

# **BOTANICAL SURVEY OF PROPOSED HOLIDAY UNIT FOOTPRINTS ON PORTION 1 OF FARM MATJESFONTEIN 206, NEAR WILLOWMORE**

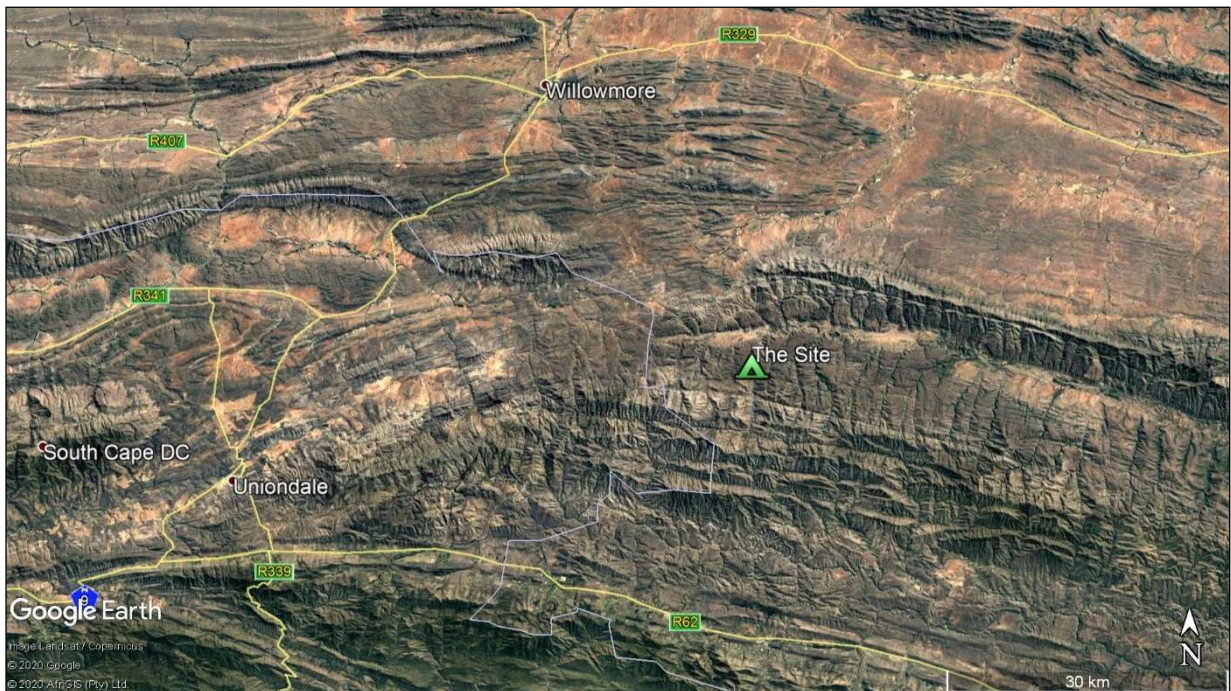
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April 2020



## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report investigates the botanical aspects of 11 proposed footprints for holiday housing units on Portion 1 of Farm Matjesfontein 206, southeast of Willowmore in the Baviaanskloof area (see Map 1). The project comprises the addition of 11 housing units on the farm, which is situated near the western end of the Baviaanskloof wilderness area. The units will be placed on the edge of fallow land areas in the valley bottom, on the foot slope of the surrounding mountains. It is expected that small scale farming will continue on a small area around the farm house and buildings, while the fallow land on the rest of the farm will revert back to natural veld through succession! The independent botanical assessment was commissioned by Sharples Environmental Services who is the appointed environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) for the NEMA application.



**Map 1** Satellite photo showing the location of the subject property (green symbol) southeast of Willowmore.

## 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project comprises the construction of about 11 holiday housing units mostly inside fallow land at the foot of the surrounding mountains. The exact number of units is not fixed yet. The building footprints will be 250 m<sup>2</sup> per unit. Map 2 below shows the positions of the holiday units in relation to other existing resort and farm buildings. Please note that the indicated positions of the units are estimates, which will be finalised at a later stage. This report has investigated the general areas at these footprints and made recommendations to reduce the impact where needed. Septic tank soakaways will also be added to each unit as there is no other practical

way for the disposal of wastewater and sewage. The rest of the farm will be rezoned to conservation or Open Space 3.



**Map 2** Layout plan showing the proposed holiday units and other existing infrastructure.

### 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for this study are as follows:

- ✓ Contextualization of the study area in terms of important biophysical characteristics and the latest available conservation planning information (including but not limited to vegetation, critical biodiversity areas (CBA's), threatened ecosystems, any Red List information, sensitive and protected areas).
- ✓ Undertake a site visit and ground-truth biodiversity information.
- ✓ Describe and map important biodiversity at the site and its surroundings, from both pattern and ecological process perspectives.
- ✓ Note the condition of affected ecosystems and levels of degradation, including infestation by invasive alien species and past farming activities.
- ✓ Adherence to the EAP's terms of reference.

### 4 METHODOLOGY

Botanical surveys of the site were undertaken on 26 August 2019 and 4 February 2020 by Mark Berry (see CV attached). A qualitative assessment of the type and condition of affected vegetation on site, disturbances and presence of alien species, Species of Conservation Concern and protected species was carried out. Plant species not identified in the field, were

collected or photographed and identified at the Compton Herbarium at Kirstenbosch. The latest (2018) version of the South African vegetation map<sup>1</sup> and the latest floristic taxonomic literature and reference books were used for the purpose of this specialist study. Any plants classified as rare or endangered in the Red List of South African Plants online database are highlighted. The relevant NEMA guidelines for biodiversity assessments were also taken into account in the assessment.

