



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PROJECT RESERVE DETERMINATION STUDY FOR SELECTED SURFACE WATER, GROUNDWATER, ESTUARIES, AND WETLANDS IN THE F60 AND G30 CATCHMENT WITHIN THE BERG-OLIFANTS WATER MANAGEMENT AREA: WP11340.**

**MEETING : MINUTES OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC) MEETING NO. 4**

**VENUE : MS TEAMS (Online meeting)**

**TIME : 10:00 – 13:35**

**DATE : 23 MARCH 2023**

Item	Description	Action																										
1.	<b>Welcome and Objectives of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The chairperson, Ms Ndileka Mohapi, opened the meeting and welcomed all present. The objectives of the meeting were to share progress made on the project with a specific focus on the groundwater contribution to the Reserve determination work and the Estuary EWR determination work and to obtain input from PSC members.</li><li>It was requested that the meeting be recorded – there was no objection.</li></ul>																											
2.	<b>Attendance/Apologies and Introductions</b> <p>An online meeting was held on MS Teams. A round of introductions was made. The attendees and apologies are listed below.</p> <b>Attendance Register</b> <table><tr><th>Name</th><th>Designation</th></tr><tr><td>1. Ndileka Mohapi</td><td>DWS: Chief Director: Water Ecosystems Management</td></tr><tr><td>2. Felicity Strange</td><td>Friends of Verlorenvlei</td></tr><tr><td>3. Yakeen Atwaru</td><td>DWS: Reserve Determination</td></tr><tr><td>4. Adaora Okonkwo</td><td>DWS: Water Resources Classification</td></tr><tr><td>5. Philani Khoza</td><td>DWS: Groundwater Reserve Determination</td></tr><tr><td>6. Caren George</td><td>DEA&amp;DP</td></tr><tr><td>7. Mellisa Naiker</td><td>WC Environmental Affairs and Development</td></tr><tr><td>8. Barbara Weston</td><td>DWS: Surface Water Reserve Determination</td></tr><tr><td>9. Dana Grobler</td><td>Blue Science</td></tr><tr><td>10. Toni Belcher</td><td>Blue Science</td></tr><tr><td>11. Gladys Makhado</td><td>DWS: Surface Water Reserve Determination</td></tr><tr><td>12. Bheki Cele</td><td>DWS: Surface Water Reserve Determination</td></tr></table>	Name	Designation	1. Ndileka Mohapi	DWS: Chief Director: Water Ecosystems Management	2. Felicity Strange	Friends of Verlorenvlei	3. Yakeen Atwaru	DWS: Reserve Determination	4. Adaora Okonkwo	DWS: Water Resources Classification	5. Philani Khoza	DWS: Groundwater Reserve Determination	6. Caren George	DEA&DP	7. Mellisa Naiker	WC Environmental Affairs and Development	8. Barbara Weston	DWS: Surface Water Reserve Determination	9. Dana Grobler	Blue Science	10. Toni Belcher	Blue Science	11. Gladys Makhado	DWS: Surface Water Reserve Determination	12. Bheki Cele	DWS: Surface Water Reserve Determination	
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	13. Grenville White	Friends of Verlorenvlei	
	14. Giselle Murison	Birdlife SA	
	15. Melisa Lintnaar-Strauss	DWS: Western Cape – Resource Protection	
	16. Jacobus Smit	Sandveld Bewarings Komitee, en Moutonshoek Beskermde Gebied	
	17. Stephen Lamberth	DFFE: Biodiversity & Coastal Research	
	18. Kwazikwakhe Majola	DWS	
	19. Gerhard Cilliers	DFFE: Biodiversity & Coastal Research	
	20. Jan Smit	DoA Western Cape	
	21. Deon Geldenhuys	Cape Nature	
	22. Pierre Brink	Homeowner - Verlorenvlei	
	23. Piet-Louis Grundling	DFFE	
	24. Charles Malherbe	West Coast District Municipality	
	25. Zanne Brink	Cape Nature	
	26. Ismat Adams	Cape Nature	
	27. Fanus Fourie	DWS	
	28. Pierre de Villiers	Cape Nature	
	29. Ashton van Niekerk	DWS: Western Cape	
	30. Ntsoakeleng Nakin	DWS	
	31. Rafieka Johaar	DWS: Western Cape	
	<b>Apologies:</b>		
	1. Ernst Baard	CapeNature	
	2. Tovho Nyamande	DWS	
	3. Brian Dyson	DWS: Western Cape – Groundwater	
	4. Marius Wheeler	Cape Nature	
	5. Jeanne Gouws	Cape Nature	
	6. Bertie Poole	Bitterfontein	
	7. Pieter Brink	WUA	
	8. Marlene Laros	WC Environmental Affairs and Development Planning	
	9. Rassie Nieuwoudt	DWS: Western Cape	
	10. Stanley Tshitwamulomoni	DFFE	
	11. Monique Vlok	Krom Antonies WUA	

