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20 April 2007

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*Heritage Resource Impact Assessment*

**EIA APPLICATION – A NEW DAM WALL AT WHISKEY CREEK TROUT FARM:  
THABA CHWEU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR EXEMPTION**

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**EIA CONSULTANCY:**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The application constitutes an activity, which may potentially be harmful to heritage resources that could occur in the demarcated area. The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA - Act No. 25 of 1999) protects all structures and features older than 60 years (section 34), archaeological sites and material (section 35) and graves and burial sites (section 36). Section 38(1) stipulates that any person who intends to undertake a development\* ... must at the very earliest stages of initiating such development notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.

In order to comply with the legislation, the Applicant requires an informed assessment in respect of the probable presence of heritage resources, and their significance that may occur in the demarcated area. This would enable the Applicant to take pro-active measures to limit the adverse effects that the development could have on such heritage resources.

\*‘**development**’ means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of the heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being,

**TERM OF REFERENCE**

The author was requested by SRK Consulting to assess the probable presence of heritage resources on the demarcated terrain. In January 2000, two major 1:100 storm events

occurred at the Whiskey Creek Trout Farm that resulted in the failure of the existing dam No 5. The EIA application is for the proposed construction of a new dam wall to replace the existing damaged Dam 5.

### **LOCALITY**

Map reference: South Africa 1:50000 2530 BA. The proposed site of Whiskey Creek (De Kuilen 205, Section 13) forms part of a trout and game farm in the Mpumalanga province. The proposed site is located within a designated agricultural area. The Whiskey Creek farm is approximately 1000 ha in size and is situated 20 km east of Lydenburg on the Long Tom Pass on the way to Sabie.

### **DESCRIPTION**

The farm is owned by Norsand Holdings and its infrastructure consists of a lodge, various man-made weirs and dams and a manager's house. The farm is characterised by a grass covered undulating landscape with tall blue gum trees scattered throughout the farm. The weirs and dams are used for trout fishing. The farm also offers game viewing either by walks, vehicles or horseback. The site is located at the bottom of a canyon and is flanked by undisturbed vegetation on either side. Immediately upstream of the damaged dam 5 the Whiskey Creek Lodge is situated at the top of the canyon. Once in operation, the new dam will again be stocked with fish and used for fishing.

The site slopes in a northerly direction. Storm water runoff flows down the canyon and into the Whiskey Creek stream, which flows in a northerly direction.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A large concentration of stone walled terraces and settlements occur on the eastern escarpment from Lydenburg southwards towards Badplaas and Carolina. Mason and others have recorded such settlements since the late 1950's and later some of those close to Lydenburg had been excavated and studied by Evers.

The most recent research by Huffman places the origins of these stone walled complexes within KwaZulu-Natal. The oldest known walling following the Central Cattle Pattern occurs at Moor Park in the midlands of KwaZulu-Natal. Dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, **Moor Park** walling partially served defensive purposes. Located on spurs and the ends of hills, stonewalls cut the settlement off from the remaining terrain. Perimeter walls enclose about two-thirds of the settlement, leaving the back free. Low hut platforms supported beehive huts in the residential zone behind cattle enclosures. Of all the organizational principles of the Central Cattle Pattern, Moor Park appears to have emphasized the front/back axis.

Between AD 1350 and 1500, the period of Moor Park defensive walling, population numbers were still probably low, land was probably available near the coast, and emigration was probably not an attractive option. At this point, one should note that people with a pastoral ideology, such as the Nguni, have a low tolerance for high population densities, especially in other political groups. As populations increase, social tensions become more acute within and between political entities, and emigration to less populated areas becomes more attractive.

Adverse climate conditions were experienced in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and by this time populations had expanded. As a result, it appears, some Nguni-speaking people left KwaZulu-Natal and moved up onto the plateau where they built walls on top of defensive hilltops similar to Moor Park. On the eastern escarpment these people became known as Koni and were members of a Langa cluster that had moved out of KwaZulu-Natal as small and separate entities at various times. They developed extensive stonewalled complexes known as the Badfontein type of walling found along the Mpumalanga escarpment. Badfontein walling emphasizes the centre/side axis of the Central Cattle Pattern expressed through concentric circles: the inner circle encompassed cattle, the next marked the men's

court, and the outer ring the zone of houses. Rock engravings in the same area depict this settlement pattern. Associated engravings, terrace walls, cattle lanes and circular settlements extend over an enormous area along the escarpment south of Lydenburg. Oral traditions place Koni in this escarpment area before the Pedi, and so some walled settlements must first date before AD 1650, perhaps as early as AD 1600 and the second dispersal. Later, as the associated ceramics show, they became allied to the Pedi. The Badfontein Koni probably chose the escarpment because it is part of a mist belt that would have offered some relief to dry conditions during the Little Ice Age.