The following information was recorded during the site visit:

1. The condition of the vegetation. Is the vegetation either disturbed or degraded? A disturbed or degraded area could range from agricultural fields (fallow land), or areas previously disturbed by construction activities, to an area that has been severely eroded or degraded as a result of bad land management or alien infestation.
2. The species diversity. This refers to the numbers of different indigenous plant species occurring on site. Indigenous fauna observed was also noted.
3. Species of Conservation Concern, as well as protected tree species occurring on site. This would include rare, vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered species. Species listed as threatened (if present) were mapped using Easy GPS v2.5 software on an iPhone. Accuracy is given as  $\pm 4$  m.
4. Identification of the vegetation types and communities (if discernible) on the site. This would include trying to establish the known range of a vegetation type and whether or not it is vulnerable (VU), endangered (EN) or critically endangered (CR).
5. Identify any potential links with adjacent/nearby significant vegetation remnants.

## **5 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

Since fieldwork was carried out in spring and late summer, flowering plants that only flower at other times of the year (e.g. winter) may have been missed. However, due to the positions of the footprints mainly inside fallow land, no further botanical surveys are deemed necessary. The overall confidence in the completeness and accuracy of the botanical findings is considered to be good.

## **6 LOCALITY & BRIEF SITE DESCRIPTION**

The study site lies in a north-south orientated side valley in the western part of the Baviaanskloof area, 38 km southeast of Willowmore. The narrow valley is flat bottomed, with the Rietrivier meandering northwards towards the Baviaanskloof River. The mountain slopes above the valley floor range from moderately steep to very steep or rocky. It is unknown what the current status

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<sup>1</sup> South African National Biodiversity Institute (2006-2018). The Vegetation Map of South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland, Mucina, L., Rutherford, M.C. & Powrie, L.W. (Editors), Online, <http://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/186>, Version 2018.

is with regards to agricultural activities on the farm. Parts of the low-lying areas have served as pastures in the past, but are now lying fallow. The holiday unit footprints have been sited on the edges of the fallow areas, in a few instances inside natural veld above the fallow land. The surrounding areas above the valley floor are still pristine and cater of low-impact tourist activities, such as hiking. Virtually no alien infestation was noted on and around the footprint areas.

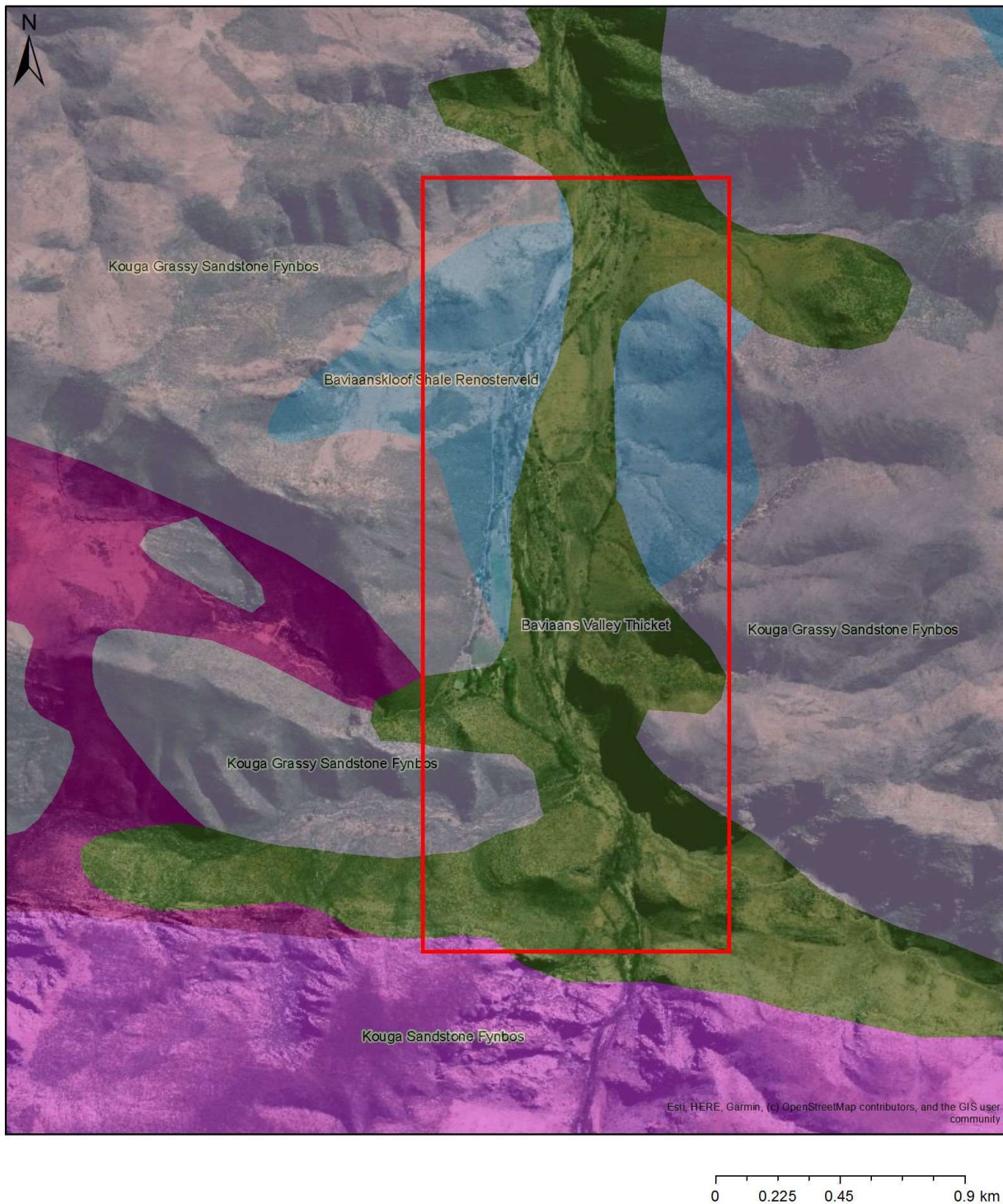
Rainfall in the area ranges from 200 to 620 per annum (mean: 365 mm), as per Mucina & Rutherford's (2006) description of the climate for Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld. It is even throughout the year, with a peak in March (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). Mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures are 27.9°C and 2.5°C for February and July, respectively (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). Frost incidence is 10 to 30 days per year.

