

Archaeological Impact Assessment at Brakfontein 375 near Niekerkshoop, Northern Cape.

David Morris
McGregor Museum, Kimberley
April 2005

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Introduction

The author was contacted by Mr Kobus de Klerk to carry out a phase 1 archaeological impact assessment with respect to tigers eye mining at Brakfontein, in the Asbesberge near Niekerkshoop.

The farm was visited on 22 April 2005. Observations made and recommendations are given in this report.

Significance criteria, where applicable, are based on tables in Deacon and Whitelaw 1997, as adapted for the Northern Cape.

Legislation

The National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (NHRA) provides protection for archaeological resources.

It is an offence to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object (defined in the Act), without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

Section 35 of the Act protects all archaeological and palaeontological sites and requires that anyone wishing to disturb a site must have a permit from the relevant heritage resources authority. Section 36 protects human remains older than 60 years. In order for the authority to assess whether approval may be given for any form of disturbance, a specialist report is required. No mining, prospecting or development may take place without heritage assessment and approval.

SAHRA at national level acts on an agency basis for the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency (PHRA) in the Northern Cape, where archaeological sites are concerned. Permit applications should be made to the SAHRA office in Cape Town.

Methods and limitations

A background literature/museum database search provides indications of what might be expected in the region.

During the site investigation, areas of proposed mining were inspected.

The sites of proposed and previous mining for tigers eye are situated on the tops of hills forming the Asbesberge, where soils are mostly absent, the surface consisting of broken up banded ironstone (jasplite). It is hence easy to spot any significant archaeological traces. Locales of potentially greater sensitivity include shelters on

the sides of these hills, in krantzies and kloofs, where, however, there is no intention to mine.

Background: archaeological resources in the region

The Northern Cape has a wealth of archaeological sites (Beaumont & Morris 1990; Morris & Beaumont 2004).

Stone Age material found in the region spans the Earlier, Middle and Later Stone Ages through Pleistocene and Holocene times. Rock engravings and paintings are known from the vicinity of Niekerkshoop and from shelters in the Asbesberge (Morris 1988; McGregor Museum records).

Observations

The areas examined were at the top of one of the hills forming the Asbesberge.

Parts of the area had been mined previously, in places where pockets of tigers eye had been found. Typically the pits are less than 10 by 20 m in size and little more than a metre deep (e.g. at 29°19.963' S 22°56.033' E). No traces of archaeological material were noted on the surface and the pits are dug directly into rock. Such situations are very exposed to the elements with little to attract human activities except perhaps gathering of veldkos, which would have left no enduring material trace. (*See photos*)

For comparative purposes a shelter in a nearby krantz was examined at 29°19.522' S 22°56.219' E. Surprisingly, no archaeological traces were found here either, not even finger paintings on the shelter walls. It was surmised that this north facing shelter would not have been favoured if south-facing and hence more sheltered examples occurred in the vicinity.

On present evidence it cannot be said that any significant archaeological feature is present.

No infrastructure is to be built to support this low-intensity and low-impact form of mining and existing 'tweespoor' farm tracks are used to gain access to the hill-tops.

Recommendations

No significant archaeological traces were noted on intended mining sites and on present evidence there is no reason for mining not to proceed as planned.

In the event of any archaeological materials/features being found during mining, an archaeologist should be consulted immediately.

