



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 16592

Date: Friday September 03, 2021
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Interim Comment

In terms of Section 38(3), 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

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

The activity entails the development of a photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on the farm Weltevrede No. 638, Registration Division Theunissen, Free State Province situated within the Matjhabeng Local Municipality area of jurisdiction. The proposed development is located in the Free State province in the central interior of South-Africa. The town of Welkom is located approximately 23km north-northwest and Virginia is located approximately 10km north-northeast of the proposed development. The project entails the generation of up to 150MW electrical power through photovoltaic (PV) panels. The total development footprint of the project will approximately be 280 hectares including supporting Infrastructure on site.

Springbok Solar Power Plant (RF) (Pty) Ltd appointed Environamics to undertake the Environmental Authorisation (EA) Application for the development of a photovoltaic solar facility and associated infrastructure on the Farm Weltevrede No. 638 in Theunissen, Free State Province.

A Draft Basic Assessment Report was submitted in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act 107 of 1998) and the NEMA EIA Regulations. The project entails the generation of up to 150MW electrical power through photovoltaic (PV) panels. The total footprint of the project will be approximately 280 hectares.

SAHRA issued an interim comment dated 19/07/2021 which requested the submission of a HIA inclusive of an AIA and PIA components. The PIA and HIA along with the Draft Scoping Report were submitted on the 30/07/2021.

J A van Schalkwyk and Dr John E. Almond to provide the heritage specialist reports as part of the EA process as required in terms of section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and in terms of section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

van Schalkwyk, J. A. 2021. Phase 1 Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment: The Proposed Springbok Solar Power Plant Near Welkom/Virginia, Free State Province



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During the survey an informal burial site with probably more than 5 graves was identified. Most of the graves are marked with stone cairns. The remains of an extensive farmstead was also identified. The grave site is of high significance and the farmstead is of low significance for which no mitigation is required. Design alternatives will be considered throughout the planning and design phase and specialist studies are expected to inform the final layout of the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that

Recommendations for Mitigation:

- Once the developer has decided on a final layout, the vegetation cover is manually removed from the burial site in order to determine its exact size and significance.
- Avoidance/Preserve: If it is decided to retain the burial site, and its exact size has been determined it should be fenced off permanently by means of a wire fence or brick wall, with a buffer zone of at least 100m.
- Relocation of graves: This option can be implemented with additional design and construction inputs. This is appropriate where development occurs in a context of heritage significance and where the impact is such that it can be mitigated. Mitigation is to excavate the site by archaeological techniques, document the site (map and photograph) and analyse the recovered material to acceptable standards.

Almond, J, E. 2021. Palaeontological Heritage Report: Combined Desktop & Field-Based Assessment Proposed Springbok Solar Power Plant On The Farm Weltevrede No. 638 Near Virginia, Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Free State Province

The solar facility and grid connection project area is underlain by the Adelaide Subgroup (Lower Beaufort Group, Karoo Supergroup) which is associated with fossil biotas of the Daptocephalus Assemblage Zone. No fossils were recorded within Adelaide Subgroup bedrocks. Palaeosensitivity of the bedrocks regionally may have been reduced by dolerite intrusions. The entire region is covered by Late Caenozoic aeolian sands and alluvial deposits which may contain important fossil bones, teeth and horn cores of mammals, ancient human remains, non-marine molluscs, ostrich egg shells, trace fossils, and plant remains such as peats or palynomorphs (pollens) in fine-grained, organic-rich alluvial horizons. Petrified wood blocks were identified within the development area, but are of low scientific value. A Chance Fossil Finds Procedure has been attached.

The Final Scoping Report was submitted to the case on the 02/09/2021 the location of the heritage object

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(burial) site will also be considered as part of the final layout plan. Therefore, a single preferred location alternative was assessed. The size of the site makes provision for the exclusion of any sensitive environmental features that may arise during the EIA proses.

Interim Comment

The SAHRA notes the heritage specialist reports along with the recommendations provided therein. The SAHRA awaits the submission of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before further comments can be made.

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

Yours faithfully

Sityhilelo Ngcatsha
Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorite Assistant
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/575351>

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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.