According to the 3322 Oudtshoorn 1:250 000 geological map, the site is underlain by Tchando and Cederberg Formation sandstones and shales (exposed on the mountain slopes flanking the valley), as well as sandy alluvial deposits in the valley bottom. Both Tchando and Cederberg Formations belong to the Table Mountain Group, which form the backbone of the Baviaanskloof landscape.

## 7 BIOGEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The study site is located in an arid mountain fynbos-renosterveld-thicket environment in the Eastern Cape interior, close to the Western Cape Province boundary. Most of the indigenous species recorded are typical renosterveld/fynbos species, such as *Pteronia incana*, *Elytropappus rhinocerotis*, *Osteospermum moniliferum*, *Metalasia densa* and *Aspalathus hystrix*. A few thicket species were also recorded, including *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Searsia longispina*, *Lycium* sp. and *Asparagus* spp. The 2018 Vegetation Map of South Africa classifies the vegetation types found in the area as Baviaans Valley Thicket (in the valley bottom), Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld (lower mountain slopes) and Kouga Grassy Sandstone Fynbos (upper mountain slopes) (see Map 3).

Baviaans Valley Thicket occurs on the lower slopes and ridges from Willowmore in the west, through the Baviaanskloof to Zuurberg (northwest of Kirkwood) in the east (Grobler *et al.* 2018). It is dominated by a low succulent thicket, often dense and closed (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). Spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*) is sometimes abundant, while both stem- and leaf-succulents are present (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). Important tree species include *Aloe ferox*, *Boscia oleoides*, *Sideroxylon inerme*, *Searsia longispina*, *Cussonia spicata*, *Schotia afra* and *Putterlickia pyracantha*.



**Map 3** Extract of the SA Vegetation Map (obtained from Cape Farm Mapper), showing the subject property (outlined in red) inside Baviaans Valley Thicket, Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld and Kouga Grassy Sandstone Fynbos.

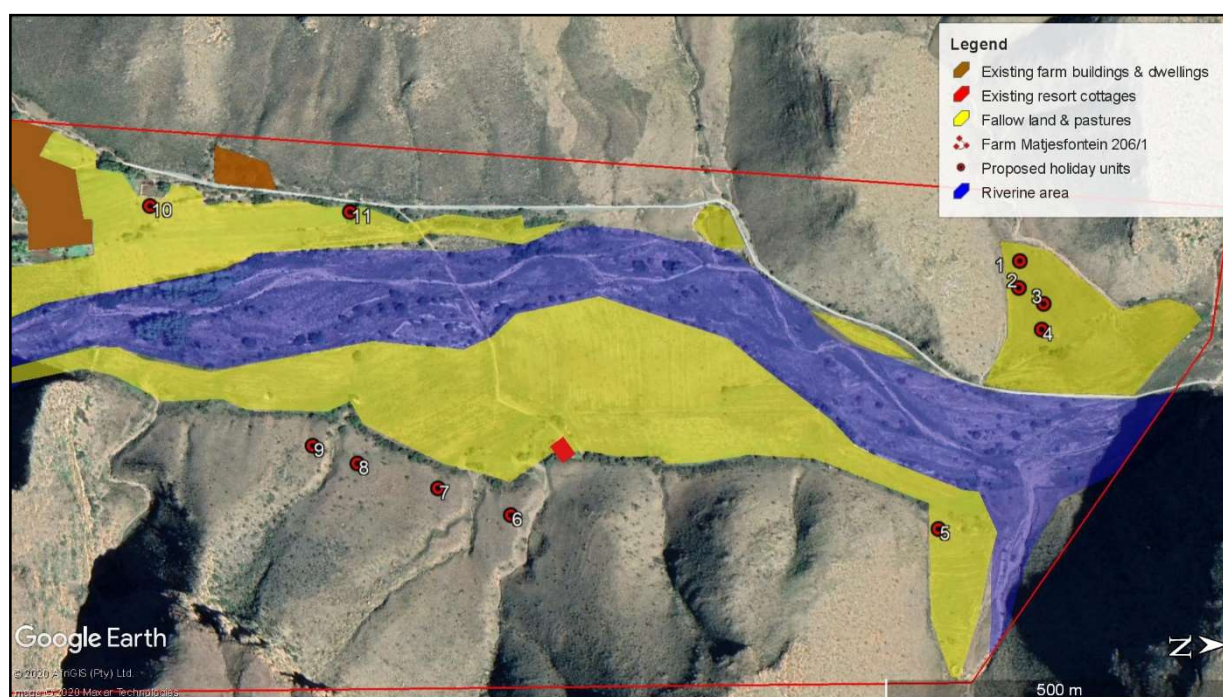
Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld occurs on the flat, lower mountain bases of the Baviaanskloof (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). It is described as a low, medium dense, cupressoid-leaved shrubland, dominated by renosterbos (*Elytropappus rhinocerotis*) (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). The rocky areas may have small thicket patches. It grades into fynbos on the mid to

upper mountain slopes. Important taxa include *Elytropappus rhinocerotis*, *Aloe ferox*, *Passerina obtusifolia*, *Phylla axillaris* and *Pteronia incana* (Mucina & Rutherford 2006).

Kouga Grassy Sandstone Fynbos is widely distributed on the mountain slopes between Uniondale in the west and Uitenhage in the east (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). It is described as a low shrubland with sparse, emergent tall shrubs and dominated by grasses in the undergrowth, or grassland with scattered ericoid shrubs (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). Important taxa include *Protea nitida*, *Aloe ferox*, *Aspalathus kougaensis*, *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Agathosma* spp., *Erica* spp. and *Leucospermum cuneiforme* (Mucina & Rutherford 2006).

