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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
PROPOSED PLANT SITE AND BULK SAMPLING TRENCHES
NAMAQUA DIAMOND COMPANY
VREDENDAL DISTRICT
CAPE WEST COAST**

Prepared for

SRK CONSULTING ENGINEERS & SCIENTISTS

By

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**DECEMBER
2001**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Agency for Cultural Resource Management was commissioned by SRK Consulting Engineers & Scientists, on behalf of the Namaqua Diamond Company (Pty) Ltd, to investigate seven bulk sampling trenches and a proposed plant site, on the farms Graauw Duinen, KlipVley Karoo Kop and Geelwal Karoo, for archaeological remains.

The aim of the investigation was to identify any archaeological remains requiring protection during proposed bulk sampling operations, and to propose measures to mitigate any potential archaeological impacts that may occur.

Recommendations regarding the protection of archaeological sites/remains will be included in the Environmental Management Report (EMP).

2.0 THE STUDY SITE

The study site, the proposed new plant site, and the bulk sampling locations are illustrated in Figure 1.

Apart from some prospecting by De Beers in the 1960's, and some small scale testing by the Namaqua Diamond Company, most of the proposed bulk sampling sites are relatively undisturbed.

Two bulk sampling sites are located close to the shoreline area.

3.0 LEGISLATION

Archaeological, including human burial remains, sites are protected under the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999).

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

4.0 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN THE STUDY AREA

Archaeological remains have previously been recorded in the study area, on the farm Klip Vley Karoo Kop (Hart 1999; Kaplan 2001).

Later Stone Age¹ (LSA) sites appear to be confined to the immediate shoreline below the coastal ridge, the most archaeologically sensitive zone. This shoreline has been severely impacted by previous mining operations. Apart from a few remnant scatters, most of the sites here have been destroyed (Hart 1999; Kaplan 2001).

¹ A term referring to the last 20 000 years of precolonial history in southern Africa.

Middle Stone Age² and Early Stone Age³ material is very common in the study area. Occurrences have been recorded in virtually every track/road, borrow pit, and quarry along the length of the road servicing Namaqua Sands (Hart and Lanham 1997). In any place where the ground surface has been quarried or deflated, such material is visible. Many of these previously buried sites have been exposed and disturbed as a result of road works and mining operations. As a result most of these sites have very little archaeological or scientific value.

However, mining operations have also exposed some very important sites. Large quantities of stone tools, ostrich eggshell and shellfish, were found associated with a prospecting trial trench during the course of a Phase 1 archaeological study of the farm KlipVley Karoo Kop. Mineralised bone found in the tailings may indicate a buried MSA midden (Hart 1999) Buried MSA sites are assigned a high conservation rating, as they are considered extremely rare finds.

5.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Seven bulk sampling sites, on the farms Graauw Duinen, Klip Vley Karoo Kop and Geelwal Karoo, were investigated for archaeological remains. The proposed new plant site was also investigated (Figure 1).

GDT4b

Apart from two quartz flakes, a quartz chunk and a few scraps of shellfish remains associated with tailings from a De Beers prospecting pit, no significant archaeological remains were located on the site.

GDT7

A thin (1-2 cm thick) lens, about 6 metres long, of fragmented shell remains were located in a road cutting close to the shoreline. This LSA midden comprises mainly crushed black mussel with some limpet fragments. No other cultural remains were found associated with the midden.

The site has been severely impacted by road construction.

Impact: High. The site will be destroyed by mining activities

Significance of finds: Low

Mitigation: none required

In addition, two MSA flakes and a few pieces of fossil shell were found in an old prospecting trench/pit.

Some fragmented shellfish remains were also located close to the shoreline among large dumps of sand from previous mining operations.

² A term referring to the period between 250 000 and 20 000 years ago.

³ A term referring to the period between 2 million and 250 000 years ago.

KKT4

Some fragmented shellfish remains, two quartz flakes and one piece of ostrich eggshell, were found with a pile of gravel tailings from an old prospecting trench.

A well made ESA handaxe was also found in a large test/borrow pit on the ridge overlooking the shoreline, in the study site.

KKT5

No archaeological remains were located.

KKT6

No archaeological remains were located.

KKT10

No archaeological remains were located.

GWT1

No archaeological remains were located.

PROPOSED NEW PLANT

The site has been severely degraded as a result of previous mining operations. A few quartz flakes and chunks were noted among some calcrete rubble, and near the road cutting.

6.0 IMPACT STATEMENT

The impact of proposed bulk sampling on significant archaeological sites/remains is considered to be potentially high.

Buried sites, including LSA and MSA shell middens and tool making sites, may be uncovered during sampling operations.

Human burial remains may also be uncovered sampling.

7.0 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Archaeological visibility in the study area is high, but the majority of sites have been severely impacted by previous mining operations.

Proposed bulk sampling may expose potentially important archaeological sites, including human burials.

Mechanisms are proposed in order to minimise potential damage.