

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PORTION 64 OF THE FARM MOUTONS VALLEY NO. 79  
PIKETBERG**

Prepared for

**EnviroAfrica**

By

Jonathan Kaplan

**Agency for Cultural Resource Management**

P.O. Box 159

Riebeeck West

7306

Ph/Fax: 022 461 2755

Cellular: 082 321 0172

E-mail: [acrm@waccess.co.za](mailto:acrm@waccess.co.za)

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## Executive summary

EnviroAfrica requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of Portion 64 of the Farm Mouton's Valley No. 79 in Piketberg in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed rezoning of the subject property forms part of the proposed Versveldpark Rural Resort, comprising a residential vineyard estate, a chapel, and a conference facility.

A private nature reserve with hiking trails is also planned.

A study of a 4.0 ha portion of the affected farm was undertaken by ACRM in June 2005, which comprised only the footprint for the proposed above activities.

The 2005 archaeological assessment did not include a survey of the proposed nature reserve.

In terms of the rezoning requirement (from Agriculture Zone I to Open Space II for the establishment of a private nature reserve), and the extent of the proposed nature reserve (about 50 ha), an archaeological impact assessment is required in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Heritage Western Cape, in issuing a comment on the 2005 AIA report, requested that, the proposed nature reserve also be subjected to a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment.

For the purpose of this study, the entire affected property, comprising about 54 ha, was subjected to a detailed survey. The focus of the study was on a large, prominent rock outcrop known as the Stawelklip, as well as several smaller rocky outcrops scattered over the remainder of the property.

The aim of the study is to locate and map archaeological heritage sites that may be negatively impacted by the planning of the proposed nature reserve and associated activities, in order to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate against the impacts.

The following findings were made:

- Other than the fairly well preserved San paintings located during the 2005 study, no additional rock painting sites were located during the study of the remainder of the property.
- A small scatter of Later Stone Age tools was located alongside a gravel road in a small gravel clearing below the Stawelklip.

Apart from the recommendations made in the 2005 study, no additional mitigation measures are required.

The following essential mitigation measures, however, still apply.

- The rock painting site (VP 1) must be documented in detail.
- A qualified specialist must remove graffiti from the painted wall of the rock shelter.
- The development of a proposed public rock art viewing site at VP 1 is subject to the implementation of a Heritage Management Plan (HMP), as required in terms of Section 47 (3) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).
- The opening of any rock art site to the public must be undertaken in consultation with Heritage Western Cape, the delegated provincial heritage authority.
- The HMP must be submitted to Heritage Western Cape for their approval.
- A HMP must form part of the detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for both the Construction and Operational Phase of the proposed project.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and brief**

EnviroAfrica requested that the Agency for Cultural Resource Management (ACRM) conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) of Portion 64 of the Farm Mouton's Valley No. 79 in Piketberg in the Western Cape Province.

The proposed rezoning of the subject property forms part of the proposed Versveldpark Rural Resort, comprising a residential vineyard estate, a chapel, and a conference facility.

A private nature reserve with hiking trails is also planned.

A study of a 4.0 ha portion of the farm was undertaken by ACRM in June 2005, which comprised only the footprint for the proposed above activities.

The 2005 archaeological assessment did not include a survey of the proposed nature reserve.

In terms of the rezoning requirement (from Agriculture Zone I to Open Space II for the establishment of a private nature reserve), and the extent of the proposed nature reserve (about 50 ha), an archaeological impact assessment is required in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Heritage Western Cape, in issuing a comment on the 2005 AIA report (dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2005), requested that, the proposed nature reserve be subjected to a Phase 1 AIA.

For the purpose of this study, the entire Portion 64 of the Farm Mouton's Valley No. 79, comprising about 54 ha, was subjected to a detailed survey.

The focus of the archaeological study was on a large, prominent rock outcrop known as the Stawelklip, as well as several smaller rocky outcrops scattered over the remainder of the property.

