28 October 2025

BOTANICAL COMMENT

Remnant scrub on Sedgefield property earmarked for development

The botanical comment below was requested by PHS Consulting, the EAP acting on behalf of the applicant. The undersigned was appointed as an independent botanical specialist to prepare the comment. The EAP wishes to obtain a comment on the status of the scrub found on the western and northern sides of the site, and confirmation of the status of the remaining erf, which is located in Sedgefield (**Figure 1**). The strip covered with scrub is about 200 m long and ±0.25 ha in size. The site is earmarked for a retail development.



Figure 1: Remnant scrub on Sedgefield property.

Site survey

A botanical survey of the site was undertaken on 20 October 2025 by the undersigned. A

qualitative assessment of the type and condition of vegetation on site (if present), disturbances and presence of alien species, species of conservation concern (SCC) and protected tree species was carried out. The 2018 South African Vegetation Map and the latest floristic taxonomic literature and reference books were used for the purpose of this comment.

Biodiversity Planning Context

According to the 2018 Vegetation Map of South Africa, the site is located inside Knysna Sand Fynbos (**Figure 2**). Further, according to the Vegetation Map, Goukamma Dune Thicket also encroaches the site from the south. The site and surrounding area are, however, highly degraded/transformed by past agricultural/forestry activities and urban development. The scrub recorded on site leans more towards thicket than fynbos. Important Goukamma Dune Thicket species recorded here include *Passerina corymbosa, Searsia crenata* and *S. glauca*.



Figure 2: Extract of the 2018 SA Vegetation map.

The recorded scrub falls outside the Western Cape biodiversity network, while a large part of the remainder of the property has been mapped as a degraded terrestrial critical biodiversity area (CBA2) (**Figure 3**). The latter corresponds with the transformed part of the site. A strip alongside the road on the southern side of the site has been mapped as an aquatic ecological support area (ESA) and degraded ecological support area (ESA2). It is not clear what the reason was for the latter mapped units as the area is highly

degraded or transformed, comprising grasses and weeds.

