegetation at an informal rubbish dump site is transformed. Some areas have been cleared, exposing soil. Fairly large patches of disturbed savanna still remain at the site. *Vachellia hebeclada* (Candlepod Thorn) occurs in many clumps at visibly disturbed areas with noticeable poor plant cover.
- Indigenous trees at the site include *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn), *Vachellia hebeclada* subsp. *hebeclada* (Candlepod Thorn; shrub-height at site), *Vachellia karroo* (Sweet Thorn), *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* (Camphor Bush) and *Grewia flava* (Velvet Raisin; shrub-height at site). The indigenous shrub *Asparagus lariginus* (Wild Asparagus) is found at disturbed places at the site. Indigenous grass species include *Eragrostis lehmanianna*, *Eragrostis superba*, *Aristida congesta*, *Pogonarthria squarrosa*, *Heteropogon contortus*, *Melinis repens* and *Tragus berteronianus*. Indigenous forb species and shrublets include *Bulbine narcissifolia*, *Barleria macrostegia* and *Berkheya onopordifolia*. Herbaceous shrub *Gomphocarpus fruticosus* is also found at the site. Dwarf shrubs and shrublets at the site include *Felicia muricata*. The widespread succulent *Aloe grandidentata* occurs at several places at the site.
- A number of alien invasive weed species are present at previously cleared and perviously cultivated areas. The succulent alien invasive plant species *Cylindropuntia imbricata* (Umbricate Prickly Pear) is conspicuous at the site.
- No wetlands appear to be present at the footprint proposed for the development. A narrow non-perennial river, with its active channel and riparian zone, is present at the northern part of the site. An in-channel dam, the Wentzeldam, is present at the northeastern part of the site.
- Riparian zone along the active channel contains indigenous tree species such as *Vachellia karroo*, *Searsia pyroides*, *Searsia lancea*, *Diospyros lycioides* and *Ziziphus mucronata*. Indigenous grass species such as *Cynodon dactylon* and exotic grass species such as *Paspalum dilatatum* are also present at the riparian zone. Alien invasive herbaceous species such as *Oenothera rosea* and *Rumex crispus* are present at the riparian zone/ fringes of the dam. *Persicaria* species (Knotweeds) occur at the permanent zones of the watercourse.
- Two low rocky ridges are found at the northeastern parts of the site.
- Savanna at the site is represented by the Schweizer-Reneke Bushveld vegetation type (SVk 3) which is listed as a Threatened Ecosystem, Vulnerable, according to the National List of Threatened Ecosystems (2011). Terrestrial vegetation at the site has been modified and transformed at parts, in the past and most of the vegetation appears degraded. Some areas contain savanna in fairly natural condition. The scope overall, for the conservation of natural savanna at the site, is small.
- No Threatened or Near Threatened plant or animal species appear to be resident at the site.

- One plant species, *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn) that is not threatened but listed as Protected tree species occurs at the site. In terms of a part of section 15(1) of the National Forests Act No. 84 of 1998, no person may cut, disturb, damage or destroy any protected tree or possess, collect, remove, transport, export, purchase, sell, donate or in any other manner acquire or dispose of any protected tree, except under a license granted by the Minister. *Vachellia erioloba* is numerous at some areas at the site. A Camel Thorn Tree Forest or large Camel Thorn trees (>10 m) such as at Kathu and Witsand in the Northern Cape Province, are absent at the site. If the development is approved it is likely that some Camel Thorn trees (*Vachellia erioloba*) should be removed, in which case a permit for removal would be imperative, and should be applied for.
- Site is part of the Lower Vaal Water Management Area (WMA 10). The site is not part of a Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area (FEPA) or wetland cluster (Nel *et al.*, 2011a, 2011b).
- Ecological sensitivity at most of the site is medium. Ecological sensitivity at some of the conspicuously disturbed areas at the site, such as the extensive dumping area is indicated as low. Ecological sensitivity at the non-perennial active channel, in-channel dam and riparian zone, as well as the low rocky ridges and their buffer zones, is medium-high owing to the importance of these watercourses and low rocky ridges as conservation corridors in the larger area (Figure 6). Note that an existing dirt road with a concrete wall across the watercourse, a railway line as well as a tar road (R506) currently run across this area of medium-high sensitivity.
- There is little scope for most of the site to be part of a corridor of particular conservation importance, excluding the watercourse (with its bufferzone) and the low rocky ridges. Non-perennial river at the northern part of the site, as well as the low rocky ridges at the northeastern parts of the site are corridors of particular conservation concern.
- Continued monitoring and eradication of alien invasive plant species are imperative. It is in particular declared alien invasive species such as *Prosopis glandulosa* (Mesquite), *Melia azedarach* (Syringa) and alien invasive Australian *Acacia* species (Australian wattles) that should not be allowed to establish.

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ANNEXURE 1

List of plant species recorded at the site.

Plant species marked with an asterisk (*) are exotic.