## 8 VEGETATION & FLORA

The vegetation in the area where the proposed units are located can best be described as renosterveld. It is generally less than 0.5 m high, grassy in places with a few emerging species. Footprints 1-5 and 10-11 are located inside fallow land, while 6-9 are located in relatively undisturbed veld (see Map 4; Photos 1-5). Unit 8's footprint is located on a previously disturbed site covered by grasses. A veldfire swept through the area in December 2016 and the vegetation is still in a recovery phase. Vegetation cover ranges between 40 and 50%. It is assumed that the fallow land will be allowed to revert back to natural vegetation over time and farming activities scaled down or concentrated around the large area of farm buildings/dwellings shown on Maps 2 and 4.



**Map 4** Satellite photo showing the proposed holiday units in relation to fallow land/pastures, the Rietrivier and the remainder of site which is considered pristine.



**Photo 1** An elevated view of the fallow land earmarked for holiday units 1-4.



**Photo 2** Fallow land area earmarked for unit 5.





**Photo 3** Elevated view of site earmarked for unit 6 (encircled in red).



**Photo 4** Site earmarked for unit 7, looking south towards the main farm buildings.



**Photo 5** Level grassy area (already disturbed!) earmarked for unit 8. The main farm buildings and labourer cottages can be seen in the background.



**Photo 6** Proposed site for unit 9, looking north towards valley entrance.



**Photo 7** Pasture earmarked for units 10 and 11.

The following indigenous tree and shrub species were recorded in the renosterveld on and around the unit footprint sites, namely *Aloe ferox* (on the hill slopes above the footprint sites), *Diospyros austro-africana*, *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Searsia longispina*, *S. pallens*, *Gymnosporia buxifolia*, *Phyllica paniculata*, *Lessertia frutescens*, *Otholobium cf. prodiens*, *Melolobium microphyllum*, *Aspalathus hystrix*, *Lycium horridum*, *Solanum tomentosum*, *Osteospermum moniliferum*, *Pteronia incana*, *Elytropappus rhinocerotis*, *Metalasia densa*, *Othonna parviflora*, *Chrysocoma ciliata*, *Helichrysum rosum*, *Amellus strigosus*, *Asparagus capensis*, *A. retrofractus*, *Pelargonium quercifolium*, *Chaenostoma revolutum*, *Hermannia stipulacea*, *H. cf. odorata*, *Anisodonteia scabrosa*, *Clutia laxa*, *Mesembryanthemum granulicaule*, *Ruschia multiflora*, *R. knysnana*, *Carpobrotus* sp, *Drosanthemum cf. hispidum*, *D. gracillimum*, *Galenia sarcophylla*, *G. procumbens*, *Cliffortia strobilifera* (wet areas near river) and *C. ilicifolia*. *Bulbine lagopus* is the only bulb species recorded.

As can be expected in areas previously disturbed by agricultural activities (fallow land) and a recent veld fire, species diversity is not particularly high in the surveyed areas. No species of

Species of Conservation Concern<sup>2</sup> or regional endemics were recorded on site. All the recorded species are widespread and mostly common.

*Prosopis glandulosa* is the only invasive alien species recorded (in the vicinity of proposed unit 5). *Prosopis glandulosa* is a declared alien invader under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act 43 of 1983) and an important woody invader of riverine areas.

## 9 CONSERVATION STATUS & CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS

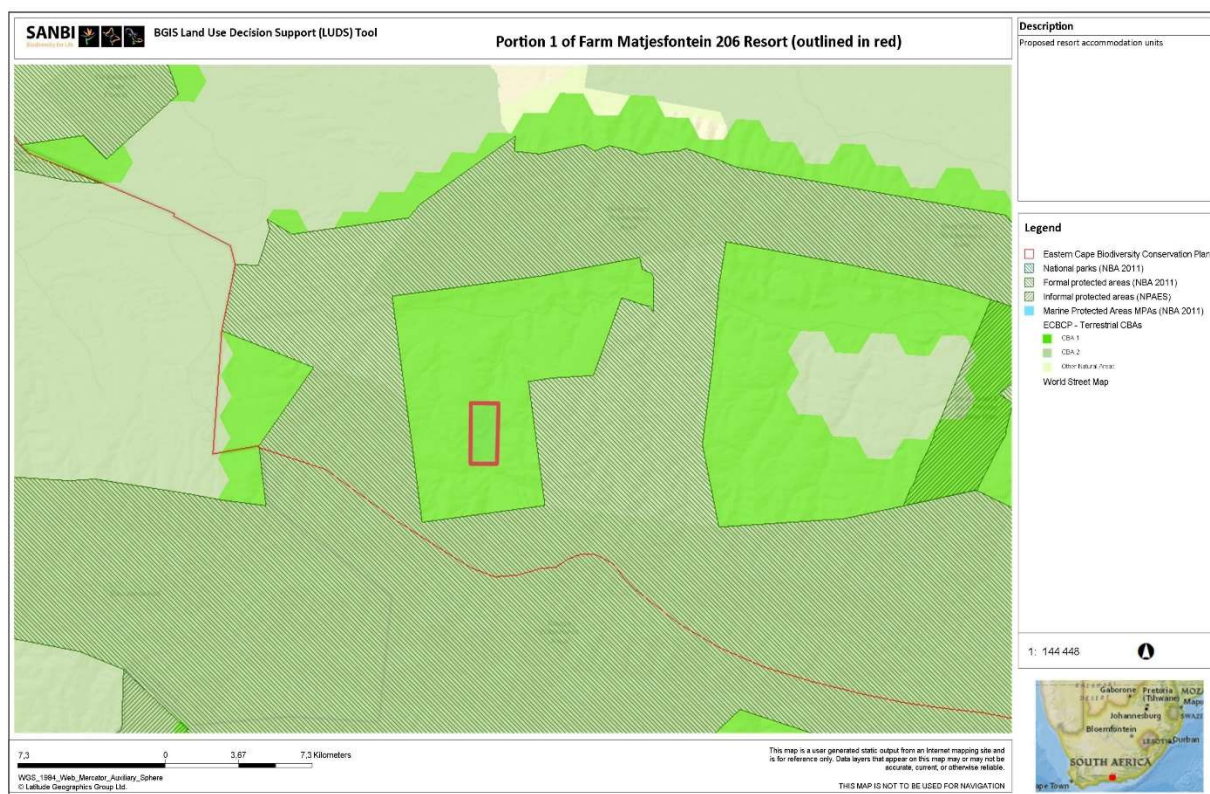
None of the mapped vegetation types are currently listed as threatened (DEA 2011). Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld is formally conserved in the Guerna (16%) and Baviaanskloof Wilderness Areas (4%), with a few smaller areas also conserved on private land (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). It has not experienced much transformation. Kouga Grassy Sandstone Fynbos is about 20% formally conserved in several wilderness and conservation areas, including Baviaanskloof, Groendal, Kouga and Berg Plaatz Wilderness Areas (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). About 9% is transformed by agriculture (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). With regards to Baviaans Valley Thicket, also very little is transformed (<2%), while it is well protected in, among other, the Addo Elephant National Park, Baviaanskloof Hartland Nature Reserve and Baviaanskloof Nature Reserve (Grobler *et al.* 2018). The Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area is also a declared World Heritage Site.