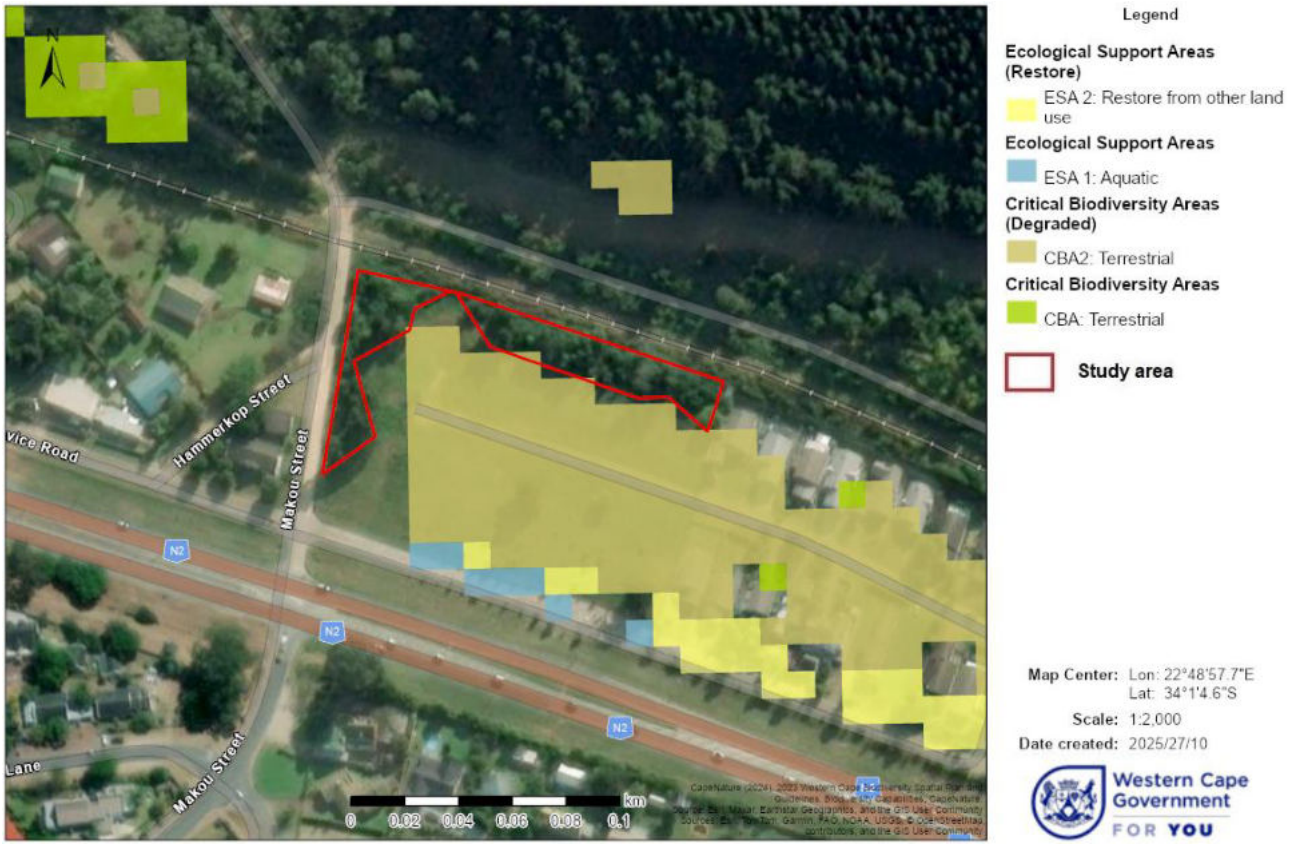


Figure 3: Extract of the Western Cape biodiversity network map.

Findings

The scrub on the northern and western sides of the property resembles a thicket fragment (**Figures 4** & **5**). Given the nearby presence of dune thicket, the scrub can be classified as a degraded thicket fragment or regrowth. The remainder of site resembles a pasture and comprises grasses and weeds (**Figure 6**). It does not consist of indigenous vegetation as per definition.

Indigenous shrub species recorded (mainly inside the thicket remnant) include *Leucospermum cuneiforme, Helichrysum cymosum, Senecio ilicifolius, Osteospermum moniliferum* (dominant), *Pittosporum viridiflorum*, *Ficus burkei* (planted!), *Vepris lanceolata, Pterocelastrus tricuspidatus, Zanthoxylum capense, Grewia occidentalis* (dominant), *Dovyalis rhamnoides, Diospyros dichrophylla* (dominant), *Carissa bispinosa, Secamone alpini, Cynanchum obtusifolium, Searsia glauca* (dominant), *S. crenata, Dodonaea viscosa, Phylica* sp, *Aloe arborescens, Crassula sarmentosa, Carpobrotus edulis, Mesembryanthemum aitonis, Conicosia pugioniformis, Passerina corymbosa, Asparagus africanus, A. rubicundus, A. asparagoides, Rhoicissus digitata* and *Pelargonium capitatum*. Annuals, hemicryptophytes and geophytes recorded include *Wahlenbergia capensis, Cheilanthes viridis* and a *Watsonia* sp.



Figure 4: Strip of thicket on western boundary of site.



Figure 5: Degraded thicket on northern boundary of site.



Figure 6: Remainder of site, with abandoned road infrastructure.

There is also a notable presence of alien species, such as *Acacia mearnsii* (black wattle), *A. saligna* (port jackson), *Ricinus communis* (castor-oil plant), *Plantago lanceolata* (ribwort plantain), *Phytolacca octandra* (inkberry) and *Nephrolepis cordifolia* (sword fern). No Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) were recorded or are expected to occur on site. The positions of *Pittosporum viridiflorum*, a protected tree species, are shown in **Figure 7**.

Potential Impacts

Due to the poor quality and size of the thicket fragment, its relative isolation from larger more viable remnants and the transformed state of the remainder of site, the impact of development is not of great concern. One protected tree species (in terms of the National Forests Act 84 of 1998) was recorded in the thicket, namely *Pittosporum viridiflorum* (kasuur). This tree species is still common in the region, but its removal requires a permit from the Department of Forestry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the scrub recorded on site can be classified as a Goukamma Dune Thicket remnant. In a recent study on the vegetation of Holocene coastal dunes of the Cape south

coast, the latter was reclassified as Goukamma Strandveld[1]. But this unit must still be incorporated in the SA Vegetation Map. With regards to EIA listed activities applicable to vegetation clearing, activity 27 of Listing Notice 1 (clearance of an area of 1 ha or more, but less than 20 ha of indigenous vegetation) and activity 12 of Listing Notice 3 (clearance of an area of 300 m^2 or more of indigenous vegetation within any critically endangered or endangered ecosystem listed in terms of Section 52 of the NEMBA) will not be triggered. The thicket remnant is less than 1 ha in size and Goukamma Dune Thicket is not currently listed as endangered or critically endangered. It is also degraded with a notable presence of invasive aliens. *Pittosporum viridiflorum*, a protected tree species, is also present on site. A permit will be needed from the Department of Forestry for its removal.



Figure 7: Positions of *Pittosporum viridiflorum* on site.

Prepared by:

Mark Berry Pr Sci Nat (registered ecologist, reg. no. 400073/98)

[1] The vegetation of Holocene coastal dunes of the Cape south coast, South Africa [PeerJ]