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**KEELEY GRANITE
SURVEY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ON
HOEKFONTEIN 432 JQ**



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1. Introduction

The destruction of archaeological sites on the farm Hoekfontein came to light during November 2002. The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) wrote a letter to Keeley Granite on 20 November 2002, requesting Keeley Granite Mine to cease their activities, which had an impact on the archaeological sites (see attached letter).

Several meetings between SAHRA and mine officials followed. It became clear that only a limited environmental impact assessment had been done on a small area of the mountain. In this report, dated November 1998, it was stated that:

“A large number of archaeological sites occur in the area. It is therefore recommended that:

“Development can continue, only if suitable mitigation measures are applied to the various archaeological sites. Prospecting activities (middle August 1998) have already damaged a Late Iron Age site. The situation is not acceptable. It should be noted that in the meantime mitigation measures have already been conducted under supervision of the National Cultural Museum”.

Notwithstanding this report and other recommendations the mine continued operations ignoring archaeological sites.

At a meeting held on 12 March 2003 with SAHRA it was agreed that the whole area (1000 hectare) should be surveyed, first by aerial photographs and then on foot so that all archaeological remains can be plotted on a map. It was also agreed that if any new roads by the mine are to be developed, Dr. Küsel and Mr. W du Plessis should plan the new route or mining area in such a way that the archaeological sites are avoided. If some mining activities have to take place where archaeological sites occur, than the mine will first have to apply for a permit from SAHRA.

2. Survey

An aerial surveyor Cor van der Walt was appointed to conduct the aerial survey during August 2003. After those maps were completed, Dr. Küsel was instructed to inspect the archaeological sites and to plot them on the aerial maps.

The Hoekfontein mountain was extensively walked, photographed and mapped during November 2003. During this survey some 490 individual sites were mapped and some photographed.

3. Results of survey

It was found that the whole mountain had been extensively settled over a period of five hundred years or more. For the most part, these people settled on plateau's in the mountain. The main sites occur to the eastern and western side of the mountain and the central portion in that area where the mining office and workshops are now situated. Sites also occur along the foot of the mountain, especially on the northern and northwestern side. Unfortunately most of the sites to the east and south were destroyed by informal and township development. This destruction is still continuing on the western side of the mountain.

The following types of sites were found:

3.1 Settlements

The most common features on the mountain are remains of settlements. They differ in size from a few metres to several hectares. Normally a single settlement consists of a number of small stone circles in the middle surrounded by a large circle or semi-circle on the outside.

The walls of these settlements also differ considerably. The older settlements have low walls consisting only of a double row of stones. The middle phase of development has stonewalls up to half a metre high. The last phase consists of very large sites with well built stonewalls up to 1.50 metres high.

3.2 Waterholes

Waterholes occur near or in some of the settlements and are between five and ten metres in diameter. One large hole is over forty metres long. There are thirteen waterholes in total.

3.3 Footpaths

Footpaths interconnected the various settlements. Many of these are still used today. Where footpaths cross a saddle, stone cairns occur. These are found all over Southern and Eastern Africa and in the Far East. A traveller had to put a stone on these cairns when he passes the area to ensure a safe journey. Fourteen stone cairns occur on the mountain.

3.4 Modern ruins

There are ruins of modern square houses on the northern side of the mountain. In most cases they were built in the centre of the archaeological sites with stones taken from them. The stones were dressed and built into walls with mud. These houses date to approximately 1890 – 1930. Seven modern ruins were found.

3.5 Graves

The traditional practice was to bury people in or near the cattle enclosure. Though the graves are not visible on the surface, each settlement will contain a number of graves in or near the middle of the settlement. Many gravesites had been destroyed through mining or grading. On one of the mining sites a broken human skull and bones were found.

