

Glencore Lakenvlei WULA BAR

eMakhazeni Local Municipality, Nkangala District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province.

Farm: Lakenvlei 355-JT

Fourie, H. Dr

***Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Phase 1: Field Study***

Facilitated by: WSP Group Africa (Pty) Ltd

Building 1, Maxwell Office Park,

Magwa Crescent West, Waterfall City,

Midrand

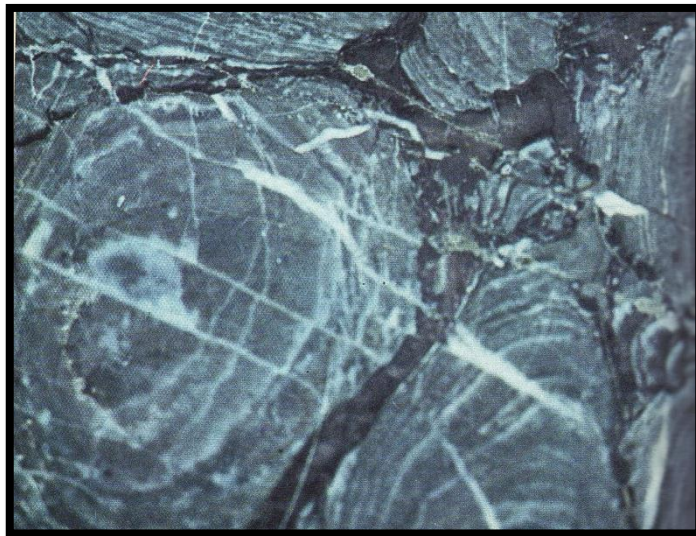
1685

2024/03/28

PIA 0018/23

Ref: Pending

***Stromatolite thin section (De Zeeuw et al)***



## B. Executive summary

Outline of the development project: Platinum Mile Investments (Pty) Ltd has facilitated the appointment of Dr H. Fourie, a palaeontologist, to undertake a Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA), Desktop Study of the suitability of the Glencore Lakenvlei WULA BAR in the Emakhazeni Local Municipality, Nkangala District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province on Farm: Lakenvlei 355-JT.

The applicant, Glencore Operations South Africa plans rehabilitation interventions at the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Area.

The Project includes one locality Option (see Figure 2):

Option 1: An area blocked in different colours to indicate the wetland with Dullstroom north, Elandsfontein Road south-east and the R540 Road to the west. The approximate size of the site is 153.8 hectares.

### Legal requirements:-

The **National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999) (NHRA)** requires that all heritage resources, that is, all places or objects of aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance are protected. The Republic of South Africa (RSA) has a remarkably rich fossil record that stretches back in time for some 3.5 billion years and must be protected for its scientific value. Fossil heritage of national and international significance is found within all provinces of the RSA. South Africa's unique and non-renewable palaeontological heritage is protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act. According to this act, palaeontological resources may not be excavated, damaged, destroyed or otherwise impacted by any development without prior assessment and without a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority.

The main aim of the assessment process is to document resources in the development area and identify both the negative and positive impacts that the development brings to the receiving environment. The PIA therefore identifies palaeontological resources in the area to be developed and makes recommendations for protection or mitigation of these resources.

"palaeontological" means any fossilised remains or fossil trace of animals or plants which lived in the geological past, other than fossil fuels or fossiliferous rock intended for industrial use, and any site which contains such fossilised remains or traces.

For this study, resources such as geological maps, scientific literature, institutional fossil collections, satellite images, aerial maps and topographical maps were used. It provides an assessment of the observed or inferred palaeontological heritage within the study area, with recommendations (if any) for further specialist palaeontological input where this is considered necessary.

A Palaeontological Impact Assessment is generally warranted where rock units of **LOW** to **VERY HIGH** palaeontological sensitivity are concerned, levels of bedrock exposure within the study area are adequate; large scale projects with high potential heritage impact are planned; and where the distribution and nature of fossil remains in the proposed area is unknown. The specialist will inform whether further monitoring and mitigation are necessary.

Types and ranges of heritage resources as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No.25 of 1999): (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens.

This report adheres to the guidelines of Section 38 (1) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Subject to the provisions of subsections (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development categorised as (a) the construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300 m in length; (b) the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length; (c) any development or other activity which will change the character of a site (see Section 38); (d) the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> (**1 ha**) in extent; (e) or any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a PHRA authority.



Chuniespoort Group (Kent 1980). The Silverton shales are rich in carbon and pyrite and show cross-bedding. Brown to khaki-weathering shales is stratigraphically below the Magaliesberg Formation. These shales are visible in road cuttings. The Silverton shale Formation is the thickest of all the shale formations of the Pretoria Group (300-3000 m). It forms wide valleys and when changed to hornfels it can be used for roof coverings (Visser 1989).

*Palaeontology* – Fossils in South Africa mainly occur in rocks of sedimentary nature and not in rocks from igneous or metamorphic nature. Therefore, if there is the presence of Karoo Supergroup strata the palaeontological sensitivity can generally be ranging from **LOW** to **VERY HIGH**, and here locally in the development area **VERY HIGH** for the Vryheid Formation, **HIGH** for the Vermont Formation and **LOW** for the Quaternary, Lakenvalei and Steenkampsberg Formations (SG 2.2 SAHRA APMHOB, 2012).

One of the formations (Silverton) in the development area may contain fossils. Nixon *et al.* (1988) described the black shales south-west of Potchefstroom as consisting of overlapping laminated basal mounds which are stromatolitic as well as spheroidal possible planktonic fossil algae. These can range in size from 3.5 - 17 mm in height and up to 10 mm in diameter and can be present in the development area.

Summary of findings (1d): The Phase 1: Field Study was undertaken in April 2023 in the summer in dry and hot conditions, the season and time has an influence, and the following is reported:

The Project includes one locality Option present on the **Pretoria Group**:

Recommendation:

The potential impact of the development on fossil heritage is **VERY HIGH** and therefore a field survey was necessary for this development (according to SAHRA protocol). A Phase 2 Palaeontological Mitigation is recommended if fossils are found during the development. Fossils are usually micro in size.

Concerns/threats **(1k,l,m)** to be added to EMPr:

1. Threats are earth moving equipment/machinery (for example haul trucks, front end loaders, excavators, graders, dozers) during construction, the sealing-in, disturbance, damage or destruction of the fossils by development, vehicle traffic, and human disturbance.
2. Special care must be taken during clearing, ground-breaking, digging, drilling, blasting and excavating of foundations, trenches, channels and footings and removal of overburden not to intrude fossiliferous layers.

