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Dear Phillip,

I am writing to request an extension to our existing temporary export permit for material from excavations at VR003, granted by SAHRA on 31 August 2015 (permitID 2089). The permit was granted to Dr. Jayson Orton (ASHA Consulting Pty Ltd) in collaboration with Dr. Teresa E. Steele (University of California, Davis) and Dr. Alex Mackay (University of Wollongong) for export of “50% of the total material (bones and stone artifacts) excavated from Varsche Rivier [(VR)003 on farm Varsche Rivier, Matzikama]”. The faunal material is undergoing analysis at UC Davis and the stone artefacts are being examined at the University of Wollongong. The terms of the export were set at one year, with material to be returned by courier or by hand on or before 1 September 2016.

We seek an extension in part due to delays in export and in part due to new analytic opportunities that have arisen. As noted above, the permit application was granted on 31 August 2015. However, because of delays, including the closure of UCT due to student protests, the material did not ship and arrive until 9 Nov. While this delay was only two months it precluded Dr. Steele from undertaking analysis during the period of September/November which she had allocated to this research. From January to June (2016) Dr. Steele returned to her full three course teaching load plus administrative responsibilities, significantly curtailing analysis time. With another VR003 field season occurring in September, the remaining period of July-August is insufficient to complete a detailed analysis (zooarchaeology plus detailed burning study). While a low resolution analysis would be possible in this time, it seems preferable to make a complete and detailed study of the fauna within the period of export.

Shipping of the stone artefacts was similarly delayed, and Dr. Mackay’s preliminary analysis is now 70% complete (based on estimated numbers). Unforeseen and fairly exciting initial results, combined with some new analytic opportunities, motivate a request for extension of the analytic time for this material as well. Against expectations, the early MSA material exported from the deepest excavated context presents indications of systematic use of heat in modification of the abundant silcretes in the sample, however the form of this modification is unusual and warrants more detailed analyses than were originally anticipated. Dr. Mackay is currently negotiating access within University of Wollongong to a laser profilometer for examination of preheat and postheat surfaces on the artefacts, and FTIR instruments to examine potential tempering residues. The recent purchase of a high resolution white-light scanner— anticipated for arrival in November – will also allow us to generate a 3D archive of these artefacts suitable for on-going study.

Due to these factors we thus seek an extension of the temporary export permit for a period of a further 12 months – until 1 September 2017 – to complete all appropriate analyses. We commit to requesting no further extensions beyond this date. We appreciate that the processing time for such requests is 21 days, meaning that, if the extension is not granted we will be able to return the material prior to our impending season of fieldwork at VR003.

We thank you for your consideration of this application and for SAHRA's on-going support of our research.

Best regards,

*Teresa E. Steele*

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