4. Destruction of sites

It is difficult to determine how many settlements and sites had been destroyed on the mountain. Portions of walls and other archaeological material have identified possible destroyed site where mining, grading or dumping had taken place. Mining has destroyed at least hundred and nine sites (see photographs). The installation of the Oshoek water pipeline destroyed four sites.

The greatest destruction had taken place near the offices, workshops, mining and dumping sites. Destruction of archaeological sites continues daily, especially with the dumping of waste rock on the archaeological sites.

The mine is contravening the National Environmental Law and the South African Heritage Resources Act through this illegal practice. The contravention of these acts can lead to the cessation of all activities on the site, heavy fines and also imprisonment. If the media becomes aware of this contravention, it can cause irreversible damage to the company and the people involved.

An archaeological site, which is destroyed, is a non-renewable resource. Once it has been destroyed the scientific and historic information it contained is lost forever.

It must be realized that Keeley Granite is in serious trouble with regard to the way mining has been conducted on Hoekfontein.

5. The way forward

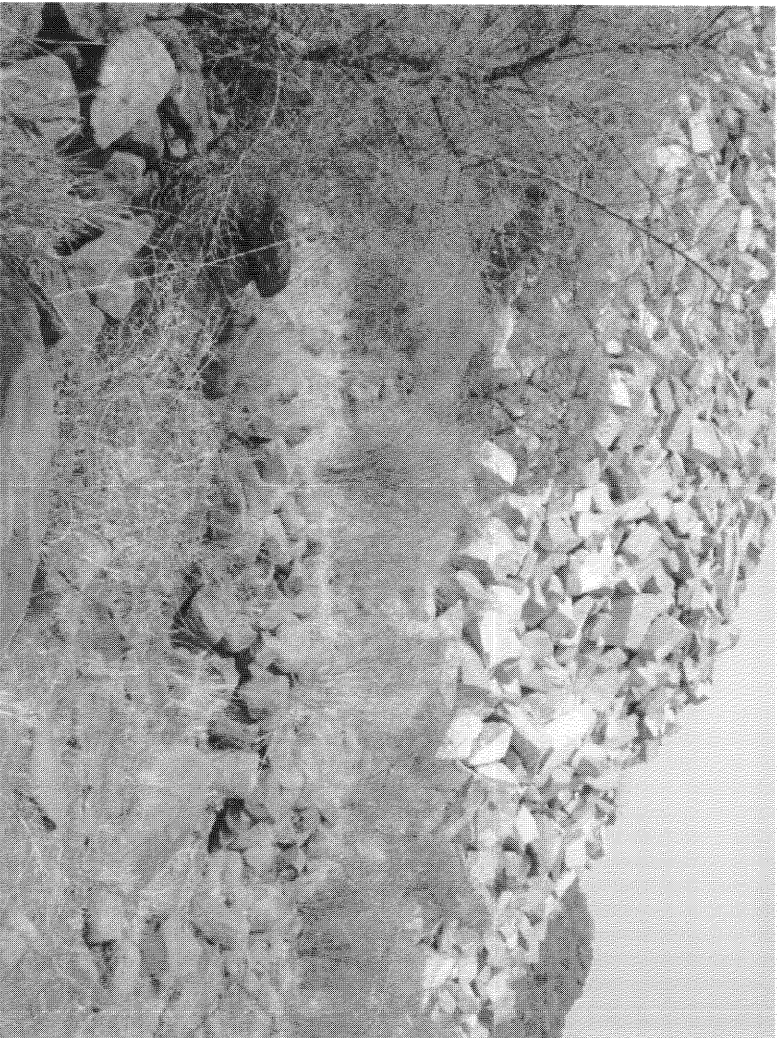
Keeley Granite will have to apologize to SAHRA and negotiate a solution, which will salvage as far as possible the scientific information and material, that can still be retrieved from the destroyed sites.

