Palaeontological Impact Assessment for the proposed Creighton Bulk Water Supply System, southern KwaZulu Natal Province

Desktop Study (Phase 1)

For

JLB Consulting

05 June 2022

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Expertise of Specialist

The Palaeontologist Consultant: Prof Marion Bamford Qualifications: PhD (Wits Univ, 1990); FRSSAf, mASSAf

Experience: 33 years research and lecturing in Palaeontology

25 years PIA studies and over 300 projects completed

Declaration of Independence

This report has been compiled by Professor Marion Bamford, of the University of the Witwatersrand, sub-contracted by JLB Consulting, Durban, 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

MKBamfurk

Signature:

Executive Summary

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment was requested for the proposed Creighton Bulk Water Supply Scheme (BWSS) in the Harry Gwala District Municipality, KwaZulu Natal, comprising extraction form the uMzimkhulu River, pipes and pumps to take the water eastwards to Creighton, and a reservoir along the pipeline route.

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 pipeline and infrastructure lie on the Volksrust Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup), that might preserve trace fossils or rare marine bivalves although this is unlikely. Nonetheless, a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. Based on this information it is recommended that no further palaeontological impact assessment is required unless fossils are found by the contractor, environmental officer or other designated responsible person once excavations, drilling or mining activities have commenced. Since the impact will be low, as far as the palaeontology is concerned, the project should be authorised.

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1. Background

The Harry Gwala District Municipality is proposing to construct the Creighton Bulk Water Scheme which aims to provide a safe and reliable source of potable water to the communities living in the project area (Figures 1-3). The current water resource supplying the Creighton Area is insufficient to meet the projected water demands. The project aims to increase the assurance of water supply for the area of Creighton and provide a long-term bulk water supply scheme that will be able to meet the current and future water demands. The project intends to increase the level of infrastructure in the area in terms of water supply to meet the growing demands.

The project will consist of the following proposed infrastructure with capacities and dimensions:

INFRASTRUCTURE DESCRIPTION		
Centocow abstraction works upgrade	Upgrade from 1.5 Mℓ/d to 5.0 Mℓ/d • Existing Intake Structure and Pump to Sump • New Sump • New High-lift Pump Station	
Rising Main (abstraction point to Centocow WTP)	Raw water pipeline: 500mm Ø (Class 20) • 1.2 km long @ 90m Pumping Head	
Upgrade of Centocow WTP	Upgrade from 1.5 M ℓ /d to 5.0 M ℓ /d	
Clear water balancing and storage reservoir	New water balancing and storage facility for Creighton • Capacity: 3Mℓ • Position: @ 1060mAMSL	
Gravity Main	Clear water pipeline: 300mm Ø (Class 16) 11 km long (Centocow to balancing reservoir) 3 km long (balancing reservoir to Creighton) 90m Head (Negative surge pressure)	

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment was requested for the proposed Creighton BWSS. 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 and is reported herein.

Table 1: National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (as amended) - Requirements for Specialist Reports (Appendix 6).

	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
aii	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
С	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	
cii	A description of existing impacts on the site, cumulative impacts of the proposed development and levels of acceptable change	
d	The date and season of the site investigation and the relevance of the season to the outcome of the assessment	
e	A description of the methodology adopted in preparing the report or carrying out the specialised process	
f	The specific identified sensitivity of the site related to the activity and its associated structures and infrastructure	
g	An identification of any areas to be avoided, including buffers	
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;	
i	A description of any assumptions made and any uncertainties or gaps in knowledge;	
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	
k	Any mitigation measures for inclusion in the EMPr	
1	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation	N/A
m	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation	
ni	A reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised	Section 6
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	Sections 6, 8

	A specialist report prepared in terms of the Environmental Impact Regulations of 2017 must contain:	Relevant section in report
0	A description of any consultation process that was undertaken during the course of carrying out the study	N/A
р	A summary and copies of any comments that were received during any consultation process	N/A
q	Any other information requested by the competent authority.	N/A
2	Where a government notice gazetted by the Minister provides for any protocol or minimum information requirement to be applied to a specialist report, the requirements as indicated in such notice will apply.	N/A