With regards to the Eastern Cape Biodiversity Conservation Plan, Map 5 shows the location of the site inside a critical biodiversity area (CBA1), which again is surrounded by the Baviaanskloof, Kouga and Berg Plaatz Wilderness Areas. In this respect the larger area is considered very sensitive in its totality. The CBA provides support in maintaining ecological connectivity between the Berg Plaatz Wilderness Area to the north, and the Baviaanskloof and Kouga Wilderness Areas to the south. It is not expected that the project will compromise this function given the low density and spread out nature of the proposed holiday units.

CBA's are areas that are required to meet biodiversity targets for species, ecosystems or ecological processes and infrastructure (Pool-Stanvliet *et al.* 2017). These are areas of high biodiversity and ecological value and need to be kept in a natural or near-natural state, with no further loss of habitat or species. Only low-impact, biodiversity-sensitive land uses, such as eco-tourism and limited tourist accommodation, are considered appropriate in this instance.

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<sup>2</sup> The Red List of South African Plants (Raimondo *et al.* 2009) has assessed all plant species in South Africa, and all indigenous species are now technically Red Data Book species, and thus it is preferable to use the term Species of Conservation Concern to refer to species that are listed as either Threatened or Rare.

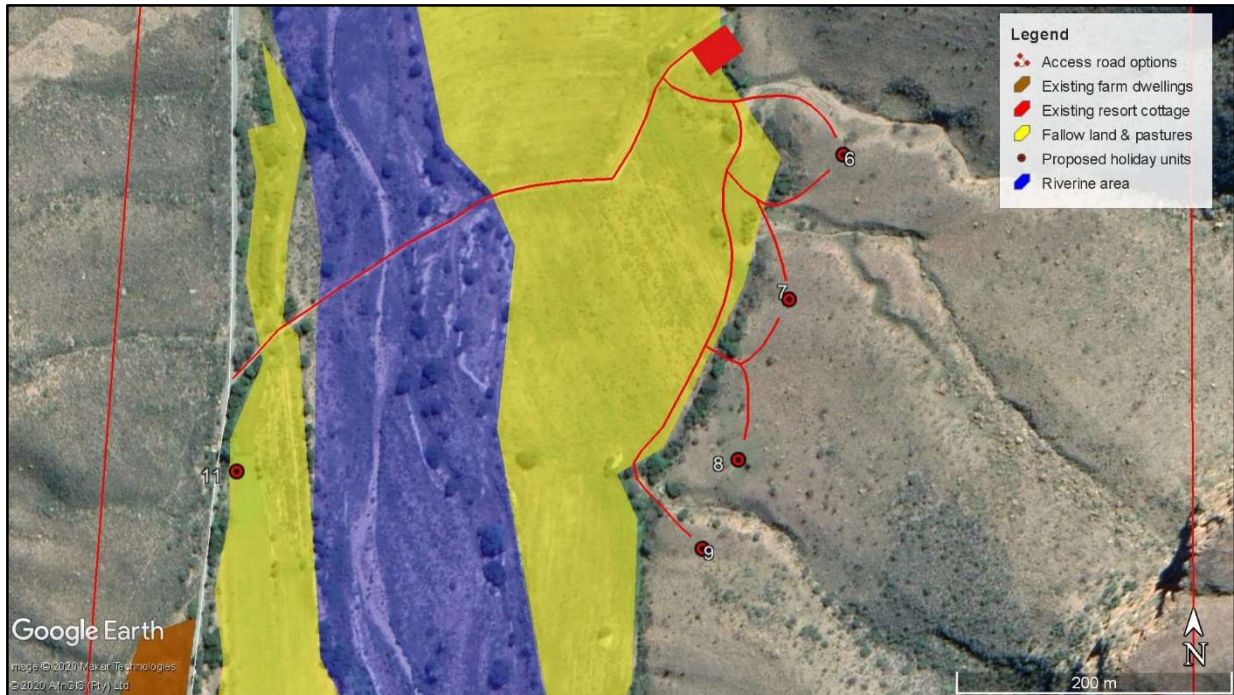


**Map 5** Biodiversity network map (obtained from SANBI's LUDS site). The subject property (outlined in red) is located inside a CBA 1 area.