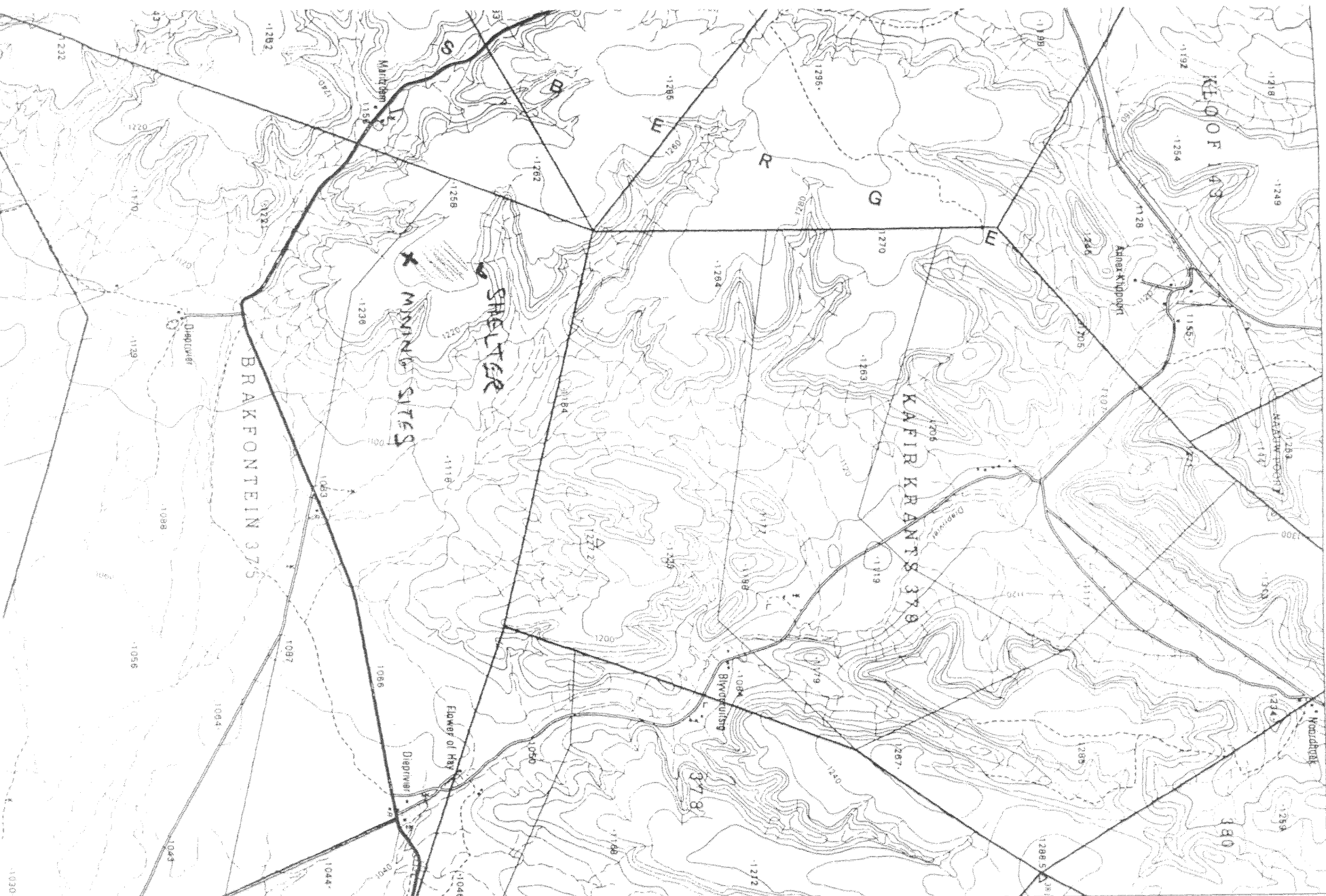
Acknowledgements

I thank Mr & Mrs de Klerk, especially Mr Kobus de Klerk who drove me to the sites of proposed mining.

55'

23°00'

29°15'



20'

