
SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION REPORT

PROPOSED CLEARING OF NATURAL VEGETATION FOR CULTIVATION PURPOSES ON FARM 800, WORCESTER

PREPARED FOR: JRG FARMING (PTY) LTD

DATE: 22 APRIL 2026

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INTRODUCTION

A Screening Tool Report was generated from the national web-based environmental screening tool, as contemplated in Regulation 16(1)(b)(v) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, published under Government Notice No. R982 in Government Gazette No. 38282 of 4 December 2014, as amended. Thereafter, a desktop analysis of the site was undertaken using Google Earth Pro and Cape Farm Mapper.

A site visit (**13 February 2026**) was then carried out to determine if the environmental sensitivities reported in the Screening Tool Report were accurate/correct in relation to the physical and ecological characteristics of the site.

The Applicant wishes to expand his existing agricultural areas to include an additional 17ha of cultivated lands. The proposed area is located on Farm 800, Worcester. Furthermore, the intention is to develop an irrigation dam on the property to store irrigation water. Two sites are being investigated, one on Farm 800 and the other on Farm 31/319.

The area identified for cultivation is covered in natural vegetation. The dam site is located adjacent to the proposed cultivation area. The alternative dam site on 31/319 consists of developed agricultural land.

Refer to **Figure 1**.

