

CONSERVATION INTELLIGENCE: LANDSCAPE CENTRAL

postal Private Bag X5014 Stellenbosch 7599
physical Assegaaibosch 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 **SSD14/2/6/1/9/2/481-12_Cult&Dam_exp_ScherpenHeuvel**
date **11 March 2021**

Clinton Geyser
EnviroAfrica
PO Box 5367
Helderberg
7135

By email: clinton@enviroafrica.co.za

Dear Mr Geyser

RE: Proposed agricultural development and dam expansion on portion 12 of Farm Scherpen Heuvel No. 481, Worcester – Pre-application Draft Basic Assessment Report.
DEA&DP Ref: 16/3/3/6/7/1/B2/32/1022/21

CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Pre-application Draft Basic Assessment Report for this application and wish to make the following comments:

Agricultural expansion:

1. The botanical specialist assessed several areas on the property that may be impacted by the proposed developments. He determined that Area 1 is still in a good ecological condition and therefore Area 2 should be the preferred choice for agricultural development. Area 2 is disturbed in its northern section. He has recommended that agricultural activities are focused in this northern section and CapeNature supports this recommendation.
2. The “waaisand” area which is to be used as a source of sand for construction has been determined as a Critical Biodiversity Area as it is within a floodplain area. However, this area is not currently functioning as such and has already been previously disturbed. We do not object to the use of this area providing that the footprint is kept as small as possible and after construction is stabilised in terms of slope and groundcover.
3. Search and rescue has been recommended. Note that this does not necessarily reduce the impact ratings but can be considered good practice if the species are tolerant to relocation, a suitable receiving area is identified in advance; it does not create additional disturbance in areas which are in food ecological condition; and are to be kept natural; and the success of the plants is monitored and assisted as necessary.

4. There are several quite outdated references in the botanical specialist report, it is only necessary to refer to these if the latest best available science is in contradiction to the findings on site. Nevertheless, we are satisfied with the findings and recommendations made by the botanical specialist based on the site visit and NBA 2018.

Dam expansion:

5. Thank you for providing information of all the sub-catchments in the study area. We note that the proposed dam will only receive water form one of these sub-catchments and that not all water will be captured by the dam. We therefore agree that given the nature of the watercourse and the ecological integrity that an Ecological Flow reserve is not necessary.
6. The dam wall and area surrounding the dam should be monitored to ensure that there is no erosion occurring.
7. If additional water from the Breede River is abstracted this should only be done in the rainy season when flows are high in the river.

General:

8. The Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) is quite generic. The most important mitigation measures to highlight with regard to ecological impacts are clear demarcation of the approved area for expansion, on-going erosion management during the construction phase (this needs to be more than “once-off” as stated in the EMPr) and operational phase and on-going clearing of alien invasive species throughout the farm. We support the recommendations linked to management of the remaining natural areas.

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

Yours sincerely



Alana Duffell-Canham