



DIGBY WELLS

ENVIRONMENTAL

24 April 2014

Philip Hine/Jenna Lavin
APM Case Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

WELTEVREDEN OPEN CAST COAL MINE PROJECT

Dear Philip Hine/Jenna Lavin,

Northern Coal (Pty) Ltd (Northern Coal) appointed Digby Wells Environmental to undertake specialist studies in support of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Management Programme (EMP) required for a Mining Right Application (MRA) in 2008, to mine coal on Portions 15 and 16 of the farm Weltevrede 381 JT within the Belfast area of the Mpumalanga Province. The EIA and EMP were undertaken in accordance with the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act 28 of 2002). The MRA was approved by the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) who subsequently granted Northern Coal a Mining Right on 04 December 2013 (File Ref No.MP302/5/1/1/2/358 MR).

The EIA included an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) completed by PGS Heritage and Grave Relocation Consultants in 2008, which was submitted to SAHRA (File Reference: 9/2/204/0004). This study found no heritage resources within the project area. SAHRA subsequently issued Statutory Comment on the report, dated 16 August 2008, that stated:

- SAHRA does not object to the development ;
- Chance Finds Procedures must be implemented if any new evidence for heritage resources are found, including graves and palaeontological resources;
- If bedrock is to be affected, a desktop Palaeontological Study must be conducted to assess whether or not the development will impact upon palaeontological resources. If the area is deemed sensitive, a full Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) will be required.

Subsequent to the granting of the Mining Right, Northern Coal is now applying for environmental authorisations in terms of Section 24 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA). Authorisations are required for listed activities in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and Listing Notices 1 and 2 (GN R. 543, GN R. 544 and GN R. 545).

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The project area and potential impacts have not been amended, and most of the initial specialist studies completed in support of the EIA and EMP for the MRA are relevant to the NEMA EIA and EMP process, including the 2008 AIA. The project is currently in its Final Scoping phase. As such, the Final Scoping Report (FSR) has been made available for public review and needs to be uploaded onto SAHRIS.

Given that the EIA and EMP for the MRA were completed prior to the launch of SAHRIS, no case references exist. We have, however, created a case file (Case ID: 5472) for both the MPRDA and NEMA processes. The following documents have been included:

- 2008 MPRDA Application BID;
- 2008 AIA (Archaeological Impact Assessment: Northern Coal Portion 15 and 16 of the farm Weltevreden 381 JT, Belfast, Mpumalanga Ref No: 9/2/204/0004);
- 2008 SAHRA Comment (Ref No: 9/2/204/0004);
- 2010 EMP (Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Environmental Management Plan: Northern Coal Weltevreden (Ref No: MP302/5/1/1/2/358 MR);
- 2014 NEMA Application BID;
- 2014 Draft Scoping Report (Draft Scoping Report for the Northern Coal Weltevreden Open Cast Coal Mine DEDET Ref No17/2/3N-272); and
- 2014 Final Scoping Report (Final Scoping Report for the Northern Coal Weltevreden Open Cast Coal Mine DEDET Ref No17/2/3N-272)

We therefore kindly request that Statutory Comment be issued in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) for the current NEMA authorisation process, based on the 2008 findings.

Should you have any queries or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,



Natasha Higgitt
Assistant Heritage Consultant