

## **BASE Newsletter July 2021**

Dear colleagues, Barberton and Archean enthusiasts,

I would like to bring you up-to-date on recent developments:



### **Finances**

The MoU governing the transfer and use of ICDP funds has finally been signed; Nic and I have approved the transfer of the first rate of ICDP funds committed to our project into the Moodies account at CIMERA at the University of Johannesburg from where invoices will be paid.

Our funding status is still a nail-biting affair. Paul Mason's application for a (comparatively small) grant was turned down amidst heavy competition; he will reapply in September. We are still waiting for the outcome of the (large) French proposal, shepherded by Stefan Lalonde. If this is turned down, we'll have to conduct this project on a shoestring, cutting expenses where we can while concentrating to get the maximum length of core out of the ground. Much will also depend on the rig day rates and the currency exchange rate.

### **Drilling Campaign**

Nic Beukes designed the tenders which describe the project tasks to drilling companies. They will be sent out July 19<sup>th</sup> and close August 2<sup>nd</sup>, followed by the review process. Nic thinks that drilling may start at the end of September or early October. He has discussed with drilling company representatives whether it would not be efficient to use two rigs instead of one, which would probably greatly cut down on our daily rates for travel, accommodation etc. If so, we may be done drilling in February.

Our challenge will be to begin with the drilling ASAP in order to escape the onset of the rainy season (usually mid-November): We want to drill the distant and somewhat difficult-to-access sites (5-1, 5-2) in the Stolzberg Syncline first; those sites next to paved roads (1, 2) will move to the end of the campaign.

### **Logistics**

We have only heard informally that our request to use the central hall of a historical industrial building in the center of Barberton (in the wings are located the Barberton Museum and a series of small shops, respectively) has been approved but we have nothing in writing yet. We would use this hall to install the rock saw (along with some soundproofing), lighting, water, display, work and storage racks etc., conduct tours, hold briefings etc. and to do the principal work in core slabbing and description.

We also have the staffing to handle the operations by two rigs, having contracted Rod Tucker and Chris Rippon, two very experienced wellsite geologists (among other qualifications). I (CH) will fly to South Africa (Corona and unrest permitting) in early to mid-September and am planning to stay there for most of the drilling campaign to describe core, oversee core handling, do publicity-related activities, and write the numerous reports.

## Communications

We keep discussing communication strategies. As we have no core yet, all current publications by us and by outsiders are based on outcrop data only. We therefore decided to temporarily rescind the publication requirements I listed in our last (April) newsletter and to replace them with the requirement to give the Science Management Board (SMB) notice *whenever a manuscript is at a stage such that the authors are comfortable to share it*, at least within the limited circle of the SMB, who would forward these manuscripts responsibly. This is a much softer rule than before but places more responsibility on all of us. Manuscripts based on core data will have a stricter requirement for co-authorship and sharing.

As announced in the previous newsletter, I will start calling monthly Zoom-Seminars as the drilling campaign gradually moves into focus. If any of you have questions, please do not hesitate to call or write.

I am also still looking for someone to create and manage a repository for publications exchange and archival.

## Publications

There is a lot going on the publication front. The manuscripts will serve us well to provide an up-to-date ground on many regional (and perhaps diagenetic) aspects of Moodies strata. The SMB is regularly discussing the most recent publications at its monthly meeting; please contact your group or country representative on the SMB if you want (or need) to stay up-to-date on the developments.

For 2021, I am aware of the following publications (submitted, in review, accepted, or published) which have Moodies Group as their principal focus:

- Heubeck et al. (Moodies detrital zircons compilation, age provenance) was accepted in June by Am.J.Sci.
- Heubeck et al. ("Eriksson's dune" and Earth-Moon distance) was submitted to Sedimentology in May
- Janse van Rensburg et al. (Physical volcanology of Moodies) was accepted in July by Precambrian Research
- Reimann et al. (Moodies hydrothermal overprint) was published by Precambrian Research
- Saitoh et al., 2021, (Metamorphic origin of crinklies) was published in June in Precambrian Research
- Schmitz and Heubeck (Moodies fold style and tectonic models) was published in March in Prec. Res.

I know of a couple of other manuscripts in progress; please contact me (CH) for drafts or more information.

So much for now.

Best regards; Frohes Forschen !

Christoph (and Nic), on behalf of the BASE SMB