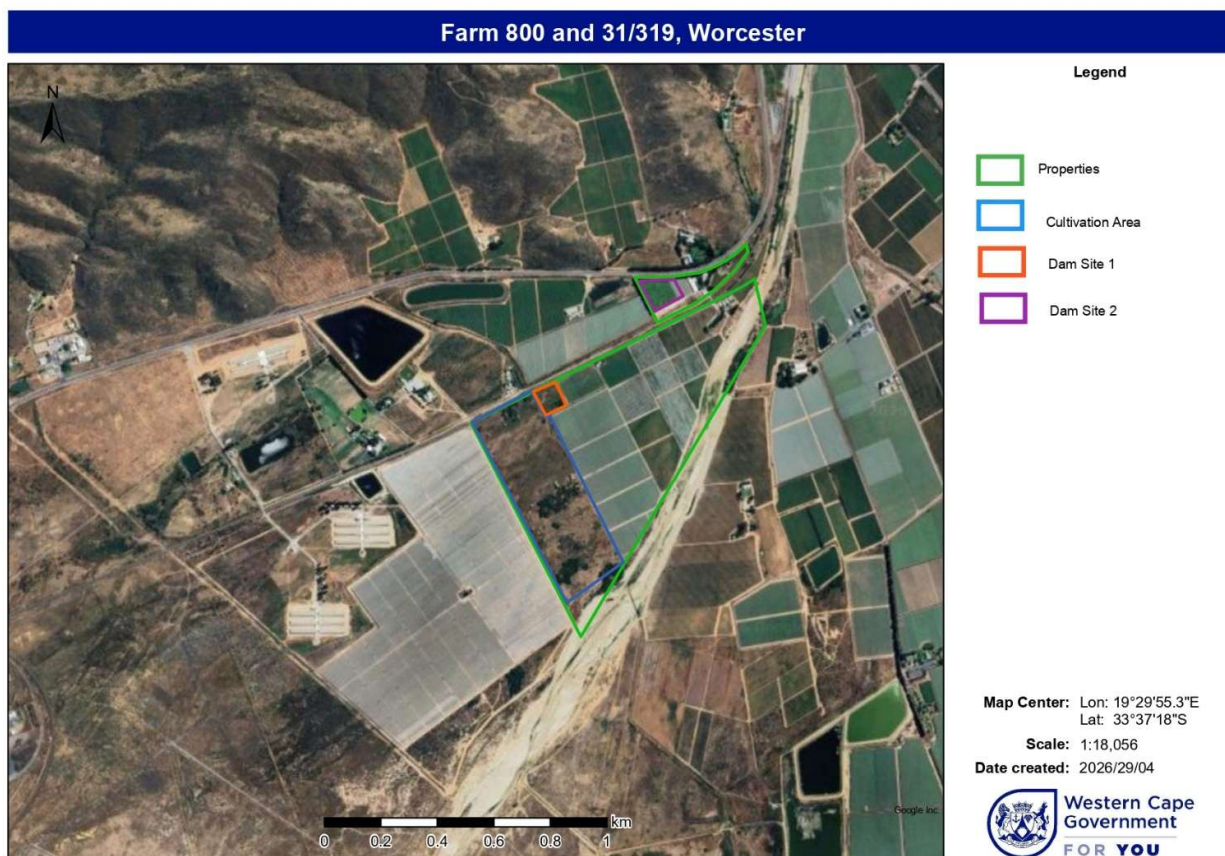


Figure 1: Proposed cultivation land and dam sites

HISTORICAL IMAGERY

The historical imagery below (**Figures 2 to 6**) obtained from Google Earth provides a timeline of the site from 2014 to the latest available image in 2025. The images show that the proposed cultivation site has not been farmed in the last 10 years but is disturbed, and dam site 2 has been cultivated since prior to 2014.



Figure 2: Google Earth Imagery dated 2014 showing proposed cultivation area (purple polygon) and the dam alternative sites (white polygon).



Figure 3: Google Earth Imagery dated 2017 showing proposed cultivation area (purple polygon) and the dam alternative sites (white polygon).



Figure 4: Google Earth Imagery dated 2019 showing proposed cultivation area (purple polygon) and the dam alternative sites (white polygon).



Figure 5: Google Earth Imagery dated 2022 showing proposed cultivation area (purple polygon) and the dam alternative sites (white polygon).



Figure 6: Latest Google Earth Imagery dated 2025 showing proposed cultivation area (purple polygon) and the dam alternative sites (white polygon).

SCREENING TOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES WITH SITE PHOTOGRAPHS (ANNEXURE 1)

The Screening Tool Report uses national datasets to identify environmental sensitivities and potential specialist studies that may be required for any development. Since the datasets are not necessarily ground-truthed, there may be instances where the level of sensitivity rating is incorrect or irrelevant to the scale, nature, and type of development.

The following themed sensitivities are identified in the Screening Tool:

Agricultural Sensitivity

The site has a very high agricultural sensitivity according to the Screening Tool. The EAP is in agreement with this sensitivity rating since the sites are located within an agricultural area and on a working farm. See Figure 7 below.





Figure 7: Site in context

Animal Species

The Screening Tool Report indicates a medium animal species sensitivity, however the site is identified as having a low sensitivity. A small sliver to the north and south of the site is marked as medium and therefore the Screening Tool automatically reverts to the highest sensitivity. The section to the south of the site corresponds with the Hex River. The EAP agrees with the low sensitivity rating since the sites are part of a working farm and are surrounded by cultivated lands. The Hex River can be considered of medium sensitivity but the small section in the north corresponds with a railway line and disturbed land. That section is likely of low sensitivity too. See Figure 8.





Figure 8: Northwestern portion of the site showing open degraded areas.

Aquatic Biodiversity

The Screening Tool Report indicates a very high aquatic sensitivity, however the site is identified as having a low sensitivity. A small sliver to the south of the site is marked as very high and therefore the Screening Tool automatically reverts to the highest sensitivity. The areas shown as very high correlate with the presence of the Hex River (Figure 9). The proposed cultivated area will be sufficiently set back from the river to ensure impacts on the river are avoided.

