

**Palaeontological Impact Assessment for the proposed  
Minor Reticulation Project THT370579122  
at Fefe Village  
Mutale Local Municipality, Limpopo Province**

**Desktop Study (Phase 1)**

**For**

**Archaeological and Heritage Services (Pty) Ltd**

**02 February 2021**

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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 Archaeological and Heritage Services (Pty) Ltd, Pretoria, 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**

The Mutale Local Municipality proposes to undertake a minor reticulation project with a 22kV line for the village of Fefe, north of Mavhuwa, Limpopo Province.

As requested in SAHRIS CaseID: 15668 and 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 project.

The route for the proposed power line lies entirely on the quartzitic sandstone of the Wyllie's Poort Formation, Soutpansberg Group. There is no indication or record that these ancient sedimentary rocks could preserve any fossils. They are older than the origin of anybody fossils, so there is NO CHANCE of fossils being preserved in the vicinity. It is recommended that the SAHRIS paleosensitivity map be amended to reflect the lack of fossils. It incorrectly shows the area as moderately sensitive (green). Based on this information it is recommended that no palaeontological assessment is required and the project may proceed.

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# 1. Background

The Mutale Local Municipality proposes to undertake a minor reticulation project for the village of Fefe with a 22kV supply line, north of Mavhuwa, Limpopo Province (Figures 1 and 2).

The whole area is indicated as moderately sensitive (green) on the SAHRIS Palaeosensitivity map so a desktop study is required, as requested in the letter from SAHRA CaseID: 15668.

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 project and is reported herein.

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

	<b>A specialist report prepared in terms of the Environmental Impact Regulations of 2017 must contain:</b>	<b>Relevant section in report</b>
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
c ii	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	N/A
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	N/A
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	Appendix A
l	Any conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation	N/A
m	Any monitoring requirements for inclusion in the EMPr or environmental authorisation	Appendix A
ni	A reasoned opinion as to whether the proposed activity or portions thereof should be authorised	N/A
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: Locality map of the Fefe power line route shown by the by the red line.



Figure 2: Google map showing the Fefe power line route in relation to other villages, for orientation.

