

## **Archaeological Impact Assessment at Abrahamoos Fontein near Plooyburg, Northern Cape.**

DME: prospecting

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### **Introduction**

The author was contacted by Mr Hendrik Snyman to carry out a phase 1 archaeological impact assessment with respect to proposed mining at Abrahamoosfontein, which lies south of the Riet River downstream from Driekopseiland, near Plooyburg.

The farm was visited on 16 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.

In this environment sediments of archaeological significance are frequently well below the surface. Old diggings or quarries do provide sections that may be

## Recommendations

No significant archaeological traces were noted on intended mining sites.

But it should yet be noted that sub-surface archaeological sites/traces/features may occur. Closer to the river or in softer silts, these could include Later Stone Age burials, such as have been found at Weltevrede and Driekopseiland, nearby. The gravels to be mined may contain localised accumulations of Earlier Stone Age artefacts. In the event of such materials/features being found during mining, an archaeologist should be consulted immediately.

Archaeologists of the McGregor Museum should be allowed to carry out visual inspections of sections opened up by mining in order to assess the nature of sedimentation and possible cultural stratigraphies once these become available for study.

## Acknowledgements

I thank Mr Hendrik Snyman who guided me to the sites of proposed mining.

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