The recommendations are **(1g)**:

1. Mitigation will be needed if fossils are found during the development.
2. No consultation with parties was necessary. The Environmental Control Officer must familiarise him- or herself with the formations present and its fossils and follow protocol and meet with Site Manager regularly.
3. The development may go ahead.
4. The ECO must survey for fossils (shale) before and or after clearing, ground-breaking, digging, drilling or excavating with a weekly or bi-weekly audit.
5. The EMPr will cover the conservation of heritage and palaeontological material that may be exposed during construction activities. For a chance fossil find, the protocol is to immediately cease all construction activities, construct a 30 m no-go barrier, and contact SAHRA for further investigation.

Stakeholders: Developer – Glencore Operations South Africa.

Environmental – WSP Group Africa (Pty) Ltd. Building 1, Maxwell Office Park, Magwa Crescent West, Waterfall City, Midrand, 1685. Tel: 011 254 4878.

Landowner – **Several**.

## **C. Table of Contents**

A. Title page	1
B. Executive Summary	2
C. Table of Contents	5
D. Background Information on the project	5
E. Description of the Property or Affected Environment	6
F. Description of the Geological Setting	7
G. Background to Palaeontology of the area	17
H. Description of the Methodology	18
I. Description of significant fossil occurrences	20
J. Recommendation	21
K. Conclusions	21
L. Bibliography	21
Declaration	23
Appendix 1: Protocol for finds and Management plan	24
Appendix 2: Table	25
Appendix 3: Impact Statement	28
Appendix 4: Impact Statement	29

## **D. Background information on the project**

### Report

This report is part of the environmental impact assessment process under the National Environmental Management Act, as amended (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and includes Appendix 6 (GN R326 of 7 April 2017) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (see Appendix 2). It also is in compliance with The Minimum Standards for Palaeontological Components of Heritage Impact Assessment Reports, SAHRA, APMHOB, Guidelines 2012, Pg 1-15 (2).

### Outline of development

This report discusses and aims to provide the developer with information regarding the location of palaeontological material that will be impacted by the development. In the pre-construction phase it may be necessary for the developer to apply for the relevant permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency depending on the presence of fossils (SAHRA / PHRA).

The applicant, Glencore Operations South Africa plans rehabilitation interventions at the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Area.

**Figure 1:** Topographic map showing location (WSP).

Related Infrastructure:

1. Buildings
2. Agriculture
3. Roads
4. Wetland
5. Fences

The Project includes one locality Option (see Figure 2):

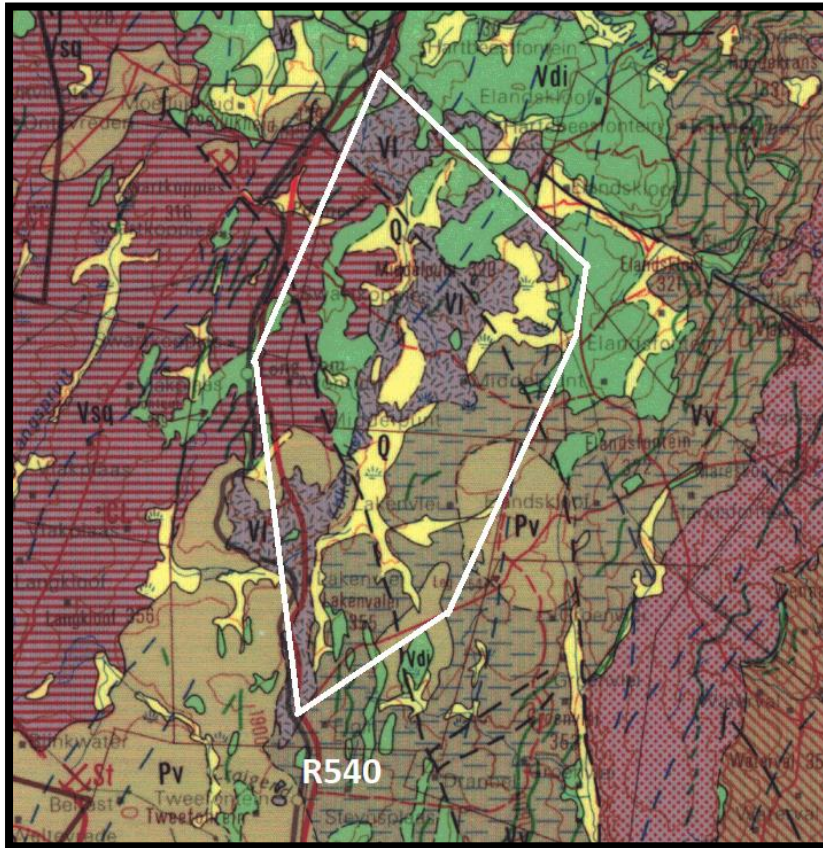
Rezoning/ and or subdivision of land: No.

Name of Developer and Landowner: Glencore Operations South Africa and WSP Group Africa (Pty) Ltd.



## F. Description of the Geological Setting

### Description of the rock units:



**Figure 3: Geology of the development area (1h).**

*Legend to Figure and short explanation.*

Q – Alluvium (yellow). Quaternary.

Di – Diabase (green). Mokolian to Vaalian.

Pv – Quartzitic, cross-bedded sandstone, pebbly near its base, gritty sandstone, shale (brown). Vryheid Formation, Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup.

VsQ – Clean, medium- to fine-grained, cross-bedded quartzite with interlayers of purple-weathering arenite and shale and thin conglomerate layers (lilac). Steenkampsberg Formation, Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup. Vaalian.

VI – Medium-grained, cross-bedded and ripple marked feldspathic quartzite, thin conglomerate layers and gritty lenses (purple). Lakenvalei Formation, Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup. Vaalian.

Vv – Fine-grained hornfels with sedimentary structures near the top and base, layers of silt and sandstone and minor layers of carbonate and calc-silicate rocks (brown). Vermont Formation, Pretoria Group, Transvaal Supergroup. Vaalian.

---- - Concealed geological boundary.

..... – (black) Lineament (Possible dyke).

--f-- Fault.

⊥20° - Strike and dip.

□ – Approximate position of township (blocked in white).

### Mining Activities on Figure:

Cu – Copper                      SB – Building sand

Mining past and present has no influence on the project.

The Karoo Supergroup is renowned for its fossil wealth (Kent 1980, Visser 1989). Large areas of the southern African continent are covered by the Karoo Supergroup. It covers older geological formations with an almost horizontal blanket. Several basins are present with the main basin in the central part of south Africa and several smaller basins towards Lebombo, Springbok Flats and Soutpansberg. An estimated age is 150 – 180 Ma. and a maximum thickness of 7000 m is reached in the south. Three formations overlie the Beaufort Group, they are the Molteno, Elliot and Clarens Formations. At the top is the Drakensberg Basalt Formation with its pillow lavas, pyroclasts, and basalts (Kent 1980, Snyman 1996). The Beaufort Group is underlain by the Eccca Group which is underlain by the Dwyka Group.

The Eccca Group is early to mid-Permian (545-250 Ma) in age. Sediments of the Eccca group are lacustrine and marine to fluvio-deltaic (Snyman 1996). The Eccca group is known for its coal (mainly the Vryheid Formation) (five coal seams) and uranium. Coalfields formed due to the accumulation of plant material in shallow and large swampy deltas (see Appendix 1). The Eccca Group conformably overlies the Dwyka Group and is conformably overlain by the Beaufort Group, Karoo Supergroup. It consists essentially of mudrock (shale), but sandstone-rich units occur towards the margins of the present main Karoo basin in the south, west and north-east, with coal seams also being present in the north-east (Kent 1980, Johnson 2009).

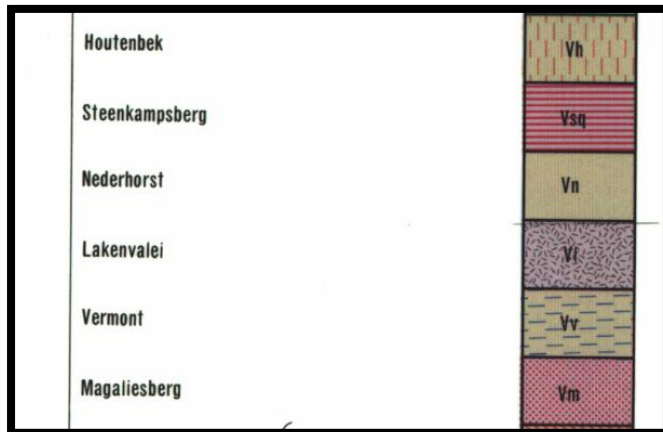
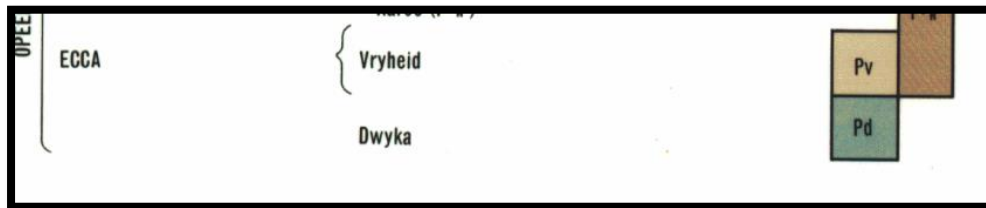
The Vryheid Formation is named after the type area of Vryheid-Volksrust. In the north-eastern part of the basin the Vryheid Formation thins and eventually wedges out towards the south, southwest and west with increasing distance from its source area to the east and northeast (Johnson 2009). The Vryheid Formation consists essentially of sandstone, shale, and subordinate coal beds, and has a maximum total thickness of 500 m. It forms part of the Middle Eccca (Kent 1980). This formation has the largest coal reserves in South Africa. The pro-delta sediments are characterised by trace and plants fossils (Snyman 1996).

The Transvaal Supergroup fills an east-west elongated basin in the south-central part of the old Transvaal (now North – West, Gauteng and Mpumalanga) as far south as Potchefstroom. It is Vaalian in age, approximately 2600 Ma to 2100 Ma. A maximum thickness of the Transvaal Supergroup reaches 2000 m in the north-eastern section. The east-west elongated basin is filled with clastic, volcanic and chemical sedimentary rocks. Three groups based on lithological differences have been established: they are the Rooiberg, Pretoria and Chuniespoort Groups as well as other smaller groups such as the Groblersdal Group, Buffelsfontein Group, Wolkberg Group and the Black Reef Formation (Kent 1980, Snyman 1996). It is the Bushveld Complex that is responsible for the tilting of the Transvaal sediments and the heat of its intrusion having created andalusite crystals (Norman and Whitfield 2006). This Supergroup is underlain by the Ventersdorp, Witwatersrand and Pongola Supergroups, and the Dominion Group. Three prominent ridges are present from the oldest to the youngest, the Time Ball Hill, Daspoort and Magaliesberg Formations (Norman and Whitfield 2006).

The Pretoria Group consists predominantly of quartzite and shale, together with a prominent volcanic unit, minor conglomerate, chemical and volcanic members. It comprises the Hekpoort Andesite, Dullstroom Basalt, Time Ball Hill, Silverton, and Magaliesberg Quartzite Formations as well as several smaller formations (in total 15) and overlies the Chuniespoort Group (Kent 1980). The pile of sedimentary rocks, mainly mudstones and quartzites with some basalt can collectively reach a thickness of up to 5 km. Both the shale and quartzite of the Pretoria Group are utilised in the building industry (Snyman 1996).

The Rayton Formation (Vr) is present northeast of Pretoria and is approximately 1,200 m thick. It consists of four layers of quartzite alternating with four layers of shale (Visser 1989). In the central part of the basin the quartzite and shale overlying the Magaliesberg Quartzite are combined into the Rayton Formation because intrusion of numerous diabase sills has made it impossible to recognise all the individual formations (Kent 1980). Below the Dullstroom, Houtenbek, Steenkampsberg, Lakenvlei and Vermont Formations is the Magaliesberg Formation which is 300 m thick in the Pretoria region and up to 500 m thick in the Lowveld (Visser 1989). The Dullstroom Formation reaches a distance of 70 km and reaches a thickness

of 400 m consisting of basalt. A thickness of 140-255 m is attained by the Houtenbek Formation, 470-630 m for the Steenkampsberg Formation, 160-300 for the Lakenvlei Formation, and 450-800 m for the Vermont Formation (Visser 1989).



**Figure 4:** Lithostratigraphic column of the development area (Baberton).

*Field Observation:* The area is large, but could be viewed. It is present on several farms. Very few outcrops are present and they are mostly not located in the wetland. Diabase outcrops are present on Elandsfontein Road with the Vryheid Formation outcrops also present as sandstone.



**Figure 5:** View on R 540 Road (blue area).



**Figure 6:** View, still on R 540 Road moving north.



**Figure 7:** View on R540 Road, still moving north. Vryheid Formation sandstone present.



**Figure 8:** Outcrops near wetland. Could be Steenkampsberg Formation.



**Figure 9:** View at northern border of project area.



**Figure 10:** View in north.



**Figure 11:** View on gravel road in north.



**Figure 12:** Middle section of project area



**Figure 13:** View of rocky outcrop.



**Figure 14:** View of wetland area (blocked in orange).



**Figure 15:** Diabase outcrop on Elandsfontein Road.



**Figure 16:** View of wetland area from Elandsfontein Road.



**Figure 17:** Outcrop of diabase on Elandsfontein Road.



**Figure 18:** Sandstone outcrop on Elandsfontein Road.

It is recommended to wait for the response from SAHRA on the Phase 1: Field Study (this report). SAHRA protocol must be followed.

