

**PHASE 1 HERITAGE IMPACT
ASSESSMENT FOR RESOURCES ON BLYDE
PLANTATION: LISBON 531KT**

REPORT PREPARED FOR:
KOMATILAND FORESTS
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was done in the area known as Blyde Plantation, property of Komatiland Forestry on topographical map (1:50 000) 2430DD Graskop, on the farm Lisbon 531 KT.

A loose stone foundation was identified on Lisbon 531 KT, approximately one kilometer to the south west of the Lisbon waterfall.

It is the aim of Komatiland Forests to rehabilitate an erosion gully on Lisbon 531 KT where the loose stone foundation is situated. The immediate area has been surveyed for other archaeological or historical cultural remains, but none were observed.

According to the specifications of the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999 (NHRA), section 35(4) "No person may without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority – (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological site" and section 34(1) "No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority".¹

The history, age or use of the foundation could not be established positively. Some of the evidence that were collected show that mining activity dates back to the 1870's. The foundation was remembered by some of the foresters and it was already there when a modern day prospector, Mr. Killian (who provided the most information regarding the structure) prospected in the area. It is therefore recommended that a phase two assessment (excavation and documentation) of the foundation be done for mitigation purposes **OR** that Komatiland Forests leave the foundation intact and implement management measures to keep it clear of any vegetation.

¹National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. p. 58.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Adansonia Heritage Consultants were requested and appointed by Komatiland Forests to assess the age of structures in the area known as Blyde Plantation, and to make recommendations as to the importance in terms of conservation and the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999. A section of a small stone foundation was identified on Lisbon 531 KT, situated on a slope at the edge of a deep gully.

B. AIMS OF REPORT

It is the aim of Komatiland Forests to rehabilitate the area around the gully, which seems to have been disturbed by previous mining activities.

The aim of this report is to source all relevant and available historic information in terms of the features at the Blyde Plantation and surrounding area, as indicated by Ms. W Lampbrecht, Environmental officer of Komatiland Forests, and to determine the history, age and possible use as well as to make recommendations regarding the conservation status of the stone foundation.

The aim is further to comment on the importance of the stone foundation on the edge of a deep gully on the farm Lisbon 531 KT. The foundation is partly covered with soil washed down from the slope above. The gully is in an advance state of erosion and Komatiland Forests wishes to rehabilitate this section in order to stop erosion completely, which poses a threat to a small stream which flows into the Lisbon river.

C. METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted by means of:

- A survey on foot of the entire study area;
- Personal (oral) information acquired from individuals;
- Archival and literary sources where available.

The surface area, which was surveyed at Lisbon 531 KT, is situated in a newly established plantation against a slope with a degraded eroded gully. Visibility of the surrounding area was excellent and the foundation was easily identifiable, although part of the foundation is covered by eroded soil from the slope above.

The cultural heritage features on Lisbon 531 KT, (stone foundation) was visited on 21 June 2008. Ms W. Lampbrecht accompanied us to the site.

- **Fieldwork and Survey:**

The fieldwork and survey was conducted on foot of the area as indicated above. GPS co-ordinates were used to plot the relevant cultural heritage resources on Lisbon 531KT.

- **Personal information:**

Discussions were held with the environmental officer of Komatiland Forests, Ms W. Lampbrecht, who accompanied us during the survey, as well as local informants, current and retired prospectors and foresters (see *Appendix 2*):

D. LOCALITY

The study area includes the cultural heritage features as indicated by Ms. Lampbrecht, and fall within the farm Lisbon 531KT, on topographical map 1:50 000, 2430DD, Graskop. (see *Appendix 1*). The farm is situated to the north of Graskop on road 532.

E. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This area is known throughout the past century for its rich history in gold. Gold was first discovered in 1873 in the MacMac and Pilgrim's Rest areas. Gold was discovered around Lisbon Falls, also known as Waterfall Creek, in Mach 1874. During this time 63 diggers were at work there², and small-scale mining continued until approximately 2005.

In 1883 the owner of the farms Lisbon and Berlyn entered into an agreement with Baron Grant to float the Lisbon-Berlyn Gold Fields Ltd., company. The chief mining manager was J.L. Gould. J.H. Curle wrote in 1899, "Lisbon-Berlyn is one of the celebrated mines of the Transvaal." It was however, not known to be very profitable.³

A certain digger by the name of Billy Davis, worked near the Lisbon-Berlyn Company's property since the late 1880's. He enclosed a small cave below the Lisbon waterfall to provide him with protection during the Sekhukhuni War (according to the late George Marshall who was himself a modern day prospector), and the cave is still known as "Billy Davis' Cave".⁴

Some information by retired foresters and prospectors who worked at Blyde Plantation and at Lisbon in the past, indicated that the foundation was associated with early mining activity:

²F. Southey, *Graskop – Pilgrim's Rest Panorama Handbook, Mpumalanga*, p. 9.

³A.F. Williams, *Some Dreams Come True*, pp. 527-529.

⁴I. Reinders, *Pilgrim's Rest Museum: Personal Communication*, 2008-06-25.

- Koos Pohl, retired forester (08-07-08), stated that the loose stone foundation was already there when he started working at Blyde Plantation in 1972. It was said to him that the foundation was the house of white people in early years, possibly nomads / “trekkers” (see *Appendix 2*).
- Briganza Johnson, retired forester (26-07-08), was at Blyde Plantation from 1982-1986. He remembered the stone foundation and guessed that it was a gold prospectors house, possibly not very old (see *Appendix 2*).
- Willie Lacock, retired forester (10-07-08), was at Blyde Plantation since 1994-2002. He was aware of the stone foundation although he did not know the history of it. He guessed that the stone foundation was an old farmhouse or that it was used as a resting place for the workers when oxen were used to pull wood out of the forest (see *Appendix 2*).
- Daan Killian, retired gold prospector (02-07-08) remembered the stone foundation and according to him, it was a prospectors' house (hut) dating to the 1890's. He also remembered the gully next to it, which was a gold prospecting gully of which the soil had been eroded (see *Appendix 2*).

Modern day prospectors lived in the Lisbon waterfall area up to approximately 2005. Very little has been recorded of their work but most of the old inhabitants of the area remembered them well. It seems as if Gould, (his grave is still in the area and he was most probably family of J.L.Gould, the original chief mining manager of the Lisbon-Berlyn Company in 1883) and his partner Brerton, were first, followed by George Marshall in 1950's (died in late 1980's). Others who prospected in the area were Rickie Jooste, Theo Potgieter (died 2006), Tom Hancock (died approximately 1998), Brian McGibbon, Bokkie van der Merwe, Daan Killian and a certain Chezh.⁵

A former prospector, Daan Killian was the only one of the informants who positively remembered the stone foundation as a prospectors house and the gully next to it, which was used by the prospectors. He even suggested that it dates to the 1890's.

It is strongly suspected that the stone foundation in this area is associated with early mining activity.

⁵J.T. Reinders, Personal Communication, 2008-06-25.

F. STONE FOUNDATION: Lisbon 531 KT:

<i>Extent of development</i>	<i>GPS Co-ordinate</i>
Part of the stone foundation	Elevation: 1309m S 24°52'22.5" E 30°49'46.4"

The stone foundation has no solid binding material between the stones, only a mixture of sand and clay. The L-shaped section of the foundation that is still visible, is 2500mm on the northern side and 3500 mm on the eastern side. The rest is covered by soil from the slope above. The foundation is very unstable and the remains of two dead bluegum trees, are still embedded in the foundation. Other vegetation is also growing in the foundation, which contributes to its further destruction.

This foundation is partly covered with soil and as a result the complete size and shape of the structure could not be determined.

• **Photos of the stone foundation:**



Photo 1:

Photo 1: Stone foundation damaged by trees



Photo 2

Photo 2: Position of the foundation. The slope is clearly visible next to the gully.

