



Final Comment

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

Attention: Mr Mike Nel
Canyon Springs Investments 82 (Pty) Ltd
P O Box 1825
Brooklyn Square
0075

Proposed Canyon Springs Coal Project: Siyabuswa district, Mpumalanga Province

Van Vollenhoven, AC. August 2012. A report on a Cultural Heritage Assessment for the Canyon Springs Coal Project, Siyabuswa District, Mpumalanga Province.

Bamford, M. September 2013. SAHRA's request for a Palaeontological Impact Assessment for development of an opencast mine by Canyon Springs Investments 82 (Pty) Ltd, near Bela-Bela, Mpumalanga – on behalf of Prime Resources, Parktown North, Johannesburg (Ms Zoë Gebhardt)

Canyon Springs Investments 82 (Pty) Ltd is proposing the development of an opencast coal mine on the farm Roodekoppies 167 IR, in the Siyabuswa District of Mpumalanga Province. The farm Roodekoppies 167 IR is 4036 hectares in extent, however, the colliery will occupy a much smaller footprint. The life of the mine will be twenty-seven years with about 250 000 tons of coal mined per month.

According to the heritage report submitted a baseline study was conducted in November 2011 to determine infrastructure locations. The field assessment was undertaken later and focused only on the footprint of the development. The archaeologist indicated that the area is extensively disturbed by previous activities such as agriculture and grazing. The archaeologist noted that villages are located in the project area and that cemeteries are associated with these villages. The villages and extension will be excluded from the project footprint.

Three sites of heritage significance were identified during the field assessment:

- Site 1: An old farmyard consisting of building ruins, an old dam and other structures. The author notes that the structures are of low significance; however, they are older than 60 years therefore may not be disturbed without a valid permit. The author did not specify the total number of structures which makes up the farmyard.
- Site 2: A mixed assemblage of Stone Age and Iron Age artefacts. One of the potsherds could possibly be dated to the Rooiberg facies of the LIA. The author regarded the site to be of low significance since it represents a mixed assemblage in a disturbed context. The size of site, density, and the types of MSA/LSA artefacts were not provided in the report. Although the site/feature is regarded as being of low significance, in future detailed analysis of the sites are required for SAHRA to take an informed decision.





- Site 3: A mixed MSA and LSA site within the Ghotwane River floodplain. This site was rated by the specialist as having a low significance because of its disturbed context.

A "Desktop PIA" was submitted for the above study as per SAHRA's request dated 22 October 2012. As the submitted assessment does not comply with SAHRA's minimum standards for palaeontological impact assessments as was distributed to palaeontologists in April 2013, the "Desktop PIA" has been assessed a a letter requesting exemption from conducting further palaeontological studies.

According to the submitted letter, the study area is underlain by the Early Permian Ecca Group of the Karoo Supergroup. While no fossils have previously been reported from the area proposed for development, there is a chance that they may be impacted.

Decision

Since all three sites identified fall outside the area to be affected by the proposed colliery no further action is required at the moment. However, the areas should be avoided by contractors to ensure that accidental damage does not take place.

- Decisions regarding site 1 must be referred to the Mpumalanga Provincial Heritage Authority (Mr Benjamin Moduka, bmoduka@mpg.gov.za), whose responsibility is to make decisions about Built Environment and structures older than 60 years.

- SAHRA has no objection to the proposed project in terms of the archaeological component of the heritage resources, provided the recommendations listed in this review comment are adhered.

- If any evidence of archaeological sites or remains (e.g., remnants of stone-made structures, indigenous ceramics, bones, stone artefacts, ostrich eggshell fragments, marine shell and charcoal/ash concentrations), unmarked human burials, fossils or other categories of heritage resources are found during mining activities, SAHRA APM Unit (Ms Jenna Lavin or Mrs Colette Scheermeyer, Tel: 021 462 4502) must be alerted immediately, and an professional archaeologist or palaeontologist must be contacted as soon as possible to inspect the findings. If the newly discovered heritage resources prove to be of archaeological or palaeontological significance a Phase 2 rescue operation might be necessary.

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

Yours faithfully

Jenna Lavin
Heritage Officer





South African Heritage Resources Agency

Colette Scheermeyer
SAHRA Head Archaeologist
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/92617>

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.