Such a proposal could include an agreement that Keeley Granite will undertake to do the following:

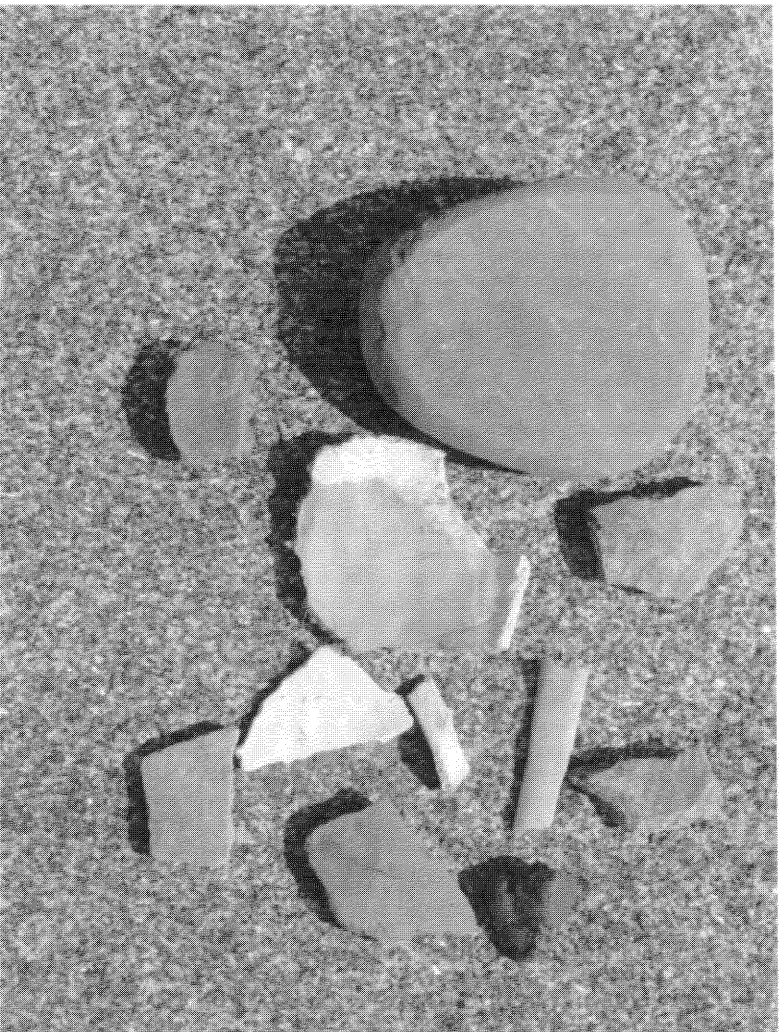
- in future strictly keep to the rules laid down by SAHRA
- salvage whatever scientific information can be salvaged from the destroyed sites through proper archaeological excavations of those portions of the destroyed sites which are still intact
- assure SAHRA that no new development, whether it is a mine, road, power line or any other infrastructure will be developed, unless the proposed site and route has been examined by an archaeologist and permission by SAHRA to proceed has been obtained
- assist and fund the preservation and development of the sites which have not been destroyed for tourism and education

- apply for permits for those sites, which will in future be destroyed by mining. If SAHRA agrees to this destruction, the mine will have to fund the archaeological excavation of these sites beforehand.
- assist in the development of a site museum where the excavated material can be placed and exhibited for the public and surrounding communities.

