

Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment Landowners' Association

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January 2019.

Dear Concerned Citizen,

Illegal coal mining at the head of the Elands River in the Belfast/ Dullstroom district

We ended 2018 with the good news that operations at the WPB Colliery mine which is on portions of Lakenvlei and Groenvlei had ceased. However as the dawn of a new year breaks we have been informed that mining operations will recommence.

This mine is surrounded by the GLPE and is also located at the source of the Elands River and if mining operations are allowed to continue it will impact all downstream communities – agricultural and residential. This operation is totally illegal as this ground has not been rezoned for mining. In addition to this they are blasting within 200 metres of human habitation and although this has been reported to the Human Rights Commission no action has been taken.

But first some back ground. We were able to halt the mining when it first started on 27/03/2017. Thereafter the matter was reported to the Department of Mineral Resources especially regarding the damage done to a wetland which of course is a criminal offence. All this was well documented with photos and handed over to the DMR's inspectors who visited the site. Despite frequent reminders nothing further has been done and it is a clear from correspondence that the department is not prepared to act.

In addition to this action the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment Landowners' Association (GLPELA) laid criminal charges at the Belfast police station against the miner in April 2018. Once again, no action was taken even though the docket was extremely well prepared and logged into their computer system. When it became apparent that the Belfast police had refused to take up the case the case was reported to the NPA. Once again, although the NPA said they would follow up nothing further has been heard from them.

Prior to 2017 a stream at the site was contaminated with acid mine drainage due to an abandoned small coal working of many years ago. This water was unfit for both livestock and human consumption but further downstream was diluted by other tributaries in the area. This fact, amongst others, was completely ignored by the Department of Water Affairs when they issued a water use licence. You can imagine what the result will be if this major open cast coal mining will be allowed to continue.

The GLPELA therefore has had no alternative but to brief senior and junior counsel in preparation for high court action this year in order to close down the mine and ensure that complete rehabilitation is carried out. This, together with attorney's fees, has to date cost us about R160 000 which is all the money we raised for this matter in 2017. We have been informed that we will need at least another R175 000 to take the matter to court and see it through to completion.

We therefore once again appeal to all landowners and other interested parties to assist with donations to this cause. Any contribution, no matter how small, will help us to fight this battle. If we

do not win this one a precedent will have been set which will open our area up to even more mining activities.

We trust that you as a concerned citizen will contribute generously to this fund. Please pay contributions into the following account:

Bank: Nedbank.

Account name: Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment.

Account number: 2011 723 914

Branch: Middelburg Mall

Branch Code: 169050 (~~delete general Nedbank code & enter this branch code~~)

Account type: Savings account

Please use "Your name – GLPELA legal fund" as reference.

Thank you in advance. We sincerely believe 2019 will send a message to all prospective miners that they need to do it by the book.

Yours sincerely,

And Mills

Chairman: GLPELA