

**Palaeontological Impact Assessment for the proposed
Nkanyezi Township, Colenso,
KwaZulu Natal Province**

Desktop Study (Phase 1)

For

Ngoti Development Consultants

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Expertise of Specialist

The Palaeontologist Consultant: Prof Marion Bamford

Qualifications: PhD (Wits Univ, 1990); FRSSAf, ASSAf

Experience: 32 years research; 24 years PIA studies

Declaration of Independence

This report has been compiled by Professor Marion Bamford, of the University of the Witwatersrand, sub-contracted by Ngoti Development Consultants, South Africa. The views expressed in this report are entirely those of the author and no other interest was displayed during the decision making process for the Project.

Specialist: Prof Marion Bamford

Signature:



Executive Summary

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment was requested for the proposed Nkanyezi township on Erven 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195 and a portion of 10 000 Nkanyezi, east of Colenso, Alfred Duma Local Municipality.

To comply with the regulations of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), a desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed for the proposed development.

The proposed site lies on the Quaternary sands, partly consolidated sediments with silica nodules that might include transported fossils from the source area, but no fossils would have been preserved in situ in the transported materials. No fossils have been reported from the site. Nonetheless, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. Based on this information it is recommended that no palaeontological site visit is required unless fossils are found by the environmental officer or other responsible person once excavations have commenced for the amenities, infrastructure and foundations.

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1. Background

The Alfred Duma Local Municipality proposes to establish a township in Nkanyezi, east of Colenso, KwaZulu Natal Province (Figure 1). The township site comprises Erven 189, 10, 191, 193, 194, 195 and a portion of 10 000 Nkanyezi.

There will be public open space and 216 units of Residential 1 of approximately 300m² each. The whole area including roads will occupy 9,0825 Ha (Figure 2) and the relevant amenities and infrastructure will be constructed.

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment was requested for the Nkanyezi Township project. To comply with the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), a desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed for the proposed development and is reported herein.

Table 1: Specialist report requirements in terms of Appendix 6 of the EIA Regulations (amended 2017)

A specialist report prepared in terms of the Environmental Impact Regulations of 2017 must contain:		Relevant section in report
ai	Details of the specialist who prepared the report	Appendix B
a ii	The expertise of that person to compile a specialist report including a curriculum vitae	Appendix B
b	A declaration that the person is independent in a form as may be specified by the competent authority	Page 1
c	An indication of the scope of, and the purpose for which, the report was prepared	Section 1
ci	An indication of the quality and age of the base data used for the specialist report: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map accessed – date of this report	Yes
cii	A description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change	Section 5
d	The date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment	Not relevant to fossils
e	A description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process	Section 2
f	The specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the activity and its associated structures and infrastructure	Section 4
g	An identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers	None
h	A map superimposing the activity including the associated structures and infrastructure on the environmental sensitivities of the site including areas to be avoided, including buffers;	N/A

i	A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	Section 5
j	A description of the findings and potential implications of such findings on the impact of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives, on the environment	Section 4
k	Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr	Section 8, Appendix A
l	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation	Section 8, Appendix A
m	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation	Section 8, Appendix A
ni	A reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised	Section 7
nii	If the opinion is that the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised, any avoidance, management and mitigation measures that should be included in the EMPr, and where applicable, the closure plan	N/A
o	A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of carrying out the study	N/A
p	A summary and copies if any comments that were received during any consultation process	N/A
q	Any other information requested by the competent authority.	N/A



Figure 1: Google Earth map of the proposed Nkanyezi Township, just east of Colenso, shown within the yellow outline. Map supplied by Ngoti.

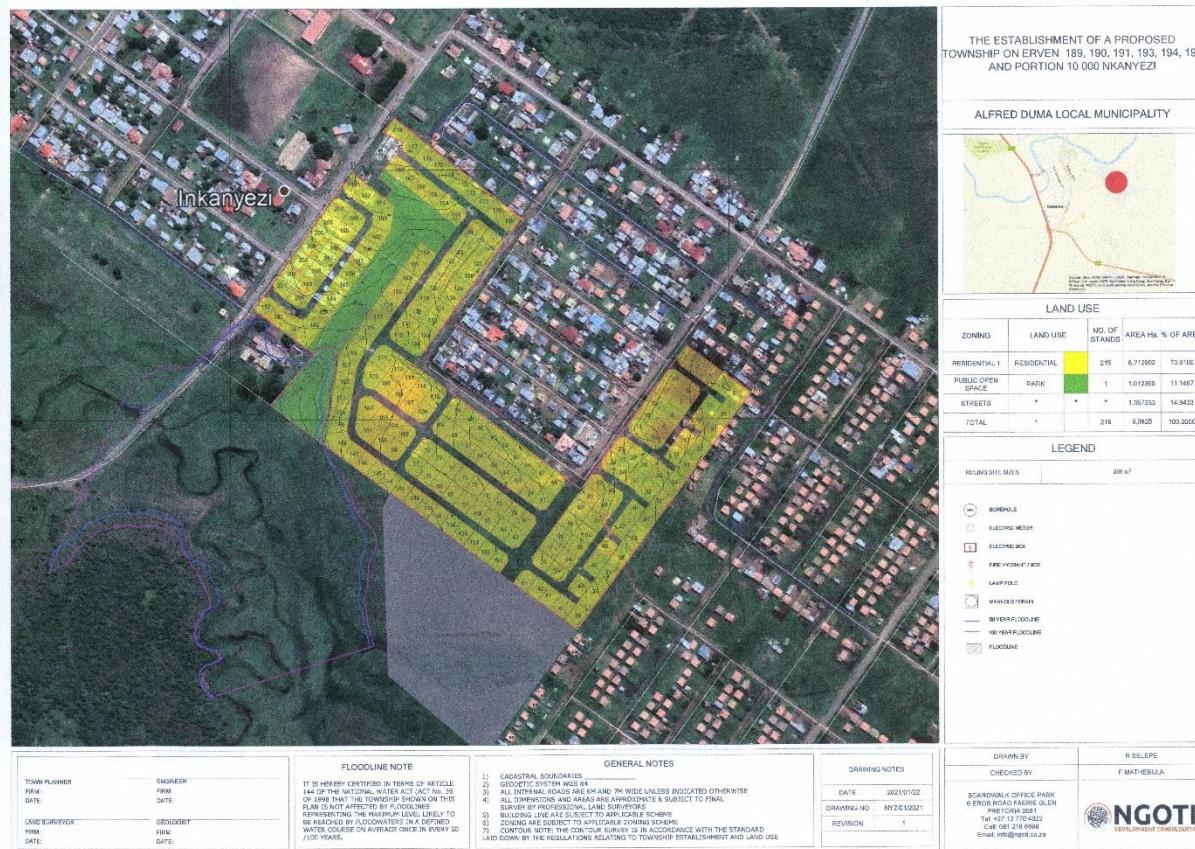


Figure 2: Detailed layout of the proposed Nkanyezi township, east of Colenso.

2. Methods and Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this study were to undertake a PIA and provide feasible management measures to comply with the requirements of SAHRA.

The methods employed to address the ToR included:

1. Consultation of geological maps, literature, palaeontological databases, published and unpublished records to determine the likelihood of fossils occurring in the affected areas. Sources included records housed at the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand and SAHRA databases;
2. Where necessary, site visits by a qualified palaeontologist to locate any fossils and assess their importance (*not applicable to this assessment*);
3. Where appropriate, collection of unique or rare fossils with the necessary permits for storage and curation at an appropriate facility (*not applicable to this assessment*); and
4. Determination of fossils' representativity or scientific importance to decide if the fossils can be destroyed or a representative sample collected (*not applicable to this assessment*).