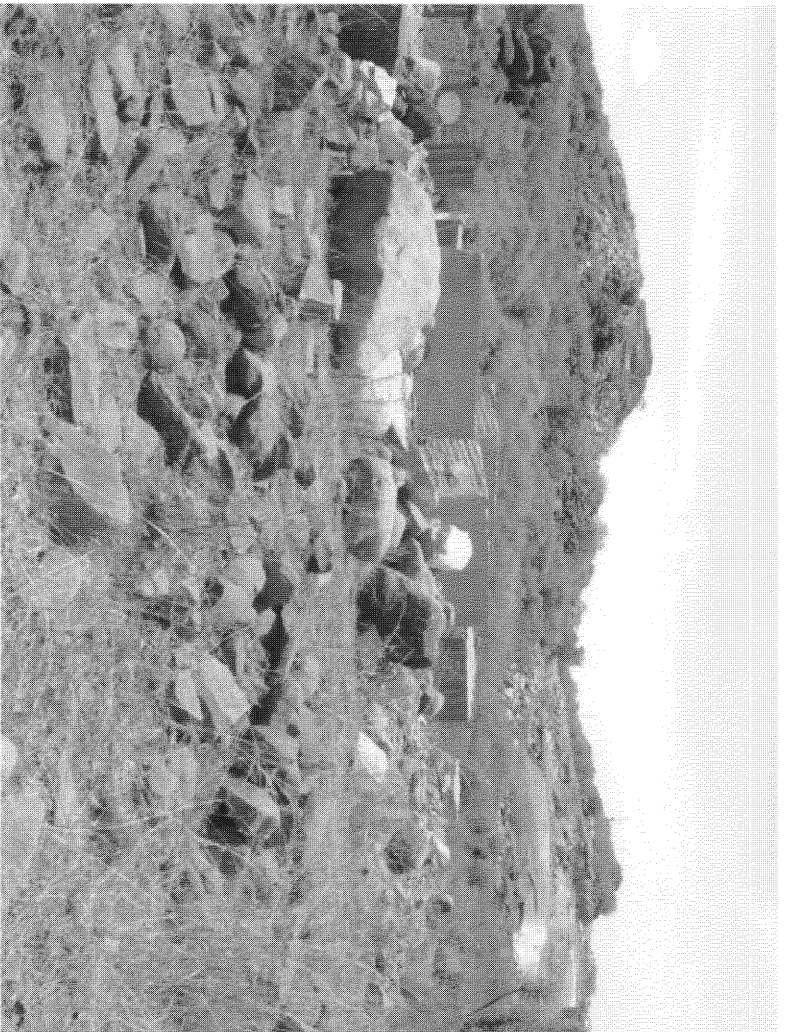
PHOTOGRAPHS



No. 1 Waste rock being dumped on an archaeological site.



No. 2 Archaeological remains including portions of a human scull found on a destroyed site



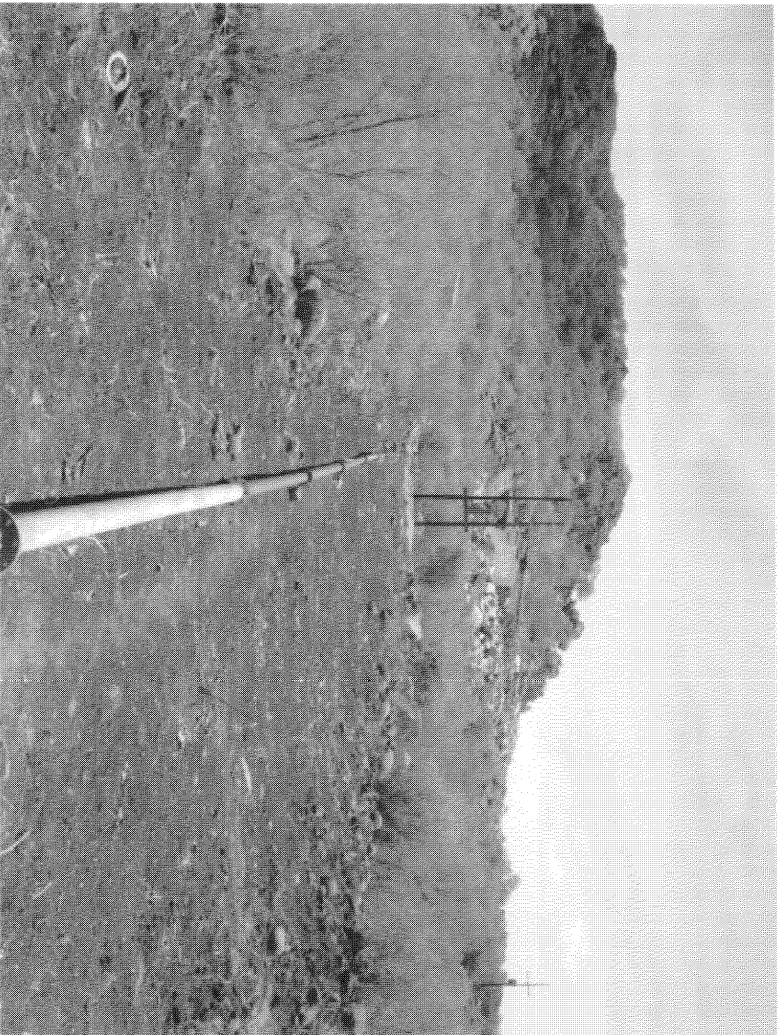
No. 3 Granite blocks stored on an archaeological site