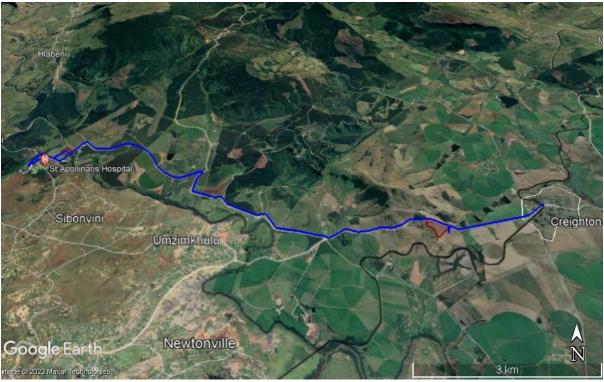


Figure 1: Google Earth map of the general area to show the relative land marks. The Creighton BWSS pipeline is shown by the blue line with the point of abstraction to the west and Creighton town in the east.



Figure 2: Google Earth Map of the proposed Creighton BWSS western section (abstraction – red), reservoir and Centocow WTP (white).

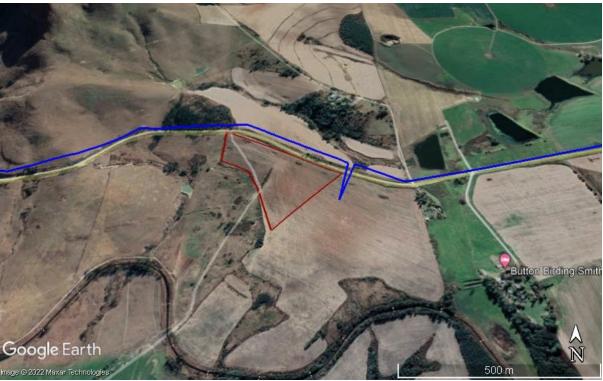


Figure 3: Google Earth map of the proposed reservoir just west of Creighton (red polygon).

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' representivity 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

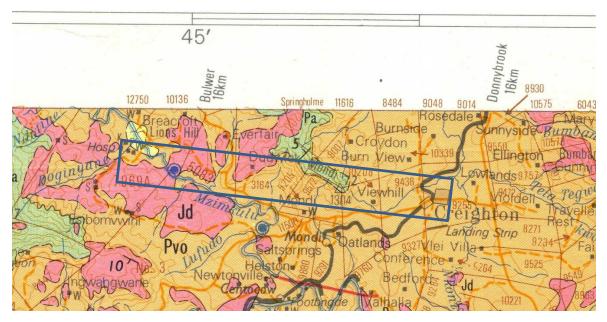


Figure 4: Geological map of the area around the proposed Creighton BWSS. The location of the proposed project is indicated within the blue rectangle. Abbreviations of the rock types are explained in Table 2. Map enlarged from the Geological Survey 1: 250 000 map 3028 Kokstad.

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

impacted by the project.

Symbol	Group/Formation	Lithology	Approximate Age	
0	Quatarnary	Alluvium, sand,	Neogene, ca 2.5 Ma to	
Q	Quaternary	calcrete	present	
14	Juraccia dultas	Dolerite dykes,	Jurassic, approx. 180 Ma	
Jd	Jurassic dykes	intrusive		
	Adelaide Subgroup,	Grey mudstone, dark	Late Permian, ca 255 – 251 Ma	
Pa	Beaufort Group,	grey shale, siltstone,		
	Karoo SG	sandstone		
Pvo	Volksrust Fm, Ecca	Shales, sandstone, coal	Late Permian, ca 266 –	
FVU	Group, Karoo SG		255 Ma	

The project lies in the south eastern part of the Karoo Basin where the older Ecca Group sediments are exposed.

The Karoo Supergroup rocks cover a very large proportion of South Africa and extend from the northeast (east of Pretoria) to the southwest and across to almost the KwaZulu Natal south coast. It is bounded along the southern margin by the Cape Fold Belt and along the northern margin by the much older Transvaal Supergroup rocks. The Karoo Supergroup rocks, representing some 120 million years (300 – 183Ma), have preserved a diversity of fossil plants, insects, vertebrates and invertebrates.

During the Carboniferous Period South Africa was part of the huge continental landmass known as Gondwanaland and it was 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 fine-grained 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 (Johnson et al., 2006).

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 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 are the rocks of the Beaufort Group that has been divided into the lower **Adelaide Subgroup** for the Upper Permian strata, and the Tarkastad Subgroup for the Early to Middle Triassic strata. As with the older Karoo sediments, the formations vary across the Karoo Basin. In the eastern part of the Karoo Basin the Adelaide Subgroup comprises part of the Volksrust Formation that unconformably underlies the Normandien Formation. Previously known as the Estcourt Formation, the Normandien Formation has been divided into the Frankfort, Rooinekke, Schoondraai and Harrismith Members.