### G. Background to Palaeontology of the area

Summary: When rock units of moderate to very high palaeontological sensitivity are present within the development footprint, a desk top and or field scoping (survey) study by a professional palaeontologist is usually warranted. The main purpose of a field scoping (survey) study would be to identify any areas within the development footprint where specialist palaeontological mitigation during the construction phase may be required (SG 2.2 SAHRA AMPHOB, 2012).

The Ecca Group may contain fossils of diverse non-marine trace, *Glossopteris* flora, mesosaurid reptiles, palaeoniscid fish, marine invertebrates, insects, and crustaceans (Johnson 2009). *Glossopteris* trees rapidly colonised the large deltas along the northern margin of the Karoo Sea. Dead vegetation accumulated faster than it could decay, and thick accumulations of peat formed, which were ultimately converted to coal. It is only in the northern part of the Karoo Basin that the glossopterids and cordaitales, ferns, clubmosses and horsetails thrived (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005). Sediments of the Group contain significant reserves of coal and the interbedded shale is an important source of clay for brick making (Groenewald and Groenewald 2014).

One of the formations in the development area may contain fossils. Nixon *et al.* (1988) described the black shales south-west of Potchefstroom as consisting of overlapping laminated basal mounds which are stromatolitic as well as spheroidal possible planktonic fossil algae. These can range in size from 3.5 - 17 mm in height and up to 10 mm in diameter and can be present in the development area.



**Figure 5:** Stromatolite (E. Butler).

Fossils in South Africa mainly occur in rocks of sedimentary nature and not in rocks from igneous or metamorphic nature. Therefore, if there is the presence of Karoo Supergroup strata the palaeontological sensitivity is generally **LOW** to **VERY HIGH**.

**Table 1:** Taken from Palaeotechnical Report (Groenewald and Groenewald 2014) (**1cA**).

ALLUVIAL DEPOSITS		mmm; Q-x; Q-x; Q8. Several symbols used for alluvium, colluvium and scree	Recent sandy and clayey deposits along water courses	Wide range of fossils possible, including mammalian bones and teeth, tortoise remains, ostrich egg etc	Alluvial deposits associated with recent water courses of main rivers and streams. These sediments are presently not well studied and records of fossil occurrences are mainly associated with archaeological reports
-------------------	--	--	--	--	---

Dullstroom (Vdb)		Volcanic rocks	No fossils recorded	Pretoria Group subunits with stromatolites probably also contain microfossils. This may also apply to carbonaceous mudrocks.  ALERT FOR POTENTIALLY FOSSILIFEROUS LATE CAENOZOIC CAVE BRECCIAS WITHIN OUTCROP AREA OF CARBONATE SUBUNITS – i.e. LIMESTONES DOLOMITES (breccias not individually mapped)  Rooiberg Group was previously included within top of Transvaal Supergroup but now regarded as separate succession
Houtenbek (Vh)		Quartzite, limestone, chert	Stromatolites	
Steenkampsberg (Vsq)		Quartzite and shales	No fossils recorded	
Nederhorst (Vn; Vne)		Fine-grained hornfels and granite	No fossils recorded	
Lakenvale (Vl; Vlm)		Alluvial sandstone	No fossils recorded	
Vermont (Vve; Vve1; Vlm)		Mudrock and tuffs	Stromatolites	
Magsiesberg (Vmg)(Vlm)		Coastal sandstones with mudrocks	Microbial mat structures (Desiccated mats sometimes resemble trace fossils)	
Intrusive Shelter Norite (Vsh; Vsh1)		Norite	No fossils recorded	
Silverton (Vst; Vst1; Vst3; Vst5)	Lydenburg (Vst; Vst1; Vst1)	Shale, mudstone and carbonate layers	Stromatolites	
	Machadodorp (Vsm; Vsm1; Vsm2; Vsm)	Fine-grained tuff and basic lava	No fossils recorded	
	Boven (Vst; Vbn; Vbn1)	Marine shale and mudrocks with tuff and minor carbonates	Stromatolites	
Igneous intrusions (Vdi)		Igneous intrusions	No fossils recorded	
Despoort (Vda; Vhd; Vdq)		Alluvial, fluvial and deltaic sandstones and mudrocks, marine sediments in east	Stromatolites	

**Table 2: Criteria used (Fossil Heritage Layer Browser/SAHRA) (1cB):**

Rock Unit	Significance/vulnerability	Recommended Action
Quaternary	Low	Protocol for a Chance Find
Diabase	Very Low	No action required
Vryheid Formation	Very High	Desktop Study and Field Assessment
Steenkampsberg Formation	Low	Protocol for a Chance Find
Lakenvlei Formation	Low	Protocol for a Chance Find
Vermont Formation	High	Desktop Study and Field Assessment likely

Databases and collections: Ditsong: National Museum of Natural History. Evolutionary Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand (ESI).

Impact: **VERY HIGH**, **HIGH** and **LOW** There are significant fossil resources that may be impacted by the development (shale) and if destroyed are no longer available for scientific research or other public good (Almond, *et al.* 2009).

The Project includes one locality Option (see Figure 2) (1f,j) The palaeontological sensitivity is as stated above.

All the land involved in the development was assessed (ni,nii) and none of the property is unsuitable for development (see Recommendation B).

## H. Description of the Methodology (1e)

The palaeontological impact assessment study was undertaken in April 2023. A Phase 1: Field Survey of the affected portion includes photographs (in 7.1 mega pixels) taken of the site with a digital camera (Canon PowerShot A470). Additionally, Google Maps will be accessed on a cellular phone/tablet for navigation. A Global Positioning System (GPS) (Garmin eTrex 10) is used to record fossiliferous finds and outcrops (bedrock) when the area is not covered with topsoil, subsoil, overburden, vegetation, grassland, trees or waste. The survey did identify the Karoo Supergroup. A literature survey is included and the study relied heavily on geological maps.

SAHRA document 7/6/9/2/1 (SAHRA 2012) requires track records/logs from archaeologists not palaeontologists as palaeontologists concentrate on outcrops which may be recorded with a GPS. Isolated occurrences of rocks usually do not constitute an outcrop. Fossils can occur in dongas, as nodules, in fresh rock exposures, and in riverbeds. Finding fossils require the experience and technical knowledge of the professional palaeontologist, but that does not mean that an amateur

can't find fossils. The geology of the region is used to predict what type of fossil and zone will be found in any particular region. Archaeozoologists concentrate on more recent fossils in the quaternary and tertiary deposits.

#### Assumptions and Limitations (1i):-

The accuracy and reliability of the report **may be** limited by the following constraints:

1. Most development areas have never been surveyed by a palaeontologist or geophysicist.
2. Variable accuracy of geological maps and associated information.
3. Poor locality information on sheet explanations for geological maps.
4. Lack of published data.
5. Lack of rocky outcrops.
6. Inaccessibility of site – site visit was necessary.
7. Insufficient data from developer and exact lay-out plan for all structures - sufficient.

