



**PRELIMINARY REPORT ON ACCIDENTAL EXPOSURE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HUMAN REMAINS/ BURIAL ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED DURING TRENCHING FOR WATER RETICULATION AT MAKGODU BOREKWA, MOLETJI, UNDER AGANANG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

HERITAGE CONSULTANTS	CLIENT
 <p><b>MBOFHO</b> Consulting and Projects</p> <p>Mbofho Consulting and Project Managers 91 Hans van Rensburg Street Suite 107, Eurasia Courts Polokwane</p> <p>P.O Box 54 Polokwane 0700</p> <p>Tel: 015 297 7324 Mobile: 079 1930 634 Fax: 086 539 6388 Email: <a href="mailto:info@mbofhoconsulting.co.za">info@mbofhoconsulting.co.za/</a> <a href="mailto:silidima@gmail.com">silidima@gmail.com</a></p>	 <p><b>AGANANG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY</b></p> <p>PO Box 990 Juno 0748</p> <p>Tel: 015 295 1400 Fax: 015 295 1401/ 1447 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:admin@aganang.gov.za">admin@aganang.gov.za</a> Website: <a href="http://www.aganang.gov.za">www.aganang.gov.za</a></p> <hr/> <p>Capricorn District Municipality</p> <p>P.O Box 4100 Polokwane 0700</p> <p>Tel: 015 294 1000 Fax:</p>

**Date: 13 November 2015**



**MBOFHO**  
Consulting and Projects Managers

Head Quarters: Polokwane  
91 Hans van Rensburg Str  
Office 107 Eurasia Courts  
P.O Box 54  
Polokwane 0700

Middelburg  
50 Aerovilla  
Aerorand  
Middelburg  
1050

Midrand  
78 Breakfree Estate  
C/n: Mimosa & Garden Rd  
P.O Box 16405,  
Doornfontein, 2028

Brits  
No 02 Kudu Street,  
Elandsrand, Brits  
P.O Box 3119,  
Brits, 0250

Tel: 015 297 7324 Cell: 072 133 4195  
Fax: 086 514 6151

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORT DETAILS .....	3
ABBREVIATIONS .....	4
DEFINITIONS .....	5
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. APPOINTMENT OF MBOFHO CONSULTING.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. OUR PRELIMINARY FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. PROPOSED MITIGATION PLAN .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## REPORT DETAILS

- Project name:** PRELIMINARY REPORT ON ACCIDENTAL EXPOSURE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HUMAN REMAINS/ BURIAL ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED DURING TRENCHING FOR WATER RETICULATION AT MAKGODU BOREKWA, MOLETJI, UNDER AGANANG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.
- Client:** Aganang Local Municipality/ Capricorn District Municipality
- Heritage firm:** Mbofho Consulting and Project Managers
- Project team:**
- Matodzi A. Silidi:** Masters Env Management (UOFS), PGD in Heritage Studies (UCT), B.Env. Sc. (UNIVEN), ASHEEP (NOSA), SAMTRAC (NOSA), Environmental and Mining Rehab (Potch), Advanced Project Management (Potch).
- Dr. Edward Matenga:** PhD Archaeology & Heritage, Uppsala, Sweden; MPhil. Archaeology, Uppsala; Certificate in the Integrated Conservation of Territories and Landscapes of Heritage Value, ICCROM, Rome

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CRM</b>	Cultural Resources Management
<b>CMP</b>	Conservation Management Plan
<b>DEDET</b>	Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
<b>DEA</b>	Department of Environmental Affairs
<b>DMR</b>	Department of Mineral Resources
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>HIA</b>	Heritage Impact Assessment
<b>LSA</b>	Late Stone Age
<b>LIA</b>	Later Iron Age
<b>LIHRA</b>	Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority
<b>PHRA</b>	Provincial Heritage Resources Authority
<b>MSA</b>	Middle Stone Age
<b>NHRA</b>	National Heritage Resources Act
<b>NEMA</b>	National Environmental Management Act
<b>NTFP</b>	Non-timber Forest Product
<b>SAHRA</b>	South African Heritage Resources Agency
<b>WAC</b>	The World Archaeological Congress

## DEFINITIONS

**Archaeological material:** remains resulting from human activity left as evidence of their presence which, as proscribed by South African heritage legislation, are older than 100 years, which are in the form of artefacts, food remains and other traces such as rock paintings or engravings, burials, fireplaces and structures.

**Artefact/ Ecofact:** Any movable object that has been used, modified or manufactured by humans.

**Catalogue:** An inventory or register of artefacts and/or sites.

**Conservation:** All the processes of looking after a site/heritage place or landscape including maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation.

**Cultural Heritage Resources:** refers to physical cultural properties such as archaeological sites, paleontological sites, historic and prehistorical places, buildings, structures and material remains, cultural sites such as places of rituals, burial sites or graves and their associated materials, geological or natural features of cultural importance or scientific significance. This include intangible resources such religion practices, ritual ceremonies, oral histories, memories indigenous knowledge.

**Cultural landscape:** “the combined works of nature and man” and demonstrate “the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both internal and external”.

**Cultural Significance:** is the aesthetic, historical, scientific and social value for past, present and future generations.

**Early Stone Age:** Predominantly the Acheulean hand axe industry complex dating to + 1Myr yrs – 250 000 yrs. before present.

