



COBUS DREYER

ARCHAEOLOGIST/HERITAGE SPECIALIST

Tel: 051 - 444 1187
Fax: 051 - 401 2363
Cell: 083 - 357 7982

P.O. Box 12910
Brandhof
9324
dreyerc.HUM@mail.uovs.ac.za

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FIRST PHASE HERITAGE / ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NEC KLIPKOP-WESSELS FEEDER PROJECT AT ASKHAM, NORTHERN CAPE

INVESTIGATION

The proposed power line extensions located in the region of Askham and Van Zylsrust in the Northern Cape were visited on 6 & 7 November 2003.

The 3 different routes were inspected in the company of Rudi Moolman, the Project Planner from ESKOM in Kimberley. The different farms where existing solar panels are to be replaced by power lines were examined for the possible presence of archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

The different sites were selected and submitted by the ESKOM.

The following sites were visited and observations were made. For easy directions, please refer to the route maps supplied by ESKOM.

ROUTE 1

TOEVAL (Starting point) (27°15'50"S. 21°26'52"E. Altitude 929m)

NIEUWOUDTSRUS (Turning point) (27°18'59"S. 21°29'02"E. Altitude 936m)

VREDENBURG (27°15'16"S. 21°32'19"E. Altitude 939m)

COETZENBURG (End of line) (27°15'07"S. 21°32'50"E. Altitude 930m)

ROUTE 2

LOCH LAMOND (27°07'47"S. 20°50'25"E. Altitude 931m)

AASVOëLPAN (Border Loch Lamond) (27°09'27"S. 20°53'09"E. Altitude 825m)

AASVOëLPAN (AAS D) (Turning point) (27°10'44"S. 20°56'01"E. Altitude 874m)

JAKKALSDANS (Border Aasvoëlpan) (AAS/JAK) (27°12'48"S. 20°57'13"E. Altitude 878m)

JAKKALSDANS (27°14'34"S. 20°59'35"E. Altitude 877m)

JAKKALSDANS (Border Muishoek) T-OFF POINT (27°15'05"S. 21°00'20"E. Altitude 873m)

MUISHOEK (27°15'54"S. 20°01'23"E. Altitude 874m)

MUISHOEK (Border Rondepan) (27°17'57"S. 21°03'44"E. Altitude 886m)

SOMERHEL (T-OFF POINT) (27°21'15"S. 21°07'13"E. Altitude 883m)

SWARTPAN (27°17'17"S. 20°45'47"E. Altitude 855m)

BURGERSHOOP (T-OFF POINT) (27°12'07"S. 20°44'37"E. Altitude 861m)

BURGERSHOOP (27°12'27"S. 20°45'07"E. Altitude 846m)

ROUTE 3

PHILANDERSBRON (Starting point) (26°52'30"S. 20°05'40"E. Altitude 831m).

BOSCHSTRAAT (26°55'40"S. 20°30'09"E. Altitude 865m) (Fig.).

OLD FARM HOUSE (26°52'01"S. 20°28'31"E. Altitude 868m) (Fig.).

LENTLANDSPAN (T-OFF POINT) (25°51'21"S. 20°28'33"E. Altitude 870m).

RIETFONTEIN R31

KLIPKOLK (Turning point) (26°55'40"S. 20°30'09"E. Altitude 865m).

TWO WINDMILLS (26°55'09"S. 20°12'06"E. Altitude 830m).

KOPPIESKRAAL (Farm).

WATERVAL (26°57'53"S. 20°13'34"E. Altitude 838m).

FINDS

All the inspected sites were found to be located in the red dunes of the Kalahari.

During prehistoric times indigenous San people used to roam many of these dunes in a nomadic way of life, never settling in any area very long. In this manner and in their basic existence way of life not much was left behind in the sense of cultural goods. It is uncharacteristic and unlikely, therefore, to find human cultural remains in any of these areas.

None of the sites inspected produced any archaeological material. No stone tools or ceramics were recovered, neither were traces of rock art or graffiti of historical significance found at any of the sites.

GEOLOGICAL FINDS

Bare patches of stone were observed at several places. These elaborate occurrences of stone scatters on the surface were investigated for possible cultural material in the form of stone tools. No stone tools or flakes could, however, be detected. It was decided that they must originate from geological or other natural source or cause. A small sample of these stone was randomly collected and taken to the experts at the Geology Department at the University of the Free State for clarification.

The collection of various angular, half rounded and well rounded rock-types appears to represent weathered Tillite with the erratics (stones carried by glazier) of Dwyka ice, remaining on the surface, while the matrix of sand and clay was carried away. Modern rivers could have redistributed the pebbles (erratics) (Loock, J.C. personal communication).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Not much could be gathered about the general history of the area. Me Hanneljie van der Merwe, a local resident of Askham and Mr W.H.A. Boshoff, owner of Boschstraat, related that their families moved onto unoccupied land made available by the Government in the mid-1950s. People had to apply to obtain land, which was then sold on tender by the authorities.

After examination and discussion by the archaeologist and the project planner, it has been agreed that no obvious reasons could be found to restrict any of the proposed developments in the Askham area, or to delay the commencement of further planning in future.

Every archaeological and historical site is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or destruction of such sites. It is stressed that in case of the discovery of any archaeological or historical material during the course of further work, all activities should temporarily be stopped in the specific area for inspection by the archaeologist or other specialists.

MITIGATION

Concerning the areas of the existing developments, mitigation measures are not needed in any of the investigated cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the development of the NEC Klipkop-Wessels feeder project at Askham, should proceed as planned.

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