3. Geology and Palaeontology

i. Project location and geological context

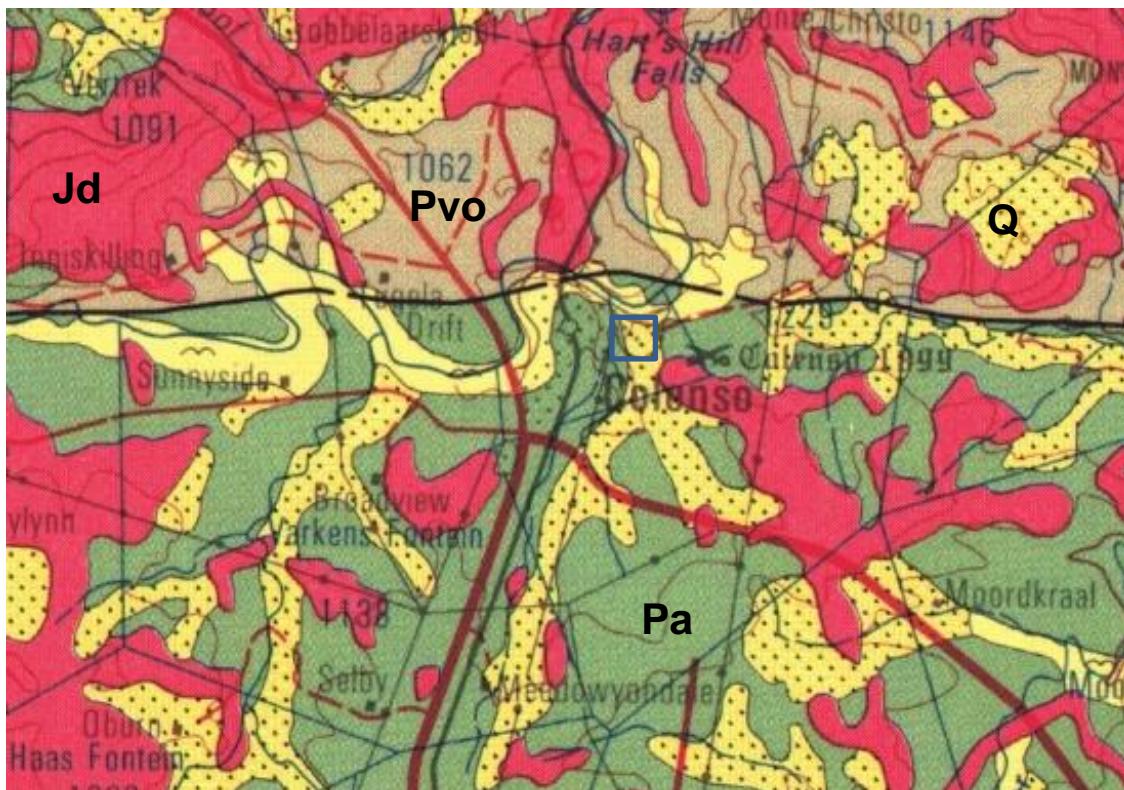


Figure 3: Geological map of the area around Colenso and the proposed project is indicated within the blue rectangle. Abbreviations of the rock types are explained in Table 2. Map enlarged from the Geological Survey 1: 250 000 map 2828 Harrismith.

Table 2: Explanation of symbols for the geological map and approximate ages (Johnson et al., 2006; Partridge et al., 2006). SG = Supergroup; Fm = Formation; Ma = million years; grey shading = formations impacted by the project.

Symbol	Group/Formation	Lithology	Approximate Age
Q	Quaternary	Alluvium, sand, calcrete; Dots = partly consolidated sediments with silica nodules	Neogene, ca 2.5 Ma to present
Jd	Jurassic dykes	Dolerite dykes, intrusive	Jurassic, approx. 180 Ma
Pa	Adelaide Subgroup, Beaufort Group, Karoo SG	Grey mudstone, shale, siltstone, sandstone	Late Permian, ca 260-251 Ma
Pvo	Volksrust Fm, Ecca Group, Karoo SG	Dark-grey shales, mudstones	mid Permian, Upper Ecca

The site is in the eastern part of the main Karoo Basin that has been filled with sediments of the Karoo Supergroup.