## 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



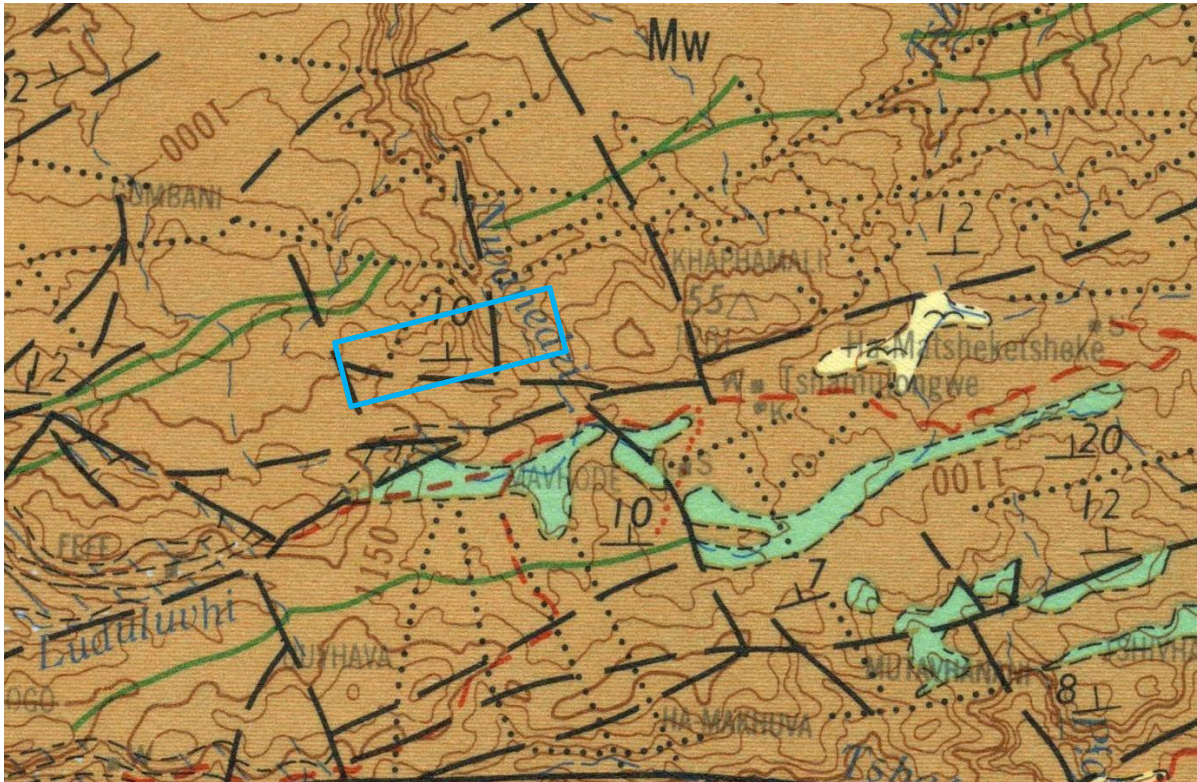


Figure 2: Geological map of the area around Mavhuwa and Fefe, Mutale Local Municipality, Limpopo Province. The location of the proposed project is indicated within the blue rectangle. Abbreviations of the rock types are explained in Table 2. Map enlarged from the Geological Survey 1: 250 000 map 2230 Messina.

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

Symbol	Group/Formation	Lithology	Approximate Age
Q	Kalahari Group	Soil, sand, alluvium	Quaternary ca 2.5 Ma to present
Di	Diabase	Intrusive volcanic rocks	Post 1700 Ma
Mw	Wyllies Poort Fm, Soutspansberg Group	Pink quartzite, minor conglomerate, shale and sandy shale	2000 – 1700 Ma

Makhado and Thohoyandou lie in the southwestern part of the Soutspansberg Basin that is an intracratonic to mobile belt or near cratonic environment (Barker et al., 2006). The sediments that filled the basin are about 1700 to 2000 million year old are what are known as red beds. These Palaeoproterozoic red beds formed when there was sufficient free atmospheric oxygen to produce oxides of the ferruginous materials, i.e. red beds (ibid). Just northeast of Makhado are exposures of the Sibasa Formation basalts and the Wyllie's Poort Formation quartzites and conglomerate.



Intruding through the Soutpansberg Group rocks are younger volcanic rocks or diabase (Figure 3 and Table 2). The whole region is highly faulted. No fossils would be found in intrusive volcanic rocks.

## ii. Palaeontological context

The palaeontological sensitivity of the area under consideration is presented in Figure 4. The route for the power line is indicated as moderately sensitive (green), however the geological map shows that it is all on the quartzites and conglomerates of the Wyllie's Poort Formation (brown in Fig 3). The Palaeotechnical report for Limpopo (Groenevald et al., 2014) also shows this formation as having insignificant to zero palaeosensitivity (blue). It is likely, therefore, that the SAHRIS map needs to be corrected.

Since there is no chance of fossils occurring along the proposed route for the power line, there is no need for a Fossil Chance Find Protocol.