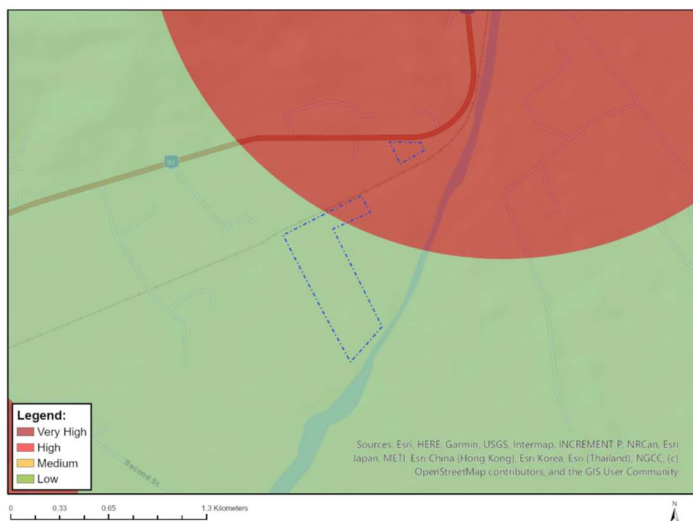




Figure 9: The adjacent Hex River

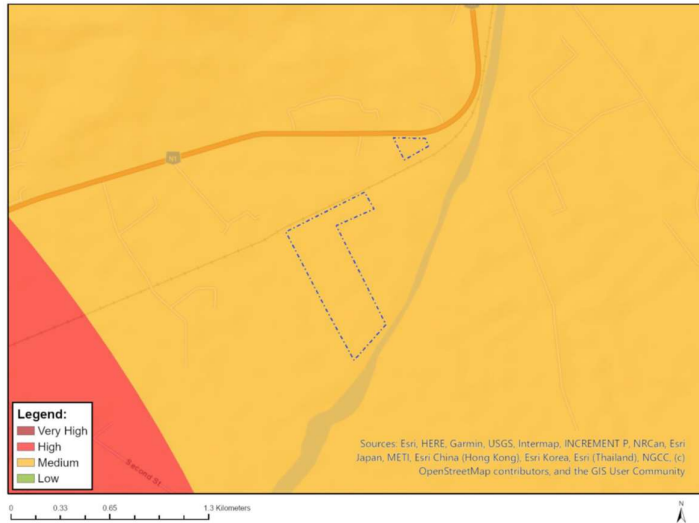
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

The archaeology and cultural heritage of the site is rated as very high although the majority of the site is located within a low sensitive area. The two dam sites are rated as having a very high sensitivity since they are located within 2km of a Grade 2 Heritage Site. The EAP is in agreement with the low sensitivity and the fact that a portion of the site is very high since it is within a 2km radius of a heritage site. The proposed irrigation dam will have no affect or impact on any nearby heritage sites.



Civil Aviation

This theme has a medium sensitivity. The Screening Tool identifies the site as being within 8km from an aviation aerodrome. The proposal will have absolutely no impact on any aviation activities. The application is for the clearing of vegetation for cultivation purposes.



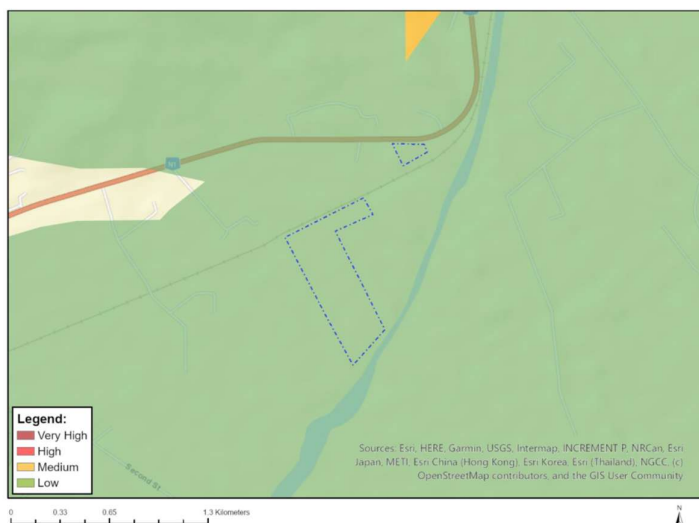
Defence

The site is located within a low sensitive area for the Defence theme. The EAP concurs with this rating.



