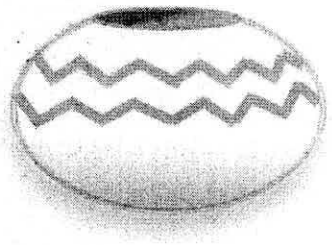
Report on Archaeological Survey of the White River Water Supply Augmentation Scheme

compiled by

# Kudzala Antiquity



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Surveyor, Mr JP Celliers BA (Hons) Archaeology.

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# 1. Introduction

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act no. 25 of 1999) requires of individuals (engineers, farmers, mines and industry) to have impact assessment studies undertaken whenever any development activities are planned. This includes guidelines for impact assessment studies to be done whenever cultural resources may be destroyed by development activities.

Against this background a preliminary Archaeological or Cultural Resources Management (CRM) survey was carried out during March 2005 on a number of farms before construction of a water pipeline commenced. The farms concerned included: Portions 3, 18, 22, 23, 28, 35 and Remainder of Portion 14 of the farm Boschrand 283 JT; Erf 23 Vintonia Extension 2; Erven 37, 38 and 39 of Riverside Park Extension 6; Remainder of the farm Stony Ridge 281 JT; Remainder of the farm Germans Gooiehoop 291 JT; Remainder of the farm Dingwell 276 JT; and Portion 14 of the farm Dingwell 276 JT.

Van Vollenhoven (1995:3) describe cultural resources as all unique and non-renewable physical phenomena (of natural occurrence or made by humans) that can be associated with human (cultural) activities. These would be any man-made structure, tool, object of art or waste that was left behind, on, or beneath the soil surface by historic or pre-historic communities. These remains, when studied in their original context by archaeologists, are interpreted in an attempt to understand, identify and reconstruct the activities and lifestyles of past communities. When these items are disturbed from their original context, any meaningful information they possessed is lost, therefore it is important to locate and identify such remains before construction or development activities commence.

A CRM survey consists of three phases; this document deals with the first phase. This (phase 1) investigation is aimed at getting an overview of cultural resources in a given area, thereby assessing the possible impact a proposed development may have on these resources. When the archaeologist encounters a situation where the planned project will lead to the destruction or alteration of an archaeological site, a second phase in the survey is normally recommended. During a phase 2 investigation the impact assessment of development activities on identified cultural resources is intensified and detailed investigation into the nature and origin of the cultural material is undertaken. Normally at this stage, archaeological excavation is carried out in order to document and preserve the cultural heritage. Phase three consists of the compiling of a management plan for the safeguarding, conservation, interpretation and utilization of cultural resources (Van Vollenhoven, 2002).

Continuous communication between the developer and surveyor after the initial report has been compiled may result in the modification of a planned route or development to incorporate or protect existing archaeological sites.

# 2. Description of surveyed area

The survey was carried out on a route of about 9km on the following properties: Portions 3, 18, 22, 23, 28, 35 and Remainder of Portion 14 of the farm Boschrand 283 JT; Erf 23 Vintonia Extension 2; Erven 37, 38 and 39 of Riverside Park Extension 6; Remainder of the farm Stony Ridge 281 JT; Remainder of the farm Germans Gooiehoop 291 JT; Remainder of the farm Dingwell 276 JT; and Portion 14 of the farm Dingwell 276 JT. This is the planned route of a water pipeline between Nelspruit and White River. The pipeline roughly follows the R40 route between Nelspruit and Rocky Drift and ends at Phumulani. At some locations the pipeline will connect to water reservoirs

to be constructed at Boschrand Heights, Phumulani, and White River.

Typical Lowveld vegetation occurs on the surveyed area, a number of small granite hills form the highest points where the pipeline will lead on its way towards Rocky Drift and White River.

## 3. Aim and method of survey

As stated earlier the aim of the survey is to establish the whereabouts and nature of cultural heritage sites should they occur in the area. This includes settlements, structures and artefacts which have value for an individual or group of people in terms of historical, archaeological, architectural and human (cultural) development.

It is the aim of this study to locate and identify such objects or places in order to assess whether they are of significance and warrant further investigation and/ or protection.

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) formulated guidelines for the conservation of all cultural resources and therefore also divided such sites into three main categories. These categories might be seen as guidelines that suggest the extent of protection a given site might receive. They include sites or features of local (Grade 3) provincial (Grade 2) and national (Grade 1) significance.

For practical purposes the surveyor uses his own classification for sites or features and divides them into three groups, those of low or no significance, those of medium significance, those of high significance.

*Sites of low significance:*

These are sites or features that indicate some form of human activity in the form of a structure, shelter or material used by historic settlers but is in such a weathered state that it will provide very little information that warrants further investigation.