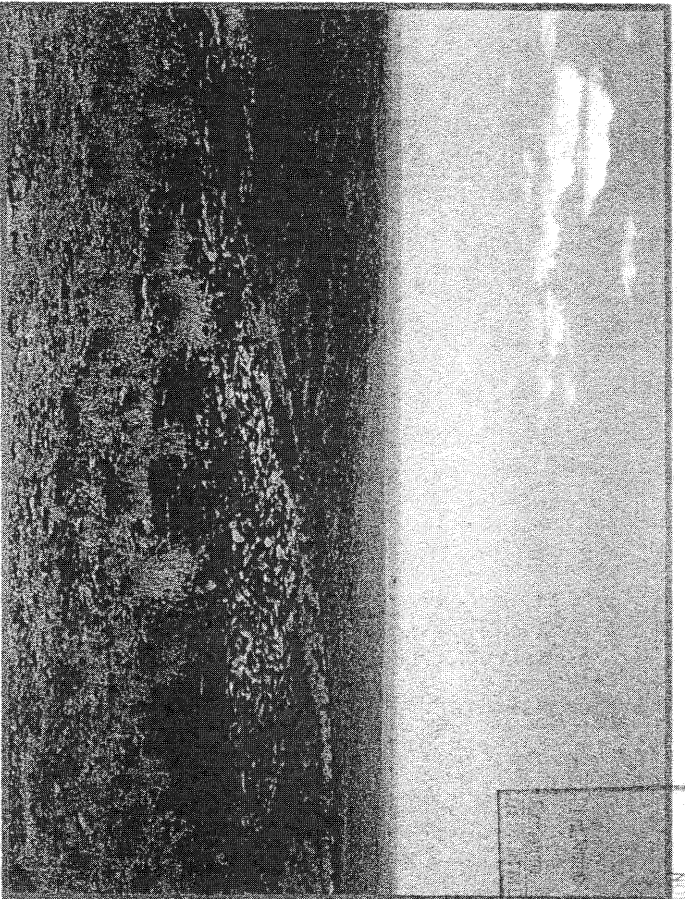
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2005-03-03

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DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY
03 MAY 2005

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

for a Mining Right application on Portion 1 of the farm
Brakfontein No. 375, District of Hay, Northern Cape Province



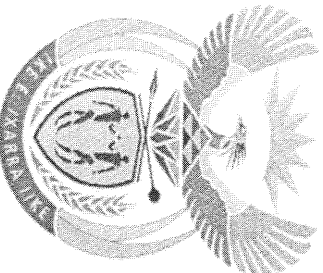
Application received in terms of the Mineral and Petroleum
Rights Act 1992 (Act No. 101 of 1992)
NORTHERN CAPE REGION (S)
03 MAY 2005
DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY

Applicant: D.J. de Klerk

Reference No.: (NC) 30/5/1/3/3/2/1/(034) EM

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3 May 2005



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DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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43 Chapel Street, 1st Floor Standard Bank Building, Kimberley, 8301

From: Directorate: Mineral Development: Northern Cape **Date:** 11 May 2005

Enquiries: Mr. N.J. Ravhugoni **E-mail:** Ntsundeni.Ravhugoni@dme.gov.za

Ref: NC 30/5/1/2/3/2/1/034 EM

The Director
South African Heritage Resources Agency
PO Box 4637
CAPE TOWN
8000

Attention: MARY LESLIE

CONSULTATION IN TERMS OF SECTION 40 OF THE MINERAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT 2002, (ACT 28 OF 2002) FOR THE APPROVAL OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME SUBMITTED IN RESPECT OF PORTION 1 OF BRAKFONTein NO 375 IN THE MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT OF HAY. APPLICANT: D J DE KLERK

Attached herewith, please find a copy of an Environmental Impact Assessment and an Environmental Management Programme received from the above-mentioned applicant, for your comments.

It would be appreciated if you could forward any comments or requirements your Department may have in the case in hand to this office and to the applicant within **60 days as from the 11th May 2005 to 08 July 2005**, failure of which will lead to the assumption that your Department has no objection(s) or comments with regard to this application and this Department will in that instance proceed with the finalisation thereof.

Consultation in this regard has also been initiated with other relevant State Departments. In an attempt to expedite the consultation process please contact **Mr. Ntsundeni Ravhugoni** of this office to make arrangements for a site inspection or for any other enquiries with regard to this application.

Your co-operation will be appreciated

N.J. Ravhugoni
**REGIONAL MANAGER: MINERAL DEVELOPMENT
NORTHERN CAPE REGION**