The aim of this study is to locate and map archaeological heritage sites that may be negatively impacted by the planning of the proposed nature reserve and associated activities, in order to assess the significance of the potential impacts and to propose measures to mitigate against the impacts.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The terms of reference for the specialist study were:

- to determine whether there are likely to be any archaeological sites of significance within Portion 64 of the Farm Mouton's Valley No. 79;
- to identify and map any sites of archaeological significance within the proposed site;
- to indicate the sensitivity and conservation significance of archaeological sites potentially affected by the proposed development;
- to assess the status and significance of any impacts resulting from the proposed development;

- to identify mitigatory measures to protect and maintain any valuable archaeological sites that may exist within the proposed site, and
- to propose actions for inclusion in the Construction and Operational Environmental Management Plan for the proposed project.

### 3. THE STUDY SITE

Portion 64 of the Farm Moutons Valley No. 79 is situated on the Piketberg Mountains (above Versveld Pass) and is located about 17 kms from the town of Piketberg in the Western Cape Province (Figure 1). The prominent rocky outcrop on the property is also known as the Stawelklip (refer to Figure 2). The property is characterised by an extensive elevated plateau overlooking the valley and the remainder of the farm northwards (Figures 3-6). Apart from the Stawelklip, a number of smaller rocky outcroppings are scattered over the remainder of the property, which comprises a mix of old agricultural lands with some indigenous vegetation, including well preserved thicket and trees.

Historically farmed, the property is now vacant and has not been farmed for many years. It is currently zoned Agricultural Zone 1. Currently, however, medicinal Buchu is now produced on a small portion of the property and recently, a fairly large area along the southern boundary has also been planted with Blueberries.

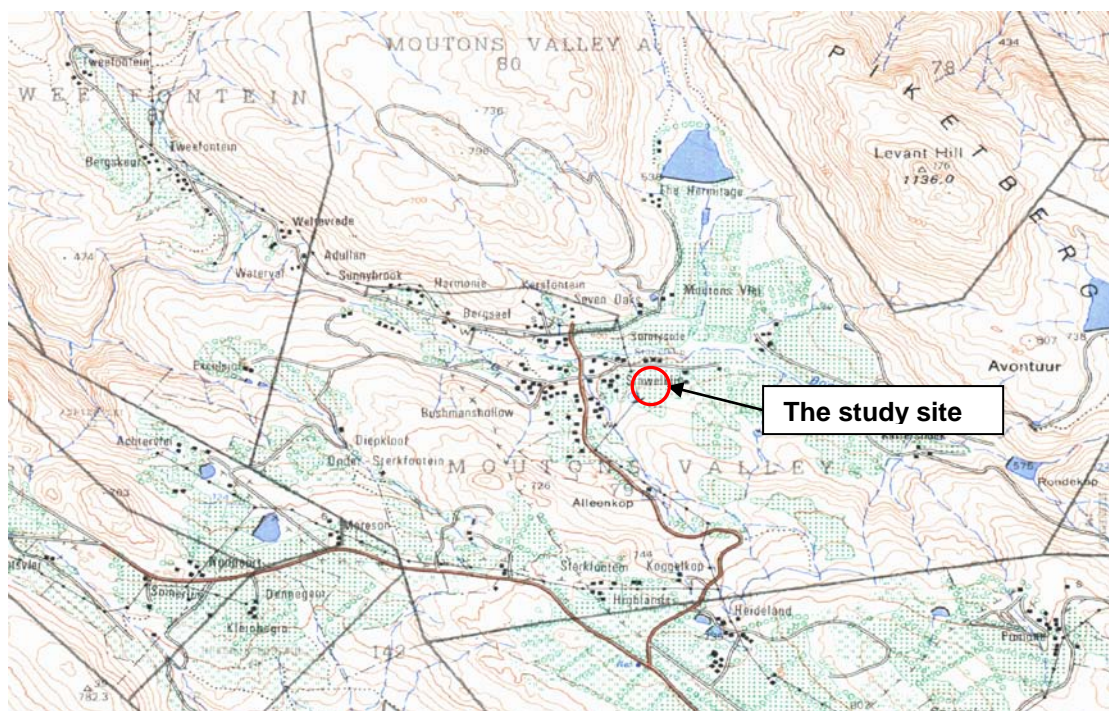


Figure 1. 1:50 000 site locality map (3218 DC Monravia).

