

Mtunzini

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SOS Mtunzini news update NO. 1, March 2011.

SOS Mtunzini (Save Our Sands) is the joint campaign of the MRA (Mtunzini Residents Association) and the Mtunzini Conservancy to address the proposed sand dune mining to the North and the South of Mtunzini.

The **Mtunzini Residents Association** (Reg. No. 2003/022172/08) and the **Mtunzini Conservancy** (Reg. No. 2007/006455/08) are both Section 21 companies. The Mtunzini Conservancy has Section 18A tax status and can issue tax certificates for donations made.

We are on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/SOS-Mtunzini/194597520558329?sk=info>



We think that the proposed Exxaro KZN Sands mine will have a very negative impact on our town and surrounds and make irreversible changes to the environment leaving the whole community worse off than before. For this reason we have decided to engage the help of an environmental attorney to represent us in a very complex process with high stakes for everyone. The process, as we have discovered before with the Ext C authorisation, is one sided and loaded against us. We see this as an empowering move on the part of the community, and will help to some small degree in leveling the playing field. It means we will have a much greater impact on the process as IAP's (Interested and Affected Parties).



Mining 100 m from a settlement



This is probably what it will look like on both sides of the freeway from Fairbreeze to Mtunzini. Eventually the mine will expand north of Mtunzini, consume Port Durnford ending north of Empangeni –Hillendale pictures above and below.



It is very important that, in the first instance, as many residents of Mtunzini and other interested people as possible register as IAP's and make comment on the proposed mine. You can register as an IAP at:

ACER (Africa)

Tel. 035 340 2715
Fax: 035 340 2232
Email: exxaroppp@acerafrica.co.za

The first round of comments for the Fairbreeze Mine project closed on 10 December 2010. There will, however, be a second opportunity to submit comments when the Basic Assessment Report is distributed for public review. Please make sure that you register for this second round of comment. Acer are updating the project database on a continuous basis so we encourage you to register directly with ACER (email, fax or telephone).

Sometime in the near future Exxaro will hold a public meeting where they will tell us what they intend doing and how they hope to fix what they have broken down. As many residents, ratepayers and interested people as possible should attend this meeting. This is your chance to hear, from the horse's mouth, what Exxaro has in store for Mtunzini, and to be able to question them directly on their plans, promises and on their past record at Hillendale. You will also be able to register as IAP's at this meeting. Once we know the date of the meeting we will inform you and encourage you to attend.

So, where are we now?

1. We have held a public meeting where it was agreed that we should raise money to fund legal advice and any studies that may be required.
2. We have appointed Norman Brauteseth, a well established environmental, development and planning lawyer, as our attorney in the matter and he will now guide us in the process. A circular has been sent out to MRA and Conservancy mailing lists with his details and credentials, or can be obtained from us.
3. At our first meeting with Norman, 9th February, we established a plan of action and will now proceed accordingly.
4. We await the public meeting and the publication of the Basic Assessment Report.

At this stage Exxaro will be making all sorts of claims about their ability to rehabilitate the mined areas, the slimes dams, creation of jobs, their minimal impact on the environment, no impact on property prices, their ability to control dust, water use etc. etc.. It is our job to interrogate these claims and expose any problems or discrepancies between the promises made and expected reality before they start mining. Reality can be found at their Hillendale mine where meaningful rehabilitation appears to be wishful thinking and where the immediate neighbours are continually covered in dust. As with Humpty Dumpty, it remains to be seen if all the kings men and all the kings horses can put our precious old soils together again!

You only have to cast a casual glance towards the Exxaro Hillendale mine on the right as you drive to Empangeni to get an idea of what it is likely to look like on both sides of the N2 as you approach Mtunzini from bridge 6.

As we go into this new authorisation process, we should make sure that



we get to know our new neighbour. A quick search on Google under “illegal mining Exxaro” or some such will show that there appears to be controversy around many of Exxaro’s mining operations in other parts of the country and will give you some idea as to what we may be up against here.

There is evidence of the failure of Exxaro to comply with legal and regulatory requirements at the mines associated with the Arnot Colliery, the Groot Pan Colliery, the Glisa South Colliery, and then Mooifontein Pan (the pan is probably not so mooi anymore!). It should be of great concern to all of us to think that we will have a large open cast mining operation within 100 m of Mtunzini that is run by a company that appears to be surrounded by so much controversy. Google searches on these names will give you a feel for how they operate.



Elize Templehof, of Die Beeld, has been reporting on Exxaro mining operations for some time now and another Google search on her name will show the extent of her coverage of Exxaro mining operations. She was recognised by the Federation of SA Flyfishers (FOSAF) which you can find at:

<http://www.fosaf.org.za/ywgDisplay.php?archive=Y&nid=28>

“Congratulations to Elise Tempelhoff of the Beeld and a keen supporter of the YWG and other environmental NGO's. It is mainly due to her efforts and with help from the redoubtable Dr Koos Pretorius that Exxaro's Mooifontein mine at Arnot has been closed and the company has been told to rehabilitate the 88 ha wetland they have completely destroyed. The cost of the rehab for this wetland will cost between R200 and R400 million. It was only due to the persistence of Elise and her allies that action has eventually been taken. This was in the face of very unpleasant threats of police action and a refusal to produce a water use licence and other documentation which should have been available to the public.”

Slime dam in the foreground



Questionable rehabilitation?



Another dusty day next to the Exxaro Hillendale mine.

Thank you for your support in our fight to save Mtunzini and ultimately we think Zululand as well. Unfortunately it does take money to participate effectively in the mining authorization process so we do need your contributions.

Contributions may be made to Mtunzini Conservancy at any branch or via the internet to.

**FNB, branch code 220130.
Cheque Account no. 62093027475**



Please fax or email personal details (name and address) and proof of

deposit to 086 512 6476 or bwkewley@telkomsa.net, so that a tax receipt can be sent to you.

If you have any queries please call:

- **Stan Whitfield** 083 655 8983
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