

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Notification of Public Participation:

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE

Notice is hereby provided in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), the National Environmental Management Act: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended, of a 30-day Pre – Application Public Participation Process to be undertaken under the authority of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE). The Public Participation Process will run from **24/04/2025 to 24/05/2025**.

DFFE Reference Number: TBC

Project Proposal: The construction of a primary residence, three cottages, a vehicle parking area, and a garage/storeroom. Additionally, it is necessary to create an access road through the existing dense vegetation on the property to the development.

Location: Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape



The following EIA Listed Activities are applicable:

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 17

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 19A

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 27

Government Notice No. R324 (Listing Notice 3): Listed Activity 4

A Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report and relevant appendices will be made available to all registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) for public review and comment. All relevant documents may be accessed via our website during the public participation period.

Should you wish to gain further information regarding the project or wish to register as an Interested and Affected Party please contact the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (details below).

Please provide written comments with your name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal, or other interest which you may have in the development. Please note that information submitted by I&APs becomes public information. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA), no personal information will be made available to the public.

Environmental Assessment Practitioner: Bianca Gilfillan (EAPASA Reg 2023/7929)

www.ecoroute.co.za

Email: bianca@ecoroute.co.za / admin@ecoroute.co.za

Cell: 079 189 5060

ECO-ROUTE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY

EIA PROCESS



Notification of Public Participation:

Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of Farm 25, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Notice is hereby provided in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), the National Environmental Management Act: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended, of a 30-day Public Participation Process to be undertaken under the authority of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE).

The Public Participation Process will run from **24 April 2025 – 23 May 2025**.

The following EIA Listed Activities are applicable:

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 17

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 19A

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 27

Government Notice No. R324 (Listing Notice 3): Listed Activity 4

A Draft Basic Assessment Report and relevant appendices will be sent via email to all registered Interested and Affected Parties/ I&APs for public review and comment. Alternatively, all relevant documents may be accessed via our website during the public participation period:
www.ecoroute.co.za

In addition, a hard copy will be placed at the Public Library in Sedgefield for I&APs without access to internet.

Should you wish to comment on the Draft report, gain further information regarding the project or wish to register as an Interested and Affected Party please contact the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (details below).

Please provide written comments with your name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal, or other interest which you may have in the development.

Environmental Assessment Practitioner: Bianca Gilfillan (EAPASA Reg 2023/7929)

P.O. Box 1252, Sedgefield, 6573

Email: bianca@ecoroute.co.za/ admin@ecoroute.co.za

Tel: 0791895060

www.ecoroute.co.za

physical 4th Floor, York Park Building,
York Street, George, 6530
website www.capenature.co.za
enquiries Megan Simons
telephone 087 087 3060
email msimons@capenature.co.za
Reference LE14/2/6/1/6/4/205-79_Residential_Sedgefield
date 26 June 2025

Eco Route Environmental Consultancy,
P.O. Box 1252,
Sedgefield,
6573

Attention: Ms Bianca Gilfillan
By email: admin@ecoroute.co.za

Dear Ms Bianca Gilfillan

**THE BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT: PRE-CONSULTATION FOR THE
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY DWELLING AND ACCESS ROAD
ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, KNYSNA
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, WESTERN CAPE.**

CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to review the above report. Please note that our comments only pertain to the biodiversity related impacts and not to the overall desirability of the application. CapeNature wishes to make the following comments:

The property is within the Wilderness Lakes Protected Environment. According to the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (CapeNature 2024)¹ the property has Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA 1: Terrestrial and Forest to the north and CBA 2: Terrestrial and Forest to the south) and Ecological Support Areas (ESA 1: Terrestrial to the north west). The fine-scale vegetation map describes the vegetation as Wilderness Forest-Thicket and Hartenbos Primary Dune (the latter along the southern section) (Vlok *et al.*, 2008)². The National Biodiversity Assessment (Skowno *et al.*, 2018)³ mapped the vegetation unit as Goukamma Dune Thicket which is Least Concerned (SANBI 2022)⁴. The 2024 update of the Vegetation of South Africa (Beta VegMap, 2024)⁵ mapped the vegetation of the property as Goukamma Strandveld. Following a review of the application, CapeNature wishes to make the following comments:

The property does not have any freshwater features but falls within the Coastal Protection Zone and the Coastal Management Line is towards the southern end of the property. Following a review of the application, CapeNature has the following comments:

¹ CapeNature. 2024. 2023 Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan and Guidelines. Unpublished Report

² Vlok JHJ, Euston-Brown DIW, Wolf T. 2008. A vegetation map for the Garden Route Initiative. Unpublished 1: 50 000 maps and report for C.A.P.E. FSP Task Team, Oudtshoorn.

³ Skowno, A. L., Poole, C. J., Raimondo, D. C., Sink, K. J., Van Deventer, H., Van Niekerk, L., Harris, L. R., Smith-Adao, L. B., Tolley, K. A., Zengeya, T. A., Foden, W. B., Midgley, G. F. and Driver, A. 2019. National Biodiversity Assessment 2018: The status of South Africa's ecosystems and biodiversity. Synthesis Report. Pretoria, South Africa. 214 pp.

⁴ Government of South Africa (2022) South African Red List of Terrestrial Ecosystems: assessment details and ecosystem descriptions. Technical Report #7664, SANBI Pretoria, South Africa.

⁵ South African National Biodiversity Institute (2006-2024). The Vegetation Map of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland, Mucina, L., Rutherford, M.C. and Powrie, L.W. (Editors), Online, <https://bgis.sanbi.org/Projects/Detail/2258>, Version 2024.

1. The property is largely in a natural state and falls within a Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA). While the proposed development is located within a degraded CBA, this does not imply reduced sensitivity. We do not support the specialist's view that the degraded CBA is a preferable option, as its management objectives clearly state: *"Maintain in a functional, natural, or near-natural state, with no further loss of natural habitat. These areas should be rehabilitated."* Degraded CBAs must be managed in line with these objectives, including rehabilitation, unless a qualified rehabilitation specialist confirms that restoration is not feasible.
2. The presence of invasive alien species on the property indicates that it has not been managed. In terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)⁶ and its associated Alien and Invasive Species Regulations⁷, landowners are legally obligated to control and remove listed invasive species from their properties. The presence of these species should not be used to justify the proposed development, as it reflects non-compliance with existing environmental obligations rather than a reduced ecological value.
3. CapeNature does not support the currently proposed development location, as it lies within 100 metres of the High-Water Mark. We recommend that the development be relocated further inland within the forested area. Consultation with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is advised to identify the most ecologically appropriate site. The development should be sensitively positioned to avoid impacting the forest and should be designed to retain and build around the protected milkwood trees⁸.
4. The site is steep, and we remind the applicant that steep slopes increase the chance of erosion and siltation which can also result in land slipping. Also, heavy rainfall events may also exacerbate the soil condition.
5. As noted, the property falls within the Wilderness Lakes Protected Environment, is bordered by the Lake Pleasant Private Nature Reserve, and lies within a Priority Focus Area of the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy. We recommend that the landowner consider placing the remaining portion of the property under formal conservation through a biodiversity stewardship agreement in perpetuity. This would, in the long term, contribute to linking the property with the Goukamma Cluster of the Garden Route Complex World Heritage Site and Nature Reserves⁹.
6. The Basic Assessment Report (BAR) identifies a Biodiversity Offset Agreement as a proposed mitigation measure. However, biodiversity offsets should only be considered as a last resort, after all other steps in the mitigation hierarchy have been fully applied. The BAR must clearly outline how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, step-by-step. As per the National Biodiversity Offset Guidelines (2023)¹⁰ (hereafter NBOG). The NBOG also stress that offsets should not be applied in areas with irreplaceable biodiversity,

⁶ National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004), Government Gazette No. 26436

⁷ Regulations under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004): Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, Government Gazette No. 43735

⁸ Notice of the List of Protected Tree Species under the National Forest Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998).

⁹ CapeNature. 2023. Garden Route Complex World Heritage Site & Nature Reserves: Protected Areas Management Plan 2023-2033. Internal Report. CapeNature. Cape Town.

¹⁰ National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998): The National Biodiversity Offset Guideline. 2023. Government Gazette No. 48841.

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

Board Members: Ms Marguerite Loubser (Chairperson), Prof Gavin Maneveldt (Vice Chairperson), Mr Tom Blok, Ms Reyhana Gani, Dr Colin Johnson, Ms Ayanda Mvandaba, Prof Nicolaas Olivier, Ms Chwayita Shude-Mareka, Dr Razeena Omar

including Critically Endangered ecosystems. While the mapped vegetation type is classified as Least Concern, the property includes patches of indigenous forest, which have high biodiversity value.

