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**ADDO ELEPHANT NATIONAL PARK: CONSTRUCTION OF THE
SOUTHERN ACCESS ROAD BETWEEN SPEKBOOM AND PEASLAND -
PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Prepared for:

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INTRODUCTION

The Albany Museum was approached in September 2003 to undertake an archaeological impact assessment of the remainder of the southern access road into the Addo Elephant National Park (AENP). This is the third of a series of reports.

The first report examined the first four (4) km of the southern access road from the gate at Colchester into the Park. This report found that it could not survey the remainder of the 27 km route as the exact alignment of the road had not been finalized (June).

The second report examined the rest camp area in the south of the Park.

This third report deals with the remaining 23 km of the road not surveyed previously.

1.1 Background

The terms of reference of this study were:-

1. To determine if any archaeological and/or heritage sites are located along the route of the proposed southern access road between Spekboom and Peasland.
2. In the event of sites being threatened, to suggest possible alternative routes.

1.2 Study Area

The study area involves narrow corridor of land that will form the new southern access road. It stretches along a substantial distance (about 23 km) from Spekboom within the current Park boundaries, across the Addo Heights road, as far as the farm Peasland. The two previous surveys examined the route from from Colchester to Peasland. Sections of the road will follow existing farm roads and tracks, while other sections of the road cuts through virgin bush.

1.3 Approach to Study

A survey was undertaken on the 10 October 2003 in the company of Ms M Mathee (Vuka Environmental Management Services) and a civil engineer from the road construction company. Since the route of the new road has been pegged but not cleared, we were only able to travel along existing tracks and farm roads. Where the proposed route cut through bush, we had to leave the vehicle and proceed on foot.

The most significant obstacle to the thorough survey of the affected area was the presence of dangerous animals in the area. Apart from numerous elephant, the AENP has recently released a number of lion in the vicinity of the survey area. We were not able to determine the location of the lions and we did not have an armed escort. For this reason, surveys could only be undertaken in areas close to the vehicle.

We drove along the farm roads and tracks where this was possible, and examined areas which cut through the bush on foot. Since a total distance of some 23 km was traversed, it was clearly not possible to undertake a thorough survey and selected areas had to be identified and surveyed.

2. OBSERVATIONS ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE AREA

A pilot survey in 2002 of the heritage sites in the Greater Addo Elephant National Park (GAENP) indicated the presence of an open Middle Stone Age site in a red gravel donga exposure, on the farm Glenmore on the Addo Heights (S 33.53460; E 25.82950). This site included a scatter of artifacts, mainly of quartzite and siltcrete flakes and flaked cobbles. There was one possible Early Stone Age handaxe. The location of this site alerted archaeologists to the likelihood that further open sites might be located in the area to be bisected by the new access road.

There is also a reference in Illenberger, Goedhart & Hattingh (1997) to an outcrop of calcareitized Cenozoic sediment on the farm Bosrijk 243, just north of Alexandria (S 33.61675; E 26.45008). The sediment contained fossil teeth, bone and MSA stone tools. A suggested date of 80 000 to 65 000 years has been proposed for the site. Interestingly, the bone has been identified as belonging to wildebeest, blesbok/bontebok, buffalo and an extinct ass-like zebra.

Early and Middle Stone Age (ESA and MSA) scatters are found on the banks of the Sundays River as well as the Bushman's River. These scatters are found immediately below the topsoil, down to a depth of around 30 cm. They are therefore generally invisible, except on occasions when they are exposed in river cuttings and dongas. They appear to be randomly distributed in the top red gravels. The majority of artifacts consist of flaked quartzite cobbles (with cortex) and quartzite flakes. There are very few diagnostic flakes. The extent of the scatters suggests that they are widely distributed and it would appear that they are not *in situ*, but have been distributed by river action. These red gravels are part of the Kinkelbos Formation, which is part of the Algoa Group and these river terraces are geologically of recent origin (some 3 million years old).

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Site 1

The first length of road (A to B) cutting through the bush was approximately 400 m long. A small scatter of siltcrete and quartzite flakes was found lying on a calcareite horizon close to A. There is no evidence that this is a stone knapping site and the artifacts are probably not *in situ*.