#### **A Phase 2 Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Mitigation will include:**

1. Recommendations for the future of the site.
2. Description of work done (including number of people and their responsibilities).
3. A written assessment of the work done, fossils excavated, not removed or collected and observed.
4. Conclusion reached regarding the fossil material.
5. A detailed site plan.
6. Possible declaration as a heritage site or Site Management Plan.

The National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 further prescribes.

#### Act No. 25 of 1999. National Heritage Resources Act, 1999.

National Estate: 3 (2) (f) archaeological and palaeontological sites,

(i)(1) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens,

Heritage assessment criteria and grading: (a) Grade 1: Heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance;

(b) Grade 2: Heritage resources which, although forming part of the national estate, can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or a region; and (c) Grade 3: Other heritage resources worthy of conservation.

SAHRA is responsible for the identification and management of Grade 1 heritage resources.

Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (PHRA) identifies and manages Grade 2 heritage resources.

Local authorities identify and manage Grade 3 heritage resources.

No person may damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of a provincially protected place or object without a permit issued by a heritage resources authority or local authority responsible for the provincial protection.

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites: Section 35.

(2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (8) (a), all archaeological objects, palaeontological material and meteorites are the property of the State.

(3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority offices or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Mitigation involves planning the protection of significant fossil sites, rock units or other palaeontological resources and/or excavation, recording and sampling of fossil heritage that might be lost during development, together with pertinent geological data. The mitigation may take place before and / or during the construction phase of development. The specialist will require a Phase 2 mitigation permit from the relevant Heritage Resources Authority before a Phase 2 may be implemented.

The Mitigation is done in order to rescue representative fossil material from the study area to allow and record the nature of each locality and establish its age before it is destroyed and to make samples accessible for future research. It also interprets the evidence recovered to allow for education of the public and promotion of palaeontological heritage.

Should further fossil material be discovered during the course of the development (e. g. during bedrock excavations), this must be safeguarded, where feasible *in situ*, and reported to a palaeontologist or to the Heritage Resources authority. In situations where the area is considered palaeontologically sensitive (e. g. Karoo Supergroup Formations, ancient marine deposits in the interior or along the coast) the palaeontologist might need to monitor all newly excavated bedrock. The developer needs to give the palaeontologist sufficient time to assess and document the finds and, if necessary, to rescue a representative sample.

When a Phase 2 palaeontological impact study is recommended, permission for the development to proceed can be given only once the heritage resources authority has received and approved a Phase 2 report and is satisfied that (a) the palaeontological resources under threat have been adequately recorded and sampled, and (b) adequate development on fossil heritage, including, where necessary, *in situ* conservation of heritage of high significance. Careful planning, including early consultation with a palaeontologist and heritage management authorities, can minimise the impact of palaeontological surveys on development projects by selecting options that cause the least amount of inconvenience and delay.

Three types of permits are available; Mitigation, Destruction and Interpretation. The specialist will apply for the permit at the beginning of the process (SAHRA 2012).

### **I. Description of significant fossil occurrences**

All Karoo Supergroup geological formations are ranked as **LOW** to **VERY HIGH**, and here the impact is potentially **VERY HIGH** for the Vryheid Formation, **HIGH** for the Pretoria Group and **LOW** for the Steenkampsberg and Lakenvlei Formations.

The Ecca Group may contain fossils of diverse non-marine trace, *Glossopteris* flora, mesosaurid reptiles, palaeoniscid fish, marine invertebrates, insects, and crustaceans (Johnson 2009). *Glossopteris* trees rapidly colonised the large deltas along the northern margin of the Karoo Sea. Dead vegetation accumulated faster than it could decay, and thick accumulations of peat formed, which were ultimately converted to coal. It is only in the northern part of the Karoo Basin that the glossopterids and cordaitales, ferns, clubmosses and horsetails thrived (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005). Sediments of the Group contain significant reserves of coal and the interbedded shale is an important source of clay for brick making (Groenewald and Groenewald 2014).

One of the formations in the development area may contain fossils. Nixon *et al.* (1988) described the black shales south-west of Potchefstroom as consisting of overlapping laminated basal mounds which are stromatolitic as well as spheroidal possible planktonic fossil algae. These can range in size from 3.5 - 17 mm in height and up to 10 mm in diameter and can be present in the development area.

Details of the location and distribution of all significant fossil sites or key fossiliferous rock units are often difficult to be determined due to thick topsoil, subsoil, overburden and alluvium. Depth of the overburden may vary a lot.

The threats are:-

- Earth moving equipment/machinery (front end loaders, excavators, graders, dozers) during construction,
- The sealing-in or destruction of fossils by development, vehicle traffic and human disturbance. See Description of the Geological Setting (F) above.

## J. Recommendation

- a. There is no objection (see Recommendation B) to the development, it was necessary to request a Phase 1: Field Study. A Phase 2: Mitigation will be necessary if fossils are found during construction. Protocol is attached (Appendix 2).
- b. This project may benefit the community, will create short- and long-term employment, the life expectancy of the community, the growth of the community, and social development in general.
- c. Preferred choice: Locality Option 1 is preferred and possible.
- d. The following should be conserved: if any palaeontological material is exposed during clearing, ground-breaking, digging, excavating, or drilling SAHRA must be notified. All construction activities must be stopped, a 30 m no-go barrier constructed and a palaeontologist should be called in to determine proper mitigation measures.
- e. Consultation with parties was not necessary **(1o,p,q)**.
- f. This report must be submitted to SAHRA/PHRA together with the Heritage Impact Assessment Report.

### Sampling and collecting:

Wherefore a permit is needed from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA / PHRA).

- a. Objections: Cautious. See heritage value and recommendation.
- b. Conditions of development: See Recommendation.
- c. Areas that may need a permit: Yes.
- d. Permits for mitigation: **Needed from SAHRA/PHRA prior to Mitigation.**

## K. Conclusions

- a. All the land involved in the development was assessed and none of the property is unsuitable for development (see Recommendation B).
- b. All information needed for the Palaeontological Impact Assessment was provided by the Consultant. All technical information was provided by WSP Group Africa (Pty) Ltd.
- c. Areas that would involve mitigation and may need a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency are discussed.
- d. The following should be conserved: if any palaeontological material is exposed during clearing, ground-breaking, digging, excavating, drilling or blasting, SAHRA must be notified. All construction activities must be stopped, a 30 m barrier constructed, and a palaeontologist should be called in to determine proper mitigation measures.
- e. Condition in which development may proceed: It is further suggested that a Section 37(2) agreement of the Occupational, Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 is signed with the relevant contractors to protect the environment (fossils) and adjacent areas as well as for safety and security reasons.