7. It is important that the service infrastructure be included to determine whether they will cause any other additional habitat loss. The applicant must demonstrate that there is sufficient municipal capacity to support the proposed development, specifically in relation to potable water supply, sewage treatment, and waste management services. Given ongoing water security challenges, the development should incorporate water conservation measures, including the installation of rainwater harvesting systems (e.g., water tanks). In addition, the development should adopt energy-efficient design principles, such as passive solar orientation, energy-saving appliances, and potentially renewable energy sources (e.g., solar panels).

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 'Megan Simons', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Megan Simons
For: Manager (Conservation Intelligence)

Re: [Public participation] Rezoning and Land Use Inquiry – Farm 73/216, Uitzicht/ Brenton On Sea

From bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Date Wed 28/05/2025 08:59

To admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Dear Carina,

Thank you.

I will reach out to her.

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan

Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929

EcoRoute



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From: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Sent: Wednesday, May 28, 2025 8:56 AM

To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: Re: [Public participation] Rezoning and Land Use Inquiry – Farm 73/216, Uitzicht/ Brenton On Sea

Hi Bianca,

I think it was just a typo, we do not have a project for Portion 73.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie

Personal Assistant/Admin

Office: 064 691 4394

www.ecoroute.co.za



Eco Route
Environmental Consultancy

From: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Sent: Wednesday, 28 May 2025 08:38

To: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: Re: [Public participation] Rezoning and Land Use Inquiry – Farm 73/216, Uitzicht/ Brenton On Sea

Good morning, Carina.

Thank you. Is there a project for Portion 73? If not, then it must be for Portion 79.

Thank you.

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan
Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929
EcoRoute



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From: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 11:14
To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>
Subject: Fw: [Public participation] Rezoning and Land Use Inquiry – Farm 73/216, Uitzicht/ Brenton On Sea

Hi Bianca,

I believe this is for Portion 79.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie
Personal Assistant/Admin
Office: 064 691 4394
www.ecoroute.co.za



Eco Route
Environmental Consultancy

From: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Sent: Monday, 26 May 2025 17:33
To: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Subject: [Public participation] Rezoning and Land Use Inquiry – Farm 73/216, Uitzicht/ Brenton On Sea

Noeleen Davel (not verified) (noeleen@remaxcoastal.co.za) sent a message using the contact form at <https://www.ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name
Noeleen Davel

The sender's email
noeleen@remaxcoastal.co.za

Subject
Rezoning and Land Use Inquiry – Farm 73/216, Uitzicht/ Brenton On Sea

Message
Dear Eco Route Team,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to inquire about the current and future zoning status of Farm 73/216 located in Uitzicht. Specifically, I would like to confirm whether there are any plans for rezoning the property for development purposes, or if it will remain designated as conservancy land.

In the event that the land retains its conservancy status, could you kindly provide clarity on the following:

What types of buildings or structures, if any, are permitted under the current zoning regulations?

What forms of agricultural or farming activities are allowed on the property?

This information is essential for advising interested parties accurately and ensuring compliance with local regulations.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. I look forward to your response.

Noeleen

Registration as interested and affected party : Portion 79 of Farm 205

From info@aubergeducap.co.za <info@aubergeducap.co.za>

Date Tue 01/07/2025 10:58

To bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Cc 'Auberge du Cap' <info@aubergeducap.co.za>; 'Auberge du Cap' <info@aubergeducap.co.za>

Dear Bianca

We have been away for several weeks and only returned home on the weekend.

We hereby wish to register as interested and affected party.

We are the owners of Portion 78 of Farm 205 Ruygtevalley Sedgefield. M and MJ van Vuuren.

Contact details. Emails as above under cc.

We are concerned about the effect the increase in traffic will have on the animals that roam freely in this protected forest area should tourism cottages be built.

3 Tourist cottages will entail 3 cars per day travelling in and out of the single lane Bushy way most likely twice a day. Further more – the staff will be travelling in and out of the forest daily as well . The general idea, as we understood when purchasing here, was for permanent accommodations only and not tourism accommodation, with the resultant increase in traffic on Bushy way, which incidently is a narrow one spoor lane. In order to preserve the Forest Tranquility we hope to keep the traffic to a minimum in order not to kill, mame and disturb the wildlife that we encounter regularly when using Bushy way. The amount of spoor observed on a daily basis during our walks testify to the large amount of animals traversing Bushy way.

Bushy way has many blind spots. This makes it extremely difficult to see oncoming traffic – which may lead to a situation - where in the event of tourists frequently driving up and down Bushy way – could result in head to head accidents. We understand this potential problems, as we are the only residents who have actually lived here and experienced such problems with oncoming cars.

We are also concerned about the level of fire safety and whether tourists visiting the area will be as educated and concerned with the extreme caution we need to take regarding fires and fire safety the Forest.

Can you please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Regards

Marchelle van Vuuren
082 73 466 73

Re: Register as intrested party

From bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Date Wed 28/05/2025 08:50

To James Vos <jamesv@agriwiz.co.za>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Cc Karen Daymond <karindaymond@gmail.com>

Good morning, James.

Thank you for the email.

We hereby acknowledge receipt of your email and confirm that you are registered as an interested and affected party.

Thank you.

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan

Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929

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From: James Vos <jamesv@agriwiz.co.za>

Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 12:55 PM

To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Cc: Karen Daymond <karindaymond@gmail.com>

Subject: Register as intrested party

Hello Bianca,

Please register me as an interested party for the Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape.

Reason for interest, is that I am the owner of Portion 76 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape.

My contact details are:

James Vos

+83 305 4815

jamesv@agriwiz.co.za/"Karen Daymond" <karindaymond@gmail.com>

Many thanks,

James



James Vos
+27 83 305 4815
james@agriwiz.mu

Re: EIA listed activities

From bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Date Mon 26/05/2025 09:55

To noeleendavel@gmail.com <noeleendavel@gmail.com>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Good day,

A 30-day public participation will be held from **21/05/2025 – 23/06/2025**. Please submit your comments to the EAP undersigned in this time.

Please kindly visit our website to view the Pre-Application BAR and relevant appendices:

[Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape | Eco Route](#)

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan

Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929

EcoRoute



Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

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From: noeleendavel@gmail.com <noeleendavel@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, May 26, 2025 5:53 AM

To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>; admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: FW: EIA listed activities

Good morning

Sorry me again – sorry this is for farm 216 section 73

From: noeleendavel@gmail.com <noeleendavel@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, 26 May 2025 05:40

To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za; admin@ecoroute.co.za

Subject: EIA listed activities

Good morning

Please could you email me a draft of what interested parties are allowed to do on vacant land been sold in the Uitzicht farms and in particular to farm 216/

Kind regards

NOELEEN DAVEL
PROPERTY PRACTITIONER

RE/MAX Coastal
Registered with the PPRA | FFC 2023/19237

+27 (0)82 668 8373
+27 (0)44 382 5722
noeleen@remaxcoastal.co.za
www.gardenrouterealestate.com
Waterside Shopping Centre, Union Street, Knysna, 6571

KNYSNA **SEDFIELD** **WILDERNESS** **MOSSEL BAY**

Each Office Independently Owned and Operated | CIRCLE BROKERS CC t/a RE/MAX Coastal. A franchise of RE/MAX of Southern Africa
Registered with the PPRA | FFC 2023/19237

Date: 23 June 2025

Carina Leslie
admin@ecoroute.co.za

Re: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

In my capacity as a professional conservation planner and adjacent landowner, I submit my comments to the BAR here. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed development. The thorough nature of the documentation provided is also noted (although Appendix D5 has a calculation error - the building footprint is 2.27% (and not 0.02%) of the site, which means 97.73%, and not 99.98%, remains “undeveloped”).

Although I respect the desires of the owners to construct a dwelling with sea views, the very high ecological and geological sensitivity of the site also need to be respected. I support a single dwelling, with no additional tourism development, away from the cliffs and placed for minimal forest disturbance (i.e. adjacent to currently undeveloped “public” access road). I also recommend that the property apply for Private Nature Reserve status under NEMA (as I have completed for my property), with an appropriate management plan, to secure long term conservation outcomes, to which property owners can be held accountable. In my opinion, rezoning does not hold owners accountable, and far too many proposals promise “future conservation care of the land” simply to get proposal authorized. In addition, the desire to earn income from tourism may be in line with the broader ecotourism objectives for the Garden Route, but it is not sufficient rationale for extra disturbance of an extremely sensitive forested/cliff top environment (and the cumulative impacts that tourism brings). The potential income from tourism will likely be a very small percentage of the investment costs, so I do not view a “financial needs” argument as rational.

My reasons for my recommendation for a single dwelling on the “road” are detailed in various subsections below. The Terrestrial Biodiversity Report provided has picked up on many of these issues, although I do

not support the location advised. For almost 30 years now I have been recommending that all the properties in this region be amalgamated into one and that landowners site their private dwellings in an appropriate location with shared access roads and off-grid power/water/security infrastructure, with the remaining area managed for its high conservation value. This requires all the landowners to cooperate, but this has proven impossible to date. It remains something I support and I would welcome the landowner's views on this.

