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REPORT ON THE CONSERVATION
OF THREE PAINTED SITES ON
PORTION 27 OF THE FARM
KROMME VALLEY NO. 113,
BULSHOEK DAM, CLANWILLIAM

Prepared for

DENNIS MOSS PARTNERSHIP

By

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Executive summary

Three painted sites on portion 27 of the farm Kromme Valley No. 113, Bulshoek Dam, Clanwilliam, were recorded. The paintings have been traced, photographed, and described in detail.

The painted sites will be incorporated in the Environment Management Plan for the planned South African Police Services (SAPS) Rondebberg private nature reserve.

The Kromme Valley paintings are a significant cultural resource, and will benefit greatly from the implementation of the Environmental Management Plan.

Bushman rock paintings are a threatened non-renewable cultural and historical resource. The art is closely associated with religious activities performed by Bushman shamans or medicine people, and records in a unique manner the history of southern Africa's indigenous people over at least 25 000 years.

Well managed, rock art sites can play an important role in understanding the history of the Bushman people in the sub-continent, and in nation building through the eradication of racial stereotypes.

The Kromme Valley rock paintings are of national and international importance. The fish site (KRV 3) is considered to be unique in the south-western Cape, while 'fight scenes' (KRV 4), compared to other painted images, are considered to be quite rare in the southwestern Cape.

Visitor impact on the painted sites will be low as the planned resort and private nature reserve will not be publicly accessible. It is therefore recommended that all three sites should be 'open' to viewing, but the number of viewers strictly controlled. Viewers should be accompanied at all times by the nature conservation officer.

An inexpensive, bilingual pamphlet should be produced and include information on the age, authorship, and meaning of the paintings, how they were made, and how they can be conserved.

The proposed signposting of the rock art site should be made in consultation with the National Monuments Council.

The paintings should be monitored initially by a professional archaeologist on an annual basis.

Consideration should be given to the establishment of a small permanent display of the redrawings of the paintings, enclosed in a glass cabinet, with information, possibly housed in the planned clubhouse, or other appropriate venue.

The Rondeberg Nature Conservation Officer should undergo a short training and teaching programme in rock art and rock art management.

No touching, scratching, wetting and drawing on the paintings should be permitted. The making of fires near the paintings should be prohibited.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and brief

The Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) was instructed by Dennis Moss Partnership in January 1996 to survey a portion of the remainder of portion 27 of the farm Kromme Valley No. 113, on the west bank of the Bulshoek Dam, Clanwilliam, for archaeological sites (Kaplan 1996).

Kromme Valley No. 113 has been identified for a planned South African Police Services (SAPS) Stress Release Resort. The planned project envisages a small mixed use development which includes chalets, caravan sites, clubhouse, manager's accommodation, recreational facilities, and landscape features (Figure 1).

A portion of the farm has also been set aside for the development of the Rondebeg private nature reserve, subject to the implementation of an approved Environmental Management Plan.

The aim of the archaeological study was to locate, identify and map archaeological and historical remains that may suffer a negative impact as a result of the proposed activities, and to propose measures to mitigate against the impact.

