



**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENT and TOURISM.**

DIRECTORATE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT.

LIMPOPO PROVINCE

SITES OF ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

INFORMATION COLLECTED IN TERMS OF Sections 18-20 OF THE LIMPOPO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT, 2003.

A. LANDOWNER(S)

1. Name(s) and initials: Gift Makamu, Department of Public Works.
2. Postal Address:
.....
3. Contact Details: Cel : . 083 470 4052
Fax :
Website / Email Address :

B. SITE CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Is the site information to be kept confidential – can it be incorporated in the Limpopo Province Biological database?

Yes No

2. Would you permit visitors (members of the public to view your site?)

Yes No

3. If so, under what restrictions? The Environmental Management Plan (Appendix A) will be adhered to at all times

C. PROPERTY

1. Site name: Haenertsburg Townlands.....
2. Farm name and number: Haenertsburg Townlands.....
4. Lot number and description (if in an urban area): ...N/A.....
.....
5. Nearest town and distance: a) Tzaneen
b) 37 km
6. Name of conservancy: Wolkberg to Woodbush Conservation Forum
7. Location co-ordinates of property (Degrees, Minutes and Seconds).

23°56'28" S 29°56'35 E

8. GPS Datum used : WGS 84
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D. PROPOSED SITE OF ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

1. Name by which the proposed is to be known:
Haenertsburg Grassland(s?)

2. Main feature of site:
North Eastern Mountain Sourveld

3. Size: 242ha

4. Is the proposed site a locality for any rare or endangered species?

Yes No

5. Are there any important concentrations of plants and animals present?

Yes No

6. Are there any good examples of habitats present such as :

- Forest .Yes.
- Woodland .No
- Grassland .Yes.
- Wetland .Yes
- Other .Yes (Forest Scrub)

7. If you have ticked or answered YES to any of the above then, provide details, including names of any special species present.

Plant list has been prepared by Sonnette Krynauw, University of Limpopo Herbarium. (Appendix B). The new vegetation map for southern Africa lists this grassland type as being Critically Endangered.....

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8. List criteria that identify the area as a Site of Ecological Importance:

- a) Biodiversity, Critically Endangered vegetation type b) Water catchment area
- c) Source of traditional medicinal plants

9. Provide a short motivation for each of the criteria relevant to the status of the site:

a) Biodiversity: North Eastern Mountain Sourveld has a very high conservation value as only few examples of this Critically Endangered vegetation type remain in southern Africa. North Eastern Mountain Sourveld supports high plant diversity (Davies et al. 1994) and a large number of plants that occur nowhere else (Matthews et al. 1993) for example *Aloe lettyae*. Patches of indigenous Afromontane forest and riverine habitats add to the diversity of life forms encountered. Large tracts of grassland have been planted with pine and eucalyptus. Today less than five percent of the Woodbush range's original grasslands still exist. Locally, the Haenertsburg Grassland is the largest area of grassland. The Haenertsburg Grassland supports over 630 different plant species, which, apart from their conservation importance, have medicinal, cultural and nutritional value for rural communities (Winter 1999).

The ecological importance of this site has been acknowledged by Dr J. Botha (previously of the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism), Mark Botha (Botanical Society of SA) and Pieter Winter (SANBI). In 1993, the Director General of the Nature and Environmental Conservation Department sent a letter to the Haenertsburg Local Area Committee stating that the Haenertsburg grassland was of great conservation importance as it was one of the last few remaining portions of North Eastern Mountain Sourveld in the vicinity (Knoll 2002). During 1998, the Land Development Objective

(LDO) process was undertaken in the Haenertsburg area and full support was given to the principle of “the last grasslands left, needing to be protected and preserved.” More recently the Haenertsburg Grassland has been recognized by the Botanical Society of South Africa and the ecologist employed by the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism as having high conservation value and being an asset for the Haenertsburg community and local authority (Letters dated 25 May 2004 and 13 May 2004). These examples illustrate that the Haenertsburg Grassland is widely recognized by credible organizations as deserving to be declared a Site of Ecological Importance.