During the Carboniferous Period South Africa was part of the huge continental landmass known as Gondwanaland and it positioned over the South Pole. As a result there were several ice sheets that formed and melted, and covered most of South Africa (Visser, 1986, 1989; Isbell et al., 2012). Gradual melting of the ice as the continental mass moved northwards and the earth warmed, formed sediments in the large inland sea. These are the oldest rocks in the system and are exposed around the outer part of the ancient Karoo Basin and are known as the Dwyka Group. They comprise tillites, diamictites, mudstones, siltstones and sandstones that were deposited as the basin filled.

Overlying the Dwyka Group rocks are rocks of the Ecca Group that are Early Permian in age. There are eleven formations recognised in this group but they do not all extend throughout the Karoo Basin. In the west and central part are the following formations, from base upwards: Prince Albert Formation, Whitehill Formation, Collingham Formation, Laingsburg / Ripon Formations, Tierberg / Fort Brown Formations, and Waterford Formation. In the Free State and KwaZulu Natal, from the base upwards are the Pietermaritzburg Formation, Vryheid Formation and the Volksrust Formation. All of these sediments have varying proportions of sandstones, mudstones, shales and siltstones and represent shallow to deep water settings, deltas, rivers, streams and overbank depositional environments.

Overlying the Ecca Group rocks are the Beaufort Group Rocks that are late Permian and early Triassic in age. There are two subgroups recognised in the Beaufort Group, the lower Adelaide Subgroup and the upper Tarkastad Subgroup. Six formations comprise the Adelaide Subgroup but their distribution is not the same throughout the basin. West of the 24°E line of latitude the rocks have been divided in the basal Abrahamskraal Formation, the upper Teekloof Formation and no younger rocks. East of the 24°E line of latitude there are three formations: the basal Koonap Formation, Middleton Formation and the Balfour Formation. Five members are noted in the Balfour Formation. In the Free State and KwaZulu Natal upper Beaufort, only one formation is usually recognised, the Normandien Formation (previously known as the Estcourt Formation; Johnson et al., 2006).

The Stormberg Group overlies the Beaufort Group and finally the Drakensberg Group volcanics (basalt and dolerite dykes) concluded the deposition of the Karoo Supergroup. At the same time as the massive basalt eruptions occurred in the early Jurassic, numerous dykes intruded through the sediments and are visible as ridges and hills, or remain below ground.

Much younger deposition occurred during the Quaternary of sediments that have eroded from older rocks, such as the Karoo Supergroup, older igneous rocks and sandstones, during the African Erosion Cycles of the Cenozoic (Partridge et al., 2006). These fluvial and aeolian (windblown) sands, gravels and alluvium have covered large areas of the land surface. In some regions where there have been wet-dry recurring cycles, calcretes, limestones and silcretes have partially cemented these sediments.

ii. Palaeontological context

The palaeontological sensitivity of the area under consideration is presented in Figure 4. The site is indicated as being of moderate palaeosensitivity (green), referring to the Quaternary partially consolidated sediments (yellow with black dots; Figure 2).

Quaternary calcretes and sands may preserve fragments of transported bone, wood, rhizoliths and invertebrate shells but these would be out of context and very small. Only under special conditions such as palaeo-pans and palaeo-springs would younger and more complete fossils be likely to form or be trapped. These would include Quaternary aged plants, wood, mammals, rodents and invertebrates (Partridge et al., 2006; Goudie and Wells, 1995). Pans do occur in the more northwestern arid region of central South Africa (Goudie and Wells, 1995, Fig. 2) but are not common in KwaZulu Natal that has a much higher rainfall.

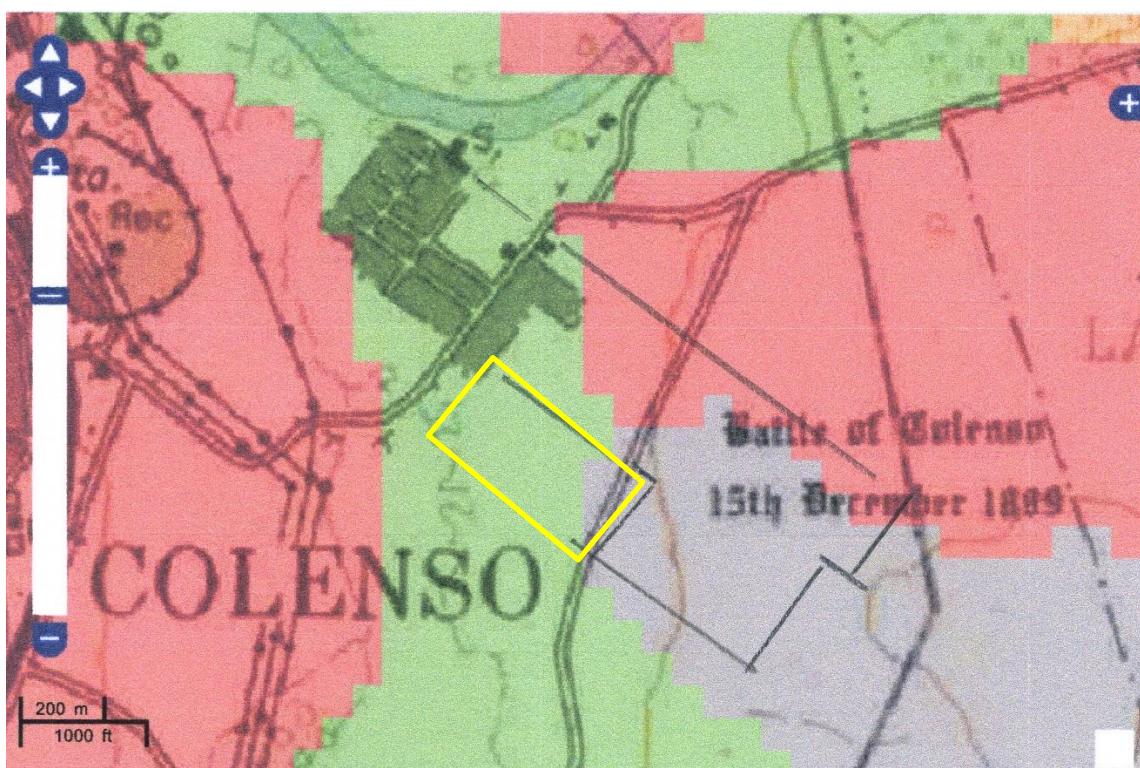


Figure 4: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map for the site for the proposed Nkanyezi Township shown within the yellow rectangle. Background colours indicate the following degrees of sensitivity: red = very highly sensitive; orange/yellow = high; green = moderate; blue = low; grey = insignificant/zero.

4. Impact assessment

An assessment of the potential impacts to possible palaeontological resources considers the criteria encapsulated in Table 3:

TABLE 3A: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING IMPACTS

PART A: DEFINITION AND CRITERIA		
Criteria for ranking of the SEVERITY/NATURE of environmental impacts	H	Substantial deterioration (death, illness or injury). Recommended level will often be violated. Vigorous community action.
	M	Moderate/ measurable deterioration (discomfort). Recommended level will occasionally be violated. Widespread complaints.
	L	Minor deterioration (nuisance or minor deterioration). Change not measurable/ will remain in the current range. Recommended level will never be violated. Sporadic complaints.
	L+	Minor improvement. Change not measurable/ will remain in the current range. Recommended level will never be violated. Sporadic complaints.
	M+	Moderate improvement. Will be within or better than the recommended level. No observed reaction.
	H+	Substantial improvement. Will be within or better than the recommended level. Favourable publicity.
Criteria for ranking the DURATION of impacts	L	Quickly reversible. Less than the project life. Short term
	M	Reversible over time. Life of the project. Medium term
	H	Permanent. Beyond closure. Long term.
Criteria for ranking the SPATIAL SCALE of impacts	L	Localised - Within the site boundary.
	M	Fairly widespread – Beyond the site boundary. Local
	H	Widespread – Far beyond site boundary. Regional/ national
PROBABILITY (of exposure to impacts)	H	Definite/ Continuous
	M	Possible/ frequent
	L	Unlikely/ seldom

