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MEETING SUMMARY	Project Name: Bigai River/Wetland Maintenance Management Plan	Reference Number: KNY816	Date: 21 August 2023	
		Time: 12h15 am	Location: Virtual Teams Meeting	
ATTENDEES:	Start time	8/21/23, 12:23:54 PM		
	End time	8/21/23, 1:18:09 PM		
	Meeting duration	54m 15s		
	2. Participants			
	Name	First Join	Last Leave	
	Louise-Mari van Zyl & Jackie Dabrowski	8/21/23, 12:24:05 PM	8/21/23, 1:18:08 PM	
	Makhosi Yeni	8/21/23, 12:29:02 PM	8/21/23, 1:18:09 PM	
	Mahlatse Shubane	8/21/23, 12:29:03 PM	8/21/23, 1:18:00 PM	
	3. In-Meeting Activities			
	Name	Join Time	Leave Time	
Louise-Mari van Zyl & Jackie Dabrowski	8/21/23, 12:24:05 PM	8/21/23, 1:18:08 PM		
Makhosi Yeni	8/21/23, 12:29:02 PM	8/21/23, 1:18:09 PM		
Mahlatse Shubane	8/21/23, 12:29:03 PM	8/21/23, 1:18:00 PM		
APOLOGIES	Mrs Pamela Booth representing Knysna Municipality			
MEETING MEMO				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-application meeting minutes must be submitted to the DFFE for approval. 2. Site orientation done by LvZ with the use of Google Earth aerial maps. 3. Purpose of the pre-application meeting is to focus on maintenance of existing infrastructure (no new infrastructure). 4. Confirm that the Knysna Golf Course is municipal property, rented by the golf club, so it forms part of the overall MMP. 5. Bigai system has been exposed to repetitive flooding in the past with 2023 having had a number of heavy rain events. 6. Small catchment with Confluent Consulting who's been appointed by the Municipality to assist with drafting of a maintenance management plan (MMP) considering the aquatic nature of the receiving environment. 				

7. Screening Tool presented during the meeting to highlight the various studies inclusive of disciplines not applicable to the activity, thus the focus is on freshwater/aquatic inclusive of botanical theme as well.
8. Ms Makhosi Yeni request that Site Sensitivity Verification (SSVR) must be done (as an appendix to the MMP), to address the disciplines indicated in the Screening Tool.
9. Mr Mahlatse Shubane confirms that the themes not applicable must be discussed in the SSRV to ensure that the Department can consider it as part of the MMP.
10. Dr Jackie Dabrowski introduced to review the draft MMP.
 - Municipality has a problem with chronic flooding in the area that cuts of areas (some permanently, some intermittently) – Howard Street being a typical example.
 - The flooding stems from historical design and planning that unfortunately did not take into account flooding and future hardening of surfaces which has contributed to an increase in stormwater runoff volumes.
 - The Bigai wetland is doing very well in absorbing a lot of the additional stormwater, doing what it (a wetland) should do which is flood attenuation. But unfortunately the wetland area is very flat and there is no drainage capacity, especially considering that the area is silted up with sediment, which results in blocking of existing culverts.
 - The main focus is only to clear existing culverts and stormwater channels as a Phase 1 approach.
 - All areas (culverts/stormwater channels) that must be cleared are all indicated in the MMP with red dots and the stormwater channels are indicated in yellow (numbered as well).
 - Opening the culverts and stormwater channels must be opened to allow water to drain from these areas (nothing is made bigger or added into infrastructure/structures).
 - The MMP stipulates how wide / how deep etc to assist the Municipality with clearing of the culverts and the stormwater channel.
 - Aquatic features of the site includes are area within the estuarine functional zone because it is below the 5m contour, but the work that needs to be done is within the freshwater portion for which Confluent Consulting have applied for a General Authorisation (GA) in terms of the National Water Act;
 - The MMP includes a historical overview of the area and historical/more recent development to help with the understanding of development in the area over time;
 - Confluent has also surveyed the area which clearly indicates the various islands of (higher lying) sediment that is contributing to the flooding.
 - Table 1/9 in the MMP provides exact coordinates with photographic evidence of the flooding/site area that requires maintenance to be undertaken.
 - Clearing the culverts will require the removal of vegetation for a small area to access the culvert (small machine work, but mostly clearing will be done by hand) and then the moving/removal of material from within that area.
