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After surveying the borehole and pulling casing, rigs MDX315 and MDX317 trammed themselves to the R40 road and climbed on a waiting flatbed truck which brought them from their former sites 3 and 4A to the new sites 4B and 4C, respectively. These are located next to the Ameide Road, ca. 5.3 and 7.7 km from the R40 turnoff. Both rigs will further explore the stratigraphy and facies architecture of the Lomati Delta Complex, exposed in cross section in steeply dipping, overturned strata of the Saddleback Syncline. The move took only a day. 315 started drilling this past Friday; 317 yesterday.



After non-coring through ca. 75 m of weathered, tuffaceous tidal-channel-sandstone within two days, rig LF90 at Site 2 in the Dycedale Syncline started coring in coastal-facies sandstones with abundant silicified dolomitic and gypsiferous concretions. They represent in part in-situ, in part reworked vadose-zone aridisols, mixed with tuff and shale clasts. After crossing a fault zone (89 m - 101 m) in these rocks, the borehole entered the target section, well ahead of schedule. Because its location next to a scenic parking turnout provides this site with a steady flow of visitors, we attached several information posters to the fence ("your taxpayer's money at work"; "for the benefit of ... all curious people" etc.).



A delegation from the Geological Survey of South Africa (the Council for Geoscience, CGS), led by CEO Mr. Mosa Mabuza, visited us and left impressed. We showed the group the exhibition hall, our core processing workflow, inspected some spectacular core, and visited Site 2 where we watched the spudding of the borehole. Mr. Mabuza, shown left thanking Phumi, was also instrumental in resolving the permitting issue we had with Farm Belvue in the Stolzburg Syncline where we plan to drill boreholes 5A and B in March and April.



Organized by Astrid Christianson, a professional camera team worked with us for two days. Antoinette and Jacques from SANHU in Nelspruit interviewed roleplayers and team members, filmed in the exhibition, the core shed and at all three drill sites from sunrise to sunset. The ample footage will be useful for a variety of purposes; we are exploring several options.

A steady stream of visitors (schools, civic groups, tourists, locals, colleagues) has developed at our BIAS hall work place in downtown Barberton, keeping Phumi and the other team members busy with tours. Our near-perfect setup, the material on Facebook and the hiring of a new staff member allows us to keep up.

Frohes Forschen!

Christoph Heubeck, Nic Beukes and the BASE onsite team