SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

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FOR ATTENTION:
PHRA Northern Cape (Mr Andrew Timothy)

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SAHRA File No: **9/2/067/0002**
Date Received: **4 May 2012**
Date of Comment: **23 May 2012**
Sent to Peer Review: .....
Date to Peer Review: .....
SAHRA Contact Person: **Ms Kathryn Smuts**
DEA Ref. no: **14/12/16/3/3/1/529**

REVIEW COMMENT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

BY ARCHAEOLOGY, PALAEONTOLOGY AND METEORITES UNIT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

South Africa has a unique and non-renewable archaeological and palaeontological heritage. Archaeological and palaeontological sites are protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999) and may not be disturbed without a permit. Archaeological Impact Assessments (AIAs) and Palaeontological Impact Assessments (PIAs) identify and assess the significance of the sites, assess the potential impact of developments upon such sites, and make recommendations concerning mitigation and management of these sites. On the basis of satisfactory specialist reports SAHRA or the relevant heritage resources agency can assess whether or not it has objection to a development and indicate the conditions upon which such development might proceed and assess whether or not to issue permission to destroy such sites.
AIAs and PIAs often form part of the heritage component of an Environmental Impact Assessment or Environmental Management Plan. They may also form part of a Heritage Impact Assessment called for in terms of section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act No. 25, 1999. They may have other origins. In any event they should comply with basic minimum standards of reporting as indicated in SAHRA Regulations and Guidelines.
This form provides review comment from the Archaeologist of the relevant heritage resources authority for use by Heritage Managers, for example, when informing authorities that have applied to SAHRA for comment and for inclusion in documentation sent to environmental authorities. It may be used in conjunction with Form B, which provides relevant peer review comment.

A. PROVINCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY: **Northern Cape**

B. AUTHOR(S) OF THE REPORT: **Ms C. Booth**

C. ARCHAEOLOGY CONTRACT GROUP: **Albany Museum**

D. CONTACT DETAILS: **Albany Museum, Somerset Street Grahamstown 6139**

E. DATE OF REPORT: **April 2012**

F. TITLE OF REPORT: **A PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIDA SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY ON PORTION 3 OF THE FARM RIETFONTEIN, NEAR NOUPOORT, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

G. Please circle as relevant: Heritage component of EIA / EMP / HIA / CMP/ Other (Specify) **DBAR**.....

H. REPORT COMMISSIONED BY (**CONSULTANT** OR DEVELOPER): **Savannah Environmental**

I. CONTACT DETAILS: **Mr Marinus Boon, Savannah Environmental PO Box 148, Sunninghill 2157**

J. COMMENTS:

REVIEW COMMENT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Ms Celeste Booth
Dated: April 2012, Received: May 2012

A PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIDA SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY ON PORTION 3 OF THE FARM RIETFONTEIN, NEAR NOUPOORT, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

INTRODUCTION

Terra Solar (Pty) Ltd has proposed the development of a 20 MW Photovoltaic (PV) facility (the Dida Solar Energy Facility) on Portion 3 of Farm Rietfontein 140 near Noupoort in the Northern Cape. The property is approximately 30km north of Noupoort on the N9 in an area bordered by koppies and vegetated with Karoo shrubs and grasses. While no water channels are found on the property, two wetland areas surround it. The adjacent Portion 2 of Rietfontein 140 is being considered as the site for a second PV facility.

The development and its associated infrastructure will cover 19.6 ha of the property. The infrastructure required for the development includes the photovoltaic panels on mounting supports, connecting underground cables, a 66kV overhead power line connecting the facility to the onsite ESKOM Fontein Substation as well as internal and access roads and a workshop area.

No palaeontological assessment was undertaken, however the basic Assessment Report states that the area is underlain by mudstone and sandstone of the Beaufort Group intruded by Karoo Dolerite Suite.

DISCUSSION

The archaeologist surveyed the study area on foot and noted that the dense vegetation made for poor visibility. The survey identified isolated scatters of *ex situ* Middle Stone Age material immediately surrounding the proposed development area. These were predominantly on heavily weathered hornfels, and consisted largely of small and large flakes with some facetted platform flakes. Some flakes showed secondary retouch and possible use wear while others showed fresh flaking that may have resulted from trampling. These artefacts were predominantly recorded in exposed areas near the rocky outcrops outside the development footprint, but the author notes that artefacts occurring in the more heavily vegetated areas may be less disturbed.

SAHRA RECOMMENDATIONS

SAHRA supports the recommendations of the authors and requires that:

- The archaeologist must be informed once the final layout of the panels, underground cables, overhead power line and workshop area is determined.
- As the solar panel footprints are small, and extensive, deep excavations are not necessary, the development is unlikely to impact on local palaeontological heritage resources. The Ecological Management Officer should be notified of the possibility of finding fossils in the surface deposits and in fresh excavations. If development does expose any substantial fossils, however, these should be preserved, *in situ*, until SAHRA has been notified and a palaeontologist can be appointed to undertake a field survey and submit a report to SAHRA for further comments. Mitigation or monitoring may then be required.

CONCLUSION

If the recommendations made in the specialist reports and in this comment are adhered to, the SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit has no objection to the development (in terms of the archaeological and palaeontological components of the heritage resources). If any new evidence of archaeological sites or artefacts, palaeontological fossils, graves or other heritage resources are found during

development, construction or mining, SAHRA (Katie Smuts / Colette Scheermeyer, tel 021 462 4502) and a professional archaeologist and/or palaeontologist, depending on the nature of the finds, must be alerted immediately.

Decisions on Built Environment (e.g. structures over 60 years) and Cultural Landscapes and associated Living Heritage (e.g. sacred sites) must be made by the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority of the Northern Cape ***(Mr. Andrew Timothy, ratha.timothy@gmail.com***) to whom this Archaeological Review Comment will be copied.

SIGNATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGIST PROCESSING REPORT: .....

EMAIL: ksmuts@sahra.org.za.....

SIGNATURE OF SAHRA HEAD ARCHAEOLOGIST: .....

EMAIL: cscheermeyer@sahra.org.za .....

NAME OF HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY: SAHRA.....

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COMMENT (ABOVE OR APPENDED) CONSTITUTES THE COMMENT OF THE HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY ARCHAEOLOGIST AND THAT ANY DEVELOPMENT THAT INVOLVES DESTRUCTION OF ANY ARCHAEOLOGICAL/PALAEONTOLOGICAL SITE IS STILL SUBJECT TO A PERMIT/PERMISSION FOR DESTRUCTION OF SUCH SITE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPER BY THE RELEVANT HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALAEONTOLOGICAL PERMIT COMMITTEE (THIS WILL BE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF THE PHASE 2 OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL/ PALAEONTOLOGICAL MITIGATION AS NECESSARY). THIS REPORT MAY BE TAKEN ONLY AS APPROVAL IN TERMS OF SECTION 35 OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT. THE PROVINCIAL MANAGER OF THE HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY MUST ADVISE AS TO APPROVAL IN TERMS OF HERITAGE ISSUES ENCOMPASSED BY OTHER ASPECTS OF THE LEGISLATION, SUCH AS ISSUES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (STRUCTURES (E.G. FARM HOUSES), OVER 60 YEARS), INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS OR OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AS THIS IS NOT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGIST.

PLEASE NOTE THAT SAHRA IS NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR GRADE I HERITAGE RESOURCES (AND EXPORT) AND THE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GRADE II AND GRADE III HERITAGE RESOURCES, EXCEPT WHERE THERE IS AN AGENCY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY.