

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED NGWADINI DAM

INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Cultural Resource Management (ICRM) was approached by SWK to undertake an archaeological survey of the proposed Ngwadini Dam. The archaeological survey was to identify, assess and suggest mitigation of archaeological sites located in the affected area.

METHODOLOGY

The area to be surveyed was first analysed by means of a desktop analysis where the Natal Museum's archaeological database was correlated with the location of the Ngwadini Dam. This analysis indicated that no previous archaeological surveys had been undertaken in the area, nor were there any known archaeological sites in this area. Previous experience and the Natal Museum's database suggested that archaeological sites may exist in the affected area, since it is located near a main water source in a valley (the Umkomas River).

The method of survey was to use prior experience and knowledge of other archaeological sites to locate probable areas of prior human occupation. These areas tend to be on the top of hills, near floodplains, and so forth. I located three such areas, and walked in their vicinity. These sites would have been visible by scatters of artefacts such as stone tools, pottery sherds, debris from iron working, and so forth.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

I was taken to the affected area 8 March 1997 by Mr S. Day of SWK, who indicated the areas to be affected by the Ngwadini Dam.

I did not record any archaeological sites in the affected area. The only artefacts we observed were a few Middle Stone Age stone tools. These tools are common in KwaZulu-Natal.

These scatters of stone tools are of low archaeological significance, even though the impact on the dam will be high negative. No mitigation is required for these scatters.

I did not purposefully search for human graves, or remains, since the social impact report is to undertake this aspect of the Dam. However, I feel it is necessary to note the following before any human remains may be removed, especially if the remains/burials are older than sixty years.

Human remains are protected by various forms of legislation. Presently human remains are covered by the Human Tissues Act, and the National Monuments Act. These are currently being amalgamated under the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Bill of 1997, that has been recently gazetted, and is due to be passed shortly. This Bill requires that the exhumation is undertaken by the relevant authorities and that a permit is granted to the exhumers and/or developers for the removal of the grave/remains. This will occur regardless of whether the members of the community have given their approval for the exhumation.

I was informed that several graves existed in the affected area, and that one of these belonged to an *Inkosi*. The National Monuments Council, or soon to be renamed *Amafakwazi-Natali*, should be contacted regarding this matter.