Overlying the Beaufort Group are the three formations of the Stormberg Group. Large exposures of Jurassic dolerite dykes occur throughout the area. These intruded through the Karoo sediments around 183 million years ago at about the same time as the Drakensberg basaltic eruption.

Quaternary sands and alluvium have been deposited in the much younger river valleys.

ii. Palaeontological context

The palaeontological sensitivity of the area under consideration is presented in Figure 5. The site for development is in the non-fossiliferous Jurassic dolerite (grey) and the potentially fossiliferous (orange) Volksrust Formation.

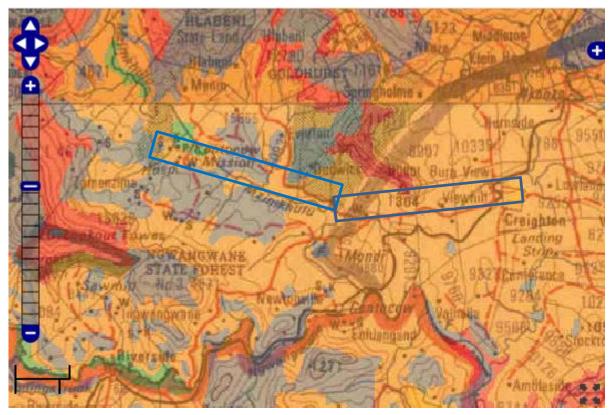


Figure 5: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map for the site for the proposed Creighton BWSS shown within the blue rectangles. Background colours indicate the following degrees of sensitivity: red = very highly sensitive; orange/yellow = high; green = moderate; blue = low; grey = insignificant/zero.

The Volksrust Formation is the upper part of the Ecca Group and is predominantly argillaceous, and the grey to black silty shale with thin, usually bioturbated siltstone or sandstone lenses and beds, occur mostly in the upper and lower boundaries. The very thick and fine-grained sediments represent an open shelf environment where muds were deposited from suspension (Johnson et al., 2006) in a deep-water environment. It is not known if this was an inland sea or open marine setting but the discovery of the marine bivalve, *Megadesmus*, (albeit one instance) about 25km west southwest of Newcastle in Volksrust Formation shales, points to a marine influence for at least part of the sequence (Cairncross et al., 2005).

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				
	Н	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.		
Criteria for ranking of the SEVERITY/NATURE of environmental	L	Minor deterioration (nuisance or minor deterioration). Change not measurable/ will remain in the current range. Recommended level will never be violated. Sporadic complaints.		
impacts	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	L	Quickly reversible. Less than the project life. Short term		
the DURATION of	M	Reversible over time. Life of the project. Medium term		
impacts	Н	Permanent. Beyond closure. Long term.		
Criteria for ranking	L	Localised - Within the site boundary.		
the SPATIAL SCALE	M	Fairly widespread – Beyond the site boundary. Local		
of impacts	Н	Widespread - Far beyond site boundary. Regional/ national		
PROBABILITY	Н	Definite/ Continuous		
(of exposure to	M	Possible/ frequent		
impacts)	L	Unlikely/ seldom		

Table 3b: Impact Assessment

PART B: Assessment			
	Н	-	
	M	-	
SEVERITY/NATURE	L	Soils do not preserve fossils; so far there are no records from the Volksrust Fm of trace fossils of marine invertebrates in this region so it is very unlikely that fossils occur on the site. The impact would be negligible	
	L+	-	
	M+	-	

PART B: Assessment		
	H+	-
	L	-
DURATION	M	-
	Н	Where manifest, the impact will be permanent.
SPATIAL SCALE	L	Since the only possible fossils within the area would be trace fossils or invertebrate fossils in the shales, the spatial scale will be localised within the site boundary.
	M	-
	Н	-
	Н	-
	M	-
PROBABILITY	L	It is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be found in the loose soils and sands that cover the area or in the deep-water shales that might 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 rocks are the right age to contain fossils. However, the material to be excavated is soil and this does not preserve fossils. Since there is an extremely small chance that fossils from the Volksrust Formation 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 might contain trace fossils or invertebrate fossils although none has been reported from this area. The soils and sands of the Quaternary period would not preserve fossils.