 - The vegetation in the area is not diverse and is not deemed sensitive – as a wetland ecologist (Dr Dabrowski) there is no concern with regards to the removal of the vegetation to do the maintenance work – will be addressed in the MMP.
 - The MMP does also address potential plant search & rescue where necessary in the working study sites.
 - Replanting of rescued plants also specified in the MMP for re-vegetation.
 - The system is largely modified with one of its last remaining (ecological) functionality is to treat water before it enters the Knysna Estuary – again, the maintenance work will impact negatively on this function.

- The Bigai system contains a lot of invasive alien vegetation (Black Wattle mostly, but the MMP lists the various invasive alien vegetation) which will also be removed in the process working in the specific study site areas.
 - From a water quality assessment perspective the Bigai wetland system is good and the maintenance work to be undertaken will not compromise the wetland function in any way whatsoever.
 - Conducting this Phase 1 maintenance to clear the culverts/stormwater channels is unlikely to resolve the overall flooding problem completely. More significant work is likely to be necessary as a second phase, but the recommendation is to have this initial maintenance work done and then assess the situation to see to what extent it improves the flooding, before putting further effort into the second phase that may be required to fully address the long-term flooding in this system. We cannot motivate to entertain large scale interventions before we've had a chance to see what the system does when the conduct that are suppose to be open, are in fact opened up.
 - LvZ confirms that any further interventions (which may include additional structures/infrastructure) is likely to require prior Environmental Authorisation (EA), but it will be a second phase (if this phase 1 maintenance is not fully successful).
 - A key outcome of this MMP is to ultimately ensure that the Knysna Estuary (rated #1 estuary in South Africa) is protected and not compromised (the maintenance work recommended will not compromise the estuary, on the contrary it will help the inflow of freshwater to the system which is very important from an ecological perspective).
 - Table 9 in the MMP is a summary of each point, inclusive of the coordinates, the description of the work that must be done in that particular area, with a photograph to help the contractor, with very specific actions/scope of works for each of the work study sites, with specific mitigation measures for the areas that are deemed to be more sensitive.
 - Excavated sediment that will be coming from the culverts/stormwater channel can be re-used by the golf course as part of their ongoing landscaping.
11. The KMZ to be submitted along with the Application and draft MMP coordinates to the study site map included in the MMP so that it is easy to zoom in on each of the work areas.
 12. Ms Makhosi Yeni enquires about the relevant stakeholders – need input from DEADP, Oceans & Coast (W- Cape) as well as *National* Oceans & Coast, BOCMA, Biodiversity representatives, SanParks, CapeNature as well please, perhaps before putting it, out for advertising to give the authorities enough time to comment inclusive of the 30-day commenting period. Must obtain comment from these Authorities in writing so that it is included with the final MMP.
 13. LvZ informs the DFFE that the urgency with the MMP relates to the support coming from the local residents, residents association and ward councillor, and there has been active engagement with residents who support the maintenance work that needs to be done urgently.
 14. Due to the involvement of the local community and residents association leading up to this MMP, the request is submitted that we deviate from the Chapter 6 requirements for public participation to not give written notice to immediate neighbouring property owners, but still advertise and put up multiple site notices at each of the study site locations. POPIA makes it challenging to obtain contact details as well. Obviously engaging with the local Ward Councillor and Ratepayers Association as well since they have been actively involved.
 15. Submitted a written request for deviation from Chapter 6 along with our Request for Pre-Application Meeting. Can we proceed accordingly?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr Mahlatse Shubane confirms no need for deviation to be approved as the Competent Authority, but confirms that the deviation is permissible. The Applicant must take note that if there are comebacks later it may delay the process. 	
DECISIONS MADE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DFFE agrees that based on the project description the activities adhere to the definition of 'maintenance' and considering the listed activities presented and discussed during the pre-application meeting, that the project qualifies for a Maintenance Management Plan (MMP); 2. Draft MMP must be distributed to key stakeholders (Authorities) before the general public 30-day commenting period; 3. Immediately neighbouring property owners need not be given written notice on condition that the Municipality note that any comebacks on such may delay the process; 4. Draft MMP to be submitted along with the Application for Adopting a MMP. 5. Final MMP to be submitted with comments received in response to the advertising/commenting period.
EXTERNAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parallel application processes to run concurrent (General Authorisation already submitted to BOCMA).