

PROGRESS REPORT 08: May 28, 2012

Towers 146-147 & Line from Tower 205 - Witkop PROPOSED 400KV TABOR-WITKOP TRANSMISSION LINE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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On May 24, 2012 the archaeologist was accompanied by Mr F Roodt, also an archaeologist, to inspect the archaeological sites and construction activities at Towers 146 and 147.

TOWER 146



Figures 1-6. The foundations of Tower 146. No archaeological stratification is visible in the walls of the excavation.

Tower 146 was moved from its initially planned location which was inside a sensitive archaeological site. The new location does not intrude on any archaeological remains. It was however recommended that an archaeologist should be present during the excavation phase of this tower, since it is still in close proximity to the site. This recommendation was, however, not heeded. The importance of an archaeologist being in attendance at sensitive sites, particularly during excavation, such as these cannot be stressed enough. It would be a total contravention of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) should any destruction of such a site happen without having taken the necessary precautions.

Recommendations

- Since the stringing of the line necessitates heavy vehicle traffic on site, it is recommended that the archaeologist should be present when the stringing of the line between Towers 146 and 147 takes place since the line crosses a large part of the archaeological site.
- Another access route should be mitigated. Although the present access route has been in use for a prolonged period, the recent intensified construction activities are daily causing more damage to the archaeological site. This situation should receive immediate attention.
- The route and access points should be clearly demarcated prior to further construction activities.

TOWER 147

The relocation of Tower 147 is also well and safely removed from the archaeological site.

Recommendations

- Since another access road, which doesn't disturb the archaeological site, is recommended, it remains important that the archaeologist be consulted in this regard to insure that the new road does not impair the archaeological site.
- The archaeologist should be in attendance during the stringing of the line, since it will cross the archaeological site with particular sensitive areas. It is understood that heavy vehicles will be used in the process, which could cause further damage.





Figures 7-12. The foundations of Tower 147. No archaeological stratification is visible in the walls of the excavation. In Figs 7 & 8 Mr Roodt is standing among the delineated areas for the tower legs.

TOWERS 205 – 206

On May 27, 2012, the archaeologist was once again accompanied by Mr Roodt, since he had completed the induction course and it was necessary to have a driver on board – almost the entire distance had been walked.

Since the archaeologist's last visit to Towers 205 and 206, debushing had been completed. At least five more graves are now visible, some which are quite close to the line but they are not located at any of the towers. Their co-ordinates were added to the list which was included as Appendix A in Progress Report 01.

Recommendations: Great care must be exercised during stringing. The graves should be clearly marked. It is also advisable that the archaeologist should be in attendance during this part of the line construction in this particular area. The reader is referred to Attachment 01, where the law regarding graves and burials clearly stipulates that no destruction or damage to a grave or burial ground should occur at any time.

TOWER 206 UP TO WITKOP POWER STATION

The rest of the line, from Tower 206 up to the Witkop Power Station has been walked. No archaeological site was identified, since the largest part of the area has previously been ploughed, which would have destroyed archaeological remains, while another low lying part consists of peat. No test pits had been dug. It is, however, possible that e.g the Eiland facies and Stone Age implements could be found. These might be found at least a metre below topsoil and it is thus impossible to guess about the possibility of sites.

Most of the towers had already been excavated, and some foundations had been cast. Excavations for foundations were inspected for signs of possible archaeological stratigraphy, but none were observed.

Recommendations: Should any archaeological material be encountered on any of the sites during construction, the archaeologist should be notified immediately.



Figure 13. Tower 215. Already cast and closed up. The open area around the tower was particularly well searched for possible archaeological remains. None were present.



Figure 14. *The area around Tower 216 was also sterile.*



Figure 15. *The relatively wide area covered by several power lines. It is clear that these lines impact upon large areas of the landscape, whether it is natural or human-made. It is thus obvious that laws pertaining to the protection and preservation of archaeological sites are not excessive or unnecessary.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) should be viewed in a serious light. Breaching of the law has already occurred. All workers concerned with assembly, construction, stringing, delivery and transport should be made aware of the seriousness of this situation.
- Where archaeological sites had been identified that will be affected in ANY MANNER whatsoever by ANY ACTIVITIES concerned with the transmission line, the responsible person on site should be handed a written statement to ensure that he/she has it available at all times. It is recommended that the prohibition of any damaging action pertaining to these sites should be included in the induction, thereby impressing the importance of these sites and their preservation on workers as well as visitors.
- Immediate steps should be taken to safeguard the graves at Tower 205 before work commences. This would include the permanent demarcation of the cemetery with standard fencing materials (corner posts, wire and droppers, at least 1,2 m high with “No Access” signs fixed onto the wire).
- Tower 205: The access road and parking should be clearly indicated with permanent sign boards. The area used for parking was among graves, and this area should be out of bounds.
- The archaeologist should receive a **weekly schedule** in order to know when work in the sensitive areas commences in order to be present.
- The archaeologist should be present when construction, assembly or stringing occurs at sensitive archaeological sites.
- The access route and entrance to Tower 147 still need to be decided. In this regard the archaeologist should also be contacted.



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Attachment 01

The **National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999** stipulates the following (emboldened text has relevance) in connection with graves and burials:

36. Burial grounds and graves

(3) (a) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority-

(a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;

(b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or

(c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

(6) Subject to the provision of any other law, any person who in the course of development¹ or any other activity discovers the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

(a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and

(b) if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangements as it deems fit.

45. Compulsory repair order

(1) When the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of a heritage site considers that such site –

(a) has been allowed to fall into disrepair for the purpose of –

(i) effecting or enabling its destruction or demolition;

(ii) enabling the development of the designated land; or

(iii) enabling the development of any land adjoining the designated land; or

(b) is neglected to such an extent that it will lose its potential for conservation, the heritage resources authority may serve on the owner an order to repair or

¹ NHR Act (No 25, 1999) defines “development” as any physical intervention, excavation or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of a heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including –

- (a) Construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- (b) Carrying out any works on or over or under a place;
- (c) Subdivision or consolidation of land comprising, a place, including the structures or airspace of a place;
- (d) Constructing or putting up for display signs or hoardings;
- (e) Any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and
- (f) Any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil.

maintain such site, to the satisfaction of the heritage resources authority, within a reasonable period of time as specified in the order: Provided that the heritage resources authority must specify only such work as, in its opinion, is necessary to prevent any further deterioration in the condition of the place.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), upon failure of the owner to comply with the terms of an order under subsection (1) within the specified time, the authority which served the order may itself take such steps as may be necessary for the repair or maintenance thereof and recover the costs from the owner.

(3) If the owner can show good cause, he or she may, within 21 days of the service of a repair order under subsection (1) –

(a) apply to the heritage resources authority which served the repair order for the extension of the time specified in the order; or

(b) appeal to the Minister, in the manner prescribed under section 49.

From the above statement it is clear that human remains have a high significance, usually at local level.