

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY C:
Revised Brackenridge Estate Environmental Management Plan
Prof. Patricia M. Holmes (PhD), 20th October 2023

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A revised Brackenridge Estate Environmental Management Plan (EMP) was drafted by Prof. Holmes to update the original Environmental Management Plan Operational Phase (OEMP, 2001) for Brackenridge Estate. This revision was undertaken in conjunction her concurrent Biodiversity Survey and Environmental Audit (EA) of the Estate.

The present document summarizes Prof. Holmes's revised and updated 25-page EMP document dated 20th October 2023. This revised EMP is set out in three sections:

Section 1: Contextual Information

1.1 Introduction (p. 3)

Approval of the Estate with 280 dwellings on 128 ha of ground was granted and formalized by way of an Environmental Exemption Record of Decision (RoD) in 2000, with the proviso that 54% of the ground to be preserved as open space and natural vegetation. The RoD specified the following conditions of approval:

- The principles of an "Eco-estate" to be followed, with the retention of 66.97 ha of private open space (*Condition 1*).
- An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to be drawn up (*Condition 2*).
- A Fire Management Plan to be drawn up as an integral part of the EMP to ensure the long-term survival of the fynbos vegetation in an ecologically acceptable way (*Condition 8*).

The original EMP was then compiled in 2001 by Planning Partners to fulfil the condition of exemption in terms of the Environment Conservation Act, as well as the Land Use Planning Ordinance. Compliance with this EMP thereafter constituted a legal obligation.

1.2 Biophysical Setting (p. 3 - 5)

The specifics of the biophysical setting of the Estate are identified in terms of location, geology, indigenous vegetation, flora, alien vegetation and fauna.

Section 2: Implementation of the updated EMP of 20th October 2023

2.1 Organizational structure (p. 5-6)

- The legal entity responsible for the maintenance of common property and infrastructure as well as for the long-term management of the development and natural environment is the HOA. This entity operates according to the HOA constitution.
- An Environmental Liaison Committee (ELC) was originally established as a condition of approval (Environmental Exemption RoD dated 22/6/2000; Planning Partners 2001). The ELC no longer exists.
- The HOA was furthermore responsible for establishing an Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC) in accordance with *Condition 11* of the RoD. However, an EMC is currently not in place.
- The current Environmental Management Subcommittee (EMS) of the HOA does not formally fulfil an ELC / EMC function. It should therefore be re-constituted as an Environmental Monitoring/ Management Committee that reports directly to the Board of Trustees in order to comply with the RoD *Condition 11*. Once appointed, the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) should also serve on this committee.

2.3 Environmental Monitoring (p. 6 - 7)

The requirements of Environmental Monitoring are described in detail in terms of Veld Condition Monitoring; Fire Monitoring; Erosion Monitoring and Minor Infrastructure Monitoring.

2.4 Environmental Audit (p. 7)

It is proposed that the updated 2023 EMP be henceforth reviewed and updated by the appointed Estate ECO on a 3-5-year cycle. However, the subsidiary “Integrated Fire and Invasive Species Management Plan” that is to be included in the EMP should be reviewed and updated annually.

2.5 Financing Implementation of the EMP (p. 8)

The creation of an environmental management fund by the HOA, which is legally responsible for the environmental management, is proposed.

Section 3: Specifications for Environmental Management

The document specifies in detail the requirements and urgent actions to be taken in terms of

3.1 Vegetation Management (p. 8 - 9)

- ACTIONS: Invasive alien species control; Drafting and implementation of a subsidiary “Integrated Fire and Alien Species Management Plan”; Fuel reduction; Urgent as well as regular prescribed ecological burning.

Requirements and actions for the post-burn rehabilitation of degraded areas are detailed in terms of rehabilitation and restoration principles and guidelines.

3.2 Fire Management (p. 8 - 9)

- ACTIONS: Conduct pre-emptive prescribe ecological burns on a 10-15-year cycle; Minimizing of fuel loads; Implementation of fire management in terms of a total of 3-5 blocks which are burned at least 2 years apart; Establishing and maintenance of fire breaks.

Furthermore, detailed management requirements are listed in terms of 3.2.1 Fire Prevention (p. 10-11); 3.2.2 Fire Belts (p.11-12); 3.2.3 Prescribed Ecological Burns (p.12-13)

3.3 Alien Vegetation Control (p. 13)

- ACTIONS: Drafting and annual updating of an “Integrated Fire and Alien Species Management Plan”, to be implemented by way of an “Annual Plan of Operation”; Plotting of maps of areas of priority invasive species for each management block which include alien density as well as removal workload/cost estimates; Specification of pre- and post-fire invasive alien species control requirements; Appointment of a skilled operational team to implement the alien control and fuel reduction (removal) actions prior to block burns; Appointment of a skilled operational team to implement post-fire alien control; Application of rehabilitation and active restoration principles where appropriate.

3.4 Management of modified open space (p. 14-15)

Specific management requirements are specified for the following: 3.4.1 Maintenance of Roads etc.; 3.4.2 Erosion Control; 3.4.3 Waste and Litter Control.

Steve Harcourt-Cooke

Brackenridge Environmental Sub-Committee – 21 October 2023