

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES

postal Private Bag X5014 Stellenbosch 7599
physical Assegaibosch Nature Reserve Jonkershoek
website www.capenature.co.za
enquiries Alana Duffell-Canham
telephone +27 21 866 8000 **fax** +27 21 866 1523
email aduffell-canham@capenature.co.za
reference SSD14/2/6/1/9/6/ 415_Water_Dams_Houdenbek
date 21 July 2017

Peet Botes
EnviroAfrica
PO Box 5367
Helderberg
7135

By email: admin@enviroafrica.co.za

Dear Mr Botes

RE: Proposed construction of two instream dams (Harmony and Toeka) on Farm Houdenbek No. 415, Ceres – Background Information Document.
DEA&DP Ref: TBA

CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application.

Please note that CapeNature does not support new instream dams or enlargement of existing instream dams unless it can be shown that the ecological condition of the river/stream in which the dam is located can be improved and no significant terrestrial or aquatic habitat will be lost.

Harmony Dam is not supported by CapeNature as it located within a proclaimed Mountain Catchment Area (Kouebokkeveld MCA). No activities which result in loss of habitat or alteration of water flow or quality should be permitted in MCAs. MCAs are of very high conservation value and should be treated and managed as formal protected areas. Runoff from this MCA assists in maintaining the water quality of the Houdenbeks River and groundwater recharge. It should be noted that a significant amount of water is already being captured by the dams in the Houdenbeks River and the many smaller dams in the Quaternary Catchment Area.

Toeka Dam is not within the MCA, however, it is proposed within an area determined as Ecological Support Area (ESA). Although it is acknowledged by the 2017 Biodiversity Spatial Plan that some of the ESA is degraded, the ESAs on this site have been determined as such because they are important for groundwater recharge, watercourse protection and the presence of a channelled valley bottom wetland. Ideally this area should be rehabilitated to allow for improved water flow and ecological functioning.

Should the applicant wish to pursue the applications for these dams, a freshwater specialist must be appointed to consider direct and cumulative impacts and to determine Ecological Flow Reserve and river rehabilitation requirements. However, our objection to Harmony Dam is likely to remain in place as development of a dam in the proposed location is contrary to the conservation objectives of a MCA.

The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board trading as **CapeNature**

Board Members: Ms Merle McOmbring-Hodges (Chairperson), Dr Colin Johnson (Vice Chairperson), Mr Mervyn Burton, Prof Denver Hendricks, Dr Bruce McKenzie, Adv Mandla Mdludlu, Mr Danie Nel, Prof Aubrey Redlinghuis, Mr Paul Slack

CapeNature reserves the right to revise initial comments and request further information based on any additional information that may be received.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alana Duffell-Canham', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Alana Duffell-Canham
For: Manager (Scientific Services)