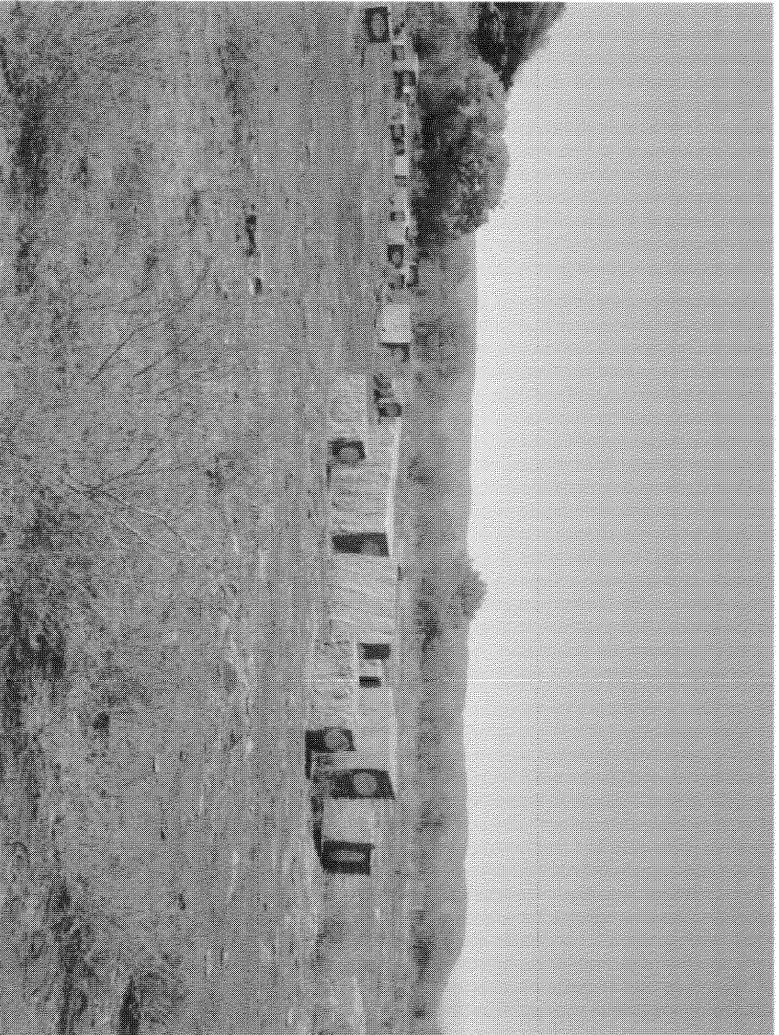
No. 4 Granite waste which have been dumped in one of the waterholes



No. 5 Road cutting through one of the archaeological sites



No. 6 Pipe line destroying archaeological sites



No. 7 Very large archaeological site, which has been graded for the storage of granite blocks