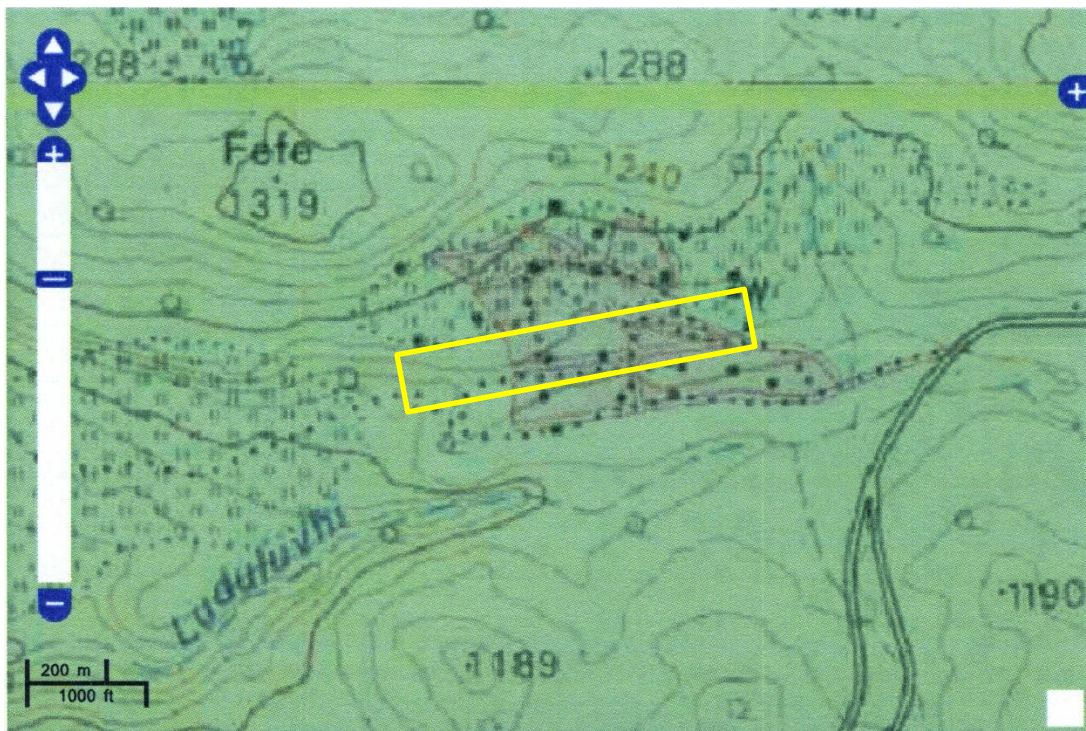


Figure 4: SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map for the site for the Fefe reticulation project shown within the yellow rectangle. Background colours indicate the following degrees of sensitivity: red = very highly sensitive; orange/yellow = high; green = moderate; blue = low; grey = insignificant/zero.

From the SAHRIS map above the area is indicated as moderately sensitive (green) and this incorrectly applies to the Wyllie's Poort Formation (Soutpansberg Group). The whole area should be indicated as blue.

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

**TABLE 3B: IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

PART B: ASSESSMENT		
<b>SEVERITY/NATURE</b>	<b>H</b>	-
	<b>M</b>	-
	<b>L</b>	Quartzites of the Wyllie's Poort Fm do not preserve any fossils. The impact would be very unlikely.
	<b>L+</b>	-
	<b>M+</b>	-
	<b>H+</b>	-
<b>DURATION</b>	<b>L</b>	-
	<b>M</b>	-
	<b>H</b>	Where manifest, the impact will be permanent.
<b>SPATIAL SCALE</b>	<b>L</b>	There is no chance of finding fossils in the ancient quartzites and conglomerates, the spatial scale will be localised within the site boundary.
	<b>M</b>	-
	<b>H</b>	-
<b>PROBABILITY</b>	<b>H</b>	-
	<b>M</b>	-
	<b>L</b>	There is no chance of finding fossils in the quartzites and conglomerates of the Wyllie's Poort Fm,

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 wrong kind, i.e. basalt which is of volcanic origin. It is older than the origin of any body fossils so would not have trapped fossils when flowing on the land surface. Since there is no chance of finding any fossils along the power line route, or even in the vicinity, no further palaeontological assessment is required.

## 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 basalts, quartzites and conglomerates are typical for the country and do not contain any fossils of any kind. It is probably a mistake that the area has been mapped as moderately sensitive in the SAHRIS palaeosensitivity map.

## 6. Recommendation

Based on the geology and the lack of any previously recorded fossils from the area, it is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be preserved in the quartzites and conglomerates of the Wyllie's Poort Formation, Soutpansberg Group. No palaeontological assessment is required and the project can proceed.

It is recommended that the SAHRIS palaeosensitivity be amended to reflect the geology and recommendation given in the Palaeotechnical report for Limpopo.

## 7. References

Barker, O B., Brandl, G., Callaghan, C.C., Erikssen, P.G., van der Neut, M., 2006. The Soutspanberg and Waterberg Groups and the Blouberg Formation. 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 301-318.

Groenewald, G., Groenewald, D., Groenewald, S., 2014. SAHRA Palaeotechnical Report. Palaeontological Heritage of Limpopo. 22 pages.

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.

## Appendix A – Details of specialist

### Curriculum vitae (short) - Marion Bamford PhD January 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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#### 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	7	0
Masters	10	4
PhD	12	5
Postdoctoral fellows	10	3

### **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 –  
*Cretaceous Research*: 2014 – 2019; Associate Editor: 2020 -

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
- Lielifontein 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

## **xi) Research Output**

Publications by MK Bamford up to December 2019 peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books: over 150 articles published; 5 submitted/in press; 8 book chapters.

Scopus h-index = 29; Google scholar h-index = 36; -i10-index = 80

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)