## L. Bibliography

ALMOND, J., PETHER, J, and GROENEWALD, G. 2013. South African National Fossil Sensitivity Map. SAHRA and Council for Geosciences.

CLUVER, M.A. 1978. *Fossil Reptiles of the South African Karoo*. South African Museum, Cape Town, Pp 1-54.

DE ZANCHE, V. and MIETTO, P. 1977. *The World of Fossils*. Sampson Low Guides, Berkshire, Printed in Italy, Pp 256.

- GROENEWALD, G.H. and GROENEWALD D. 2014. Palaeotechnical Report for Gauteng Province, South African Heritage Resources Agency, Pp 23.
- KENT, L. E., 1980. Part 1: Lithostratigraphy of the Republic of South Africa, South West Africa/Namibia and the Republics of Bophuthatswana, Transkei and Venda. SACS, Council for Geosciences, *Stratigraphy of South Africa. 1980. South African Committee for Stratigraphy. Handbook 8, Part 1*, pp 690.
- KITCHING, J.W. 1977. The distribution of the Karroo Vertebrate Fauna, Memoir 1. Bernard Price Institute for Palaeontological Research (now ESI), University of the Witwatersrand, Pp 1-131.
- MACRAE, C. 1999. *Life Etched in Stone: Fossils of South Africa*. The Geological Society of South Africa, Johannesburg. Pp 305.
- MCCARTHY, T and RUBIDGE, B. 2005. *The Story of Earth Life: A southern African perspective on a 4.6-billion-year journey*. Struik. Pp 333.
- NIXON, N., ERIKSSON, P.G., JACOBS, R. and SNYMAN, C.P. 1988. Early Proterozoic micro-algal structures in carbonaceous shales of the Pretoria Group, south-west of Potchefstroom. *South African Journal of Science*, **84**: 592-595.
- NORMAN, N. 2013. *Geology off the beaten track: exploring South Africa's hidden treasures*. De Beers, Struik, Pp 1-256.
- NORMAN, N. and WHITFIELD, G., 2006. *Geological Journeys*. De Beers, Struik, Pp 1-320.
- RUBIDGE, B. S. (ed.), 1995. Biostratigraphy of the Beaufort Group (Karoo Supergroup). South African Committee for Biostratigraphy, Biostratigraphic Series No. 1, 46pp. Council for Geoscience, Pretoria.
- SAHRA 2012. Compliance to SAHRA Minimum Standards for Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessments. Document 7/6/9/2/1. Pp 2.
- SG 2.2 SAHRA APMHOB Guidelines, 2012. Minimum standards for palaeontological components of Heritage Impact Assessment Reports, Pp 1-15.
- SNYMAN, C. P., 1996. *Geologie vir Suid-Afrika*. Departement Geologie, Universiteit van Pretoria, Pretoria, Volume 1, Pp. 513.
- VAN DER WALT, M., DAY, M., RUBIDGE, B. S., COOPER, A. K. & NETTERBERG, I., 2010. Utilising GIS technology to create a biozone map for the Beaufort Group (Karoo Supergroup) of South Africa. *Palaeontologia Africana*, **45**: 1-5.
- VISSER, D.J.L. (ed) 1984. Geological Map of South Africa 1:100 000. South African Committee for Stratigraphy. Council for Geoscience, Pretoria.
- VISSER, D.J.L. (ed) 1989. *Toeligting: Geologiese kaart (1:100 000). Die Geologie van die Republieke van Suid Afrika, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei en die Koningryke van Lesotho en Swaziland*. South African Committee for Stratigraphy. Council for Geoscience, Pretoria.
- VISSER, H.N., SPIES, J.J., FOURIE, G.P., VILJOEN, J.J., SÖHGNE, A.P.G. and VENTER, F.A. 1961. Die geologie van die gebied tussen Middelburg en Cullinan, Transvaal. Toeligting van blad 2528D (Bronkhorstspuit) en blad 2529C (Witbank). *Geologies Opname*, Pp 1-69.
- WALRAVEN, F. and HARTZER, F.J. 1986. 1:250 000 Geological Map 2530 Baberton. South African Committee for Stratigraphy, Council for Geoscience, Pretoria.

**Declaration (1b)**

I, Heidi Fourie, declare that I am an independent consultant and have no business, financial, personal or other interest in the proposed development project for which I was appointed to do a palaeontological assessment. There are no circumstances that compromise the objectivity of me performing such work.

I accept no liability, and the client, by receiving this document, indemnifies me against all actions, claims, demands, losses, liabilities, costs, damages and expenses arising from or in connection with services rendered, directly or indirectly by the use of the information contained in this document.

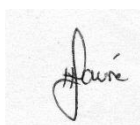
It may be possible that the Phase 1: Field Study may have missed palaeontological resources in the project area as outcrops are not always present or visible while others may lie below the overburden of earth and may only be present once development commences.

This report may not be altered in any way and any parts drawn from this report must make reference to this report.

