



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 12860

Date: Thursday September 27, 2018
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Interim Comment

In terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: White Rivers Exploration (Pty) Ltd

White Rivers Exploration submitted a Prospecting Right and an Environmental Authorisation application to the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) Free State Regional Office. The application for the Prospecting Right was accepted by the DMR Free State Regional Office on the 25th June 2018. If the application is granted, White Rivers Exploration will be enabled to ascertain if economically viable mineral deposits exist within the application area. The minerals of interest include: gold, silver, coal, cobalt, copper, diamond (alluvial), iron, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, lead, platinum group metals, rare earths, sulphur, uranium, tungsten and zinc. The proposed prospecting programme will be completed within five (5) years.

The proposed project entails a prospecting right application for gold, silver, coal, cobalt, copper, diamond (alluvial), iron, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, lead, platinum group metals, rare earths, sulphur, uranium, tungsten and zinc on 90 farm portions (18623.73 hectares) within the Vredefort Magisterial district, near Parys, Free State Province. Proposed invasive activities will include vegetation clearing and trenching of two trenches (phase 4). In an interim comment dated 12 September 2018 SAHRA requested a desktop Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) to be submitted. After the locations of trenches have been identified (after phase 3) and before trenching-related activities including vegetation clearing commences (before phase 4) a full field-based HIA and PIA must be conducted for the identified trenching and vegetation clearing locations by a professional archaeologist and palaeontologist and submitted to SAHRA for comment. The submitted draft BAR and EMP states that only two trenches (3x10x1.5m) will be excavated, which will be located on the farm Mimosa grove 491. As two proposed trench sites have been identified at this stage, a full phase 1 HIA and desktop PIA were submitted.

De Bruyn, C. 2018. Heritage Impact Assessment the Prospecting Right and Environmental Authorisation Application for Vredefort West situated in the Free State Province.

The author identified the following sites within the proposed broader Vredefort West prospecting area:

- Mim Gro Cem-01: small cemetery containing 33 graves on the farm Mimosa Grove 491 located approximately 700 m to the north west of Trench 1 and falls just outside the 500 m zone of influence.



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- Lindek Cem-01: small cemetery containing 32 graves on the farm Lindekfeesfontein 73 located approximately 2.4 km to the north west of Trench 1 and falls just outside the 500 m zone of influence.
- Rhebok Cem-01: 14 graves on the Rhebokfontein West 117 located approximately 21 km to the south of Trench 1.
- Site complex 01: Several collapsed Late Iron Age stone walls on the farm Rhebokfontein West 117 located approximately 19 km to the south of Trench 1.

The following identified sites fall outside the proposed broader Vredefort West prospecting area but within a 500 m of influence:

- Onreg Cem-01: 11 graves on the farm Onreg 1032 located approximately 21 km to the south of Trench 1.

Recommendations include:

- The cemeteries (Mim Gro Cem-01 and Lindek Cem-01) identified near the location of Trench 1 and 2 on the farms Mimosa Groove 491 and Lindekfeesfontein 73 should be fenced off from prospecting activities and a 10m buffer be established from each of the cemeteries. These areas should be considered as No-Go-Areas.
- Should the prospecting activities expand in the near future to include the farm Rhebokfontein West 117, the cemetery (Rhebok Cem-01) should also be fenced off from prospecting activities and a 10m buffer zone be established. This area will become a No-Go-Area, and mining and prospecting machinery and vehicles should avoid the area.
- Should the prospecting activities expand in the near future to include the farm Rhebokfontein West 117, a Phase II investigation of the stonewalls (Site Complex 01) on the Rhebokfontein West 117 should be conducted, where it is mapped, recorded and permit for alterations and demolition should be applied for in terms of Section 34 of the NHRA, No. 25 of 1999 with the provincial heritage authority i.e. Free State Provincial Heritage Authority (FSPHRA).
- Should the prospecting activities expand in the near future a buffer zone should be established around Onreg Cem-01 on the farm Onreg 1032 and it should be marled as a No-Go-Area.



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- The historical graves identified are rated as high/medium significance and are protected as a in terms of Section 36) of the NHRA, No. 25 of 1999. As such it is recommended that no machinery or site office associated with the proposed prospecting activities should be established near the graves.

- Some archaeological material, including artefacts and graves can be buried underground and as such, may not have been identified during the initial survey and site visits. In the case where the proposed development activities bring these materials to the surface, they should be treated as Chance Finds. Should such resources be unearthed it is recommended that, the prospecting activities be stopped immediately, and an archaeologist be contacted to conduct a site visits and make recommendations on the mitigation of the finds. SAHRA and NW-PHRA should also be informed immediately on such finds.

- The proposed development will not have impact on the heritage and archaeological resources in the broader Vredefort area.

Bamford, M. 2018. Palaeontological Impact Assessment for the Proposed Kroonstad South PWP, Free State Province, South Africa.

The Farm Mimosa Grove 491 falls on ancient non-fossiliferous rocks of the Witwatersrand Group (Government and Jeppetown Subgroups) in the central and east parts. A narrow section in the west occurs on sandstones and shales of the Vryheid Formation that could preserve fossil plants of the *Glossopteris* flora (early Permian).

consists of rocks of the Karoo Supergroup overlying those of the Central Rand and West Rand groups of the Witwatersrand Supergroup

Recommendations include:

A Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be followed once drilling and coring commences as there is a small chance that fossil plants could occur in the small footprint of the coring site. If fossils are found by the responsible person a palaeontologist should be called to assess them.

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Please note that the title of the PIA should be changed to Vredefort West. It must also be noted that the PIA conducted is for a mining right application for sand mining as opposed to prospection right application for a variety of minerals; this should also be corrected. There is an inconsistency as the general arrow in the current 1:1 000 000 map (Figure 2) appears to indicate an area within the Vryheid Formation while the text describes the presence of Vryheid Formation and Witwatersrand Group. For clarity, the proposed area with the two trenches must be indicated in a geological map of a scale of at least 1:250 000 other than the SAHRIS PalaeoSensitivity map.

The SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit requires an amended PIA to be submitted in accordance with the above mentioned requirements and will comment on the HIA and amended PIA once the document is submitted.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Ragna Redelstorff
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Phillip Hine
Acting Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/511577>

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.