

REPLY TO COMMENTS BY INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES: NORTHGATE DEVELOPMENT: KIMBERLEY

The comment that a botanist should have conducted the botanical study refers:

The qualifications and experience of the scientist that conducted the study is given below:

Qualifications

B. Sc., University of Port Elizabeth, 1972 - 1975,
Majoried in Zoology and Botany

B. Sc. (Hons), (Mammalogy), 1976. University of Pretoria.

M. Sc. (Zoology), University of Pretoria,
Title of dissertation: The effect of feline panleucopaenia on the *Felis catus* (Linnaeus) population on Marion Island

Experience

The knowledge of the scientist in this bioregion extends over the following years:

PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT:

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Cape Nature Conservation and Museums and later Northern Cape Nature Conservation Service
Uninterrupted service 1 May 1979 - 31 July 1998.

POST HELD: Professional Officer

MAIN JOB FUNCTIONS: The identification of conservation-worthy geographical areas in the Northern-Cape Region. Scientific support for ecological problems experienced by farmers in the Northern Cape. Support to District Services personnel, especially in game capture and problem animal control.

PROMOTION: Senior Regional Officer

MAIN JOB FUNCTION: Coordination and supervision of all nature conservation functions in the Northern Cape region, with only one direct supervisor at the then Head Office in Cape Town.

PARALLEL MOVEMENT: In 1983 I embarked on a research project on small mammals for the benefit of conservation in the region, as part of my job function. Rather than give up this project I subsequently applied for a parallel transfer to the Scientific Services Section.

PROMOTION: Regional Manager of the Northern Cape region with the rank of Senior Regional Officer (1993) and later Deputy - Director in the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Service.

MAIN JOB FUNCTION: Coordination and supervision of all nature conservation functions in the Northern Cape Province. During this time I developed a close working relationship with the farming and game farming fraternity. The projects I was directly responsible for include the establishment of new nature reserves (Molopo and Witsand) and my last project in the Northern Cape Nature Conservation Service, the development of tourist infrastructure at Witsand Nature Reserve at a cost of nine million rand.

REASON FOR LEAVING: Voluntary severance package in July 1998.

RECENT EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

I started my own environmental consultancy firm in August 1998.

I am a qualified Professional Hunter and am in the process of renewing my Tour Guide qualifications (NQF 4 National Guide).

The consultant has experience of the Kalahari since 1976 and has contributed to a book entitled "Hidden splendour – A guide to the natural history of the Kalahari and surrounds" (1996) He has also worked with communities since 1979 (Mier) and has done work in Riemvasmaak, Schmidtsdrift, Platfontein and Khusus in Namakwaland.

Major projects that have been completed are the following:

Kimberley Triangle Forum - a private initiative to consolidate 100 000 hectares of land for re-introduction of the big five and the development of tourism infrastructure.

Kalahari Oryx Adventure trails - Evaluation of 82 000 hectares of land for appropriate land-uses and planning a game farm and tourist infrastructure on 40 000 hectares of land.

Wayland Trust - Planning and implementing the conversion of a cattle ranch to a game farming venture with hunting facilities.

Groenewald Estates - Advising on game farming and eco-tourism on three separate farms.

Gamsberg Zinc Project - Appointed as chief consultant to oversee five scientists in their fields of expertise and give input into the Environmental Impact Assessment for Anglo American Technical Services.

Environmental Impact Assessments for the Gamsberg/Pella pipeline for Anglo American, Eskom lines, diamond diggings and construction sites in an around Kimberley.

Environmental Management Program Reports for Burk Mining (opened a medium size manganese mine), Windsorton gravel pumping project and Van Wyk Diamonds (Pty) Ltd.

Game farm planning for Campbell (5000 ha) and Glen Lyon Farms (46 000 ha).
Eco-tourism for Skoolplaas near Warrenton.

Ecological Control Officer at the Flamingo Casino and the development at Platfontein.

Identification of a waste disposal site for the Phokwane Municipality.

Game counting services (helicopter) rendered on privately- owned land and provincial nature reserves.

Evaluation of a game farming venture (Rooifontein) of De Beers Consolidated Mines.

Game farming planning for the farm Uitkyk no. 102.

Habitat analyses for various game farmers for buffalo, sable and roan antelope, black and white rhino, lion, cheetah, giraffe and nyala.

Game farm planning for P. van Niekerk, J.Kros, C. Kruger, J. Dercksen, N. Smith, J. Smit, De Beers Consolidated Mines, etc.

The question is posed that why a person with three years tertiary training in botany and with vast experience in the botanical and zoological experience in this specific biome cannot be regarded as a botanist by WESSA: Northern Cape. Criticize the report and not the person! It is also of importance that no other of the Interested and Affected Parties raised a similar complaint/objection.

1. I recommend that an independent evaluator be appointed to assess the **content** of the botanical report for its validation and correctness. WESSA must point out what they mean by “a proper vegetation assessment” and which elements are lacking. A vegetation map was supplied, the sensitive area was mapped and referred to as such in the text. A sensitivity map is regarded as superfluous.
2. I do not understand the significance of the comment that “Red Data species and endemic species weren’t observed and only two protected species were recorded”. These were the findings of the plant survey!

The reference to Gauteng policy on safety areas around Red Data Listed plants is irrelevant in two ways – no Red Data Plants were recorded on the property and it is a Gauteng Policy, not national legislation.

3. If these vegetation corridors are required it can easily be done. The only “vegetation corridors” that remain are natural vegetation corridors from due north and from the northeast, east and even south-east (approximately 8,3 km) and a narrow area to the west (2.6 km), but it does have some disturbance in the form of mine dumps and a cemetery in this region. By calculation the open corridors towards the pan make up 56,2 percent of the approach to the pan and the rest constitutes built-up areas. The proposed Northgate development adds approximately 2,6 kilometres of built-up area towards the north-west of Kamfersdam, adding a further 8,6 percent to the perimeter encapsulation, leaving 47,6 percent open approach areas.

If this argument is aimed mainly at flamingoes, it is an invalid argument as the flamingo fly in from any direction over any urban area from one water body to the next water body. I have resided in Monument Heights for the past 28 years and have often heard flamingoes vocalizing at night, flying between the “Yacht Club” and Kamfersdam and in 1988 with the exceptional rainfall, to Platfontein as well. The existence of “vegetation corridors” and “natural biodiversity corridors” is seriously in question. The existence of Kimberley as a city has very little

environmental influence on the quality of the veld type in which it is situated or the influence that a new suburb would negatively affect the veld type. The main objections in this case are based on the possible negative effects on the lesser flamingo population in the adjacent Kamfersdam that are breeding on an artificially created inundated pan, on an artificially created island. It is indeed regarded as a conservation feat of significance, but the almost immediate problems with the health and well-being of the flamingoes in this closed ecological system should be recognized and addressed.

4. “The drainage line is mapped too narrowly” – tell me how widely they want it mapped, then we will map it more widely! The public open space to protect the drainage line is 82,68 hectares in size and protects the whole drainage line.
5. The reason for not mentioning the inland zonal vegetation is because it is not being developed (in the Northgate development) and further not regarded as such anymore. The mapping of Mucina & Rutherford (2006) indicates only Kamfersdam as the veld-type, but it is interpreted that the pan-fringes are also included in the veld type.

However, the pan fringe/drainage line is not situated next to an intermittent salt-pan anymore. It is an ecosystem where salt content is the major ecological determinant of this vegetation complex. The environment of these pans is supposed to undergo dramatic changes from freshwater systems during the wet season to saline systems as the dry season progresses and evaporation intensifies. Wind erosion is of particular significance during the dry season, when the playa basin is dry and marginal vegetation is short and sparse.

Four percent of these pans have been transformed so far but threats such as agriculture, road building, mining and urbanization are still increasing (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

Looking at Kamfersdam three more threats can be added, namely railway lines, artificial permanent inundation and dumping of sewage.

The rest of the development (approximately 300 hectares) is the veld type that is primarily affected by the development.

If the Kamfersdam area needs to be described as “inland zonal vegetation” then the artificial inundation of the pan should cease and the area be allowed to return to a natural endorheic pan-system.

6. The most prominent protected trees (*Acacia erioloba*) were geo-referenced, together with *Nerine laticoma*, which is a protected species in terms of the Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ordinance 19 of 1974) **as stated** in the specialist report. In the vegetation map of the property there is reference to a designated sensitive area in the text of the specialist report, which in essence serves as a “sensitivity map” of the area.