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 deep-water shales of the Volksrust Formation or in the soils of the Quaternary. There is a very small chance that fossils may occur below ground in the shales of the early Permian Volksrust Formation so a Fossil Chance Find Protocol should be added to the EMPr. If fossils are found by the environmental officer, or other responsible person once excavations for pipes and infrastructure have commenced then they should be rescued and a palaeontologist called to assess and collect a representative sample. The impact on the palaeontological heritage would be low, therefore as far as the palaeontology is concerned, the project should be authorised.

7. References

Anderson, J.M., Anderson, H.M., 1985. Palaeoflora of Southern Africa: Prodromus of South African megafloras, Devonian to Lower Cretaceous. A.A. Balkema, Rotterdam. 423 pp.

Cairncross, B., Beukes, N.J., Coetzee, L.L., Rehfeld, U., 2005. The Bivalve Megadesmus from the Permian Volksrust Shale Formation (Karoo Supergroup), northeastern Karoo Basin, South Africa: implications for late Permian Basin development. South African Journal of Geology 108, 547-556.

Isbell, J.L., Henry, L.C., Gulbranson, E.L., Limarino, C.O., Fraiser, F.L., Koch, Z.J., Ciccioli, P.l., 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.

Plumstead, E.P., 1969. Three thousand million years of plant life in Africa. Geological Society of southern Africa, Annexure to Volume LXXII. 72pp + 25 plates.

Visser, J.N.J., 1986. Lateral lithofacies relationships in the glacigene Dwyka Formation in 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 / drilling 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 (trace fossils, burrows, invertebrates) 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 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.

9. Appendix A – Examples of fossils from the Volksrust Formation

B. CAIRNCROSS, N.J. BEUKES, L.L. COETZEE AND U. REHFELD



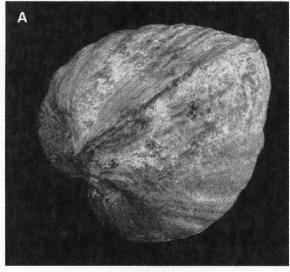


Figure 11. (A). Dorsal view of the *Megadesmus* bivalve. The fossil is 9 cm dorsal to ventral, and 8.4 cm lateral. See text for taxonomic

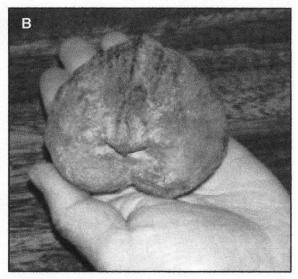


Figure 11. (B). Close-up of the anterior, dorsal section of the bivalve

Figure 6: Pelycepod bivalve *Megadesmus* from the Volksrust Formation, south of Newcastle (Cairncross et al., 2005).

10. Appendix B – Details of specialist

Curriculum vitae (short) - Marion Bamford PhD January 2022

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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E-mail : <u>marion.bamford@wits.ac.za</u>;

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.

NRF Rating: C-2 (1999-2004); B-3 (2005-2015); B-2 (2016-2020); B-1 (2021-2026)

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

in at the entresty			
Degree	Graduated/completed	Current	
Honours	13	0	
Masters	11	3	
PhD	11	6	
Postdoctoral fellows	15	1	

viii) Undergraduate teaching

Geology II – Palaeobotany GEOL2008 – average 65 students per year Biology III – Palaeobotany APES3029 – average 45 students per year Honours – Evolution of Terrestrial Ecosystems; African Plio-Pleistocene Palaeoecology; Micropalaeontology – average 12-20 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 -

Associate Editor Open Science UK: 2021 -

Review of manuscripts for ISI-listed journals: 30 local and international journals Reviewing of funding applications for NRF, PAST, NWO, SIDA, National Geographic, Leakey Foundation

x) Palaeontological Impact Assessments

Selected from the past five years only – list not complete:

- 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 IP 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
- Frankfort-Windfield Eskom Powerline 2020 for 1World
- Beaufort West PV Facility 2021 for ACO Associates
- Copper Sunset MR 2021 for Digby Wells
- Sannaspos PV facility 2021 for CTS Heritage
- Smithfield-Rouxville-Zastron PL 2021 for TheroServe

xi) Research Output

Publications by M K Bamford up to January 2022 peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books: over 160 articles published; 5 submitted/in press; 10 book chapters.

Scopus h-index = 30; Google scholar h-index = 35; -i10-index = 92

Conferences: numerous presentations at local and international conferences.