**Early Iron Age:** Refers cultural period of the first millennium AD associated with the introduction of metallurgy and agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa

**Later Iron Age:** Refers to the period after 1000AD marked by increasing social and political complexity. Evidence of economic wealth through trade and livestock keeping especially cattle

**Excavation:** A method in which archaeological materials are extracted, involving systematic recovery of archaeological remains and their context by removing soil and any other material covering them.

**Grave:** a place of burial which include materials such as tombstone or other marker such as cross etc.

**Historic material:** means remains resulting from human activities, which are younger than 100 years and no longer in use, which include artefacts, human remains and artificial features and structures.

**Intangible heritage:** Something of cultural value that is not primarily expressed in a material form e.g. rituals, knowledge systems, oral traditions, transmitted between people and within communities.

**Historical archaeology:** the study of material remains from both the remote and recent past in relationship to documentary history and the stratigraphy of the ground in which they are found; or archaeological investigation on sites of the historic period. In South Africa it refers to the immediate pre-colonial period, contact with European colonists and the modern industrial period.

**In situ material:** means material culture and surrounding deposits in their original location and context, for instance archaeological remains that have not been disturbed.

**Later Iron Age:** The period from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium AD marked by the emergence if complex state society and long-distance trade contacts.

**Late Stone Age:** The period from ± 30 000-yr. to the introduction of metals and farming technology

**Middle Stone Age:** Various stone using industries dating from ± 250 000 yr. - 30 000 yrs. ago

**Monuments:** architectural works, buildings, sites, sculpture, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings which are outstanding from the point of view of history, art and science.

**Place:** means site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, together with pertinent contents, surroundings and historical and archaeological deposits.

**Preservation:** means protecting and maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration or change, and may include stabilization where necessary.

**Potsherd:** ceramic fragment.

**Significance grading:** Grading of sites or artefacts according to their historical, cultural or scientific value.

**Site:** a spatial cluster of artefacts, structures, organic and environmental remains, as residues of past human activity.

**Site Recoding Template:** Site recording form.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In early May 2015 workers of Mexcon Civils accidentally exposed a possible grave during the excavation and trenching for the laying bulk water pipe at Makgodu Village. Mexcon Civils was contracted by the Capricorn District Municipality to implement the project designed by Superior Quality Engineering. What turned out to be sherds of a human skull were found at GPS coordinates S29° 18' 38", E023° 37' 06").

Water supply to the rural areas is part of government's on-going programme to provide basic needs in rural areas. Operations were suspended immediately after discovery of the human remains. Members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) were informed and they visited the site during May 2015 and prepared a record for their files.

Makgodu area comprises small scale farms/ plots owned and run on a freehold basis (with title deeds) and without a formal village setup. There are thus no traditional structures of authority. The area is run by a local management committee elected by the farmers /landowners. Each family has its own private cemetery and there is no communal graveyard.

## **2. APPOINTMENT OF MBOFHO CONSULTING**

Aganang Local Municipality on behalf of the Capricorn District appointed Mbofho Consulting and Project Managers as Heritage Specialists to carry out preliminary investigations, which prompted meeting the Project Steering Committee and a site visit on 04 August 2015. A follow up visit with the Principal Investigator (PI) was made on the 03<sup>rd</sup> of September 2015.

## **3. OUR PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The area is approximately 70 km northwest of Polokwane city and about 20km from Moletjie Traditional Council



The site of the discovery is on a small farm about 400m from the farmhouse. It is an open field which was under cultivation in the recent past. Judging by the colour of the soil there appears to have been a cattle kraal and potsherds scattered around suggests a large settlement. The extent of the site is about 70m x 40m. We noticed exposures of many small fragmented bones, and we are aware that some of the material was removed by Curators from the Polokwane Museum in a rescue operation.



Fig 1. Excavated and backfilled trench with two blue posts indicating where human remains were found



Fig 2. The extent of the archaeological site



Fig 3. Spine bone found at the site



Fig 4. Diagnostic potsherd found at the site

Our preliminary conclusion is that the burial is old and should be treated as an archaeological. Indication to this is the poor state of preservation of bones, and the fact that village residents were not aware of the remains in the field over which had been under cultivated many years.

#### 4. PROPOSED MITIGATION PLAN

Given that the burial has been disturbed by the trenching, salvage work must be undertaken to remove the remains and re-inter them in a formal graveyard. Archaeological salvage of graves is done in accordance with SAHRA guidelines on the treatment of human remains. The community has been consulted and it has been resolved that, since the human remains are of an unknown individual, and the area does not have a communal graveyard, they must suitably be buried at the Polokwane Cemetery at Seshego. Alternatively they could be sent to the museum or other research institution. However museums hold a large number of such collections. International opinion is now generally not in favour of arguments that such material provides good opportunity for research into biology and past funerary practices. Decent reburial is therefore recommended.

Matodzi Silidi and Edward Matenga

For Mbofho Consulting and Project Managers

**Matodzi Silidi:**

*Masters in Environmental Management (UOFS), PGD in Heritage St (UCT), B.Env. Science Degree (UNIVEN), Health and Safety: Construction Research Education and Training Enterprises (CREATE), Bituminous Binders for Road Construction: SABITA & CSIR – Asphalt Academy , ASHEEP (NOSA), Intro to SAMTRAC (NOSA), SAMTRAC (NOSA), Environmental and Mining Rehab (UNW), Advanced Project Management (UNW), Handling, Storage and Transportation of Hazardous Chemicals and Dangerous Goods (UNW)*

**Edward Matenga:** *PhD Archaeology and Heritage*