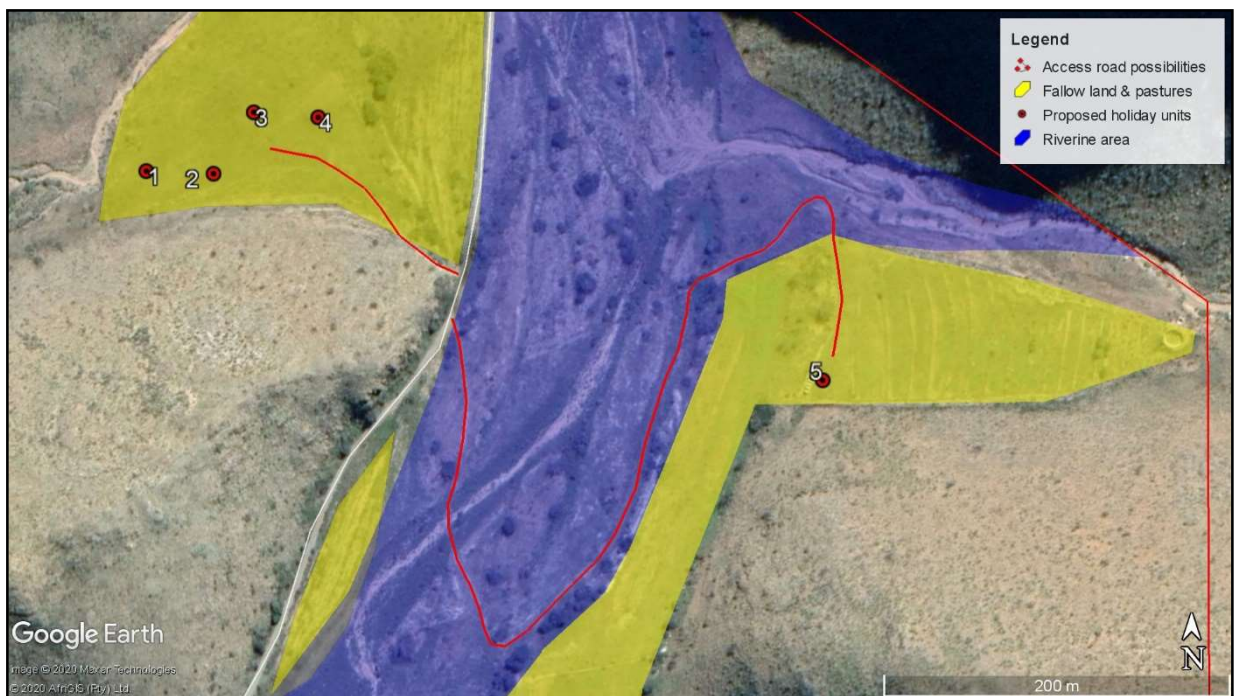
## 10 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON BIODIVERSITY

As stated above, holiday unit footprints 1-5 and 10-11 are located inside fallow land, while 6-9 are located in relatively undisturbed veld. Unit 8's footprint is located on a previously disturbed grass covered site. The proposed building footprint for each unit will be 250 m<sup>2</sup>, which translates to a total area of 750 m<sup>2</sup> located inside undisturbed veld. The rest will be located inside fallow land or previously disturbed areas of low to medium sensitivity. The affected vegetation type, i.e. Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld, is not listed as threatened.

Some concern is expressed about the access roads needed for units 6-9 as the latter are all positioned above a relatively steep terrace (see Map 6). The shared access option for units 7 and 8 (see Photo 8), and the northern option for unit 6 and single option for unit 9 (see Photo 9) are the most feasible as they avoid the steepest parts of the terrace. The alternative access option for unit 7 from the northwest crosses the bottom end of a watercourse channel and is therefore not ideal. With regards to unit 6, both access options are challenging and will require some earthworks (cut-to-fill). In the case of units 1-5 (see Map 7), as well as the others, existing farm roads/tracks provide easy access to the unit platforms.

