

Acres

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Att: Kate Parkinson
GIBB
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Greenacres
Port Elizabeth

BOTANICAL INVESTIGATION, ESKOM NEW POWER LINE, MELKHOUT TO DIEPREVIER

We conducted our survey on foot between 30 May and 1 June 2015, in order to ascertain whether any protected plant species were present along the proposed new power line.

The site covers an area of approximately 26km over mainly cultivated farm land.

Pylons 1 to 40

This area falls mostly within the boundaries of the Kouga municipality and consists of grassland and severely infected wattle vegetation (*Acacia mearnsii* and *Acacia saligna*) Around the Melkhout substation, transformed Fynbos is present, although during the time of our survey, no protected plant species were found.



Area around Melkhout substation

Pylons 41 to 59

Vegetation here is predominantly pasture land which is periodically ploughed and seeded with grass species.
No protected plant species were found here.



Agricultural grassland

Pylons 60 to 69

Powerlines will transverse Fynbos type vegetation which was previously disturbed by farming activity.

Drainage lines consist of narrow sections of pristine vegetation, the main tree species being *Searsia (Rhus) crenata* and *Searsia chirindensis*, *Pittosporum viridiflorum*, *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* and *Curtusia dentata*.



Pittosporum viridiflorum

As no pylons are to be constructed directly in any drainage lines, there are no species to be rescued here. However *Curtusia dentata* and *Pittosporum viridiflorum* are protected plant species and care must be taken to avoid any damage to these areas. It is recommended that these trees be clearly marked to prevent damage or destruction.

Fynbos consist of mostly pioneer plant species: *Stoebe plumosa*, *Bobartia orientalis*, *Erica sessilifolia*, *Erica curvifolia*, and various grasses.



Metalasia and Bobartia orientalis



Erica and Stoebe

Although no protected plant species are present within proposed construction boundaries, vegetation here could be rescued for rehabilitation purposes at the end of the project.

Topsoil stripped during the construction process should be stockpiled for re-use during rehabilitation. Care should be taken to prevent invasive plant species from establishing in the topsoil.

Pylons 70 to 75

The vegetation in this area was previously agricultural farmland, which the farmer is endeavoring to return to natural vegetation.

No protected plant species were found within proposed construction boundaries. However there are 2 small natural forests near pylon 75 which contain species of *Pittosporum viridiflorum*. As they are not close to the actual construction site, removal will not be necessary. We would however recommend that they be clearly marked to prevent damage or destruction.



Forest species in drainage areas

Pylons 76 to 81

No protected plant species were found in this section. Vegetation consists of agricultural grassland which is occasionally infested with invasive pine tree species

Pylons 82 to 88

This section travels over farmland consisting of grasses with occasional Fynbos species. No protected plant species were found here.



Agricultural farmland

Pylons 88 to 89

The proposed line crosses over a river containing various tree species. Although many of the trees are invasive, one species of *Podocarpus falcatus* was present in the river bed, with a few specimens of *Pittosporum viridiflorum*, both of which are protected. Construction is not expected to take place here, but care must be taken not to damage or destroy natural tree species. We would recommend that these trees be marked to prevent damage or destruction.



River section

Pylons 90 to 107

No protected plant species were found here. Vegetation consists of cultivated grassland.

SUMMARY

No protected plant species were found on proposed construction sites.

Should plants be required for rehabilitation purposes, areas consisting Fynbos and grassland contain plants suitable for this purpose.

Protected tree species should be clearly marked and the location designated as a no-go area.

The above is presented for your information and records.

Yours faithfully

Jenny Clark
NHD Horticulture