3.	<p><b>Additions to the agenda and approval of the agenda</b></p> <p>The following items were added to the agenda under General:</p> <p>8.1. Estuaries (Pierre de Villiers)</p> <p>8.2. Peatlands (Piet-Louis Grundling)</p> <p>The amended agenda was accepted.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b></p> <p><b>4.1. Approval of previous minutes 23 November 2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was requested that Rassie Nieuwoudt, Ashton van Niekerk and Zanne Brink be added to the list of apologies.</li> <li>• Mellisa Naiker requested that the spelling of her name be corrected in the minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b>4.2. Matters arising from previous minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lack of attendance of CapeNature, and specifically Pierre de Villiers, at previous PSC meetings had been raised as a concern. Pierre had been contacted and was at the meeting.</li> <li>• Minutes of the stakeholder meetings held had been distributed.</li> <li>• A copy of the presentations given at the last PSC meeting was emailed together with the meeting minutes.</li> <li>• Felicity Strange indicated that she would be happy if there was an executive summary included in the Final Integrated Report for the project.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Updates on study progress:</b></p> <p>A presentation on the Objectives, Roles and responsibilities of the PSC was given by Gladys Makhado. The details of contact persons for the project and the location of available documentation relating to the project were also communicated (<a href="http://www.dwa.gov.za/rdm/currentstudies/default.aspx">http://www.dwa.gov.za/rdm/currentstudies/default.aspx</a>).</p>	
6.	<p><b>Technical Presentations</b></p> <p><b>6.1 Background to the study and project progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toni Belcher gave a presentation that provided background to the study and the project's progress to date. A copy of the presentation will be emailed with the minutes.</li> <li>• Piet-Louis Grundling asked specific questions about the thinking and approach of the study and asked that there be a separate discussion regarding the wetland component of the project.</li> <li>• Pierre de Villiers suggested that possibly the Ramsar status of Verlorenvlei required review. He also mentioned that the system appeared to go through a 20-year dry-wet cycle.</li> <li>• Barbara Weston indicated that she would send the minutes of the PSC meeting to Stanley Tshitwamulomoni (Director: Water Sources and Wetlands Conservation, DFFE) and Jackie Jay (Control Biodiversity Officer Water Sources and Wetlands Conservation, DFFE).</li> </ul>	

6.2	<p><b>Presentation on the Estuaries EWR determination progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Lamberth provided feedback on the estuaries Reserve determination component of the study. A copy of the presentation will be emailed with the meeting minutes.</li> <li>• Yakeen Atwaru indicated that the climate change scenario is a reality and queried whether a B ecological category is achievable in the estuary. Both flow and non-flow-related recommendations have been included in the estuary Reserve reports to address achieving the recommended ecological categories.</li> <li>• Felicity Strange commented that the reeds in Verlorenvlei appear to be increasing not decreasing. Rassie Nieuwoudt responded that the reeds are thriving despite the decreasing freshwater inflow as they intercept mist to obtain water.</li> <li>• Piet-Louis Grundling commented that acidification of peatlands is occurring everywhere largely as a result of the abstraction of groundwater. This is not the same process as the pyrite dissociation indicated by the estuary team as taking place in the Verlorenvlei.</li> <li>• Pierre de Villiers indicated that the non-flow-related mitigation measures recommended are implementable and are included in the estuary management plans for the estuaries. Key sites/actions should be prioritized to make a difference in the ecological condition of the estuaries.</li> <li>• Gerhard Cilliers asked if sediment samples had been taken in the estuary surveys. This element could be taken up in the DFFE sampling programme.</li> <li>• Piet-Louis Grundling recommended that there be interaction with local communities and organized agriculture to address key issues such as water use.</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Completed and upcoming activities</b></p> <p>These were discussed under item 6.1. There is a stakeholder engagement session scheduled for 19 April 2023. The PSP team asked the stakeholders if the session is needed and an indicating a time for the session. The meeting confirmed that the engagement is required and that it could be delayed to allow the team to prepare further for it.</p>	
8	<p><b>General</b></p> <p><b>8.1. Estuaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pierre de Villiers indicated that there are quarterly Estuary Advisory Forum meetings and that the forum would provide a good base for the implementation of the estuary Reserve recommendations and specifically the non-flow recommendations. Implementation of the Estuary Management Plan, which is being approved, is a priority for Cape Nature.</li> </ul> <p><b>8.2. Peatlands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piet-Louis Grundling stated that he is glad to see that the important role of groundwater in the wetlands is recognized and that peat needs to stay wet throughout the year, fed by groundwater. The peatlands are adapted to dry cycles but still need to be fed from groundwater. Unmanaged groundwater abstraction places the wetlands at risk. Valley bottom peatlands surface drops as it dewateres – in Verlorenvlei at least 1 m – and creates terraces at the edges. For seep peatlands, need to look at groundwater contributors to understand them better and target water users of those aquifers for better management. The catchments of peatlands are as important as the</li> </ul>	

	wetlands themselves. This requires cooperation between all levels of government and creating awareness of water users in the catchment.	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Way forward</b></p> <p>This PSC meeting was the last meeting.</p> <p>Yakeen Atwaru indicated that there would be an independent peer review of the project. For surface water, Dr Patsy Scherman has been appointed. Prof. Kai Witthüser has been appointed to do the groundwater Reserve determination process.</p> <p>The Reserve will be gazetted for a 60-day comment period before being finalised. The project documents will be posted on the website for review.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Closure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ndileka Mohapi thanked all and closed the meeting. The meeting was closed at 13:35 by the chair.</li> </ul>	