

9/2/07/15

ACTION PLAN: ENGRAVING SITE ON THE FARM BEESHOEK 448, POSTMASBURG DISTRICT, NORTHERN CAPE.

INTRODUCTION

The site Beeshoek 1 (28°18' S, 23°0' E) is located some 8 km WNW of Postmasburg and 2 km SSE of Beeshoek, on the farm Beeshoek 448, in the Postmasburg district of the Northern Cape. It has been known since at least 1949, was recorded in the 1960s (Fock 1969, Fock & Fock 1984), and has been subject of an archaeological scoping assessment (Morris 1992) and phase 1 salvage work (Morris 1993). Figure 1 depicts the distribution of the individual engravings there, which are dominated by cupules (cup-like depressions), but pecked concentric circles, wavy lines, grid and ladder forms and some animal images also occur. Large-scale open-cast mining is scheduled to commence over an area that encompasses the site in August 1998, and the following plan is therefore proposed to salvage these fascinating and enigmatic creations of the past.

ACTION PLAN

The objective of the plan is to re-assemble an exact replica of the site, using as many of the original engraved stones as possible, on a portion of the mine property next to the main road, where it would be accessible to tourists. As the McGregor Museum archaeology staff are already over-committed, it is further proposed that this work be undertaken on a contract basis by Royden Yates, a gifted field-worker with 15 years of service at UCT.

TASK LIST

The following tasks would need to be fulfilled by him in order to meet the permit requirements of the National Monuments Council.

1. A foot survey of the entire mining area, to establish if any other sites occur within it.
2. If such sites do occur, then remedial actions will be required, to extents deemed necessary by the archaeologist.
3. Test trenching in the vicinity of the defunct spring near Beeshoek 1, to establish if cultural debris occurs there.
4. Removal of vegetation at the engraving site and excavation of abutting sediments within a grid.
5. Detailed mapping and photographic coverage of the entire engraving area on completion of 4.
6. Production of a silicon rubber mould, reinforced by fibre-glass or other appropriate materials, of the total site, portion by portion.
7. Removal or loose slabs and an attempt to removed engraved bedrock by way of

vertical and horizontal drilling or other appropriate means.

8. Re-assembly of all intact engraved slabs and replica casting of portions damaged during removal.
9. Erection of a rondavel-roofed display structure in the vicinity of the reconstructed site.
10. Production of photos and texts for eight panels dealing with Beeshoek 1 and other Associated Manganese Mines sites.
11. Writing of an illustrated report on the project for Associated Manganese Mines Ltd, National Monuments Council and McGregor Museum.

TASK DURATIONS

Rough estimates, assuming the availability of casual assistants, are that tasks 1-5 will take a month, tasks 6 & 7 about two months, task 8 a month, and tasks 9-11 a final two months, with the total being six months.

PROJECT COSTS

1. Materials including excavation equipment and packaging, photographic film and processing, silicon rubber and fibre glass, casting material, etc, about R5000,00
2. Erection of a display structure according to a design available from the Northern Cape office of the National Monuments Council, about R15 000,00
3. Production of an 8-panel laminated display, based on texts and photos, as part of the McGregor Museum's Roadside History Project, about R5000,00
4. Archaeologist's transport, using own vehicle, comprising Cape Town - Beeshoek x 1, Beeshoek - Kimberley x 6, as also daily trip from Beeshoek to sites, about R7000,00
5. Archaeologist's salary to be based on a viable contract rate that is acceptable to himself as also to Associated Manganese Ltd, about ~~R50~~ ⁴⁸ 000

OTHER COMMENTS

1. The archaeologist's accommodation should, ideally, be at the Beeshoek mine, at a rental rate that is acceptable to him.
2. The archaeologist is responsible for obtaining a National Monuments Council permit and meeting the requirements thereof.
3. The archaeologist must at all times be completely free to carry out his specified tasks.
4. All collections that may result from this project and full documentation must be

eventually housed at the McGregor Museum.

5. Officers of the McGregor Museum and the National Monuments Council must at all times have free access during the project.
6. Information on casting procedures and casting material sources is available from Annette Coetzee of the McGregor Museum.

CONCLUSION

The reconstructed site and accompanying display would mark the beginning of an archaeo-tourism infrastructure for the region, which is richly endowed by way of many other interesting and important heritage sites around Postmasburg.

Peter B. Beaumont
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3 April 1998

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