TABLE 3B: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PART B: ASSESSMENT		
SEVERITY/NATURE	H	-
	M	-
	L	Transported sands do not preserve fossils but might entrap older/ex situ fossils; so far there are no records of plant or animal fossils in this region so it is very unlikely that fossils occur on the site. The impact would be very unlikely.
	L+	-
	M+	-
	H+	-
DURATION	L	-
	M	-
	H	Where manifest, the impact will be permanent.
SPATIAL SCALE	L	Since the only possible fossils within the area would be transported very small or fragmentary fossils in the sands and alluvium, the spatial scale will be localised within the site boundary.
	M	-
	H	-

PART B: ASSESSMENT		
PROBABILITY	H	-
	M	-
	L	It is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be found in the soils or loose sand that will be excavated. Nonetheless, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the eventual EMPr.

Based on the nature of the project, surface activities may impact upon the fossil heritage if preserved in the development footprint. The geological structures suggest that the surrounding rocks are the correct type and age to preserve fossils, but the transported Quaternary sediments on the site would preserve *in situ* fossils. Transported fragments of fossils might be trapped in the sands but their scientific value is greatly reduced because the primary context is lost, and the fossils would be very fragmented. Since there is an extremely small chance that fossils from the Quaternary sands may be disturbed, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol has been added to this report. Taking account of the defined criteria, the potential impact to fossil heritage resources is extremely low.

5. Assumptions and uncertainties

Based on the geology of the area and the palaeontological record as we know it, it can be assumed that the formation and layout of the dolomites, sandstones, shales and sands are typical for the country and some do contain fossil plant, insect, invertebrate and vertebrate material. The sands of the Quaternary period would not preserve fossils because they are transported, sorted and redeposited, thus partially or completely destroying fossils, if they were present.

6. Recommendation

Based on experience and the lack of any previously recorded fossils from the area, it is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be preserved in the sands and partially cemented sediments of the Quaternary. There is a very small chance that fossils may have survived and been trapped in the sediments, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. If fossils are found once excavations for foundations and amenities has commenced then they should be rescued and a palaeontologist called to assess and collect a representative sample.

7. References

Goudie, A.S., Wells, G.L., 1995. The nature, distribution and formation of pans in arid zones. Earth Science Reviews 38, 1-69.

Isbell, J.L., Henry, L.C., Gulbranson, E.L., Limarino, C.O., Fraiser, F.L., Koch, Z.J., Ciccioli, P.I., Dineen, A.A., 2012. Glacial paradoxes during the late Paleozoic ice age: Evaluating the equilibrium line altitude as a control on glaciation. *Gondwana Research* 22, 1-19.

Johnson, M.R., van Vuuren, C.J., Visser, J.N.J., Cole, D.I., Wickens, H.deV., Christie, A.D.M., Roberts, D.L., Brandl, G., 2006. Sedimentary rocks of the Karoo Supergroup. In: Johnson, M.R., Anhaeusser, C.R. and Thomas, R.J., (Eds). *The Geology of South Africa*. Geological Society of South Africa, Johannesburg / Council for Geoscience, Pretoria. Pp 461 – 499.

Partridge, T.C., Botha, G.A., Haddon, I.G., 2006. Cenozoic deposits of the interior. In: Johnson, M.R., Anhaeusser, C.R. and Thomas, R.J., (Eds). *The Geology of South Africa*. Geological Society of South Africa, Johannesburg / Council for Geoscience, Pretoria. Pp 585-604.