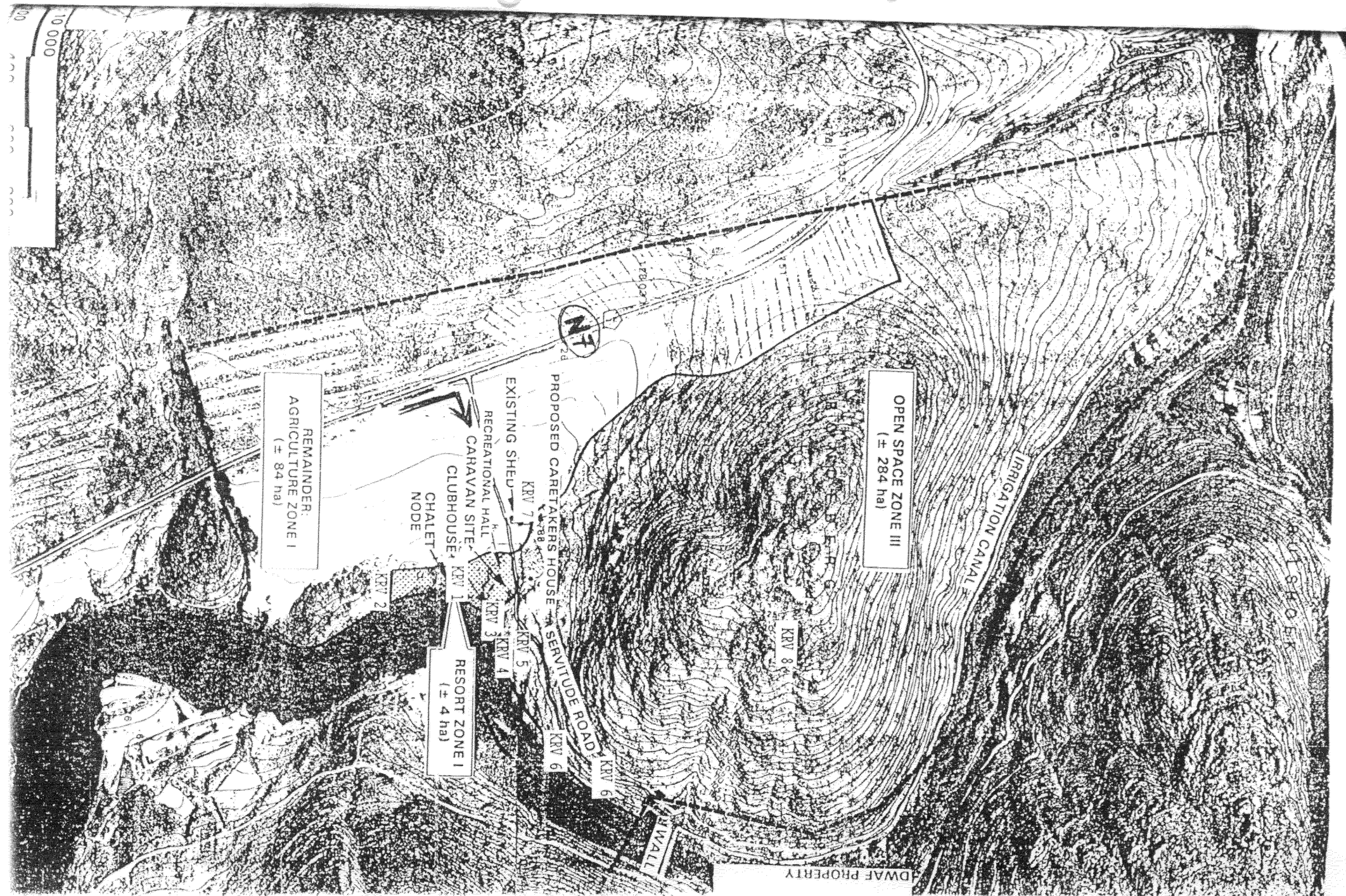
During the course of the survey, three painted sites (KRV 3, KRV 4 & KRV 5), one open-air site (KRV 2), incidental and ephemeral scatters of stone tools (KRV 1, KRV 7 & KRV 8), and the remains of two ruined buildings (KRV 6), were located (Figure 1). The sites were also ranked in order of significance (Kaplan 1996:3-6).

The painted sites are accessible, particularly the fish site (KRV 3), which is very close to the existing clubhouse. Unsupervised and uncontrolled access to the sites represent a significant threat to the paintings. The siting of a braai facility close to KRV 3, and some graffiti on the rock surface, had already resulted in some damage to the paintings.

Natural processes such as surface exfoliation, exposure to direct sunlight, and the leaching of chemicals such as salts and moisture in the rock, have also resulted in some damage and deterioration to the paintings.

It was therefore recommended that the three painted sites (KRV 3-5), representing a significant cultural and heritage resource, be recorded in detail (Kaplan 1996:7) and incorporated in the planned Rondebeg private nature reserve Environmental Management Plan, therefore ensuring its protection and continued conservation.

No mitigation was required for KRV 1 and KRV 6-KRV 8. It was recommended, however, that KRV 2 be signposted (Kaplan 1996:7), but it was later decided by the National Monuments Council that visitors should not be made aware



of its existence, as this will prevent damage to the site that accessibility to the public can cause. However, should the portion of the farm where KRV 2 is located be developed at a later stage, a controlled collection of stone implements on the site should be made.

In April 1997 ACRM was instructed by Dennis Moss Partnership on behalf of the South African Police Services, to undertake the recording of the three painted sites, and to develop a rock art management plan for incorporation into the Environmental Management Plan for the Rondeberg private nature reserve.

2. Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the archaeological study were:

1. to trace, photograph, and record in detail the painted sites KRV 3, KRV 4 and KRV 5;
2. to propose measures for the incorporation of KRV 3, KRV 4 and KRV 5 in the implementation of the Environmental Management Plan for the planned Rondeberg private nature reserve;

3. The study site

The study site for the planned South African Police Services (SAPS) Stress Release Resort and private nature reserve is the remainder of Portion 27 of the farm Kromme Valley No. 113, located on the west bank of the northern extremities of the Bulshoek Dam. The farm is accessed from the N7 national road, some 22 km north of the town of Clanwilliam, and some 230 km north of Cape Town.

The planned project envisages a small mixed use development which includes chalets, caravan sites, clubhouse, manager's accommodation, recreational facilities, and landscape features (Figure 1).

4. Method of recording and techniques

The method of recording the Kromme Valley painted sites follows guidelines produced by Deacon (1993), and those contained in a report titled 'A regional management strategy for rock art in southern Africa, produced by the National Monuments Council.

The location of each painted site has been plotted on the relevant 1:50 000 map sheet (3118 DD Bulshoek) and given a site name and site number. The numbers can be used to cross-refer with reports, numbered slides, site recording sheets and redrawings (Appendix 1 & 2). The paintings were photographed with 50 ASA colour slide film. Finally, paintings on sufficiently stable surfaces are traced onto a transparent plastic sheet with a 0.25 mm clutch pencil.

A field microscope was used to help clarify finer details on the rock surface.

The original ink redrawings of the tracings are stored together with the numbered slides and site record sheets at the offices of Dennis Moss Partnership in Stellenbosch. Copies of the tracings and slides have been retained by the ACRM. These records can be used as a documentary base for subsequent conservation action, and research.

The descriptions of the location and condition of the sites and associated paintings are followed by recommendations conserving them.

5. Description of the painted shelters

Three painted shelters (KRV 3, KRV 4 and KRV 5) were located during the initial baseline archaeological study (Kaplan 1996). The sites are located on a conspicuous rocky promontory overlooking the Bulshoek Dam (Figure 1).

Construction of the planned slipway and pier with timber decks near the existing clubhouse, some 10 metres from KRV 3, may impact negatively on these paintings. The use of this shelter in the past as a braai facility has already resulted in some damage to some of the paintings.

3118 DD 1 (KRV 3)

KRV 3 is on a large bulging sandstone overhang, not more than 10 metres from the existing boat house, and only a few metres from the water's edge. A corner of the site has in the past been used as a braai facility and smoke and soot has possibly resulted in damage to some of the paintings. Some modern graffiti in the shelter has also impacted negatively on the sense of 'place' of the site.

On recommendations by ACRM (Kaplan 1996), the use of the braai facility has since been discontinued (Aubrey Withers pers. comm.).

The KRV 3 paintings comprise two small elephants, of which one is well preserved, the other very faded (Figure 2). Some faded paint marks, such as daubs and smudges also occur. The paintings are in red ochre.

About a metre to the east of the elephant paintings, on the same bulging boulder, is a paintings of a large fish within a naturally stained circle. A painting of a 'hairy' human figure is associated with the fish to the left of the circle, where one hand of the figure is touching the circle. One possible faded human figure occurs to the right of the fish (Figure 3).

The painting of a possible 'rain animal' (Lewis-Williams 1981) occurs below the circle (Figure 3). The paintings are in red ochre.

3118 DD 2 (KRV 4)

About 20 metres east of KRV 3, and a few metres overlooking the water of the Bulshoek Dam on a rocky ledge, beneath a small sandstone overhang on a narrow ledge, are a series of well preserved paintings.

The main panel comprises three paintings of human hunters, one apart and to the left, the other two facing each other. The hunters are firing bows, and what appear to be 'arrows' can be seen released from the bows of two (Figure 4). About a metre to the right of the two hunters, are two faded human figures, one of which is superimposed on an even more faded human form. The paintings are in red ochre.

Above the hunter panel, on a small section of the overhang, are the paintings of five very faded human figures in a circle. These paintings are in yellow ochre.

