



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 9893

Date: Thursday December 15, 2016

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Interim Comment

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

Attention: Mr Mark Myatt

Rietvlei Mining Company (Pty) Ltd

The proposed mining area lies within a farming area within the larger Witbank Coalfield and is bordered by private properties on all sides. The mine boundary covers an area of 2 225.30ha; of this approximately 800ha will be mined. The Proposed Project is located approximately 50km northeast of the town of eMalaheni and 22km northeast of Middelburg in the Mpumalanga Province on Farm Rietvlei 397 Remaining Extent and Portion 1, Mpumalanga.

WSP Environmental (Pty) Ltd has appointed Dr Fourie to conduct a field based Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) on behalf of their client Rietvlei Mining Company (Pty) Ltd, following an Interim Comment (21/09/2016) that SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit had issued to the case on SAHRIS.

Fourie, H. October 2016. Proposed Greenfields Rietvlei Opencast Coal Mining Operation, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Nkangala District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province. Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Phase 1 Field Study.

The rock unit underlying the Greenfields Opencast Coal Mine forms part of the mid-Permian sandstone, shaly sandstone, grit, coal, shale and conglomerate of the Vryheid Formation, Ecca Group (Karoo Supergroup). The Vryheid Formation has the presence of rich plant fossils of the Glossopteris Flora and is considered to be of moderate to very high palaeontological sensitivity, the likelihood of fossils being uncovered by mining operations are very high.

The report fails to provide clear recommendations on how to mitigate the any fossils that may be impacted during the construction phase and operational phase of the mine. The document reads as if a field assessment has yet to be done in some places, whilst in others the report mentions that a field assessment was conducted in mid October 2016. This report fails to put forth clear processes in the chance finds procedures which the ECO can use for monitoring processes.

Interim Comment

SAHRA APM Unit requires for this PIA report to be amended as follows:

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- Clear recommendations on the fossil heritage and the impacts to fossiliferous rock units should be given in the report. This should include field ratings and significance.
- If any rock outcrops with fossils were found mitigation measures should be clear and detailed.
- Clarify if a field assessment was conducted and remove parts that refer to further field assessment requirements.
- Draw up clear fossil finds procedure that should be included in the EMPr document. The procedure must detail processes in which the ECO must cordon off a section of the construction zone if any fossils are uncovered, and when to inform SAHRA Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites (APM) Unit as well as a palaeontologist to come and inspect the finds and provide further recommendations for mitigation. In addition the procedure must include a monitoring schedule for the palaeontologist to inspect the waste rock dump for any fossils that have been removed during mining operations.
- SAHRA will give Final Comments once the above is included into the PIA report.

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

John Gribble
Manager: Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit / 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/367615>
(DMR-MP, Ref: MP30/5/1/2/2/10105MR)