

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES

postal Private Bag X5014 Stellenbosch 7599
physical Assegaaibosch Nature Reserve Jonkershoek
website www.capenature.co.za
enquiries Rhett Smart
telephone +27 21 866 8017 **fax** +27 21 866 1523
email rsmart@capenature.co.za
reference SSD14/2/6/1/9/4/56_cultivation_Stellenbosch
date 20 December 2018

EnviroAfrica
P.O. Box 5367
Helderberg
7135

Attention: Clinton Geysler
By email: admin@enviroafrica.co.za

Dear Clinton

Background Information Document for the Proposed Vineyards on the Remainder of Farm 56 Schoongezicht, Rustenberg Wine Estate, Stellenbosch

CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed development and would like to make the following comments. Please note that our comments only pertain to the biodiversity related impacts and not to the overall desirability of the proposed development.

The area proposed for cultivation of vineyards is classified as Ecological Support Area (ESA) 2 with a strip of Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) 2 along the westernmost section according to the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP). The natural vegetation that would have occurred on the site is Boland Granite Fynbos listed as Vulnerable. There is a watercourse mapped along the western section leading to an in-stream dam just south of the proposed cultivation area.

It should be noted that CapeNature has been consulted by the applicant and the Department of Agriculture regarding the cultivation application in terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA). There were two areas under consideration of which the area to the south was determined to not contain natural vegetation. The areas to the north was recommended for determination of NEMA listed activities by DEA&DP, which has resulted in the application. It is noted that the area to the south is mapped as cultivated with planted pastures on the crop census 2013 layer on CapeFarmMapper.

As described in the comment for the CARA application, both areas have been previously ploughed however the subject area was last ploughed over 10 years ago and hence is determined to have returned to natural vegetation in terms of NEMA and therefore triggers the 1 ha vegetation clearing threshold for a Vulnerable vegetation type in terms of NEMA.

Since the area has been previously ploughed it is likely that the vegetation does not contain the full complement of species that would be typical of this vegetation type. However the precautionary principle must be applied and a botanical scan should be undertaken in late winter/spring to assess the conservation value of the area and identify the presence of any threatened species. The WCBSP will need to be taken into consideration.

As mentioned above, there is a watercourse mapped along the western section of the site, with which the CBA 2 area is associated. It should be noted that there could be additional listed activities triggered in relation to the watercourse. It is recommended that there is no cultivation within a minimum of 32 m of the delineated watercourse. Should this be adhered to there would not be the need for an additional freshwater specialist scan, however a ground-truthed delineation of the watercourse and the 32 m buffer would be necessary.

In conclusion, CapeNature will comment in more detail on the Basic Assessment Report. We further wish to alert the applicant and the environmental assessment practitioner to the operational agreement for the synchronisation of the CARA, NWA, NEMA and NHA processes within the Western Cape, particularly with regards to agricultural applications.

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 'Rhett Smart', with a horizontal line underneath.

Rhett Smart
For: Manager (Scientific Services)

cc. Arnelle Collison, CapeNature