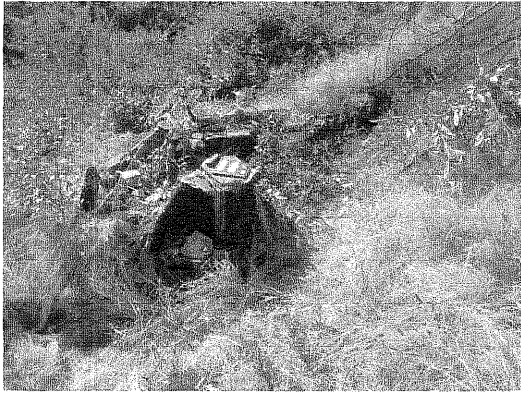


Photo 3:

Photo 4.

Photo 3: Stone foundation

Photo 4: The gully in the background.

G. SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL RESOURCES IN STUDY AREA

The small stone foundation that was identified on Lisbon 531KT has relevant cultural value of the mining history of the entire area, and it is included in the formal protection of the NHRA. Section 27(18) states that “no person may destroy, damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of any heritage site without a permit issued by the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of such site;”⁶ The general protection of the NHRA, states in section 5(7) that “the identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources of South Africa must - (a) take account of all relevant cultural values...” and forms part of the national estate.⁷

The NHRA further specifies in section 35(4) “No person may without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority – (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological site” and section 34(1) “No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority”.⁸

<i>Cultural Heritage features</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Stone foundation of structure associated with mining activity	High

⁶National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999. p. 42.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 58.

All archaeological or cultural heritage resources older than 60 years, are protected in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act no 25, 1999.⁹

H. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In an attempt to establish a date for the stone foundation, the following became evident:

- that no concrete evidence could be obtained from archival or literary sources regarding the structure;
 - personal communication associates the structure with the history of mining;
 - gold mining activity and prospecting in the Lisbon area started in 1874 and continued until approximately 2005. Mining activity in this area is therefore older than 60 years. The possibility therefore exists that the stone foundation associated with mining activity, may be older than 60 years, especially as no modern building material was used in the foundation;
 - the stone foundation contributes to the historic gold mining of the area as a whole, which is a valuable part of South Africa's National Estate;
 - necessary mitigation measures should be put into place in order to obtain as much information as possible regarding the structure;
 - activities planned by Komatiland Forests to rehabilitate the area will negatively affect the survival of the structure.
- **Recommendations:**
- It is recommended that a phase two heritage impact assessment be conducted to fully document and determine the use and possible age of the loose stone foundation;
 - **or**, that the foundation be left intact and the area around the foundation, not be rehabilitated as planned, but also be kept clear of vegetation.

All other heritage features identified outside the development area, are protected under the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999, and any changes in their current status are subject to professional research and mitigation.

⁹National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999.

I. SOURCES

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

- **National Legislation**

Republic of South Africa, National Heritage Resources Act, (Act No. 25 of 1999).

