

Conservation of Fynbos Ecosystems

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Dear Dr Luthando Dziba and Mr Property Mokoena,

I am writing to you to urge for the restoration and conservation of Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and Peninsula Granite Fynbos at Tokai Park, as well as the removal of the remaining stands of plantation pine (*Pinus pinaster*) in compliance with SANParks' conservation mandate.

The Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and Peninsula Granite Fynbos are unique and rare ecosystems found only in the Cape Floristic Region. According to the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Cape Floristic Region is the world's smallest and most diverse floristic region, with an estimated 9,000 plant species, of which 70% are found nowhere else on earth.

The Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and Peninsula Granite Fynbos are classified as critically endangered and endangered respectively by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species cites habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation as the primary threats to the survival of these ecosystems. Therefore, it is essential to conserve and restore these ecosystems to prevent further loss of biodiversity.

Plantation pine, on the other hand, is an invasive species that poses a significant threat to biodiversity. According to the Department of Environment, Forestry, and Fisheries (DEFF), invasive alien plants are one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss in South Africa. Pine trees, in particular, are notorious for their ability to outcompete and displace indigenous vegetation, leading to the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem function.

As SANParks, it is your mandate to conserve biodiversity and protect the natural heritage of South Africa for the benefit of present and future generations. The National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) mandates that SANParks must manage protected areas to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem function. Furthermore, the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004) requires that SANParks identify and control invasive species in protected areas.

I, therefore, urge you to take swift action to remove the remaining stands of plantation pine in Tokai Park and restore and conserve the Cape Flats Sand Fynbos and Peninsula Granite Fynbos ecosystems. This action will not only be in compliance with SANParks' conservation mandate but will also contribute to the global effort to protect biodiversity and preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]