



# AFRICAN HERITAGE CONSULTANTS CC

2001/077745/23

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**14 September 2007**

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BUFFELSKLOOF ECO ESTATE**

### **1. PART ONE - INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Location and description of site**

The Proposed Buffelsfontein Eco Estate will include the following farms Buffelskloof 382 JT, Waterval 385 JT, Roodewalshoek 17 JT, Naauwpoort 11 JT and Belvedere 385 KT in the Mpumalanga Province. The development area falls under the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality and the Ehlangeni District Municipality (see Küsel September 2006 and area Map 1 as attached).

The proposed development area is in mountain grassland with busheveld in the lower laying areas.

#### **1.2 Ownership and responsibility for site.**

At present the owner is Paul Malan P. O. Box 1152 Lydenburg 1102. Buffelskloof Eco Estate Owners Association will eventually manage the property (for more detail see Küsel September 2006).

#### **1.3 Statement of site significance**

On the proposed development area there are two large Late Iron Age stonewalled sites of which the one has partially been damaged. The site at S24° 58' 31.7 and E30° 14' 45.7" is still in a good state of preservation (see site 1 & 2 at A on Map 2). Little is known of the archaeological sites of this area as no intensive archaeological work has been done in the area.

The most recent information towards the east of this site is the large concentration of stonewalled and terraces agricultural sites in the Lydenburg area. These sites fall within the Moloko Cultural tradition of Sotho – Tswana (Collet 1982 and Maggs T. M. 2007) these sites are collectively known as Marateng (Collet 1982).

The two sites on the proposed development area have no terraces and it is unknown where they fit into the Late Iron Age sequence. As suggested by (Küsel 2006) they most probably belong to sites associated with the Pedi Empire possible Khoni. Only future archaeological work will be able to place them in the Late Iron Age sequence.

At present these sites are at least of local significances. Depending on future archaeological work they might be of provincial heritage value. Notwithstanding this, site no. 2 is so well preserved that it needs special attention and should in future be properly recorded, excavated and restored as a heritage feature within the Eco Estate.

The graves as well as the animal enclosure are only of local significance but are of interest and should be preserved.

#### **1.4 Objectives for opening sites to the public**

At this stage in the development no decision has been taken to open the sites to the public. Though this might happen in future it is important to protect the sites against destruction or deterioration.

#### **1.5 Objective of management plan**

The objection of the management plan is to protect the identified heritage sites against deterioration and destruction.

#### **1.6 Revision of plan**

The heritage management plan should be revised every five years.

#### **1.7 Potential impact on archaeological resources of opening site to the public**

At this stage in the development no decision has been taken to open the site to the public.

## **2. PART TWO - RECORDING AND RESEARCH**

### **2.1 Objectives of recording and research**

The objectives of recording and research are to fully document the site and to retrieve as much scientific data as possible. It will also be important to compare research findings with similar sites to establish the cultural affinity of the sites and their place in the Late Iron Age sequence of the area.

## **2.2 Research into archaeology of the sites.**

Future research into the history and archaeology of the sites has to be undertaken by a qualified archaeologist/historian, as there are both archaeology and historic sites on the development area.

## **2.3 Research into history and indigenous knowledge of the sites**

It is important that the history of the sites be properly researched. This is especially important for the animal enclosure, which were part of animal farming in the area. What is interesting is that these enclosures are not attached to a nearby farm settlement.

As far as indigenous knowledge systems are concerned the area is rich in diversity. Local people have over many generations collected plants for food, building material and traditional medicinal purposes. This knowledge has to be recorded so that the information can be preserved but also to be used in interpretation and education programmes.

# **3. PART THREE - SITE MANAGEMENT**

## **3.1 Objectives of site management**

The objectives of the site management plan are to protect and conserve the unique heritage of the sites and to ensure effective long-term management.

## **3.2 Site vegetation and firebreaks**

The control of vegetation in both the archaeological and historic sites is important as trees growing in the walls of the sites damage the walls as they grow taller or collapse. The growth of trees in these sites can also damage the archaeological contents of the site. For this reason trees growing in the walls and in the archaeological deposits should be cut and treated with herbicide to prevent re-growth. This should be done under supervision of a qualified archaeologist/historian.

The development of an effective firebreak system will be part of the larger development of the development site as the control of fire is also important in the protection of buildings, vegetation and animals. In the case of the historic and archaeological sites fire is not really a risk as both archaeological and historic sites have stonewalls which are not damaged by fire.

## **3.3 Site infrastructure – existing infrastructure and required for: Access arrangements, Visitors control, Education, Maintenance etc.**

At this stage in the development no decision has been taken to develop the sites or to make them accessible to the public. The first priority in the development of the estate is to supply infrastructure for roads, electricity and water so that houses can be built. This infrastructure should avoid all

identified sites and should not be within fifty metres distance from any of the sites.

Once a decision has been taken to open specific sites to the public a management and development plan for each specific site has to be compiled.

At this stage it is important to keep people away from the sites. As soon as people visit a site they pick up artefacts, climb onto walls etc. that damages the sites. The sites are also unsafe for visitors as stonewalls could collapse and cause injuries.

## **4. PART FOUR - MONITORING**

### **4.1 Objectives of monitoring**

The objectives of monitoring are to monitor the conservation status of the site and to determine what action has to be taken to avoid deterioration and damage to the sites.

### **4.2 Monitoring site maintenance**

The owner and later the body corporate will be responsible for the monitoring of the sites. At this stage the important aspect is vegetation control as well as keeping people out of the sites.

### **4.3 Monitoring visitor experience**

Sites will at this stage not be open to the public.

### **4.4 Monitoring impact of visitors on archaeological sites**

The sites will not be open to public at this stage.

## **5. PART FIVE - VISITORS EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION**

At this stage the sites will not be open to visitors. Should visitors be allowed in future the sites will first have to be researched so that enough information can be gathered to properly interpret the sites and to make them accessible and safe for visitors.

## **6. PART SIX MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING BUDGET**

At this stage there is no maintenance and monitoring budget. As soon as the estate development commences a budget has to be provided for the maintenance and monitoring of the sites.

## **7. REFERENCES**

- Collett DP 1982. Excavations of stone-walled ruins in the Bedfontein Valley eastern Transvaal, south Africa, South Africa Archaeological Bulletin 37: 34-43.
- Maggs T.M. 2007. The Mpumalanga escarpment Settlements: Some answers many questions. Unpublished report – 500 Year Research group Conference 26-27 May 2007 Witwatersrand University.