



Two Rivers Platinum Mine
Management of Graves and Burial Grounds
Preliminary Report on Chance Discoveries of Human Remains
October-November 2022

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1. BACKGROUND

Human bones were discovered during earthworks near the Merensky Main Shaft at Two Rivers Platinum Mine in the Fetakgomo Local Municipality, Limpopo Province (Lat: 24°56'38.50"S, Long: 30° 5'18.30"E). (Date 16 October 2022). The bones were first noticed in a scoop which was to be transported to the Merensky Rom Stockpile. Operations were halted in accordance with the environmental management plan (EMP). Two Rivers Platinum Mine keeps a Heritage Chance Finds Procedure for the identification of potential graves and material of heritage significance at all sites under development.

A preliminary investigation of the finds was conducted on 19 October 2022. The senior archaeologist examined the site on 27 October 2022 and found that the assemblage represented at least 2 individuals.

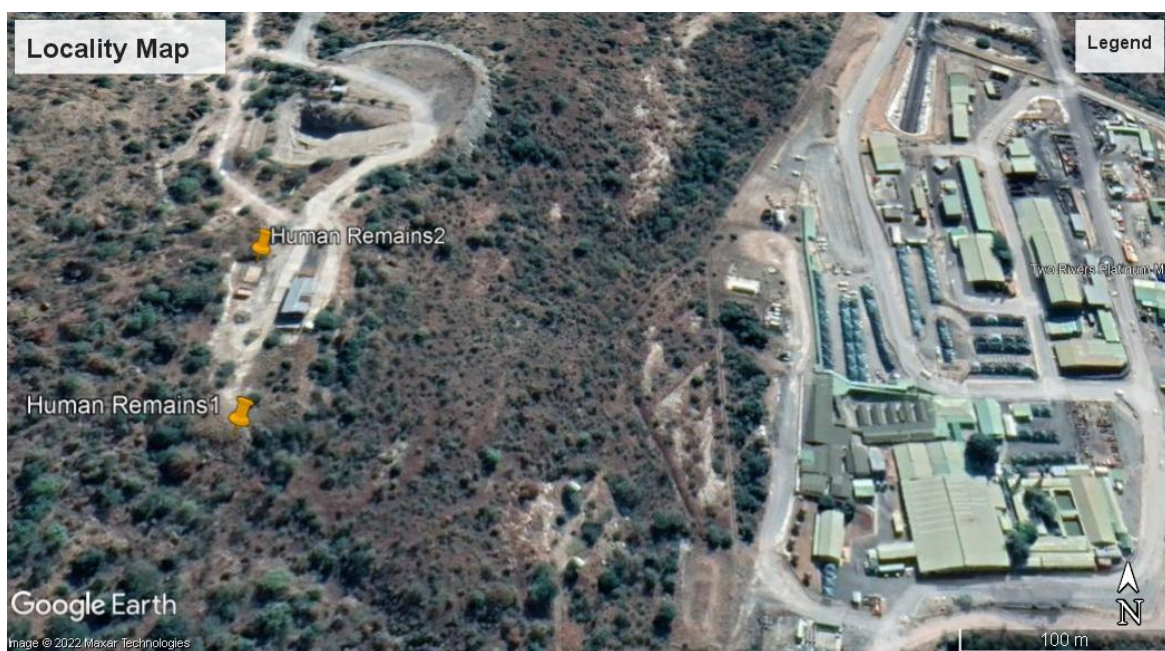


Figure 1: Google Earth Map shows the location of the human remains exposed during earthmoving operations

Subsequently more human bones were found in excavated earth in the same area (Lat: 24°56'35.42"S, Long: 30° 5'18.05"E) 90 m to the north of the first site. On further investigation, a portion of a skeleton including spinal bones and a broken pelvis was found *in situ* on an excavation face at a depth of 70 cm.

2. LOCATION AND SETTING

The location is on the slope of the mountain range that forms the western flank of Merensky Valley. There were mine utility buildings dating to within the last 2 decades. There was apparently a natural terrace on the slope of the mountain that was landscaped for the purpose. The buildings have been demolished as the Mine intends to introduce modern infrastructure for its expanding operations.

3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

As has been mentioned earlier, at the first site, at least two individuals have been isolated from the bone assemblage. At Site 2 there was a scatter of bones in a large pile of excavated earth. The bones that are *in situ* were exposed during the excavations and seem to represent a single individual. It is likely that there are more individuals in the portion which is yet to be excavated (Figures 2-5).



Figure 2. Human Remains Site 1



Figure 3: Human Remains Site 1 - Part of the assemblage of bones from the Merensky Main shaft represents at least one individual. Note the pair of femurs.



Figure 4: Human Remains Site 1 - Part of the assemblage of bones from the Merensky Main shaft representing at least another individual. Note the pair of femurs.



Figure 5: Human remains Site 2. Spinal bones and pelvis found *in situ*



Figure 6: Human bones found in excavated material

4. Public Participation and Stakeholder Consultations

Members of the Graves Task Committee which was set up to represent families with ancestral graves at Two Rivers Platinum were invited to the site. The bones were old and the elderly people on the Committee could not provide any leads as to who was buried in the area. A Public Notice has been published in the Sekhukhune Times that circulates in Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces.



Figure 7: Site visit by members of the Graves Task Committee elected by families with ancestral graves at the Mine



Figure 8: Public notice placed at the site of the earthworks

5. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mine suspended operations at the site on 16 October 2022 to allow professional investigations. The cease-works is an expensive undertaking since machinery which is hired at very expensive rates is idle.

The archaeologist removed the exposed bones for keeping at a temporary storage facility at the Mine. The archaeologist keeps a record of the bones which were put in boxes that have been labeled.

The Archaeologist will apply to SAHRA for the issue of an archaeological rescue and monitoring permit. The aim of the excavations is to retrieve the exposed human bones and screen the area that is yet to be excavated. The earth piles which have already been excavated must be screened for the presence of human bones. This requires a monitoring team to be on the site during earthworks.

It is hoped that the SAHRA BGG Unit will expeditiously issue the rescue and monitoring Permit.