I also welcome further discussion on any of my comments listed here.

Sincerely

Prof. Amanda T. (Mandy) Lombard
DST/NRF Research Chair: Marine Spatial Planning
Institute for Coastal and Marine Research
Nelson Mandela University
South Africa
Cell: 27 (0)83 454 2284
Email 1: mandylombard2@gmail.com
Email 2: mandy.lombard@mandela.ac.za

The sensitivity of forests

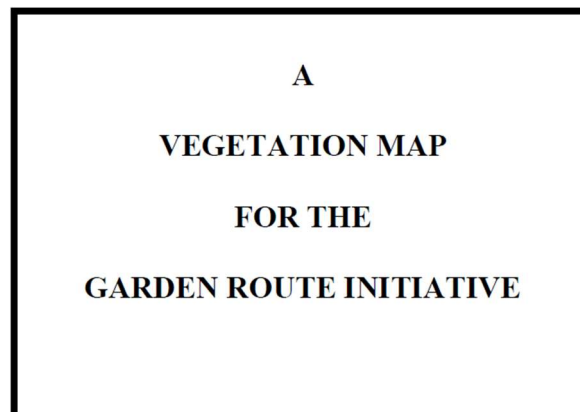
The area in which the proposed development falls is within a solid thicket/milkwood forest. This forest strip is concentrated along the coast, and is EXTREMELY sensitive to any disturbance, owing to the fact that once the forest is bisected by roads or any other form of clearing, it dies back from the “wound” as its moisture content is altered. Many plants (especially forest trees such as the protected milkwood) and animals (especially birds) rely on large expanses of intact forest to live and breed, and once this forest is fragmented in any way, their core habitat is reduced and they slowly become locally extinct (i.e. extinct to the Groenvlei forest area). This strip of forest is also a very important extension to the Goukamma nature reserve, it contains different species (it is not just “more of the same”), a lot of it falls on primary dunes adjacent to the sea. It is also one of the last remaining stretches of intact solid thicket coastal forest in South Africa. If at all possible, this unique habitat should not be touched in any way, and any authorized development should minimise forest impacts.

Vegetation mapping

Forest

High resolution mapping done for the Garden Route Initiative classifies the coastal forested area along the Groenvlei seafront as **Groenvlei Coastal Forest**, which contains protected species (for example the Milkwood). This mapping is of a higher resolution than the broader scale NBA maps for South Africa and should inform a botanical survey of the site.

Vlok, J. H. J., Euston-Brown, D. I. W., & Wolf, T. (2008). A vegetation map for the Garden Route Initiative.



Project Team:

Jan Vlok, Regalis Environmental Services, Oudtshoorn.
Doug Euston-Brown, Scarborough, Cape Town.
Trevor Wolf, Knysna.

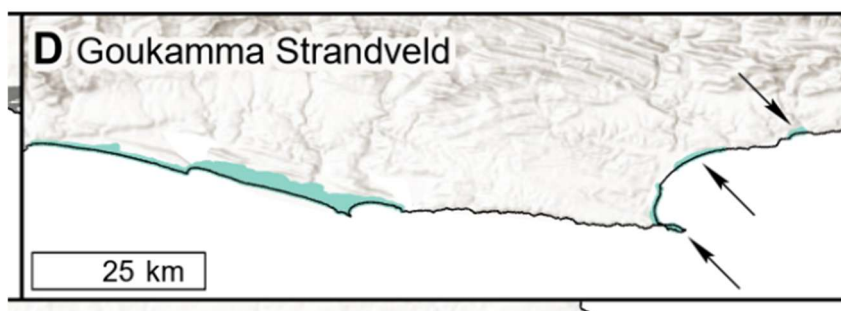
Date of report: May 2008

Suggested Reference to maps and report:
Vlok, J.H.J., Euston-Brown D.I.W. & Wolf, T. 2008. A vegetation map for the Garden Route Initiative. Unpublished 1:50 000 maps and report supported by CAPE FSP task team.

Goukamma Strandveld

In addition, Cowling et al. (2023) have recently reclassified the (non-forested) Goukamma Dune Thicket of the area to a narrow band of Goukamma Strandveld.

Cowling, R. M., Cawthra, H., Privett, S., & Grobler, B. A. (2023). The vegetation of Holocene coastal dunes of the Cape south coast, South Africa. *PeerJ*, 11, e16427

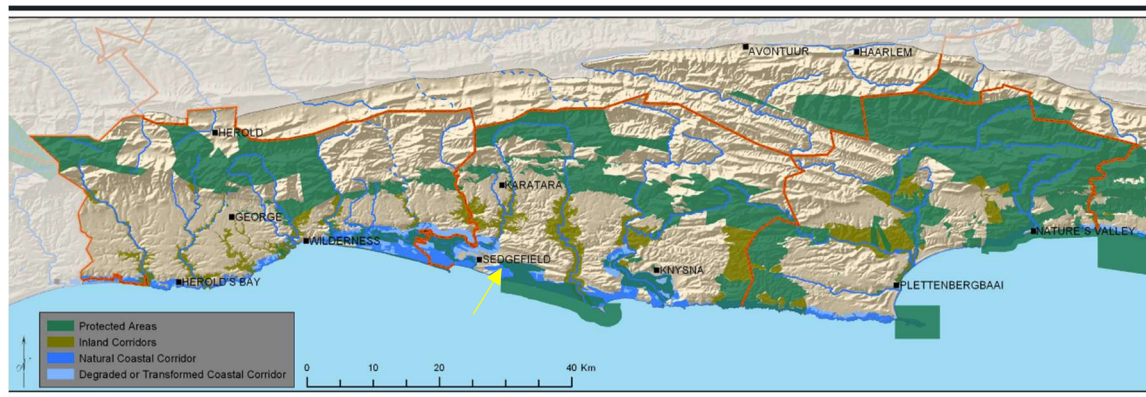


Species

The area also includes many species of special concern (endangered, vulnerable or threatened), for example *Erica glandulosa* subsp. *fourcadei*, *Satyrium princeps*, *Athanasia*, *Selago*, possibly *villicaulis*, which should also be identified by a botanical survey of the site and would trigger a full EIA.

Coastal corridor

Many documents classify the forested strip along the coastline as a coastal corridor, for example, the Garden Route National Park maps (see below)



GRNP_WC_Corridors.jpg

and the Rapid Assessment done by Lombard et al. (2005).

Lombard, A.T., T. Strauss, J. Vlok, T. Wolf and M. Cameron. (May 2005). A Rapid Conservation Assessment and Corridor Design for the Knysna Municipality. Report 8, Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa.

http://bgis.sanbi.org/download_docs/Knysna_conservation_assessment.pdf



The site (yellow arrow) within the Groenvlei dunefields east of Swartvlei mouth. A type locality for classic examples of compound ascending parabolic dunes. Should be added to the existing Goukamma Nature and Marine Reserve or given some other protection status (e.g. Geological Reserve) (Tinley 1985). (From Lombard et al. 2005)

This corridor forms a narrow strip along the coastline and provides for movement of plant and animal forest species (many of which are threatened).

Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP)

This plan has either been accepted or is in the process of being accepted into legislation. Either way, decisions should be made in the spirit of this plan since it is publicly available.

The property falls within two categories:

i) Most of it falls within an area that includes:

- Ecological processes (11.3),
- Indigenous Forest Type (5.04),
- Threatened SA Vegetation Type (8.74),
- Water resource protection (11.3)

Feature_1: Coastal resource protection- Eden

Feature_2: Indigenous Forest Type

Feature_3: Southern Cape Dune Fynbos (VU)

Feature_4: Water source protection- Swartvlei

Summary_1

Ecological processes (11.3), Indigenous Forest Type (5.04), Threatened SA Vegetation Type (8.74), Water resource protection (11.3)

Summary_2

Feature_1

Coastal resource protection- Eden

Feature_2

Indigenous Forest Type

Feature_3

Southern Cape Dune Fynbos (VU)

Feature_4

Water source protection- Swartvlei



<https://bgisviewer.sanbi.org/>

ii) A small southern component includes:

Summary_1

Coastal Habitat Type (1.75), Ecological processes (18.1), Indigenous Forest Type (5.4), Threatened SA Vegetation Type (7.21), Threatened Vertebrate (1), Water resource protection (14.04)

Summary_2

Feature_1

Coastal resource protection- Eden

Feature_2

Foredune

Feature_3

Indigenous Forest Type

Feature_4

Southern Cape Dune Fynbos (VU)