### **DISCUSSION**

Although the aerial photograph (Fig 3) is not clear, it appears that some of the geographical features that are encircled could well be Doornspruit stonewalled settlements that occur on the property. This can be expected as was discussed above. These are, however, not threatened by the proposed activity, which is located deep in the valley area.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed activity and its location is a continuation of an existing disturbance and lies in an area in the valley that would not have been suitable for past human settlement. However, due to the recreational activities offered at the lodge, it is advisable for the owners to have a heritage assessment conducted of the entire Whiskey Creek property to ensure that no damage is done to any heritage resource.

This letter serves as a qualified statement that no significant heritage resources such as archaeological or historical material or places of social or religious significance are expected in the area demarcated for development.

*From a heritage resources management point of view, we have no objection with regard to the development. **Therefore it is recommended that the proposed application be exempted from a heritage impact assessment.***

Yours faithfully,



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Principal Investigator for R & R Cultural Resource Consultants



Fig 1. General view of the Whiskey Creek valley.



Fig 2. View of an existing Dam in the valley.

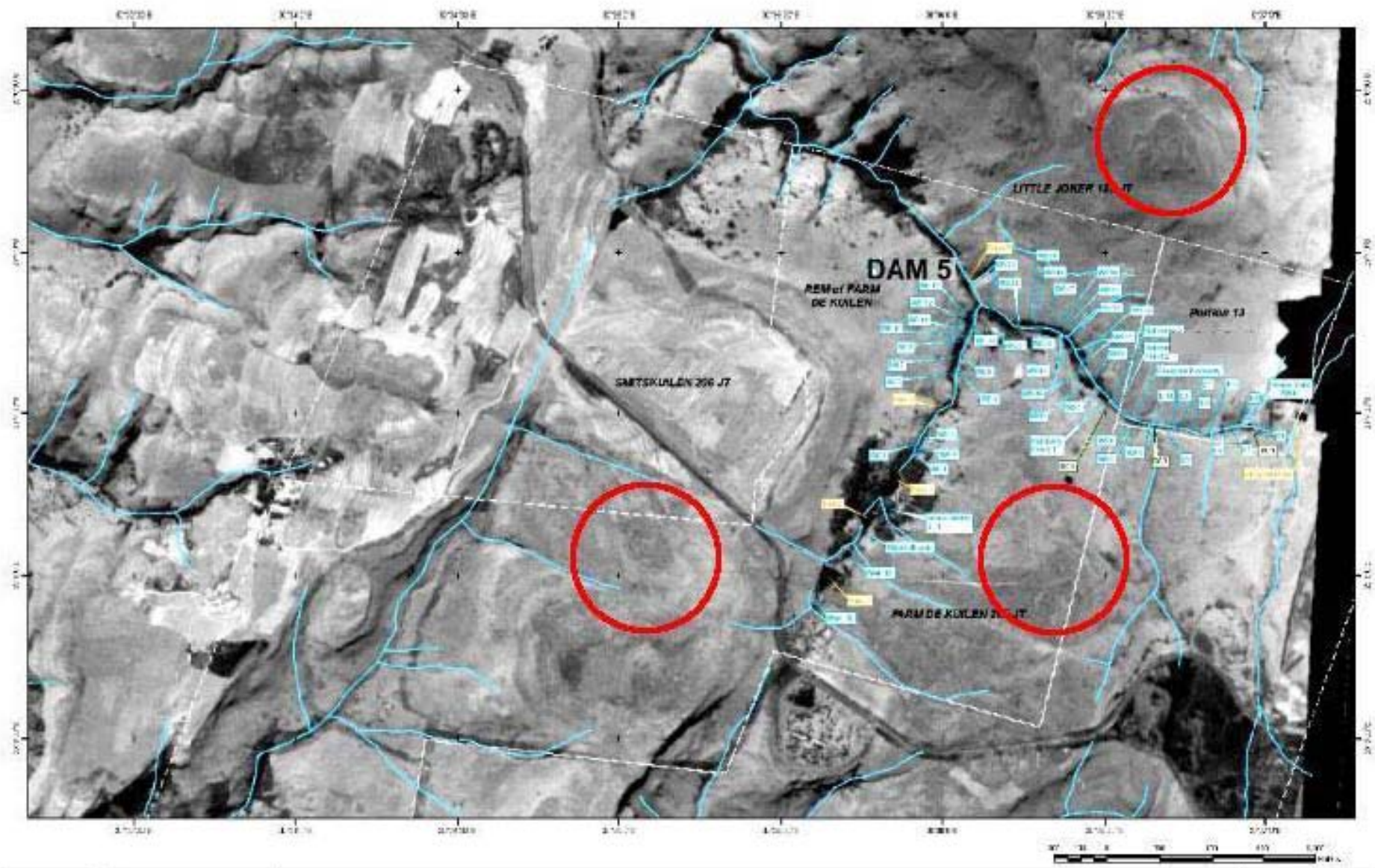
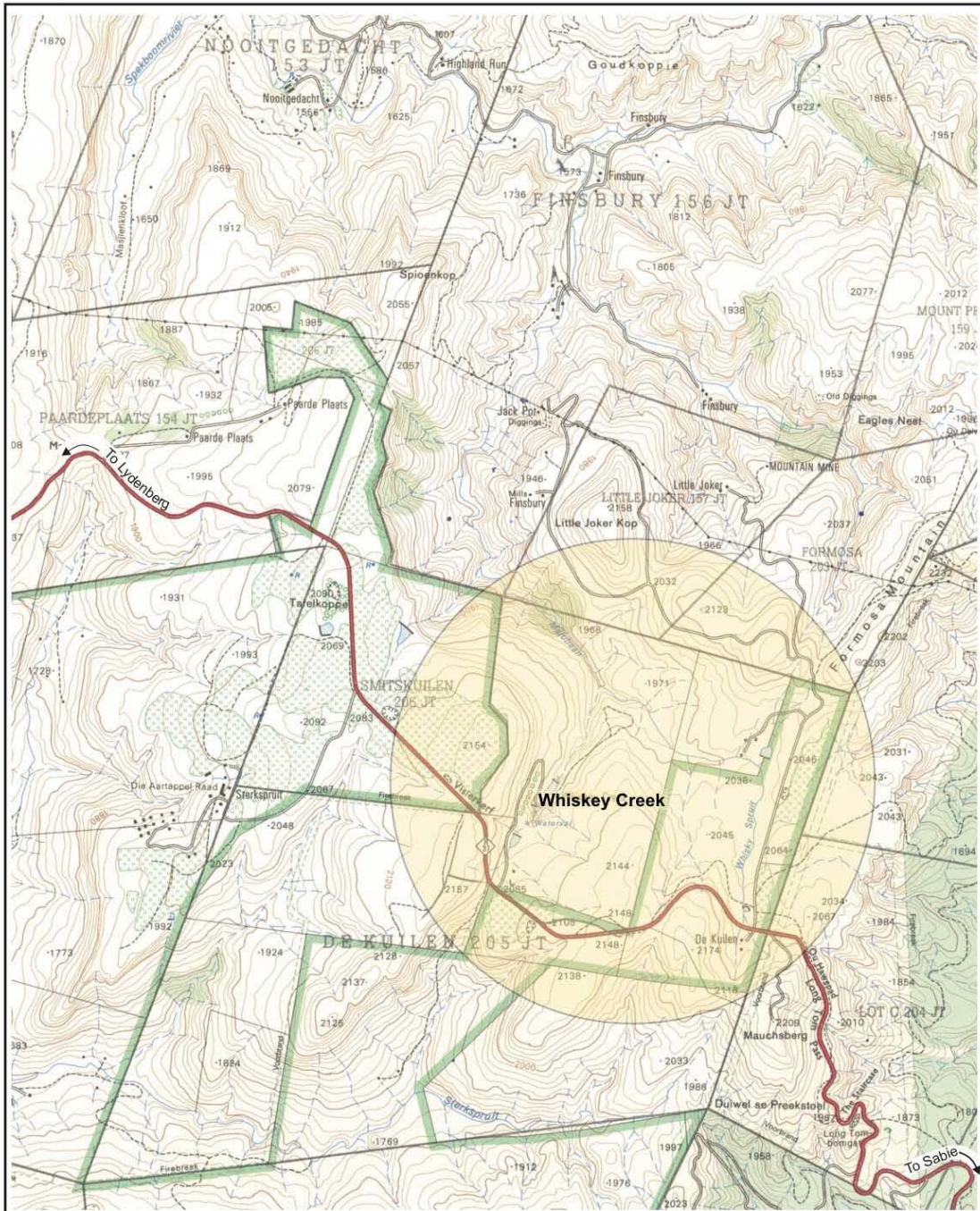


Fig 3. Aerial photograph of the area – the circles indicate area where archaeological settlements are expected.



**REFERENCE:**  
1:50 000  
2530 BA Long Tom Pass



JOB No. 364824	WHISKEY CREEK LOCALITY PLAN	FIG. No. 1.1
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J:PROJ/364824/CorelDraw/fig 1.1

DATE: 25 01 2006  
Revision: A

**Locality map**

## **REFERENCES**

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Huffman Thomas N. In Press. *The Last 500 years in the Trans-vaal*. School of Geography, Archaeology & Environmental Studies University of the Witwatersrand