

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED
TINTSWALO TENTED CAMP, MANYELETI GAME RESERVE**

A Phase-1 report submitted to Seaton Thomson and Associates

M H Schoeman

A N Motlounq

Archaeological Resources Management
School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

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INTRODUCTION

The owners of Tintswalo Safari Lodge intend to construct a tented camp with associated infrastructure, including a new access road, on the banks of the Nwaswitsontso river on the Manyeleti Game Reserve. This is a low-impact development. The paths will be placed on the current site surface, with no excavation during construction. The only excavation to be undertaken during construction of the camp will be for the support poles of the raised tent platforms.

Seaton Thomson and Associates, who are co-ordinating the scoping process, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to search for sites of archaeological and heritage interest in the area designated for development.

METHOD

One ARM staff and an University of the Witwatersrand Archaeology Masters student visited the area on the 22nd of September 2004, in the company of the project manager Mr Keith Stannard and Tintswalo Safari Lodge staff. After an on-site briefing, during which the locations of the various structures were recorded using a GPS instrument, the proposed camp terrain was surveyed on foot. Areas where platforms for tents will be constructed were examined using criss-cross transects, whereas the paths and new access road were inspected in parallel and zigzag transects.

Thick grass covered part of the terrain and survey procedures were adjusted accordingly. For grass covered areas where the tent platforms will be constructed, patches of approximately 250cm² were cleared every 2 meters. On the rest of the proposed site patches were cleared every 3 to 4 meters.

If found, sites of archaeological or heritage interest would have been recorded with a GPS instrument and then transferred to the 1:50 000 map 2531 CB Manyeleti.

RESULTS

Thick grass covered part of the terrain, and archaeological visibility was poor in those areas. Nevertheless, it was still possible to make an assessment.

Previous work in the adjacent Kruger National Park (Meyer 1986) shows that villages were clustered alongside cultivatable soils in river valleys. Whilst the proposed Tintswalo Tented Camp site had similar potential, no material culture clusters, which would have indicated the presence of old villages, were found on the surface.

Only one fragment of a broken lower maize grindstone was found on the edge of an eroded stream bank near the Tent 2 area. In spite of an intensive investigation of the area, no other cultural artefacts could be located in the vicinity. This isolated artefact has no significance.

No other artefacts were found in the area affected by the tented camp development.

Isolated undecorated ceramic shards were found upslope, where a power cable trench had disturbed the soil previously. This area, however, is not affected by the Tintswalo Tented Camp development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Archaeological sites were not found in the area directly affected by the tented camp. Consequently, **there is no archaeological reason why the development should not proceed.**

If archaeological material is discovered during construction or use of the camp, the localities need to be noted and reported to the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

REFERENCE

Meyer, A. 1986. *’n Kultuurshistoriese Interpretasie van die Ystertydperk in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin*. PhD Thesis: University of Pretoria.