Feature_5

Threatened Reptile

Feature_6

Water source protection- Swartvlei

Feature_7

Layers

Krysta



<https://bgisviewer.sanbi.org/>

- Coastal Habitat Type (1.75),
- Ecological processes (18.1),
- Indigenous Forest Type (5.4),
- Threatened SA Vegetation Type (7.21),
- Threatened Vertebrate (1),
- Water resource protection (14.04)

Feature_1: Coastal resource protection- Eden

Feature_2: Foredune

Feature_3: Indigenous Forest Type

Feature_4: Southern Cape Dune Fynbos (VU)

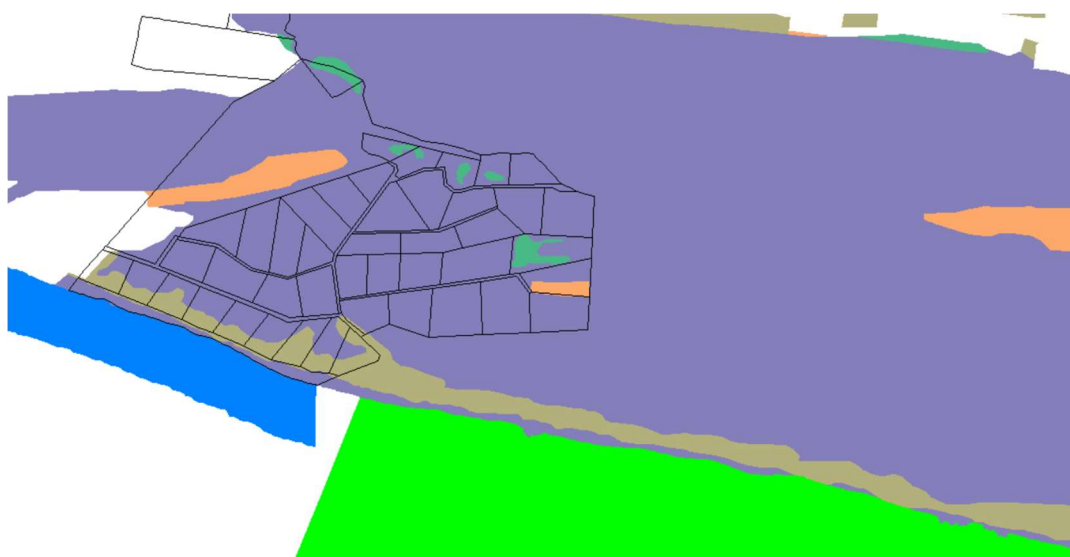
Feature_5: Threatened Reptile

Feature_6: Water source protection- Swartvlei

Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs)

The site falls within a CBA and the assertion that development should occur on the coastal/cliff end in a previously degraded area is flawed, for the following reasons:

- If there is any degradation the owners are responsible for this and would have required permission under OSCAER, NEMA, etc., to transform any vegetation here. If there are aliens such as rooikrans, landowners are required to clear them (not use their presence as a reason to site developments). CBAs require any degraded land to be restored. Many environmental consultants try to exploit the previously “degraded” option without understanding that CBAs require restoration, and that any previous unauthorised land use change is not a basis for further degradation.
- A site visit would likely show that the area defined as “degraded” on the CBA map is incorrect (it is difficult to discern invasive species canopies from Groenvlei Coastal Forest Forest canopies from satellite as was done for the development of the CBA maps). For example, the CBA map shows this entire brown strip, extending into the Gukamma Nature Reserve, as “degraded”, which is not true. The area is coastal forest, thus the desire to build on the cliff is for views, not because the area is degraded.



- A road development through the property to the cliffs/coastal area will cause far more degradation than is claimed to be present on the cliff area. Forests species respond negatively to edge effects (light, invasive aleins, noise, etc.)

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), the Garden Route Biosphere Reserve (GRBR) and the Garden Route National Park (GRNP)

All three of these designations (KBA, GRBR and GRNP) are very broad and do not consider the specific characteristics of the site, but give context for the broader conservation planning aspirations for the region.

- SANBI has recently identified KBAs for South Africa and the site falls within the Garden Route KBA: “This site qualifies as a Key Biodiversity Area of international significance that meets the thresholds for 3 criteria described in the Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs. Based on current available information, 168 species meet one or more KBA.

South African KBA NCG. 2024. South African KBAs 2024. Shapefile was produced by the South African KBA NCG and is available from the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

- The site also falls in the broader Garden Route Biosphere Reserve as well as the Garden Route National Park

Local context

Adjacent land owners in the area have (or are in the process of) declaring their properties as private nature reserves and a conservancy, and any development of the site should support these local aspirations.



Zoning and previous applications

In an extensive stakeholder process conducted this year, the Knysna Municipality has chosen to keep the Sedgelyield urban edge where it is and not expand it into the East. The site thus remains outside the urban edge, and to my knowledge, has a zoning of agriculture. To my knowledge, only a single dwelling is allowed (if agriculture is not intended). Many of the surrounding properties have been restricted to a single dwelling in the past so I do not believe an exception should be made for this particularly sensitive site. Many of the properties along this “forest strip” have been bought and sold, after landowners realise the environmental restrictions that limit building and road clearing. By allowing multiple dwellings (as is proposed) the Municipality could face legal action from previous owners.

For example, Erf 77 was sold after an Environmental Impact Assessment was conducted and recommended no development at all. Recommendations were returned as:

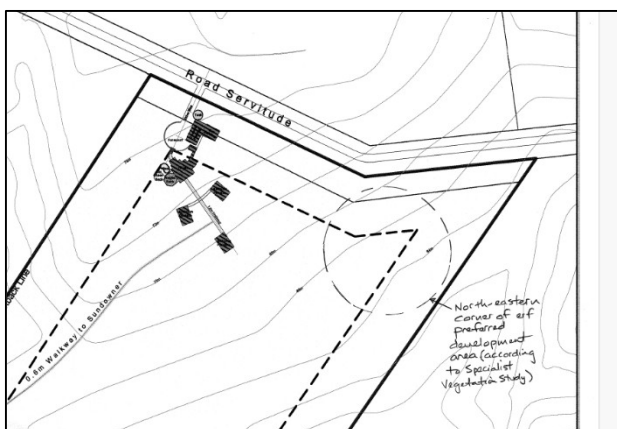
a) Primary Recommendation: Conservation priority

It is recommended that no development takes place in this area.

b) Secondary Recommendation One: Plan for “absolute” minimum ecological impacts

If any development is approved in this area, it is recommended the project be planned and controlled to have the “absolute” minimum ecological impacts, despite the costs or implications attached. This area is too special to use “high costs” as an excuse to degrade it. For instance, consideration should be given to reducing the dwelling sizes, redesigning the structures and shortening the access track.

To my knowledge, Erf 75 was also sold (or remains undeveloped) after the authorities (including the Knysna Municipality) recommended that buildings be restricted to the road area in the north-east corner of the property (see diagram below as well as an extract from the specialist vegetation report).



sloping dune ridge to the west. This Forest vegetation is also formally protected under the Forest Act.

If development rights were given, this should only be in the form of a small self contained dwelling that is accessed by foot, and is restricted to the north-east corner of the property. Alternatives within this framework should be investigated, and more careful mapping of individual trees would need to be done here to minimise the impacts and improve aesthetic value. This approach attempts to minimise the potential impact that the access way and associated structures will have on this vulnerable coastal corridor system. Any access road deeper into the forest (or to obtain access to the sea views) is seen as highly undesirable from a biodiversity perspective. The impacts that this will have on the forest and thicket ecosystems are regarded as being too high to be considered as viable development options.

placement

OSCAER

In addition to the NEMA legislation (and listed activities which this proposal triggers), OSCAER permits are required for any activity in this area. This process will consider the extreme sensitivity of the site and likely recommend a single dwelling and the location to be along the (currently undeveloped) public road.

Position of development

As mentioned previously, no development should be considered anywhere on this site except for a location that minimises the access roads, i.e. it should be placed in the area marked yellow below, subject to a detailed species-level botanical survey. Of note is that no road had been developed along the areas marked red (unless this has occurred recently with the required permissions).



The continuous coastal erosion on the cliffs is of major concern (yellow), with frequent slope slips occurring. Seabirds also nest along these cliffs. Coastal erosion is predicted to increase (and accelerate) with time – another reason to avoid building near this area.



Paleo significance

The eroding cliff face is of further significance from a Late Pleistocene perspective, with both early human and Pleistocene animal fossil footprints recently discovered:

Helm, C.W., McCrea, R.T., Cawthra, H.C., Lockley, M.G., Cowling, R.M., Marean, C.W., Thesen, G.H., Pigeon, T.S. and Hattingh, S., 2018. A New Pleistocene hominin tracksite from the Cape South Coast, South Africa. *Sci Rep* 8: 3772 [online]

Helm, C. W., McCrea, R. T., Lockley, M. G., Cawthra, H. C., Thesen, G. H., & Mwankunda, J. M. (2018). Late Pleistocene vertebrate trace fossils in the Goukamma Nature Reserve, Cape south coast, South Africa.



