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BIODIVERSITY OFFSET APPLICABILITY - Portion 36 of the Farm 708, Fransche Kraal

Dear Michelle,

I conducted the botanical assessment for the proposed residential development on Portion 36 of Farm 708 in Fransche Kraal, and I have been asked to comment on the applicability of a potential biodiversity offset for the site.

The property spans 31.38 hectares and is primarily characterized by heavily infested Agulhas sand fynbos. This vegetation type is classified as critically endangered but is currently in poor condition due to the impact of invasive alien species, particularly *Acacia saligna*. The presence of these invasive species is significantly harming the natural vegetation and disrupting the ecological processes on the site. Consequently, both the overall condition and conservation value of the site and its surroundings are rapidly declining. While three plant species of conservation concern were identified during the survey, the overall condition of the vegetation is currently low.

It is crucial that all invasive alien species be removed from the property. If the development is approved, approximately 25 hectares of remaining natural Agulhas sand fynbos should be set aside for long-term conservation, cleared of invasive species, and maintained in a pristine condition. This site could serve as an important conservation node in an area experiencing widespread alien vegetation infestation and ongoing environmental degradation.

Given the degraded condition of the site and the proposed restoration efforts, from a terrestrial biodiversity perspective I do not believe a biodiversity offset is applicable to this project.

Sincerely

Sean Privett (M.Sc. Botany, UCT)
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