



South African Heritage Resources Agency
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28 July 2016

Attention Andrew Salomon

Dear Andrew

**Heritage Scoping Assessment Amendment
Eskom Clocolan – Ficksburg 88kV Power Line,
Setsoto Local Municipality,
Free State Province, South Africa**

eThembeni Cultural Heritage conducted a desktop Heritage Scoping Assessment for the above project in 2013 and submitted our report on SAHRIS: Case Reference Number 12/ACER/Clocolan: (see: <http://www.sahra.org.za/heritage-reports/13acerclocolan>).

The terms of reference provided for the assessment of a 2 kilometre wide corridor over a linear distance of some 32 kilometres. Our report recommended that a Full 1 HIA, including a walk-down, must be undertaken by a heritage practitioner prior to any construction work being implemented and, once the final design of the power line and all related activity areas (tower positions, access roads, construction camps, materials storage areas, etc.) had been made known by Eskom.

Environmental Authorisation for the project was issued by the National Department of Environmental Affairs on 24 February 2014 (**DEA EIA REFERENCE: 14/12/16/3/3/1/797**) in which the above was conditional. Subsequent to the R.o.D, Eskom advised of its intention to construct a new Substation (S/S) near Ficksburg. Three site options were chosen and Eskom requested an assessment of these with the intention of lodging an amendment to the original authorisation. Further, the proposed new 88kV power line has been aligned within the existing power line servitude with only minor deviations between Tower Structures 10-16 (exit from Clocolan S/S); 24-26; 129-130; 136-17 and 151-155 (in and out feeds of the existing Ficksburg S/S). [see Kml.loaded to SAHRIS Case File].

eThembeni Cultural Heritage was appointed by Acer (Africa) to undertake the amendment heritage assessment . eThembeni staff conducted a site visit of the whole project area on 19 an 20 June 2016.

Observations

The entire power line alignment, both within the existing servitude and the minor deviations, traverses a mixed agrarian landscape comprising mostly orchards and ploughed croplands interspersed with grazing camps for livestock. For over 9 kilometres the servitude runs within 50 metres of and parallel with the R26 road reserve, and over a distance of some 6 kilometres adjacent to the railway line reserve.

- No archaeological remains were observed at spot transects across greenfield sections of the alignment.
- No stone-walled enclosures were observed in the field or are apparent on Google Pro.
- No graves were observed.
- The characteristically broken topography of the receiving environment and its high degree of agricultural transformation (including purpose planted windbreaks and stands and copses of exotic willow, poplar and pine trees) absorb the visual impact of the existing power line. A second line within the existing servitude will have a lesser visual impact than a new line aligned along an independent greenfield route (see Images uploaded to SAHRIS).
- The options provided for the location of proposed new substation are located on a basement lithology comprising elements of the Karoo Supergroup that is considered highly sensitive in terms of its palaeontological potential, with particular reference to the Permian Extinction Event of approximately 250 million years ago.¹

Recommendations

The chosen routing of the new 88kV power line within the existing power line servitude has limited the impact of the project to near negligible with regards to discrete heritage resources. In this regard, it is our considered opinion that no further heritage mitigation is justified.

However, the potential impact of excavations for the footprint and layout of any one of the selected Substation sites, on the subterranean fossil bearing strata, is highly likely. These fossils have medium to high heritage significance at all levels for their scientific value. We therefore recommend that a palaeontologist with experience of the Permian Extinction Zone should be appointed to have a watching brief to monitor excavations during establishment of the Substation platform. The palaeontologist must be permitted by the relevant heritage authority to collect, rescue and record fossils during these excavations.

Please contact us if you have any further queries. We look forward to SAHRA's response.

Yours sincerely



Len van Schalkwyk
Principal Investigator.

¹ Groenewald, G.H. 1989. Stratigrafie en sedimentologie van die Groep Beaufort in die Noordoos-Vrystaat. *Geological Survey of South Africa*, Bulletin 96, 62 pp.