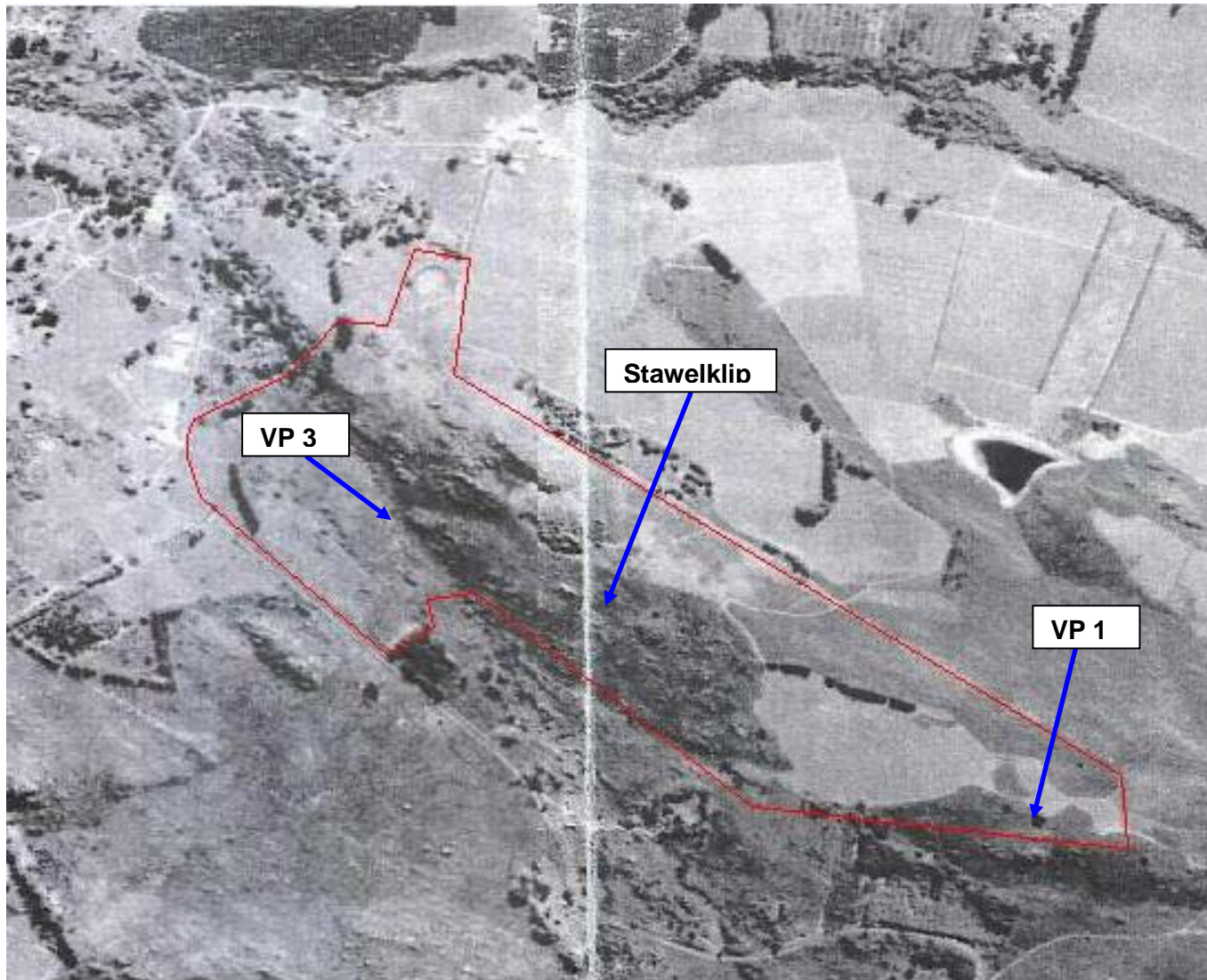


Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the study area (indicated in red).



Figure 3. View of the site (elevated plateau) facing south west. Note the old agricultural lands in the background.



Figure 4. View of the site (elevated plateau) facing south west. Note the natural veld in the background. The older agricultural lands are to the left of the plate.