*Sites of Medium significance:*

A good number of sites fall into this category. These include sites which are moderately to well-preserved and may be of such a nature that they may be utilized for future research. Sites of this nature also fall into an archaeologically well-known category which means that in most instances they will provide little new or significant information during further investigation.

*Sites of High significance:*

There exist archaeological sites that contain invaluable data which will significantly enhance the knowledge that archaeologists currently have about our cultural heritage. These sites are rare and normally of more ancient origin (Stone Age shelters and Early Iron Age settlements are among the more common ones). In most instances these sites should be preserved and not damaged during construction activities. When development activities do however jeopardize the future of such a site, a second and third phase in the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) process is normally advised.

Graves are considered very sensitive sites and should never under any circumstances be jeopardized by development activities. In all instances where graves are found by the surveyor, the recommendation would be to steer clear of these areas. If this cannot be done or if construction

activities have for some reason damaged graves, specialized consultants are normally contacted after development activities have been brought to a halt.

This survey was carried out on foot and with a motor vehicle in an effort to locate any cultural remains in the area where the proposed development will take place.

Some cultural remains (graves) were found during the survey, although it should be noted that most archaeological remains are found beneath the soil surface and might still be revealed during excavation and/or land moving activities. Two graveyards were located; the southernmost site was numbered WA 1 and the other, located north of here WA 2. After the two sites were discovered, the geographical location (GPS co-ordinates) was documented and the perimeters of these sites established. The sites were photographed as well (Appendix C, Photos).

## 4. History of the area

According to Bornman (in Barnard 1975) Rocky Drift, located close to the surveyed area, is a small railway stop on the branch-line between Nelspruit and White River. Its name originated from the rocky stream west of the railway. In popular parlance this railway stop became known as "Rokkiesdrif" but the original name of the farm is Blinkwater.

Some finds of Archaeological and cultural significance have been documented in this area. These are rock-art sites or better known as Bushman paintings.

*"In the vicinity of Rocky Drift in the White River District appears one of the best kept rock art sites in the Transvaal. The dark red elephant were painted by a highly skilled artist. These images are well-hidden inside a shelter on top of a granite hill."* (Schoonraad in Barnard, 1975. Own translation).

Before Europeans settled the area in large numbers, native bantu-speaking tribes occupied the land. The first of these groups were encountered by the odd traveler who documented their existence in diaries. This area was notorious for the abundance of Tsetse flies that made cattle herding impossible. Subsequently the groups that settled here were few and consisted of small family units (Barnard, 1975; Bornman, 1995).

In later years, when pioneers such as Hugh Lanion (H.L.) Hall established commercial farming in this area (since 1890) more of the land surrounding Nelspruit and White River was utilized for this purpose. This provided the opportunity for people to be employed as farm labourers and this state of affairs has been the norm ever since. It is believed that the graveyards discovered during this survey are those of generations of families that stayed in the area as initial farm workers.

## 5. Findings and recommendations

Apart from the graveyards, no significant archaeological or cultural material was located during the survey.

The developers should take care not to do damage to the graveyards during the construction of the pipeline. Fortunately the planned route of the pipeline, visible on the map (Appendix A) is located east of the first (WA 1) and second (WA 2) graveyard.

It is important to note that the bulk of archaeological remains are normally located beneath the soil

surface. It is therefore possible that some significant cultural material or remains were not located during this survey and will only be revealed when the soil is disturbed. Therefore it is recommended that the owner of the land or developers take this into consideration when such activities are planned and executed at this location.

Should excavation or large scale earth moving activities reveal any human skeletal remains, broken pieces of ceramic pottery, large quantities of sub-surface charcoal or any material that can be associated with previous occupation, a qualified archaeologist should be notified immediately. This will also temporarily halt such activities until an archaeologist has assessed the situation. It must also be noted that if such a situation occurs, it will probably have further financial implications for the developers.

## 6. Bibliography


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# 7. Appendix A

# 8. Appendix B

## List of Site Locations

During the survey, the location of the sites was plotted with the aid of a GPS (Global Positioning System). The sites were also numbered in the following fashion:
The initials WA followed by a number marks the identity of the site. The "W" stands for White River and "A" for Augmentation. These sites were then numbered WA1, WA 2 and so on.

1. Site name: WA 1 (Site 1)
   Date of compilation: 19/03/2005
   GPS reading: Longitude, 30° 58, 564' E
   Latitude, 25° 24, 008' S
   Altitude: 917 m
   Photo: Figure 1-6

2. Site name: WA 2 (Site 2)
   Date of compilation: 19/03/2005
   GPS reading: Longitude, 30° 58, 672' E
   Latitude, 25° 23, 530' S
   Altitude: 931
   Photo: Figure 7