REFERENCE: 4/10/2/K40D/RUYGTE VALLEY 205/79, SEDGEFIELD

DATE: 20 JUNE 2025

ECOROUTE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY
PO BOX 9187
GEORGE
6530

Attention: Ms C. Leslie

RE: BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT PRE-CONSULTATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY DWELLING AND ACCESS ROAD ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE

Reference is made to the above mentioned Pre-application Basic Assessment Report made available to Breed-Olifants Catchment Management Agency (BOCMA) for comments.

The following are BOCMA comments relating to Pre-application Basic Assessment for proposed development of a primary dwelling and access road on Portion 179 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205, which should be adhered to:

1. The Breed-Olifants Catchment Management Agency has reviewed the pre-application draft Basic Assessment Report and has no objections to the proposed activities.
2. No watercourses observed on site that will be affected by the proposed activities as it is located adjacent to the littoral zone, however the applicant is advised to seek the opinion of a Freshwater specialist.
3. Please note that no water shall be derived from any water resource and used on Portion 79 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205 for any purposes without prior approval by means of a water use authorisation in terms of section 22 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), if activities exceed Schedule 1 limits.
4. Please note that harvesting of rainwater and storing of rainwater in tanks does not trigger any water use(s) in terms of section 21 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) and it doesn't require an authorisation.
5. All reasonable measures shall have to be taken to prevent the potential pollution of the groundwater due to the proposed onsite sanitation facilities i.e. a service provider must be appointed to remove domestic wastewater from conservancy/sceptic tanks.



6. For off-grid sanitation facilities, it is recommended to dispose domestic wastewater into conservancy tank serving no more than 50 households, that must be emptied on regular basis. Sceptic tanks/french drains are not recommended as they are likely to impact on groundwater resources.
7. As required by section 22 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), a Water Use Authorisation is required prior to commencement with any water use activity contemplated in section 21 of National Water Act. Moreover, commencement with any water use activity without an authorisation as required by section 22 of National Water Act constitutes an offence in terms of section 151(1) (a) of the National Water Act. In terms of section 151(2) of the National Water Act, any person who contravenes is guilty of an offence and liable, on first conviction to a fine or an imprisonment of a period not exceeding five years or both such a fine and imprisonment.
8. In light of the above, you are advised that the onus remains with the property owner to adhere to the National Water Act, prior to commencement with any water use contemplated in section 21 of National Water Act that is associated with the proposed development.
9. Kindly note that this office reserves the right to amend and revise its comments as well as to request any further information.
10. The BOCMA office can be contacted for further information related to the requirement for, or the application for a Water Use Authorisation.
11. Should you wish to apply for a water use authorisation for unregistered water uses triggered by the proposed activities, you may apply electronically by logging onto the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) website at <http://www.dws.gov.za/e-WULAAS>
12. Should you have further enquiries, the office can be contacted or alternatively contact Mr. SI Ndlovu at the above-mentioned contact number or on sndlovu@bocma.co.za

Yours faithfully,

pp *Jan van Staden*

MR. JAN VAN STADEN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (ACTING)

Re: I&AP Erf 205/95 Sedgefield

From bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Date Mon 26/05/2025 09:48

To lake@mweb.co.za <lake@mweb.co.za>

Cc admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Good morning, Stuart.

I trust that this email finds you well.

We hereby acknowledge the receipt of your email and confirm your registration as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) for the project.

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan

Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929

EcoRoute



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From: lake@mweb.co.za <lake@mweb.co.za>

Sent: Sunday, May 25, 2025 1:33 PM

To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Cc: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: I&AP Erf 205/95 Sedgefield

Good afternoon

Reference your EIA Notification The Edge.

Kindly register myself as an I&AP.

Erf: 2055

Many thanks.

Stuart Lidstone

Simply click on the image below to view our video:



LAKE PLEASANT HOLIDAY RESORT

T/A. Lake Pleasant Chalets & Lodges (Pty) Ltd.

P.O. Box 16, Sedgefield, 6573, South Africa.

Tel: (044) 343 2661/343 1985

Mobile: 082 802 1160

Fax: 086 276 3097

Vimeo video: <http://vimeo.com/32581532>

mailto: info@lakepleasantresort.co.za

<http://www.lakepleasantresort.co.za>

Google Earth: 34 1.56' S 22 50.035' E

Enquiries: Dr Vanessa Weyer

Tel: 044-302 5613

Cell: 074 707 8199

E-mail: vanessa.weyer@sanparks.org

Bianca Gilfillan
Eco Route Environmental Consultancy
46 President Steyn
The Island
Sedgefield
Western Cape

Per email:

bianca@ecoroute.co.za

janet@ecoroute.co.za

admin@ecoroute.co.za

Dear Madam

SANPARKS COMMENTS, BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS, PRE-APPLICATION PHASE, RUYGTE VALLEY 205, PORTION 79, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE

DFFE Ref No. Not yet Provided

Ruygte Valley 205 Portion 79 is in the Buffer Zone of the Garden Route National Park (GRNP) and directly borders state Coastal Public Property (CPP) on its seaward southern boundary (**Fig. 1**). The property falls within the Coastal Protection Zone (CPZ), as designated in terms of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act (Act No. 24 of 2008) (NEM: ICMA). The CPZ is established to manage, regulate, and restrict the use of land that is adjacent to coastal public property, or that plays a significant role in the coastal ecosystem.

Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) Category 1 (Terrestrial) and Category 2 (Forest) occur on the northern sector of the property, as mapped in terms of the 2023 Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan (WCBSP) (**Fig. 2**). These are areas in a natural condition that are required to meet biodiversity targets, for species, ecosystems or ecological processes and infrastructure. They should be maintained in a natural or near-natural state, with no further loss of natural habitat. Degraded areas should be rehabilitated. Only low-impact, biodiversity-sensitive land uses are appropriate. Vegetation is mapped as Goukamma Dune Thicket (Least Concern) (**Fig. 3**).

Erosion risk lines (**Fig. 4**) and the high-water mark (HWM) are situated outside but near to the southern boundary of the property (**Fig. 5**), whilst the Coastal Management Line (CML) is shown within the property near its southern boundary (**Fig. 6**). Topography is gently sloping in the northern sector, but becomes steeper on the southern foredune, with slopes >25% to <80% in places (**Fig. 8**).

Portion 79 of Ruygte Valley 205 is 5.21ha in extent and is zoned, Agriculture Zone I, as per Knysna Municipality GIS Viewer (**Fig. 7**). The landowner is Daniel Sevenster and Partners Inc. (Mr. Daniel Sevenster). The property falls outside the Urban Edge.

addo elephant
agulhas
augrabies
bontebok
camdeboo
golden gate highlands
karoo
kglalagadi transfrontier
knysna lake area
kruger
mapungubwe
marakele
mokala
mountain zebra
namaqua
table mountain
tankwa karoo
tsitsikamma
richtersveld
west coast
wilderness

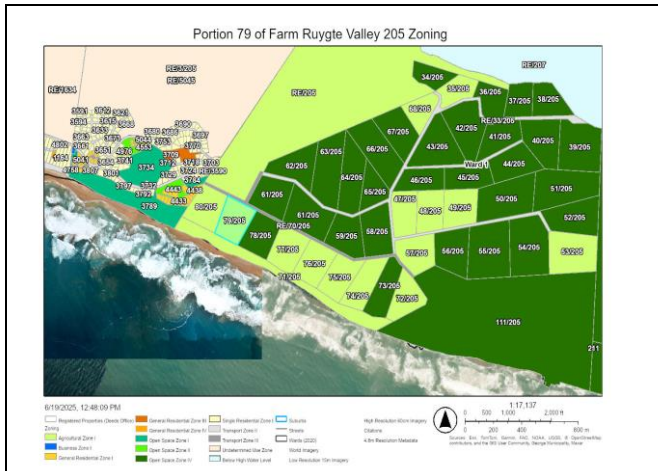


Fig. 7: Portion 79 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205 is Zoned as Agriculture Zone I (Knysna GIS Viewer).

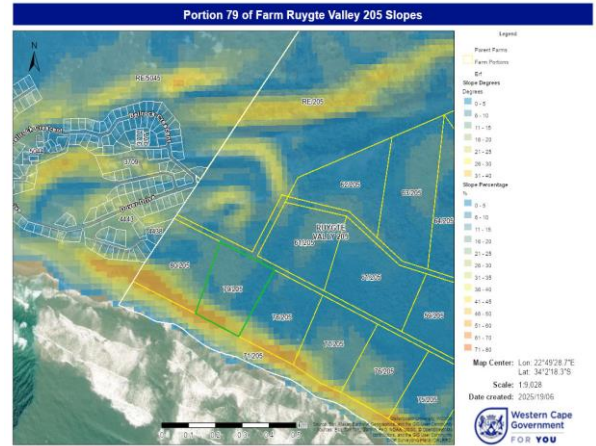


Fig. 8: Slopes of >25% to <80% are evident in parts of the southern sector of the property (CapeFarmMapper3).