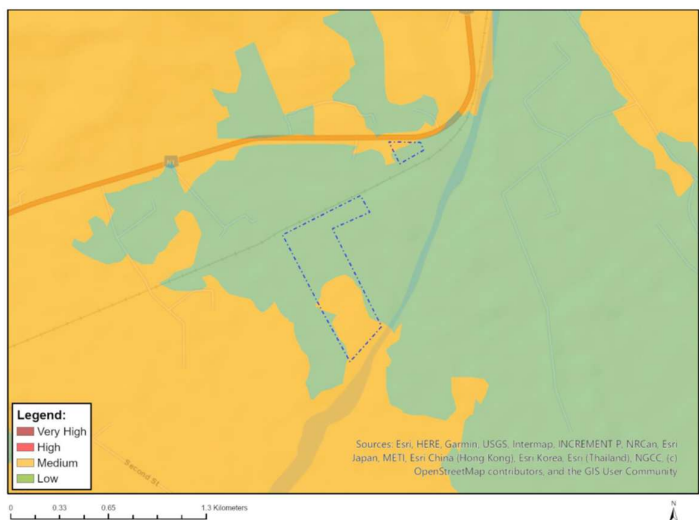
Palaeontology

The palaeontological sensitivity is identified as low. The EAP concurs with this rating since the site has been disturbed by present and past agricultural activities.



Plant Species

This theme is rated as medium sensitivity. Half the site is identified as having a low sensitivity according to the map below. A specialist was appointed to verify the sensitivity of the site.



VERIFICATION OF PLANT SPECIES SENSITIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSAL, BY THE BOTANIST

In terms of plant species, the national web based environmental screening tool recognizes the northern portion of the site to be of low sensitivity. The southern portion is considered to be of medium sensitivity in terms of plant species. The Screening Tool has listed 23 sensitive plant species that may potentially occur within the medium sensitive areas, based on their habitat requirements and the mapped ecosystems on site (e.g. species previously recorded in the same habitat type).

The on site assessment confirms that the study area is of "low" sensitivity for terrestrial plant species. None of the Medium Sensitive plant species listed in the Screening Tool nor any other Red Date List plant species were recorded on site. It is highly

unlikely that the proposed development will impact on any plant species of conservational concern based on the overall poor habitat condition and low plant diversity.

Terrestrial Biodiversity

The terrestrial biodiversity is rated as very highly sensitive. A specialist was appointed to verify the sensitivity of the site.

The very high sensitivity rating is based on the following sensitivity features:

- CBA: Terrestrial
- CBA2: Terrestrial
- National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES)
 - The site does however not fall within any NPAES – see Figure 10
- Endangered Breede Alluvium Renosterveld

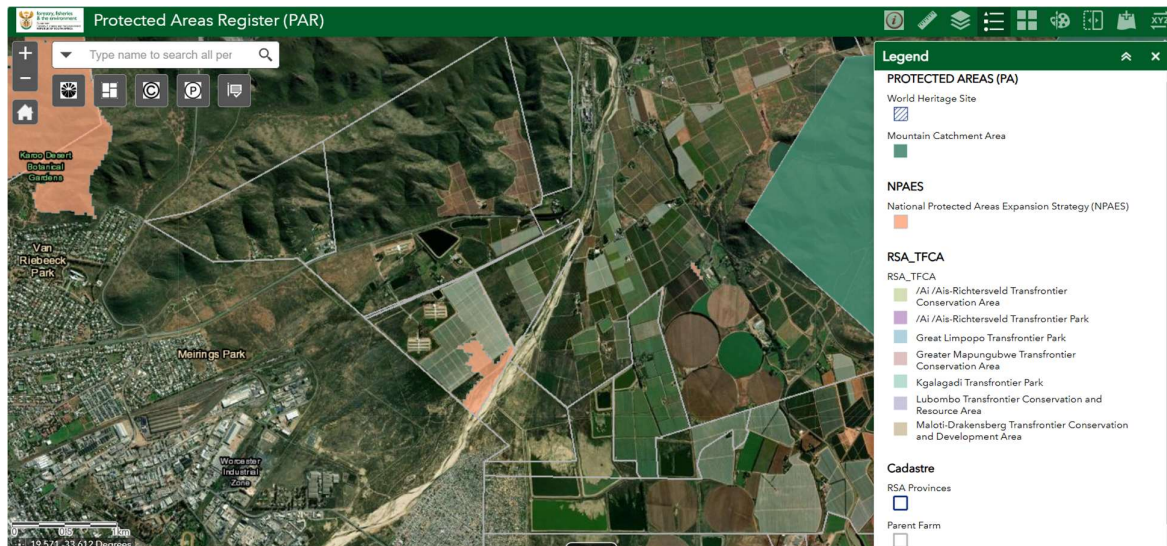


Figure 10: National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy

VERIFICATION OF TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY SENSITIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSAL, BY THE BOTANIST

Dam site 1 is recognised as a terrestrial CBA. The site partly overlaps with an existing cultivation area, currently not recognised as any CBA or ESA. Dam Site 2 is an existing cultivation area and is also not recognised as any CBA or ESAs. The entire area targeted for cultivation is recognised as a terrestrial CBA (Figure 11). The target cultivation area borders the Hex River towards the south. The Hex River is recognised as an aquatic CBA, with degraded areas regarded CBA2.

