



A 21st Century Research Institute at Wits

The Evolutionary Studies Institute



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Mr Justin du Piesanie
Digby Wells Environmental

RE: Palaeontological Impact Assessment for Copper Sunset Sand (Pty) Ltd SAHRIS Case ID 5220

Background information

Digby Wells Environmental (Digby Wells) was appointed in 2007 as the independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a Mining Rights Application (MRA) for Copper Sunset Sand (Pty) Ltd (Copper Sunset) (formerly known as Vaal Sands) to mine sand on the farm Bankfontein 9 near the town of Vereeniging. A Mining Right (FS 30/5/1/2/2/164 MR) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) were approved for this operation. Digby Wells completed a Section 102 Amendment in 2010, on behalf of Copper Sunset for the inclusion of a washing plant, return water dam, settling dam and brick building used to house electrical components at their Bankfontein operations. Copper Sunset intends to expand their current sand mining operations to a neighbouring farm that is owned by Anglo American Thermal Coal (AATC). This expansion of the mining areas requires the existing EMP to be amended and the impacts associated with the mining of the new area to be assessed.

Heritage assessment

The NID report for Project Number COP2428 states that although Stone Age and historical sites are known to occur within the study area they would have been destroyed by the plantation and no further heritage assessment is required (Page v-vi). The same conclusion can be taken for any potential surface palaeontology.

Palaeontological Assessment

The mining of sand from the adjacent farm, Bankfontein, is being proposed. Although fossil plants of Dwyka age are known from the banks of the Vaal River (Plumstead, 1966, Kovacs Endrody, 1971) these occur in solid rock. Terrestrial fossils do not occur *in situ* in loose sand (but on extremely rare occasions may have been incorporated in sands when washed down from distant sites. However they are of no significance as their origin would be unknown). Therefore it is unnecessary to carry out any palaeontological assessment for the mining of the loose riverine sand.

In the extremely unlikely event of any fossils being found in the sand they should be collected and given to a palaeontologist to identify and assess for importance.

ESI

Recommendation

No Palaeontological Assessment is required for the mining of sand on the farm Bankfontein 9.

If you need further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "M Bamford", with a horizontal line underneath.

Prof Marion Bamford
Evolutionary Studies Institute