



Rooiels Ratepayers Association (RERA)

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Comments on: **Rooiels River Estuary Draft Estuarine Management Plan, August 2021**

The Rooiels Ratepayers Association (RERA) strongly supports the vision and strategic objectives for the management of the Rooiels Estuary noting the following aspects incorporated in the EMP that are valued and need to be preserved or enhanced:

- The sense of place and beauty of the estuary by virtue of its location that is appreciated by the local community and transient visitors;
- The linkage that the estuary serves between the surrounding landscape and sea;
- The importance of protecting biodiversity;
- The need to manage activities around the estuary to ensure that these values are retained."

These values are also reflected in the Rooiels Vision that underpins RERA actions to conserve the natural splendour of Rooiels and the pledge that here nature will be nurtured and custodianship of our environment respected.

RERA supports the EMP plan to incorporate the Rooiels River Estuary into the Boland Mountain Catchment Protected Area Management Plan to support healthy biological communities and the high priority given to improving the ecological health of the estuary. It also strongly supports the need for the Estuarine Functional Zone to comply with environmental legislation and best practice and to prevent any additional transformation at the estuary margins and to ensure the removal of all alien vegetation in the near pristine Rooiels Estuary.

It is noted that the Coastal Management Line (as designated in the CML Act) extends well beyond the bridge (Fig. 7) and the same for the EFZ, defined by the presence of estuarine vegetation or wetland. RERA also strongly supports the delineation proposed in the EMP of a Nature Access Zone at the mouth (beach side of the estuary) and a Primitive Zone east of the bridge across the Rooiels River. We support the inclusion of the Rooiels River estuary Primitive Zone as Open Space Nature Reserve 1 on the Overberg Municipal Town Planning scheme and request that this be incorporated as an extension of the area (in bright green) that is designated Nature Reserve on Map 9.

We would encourage Cape Nature, the Responsible Management Authority, to appoint an Environmental Management Co-ordinator **as soon as possible** and to clarify the institutional structure which will allow for quick reporting from local residents on any infringements, areas of concern, potential support and ideas for research. There is concern around current issues related to unauthorised development, sewerage disposal and other activities that undermine the ecological integrity of the estuary and the flora and fauna, especially east of the bridge in the Primitive Zone.

We support the request that the Draft EMP consider appointing the Rooiels Conservancy as the body to co-ordinate activities on the Rooiels River estuary and to report to the regional Environmental Management Co-ordinator.

In this respect we consider it urgent to "Implement and document Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) and DWS policy to not allow Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) discharge to the estuary" Table 4.1.1 d. This is noted as High Priority and is particularly urgent for the Primitive Zone. Also noted as High Priority and that RERA would draw your attention to as particularly urgent for the Primitive Zone "Ensure that all proposed developments adhere to the full suite of relevant environmental legislation" Table 6 3.1c.

We would also recommend that Table 4 1.4b "Develop and implement invasive alien species eradication programme" should be moved from Medium Priority to High Priority.

While the establishment of an EAF for each estuary is no longer required by the NEMP, we request that the Rooiels Conservancy be represented on the proposed Kogelberg Biosphere Marine Group which is the consultative forum recommended in this Draft Environmental Management Plan. It is only if we have this representation that we will be able to play the role envisaged in the EMP "The various local members of the EAF will play an invaluable role in providing on the ground, local insight and support to the various authorities as well as to the RMA" (pg. 52).

The Rooiels Ratepayers Association would prefer to have an individual EAF for the Rooiels River and recommends such a body is constituted. However if this is not going to exist, then they would like to request that the Draft EMP for the Rooiels River amend Section 8.4 with a small addition

Paragraph 1: by adding on a sentence at the end (addition inserted in red italics)
... The existing Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Marine Working Group can provide this communication platform. *The Rooiels River Estuary will be represented on that Group (or EAF) by the Rooiels Conservancy.*

This is to ensure that Rooiels does have representation on a body advising the RMC and will have close involvement in the adaptive management strategy to be used and the next five-year revision of the EMP for the Rooiels Estuary. The Rooiels community would like to support all efforts that advance conserving the integrity of the Rooiels River Estuary.

RERA supports the importance of encouraging more research on the flora and fauna that exists in this Estuary in order to establish a benchmark to be able to monitor activities in future.

Yours faithfully,



Prof. Kay Leresche
Chairperson, Rooiels Ratepayers Association