Visser, J.N.J., 1986. Lateral lithofacies relationship sin the glaciene Dwyka Formationin the western and central parts of the Karoo Basin. *Transactions of the Geological Society of South Africa* 89, 373-383.

Visser, J.N.J., 1989. The Permo-Carboniferous Dwyka Formation of southern Africa: deposition by a predominantly subpolar marine icesheet. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 70, 377-391.

8. Chance Find Protocol

Monitoring Programme for Palaeontology – to commence once the excavations or construction activities begin.

1. The following procedure is only required if fossils are seen on the surface and when drilling/excavations commence.
2. When excavations begin the rocks and must be given a cursory inspection by the environmental officer or designated person. Any fossiliferous material (plants, insects, bone, coal or shells) should be put aside in a suitably protected place. This way the project activities will not be interrupted.
3. Photographs of similar fossils must be provided to the developer to assist in recognizing the fossil plants, vertebrates, invertebrates or trace fossils in the shales and mudstones (for example see Figure 5, 6). This information will be built into the EMP's training and awareness plan and procedures.
4. Photographs of the putative fossils can be sent to the palaeontologist for a preliminary assessment.
5. If there is any possible fossil material found by the developer/environmental officer then the qualified palaeontologist sub-contracted for this project, should visit the site to inspect the selected material and check the dumps where feasible.

6. Fossil plants or vertebrates that are considered to be of good quality or scientific interest by the palaeontologist must be removed, catalogued and housed in a suitable institution where they can be made available for further study. Before the fossils are removed from the site a SAHRA permit must be obtained. Annual reports must be submitted to SAHRA as required by the relevant permits.
7. If no good fossil material is recovered then no site inspections by the palaeontologist will be necessary. A final report by the palaeontologist must be sent to SAHRA once the project has been completed and only if there are fossils.
8. If no fossils are found and the excavations have finished then no further monitoring is required.

Appendix A – Examples of fossils from the Quaternary sediments



Figure 5: Examples of fragmented, transported bones from a Quaternary fluvial deposit in the Free State.



Figure 6: Examples of transported fragments of silicified wood from a fluvial deposit. Scale = 12 cm.

Appendix B – Details of specialist

Curriculum vitae (short) - Marion Bamford PhD June 2021

I) Personal details

Surname : **Bamford**
First names : **Marion Kathleen**
Present employment : Professor; Director of the Evolutionary Studies Institute.
Member Management Committee of the NRF/DST Centre of Excellence Palaeosciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa-
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Fax : +27 11 717 6694
Cell : 082 555 6937
E-mail : marion.bamford@wits.ac.za ; marionbamford12@gmail.com

ii) Academic qualifications

Tertiary Education: All at the University of the Witwatersrand:
1980-1982: BSc, majors in Botany and Microbiology. Graduated April 1983.

1983: BSc Honours, Botany and Palaeobotany. Graduated April 1984.
1984-1986: MSc in Palaeobotany. Graduated with Distinction, November 1986.
1986-1989: PhD in Palaeobotany. Graduated in June 1990.

iii) Professional qualifications

Wood Anatomy Training (overseas as nothing was available in South Africa):

1994 - Service d'Anatomie des Bois, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium, by Roger Dechamps
1997 - Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, France, by Dr Jean-Claude Koeniguer
1997 - Université Claude Bernard, Lyon, France by Prof Georges Barale, Dr Jean-Pierre Gros, and Dr Marc Philippe

iv) Membership of professional bodies/associations

Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa
Royal Society of Southern Africa - Fellow: 2006 onwards
Academy of Sciences of South Africa - Member: Oct 2014 onwards
International Association of Wood Anatomists - First enrolled: January 1991
International Organization of Palaeobotany – 1993+
Botanical Society of South Africa
South African Committee on Stratigraphy – Biostratigraphy - 1997 - 2016
SASQUA (South African Society for Quaternary Research) – 1997+
PAGES - 2008 –onwards: South African representative
ROCEEH / WAVE – 2008+
INQUA – PALCOMM – 2011+onwards

vii) Supervision of Higher Degrees

All at Wits University

Degree	Graduated/completed	Current
Honours	11	0
Masters	10	4
PhD	11	4
Postdoctoral fellows	10	5

viii) Undergraduate teaching

Geology II – Palaeobotany GEOL2008 – average 65 students per year
Biology III – Palaeobotany APES3029 – average 25 students per year
Honours – Evolution of Terrestrial Ecosystems; African Plio-Pleistocene Palaeoecology;
Micropalaeontology – average 2-8 students per year.