**POPI Act 2013 Statement**

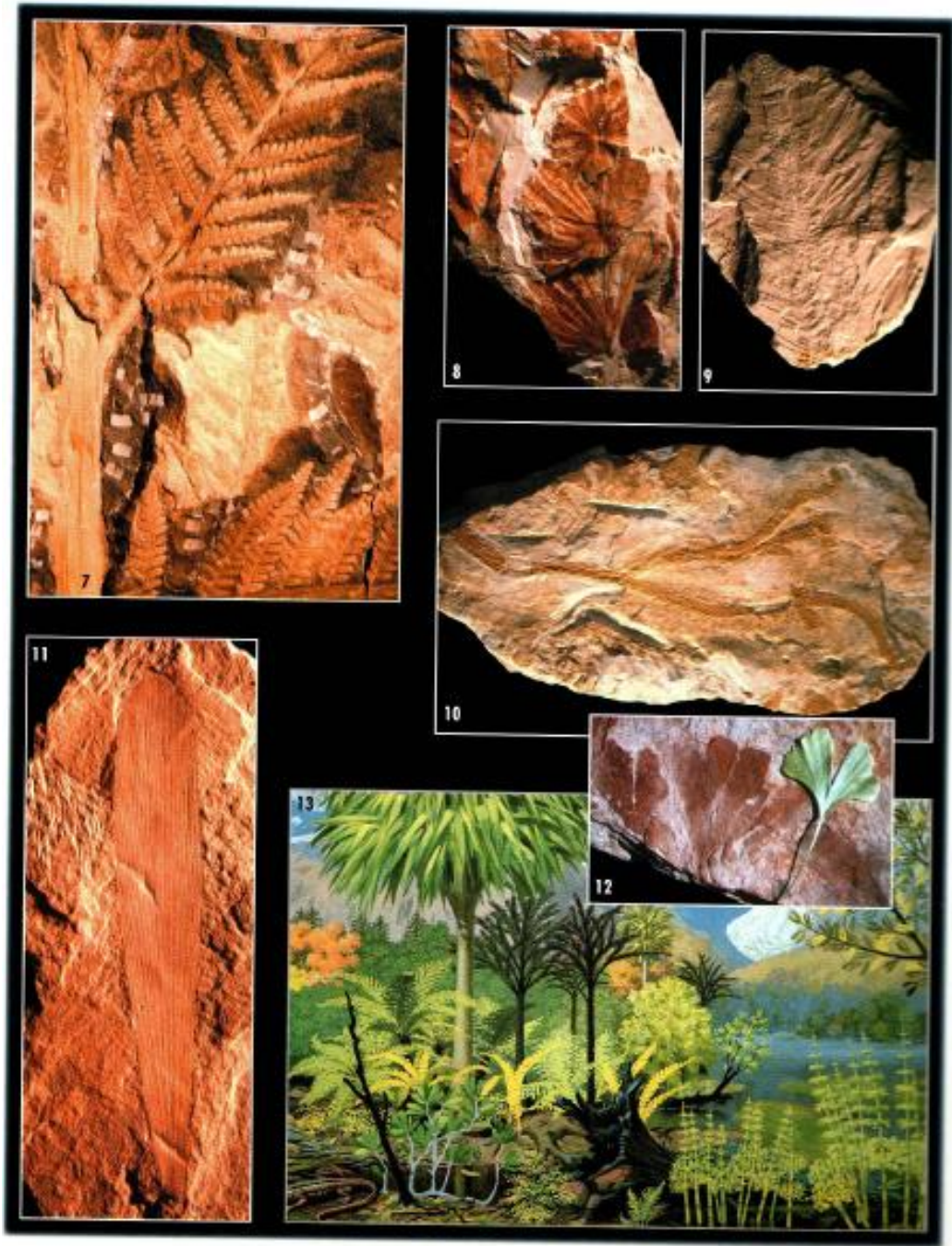
It provides that everyone has the right to privacy and includes a right to protection against the unlawful collection, retention dissemination and use of personal information contained in this document and pertains to the phone and contact details, signature and contents.

As per the Declaration Section none of the information may be shared without the permission of the author.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Fourie', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Heidi Fourie  
2024/03/28

Appendix 1: Example of Vryheid Formation fossils (MacRae 1999).



## **Appendix 2: Protocol for Chance Finds and Management Plan (1k,l,m)**

This section covers the recommended protocol for a Phase 2 Mitigation process as well as for reports where the Palaeontological Sensitivity is **LOW**; this process guides the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist on site and should not be attempted by the layman / developer. As part of the Environmental Authorisation conditions, an Environmental Control Officer (ECO) will be appointed to oversee the construction activities in line with the legally binding Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

- The EMPr already covers the conservation of heritage and palaeontological material that may be exposed during construction activities.
- For a chance find, the protocol is to immediately cease all construction activities, construct a 30 m no-go barrier, and contact SAHRA for further investigation. Construction workers must be informed that this is a no-go area.
- It is recommended that the EMPr be updated to include the involvement of a palaeontologist for pre-construction training of the ECO or during the digging and excavation phase of the development.
- The ECO must visit the site after clearing, drilling, excavations and blasting and keep a photographic record.
- The developer may be required to survey the areas affected by the development and indicate on plan where the construction / development / mining will take place. Trenches may have to be dug to ascertain how deep the sediments are above the bedrock (can be a few hundred metres). This will give an indication of the depth of the topsoil, subsoil, and overburden, if need be trenches should be dug deeper to expose the interburden.

Mitigation will involve recording, rescue and judicious sampling of the fossil material present in the layers sandwiched between the geological / coal layers. It must include information on number of taxa, fossil abundance, preservational style, and taphonomy. This can only be done during mining or excavations. In order for this to happen, in case of coal mining operations, the process will have to be closely scrutinised by a professional palaeontologist / palaeobotanist to ensure that only the coal layers are mined and the interlayers (siltstone and mudstone) are surveyed for fossils or representative sampling of fossils are taking place.

The palaeontological impact assessment process presents an opportunity for identification, access and possibly salvage of fossils and add to the few good plant localities. Mitigation can provide valuable onsite research that can benefit both the community and the palaeontological fraternity.

A Phase 2 study is very often the last opportunity we will ever have to record the fossil heritage within the development area. Fossils excavated will be stored at a National Repository.

### **A Phase 2 Palaeontological Impact Assessment: Mitigation will include (SAHRA) -**

1. Recommendations for the future of the site.
2. Description and purpose of work done (including number of people and their responsibilities).
3. A written assessment of the work done, fossils excavated, not removed or collected and observed.
4. Conclusion reached regarding the fossil material.
5. A detailed site plan and map.
6. Possible declaration as a heritage site or Site Management Plan.
7. Stakeholders.
8. Detailed report including the Desktop and Phase 1 study information.
9. Annual interim or progress Phase 2 permit reports as well as the final report.
10. Methodology used.

Mitigation involves planning the protection of significant fossil sites, rock units or other palaeontological resources and/or excavation, recording and sampling of fossil heritage that might be lost during development, together with pertinent geological data. The mitigation may take place before and / or during the construction phase of development. The specialist

will require a Phase 2 mitigation permit from the relevant Heritage Resources Authority before a Phase 2 may be implemented.

The Mitigation is done in order to rescue representative fossil material from the study area to allow and record the nature of each locality and establish its age before it is destroyed and to make samples accessible for future research. It also interprets the evidence recovered to allow for education of the public and promotion of palaeontological heritage.

Should further fossil material be discovered during the course of the development (e. g. during bedrock excavations), this must be safeguarded, where feasible *in situ*, and reported to a palaeontologist or to the Heritage Resources authority. In situations where the area is considered palaeontologically sensitive (e. g. Karoo Supergroup Formations, ancient marine deposits in the interior or along the coast) the palaeontologist might need to monitor all newly excavated bedrock. The developer needs to give the palaeontologist sufficient time to assess and document the finds and, if necessary, to rescue a representative sample.

When a Phase 2 palaeontological impact study is recommended, permission for the development to proceed can be given only once the heritage resources authority has received and approved a Phase 2 report and is satisfied that (a) the palaeontological resources under threat have been adequately recorded and sampled, and (b) adequate development on fossil heritage, including, where necessary, *in situ* conservation of heritage of high significance. Careful planning, including early consultation with a palaeontologist and heritage management authorities, can minimise the impact of palaeontological surveys on development projects by selecting options that cause the least amount of inconvenience and delay.

Three types of permits are available; Mitigation, Destruction and Interpretation. The specialist will apply for the permit at the beginning of the process (SAHRA 2012).