The animal life dependant on grassland has also suffered due to loss of habitat and frequent fires. A recent survey indicated that the Townlands could support 19 mammals, seven reptiles, seven birds and one amphibian that are found on Red Data Lists. The presence of the following three species has been confirmed by sightings:

- □ The near-threatened Northern Forest Rain Frog (*Breviceps sylvestris*) - continual habitat destruction and degradation are immediate threats for this species.
- □ The vulnerable Methuen’s Dwarf Gecko (*Lygodactylus methueni*) found on the rocky outcrops in the grassland below the Haenertsburg Primary School and above Georges valley road - particularly threatened by plantations and frequent fires.
- □ The rare Bolas Spider (*Cladomelea akermani*) – has been photographed and identified by the Spider Club of Southern Africa and the ARC, owing to its nocturnal habits very little is known about this species.

b) Water catchment area: There are two natural springs on the Haenertsburg Grassland which feed into Ebenezer Dam, a vitally important water storage dam for the entire area including the city of Polokwane. In addition, the grassland acts as sponge and retains moisture far longer than the huge surrounding areas planted to exotic timber.

c) Source of traditional medicinal plants:

A large percentage of South Africa’s population uses traditional medicine for primary health care, which has lead to a buoyant trade in the plant material used for this purpose. Most of the material is from wild harvested plants, e.g. *Athrixia phylloides*. Many traditional medicinal plants are therefore becoming scarce and it is vital that this natural heritage is protected and managed correctly both for present and future generations.



REFERENCES

- Davies, S.D., Heywood, V.H. and Hamilton, A.C. (Ed) 1994. Centres of plant diversity Volume 1. IUCN Publications, Cambridge.
- Dzerefos C.M. 2004. Yesterday, today and tomorrow: The story of the Haenertsburg grasslands of Limpopo. Veld and Flora. 90(1) 18 - 19. March.
- Knoll, C. 2002. Haenertsburg Townlands – Protecting Grasslands. Urban Green File. May/June.
- Matthews et al. 1993?
- Winter, P. 1999. An analysis of the flora of the Haenertsburg commonage (Haenertsburg

Townlands). In: The Greater Haenertsburg TLC. LDO report. Compiled by SETPLAN Services Inc, Rivonia.

E. LAND-USE PRACTICES

1. Describe the present land-use practices of the site:

Hiking trail, road camp, traversed by power lines and a water pipeline.

2. Describe the land-use practices of the surrounding properties:

Haenertsburg village, school and graveyard, pine plantations and roads.

3. Describe any threat from existing or proposed developments:

Proposed expansion of village, mealie fields around the road camp, dumping of waste and building rubble, water pipeline excavation, off road vehicle use and unplanned fires.

F. PHOTOGRAPHS

Digital pictures preferred, otherwise include negatives (slide and/or print film) of the site, together with caption descriptions.



The Haenertsburg grassland is very popular with rural women for collecting plants to make traditional tea, brooms and wild spinach. These women from Mankweng which is over 20 km away hired a bakkie to pick them up after harvesting bales of *Athrixia phylicoides* the tea bush.



Illegal earthworks on the pristine grassland disturb the endemic population of *Aloe lettyae*.

G. REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION

I hereby apply for the site, described above, to be registered as a Site of Ecological Importance in terms of the Limpopo Environmental Management Act and I understand the terms and conditions of the registration.

Signed (Owner):

Date: 20

1. Special conditions stipulated by owner:

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2. Recommendations or requests for funding of special projects on the site:

Funding to maintain the hiking trail, put up signs, remove alien plants and raise awareness of the importance of the grassland is required. It would also be useful to have someone in the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to call upon should illegal and detrimental activities be seen by the community.

H. OFFICIAL

Registering Environment Officer:

District Office Name:

1. Describe your management recommendations to the site owner (e.g. Control burning/protection, alien plant control, erosion reclamation, stocking rates, fencing. etc.)

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2. Should a full management plan be provided by the owner for the site?

Yes No

H. LAND/SITE OWNER AMENITIES OFFERED

1. Describe the facilities and amenities available to the general public (e.g. bird guides, horse trails, hiking trails, fishing and B&B's)
Hiking trails, spring flowers, bird watching and environmental education centre.....
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I. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING CERTIFICATE.

1. Official language in which certificate should be issued:
English.....
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2. Name in which certificate should be issued:
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Signed: Date:
(Investigating Officer)

Designation: