

**Prepared for:**

**LANDSCAPE DYNAMICS**

**ESKOM NORTHERN REGION**

**A PHASE I HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY FOR A  
PROPOSED NEW 132kV POWER LINE RUNNING FROM THE  
WITKOP SUBSTATION TO THE LEBOWA SUBSTATION IN  
THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Prepared by:**

**Dr Julius CC Pistorius**

**Archaeologist & Heritage**

**Management Consultant**

**352 Rosemary Street**

**Lynnwood 0081**

**Pretoria**

**Tel and fax 012 3485668**

**Cell 0825545449**

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**Member ASAPA**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eskom's proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project encompasses the construction of a proposed new 132kV power line between the Witkop Substation near Zebediela and the Lebowa Substation in Chuniespoort in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The Witkop-Lebowa Project may impact on South Africa's 'national estate' as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999), some of which may occur in or near the Eskom Project Area. Consequently, a Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) as required according to Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) was undertaken for the Witkop-Lebowa Project.

The Phase I HIA study had the following objectives: to identify, map and describe all types and ranges of heritage resources which have been observed in or near the Eskom Project Area; to outline the significance of these types and ranges of heritage resources as well as the impact on those heritage resources that may be affected by the proposed new Witkop-Lebowa Project, and to propose mitigation measures for those heritage resources which may be affected (demolished, altered, moved or relocated) by the Witkop-Lebowa Project.

The Phase I HIA for the proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project revealed a few isolated stone tools in erosion dongas along the proposed new power line corridor. However, these stone tools are scattered and some occur outside Eskom's proposed new power line corridors. No large concentrations of these stone tools or other heritage resources were observed in the proposed new power line corridor.

There is consequently no reason from a heritage point of view why Eskom's proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project should not be continued.

If any heritage resources of significance is exposed during this development project the South African Heritage Resources Authority (SAHRA) should be notified immediately, construction activities must be stopped and an archaeologist accredited with the Association for Southern African Professional Archaeologist (ASAPA) should be notified in order to determine appropriate mitigation measures for the discovered finds. This may include obtaining the necessary authorisation (permits) from SAHRA to conduct the mitigation measures.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Eskom's proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project in the Limpopo Province of South Africa encompasses the construction of a 132kV power line between the Witkop and the Lebowa Substations near Chuniespoort in the Limpopo Province. This document contains the report on a Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study done for the proposed new Witkop-Lebowa Project in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

Parts of the Limpopo Province such as Polokwane (Pietersburg), Phalaborwa, the Blouberg Mountains, Mokopane (Potgietersrust), Louis Trichardt (Makhado), the Steelpoort Valley (Sekhukuneland) and areas to the north and south of the Soutpansberg have been explored for archaeological remains in the past. These explorations have shown that the Limpopo Province has a rich archaeological heritage comprised of remains dating from the prehistoric and the historical past. Prehistoric and historical remains in the Limpopo Province reflect South Africa's 'national estate' as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (see Box 1).

## 2 AIMS WITH THIS REPORT

Eskom's proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project in the Limpopo Province of South Africa may impact on some of the types and ranges of heritage resources ('national estate') as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) (see Box 1). Consequently, Eskom and Landscape Dynamics commissioned the author to undertake a Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study according to Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) for the proposed new Eskom Project Area.

The Phase I HIA study had the following objectives:

- To identify, map and describe all types and ranges of heritage resources which have been observed in or near the Eskom Project Area.
- To outline the significance of these types and ranges of heritage resources as well as the level of impact on those heritage resources that may be affected by the proposed new Witkop-Lebowa Project.
- To propose appropriate mitigation measures for those heritage resources which may be affected (demolished, altered, moved or relocated) by the Witkop-Lebowa Project.

**Box 1: Types and ranges of heritage resources as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).**

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999, Section 3) outlines the following types and ranges of heritage resources that qualify as part of the national estate:

- (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 palaeontological 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 in terms of the Human Tissue Act (Act 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 palaeontological objects, 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 (Act 43 of 1996).

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999, Sec 3) also distinguishes nine criteria for a place and/or object 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; and/or
- (i) its significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

This Phase I HIA study was conducted by means of consulting archaeological data bases; studying maps of the Eskom Project Area; doing a survey of literature relating to the pre-historical and historical context of the larger study area and by means of doing a survey of the Witkop-Lebowa power line corridor.

#### **3.1 Archaeological data bases**

Archaeological data bases kept at institutions such as the Archaeological Data Recording Centre (African Window) and the South African Heritage Resources Authority (SAHRA) (Cape Town [national] and Polokwane [provincial]) was consulted to establish if any heritage resources of significance occur in or near the Eskom Project Area.

#### **3.2 Maps**

The 1: 50 000 topographical and the 1: 250 000 map outlining the Eskom Project Area were studied in conjunction with the other sources of evidence.

The author gained some practical understanding of the heritage potential of the larger Eskom Project Area since 2004 while doing heritage impact assessment studies for rural power lines in the study area (see 'Select Bibliography', Part 8).

#### **3.3 Survey of literature**

A brief survey of literature relating to the pre-history and cultural history of the region was undertaken in order to contextualise the larger Eskom Project Area (see Part 4, 'Contextualising the Eskom Project Area' and Part 8, 'Select Bibliography').



### **3.4 Fieldwork**

The Witkop-Lebowa Project Area was covered with a vehicle where accessible roads existed while stretches of the proposed new power line were surveyed on foot.

### **3.5 Limitations and assumptions**

The Eskom Project Area covers a considerable piece of land and could not be covered in full with a pedestrian (foot) survey. Not all stretches of the proposed new power line were accessible for an investigation. Smaller archaeological features such as scatters of stone tools, small or eroded Iron Age sites and single informal graves therefore could have been missed during the survey.

### **3.6 Some remarks on terminology**

Terminologies that may be used in this report are briefly outlined in Box 1.

## Box 1. Terminologies that may be used in this report

The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) referred to in the title of this report includes a survey of heritage resources as outlined in the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999) (See Box 1).

Heritage resources (cultural resources) include all human-made phenomena and intangible products that are the result of the human mind. Natural, technological or industrial features may also be part of heritage resources, as places that have made an outstanding contribution to the cultures, traditions and lifestyles of the people or groups of people of South Africa.

The term 'pre-historical' refers to the time before any historical documents were written or any written language developed in a particular area or region of the world. The historical period and historical remains refer, for the project area, to the first appearance or use of 'modern' Western writing brought to Zebediela-Chuniespoort by the first Colonists who settled in the area after c.1840.

The term 'relatively recent past' refers to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Remains from this period are not necessarily older than sixty years and therefore may not qualify as archaeological or historical remains. Some of these remains, however, may be close to sixty years of age and may, in the near future, qualify as heritage resources.

It is not always possible, based on observations alone, to distinguish clearly between archaeological remains and historical remains, or between historical remains and remains from the relatively recent past. Although certain criteria may help to make this distinction possible, these criteria are not always present, or, when they are present, they are not always clear enough to interpret with great accuracy. Criteria such as square floor plans (a historical feature) may serve as a guideline. However, circular and square floors may occur together on the same site.

The term 'sensitive remains' is sometimes used to distinguish graves and cemeteries as well as ideologically significant features such as holy mountains, initiation sites or other sacred places. Graves in particular are not necessarily heritage resources if they date from the recent past and do not have head stones that are older than sixty years. The distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' graves in most instances also refers to graveyards that were used by colonists and by indigenous people. This distinction may be important as different cultural groups may uphold different traditions and values with regard to their ancestors. These values have to be recognised and honoured whenever graveyards are exhumed and relocated.

The term 'Stone Age' refers to the prehistoric past, although Late Stone Age peoples lived in South Africa well into the historical period. The Stone Age is divided into an Earlier Stone Age (3 million years to 150 000 thousand years ago) the Middle Stone Age (150 000 years to 40 000 years ago) and the Late Stone Age (40 000 years to 200 years ago).

The term 'Late Iron Age' refers to the period between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the 19<sup>th</sup> century and can therefore include the historical period.

Mining heritage sites refer to old, abandoned mining activities, underground or on the surface, which may date from the pre-historical, historical or the relatively recent past.

The terms 'study area' and 'project area' refers to the area where the developer wants to focus its development activities (refer to plan).

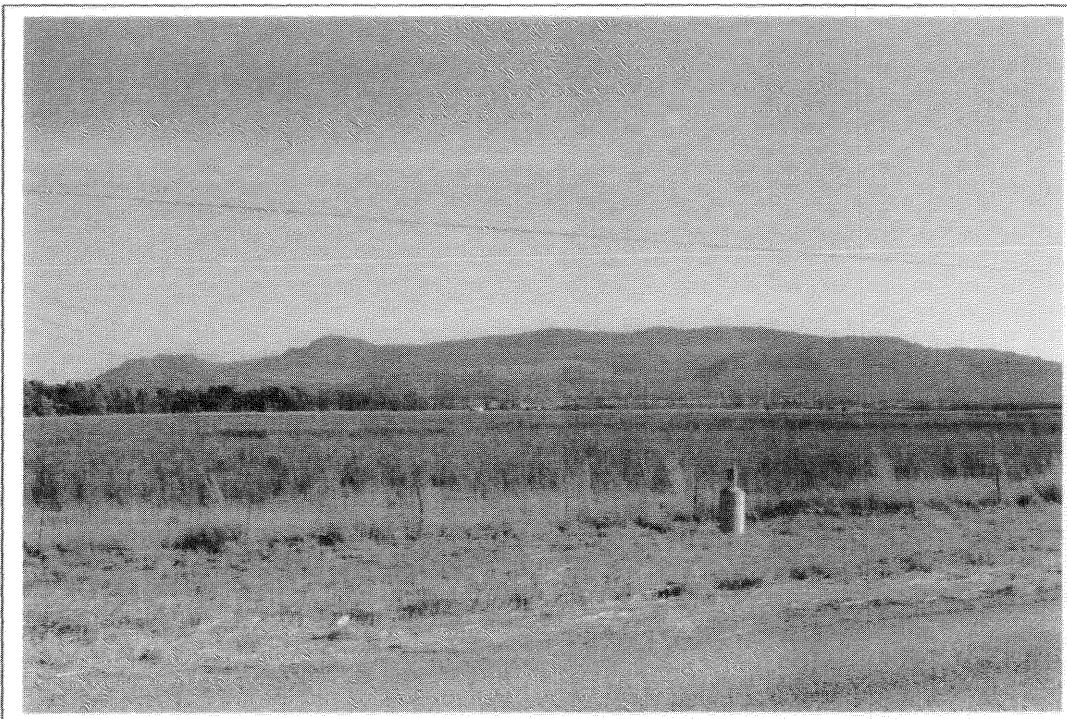
Phase I studies refer to surveys using various sources of data in order to establish the presence of all possible types of heritage resources in any given area.

Phase II studies include in-depth cultural heritage studies such as archaeological mapping, excavating and sometimes laboratory work. Phase II work may include the documenting of rock art, engraving or historical sites and dwellings; the sampling of archaeological sites or shipwrecks; extended excavations of archaeological sites; the exhumation of bodies and the relocation of graveyards, etc. Phase II work may require the input of specialists and requires the co-operation and approval of SAHRA.

#### 4 THE ESKOM PROJECT AREA

The Eskom Project Area runs from the Witkop Substation near Zebediela along the southern foot of the Witkop Mountain to the Lebowa Substation located near the southern foothills of the Magagamatlala Mountains which is part of the Strydpoort Mountains near Chuniespoort in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

The Eskom Project Area follows Eskom's existing 132kV and 22kV power lines across or between the farms Wildebeesfontein 20, Nantes 25, Deelkraal 22, Goedehoop 31, Hartbeesfontein 62, Klein Genoeg 65, Welgevonden 85, Schuinsrand 110, Randjes 01, Rooiboklaagte 112 and Uitvlugt 117 from the Witkop to the Lebowa Substations (Rooibosbult 2429AB Tshwene and 2429AD Zebediela, 1:50 000 topographical maps).



**Figure 1- The Eskom Project Area near Witkop Substation in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Note Wikop Mountains and Witkop Substation in the background (above).**

## **5 CONTEXTUALISING THE ESKOM PROJECT AREA**

A brief overview of pre-historical and historical information below contextualises the Eskom Project Area in order to identify possible types and ranges of heritage resources that may occur in the Project Area and to make assumptions about the magnitude of any possible impacts that the Witkop-Lebowa Project may have on these heritage resources.

### **5.1 Pre-historical context**

Very little is known about the pre-historical context of the Eskom Project Area. Further to the east of Chuniespoort, in the Steelpoort area, hundreds of Stone Age sites with predominant Middle Stone Age assemblages dating from 200 000 years to 22 000 years ago occur in the network of dongas which occur on the wide valley floors between the Leolo Mountain range and its numerous foothills.

No thorough research of the Stone Age in the Chuniespoort has been undertaken to date. However, it can be expected that Stone Age sites dating from all periods of the Stone Age will occur in this vast mountainous area with its numerous rivers and tributaries which are millenniums of years old and which criss-cross an area with high ecological potential and opportunities for humans to exploit from an early period.

### **5.2 Historical context**

A predominantly Northern Sotho-speaking population has occupied the previous Lebowa homeland area for centuries. These people are part of a larger Northern Sotho-speaking community who occupy a vast area between the Limpopo River in the north, the Drakensberg in the east and the Sekhukhune Mountains in the west. The history of the people of this area can be divided into several periods:

The earliest period of settlement is characterized by small groups of black people who drove the San and Khoi Khoi from the area. From AD1700 ancestral groupings of the present inhabitants of the land began to arrive in the area. Groups that can be distinguished include the following:

- A large group of Sotho came from the north-eastern parts of the Lowveld and settled on the plateau to the north and to the south of the Strydpoort Mountains.
- Smaller groups of Sotho of Kgatla and Hurutshe-Kwena origin moved from the Tswana area (Brits and Rustenburg) into the territory. Amongst them were the Pedi (or Rota) who moved into what is now Sekhukhuneland, where they subjugated the Sotho already living in the area.
- At that time Sekhukhuneland was also penetrated by Sotho arriving from the south-east.
- During the period after AD1600, the Northern Ndebele arrived from the south-east and settled in what is now the Mokerong district.

It is assumed that during the period from AD1700 to AD1826 the Pedi took political control over the territory previously known as Lebowa, but to the south of the Strydpoort Mountains. The Pedi chiefdom reached its zenith during the reign of Thulare, who died in 1824.

During the disruption of the *difaqane* (1822 to 1828) Mzilikazi attacked the Pedi from the south-east in 1826 and in 1827/1828. This caused the large-scale depopulation of the southern part of the Northern Sotho territory. The Pedi sought refuge in the Soutpansberg in 1822 and only returned in 1828.

After the wars with Mzilikazi, there were wars with the Swazi. The Voortrekkers arrived in the Steelpoort area and in Potgietersrust (Mokopane) in the late 1840's. Several armed struggles between the Voortrekkers and the Pedi ensued.

During the War of Sekhukhune (1879) the British were supported by the Swazi in their subjugation of the Pedi.

In 1842 Andries Hendrik Potgieter decided to move out of the British sphere of influence and to establish trade relations with Delagoa Bay. He moved with his followers from Potchefstroom to the Eastern Transvaal and founded Andries Ohrigstad. (The name was later abbreviated to Ohrigstad). During 1848 to 1849 Ohrigstad was abandoned when many people died of malaria. The town of Lydenburg was founded further to the south near the confluence of the Sterkspruit and the Spekboom River.

The first discovery of platinum nuggets in 1924 by Andries Lombaard in the Moopetsi River on the farm Maandagshoek in the Steelpoort valley led to an increase in the rate of exploration and mining in the Steelpoort and Chuniespoort areas.

### **5.3 The Kgaga and Ndebele of Kekana**

A number of Sotho tribes, all of Kgaga origin, live to the north and to the south of the Strydpoort Mountains, between the Pedi heartland further to the east and the Tlokwa territory in Sekgosesa to the west. The place of origin of the Kgaga people was Bokgaga, to the west of Ofcolaco. It was here that the Kgaga of Maake settled in early times. Their totem (usually a sacred animal that is venerated) was the *phuti* (or 'duiker').

Around 1750, the Kgaga of Mphahlele broke away from Maake and moved southwards and then westwards across the Steelpoort River. They eventually settled to the west of the Olifants River and to the south of the Strydpoort Mountains in the present Mphahlele village at Chuniespoort.

When the Kgaga arrived, the Kekana of Moletlane had already settled to the south-west of the area chosen by the Kgaga of Mphahlele. The Kgaga and Ndebele of Kekana are therefore the most dominant pre-historical and historical groups who lived near and in the Eskom Project Area for the last four hundred years or longer.

## 6 THE PHASE I HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 Various parts for the proposed new power line corridor

Eskom's proposed new 132kV power line running between the Witkop Substation and the Lebowa Substation near Chuniespoort in the Limpopo Province of South Africa was divided into the following parts and stretches that were subjected to a Phase I HIA study, namely (Figure 2):

- Stretch AB: This stretch runs from the Witkop Substation south-westwards across the farm Wildebeesfontein 20 following Eskom's existing power line. The power line then bends south-westwards following Eskom's existing power line and a dirt road slightly further to the east.
- Stretch BC: This stretch follows the western shoulder of the dirt road and runs across the farms Deelkraal 22, Goedehoop 31 and Hartbeesfontein 62, before crossing the dirt road.
- Stretch CD: This short stretch runs from the dirt road across Nooitgedacht 64 and Klein Genoeg 65 before crossing a second dirt road.
- Stretch DE: Stretch DE runs from the dirt road still following Eskom's existing power line across Welgevonden 85 where it ascends the Magagamatlala Mountain running across its neck and then gradually descending its southern slope. Near the lower southern foot of the mountain the power line bends sharply to the north-east running along the lower foots lope of the mountain before bending to the south-east at a bending point on Schuinsrand 110.
- Stretch EF: This stretch runs from the bending point on Schuinsrand 110 north-eastwards and then south-eastwards in order to run across the farms Randjes 01 and Rooiboklaagte 112 to the Lebowa Substation on the farm Uitvlugt 117.



## 6.2 The Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment

The Phase I HIA study for the various stretches and parts of the Witkop-Lebowa power line corridor is now discussed and illustrated with photographs.

### 6.2.1 Part AB: From the Witkop Substation to a dirt road

Stretch AB stretch runs from the Witkop Substation south-westwards across the farm Wildebeesfontein 20 following Eskom's existing power line before bending south-westwards following Eskom's existing power line and a dirt road slightly further to the east.

Stretch AB crosses agricultural fields.

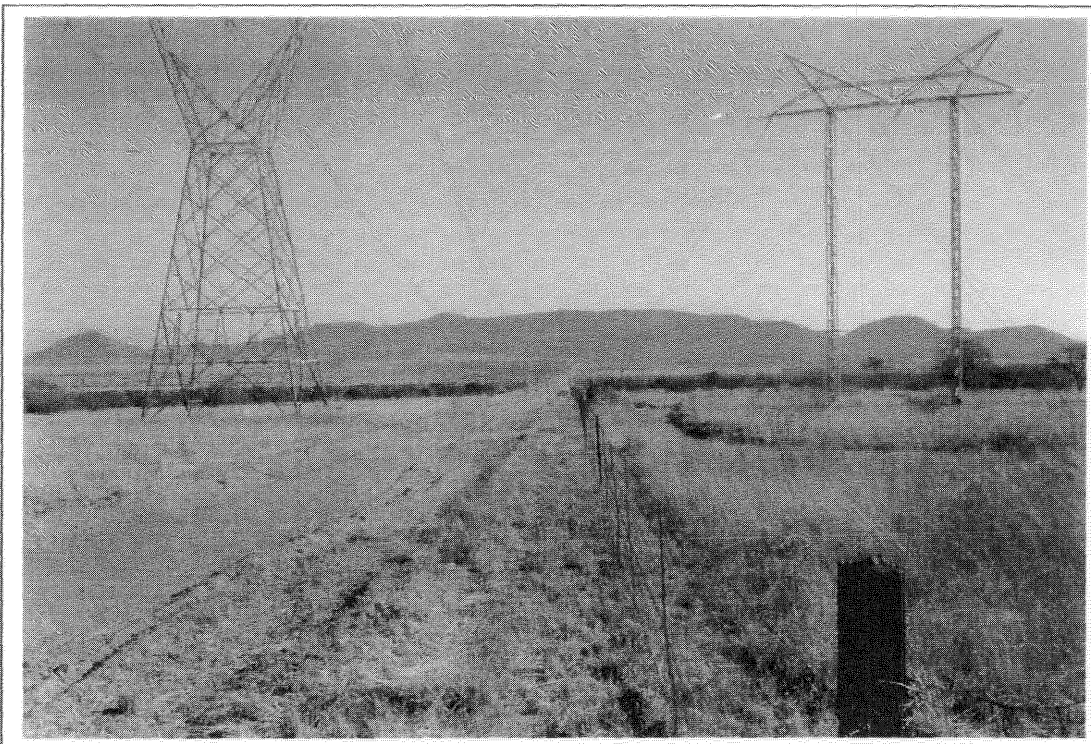


Figure 2- Part AB runs between the Witkop Substation and the first bend in the proposed new power line. Part AB crosses agricultural fields (above).

### **6.2.2 Part BC: Along Eskom's existing power lines near the western shoulder of the dirt road**

Stretch BC follows Eskom's existing power lines along the western shoulder of the dirt road and runs across the farms Deelkraal 22, Goedehoop 31 and Hartbeesfontein 62 before crossing the dirt road.

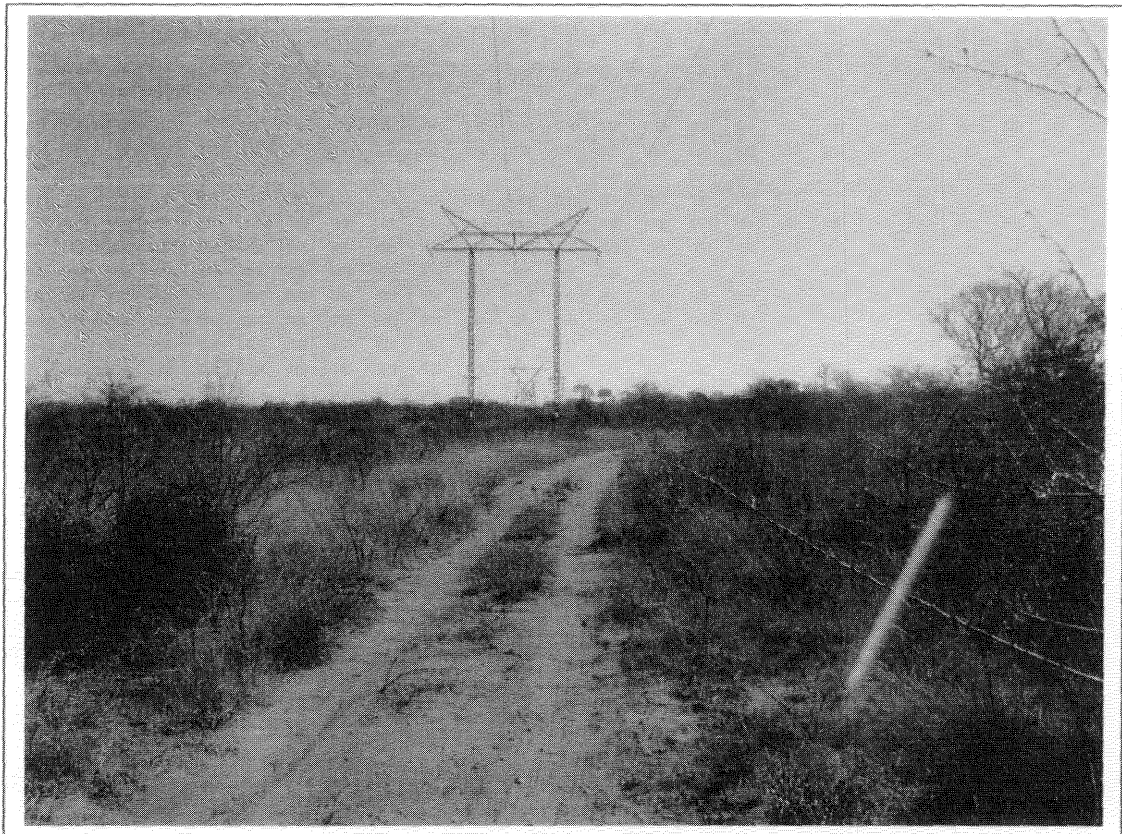
This stretch crosses pristine bush as well as a number of erosion dongas covered with grass.

A few isolated, single stone tools occur in these dongas, in the power line corridor as well as outside. More numbers may be covered with grass. However, no large concentrations were observed.

### **6.2.3 Stretch CD: From dirt road to dirt road**

Stretch CD is a short stretch that runs from one dirt road across Nooitgedacht 64 and Klein Genoeg 65 before crossing a second dirt road.

Stretch CD follows a dirt track road running through relatively pristine bush on Nooitgedacht 64 and Klein Genoeg 65.



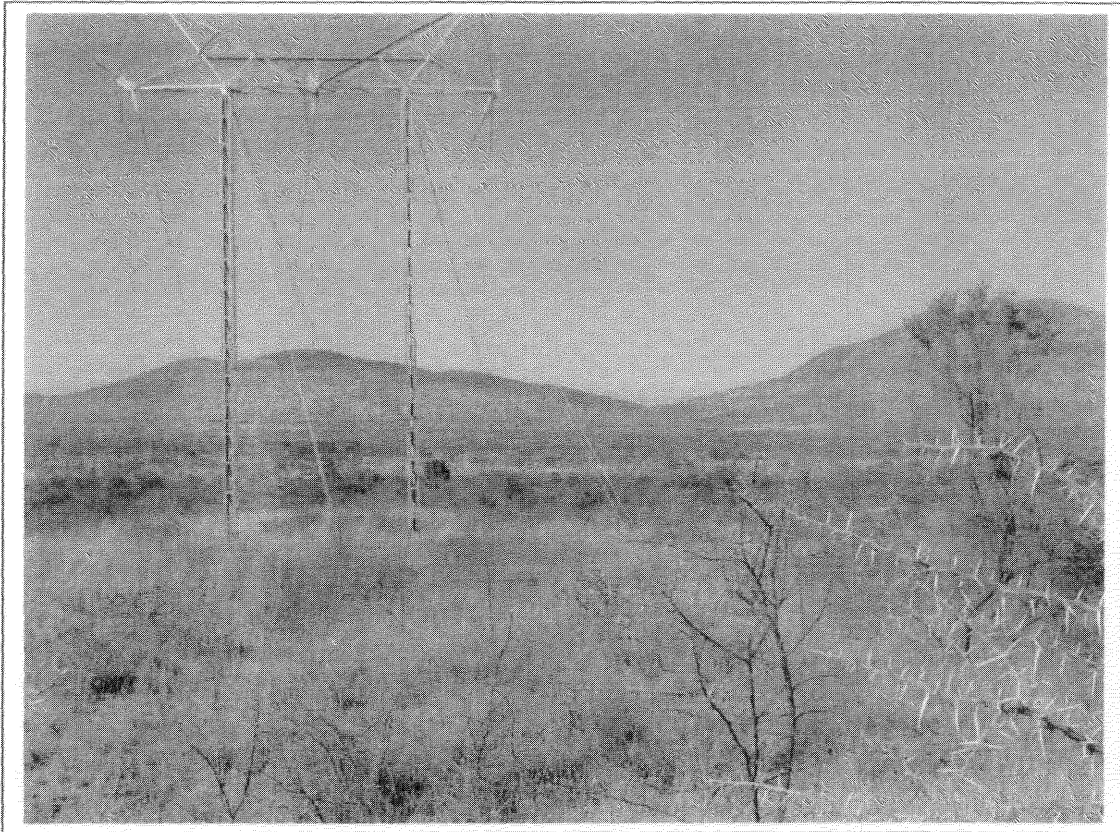
**Figure 3- Stretch CD runs along a dirt track road between two dirt roads (above).**

#### **6.2.4 Stretch DE: From the dirt road across the Magagamatlala Mountain**

Stretch DE runs from the dirt road following Eskom's existing power line across Welgevonden 85 where it ascends the Magagamatlala Mountain running across its neck and then gradually descending its southern slope.

The first part of this stretch runs across level country where a number of erosion dongas occur near the northern foot of the Magagamatlala Mountain.

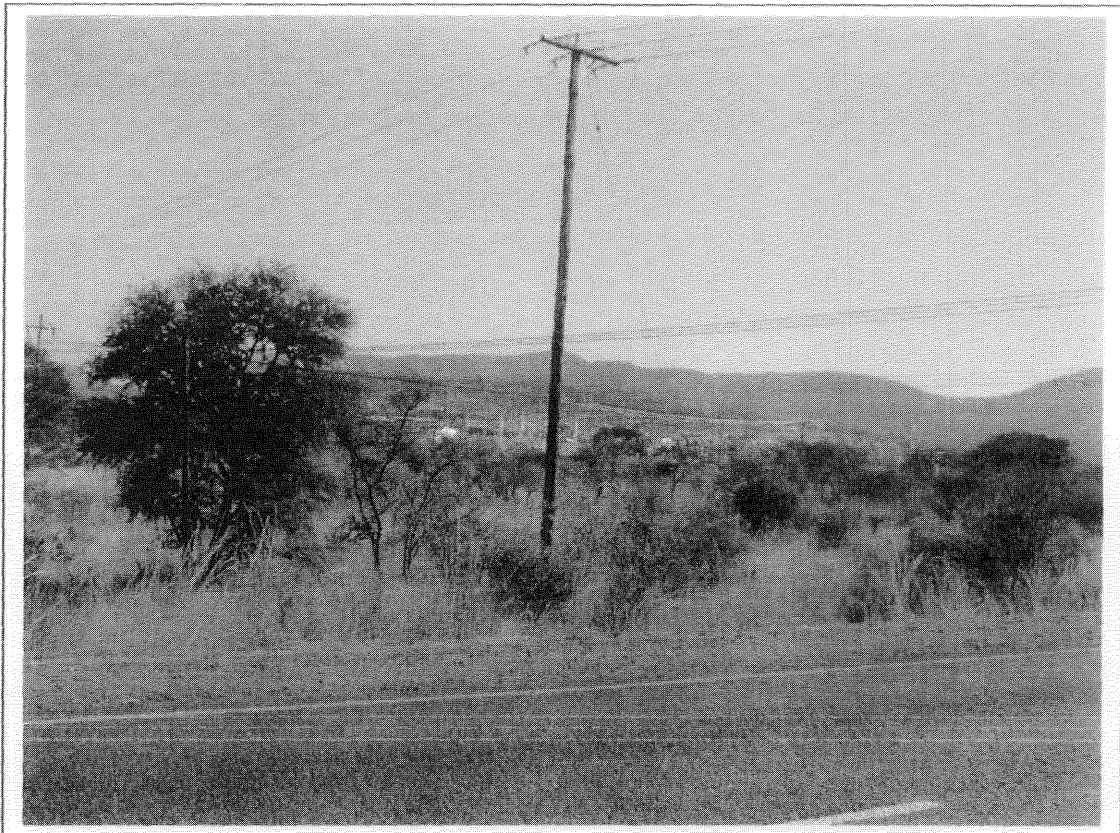
The second part of this stretch runs down along the southern slope of the Magagamatlala Mountain on Welgevonden 85 and Schuinsrand 110.



**Figure 4- Stretch DE runs up the slope and through a neck in the Magagamatlala Mountain before entering the Lebowa Substation (above).**

#### **6.2.5 Stretch EF: From the lower foot of the Magagamatlala Mountain to the Lebowa Substation**

Stretch EF runs from the bending point on Schuinsrand 110 north-eastwards and then south-eastwards in order to run across the farms Randjes 01 and Rooiboklaagte 112 to the Lebowa Substation on the farm Uitvlugt 117.



**Figure 5- The last stretch of the proposed new power line runs along the southern slope of the Magagamatlala Mountain before entering the Lebowa Substation on Uitvlugt 117 (above).**

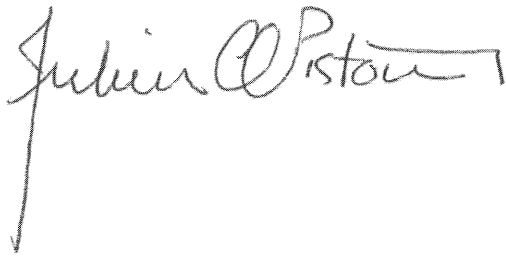
### **6.3 Summary: Types and ranges of heritage resources in the Eskom Project Area**

The Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project revealed a few isolated stone tools in erosion dongas along the proposed new power line corridor. However, these stone tools are scattered and some occur outside Eskom's proposed new power line corridors. No large concentrations of these stone tools or other heritage resources were observed in the proposed new power line corridor.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The Phase I HIA for the proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project revealed a few isolated stone tools in erosion dongas along the proposed new power line corridor. However, these stone tools are scattered and some occur outside Eskom's proposed new power line corridors. No large concentrations of these stone tools or other heritage resources were observed in the proposed new power line corridor.

There is consequently no reason from a heritage point of view why Eskom's proposed Witkop-Lebowa Project should not be continued.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julius CC Pistorius'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the name.

**DR JULIUS CC PISTORIUS**  
**Archaeologist &**  
**Heritage Management Consultant**  
**Member ASAPA**

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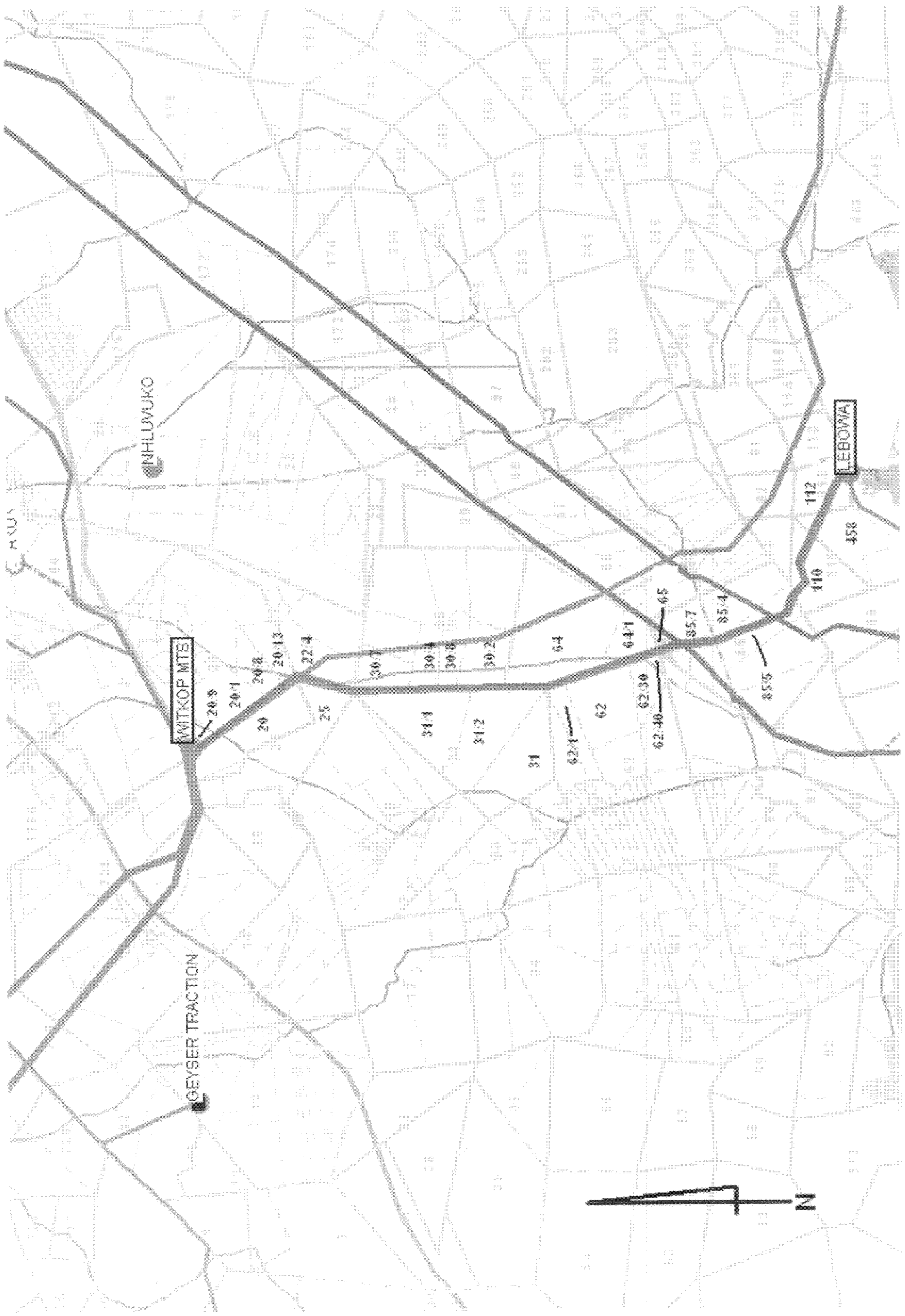




**WITKOP / GOMPIES 132kV**

Rout plan





Route Plan (Not to Scale)

Witkop - Lebowa 2 132kV

Proposed Route