

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTEMENT VAN OMGEWINGSAKE

Ref: 02/1/5/2

MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 46 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

A draft reply to Mr T D Harris (DA-WC) to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

J. Yawitch

Ms Joanne Yawitch
DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: 4/03/2010

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APPROVED/AMENDED

J. Yawitch
MINISTER

DATE: 07/03/2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 46

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO CW50E

DATE OF PUBLICATION:

Mr T D Harris (DA-WC) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

(1) (a) What is the rationale for SANParks cutting down yellowwood trees in the Tokai plantation, (b) when did this process begin and (c) how many (i) trees have been cut down so far and (ii) are expected to be cut down;

(2) whether a consultation process with relevant stakeholders was followed before the cutting down of the trees began; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) (a) what entity has the contract to cut down the trees and (b) how was this entity appointed;

(4) whether, in light of the fact that yellowwood trees are indigenous to South Africa and are still being cut down, these trees could be considered to have heritage value that would allow them to be saved; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

Mr T D Harris (DA-WC)

SECRETARY TO PARLIAMENT

HANSARD

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46. THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ANSWERS:

- (1) (a) The yellowwoods that were cleared (*Podocarpus falcatus*) are not indigenous to the Cape Peninsula. They are extremely invasive and pose a threat to the local fynbos and indigenous forests by out competing indigenous species.
- (b) The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) issued a permit on 14 January 2010 for the removal of these trees after a site inspection by a DAFF official. The process of cutting down these trees started on 25 January 2010.
- (c) (i) 132 Trees were cut and (ii) no more are expected to be cut down in Tokai.
- (2) SANParks undertook a comprehensive two year stakeholder and public consultation process to prepare the Tokai and Cecelia Management Framework which sets out the vision for the future management, use and rehabilitation of the Tokai and Cecelia plantations. Through this public process, the area concerned has been identified in the Management Framework for rehabilitation back to the endangered granite fynbos.
- (3) (a) MTO (Mountains to Oceans) has a 20 year lease (through a public tender) with the then Department of Water Affairs and Forestry for clear felling in Tokai.
(b) The management of this lease has been assigned to SANParks.
- (4) The yellowwoods in question are the Outeniqua Yellowwood (*Podocarpus falcatus*) whose natural geographic distribution is the Southern Cape and not the Cape Peninsula. These trees were planted in the 1970's as part of the plantation in a watercourse, and were not identified in the Management Framework as having heritage value.

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