Figure 5. View of the site and Blueberry fields taken from the Main Road. Stawelklip is in the distance



Figure 6. View of the site facing west taken from the top of the Stawelklip. The gravel road marks the western boundary of the farm

#### **4. STUDY APPROACH**

The approach used in the study entailed a detailed foot survey of the entire 54 ha site.

Archaeological sites recorded during the study were recorded using a Garmin Gecko 201 GPS unit set on map datum WGS 84.

A desk-top study was also undertaken.

The archaeological assessment took place on 9 March 2006.

#### **5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

##### **5.1 The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999)**

...any development or other activity which will change the character of a site exceeding 5 000m<sup>2</sup>, or the rezoning or change of land use of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>, requires an archaeological impact assessment in terms of Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

##### **5.1.1 Structures (Section 34 (1))**

No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by Heritage Western Cape (HWC), the responsible provincial resources authority.

##### **5.1.2 Archaeology (Section 35 (4))**

No person may, without a permit issued by HWC, destroy, damage, excavate, alter or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object.



### 5.1.3 Burial grounds and graves (Section 36 (3))

No person may, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years, which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority.

## 6. LIMITATIONS

There were no limitations associated with the proposed project.

## 7. RESULTS OF THE DESK TOP STUDY

According to the records of the South African Museum Archaeological Data Recording Centre (ADRC), one rock art site comprising a single faded handprint was recorded on the Stawelklip in the early 1940's.

During an initial baseline study of the proposed Versveld Park Rural Resort, a relatively well preserved rock art site was located on the property (Kaplan 1998) Versveld Park 1 (or VP 1) comprises a solitary sandstone outcrop, partially obscured by wild Olive trees, located near the south eastern boundary of the property (refer to Figure 2). Pottery and stone flakes were also found within the fairly large overhang. Several panels of art occur in the shelter, including human figures, a possible serpent and at least one antelope (Eland) species. Some graffiti is also apparent, but is not too serious. The art has been slightly degraded by natural processes such as percolation of natural salts from behind the shelter wall. Given the national importance of the rock art resource, VP 1 has been graded high local significance.

Suggested mitigation of the site includes detailed documentation, and the production of a Conservation or Heritage Management Plan (HMP). A trained rock art specialist should also be requested to remove the graffiti (Kaplan 2005).

A few Early Stone Age and Middle Stone Age tools were also recorded in the old agricultural lands, but these were graded local low significance (Kaplan 2005).

An indistinguishable painting/smudge (VP 2) in red ochre was also located in a south-facing shelter about midway down the Stawelklip during the 1998 study. This may be the ADRC site recorded in the 1940's. This site was not relocated by the archaeologist during the current study, and has been graded low local significance.

At least seven other rock art sites occur on farms close to the Stawelklip; two at Bushman's Hollow on the farm Akerdraai, two at Rheebofsfontein, one at Tweefontein and three on the farm Langberg (Van der Riet & Bleek 1940). The archaeologist has also viewed a number of rock painting sites on several farms on Bo Piketberg. The rocky, mountainous and broken terrain of the area lends itself to the formation of overhangs and the high probability of rock art sites being located.

The Bushman's River and Bushman's Hollow are close to Stawelklip, suggesting that San hunter-gatherers were present in the area during historic times. According to Dr Graham Avery of Iziko: SA Museum (pers. comm. 1998), San were recorded at the bottom of the Piekerneerskloof in the mid 1700s, not far from the town of Piketberg.

San rock paintings are found throughout southern Africa and are a threatened, non-renewable cultural and historical resource. The art is closely associated with the religious activities performed by San shamans or medicine people, and records in a

unique manner the history of southern Africa's indigenous people over at least the last 25 000 years. The art was still practiced as recently as a century ago in the Natal Drakensberg. These traditions were lost in the process of colonialism.

## 8. FINDINGS

### VP 3 (GPS reading S° 32 47 572 E 18° 42 579)

Nine LSA silcrete artefacts were located in small clearing alongside a gravel road immediately below the Stawelklip (Figure 7 and refer to Figure 2). The clearing is partially ringed by an outcropping of sandstone which is obscured by Wild Olive trees. Some tools were also found scattered and embedded in the gravel road.