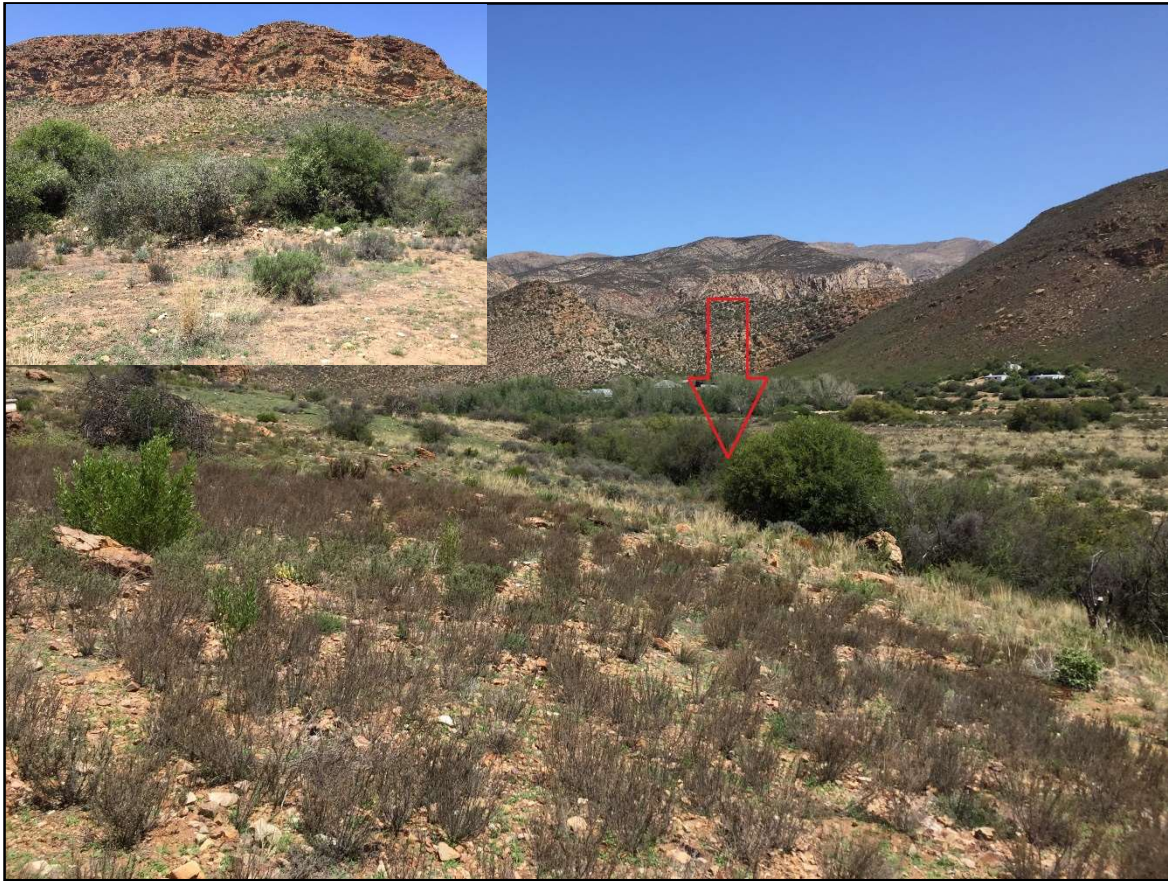


**Map 6** Access road options for proposed holiday units 6-9.



**Map 7** Access road options for proposed holiday units 1-5.

The recorded biodiversity does not seem to pose a major constraint to the development as no Species of Conservation Concern or protected species were recorded at any of the sites. As can be expected in areas previously disturbed by agriculture and a recent veldfire, species diversity was low in the surveyed areas. Overall, the impact on vegetation will be of low to medium significance due to the small scale of the project. No foreign plant material should be brought onto site for rehabilitation or landscaping purposes. Only locally indigenous species should be used for this purpose.



**Photo 8** Preferred shared access point for proposed units 7 and 8. Minor bush clearing will be needed.  
 Insert: close-up view of shared access point as seen from valley bottom.



**Photo 9** Access option for proposed unit 9 as seen from valley bottom.

## 11 SUMMARY & MITIGATION MEASURES

Holiday unit footprints 1-5 and 10-11 are located inside fallow land, while 6-9 are located in relatively undisturbed veld. Unit 8's footprint is located on a disturbed grassy patch. The recorded biodiversity does not present a major constraint to the development as no threatened or protected species were recorded at any of the sites. The affected vegetation type, i.e. Baviaanskloof Shale Renosterveld, is also not listed as threatened. With regards to the biodiversity network and the location of the farm inside the Baviaanskloof wilderness area, the site is located inside a mapped CBA. However, the impact in this regard is also considered of a lower order due to the low density and spread out nature of the proposed units.

Some concern is expressed about the access roads needed for units 6-9 as the latter are all positioned above a relatively steep terrace. The shared access option for units 7 and 8, and the northern option for unit 6 and single option for unit 9 are the most feasible as they avoid the steepest parts of the terrace. The alternative access option for unit 7 from the northwest crosses the bottom end of a watercourse channel and is therefore not ideal. With regards to unit 6, both access options are challenging and will require some earthworks (cut-to-fill). In the case of units 1-5, as well as the others, existing farm roads/tracks provide easy access to the unit platforms.

Given the above, there are no significant biodiversity constraints that suggest that the development should not be allowed. However, strict mitigation measures will be required before and during the construction phase to minimise the impact. During construction, mitigation should focus on the protection of the adjacent renosterveld vegetation, search and rescue of suitable indigenous plant species (e.g. *Carpobrotus* and other vygie species) for rehabilitation purposes, and rehabilitation of the disturbed areas post construction. The following mitigation measures should be considered:

- The development footprints and new access roads should be fenced off in order to contain disturbance during the construction phase. No disturbance may occur outside the fenced off areas.
- If considered practical (feasible), search and rescue of indigenous plants that transplant easily, such as succulents, should be undertaken in the affected renosterveld areas ahead of construction activities. These plants must be properly bagged and then transplanted in rehabilitation areas or taken to a nursery for later replanting.
- Screen construction/building material brought onto site for invasive plant contamination. Contaminated material should not be used.
- Rehabilitation of all construction areas should be undertaken after works in that area has been completed. The primary means of rehabilitation should involve the replacement of topsoil and the re-establishment of search and rescued species.



- No foreign plant material should be brought onto site for rehabilitation or landscaping purposes. Only locally indigenous species should be used for this purpose.
- There is a good chance that indigenous species will re-colonise the disturbed areas if the aliens are controlled. Regular follow-up clearing of aliens would be required in order to achieve rehabilitation successfully.
- Monitor rehabilitation success for a period of one year after completion of building activities and rehabilitation of the site.

## REFERENCES

DEA 2011. National List of Ecosystems that are threatened and in need of protection. *Government Gazette* No. 34809, Government Notice No. 1002. National Printer, Pretoria.

Grobler, A., Vlok, J., Cowling, R., van der Merwe, S., Skowno, A.L. & Dayaram, A. 2018. Technical Report: Integration of the Subtropical Thicket Ecosystem Project (STEP) vegetation types into the VEGMAP national vegetation map 2018.

Manning, J. & Goldblatt, P. 2012. Plants of the Greater Cape Floristic Region 1: the Core Cape flora, *Strelitzia* 29. SANBI, Pretoria.

Mucina, L. & Rutherford, M.C. (eds) 2006. The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.

Pool-Stanvliet, R., Duffell-Canham, A., Pence, G. & Smart, R. 2017. The Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan Handbook. Stellenbosch: CapeNature.

## DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY SPECIALIST

I Mark Gerald Berry, as the appointed specialist hereby declare/affirm the correctness of the information provided or to be provided as part of the application, and that I:

- in terms of the general requirement to be independent:
  - other than fair remuneration for work performed/to be performed in terms of this application, have no business, financial, personal or other interest in the activity or application and that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity; or
  - am not independent, but another specialist that meets the general requirements set out in Regulation 13 have been appointed to review my work (Note: a declaration by the review specialist must be submitted);
- in terms of the remainder of the general requirements for a specialist, am fully aware of and meet all of the requirements and that failure to comply with any the requirements may result in disqualification;
- have disclosed/will disclose, to the applicant, the Department and interested and affected parties, all material information that have or may have the potential to influence the decision of the Department or the objectivity of any report, plan or document prepared or to be prepared as part of the application;
- have ensured/will ensure that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the application was/will be distributed or was/will be made available to interested and affected parties and the public and that participation by interested and affected parties was/will be facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties were/will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments;
- have ensured/will ensure that the comments of all interested and affected parties were/will be considered, recorded and submitted to the Department in respect of the application;
- have ensured/will ensure the inclusion of inputs and recommendations from the specialist reports in respect of the application, where relevant;
- have kept/will keep a register of all interested and affected parties that participate/d in the public participation process; and
- am aware that a false declaration is an offence in terms of regulation 48 of the 2014 NEMA EIA Regulations.




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Signature of the specialist:

Mark Berry Environmental Consultants cc

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Name of company:

4 April 2020

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Date:

## CONDENSED CV OF SPECIALIST

**M.G. (Mark) BERRY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT & BIODIVERSITY SPECIALIST**

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**Tel:** 083 286-9470 **Fax:** 086 759-1908 **E-mail:** markberry@webafrica.org.za

### PROFESSIONAL STATEMENT

Environmental assessment professional and biodiversity specialist with nearly 25 years of experience mainly in the Western Cape Province, but also in the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape. Experience in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's), biodiversity assessments, Environmental Management Programmes (EMPr's), Environmental Control Officer (ECO) duties and environmental due diligence investigations.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

- 1989-1990** Nature Conservation Officer in the South African Air Force, based at Langebaan Road Air Force Base
- 1997-2005** Employed as principal environmental specialist at Planning Partners, a multi-disciplinary consultancy specialising in town and regional planning, environmental planning and landscape architecture. Duties included the conducting of EIA's, compiling EMPr's, ECO duties, biodiversity surveys and status quo environmental assessments for spatial development frameworks.
- 2000-2006** Examiner for the Board of Control for Landscape Architects (BOCLA), responsible for the setting up and marking of the Environmental Planning Section of exam paper.
- 2005-current** Started Mark Berry Environmental Consultants in June 2005. Responsibilities include office management, seeking tenders, conducting EIA's, compiling EMPr's, construction site environmental audits, biodiversity surveys, etc. A relationship is maintained with previous employer, and, among other, undertook land-use surveys and reporting for the Eskom's site safety reports for three proposed nuclear power plants in the Western and Eastern Cape Provinces.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- BSc (1988) University of Stellenbosch
- BSc-Hons in Botany (1991) University of Stellenbosch
- MSc in Botany (1993) Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- PhD in Botany (2000) Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Professional member (reg. no. 400073/98) of the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP).

### REFERENCES

Dr John Manning (Compton Herbarium, Kirstenbosch)

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Phone: (044) 606-5163, e-mail: wmanuel@mosselbay.gov.za

John Sharples (Sharples Environmental Services, George)

Phone: (044) 873-4923, e-mail: john@sesc.net

Andrew Cleghorn (civil engineer and branch manager at Knight Piesold (Pty) Ltd)

Phone: (021) 555-0400, e-mail: acleghorn@knightpiesold.com

Prof Eileen Campbell (Department of Botany, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University)

Phone: (041) 504-2329, e-mail: Eileen.Campbell@nmmu.ac.za



**DETAILS OF SPECIALIST AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN TERMS OF REGULATIONS 12 AND 13 OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS, 2014 AS AMENDED.**

(For official use only)

File Reference Number:

NEAS Reference Number:

Date Received:

Application for environmental authorization in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended and the Amendments to the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014. This form is valid as of 6 January 2021.

**PROJECT TITLE**

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF PORTION 1 OF THE FARM MATJESFONTEIN 206, BAVIAANSKLOOF,  
WILLOWMORE, EASTERN CAPE

SPECIALIST 1

Contact person:

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Michael Bennett		
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4.2 The SPECIALIST

I, **Mark Berry**, declare that –

General declaration:

- I act as the independent Specialist in this application
- I will 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
- I declare that there are no circumstances that may compromise my objectivity in performing such work;
- I have expertise in conducting environmental impact assessments, 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 will take into account, to the extent possible, the matters listed in regulation 8 of the regulations when preparing the application and any report relating to the application;
- I have no, and will not engage in, conflicting interests in the undertaking of the activity;
- 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 will ensure that information containing all relevant facts in respect of the application is distributed or made available to interested and affected parties and the public and that participation by interested and affected parties is facilitated in such a manner that all interested and affected parties will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate and to provide comments on documents that are produced to support the application;
- I will ensure that the comments of all interested and affected parties are considered and recorded in reports that are submitted to the competent authority in respect of the application, provided that comments that are made by

interested and affected parties in respect of a final report that will be submitted to the competent authority may be attached to the report without further amendment to the report;

- I will keep a register of all interested and affected parties that participated in a public participation process; and
- I will provide the competent authority with access to all information at my disposal regarding the application, whether such information is favourable to the applicant or not
- all the particulars furnished by me in this form are true and correct;
- will perform all other obligations as expected from an environmental assessment practitioner in terms of the Regulations; and
- I realise that a false declaration is an offence and is punishable in terms of section 24F of the Act.

**Disclosure of Vested Interest (delete whichever is not applicable)**

- I do not have and will not have any vested interest (either business, financial, personal or other) in the proposed activity proceeding other than remuneration for work performed in terms of the Amendments to Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 as amended.
- I have a vested interest in the proposed activity proceeding, such vested interest being:

N/A

*Mark Berry*

Signature of the specialist:

Mark Berry Environmental Consultants cc

Name of company:

23/2/2021

Date:

Signature of the Commissioner of Oaths:

*[Signature]*  
SGT  
.....7002390/5  
E P GEZWINT

*ELROT Sptl Gezwint*

Date:

*SERGEANT*

Designation:

1 Curriculum Vitae (CV) attached to the back of the report

Official stamp (below).

