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Eskom Diepkloof Mpumalanga

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A HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) STUDY FOR A
NEW PROPOSED 11KV POWER LINE ON THE FARM
DIEPKLOOF 44JS NEAR GROBLERSDAL IN THE
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eskom intends to establish an 11kV power line from an existing line and pole (BLOB89/12/5), south of the Groblersdal/Stofberg (R33) road to a cottage located on a kopje further to the north on the farm Diepkloof 44JS near Groblersdal in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The proposed new power line corridor was subjected to a survey on foot.

At least one crude, inconspicuous stone wall and several scattered potsherds were observed against the slope of the kopje as well as along the southern bank of the donga located near the base of the kopje. These remains date from the Late Iron Age (AD 1600 to 1880) and can possibly be associated with the history of the Baleo who occupied Maleoskop further to the south (see Box 2).

These remains will not be negatively affected when the proposed new power line is build.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document contains the report on the results of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study done for Eskom's proposed new 11kV power line on the farm Diepkloof 44JS, near Groblersdal in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

2 AIM OF THIS REPORT

Eskom intends to establish an 11kV power line from an existing line and pole (BLOB89/12/5), south of the Groblersdal/Stofberg (R33) road to a cottage located on a kopje further to the north on the farm Diepkloof 44JS near Groblersdal in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa (Figure 1).

In order to comply with legislation, Eskom requires knowledge of the presence, relevance and the significance of any heritage resources that may occur near or in the proposed new power line corridor. Eskom needs this information in order to take pro-active measures with regard to any heritage remains that may be affected, damaged or destroyed when the proposed new power line is built. Eskom therefore commissioned me to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the study area to be affected by the proposed new power line corridor.

The aim of the HIA study is:

- to establish whether any heritage resources do occur near or in the proposed new power line corridor and, if so, what the nature, the extent and the significance of these remains are (see Box 1);
- to determine whether such remains will be affected by the proposed development project; and
- to evaluate what appropriate actions could be taken to reduce the impact of the development activities on such remains.

**BOX 1: TYPES AND RANGES OF HERITAGE RESOURCES AS OUTLINED IN
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT (ACT NO 25 OF 1999)**

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, Art 3) outlines the following types and ranges of heritage resources that qualify as part of the national estate, namely:

- (a) places, buildings structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- (b) places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- (c) historical settlements and townscapes;
- (d) landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- (e) geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- (f) archaeological and paleontological sites;
- (g) graves and burial grounds including-
 - (i) ancestral graves;
 - (ii) royal graves and graves of traditional leaders
 - (iii) graves of victims of conflict
 - (iv) graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
 - (v) historical graves and cemeteries; and
 - (vi) other human remains which are not covered by in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No 65 of 1983)
- (h) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa;

(i) moveable objects, including -

- (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and paleontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
- (ii) objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- (iii) ethnographic art and objects;
- (iv) military objects;
- (v) objects of decorative or fine art;
- (vi) objects of scientific or technological interest; and
- (vii) books, records, documents, photographs, positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No 43 of 1996).

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, Art 3) also distinguishes nine criteria for places and objects to qualify as part of the national estate if they have cultural significance or other special value These criteria are the following:

- (a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- (b) its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- (e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- (f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- (h) its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa;
- (i) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa

3 METHODOLOGY

The study area where the proposed new power line is to be established was subjected to a survey on foot.

The author of this report has done several HIA studies in the immediate surroundings of the study area and is therefore not totally unacquainted with the broader area in which the development is planned (see Part 7, 'Bibliography of literature pertaining to the broader study area').

The possible presence of heritage resources in the study area can therefore to a certain extent be predicted on the basis of the archaeologist's experience gained in this particularly area. However, heritage resources at times appear in the most unexpected places and surveys may not detect all heritage resources in any given study area. While certain remains may simply be missed during surveys (observations), others may occur below the surface of the earth and may only be exposed once development (such as the building of the power lines) commences.

4 THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Location

Eskom's proposed new 11kV power line is located on the farm Diepkloof 44JS, approximately 10km to the east of the town of Groblersdal in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The study area is situated to the north of the national road (R33) running between Stofberg and Groblersdal and to the south of an extensive mountain range covering several farms to the north of Diepkloof 44JS (2529AB Groblersdal; 1 : 50 000).

4.2 Brief historical context

Diepkloof is situated near Groblersdal, the principal town in the Groblersdal magisterial district. The town is situated on the Olifants River and owes its origin to the Hereford and the Loskop irrigation schemes on the Olifants River. These schemes were started in 1930 and in 1935 on the initiative of Willem Jacobus Grobler. The town was named after Grobler, laid out on his farm Klipbank 267 JS and proclaimed on 9 March 1938.