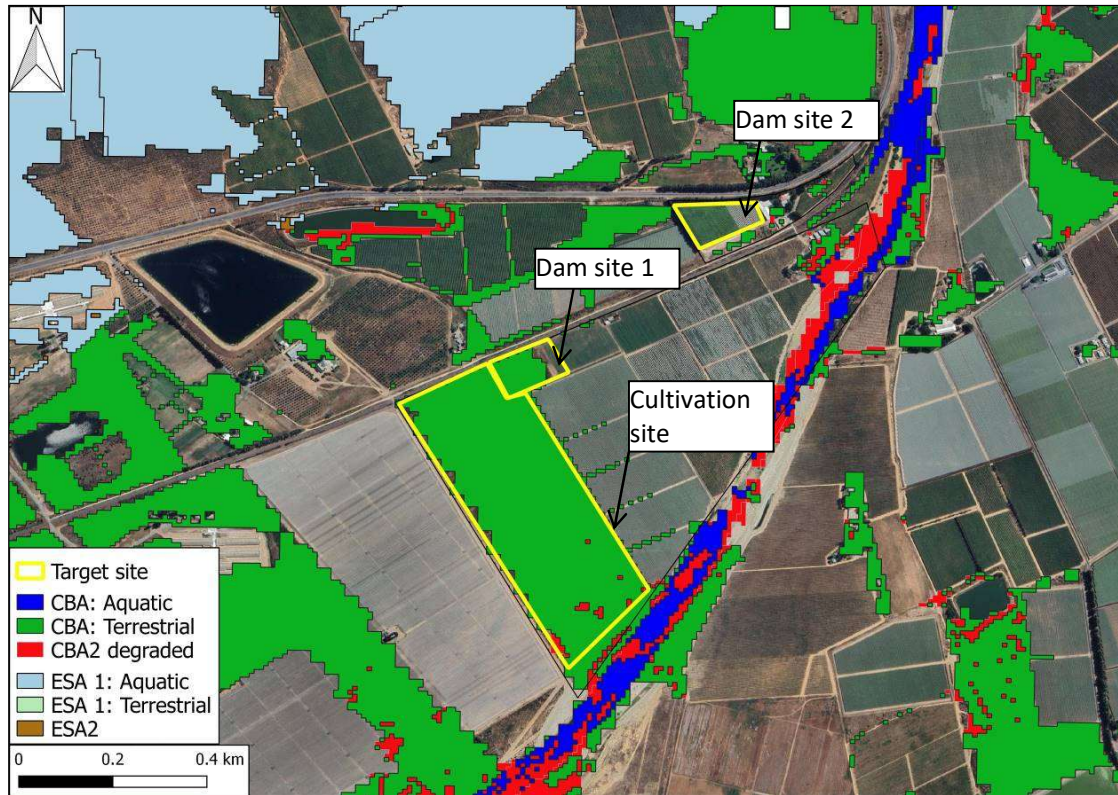


Figure 11: Extract from the WC Biodiversity Spatial Plan (2023) Map showing the extent of CBAs and ESAs in the area.

HABITAT CONDITION AND VEGETATION ON SITE

Dam site 1:

The area targeted for dam site 1 is highly degraded with no significant natural vegetation. There is currently no representation of the original ecosystem, Breede Alluvium Renosterveld, on site.

Dam site 2:

Dam site 2 has no remaining natural vegetation. The site is currently used for cultivation.