GPS: S 33.52463

E 25.77000

3.2 Site 2

The original route of the proposed road (A to B) crossed through an erosion donga and a walk through the donga revealed the presence of a number of artifacts that appear to be related to a lower, calcrete horizon.

However, the civil engineer confirmed that the route of the road has been moved several metres further to avoid going through the donga. There is therefore no danger of a possible site being destroyed.

GPS: S 33.52413

E 25.77060

3.3 Site 3

A single, large heavily patinated MSA (?) flakes was discovered lying on the surface between Sites 1 and 2 (Figure 1). It did not appear to be related to a larger concentration of artifacts and appears to be an isolated find.

GPS: S 33.52472

E 25.76939

Further observations

The section of road from C to D (passed Marion Barea), cut through two sections of bush, but an examination of the area around C revealed nothing. The Section D to F followed the existing track, except for minor deviations. The Section E to F followed the existing road, but with some small changes. The section F to G deviated from the existing road and went through a narrow kloof, following the contour. We were unable to walk through this kloof because of the thick bush and the presence of buffalos. We examined the area around point G but did not find any archaeological remains. There were several large clumps of calcrete, packed into heaps, which could be the result of human activity and Ms Mathee undertook to investigate this. The Section G to H followed the road, with small deviations. The Section I cut through bush, traveling up the hill to J, which is located next to the fence, right next to the Addo Heights road. We examined some areas around H and I, but since there were buffalo in the area, were unable to walk up the hill on the route of the proposed road. The section (J) immediately through the gates across the Addo Heights had been used as cultivated fields in the past and it was therefore assumed that any possible archaeological sites that may have existed would already have been disturbed. The markers for the proposed road then moved down through a valley (Section N) – which had clearly been flooded in the past and was also unlikely to contain any archaeological remains *in situ*. Nothing was found at O.

3.4 Site 4

While walking along Section P to Q, a single quartzite flake was discovered on the slope of a hill. It appeared to be an isolated occurrence.

**GPS: S 33.58752
E25.79966**

Further observations

The survey ended at Section S. At this stage there was still several kilometers to the Peasland. However, the markers now traveled through thick bush down the slope of the hill, and we were not able to follow any existing tracks. In order to access the final section of the road from the south, we would have to travel some 45 km to Nanaga, and then enter from Colchester. The survey was therefore concluded at this stage. In discussion with the civil engineer, it appeared that the road traveled through old farmlands through the Peasland area, and this final area was not surveyed.

4. IMPACT IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

The National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) protects all archaeological sites and it is an offense to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or disturb archaeological sites without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

It is important to note that permits are needed when sites are threatened by development. Where possible, arrangements should be made to conserve and protect sites of significance rather than allowing their destruction by development. Where this is not possible, mitigation must be arranged. Even ephemeral sites may have significance and should be sampled and recorded. A permit is needed for the destruction of a site if this is deemed necessary.

Previous surveys have shown that ESA and MSA scatters are distributed widely across the landscape between the Sundays and the Bushmen's Rivers. Any disturbance of the topsoil, man made or otherwise, seems to uncover random distributions of stone tools. It is clear that they are not *in situ*, and their location seems to be related to possible water action. It is therefore not possible to talk about 'sites' in the conventional (archaeological) sense of the word, as these distributions have no apparent beginning or end.

These scatters are not found in association with any bone, or other material remains. However, further east, towards Alexandria, MSA stone tools in association with fossilised bone remains have been found in the calcrete capping on top of the red gravel 'Kinkebos Formation'.

The current survey also pointed to an association between the calcrete horizons and the presence of stone tools. The majority of stone tools cannot clearly be assigned to any

particular time period and they could be MSA or ISA. However, one very weathered MSA flake was discovered (Figure 1) and this of interest in providing a time depth for human occupation in the Sunday's River Valley. No dense concentrations of stone tools were found during this third survey. Isolated stone tools were found distributed in certain locations, primarily at the start of the road, close to Spekboom. These scatters have little information potential and it is unlikely that the construction of the road will impact significantly on them.

5. CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological remains of significance were found during the survey. This comment has to be qualified however. There were many sections of the proposed road that we could not survey because of the dense bush and the presence of dangerous animals. It is clearly possible (although unlikely) that we failed to discover significant archaeological sites in the area because we did not cover the entire area.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the construction of the southern access road may continue if the following guidelines are met:

1. Any significant deviation from the markers indicating the route of the road should be reported to the archaeologist.
2. Any significant deviation from the width of the road previously agreed to, should be reported to the archaeologist.
3. Every care should be taken during the bulldozing of the southern access road. Buried sites may be uncovered which were not visible during the survey. Sites such as graves, as well as stone artifacts together with fossilized bone, should be reported to SAHRA and the archaeologists at the Albany Museum immediately. It is important to make this clear to the driver of the bulldozer so that he is alert to the possibility of buried archaeological remains.

7. TERMINOLOGY

Middle Stone Age: tools consists mainly of long blades or triangular flakes and reflect a more controlled use of flaking properties than during the ESA. These tools are frequently made on fine-grained raw materials such as silcretes. These tools date between 125 000 and 40 000 years ago. In some circumstances, fossil bone and marine shell have been found in association with the stone tools.

8. REFERENCES

Cocks, M., de Klerk, W., Way-Jones, F. & Webley, L. 2002. Greater Addo Elephant National Park Cultural Mapping Pilot Project. *Albany Museum Internal Report: 90 pages.*

Webley, L. 2003. Addo Elephant National Park: upgrading of existing tourist road network and construction of southern access road near Colchester – Phase 1 archaeological impact assessment.

Webley, L. 2003. Addo Elephant National Park: Construction of the Rest Camp Area in the Southern section of the Park – Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment.



Figure 1 : A heavily patinated Middle Stone Age artefact

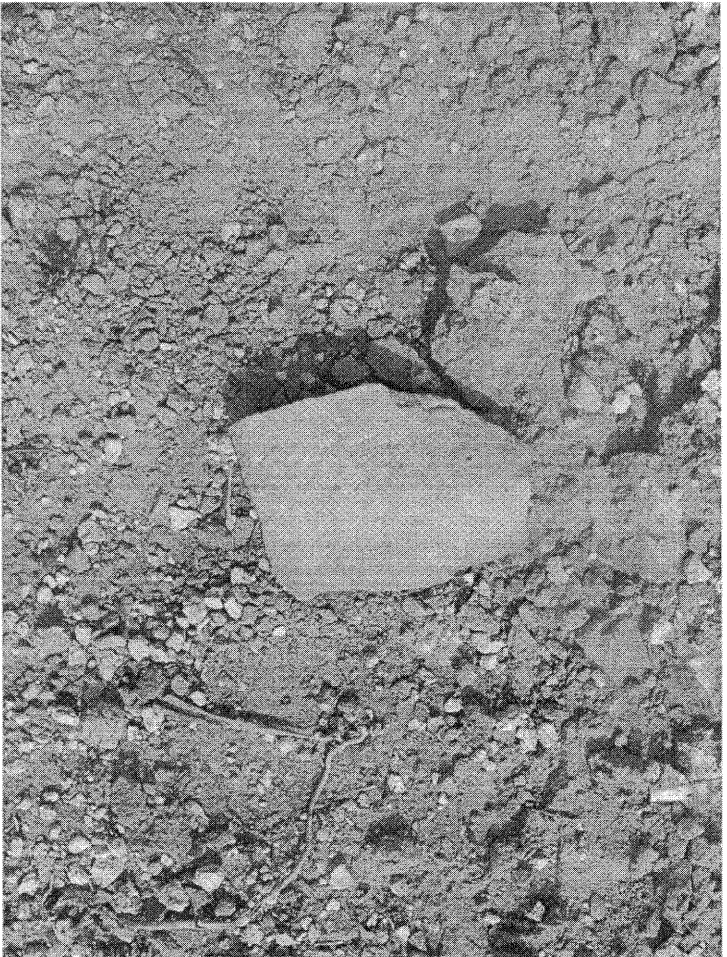


Figure 1 b: reverse of the same artefact.