3118 DD 3 (KRV 5)

KRV 5 is located on a flat ledge above the surface of the dam, on a prominent weathered sandstone outcrop. The paintings are visible on the wall in an alcove beneath the overhang, and comprise a line of four human figures, the first standing, the last crouching, painted on a rough sandstone surface (Figure 5).

The paintings lack the finer detail of KRV 3 and KRV 4, and are in bright orange.

A thin but persistent stone scatter occurs on sandy area and in the run offs between the boulders a few metres from KRV 5. The scatter comprises mainly Later Stone Age¹ (LSA) chunks and flakes, but with some Middle Stone Age² (MSA) blades. Two pieces of pottery were also found

6. Discussion

Bushman rock paintings are a threatened non-renewable cultural and historical resource. The art records in a unique manner the history of southern Africa's indigenous people over at least 25 000 years.

Bushman rock art is closely associated with religious activities performed by Bushman shamans or medicine people (Lewis-Williams 1981). Paintings of fish and fight scenes, far from containing only literal meaning, are also closely linked to these religious activities (Lewis-Williams 1981; Ousman 1995; Manhire, pers. comm.).

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1. A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history in southern Africa.
 2. A term referring to the period between about 200 000 and 20 000 years ago.

By emphasising the religious and spiritual component contained in the art, rock art can play a major role in understanding the history of the Bushmen people in the sub-continent and in nation building through the eradication of racial stereotypes.

The Kromme Valley farm paintings, particularly KRV 3 and KRV 4, are therefore of considerable scientific interest, as the religious component of Bushman society is inherent in the art.

Researchers have shown the importance of using ethnography for understanding metaphors in the art and have demonstrated the close relationship of the art to the religious beliefs and practices of the Bushmen (Lewis-Williams 1981; Vinnicombe 1976). For example, the arrows being shot by the hunters in KRV 4 may be arrows of sickness, or healing (Tony Manhire, Spatial Archaeology Research Unit, University of Cape Town, pers. comm.), while it has been convincingly argued that many depictions of fish in southern African rock art are representations of hallucinations, such as the feeling of weightlessness, being underwater, or laboured breathing sometimes experienced by shamans in altered states of consciousness (Ousman 1995:8).

As the owners of the property and therefore the custodian of the paintings, the SAPS should recognise that the rock paintings are of national and international importance. The fish site (KRV 3) is considered to be unique in the south-western Cape, while KRV 4 is only one of a handful of fight scenes known to occur in the mountains of the southwestern Cape.

The Kromme Valley paintings are fairly well preserved and will benefit from the implementation of a sustainable management plan.

7. Recommendations

With regard to the management and conservation of the three painted sites, KRV 3-5, the following recommendations are made.

1. Visitor impact on the painted sites will be low as the planned resort will be not be publicly accessible. It is therefore recommended that all three sites should be 'open' to viewing, but the number of viewers strictly controlled and managed. Viewers should be accompanied at all times by the nature conservation officer. The number of viewers per site should be determined in consultation with the National Monuments Council.

2. An inexpensive, bilingual pamphlet should be produced and include information on the age, authorship, and meaning of the paintings, how they were made, and how they can be conserved.

3. The proposed signposting of the rock art site should be made in consultation with the National Monuments Council.
4. The paintings should be monitored initially by a professional archaeologist on an annual basis.
5. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a small permanent display of the redrawings of the paintings, enclosed in a glass cabinet, with information, possibly housed in the planned clubhouse, or other appropriate venue.
6. The Rondebereg Conservation Officer should undergo a short training and teaching programme in rock art and rock art management.
7. No touching, scratching, drawing and wetting of the paintings should be permitted. The making of fires near the paintings should be prohibited.

The above recommendations are subject to the approval of the National Monuments Council Archaeological Plans Committee.

8. References

- Kaplan, J. 1966. archaeological investigation: portion 27 of farm Kromme Valley No 113, Bulshoek Dam, Clanwilliam. Report prepared for Dennis Moss Partnership. Agency for Cultural Resource Management:Riebeeck West.
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- Lewis-Williams, J. D. 1981. Believing and seeing: Symbolic meanings in southern San rock paintings. London: Academic Press.
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- Vinnicombe, P. 1976. People of the eland. Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press.
- A regional management strategy for rock art in southern Africa. Document developed at a workshop sponsored by the UNESCO southern African Sub-Region and the South African National Monuments Council held at the University of Stellenbosch, 5-9 June 1996.