Sources: Bromilow (2010); Crouch, Klopper, Court (2010); Duncan (2016); Fish, Mashau, Moeaha & Nembudani (2015); Germishuizen (2003), Goldblatt (1986); Goldblatt & Manning (1998); Johnson & Bytebier (2015); Manning (2007), Manning (2009), McMurtry, Grobler, Grobler & Burns (2008); Smith, Crouch. & Figueiredo (2017); Van Ginkel *et al.* (2011); Van Jaarsveld (2006); Van Oudtshoorn (2012); Van Wyk (2000); Van Wyk & Gericke (2000); Van Wyk & Malan (1998); Van Wyk & Van Wyk (2013); Van Wyk & Smith (2014); Van Wyk, van Oudtshoorn & Gericke (2009)

TAXON	COMMON NAMES	FAMILY
ANGIOSPERMAE: MONOCOTYLEDONS		
<i>Aloe grandidentata</i>		ASPHODELACEAE
<i>Aristida adscensionis</i>		POACEAE
<i>Aristida congesta</i> subsp. <i>congesta</i>	Tassel Three-awn	POACEAE
<i>Aristida stipitata</i>		POACEAE
<i>Asparagus larycinus</i>	Common Wild Asparagus	ASPARAGACEAE
<i>Bulbine narcissifolia</i>		ASPHODELACEAE
<i>Chloris virgata</i>		POACEAE
<i>Cymbopogon caesius</i>	Broad-leaved Turpentine Grass	POACEAE
<i>Cymbopogon pospischilii</i>	Narrow-leaved Turpentine Grass	POACEAE
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Couch Grass	POACEAE

<i>Digitaria eriantha</i>	Common Finger Grass	POACEAE
<i>Eragrostis lehmanniana</i>		POACEAE
<i>Eragrostis superba</i>	Saw-toothed Love Grass	POACEAE
<i>Heteropogon contortus</i>	Spear Grass	POACEAE
<i>Melinis repens</i>	Natal Red-top	POACEAE
* <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	Dallis Grass	POACEAE
<i>Pogonarthria squarrosa</i>	Herringbone Grass	POACEAE
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Red Grass	POACEAE
<i>Urochloa mocambicensis</i>	Bushveld Signal Grass	POACEAE
ANGIOSPERMS: DICOTYLEDONS		
* <i>Alternanthera pungens</i>	Dubbeltjie	AMARANTHACEAE
<i>Aptosimum decumbens</i>		SCROPHULARIACEAE
* <i>Argemone ochroleuca</i>	White-flowered Mexican poppy	PAPAVERACEAE
<i>Barleria macrostegia</i>		ACANTHACEAE
<i>Berkheya onopordifolia</i>		ASTERACEAE
* <i>Bidens bipinnata</i>	Spanish Black Jack	ASTERACEAE
* <i>Bidens pilosa</i>	Black Jack	ASTERACEAE
<i>Chrysocoma ciliata</i>		ASTERACEAE
<i>Cleome maculata</i>		CAPPARACEAE
<i>Cleome monophylla</i>	Single-leaved Cleome	CAPPARACEAE
* <i>Chenopodium album</i>	White Goosefoot	CHENOPODIACEAE
<i>Convolvulus sagittatus</i>	Wild Bindweed	CONVOLVULACEAE
* <i>Cylindropuntia imbricata</i>	Imbricate Prickly Pear	CACTACEAE
* <i>Datura ferox</i>	Thorn Apple	SOLANACEAE
* <i>Datura stramonium</i>		SOLANACEAE
<i>Diospyros lycioides</i> subsp. <i>lycioides</i>		EBENACEAE
<i>Ehretia alba</i>	White Puzzlebush	BORAGINACEAE
* <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	Red Gum	MYRTACEAE
<i>Felicia muricata</i>		ASTERACEAE
* <i>Flaveria bidentis</i>	Smelter's Bush	ASTERACEAE
<i>Gazania krebsiana</i> subsp. <i>krebsiana</i>		ASTERACEAE
<i>Gomphocarpus fruticosus</i>	Cotton Milkbush	APOCYNACEAE
* <i>Gomphrena celosioides</i>	Bachelor's Button	AMARANTHACEAE
<i>Grewia flava</i>	Velvet Raisin	SPARRMANNIACEAE
<i>Helichrysum argyrosphaerum</i>	Wild Everlasting	ASTERACEAE
<i>Helichrysum aureonitens</i>		ASTERACEAE
<i>Hibiscus pusillus</i>		MALVACEAE
<i>Hibiscus trionum</i>	Bladder Hibiscus	MALVACEAE
<i>Lepidium africanum</i>	Pepperweed	BRASSICACEAE
* <i>Lepidium bonariense</i>	Pepperweed	BRASSICACEAE
* <i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Creeping Sorrel	OXALIDACEAE
<i>Pentarrhinum inspidum</i>		APOCYNACEAE

<i>Pentzia globosa</i>		ASTERACEAE
<i>Persicaria</i> sp.	Knotweed	POLYGONACEAE
<i>Pollichia campestris</i>	Waxberry	ILLECEBRACEAE
<i>Rumex crispus</i>		POLYGONACEAE
* <i>Schkuhria pinnata</i>	Dwarf Marigold	ASTERACEAE
<i>Searsia lancea</i>	Karee	ANACARDIACEAE
<i>Searsia pyroides</i>		ANACARDIACEAE
<i>Searsia tridactyla</i>		ANACARDIACEAE
<i>Senegalia mellifera</i> subsp. <i>detinens</i>	Black Thorn	FABACEAE
* <i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>	Silverleaf Bitter Apple	SOLANACEAE
<i>Stachys spathulata</i>		LAMIACEAE
* <i>Tagetes minuta</i>	Khaki Weed	ASTERACEAE
<i>Tarchonanthus camphoratus</i>	Camphor Bush	ASTERACEAE
<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	Devil's Thorn	ZYGOPHYLLACEAE
<i>Vachellia erioloba</i>	Camel Thorn	FABACEAE
<i>Vachellia hebeclada</i> subsp. <i>hebeclada</i>	Candlepod Thorn	FABACEAE
<i>Vachellia karroo</i>	Sweet Thorn	FABACEAE
* <i>Verbena aristigera</i>	Fine-leaved Verbena	VERBENACEAE
* <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	Purple Top	VERBENACEAE
<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	Buffalo-thorn	RHAMNACEAE