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Unseasonable rain and fog made access to BASE-5B, up in the grasslands of the Nkomati Reserve, difficult. The wet clay made the forest roads slippery so that the water truck could not reach the drill site for several days. The crew had no choice but to stay put and wait it out. When drilling is possible, progress is good at about 15 m per day. The rig is currently at 373 m in fine- and medium-grained sandstone. It drilled through the stratigraphically uppermost beds of discontinuous silicified gypsum concretions (which are in outcrop associated with a coastal-plain facies) at ca. 368 m and has another 100 m or so to go.



BASE-1 on the property of Fairview Mine in the southern Eureka Syncline drilled through unit Mdl1 at ca. 177 m depth. Mdl1 is poorly exposed along the Elephant's Kloof Road and consists of a ca. 7 m thick unit of siltstone and some shale with several ca. 2 cm-thin laminae of jaspilite. About a week later, the borehole cored the basaltic Moodies Lava (Mdl2, left), ca. 9 m thick (compared to ca. 11 m in outcrop). The lava is typically amygdaloidal but was encountered intensely veined (left). BASE-1 is currently is at 328 m and has another 150 m or so to go. To completion.



The BASE onsite team participated in leading a sizeable group of Jaguar Car Club enthusiasts on a weekend tour of the Geotrail, complete with on-site lectures, visits to the core workshop, guided tour of the poster display section, and a pop-up restaurant in the mountains. The group from all over South Africa was highly impressed. It is not known whether they offered free rides on the windy R40 geotrail through the mountains (which should have been fun).



The European-size pallets arrived at the BIAS Hall to be loaded with the working half core trays, to be shipped to ICDP core labs and storage in Berlin-Spandau after completion of the drilling campaign. Nic has done all the necessary administrative work, and Chris and his helpers at the BIAS Hall have been doing the footwork. We anticipate to ship 38 pallets, each stacked with ten core trays side by side., totalling ca. 3200 m of slabbed core, towards the end of July.

Frohes Forschen!

Christoph Heubeck and Nic Beukes