ix) Editing and reviewing

Editor: Palaeontologia africana: 2003 to 2013; 2014 – Assistant editor
Guest Editor: Quaternary International: 2005 volume
Member of Board of Review: Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology: 2010 –

Review of manuscripts for ISI-listed journals: 25 local and international journals

x) Palaeontological Impact Assessments

Selected – list not complete:

- Thukela Biosphere Conservancy 1996; 2002 for DWAF
- Vioolsdrift 2007 for Xibula Exploration
- Rietfontein 2009 for Zitholele Consulting
- Bloeddrift-Baken 2010 for TransHex
- New Kleinfontein Gold Mine 2012 for Prime Resources (Pty) Ltd.
- Thabazimbi Iron Cave 2012 for Professional Grave Solutions (Pty) Ltd
- Delmas 2013 for Jones and Wagener
- Klipfontein 2013 for Jones and Wagener
- Platinum mine 2013 for Lonmin
- Syferfontein 2014 for Digby Wells
- Canyon Springs 2014 for Prime Resources
- Kimberley Eskom 2014 for Landscape Dynamics
- Yzermyne 2014 for Digby Wells
- Matimba 2015 for Royal HaskoningDV
- Commissiekraal 2015 for SLR
- Harmony PV 2015 for Savannah Environmental
- Glencore-Tweefontein 2015 for Digby Wells
- Umkomazi 2015 for JLB Consulting
- Ixia coal 2016 for Digby Wells
- Lambda Eskom for Digby Wells
- Alexander Scoping for SLR
- Perseus-Kronos-Aries Eskom 2016 for NGT
- Mala Mala 2017 for Henwood
- Modimolle 2017 for Green Vision
- Klipoortjie and Finaalspan 2017 for Delta BEC
- Ledjadja borrow pits 2018 for Digby Wells
- Lungile poultry farm 2018 for CTS
- Olienhout Dam 2018 for JP Celliers
- Isondlo and Kwasobabili 2018 for GCS
- Kanakies Gypsum 2018 for Cabanga
- Nababeep Copper mine 2018
- Glencore-Mbali pipeline 2018 for Digby Wells
- Remhoogte PR 2019 for A&HAS
- Bospoort Agriculture 2019 for Kudzala
- Overlooked Quarry 2019 for Cabanga
- Richards Bay Powerline 2019 for NGT
- Eilandia dam 2019 for ACO
- Eastlands Residential 2019 for HCAC
- Fairview MR 2019 for Cabanga
- Graspan project 2019 for HCAC
- Lieliefontein N&D 2019 for EnviroPro

- Skeerpoort Farm Mast 2020 for HCAC
- Vulindlela Eco village 2020 for 1World
- KwaZamakhule Township 2020 for Kudzala
- Sunset Copper 2020 for Digby Wells
- McCarthy-Salene 2020 for Prescali
- VLNR Lodge 2020 for HCAC
- Madadeni mixed use 2020 for EnviroPro

xi) Research Output

Publications by M K Bamford up to June 2021 peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books:
over 150 articles published; 5 submitted/in press; 10 book chapters.
Scopus h-index = 29; Google scholar h-index = 35; -i10-index = 92
Conferences: numerous presentations at local and international conferences.

xii) NRF Rating

NRF Rating: B-2 (2016-2020)

NRF Rating: B-3 (2010-2015)

NRF Rating: B-3 (2005-2009)

NRF Rating: C-2 (1999-2004)