The development application submitted is a **“BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT: PRE-CONSULTATION (Pre-APPLICATION)”**, refer to extract below from the Environmental Impact report prepared by Eco Route Environmental Consultancy, dated March 2025.

The proposed development encompasses a dwelling of 200 square meters, three self-catering tourist chalets each measuring 65 square meters, 50 square meters of staff housing, an equipment shed totaling 80 square meters, a designated parking area, and a 200-meter long gravel access road with a width of less than three meters. The overall footprint of the development will be 1,175 square meters (0.1175 hectares) within the degraded Critical Biodiversity Area 2 (CBA2) in the southern region. The infrastructure will include rainwater harvesting tanks, conservancy tanks, solar electricity systems, and arrangements for off-site waste removal. This development proposal is in accordance with the Knysna Spatial Development Framework 2020 and the Rural Areas Guidelines 2019, aiming to foster eco-tourism and conservation initiatives through the rezoning process to Open Space III.

The total disturbance area is noted as approximately 1,175 m².



Fig. 9: Site Development Plan for Portion 79 of Farm Ruygte Valley 205 as extracted from Visual Compliance Statement report prepared by Outline Landscape Architects, March 2025.

Points 1: Clarity Requested and Issues of Concern

SANParks seeks clarity on the following:

- The application states that the 'building footprint' will be 1175m² then later refers to this as a 'disturbance footprint'. Clarity is required on whether this is a 'building footprint' or a 'disturbance footprint' which differ substantially. SANParks wishes to know the total 'disturbance' footprint which must be inclusive of all buildings (main dwelling, tourist chalets x 3, staff housing x 1, and an equipment shed x 1), building platforms, parking, access roads, boardwalks, infrastructure, services, embankments, vegetable gardens etc. A Site Development Plan is requested to depict these areas more clearly.

It is further stated in the EcoRoute Pre-consultation Basic Assessment report, March 2025, pg.23 that >10 000m²/1ha indigenous vegetation will be cleared, which differs from the 1175m² noted above:

GN R.327 activity 27: The clearance of an area of 1 hectares or more, but less than 20 hectares, of indigenous vegetation, except where such clearance of indigenous vegetation is required for—	Construction of both the primary dwelling and an access road may require the removal of indigenous Goukamma Dune Thicket more than 1 Ha.
---	--

PO Box 1252 Sedgefield, 6573

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23

- It is noted that municipal bulk services are not available in the area and that a conservancy tank is proposed for sewage treatment. Clarity on the type and capacity of the sewerage conservancy tank is sought.
- Whilst it is desirable that the landowner proposes to rezone the property from Agricultural I to Open Space III, SANParks seeks clarity on whether any discussions on stewardship options have been held with CapeNature, who have a presence in the area (Goukamma Nature Reserve), and considering that several other Private Nature Reserves exist on neighbouring properties (Lake Pleasant No. 2.). Open Space III when combined with a formal stewardship mechanisms may afford stronger long-term conservation outcomes for the property.
- The property unfortunately does not fall within SANParks' current Land Inclusion Plan, therefore a SANParks stewardship agreement is not possible at this time.
- Climate Change resilience and adaptation does not appear to have been adequately considered in the application and specialist report (Rock Hounds (Pty) Ltd.). Although 100-year risk and flood projections have been investigated, and it is noted in reports that the coastal zone could advance by 30m over the next century, the effects of severe unpredictable events do not appear to have been considered. Recent storm surges, including that of September 2023, in many areas along the coastline have caused undercutting and dune slumps. A pre-cautionary approach should be included for such scenarios.

Adequate setbacks should be applied to safeguard the landowner from potential future climate change risks and to protect the coastal zone; this should be in line with CPZ setback requirements for the property.

It is noted that the adjacent seaward Portion 71 Ruygte Valley 205 is state owned land. This land is an extension of Coastal Public Property. Section 7 of the Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 24 of 2008) (NEM: ICMA) states: *Coastal Public Property is held in trust by the state to protect sensitive ecosystems and to secure the natural functioning of dynamic coastal ecosystems*”.

The Applicants attention is drawn to:
Section 15 of NEM: ICMA, which states:

- (1) No person, owner or occupier of land adjacent to the seashore or other coastal public property capable of erosion or accretion may require any organ of state or any other person to take measures to prevent the erosion or accretion of the seashore or such other coastal public property, or of land adjacent to coastal public property, unless the erosion is caused by an intentional act or omission of that organ of state or other person.
- (2) No person may construct, maintain, or extend any structure, or take other measures on coastal public property to prevent or promote erosion or accretion of the seashore except as provided for in this Act, the National Environmental Management Act, or any other specific environmental management Act.
- In terms of the National water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), Revision of General Authorisations for the Taking and Storing of Water, GNR. No 40243, 2 September 2016, Section 2.3; a Water Use License (WUL) may likely be required if any proposed boreholes are situated within 500m of the High Water Mark of the ocean.

Section 2.3 states the following exclusions from General Authorisations:

2.3. Geographical area and water resources to which the authorisation applies

Except where stated differently in the notice this authorisation applies to all land and all water resources in South Africa, subject to the following exclusions:

1. No water that is taken in terms of this authorisation may be taken within a 500 metre radius from the boundary (delineated edge) of a wetland, pan or estuary.
2. No groundwater that is taken in terms of this authorisation may be taken within a 500 metre radius from the boundary of a wetland or estuary, within a 100 metre radius from the delineated riparian edge of a water course or a state dam, within a 500 metre radius of a state dam wall or within 500 metres from the high-water mark of the ocean.

- Compliance with the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (Act 101 of 1998) is required. The owner should join the local Fire Protection Association, if not already a member.
- The landowner's attention is drawn to the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004) (NEM:BA) Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, 25 September 2020, where a landowner is legally responsible for the removal of alien vegetation on their property. The owner should formalise an Invasive Alien Vegetation Control Plan as required by the NEM:BA.
- A permit from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment (DFFE) must be attained should any protected tree species be disturbed on the property, as per the National Forests Act, 84 of 1998, as amended.
- Should any resources of suspected heritage value be uncovered during clearing, Heritage Western Cape (HWC) must be contacted immediately for instructions.
- The development application will set a precedent for development along this environmentally sensitive coastline. It is noted that only the adjacent Portion 78 of Ruygte Valley 205, which has one dwelling present has been developed, i.e., one property out of nine along the foredune have been developed. Aerial photographs show the road and a dwelling present in 2004.

It may well be that construction on Portion 78 took place prior to when EIA Regulations were first promulgated in 1997. Confirmation of this is requested from the EAP.

Points 2: Summary and Way Forward

SANParks requests clarity on the issues raised in Point 1 above and thereafter wishes to comment on the Draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR), when this is circulated for public comment.

It is requested that SANParks' comments be included in the DBAR in their entirety and not just in a Comments and Responses report.

SANParks reserves the right to revise comments if additional information becomes available.

Yours sincerely



DR VANESSA WEYER
PRINCIPAL PLANNER
GARDEN ROUTE NATIONAL PARK

DATE: 23 June 2025

CC:	Victor Mokoena	SANParks
	Pheladi Chuene	SANParks
	Chamell Pluim	SANParks
	Jessica Hayes	SANParks
	Megan Simons	CapeNature
	Kate Southey	Knysna Municipality
	Hennie Smit	Knysna Municipality
	Danie Swanepoel	DEA&DP
	Melanie Koen	DFFE
	Mashudu Mudau	DFFE
	Nyiko Nkosi	DFFE

Fw: [Public participation] Concerns regarding the Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report: Procedural, Landscape, Geotechnical

From admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

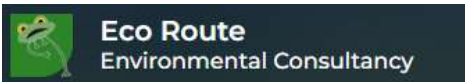
Date Mon 23/06/2025 09:05

To bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Please see below.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie
Personal Assistant/Admin
Office: 064 691 4394
www.ecoroute.co.za



From: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Sent: Sunday, 22 June 2025 19:07

To: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: [Public participation] Concerns regarding the Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report: Procedural, Landscape, Geotechnical

Stephen Stead (not verified) (steve@vrma.co.za) sent a message using the contact form at <https://ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name
Stephen Stead

The sender's email
steve@vrma.co.za

Subject
Concerns regarding the Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report: Procedural, Landscape, Geotechnical

Message

Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

VRM Africa was initially requested by Ecoroute to undertake the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the proposed development. The Draft Baseline Report was submitted to Ecoroute on 18 November 2024. This report highlighted significant landscape planning risks based on a literature review of National and Provincial planning guidelines. However, VRMA's baseline report was excluded from the assessment and replaced by an alternative visual statement undertaken by Kathin Hammel. While differing expert opinions are valuable within a peer-review process, both reports should have been submitted, or a facilitated consultation undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to resolve the differences. An email was sent to Janet Ebersohn requesting that the VRMA report should also be submitted, and VRMA should be registered as an I&AP. This did not occur even though this was requested and agreed upon in writing (by email 03 March 2025, janet@ecoroute.co.za, bianca@ecoroute.co.za).