The Palaeontological Society of South Africa (PSSA) does not have guidelines on excavating or collecting, but the following is suggested:

1. The developer needs to clearly stake or peg-out (survey) the areas affected by the mining/ construction/ development operations and dig representative trenches and if possible supply geological borehole data. When the route is better defined, it is recommended that a specialist undertake a 'walk through' of the entire road as well as construction areas, including camps and access roads, prior to the start of any construction activities, this may be done in sections.
2. When clearing vegetation, topsoil, subsoil or overburden, hard rock (outcrop) is found, the contractor needs to stop all work.
3. A Palaeobotanist / palaeontologist (contact SAHRIS for list) must then inspect the affected areas and trenches for fossiliferous outcrops / layers. The contractor / developer may be asked to move structures, and put the development on hold.
4. If the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist is satisfied that no fossils will be destroyed or have removed the fossils, development and removing of the topsoil can continue.
5. After this process the same palaeontologist / palaeobotanist will have to inspect and offer advice through the Phase 2 Mitigation Process. Bedrock excavations for footings may expose, damage or destroy previously buried fossil material and must be inspected.
6. When permission for the development is granted, the next layer can be removed, if this is part of a fossiliferous layer, then with the removal of each layer of sediment, the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist must do an investigation (a minimum of once every week).
7. At this stage the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist in consultation with the developer / mining company must ensure that a further working protocol and schedule is in place. Onsite training should take place, followed by an annual visit by the palaeontologist / palaeobotanist.

**Fossil excavation if necessary, during Phase 2:**

1. Photography of fossil / fossil layer and surrounding strata.
2. Once a fossil has been identified as such, the task of extraction begins.
3. It usually entails the taking of a GPS reading and recording lithostratigraphic, biostratigraphic, date, collector and locality information.
4. Using Paraloid (B-72) as an adhesive and protective glue, parts of the fossil can be kept together (not necessarily applicable to plant fossils).
5. Slowly chipping away of matrix surrounding the fossil using a geological pick, brushes and chisels.
6. Once the full extent of the fossil / fossils is visible, it can be covered with a plaster jacket (not necessarily applicable to plant fossils).
7. Chipping away sides to loosen underside.
8. Splitting of the rock containing palaeobotanical material should reveal any fossils sandwiched between the layers.

**This document forms part of the Environmental Monitoring Programme.** For practical reasons a palaeontologist/palaeobotanist may be required to be on site as predetermined. If any fossil material is discovered then a Phase 2 rescue operation may be necessary, and a permit will be required.

**The South African Heritage Resources Agency has the following documents in place:**

Guidelines to Palaeontological Permitting policy.

Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Component of Heritage Impact Assessment reports.

Guidelines for Field Reports.

Palaeotechnical Reports (Eastern Cape, North West, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State, Kwazulu Natal, and Limpopo)

Appendix 3: **Table 3:** Listing points in Appendix 6 of the Act and position in Report (bold in text).

<b>Section in Report</b>	<b>Point in Act</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
B	1(c)	Scope and purpose of report
B	1(d)	Duration, date and season
B	1(g)	Areas to be avoided
D	1(ai)	Specialist who prepared report
D	1(aii)	Expertise of the specialist
F Figure 3	1(h)	Map
F, B	1(ni)(iA)	Authorisation
F, B	1(nii)	Avoidance, management, mitigation and closure plan
G Table 1	1(cA)	Quality and age of base data
G Table 2	1(cB)	Existing and cumulative impacts
G, D	1(f)	Details or activities of assessment
G	1(j)	Description of findings
H	1(e)	Description of methodology
H	1(i)	Assumptions
J	1(o)	Consultation
J	1(p)	Copies of comments during consultation
J	1(q)	Information requested by authority
Declaration	1(b)	Independent declaration
Appendix 2	1(k)	Mitigation included in EMPr
Appendix 2	1(l)	Conditions included in EMPr
Appendix 2	1(m)	Monitoring included in EMPr
D	2	Protocol or minimum standard

#### Appendix 4: Impact Statement

The development footprint is situated on the **Vryheid Formation** (Pv) of the Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup with a **VERY HIGH** palaeontological sensitivity. The nature of the impact is the destruction of Fossil Heritage. Loss of fossil heritage will have a negative impact. The extent of the impact only extends in the region of the development activity footprint and may include transport routes. The expected duration of the impact is assessed as potentially permanent. The intensity/magnitude of the impact is high as it is destructive. The probability of the impact occurring will be definite and will occur regardless of preventative measures.

In the absence of mitigation procedures (should fossil material be present within the affected area) the damage or destruction of any palaeontological materials will be irreversible. With Mitigation the impact will be moderate and the cumulative impact is low. Impacts on palaeontological heritage during the construction and preconstruction phase could potentially occur and is regarded as having a high possibility. The significance of the impact occurring will be as below:

Negative Impacts:  $>4 \leq 5$  **Very High (4.6)**

Positive Impacts:  $>4 \leq 5$  **Very High (4.6)**

$S = (2+5+8)5$

$S = 75$  **High (>60).**

The development footprint is situated on a geological layer with a **HIGH** palaeontological sensitivity. The nature of the impact is the destruction of Fossil Heritage. Loss of fossil heritage will have a negative impact. The extent of the impact only extends in the region of the development activity footprint and may include transport routes. The expected duration of the impact is assessed as potentially permanent. The intensity/magnitude of the impact is moderate as it may continue in a modified way. The probability of the impact occurring will be high.

In the absence of mitigation procedures (should fossil material be present within the affected area) the damage or destruction of any palaeontological materials will be permanent. The loss of resources occurs but natural cultural and social processes continue, albeit in a modified manner. With Mitigation the impact will be low and the cumulative impact is low. Impacts on palaeontological heritage during the construction and preconstruction phase could potentially occur but are regarded as having a moderate possibility. The significance of the impact occurring will be  $S = (2+5+8)4$

$S = 60$  **Medium (30-60).**

The development footprint is situated on a geological layer with a **LOW** palaeontological sensitivity. The nature of the impact is the destruction of Fossil Heritage. Loss of fossil heritage will have a negative impact. The extent of the impact only extends in the region of the development activity footprint and may include transport routes. The expected duration of the impact is assessed as potentially permanent. The intensity/magnitude of the impact is moderate as it may continue in a modified way. The probability of the impact occurring is improbable with a low likelihood.

Mitigation procedures (should fossil material be present within the affected area) will not be necessary. The loss of resources occurs but natural cultural and social processes continue, albeit in a modified manner. The cumulative impact is low. Impacts on palaeontological heritage during the construction and preconstruction phase will potentially not occur. The significance of the impact occurring will be  $S = (2+5+8)2$

$S = 30$  **Moderate (30-60).**