



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 20883

Date: Friday June 30, 2023

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Interim Comment

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

Attention: Bonsmara Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd

The activities entail the development of an up to 250MW photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on the farm Leeuwpan No. 697, Registration Division IQ, situated within the Merafong City Local Municipality area of jurisdiction. The town of Carletonville is located approximately ~17km south of the proposed development (refer to the attached locality map). The project entails the generation of up to 250MW electrical power through photovoltaic (PV) panels. The total footprint of the project (including supporting infrastructure on site) will be placed within the assessed EIA footprint of approximately 4276,4 hectares. The project will form part of the Pluto Solar PV cluster which includes three other projects on the same property namely the Angus Solar Power Plant, Simbra Solar Power Plant and the Tuli Solar Power Plant. The property on which the facility is to be constructed will be leased by Bonsmara Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd from the property owner, for the lifespan of the project (minimum of 20 years).

Environamics Environmental Consultants (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by Bonsmara Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd to undertake a Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment in support of an Environmental Authorisation (EA) in terms of the National Environment Management Act, Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) for activities that trigger the NEMA EIA 2014 Regulations, for the construction of a solar power plant. The plant will be consisting of solar array panels with a generation capacity of 250MW, a BESS, an on-site substation and 132kV power line to connect to the Eskom 132kV Overhead Line. The facility will be 500 ha in extent located near the town of Carltonville, in the Merafong Local Municipality of Gauteng Province.

The Background Information Document (BID) has been submitted to SAHRA in terms of section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999 for commenting. The report states that a Heritage Impact Assessment (PIA) and a Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) will be commissioned for the EIA phase. The reports were submitted to the case on SAHRIS on 22/05/2023. This application (case 20883) is one of 4 solar PV facilities that form part of the Pluto SPP application area. The following applications on SAHRIS are: (Tuli, case 20885), Simbra (case 20884), Angus (case 20882).

The SAHRA issued an Interim Comment dated 27/03/2023 requesting the submission of a Heritage Impact Assessment by a suitably qualified archaeologist and a Palaeontological Impact Assessment by a suitably



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qualified palaeontologist.

Lavin, J. March 2023. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT in terms of Section 38(8) of the NHRA for the Proposed Development of the Bonsmara Solar Power Plant, near Carletonville, Gauteng and North West Province.

The plant area has been subjected to a field survey with no limitations, and no heritage resources were identified within the current development footprint. A historic building (Site 036) was identified in the adjacent Angus Solar PV, and outside the study area, a cemetery (Site 028) located 100m away from the proposed power line and historic building (Site 014) was identified. These sites will not be impacted by this project. The study area has been disturbed by recent agricultural activities and residential development. The author recommends the following:

- The Chance Fossil Finds Procedure must be implemented for the duration of construction activities,
- Any palaeontological and archaeological material uncovered during construction must be kept *in situ* and the ECO must be informed of the findings.

Butler, E. March 2023. Palaeontological Impact Assessment. The Development of the Bonsmara Solar Power Plant Near Carltonville, Gauteng Province.

The study area is entirely underlain by Precambrian undifferentiated dolomites and associated marine sedimentary rocks of the Malmani Subgroup (Chuniespoort Group, Transvaal Supergroup). The Malmani Subgroup has Very High palaeontological significance and is known for stromatolites (microbial laminates), ranging from supratidal mats to inter tidal columns and large subtidal domes. The author recommends the following:

The ECO for this project must be informed that the Malmani Subgroup has a Very High Palaeontological Sensitivity.

If Palaeontological Heritage is uncovered during surface clearing and excavations the Chance find Protocol attached should be implemented immediately. Fossil discoveries ought to be protected and the ECO/site manager must report to South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) so that mitigation (recording and collection) can be carried out.

Before any fossil material can be collected from the development site the specialist involved would need to apply for a collection permit from SAHRA. Fossil material must be housed in an official collection (museum or university), while all reports and fieldwork should meet the minimum standards for palaeontological

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impact studies proposed by SAHRA (2012).

These recommendations should be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plan for the Bonsmara Solar Power Plant.

Interim Comment

The SAHRA Development Applications Unit (DAU) notes the submission of the Scoping Report and the Heritage reports. The case will be processed further once the draft EIAr documents and the appendices are submitted to the case.

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

Yours faithfully

Nokukhanya Khumalo
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

Natasha Higgitt
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South African Heritage Resources Agency

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ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/615176>