Proposed cultivation area:

The entire area targeted for cultivation comprises old fields (previous cultivation areas). Remnants of old vineyard and tilling furrows are still evident on site. Subsequent to cultivation the site has been utilised for grazing for many years and the site is currently still utilised for grazing. Previous cultivation occurred more than 10 years ago and some natural vegetation re-established on site. The site has a history of alien *Acacia saligna* (Port Jackson) infestation with various attempts to eradicate alien vegetation over the years, followed by recurring Port Jackson infestations.

Currently the vegetation on site is highly degraded and natural plant diversity is very low, making it very difficult to distinguish the relevant ecosystem present on site. Considering the substrate, which is loamy sand and cobble, it is assumed that site would have supported Breede Alluvium Renosterveld as depicted in the SA vegetation map. There is no reference vegetation remaining within the immediate vicinity of the site as it is bounded by cultivation.

The target site is not recognised as a natural remnant of Breede Alluvium Renosterveld in the SANBI Red List of Ecosystems: Remnants layer of June 2021.

SCREENING TOOL RECOMMENDED SPECIALIST STUDIES

The following specialist studies have been recommended by the Screening Report. An explanation is given as to why some of the recommended studies will not be conducted. Refer to site photographs included in **Annexure 1**.

1. Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment

No Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment or Compliance Statement will be conducted for this proposal. The property is zoned for Agricultural Use and is located within a farming area on the outskirts of Worcester. The character of the area will not be affected by the proposal since the cultivated land and dam will be visually in-keeping with the agricultural landscape and adjacent agricultural crops and dams. No significant visual impacts are therefore expected. See Figure 2.

2. Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment

The proposed development will not alter the sense of place and no heritage or cultural resources will be affected. The majority of the site has a low archaeological and cultural sensitivity while a small portion is located within a 2km radius from a Grade II heritage site, according to the Screening Tool Report. The proposed farm dam and cultivation lands on the existing working farm will not impact on any nearby heritage sites.

For these reasons, **no heritage or archaeological studies are considered necessary**.

3. Palaeontology Impact Assessment

No Palaeontological Studies will be done. Past disturbances to the sites would have disturbed any palaeontological finds and the area has a low palaeontological sensitivity.

4. Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment

A Plant Species and Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment has been conducted by a specialist.

5. Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment

No Aquatic Study is necessary since the cultivated lands will be sufficiently setback from the Hex River so as to avoid any impact on the river. The site has a low aquatic sensitivity with only the Hex River identified as having a very high sensitivity. The proposed dams will be off stream dams and will not be in close proximity to the river.

6. Socio-Economic Assessment

The proposed clearing of vegetation for cultivation purposes will result in the creation of jobs (seasonal and permanent) and an increase in agricultural produce. This will be beneficial for the local community, the farmer and the region. However, **a socio-economic study is not considered necessary** since only a few positive impacts are expected and no significant negative socio-economic impacts are expected.

7. Plant Species Assessment

A Botanical Impact Assessment has been done.

8. Animal Species Assessment

It is the EAP's opinion that **no faunal studies** are required since the Faunal Sensitivity of the site is low. A small sliver is marked as having a medium sensitivity to the north of the site and the Hex River is identified as having a medium sensitivity. The area to the north consists of a railway line and disturbed lands. Since the cultivated land will be setback from the river, it will not impact on the faunal movement along the river corridor nor will it displace any faunal species occurring adjacent to the river.

The proposed cultivation area and dam sites are surrounded by crops and do not border natural areas.

The portions marked as having a medium sensitivity is due to the possible presence of the ***Aloeides lutescens***, the **Worcester copper butterfly**. It is the EAP's opinion that it is unlikely that this butterfly is found on site since the site is highly disturbed with heavy alien infestation. According to SANBI, this is a range-restricted endemic species and is endemic to the Western Cape Province in South Africa, in the Scherpenheuvel area and the eastern side of the Brandvlei Dam near Worcester in the west, as well as near Robertson in the east. Their preferred habitat is open karroid scrub vegetation, preferably open sandy areas at elevations of 200 m to 300 m. This site is not located within their range since the Scherpenheuvel area, the Brandvlei Dam and Robertson are 10km or more away.

ANNEXURE 1: SITE PHOTOS

ANNEXURE 2: SCREENING TOOL REPORT