Findings of the VRMA Baseline Assessment:

The proposed development is situated on the crest of a fossil dune cliff, approximately 1.7 km long, stretching from the eastern edge of Sedgefield to the boundary of Goukamma National Park and Marine Protected Area. This undisturbed sea-cliff landscape is characterised by its high scenic quality and absence of skyline development. Relevant DFFE and DEA&DP guidelines strongly discourage development on:

- Steep slopes (greater than 1:4 gradient),
- Cliff faces or crests,
- Ridges or skylines where structures would be visually intrusive.

Key Planning and Visual Concerns Identified in the VRMA Baseline:

- Lack of alignment to DFFE (Garden Route EMF) and DEA&DP landscape planning guidelines for fossil dune, sea-cliffs in the Garden Route which currently depict no residential skyline intrusion and as such, create a unique landscape context.
- Development on unstable, steep dune slopes with no clarity provided on how earthworks would be undertaken.
- Introduction of skyline development where no precedent exists on the crest of a fossil dune that has potential for structural failure and landscape degradation.
- A proposed driveway would require a long, linear clear-cut through thicket vegetation, that would set a negative precedent in an area where Private Nature Reserve's and conservation are the main land uses.

Potential Development Alternatives:

An alternative site near the proposed parking area in the southeast portion of the property was proposed as an alternative development for alternative assessment. This area has moderate slopes and is partially screened by dune thicket vegetation, limiting skyline intrusion. The following requirements

were requested in the baseline assessment submitted 18Nov2025 to Janet Ebersohn to confirm this suitability/ risk:

- Conceptual architectural design and the need for 3D visualisations, in line with DEA&DP Visual & Aesthetic Guidelines.
- A consolidated Site Development Plan (SDP) including:
 - o All access routes and cut/fill areas (especially the access route along the dune ridgeline to construct the proposed main dwelling).
 - o Earthworks/ Vegetation clearance buffers.
 - o Deck specifications.
 - o Adequate spacing between units to allow for vegetation screening.
 - o Review of the main access driveway linear design.

As VRMA was excluded from the DBAR, we reserve the right to make comments as an I&AP.

The following critique of the Hammel Visual Statement is provided:

- Lack of Policy Context: No reference to relevant planning documents, such as the Garden Route EMF, Western Cape DEA&DP Guidelines, or Knysna Municipal SDF. These documents specifically refer to fossil dune sea-cliffs as significant landscape features in the Garden Route, where the existing sense of place needs to be carefully managed.
- Incorrect Viewshed Analysis: Erroneous claim that views from the beach are obstructed by undulating topography. A basic Google Earth block extrusion clearly shows that all four of the proposed dwellings would be clearly visible from the beach. No viewshed modelling was provided to substantiate the claim, and selective photographs failed to show the actual visual incidence from beach vantage points.
- Inadequate Mitigation Strategy: Vague mitigation proposals lack feasibility on steep, exposed dune-crest sites and inadequately explain how the visual impact from skyline intrusion would be alleviated.
- Failure to Identify Alternatives: No consideration of less intrusive, alternative development locations was undertaken.
- SDP Omissions: No assessment of access road impact required earthworks (how the main dwelling would be accessed along the top of the dune crest), or the risk from debris falling down the cliff should structural failure take place in the future on unstable/ in-accessible dune slopes. No recognition of how the long access road clear-cut through the thicket vegetation would be in-appropriate to the surrounding conservation land uses, or how this would set a precedent for future development in this area that is predominantly used as PNR.

Preliminary Geotechnical Report by Dr Esmé Spicer – Key Concerns

While the geotechnical report indicates site stability, visible evidence of slope instability (also documented in the report) raises a high probability of future failure, which would result in significant visual and environmental degradation of the coastal dune face, damage to property and possibly loss of life. Relying on a preliminary assessment to support development in such a sensitive area is problematic and risks setting a precedent for authorising construction in other geotechnically vulnerable locations along this stretch of coastline in the face of increasingly unpredictable climate change / sea level rise related impacts.

The report does not include an overlay of the proposed dwelling footprints onto the identified risk zones. Should the overlay be provided, it is highly likely that one of the proposed cottages is located on the defined Structurally Weak Zone. As an overlay is not provided, this can't be confirmed.

Motivation for authorisation is made based on the presence of other dwellings also authorised to the east of the site (205/78), as well as historic residential development in Sedgfield. This rationale requires critical review, as it uses historical precedent for coastline development (that could be at risk), as a justification for setting a new development precedent on fossil dune, sea cliff areas. The two other dwellings east of the site appear to be set further back from the base of the sea-cliffs (100m), where-as the proposed main dwelling is located 66m north of the base of the sea cliffs.

Considering that the report is explicitly described as preliminary, and that any authorisation of development in this location would establish a precedent for future applications along the fossil dune system in the area, it is recommended that the geotechnical report be subjected to independent peer review to verify/ add confidence to its findings. The new report should also overlay the proposed site development areas onto the geotechnical constraints map.

Concerns Regarding the Draft Basic Assessment Report (DBAR) by Ecoroute (Prepared by Bianca Gilfillan)

The following concerns are raised in relation to the DBAR prepared by Ecoroute:

- Selective Use of Specialist Inputs ('cherry-picking'): The report selectively incorporates specialist findings to support a narrative that diminishes the significance of the visual and landscape impacts, particularly in relation to applicable planning guidelines.
- Failure to Notify Excluded Specialist: Despite a clear indication that the VRMA report was to be included in the BAR, and VRMA be notified as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), no notification was provided to indicate that the public participation process had commenced and the VRMA findings were excluded from the BAR.
- Lack of Spatial Clarity: No map has been provided that overlays the Site Development Plan (SDP) onto satellite imagery. As a result, neither the I&APs nor the competent authority can adequately assess the spatial relationship between the proposed dwellings and the coastline (noted to be approximately 66 metres away). The map showing the Proposed Development Area within 100 metres of the High-Water Mark also fails to include the actual development footprint that located within the 100m HWM.
- Omission of Topographical Constraints: As the proposed site is located on the crest of a dune, with steep slopes to the north and south, there should be an ethical imperative to ensure that a full contour survey of the site footprint is provided to adequately address the steep slope and subsequent earthworks. The full extent of the development area has not been surveyed, particularly given that the northwestern portion of the main dwelling is located on extremely steep slopes. No comment was made on how development on this steep slope area would take place. As both side of the dune crest depict slopes steeper than 1 in 4m, a slopes analysis should have been included.
- Lack of Earthworks Detail: The report does not request specific information on earthworks. Given the Geotechnical report's emphasis on the importance of foundation integrity, a detailed assessment of foundation extent and its interface with identified risk zones should be provided.
- Incomplete Development Footprint: The DBAR does not account for the full development footprint, with no depiction or consideration of proposed decking areas in the current plans. No reference is made of how the main buildings will be accessed for construction phase along the top of the dune crest.

Conclusion:

In light of the above, it is highly possible that the proposed development poses risks to the visual, ecological, and geotechnical integrity of the fossil dune landscape. The development, as currently proposed, is misaligned with national, provincial, and municipal planning frameworks that specifically aim to protect the unique and sensitive character of this coastal fossil-dune landscape. The absence of essential technical overlays, incomplete spatial data, and reliance on preliminary assessments further undermine the robustness of the Draft Basic Assessment Report. Given the potential for landscape degradation, structural failure, and precedent-setting implications that could result in loss of life and damage to property, a full reassessment, including a peer-reviewed geotechnical study, comprehensive spatial mapping, and revised visual impact inputs, should be provided before any decision-making process proceeds.

Re: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

From bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>
Date Wed 25/06/2025 12:56
To Vanessa Stoffels <Vanessa.Stoffels@westerncape.gov.za>
Cc 'Carina' <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Good afternoon, Vanessa.

Thank you for the email. You can submit once the engineer has had a chance to review the information. The 2nd week of July would be acceptable.

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan
Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929
EcoRoute



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From: Vanessa Stoffels <Vanessa.Stoffels@westerncape.gov.za>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 4:00 PM
To: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>
Cc: 'Carina' <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Subject: RE: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Good afternoon, Bianca

I am currently out of office and I will only be able to obtain a file number during the week of the 1st July.

