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GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

NO. 973

10 SEPTEMBER 2020

**NATIONAL FOREST ACT, 1998
(ACT NO. 84 OF 1998)****CONSULTATION ON INTENTION TO DECLARE THE GREY DELL AND FORT GREY FOREST AREAS AS NATURAL FOREST UNDER SECTION 7(2) OF THE NATIONAL FORESTS ACT, 1998 (ACT NO. 84 OF 1998)**

I, Barbara Dallas Creecy, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, hereby consult on my intention to declare, under section 7(2) of the National Forests Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998), to be a natural forest, all indigenous tree cover in any stage of development occurring on the indicated properties in the Grey Dell and Fort Grey Forests areas, set out in the Schedule hereto, with incorporation of interspersed open land, degraded forest and planted forest serving as nursery crop.

Section 2(1) of the National Forest Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998) defines "forest" to include "the ecosystem which it makes up". It must be noted that the forest ecosystem on the indicated properties must be viewed as an integrated functioning ecosystem. These forests consist of a mosaic of well-developed intact primary natural forest belonging to the type: Scarp Forest (VEGMAP type: FOz 5) which is seamlessly intermingled with Buffels Thicket (VEGMAP type: AT 12) and Albany Coastal Belt Thicket (VEGMAP type: AT 9) with possible interspersed pockets of Southern Afrotemperate Forest (VEGMAP type FOz 1). Furthermore, it is recognised that ecological interface exists between forest and natural open vegetation in proximity to extant forest cover as well as the small pockets of plantation of exotic species that provide extended habitat for some forest fauna and a nursery forest stand.

It is noted as well that, due to illegal activities on the affected land, some of this natural tree cover had been degraded, so that contiguous canopy cover may no longer exist in parts, whereas some areas previously wooded may also now be completely denuded as a result of deforestation. Degradation due to invasion of exotic species also occurs.

Viewed thus as an integrated functioning ecosystem, of which some parts have been degraded and deforested, I hereby give notice of my intention to declare all natural wooded land, interspersed open land and plantation patches on the designated properties to be 'natural forest' for the purposes of any actions performed in terms of the National Forests Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998).

Members of the public are invited to submit written comments or inputs, within 14 days after publication of this Notice in the *Government Gazette*, to the following address:

By post to: The Acting Director-General:
 Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (Forestry Branch)
 Attention: Mr A R Madula
 Private Bag X447
 PRETORIA
 0001

By hand at: 110 Hamilton Street
Arcadia
0083

Please note that anyone entering the Department's building will be subjected to COVID-19 procedures.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic delivering comments by hand at the Department is being discouraged.

By email: Sdzivhani@environment.gov.za

Any enquiries in connection with the draft Notice can be directed to Mr J J Bester at Tel: 012 309 5767 or Mrs S. Dzivhani at 012 309 5765/072 197 9264.

Comments or inputs received after the closing date may not be considered.



BARBARA DALLAS CREECY
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SCHEDULE**Fort Grey/Grey Dell natural forest declared in terms of section 7(2) of the National Forests Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998)**

Location: Eastern Cape Province

Local Municipality: Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality

Properties included:

- Umtiza Nature Reserve
- Farm 853: Portions 3; 4; 5; 6; and 9
- Farm 856: Remainder (a western and eastern portion)
- Farm 857: Portion 0
- Farm 870: Portions 4; 8; and 9
- Farm 871: Remainder and Portion RE/1
- Farm 871: Portions 2; 3; 5; 6; 7; 9; 11; and 12
- Farm 872: Remainder
- Farm 875: Portions 3; 8; 10; 13; and 15
- Farm 875: Remainder
- Farm 1304
- Farm 1345: Portions 0 and 1
- Farm 1504

