

## Comment on the Proposed Infilling of the Jagersfontein Open Pit by the Geological Society of South Africa

We have been made aware via John Rogers, a Fellow of the GSSA and the GSSA representative on the SAHRA Permit Committee, of the proposed intention to infill the Jagersfontein open pit, and have been given some background and access to two technical reports. There seems to be some concern over losing what could be defined as a heritage site for South Africa, but this is by no means the only issue.

The GSSA position is that the proposed in-filling project should proceed.

The pit is clearly in a serious state of degradation as evidenced from the engineering report and from Google Earth images, and will continue to collapse in the future. This has been verified by John Rogers in his recent visit with SAHRA of November 22, 2012. This has dire implications for the preservation of the town (itself a heritage feature) if the pit is left as is and continues to degrade. There are also serious safety issues due to collapsing pit walls.

The negative environmental effects will compound if the pit is left as is. The eventual establishment of wetlands with filling of the pit will be a positive development.

Infilling the pit is part of an effort to recover diamonds left in the current tailings dumps, and economically the most sensible thing to do is to re-cycle tails back into the pit. We know that there is a significant resource of diamonds in the tailings dumps, and proclaiming these dumps and the pit as heritage sites could sterilize the resource and inhibit or even halt job creation in a seriously depressed area. Further, the engineering report implies there will be a circa 15 to 20 'year life of mine', and that implies a very serious project which is liable to enhance job creation far more than geotourism could ever generate over the next ten years or so.

Infilling the pit can go hand in hand with developing the rest of the town as a long term mining heritage asset. One thing that seems to have not been mentioned in any of the reports we've seen is that this kimberlite has significant 'floors' (used in early mining) that are of enormous scientific value. If the recovery process goes ahead (seems probable) but the pit is not re-filled, recycling of the dumps could lead to heritage losses in the floors areas as well as in the town itself.

There is a question of which government agency actually has jurisdiction over the site and proposed project.

In summary, we believe that the planned diamond recovery project accompanied by pit infill should go ahead. We believe that this will be of greatest economic benefit for the longest time period to the local community, and will also ultimately benefit the establishment of Jagersfontein as a mining heritage centre. A concerted effort at photographing and documenting the current pit and the history of the mine should be initiated. SAHRA should be supplied with the relevant documentation promised during the November 22 visit.

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