The tools comprise mainly flakes, including several utilized, and a few chips and chunks. One adze and one snapped miscellaneous retouched piece were also found (Figure 8). The surrounding area was intensively searched, but no rock art sites were found.

**The archaeological remains have been graded low local significance.**



Figure 7. VP3. The Blueberry fields & the Main Road are in the foreground of the plate.



Figure 8. Collection of silcrete tools. Arrow indicates the adze. Scale is in cm.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Apart from the relatively well-preserved rock art site (VP 1) located during the 1998 baseline study, no additional rock painting sites were located during a detailed search of the remainder of the subject property.

A thin scatter of silcrete tools was located in small, gravel clearing below the Stawelklip, but the remains have been graded low local significance.

The proposed development of VP 1 as a public rock art viewing site is subject to the development of a Heritage Management Plan (HMP) (Kaplan 2005).

## 10. PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PROPOSED VERSVELDPARK RURAL RESORT.

Development of any archaeological site open to the public is subject to the implementation of a Conservation or Heritage Management Plan (HMP), and is a requirement in terms of Section 47 (3) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

A HMP for the proposed Versveldpark Rural Resort is intended principally to help guide the development and management of rock painting sites to be opened to the public.

The aim of a HMP is to retain the significance of the heritage resources, and ensure the effective protection and sustainable development of rock art resources on the property.

A HMP may also form the basis for a Heritage Agreement required in terms of Section 42 of the National Heritage Resources Act and the presentation of protected archaeological resources.

The development of any rock art site to be opened to visitors will also need to be undertaken in close consultation with Heritage Western Cape, the delegated provincial heritage authority, who will also need to approve the HMP.

Rock art is a non-renewable resource and therefore requires specialised planning and management (Deacon 1993). The responsibility ultimately rests with the landowner to ensure protection and conservation of rock art sites, which are considered a priceless national resource. Archaeological sites, especially those with rock paintings are especially vulnerable to damage.

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) has also proposed minimum standards for archaeological sites to be opened to the public. The core of these standards provides for the production of a HMP.

Some of the minimum standards proposed by SAHRA when developing a rock art site for public viewing include the following:

- A Heritage Management Plan must be developed, which must include a complete and detailed documentation of the site and the artwork. The purpose of the management plan is to conserve the significance of the site by controlling the impact of visitors.

- A permit is required for any disturbance at an archaeological site, including the erection of notice boards, board walks, fences, etc.
- A Heritage Agreement is required in terms of Section 42 of the National Heritage Resources Act.
- Access and numbers of visitors to the site should be controlled and managed.
- If appropriate, facilities such as litter bins, toilets, etc should be provided.
- Specially trained guides from the local community may be provided so that the meaning of the rock art is interpreted, so as to enhance the experience of the visitor. Employment opportunities may also be created, which would constitute a positive impact
- Appropriate measures used to protect rock art sites must be effective. For example, a barrier may be set up between the visitor and the rock art, or a boardwalk built. A cover could also be put on the floor of the site to prevent dust being kicked up and damaging the art.
- If appropriate, efforts should be made to remove graffiti, for which a permit is also required.
- Arrangements should be made for a long-term monitoring and maintenance programme.

These and other measures must be considered when developing a HMP for visitor viewing sites.

## **11. ESSENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES**

With regard to the proposed Versveldpark Rural Resort, the following essential mitigation measures are therefore required:

- The rock art site (VP 1) must be recorded in detail.
- A qualified specialist must remove the graffiti.
- The development of VP 1 as a public rock art viewing site is subject to the implementation of a Heritage Management Plan (HMP), as required in terms of Section 47 (3) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).
- The opening of any rock art site to the public must be undertaken in close consultation with Heritage Western Cape, the delegated provincial heritage authority.
- A HMP must be submitted to Heritage Western Cape for their approval.
- A HMP must form part of the detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for both the Construction and Operational Phase of the proposed project.

## 12. REFERENCES

Deacon, J. 1993. Management guidelines for rock art sites in nature conservation areas and forestry reserves in the Western Cape. Report prepared for the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Department of Archaeology, University of Stellenbosch.

Kaplan, J. 2005. Proposed development Versveld Park Rural Resort. Report prepared for EnviroAfrica. Agency for Cultural Resource Management.

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