Figure 1. The location of the proposed new 11kV power line on the farm Diepkloof 44JS to the east of Groblersdal in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

4.3 Heritage resources outside the Eskom study area

Three main types of heritage resources were discovered in the past near the study area, namely stone tools dating from the Stone Age, remains dating from the Late Iron Age (AD 1600 to 1880) and more recent remains relating to the earliest platinum mining on the eastern limb of the Merensky Reef (1920's to 1930's) (see Box 2, below).

BOX 2. HERITAGE RESOURCES OUTSIDE THE ESKOM STUDY AREA

STONE AGE SITES

A scattering of Middle Stone Age tools was discovered on the farm Blaaubank 168JS to the south of Eskom's study area during an earlier HIA. These stone tools are definitely not the only one's to exist near Eskom's study area. Stone tools date back millennia and may be exposed by natural occurrences if they are buried beneath the surface.

LATE IRON AGE REMAINS

Several cultural heritage assessment studies were done near Groblersdal. Heritage resources ranging from Stone Age sites to Iron Age sites and historical settlements were recorded on farms such as Riffontein 709 KS, Saiesloot 718 KS, Wegdraai 715 KS, Schuinsdraai ??, Kromdraai 712 KS, Nootgezien 716 KS, etc.

The well-known Late Iron Age/historical site Maleoskop is located on the farm Rietkloof 166JS. The Kōpa of Baleo occupied this site during the 19th century. The missionaries Alexander Merensky and Heinrich Gritzner established the Getrachshoop missionary station on this farm in 1860. The Kōpa maintained a hostile relationship with the ZAR and were attacked by a combined force of the Pedi and the ZAR in 1863. The Kōpa were dealt a severe defeat in battle by the Swazi in May 1864.

MINING HERITAGE

The first discovery of platinum was made on the farm Maandagshoek in the Steelport Valley during the late 1920's. Exploration for platinum was therefore initially focussed on the eastern limb of the Merensky Reef (also called the 'Platreef') in the Northern Province (Mokopane) as well as in the Mpumalanga Province (Lydenburg) of South Africa. These exploration activities followed by platinum mining were very soon extended to the western limb of the Merensky Reef near Rustenburg.

These heritage resources are located outside the study area and will not be affected by the

development of the IIG2 Onancast and Lindernround Mining Project

The proposed 11kV power line on Portion 16 of the farm Diepkloof 44JS runs from a lodge (bush camp) established on a kopje (in the north) to a connecting pole (BLOB89/12/5) (in the south-west. The proposed new power line is approximately 0,876km long and has three bends.

The HIA study along the proposed new Diepkloof power line was conducted along the following stretches of the proposed new corridor:

Part AB

Part AB is approximately 75m long and runs from the pole near the bush camp down the western slope of the kopje to ground level.

Heritage resources observed

At least one crude inconspicuous stone wall and several scattered potsherds were observed against the slope of the kopje (Figure 2). These remains date from the Late Iron Age (AD 1600 to 1880) and can possibly be associated with the history of the Baleo who occupied Maleoskop further to the south (see Box 2).

Figure 2. Part of a rudimentary stone wall dating from the Late Iron Age located against the slope of the kopje where the proposed new power line will end.

Part BC

Part BC crosses a deep donga at the base of the kopje and is approximately 76m long.

[A note on Eskom's surveyor's map of the proposed new power line states that 'Maroelabome mag gekap word' near the donga. It is assumed that this remark means that branches of some of the few Maroela trees near the donga may be cut when the new power line is build but not the trees as such.]

Heritage resources observed

A few scattered undecorated potsherds were observed along the southern bank (closest to the kopje) of the donga.

Part CD

Part CD turns towards the south and runs across open veldt while crossing underneath Eskom's existing 132KV power line (running from the east to the west). Part CD is approximately 60 m long.

No heritage resources were observed along Part CD

Part DE

Part De turns towards the south-west and runs across open veldt before crossing the Stoberg national road to connect at pole BLOB89/12/5. Part DE is approximately 77m long.

No heritage resources were observed along Part CD

6 CONCLUSION

At least one crude, inconspicuous stone wall and several scattered potsherds were observed against the slope of the kopje as well as along the southern bank of the donga located near the base of the kopje. These remains date from the Late Iron Age (AD 1600 to 1880) and can possibly be associated with the history of the Baleo who occupied Maleoskop further to the south (see Box 2).

These remains will not be negatively affected when the proposed new power line is build.

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