Thereafter, your proposal will be reviewed by our engineering team.

Kind regards
Vanessa

From: bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 3:27 PM
To: Vanessa Stoffels <Vanessa.Stoffels@westerncape.gov.za>
Cc: 'Carina' <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Subject: Re: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

You don't often get email from bianca@ecoroute.co.za. [Learn why this is important](#)
Good afternoon, Vanessa.

Thank you for the email.

In response to your request for an extension to submit comments, I would like to confirm that a deadline of July 1, 2025, is permissible.

Best regards

Ms. Bianca Gilfillan
Reg. EAP (EAPASA): 2023/7929
EcoRoute



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From: Vanessa Stoffels <Vanessa.Stoffels@westerncape.gov.za>
Sent: Monday, 23 June 2025 13:58
To: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Subject: RE: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Dear Carina,

Thank you for contacting this Branch.

Please note that we are currently experiencing a backlog in the processing of applications. In light of this, we humbly request an extension to allow us sufficient time to provide comprehensive comments.

Your understanding and consideration in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Vanessa Stoffels
Admin Officer
Road Use Management

Chief Directorate Road Planning, Roads Branch
Department of Infrastructure
Western Cape Government
Tel: 021 483 4669

9 Dorp Street, Cape Town: PO Box 2603, Cape Town 8000

Email: vanessa.stoffels@westerncape.gov.za

Website: www.westerncape.gov.za

Road Network Information System: <http://rnis.westerncape.gov.za>

Be 110% Green. Read from the screen.



From: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2025 10:53 AM

To: BNcube@dfre.gov.za; LKutu@dfre.gov.za; Danie Swanepoel <Danie.Swanepoel@westerncape.gov.za>; OCEIA@dfre.gov.za; tmhlana@dfre.gov.za; Rmolale@dfre.gov.za; OCEIA@environment.gov.za; Nathan Jacobs <Nathan.Jacobs@westerncape.gov.za>; Noluvu.Toto@westerncape.gov.za; Stephanie Barnardt <Stephanie.Barnardt@westerncape.gov.za>; Azni K November <Azni.November@westerncape.gov.za>; Dirk.Prinsloo@westerncape.gov.za; Vanessa Stoffels <Vanessa.Stoffels@westerncape.gov.za>; RobertsJ@dws.gov.za; Cor Van der Walt <Cor.VanderWalt@westerncape.gov.za>; Brandon Layman <Brandon.Layman@westerncape.gov.za>; Imapokgole@dfre.gov.za; leptieshaam Bekko <leptieshaam.Bekko@westerncape.gov.za>; Mercia J Liddle <Mercia.Liddle@westerncape.gov.za>; Ryan Apolles <Ryan.Apolles@westerncape.gov.za>; Hilda Hayward <Hilda.Hayward@westerncape.gov.za>; BCAdmin@environment.gov.za; KMathetja@dfre.gov.za; Mrabothata@dfre.gov.za; Melvin.Schwartz@dalrrd.gov.za

Cc: bianca@ecoroute.co.za; 'Janet' <janet@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Residential Dwelling on Portion 79 of the Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgfield, Western Cape

Good day,

A 30-day public participation will be held from **21/05/2025 – 23/06/2025**. Please submit your comments to the EAP undersigned in this time.

Please kindly visit our website to view the Pre-Application BAR and relevant appendices:
[Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report - The Proposed Development of a Primary Dwelling and Access Road on Portion 79 of Farm 205 Ruygte Valley, Sedgfield, Western Cape | Eco Route](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Notification of Public Participation:

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING ON PORTION 79 OF FARM 205, RUYGTE VALLEY, SEDGEFIELD, WESTERN CAPE

Notice is hereby provided in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), the National Environmental Management Act: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, as amended, of a 30-day Pre – Application Public Participation Process to be undertaken under the authority of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE). The Public Participation Process will run from **21/05/2025 – 23/06/2025**.

DFFE Reference Number: TBC

Project Proposal: The construction of a primary residence, three cottages, a vehicle parking area, and a garage/storeroom. Additionally, it is necessary to create an access road through the existing dense vegetation on the property to the development.

Location: Portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape



The following EIA Listed Activities are applicable:

Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 17
Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 19A
Government Notice No. R327 (Listing Notice 1): Listed Activity 27
Government Notice No. R324 (Listing Notice 3): Listed Activity 4

A Pre-Application Basic Assessment Report and relevant appendices will be made available to all registered Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) for public review and comment. All relevant documents may be accessed via our website during the public participation period.

Should you wish to gain further information regarding the project or wish to register as an Interested and Affected Party please contact the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (details below).

Please provide written comments with your name, contact details and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal, or other interest which you may have in the development. Please note that information submitted by I&APs becomes public information. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA), no personal information will be made available to the public.

Environmental Assessment Practitioner: Bianca Gilfillan (EAPASA Reg 2023/7929)

www.ecoroute.co.za

Email: bianca@ecoroute.co.za / admin@ecoroute.co.za

Cell: 079 189 5060

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie

Personal Assistant/Admin

Office: 064 691 4394

www.ecoroute.co.za



Eco Route
Environmental Consultancy

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Re: [Public participation] Objection - portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

From admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Date Mon 23/06/2025 09:04
To mwmwite@gmail.com <mwmwite@gmail.com>
Cc bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Good morning Ms Witte,

Thank you for your email received. You have been registered as an I&AP.

Please note that all comments, objections and concerns will be addressed in the next round of Public Participation.

Kind regards,

Carina Leslie
Personal Assistant/Admin
Office: 064 691 4394
www.ecoroute.co.za



From: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za> on behalf of Eco Route <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Sent: Monday, 23 June 2025 06:54
To: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>
Subject: [Public participation] Objection - portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Marion Witte (not verified) (mwmwite@gmail.com) sent a message using the contact form at <https://ecoroute.co.za/node/116>.

The sender's name
Marion Witte

The sender's email
mwmwite@gmail.com

Subject
Objection - portion 79 of Farm 205, Ruygte Valley, Sedgefield, Western Cape

Message

As a resident of the Garden Route and frequent hiker along this stretch of coast, I'd like to raise an objection/serious concern in this public participation process. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

After discussion with friends and colleagues it seems there is insufficient certification of the landscape change given the significance of the sea crest on which the development is proposed. I am not against the development per say, but feel that the visual impact hasn't been sufficiently unpacked to give reasonable confidence that the development will not be visually intrusive. This EIA seems not to give enough information and clarification about how its going to look. This looks like one of the first developments along that stretch of coastline and if an intrusive, aesthetically jarring development (I'm not implying that this is what the proposed development will be, but there is not sufficient information in the report to know this) is approved - there exists the potential that a worrying precedent could be set - 'uglifying' that stretch of pristine coast and ultimately damaging our landscape heritage in the area. I hope additional effort will be put into providing additional information and clarity.

Kind regards
Marion Witte

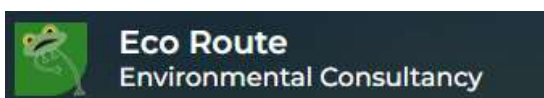
Fw: Application for the submission of a property environmental study for comment - App No: 2025-06-0033

From admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Date Wed 09/07/2025 15:14

To bianca@ecoroute.co.za <bianca@ecoroute.co.za>

Carina Leslie
Personal Assistant/Admin
Office: 064 691 4394
www.ecoroute.co.za



From: Application Manager <applications@westerncaperoadsinfrastructure.org.za>

Sent: Wednesday, 09 July 2025 07:16

To: admin@ecoroute.co.za <admin@ecoroute.co.za>

Subject: Application for the submission of a property environmental study for comment - App No: 2025-06-0033

Dear Eco Route Environmental Consultancy

The message below refers to your application for the submission of a property environmental study for comment (Application No - 2025-06-0033) submitted to the Western Cape Government on 2025/05/20:

Properties related to the application :

- Portion 79 of Farm RUYGTE VALLY 205 KNYSNA

Supporting documents submitted with the application :

- Application Cover Letter - (email correspondence.pdf)
- Site Layout Plan - (Appendix A1 Locality Map.pdf)
- Basic Assessment Report - (Draft Basic Assessment Report - Consultation Phase.pdf)
- Application Motivation - (Appendix D5 Town Planning Report.pdf)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report - (Appendix F - Draft EMPr.pdf)
- Power of Attorney Letter - (consent.pdf)

The matter is receiving attention, and further communication will be addressed to you as soon as circumstances permit.

Best Regards,
Western Cape Government



Note:

Please ensure that you reply to this email when corresponding with us and that the application number is correctly contained in the subject line in the format App No: xxxx-xx-xxxx Emails without this number correctly added to the subject line will not be monitored or received.