LITERARY SOURCES

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

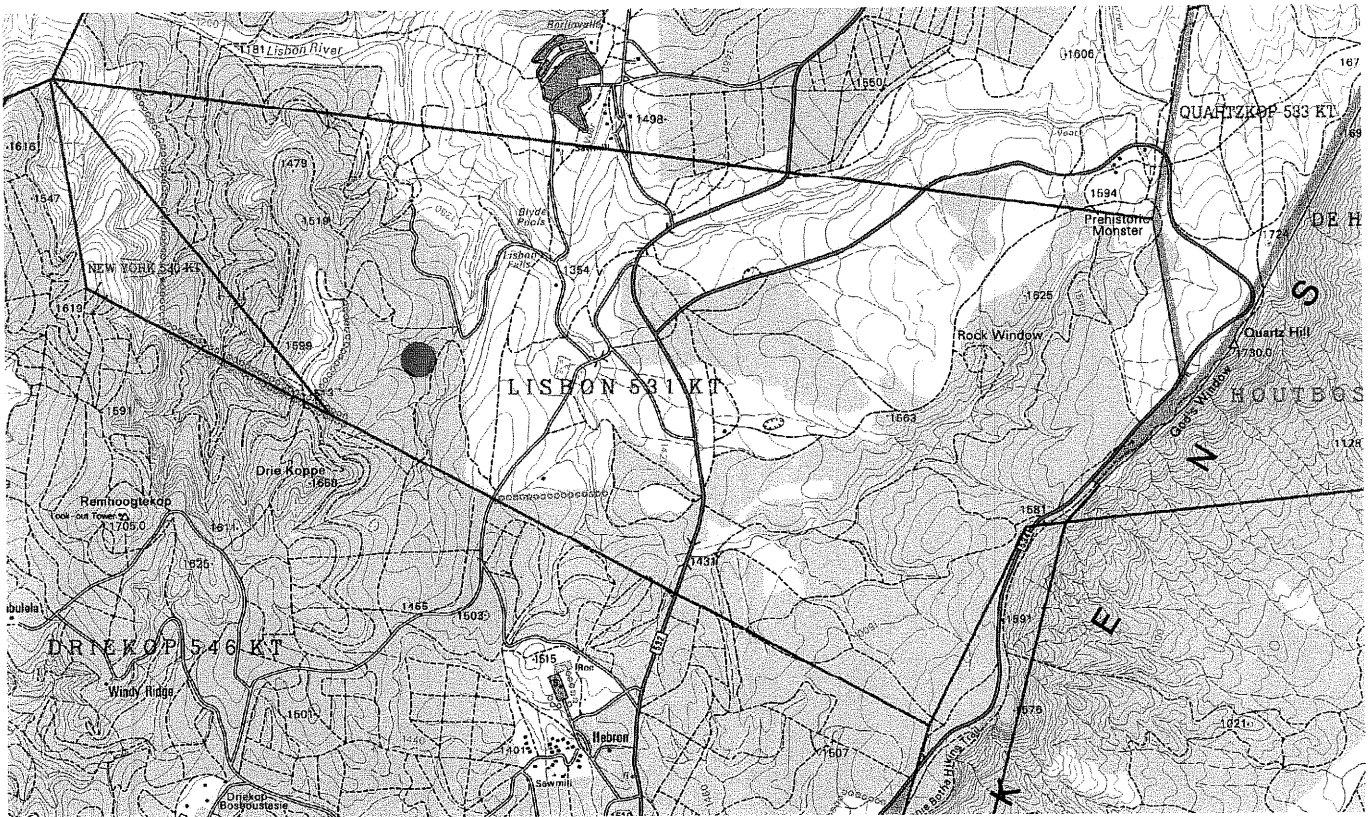
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- HINZE, WALDO, Retired from DWAF, District offices, Cell.: 0833018102, 2008-07-10, (e-mail: 2008—07-11).
- JOHNSON, BRIGANZA, Retired forester, Blyde, Komatiland, Cell.: 0823448788, 2008-07-08.
- KILLIAN, DAAN, Retired gold prospector, Cell.: 0720495422, 2008-07-02.
- KRUGER, HERMA, Komatiland Forestry Museum, Tel.: 013-7641058, 2008-07-14, (e-mail 2008-07-14).
- LACOCK, WILLIE, Retired forester, Blyde, Komatiland, Cell.: 0825651837 / 035-5504315, 2008-07-10.
- LAMPBRECHT, WINNETTE., Environmental officer, Komatiland Forests, Nelspruit, Cell: 0836770823, 2008-06-21.
- LANG, DAVE, Retired forester Blyde, Komatiland, Tel.: 0466244228, 2008-06-26.
- MALLOCH-BROWN, DAVE, Forestry Consultant, York Timbers, Tel.: 013-7649237, 2008-07-14 (e-mail 2008-07-15).
- MINNAAR, NANDUS, Forestry building team, Tweefontein, Cell.: 0731407369, 2008-07-15.
- MYBURGH, FRIK, Retired from Blyde Sawmill, Tel.: 013-7671891, 2008-07-02.
- OLIVIER, WILLEM, Retired from Sabie Forestry and SAPPI, Cell 0834428542 / 012-8044264, 2008-07-14.
- PAUW, KAREL, Manager Blyde Plantation, Komatiland Forests, Tel.: 013-7671207, 2008-06-25.

- POHL, KOOS, Retired forester, Blyde, Komatiland, Tel.: 027-2191280, 2008-07-10.
- REINDERS, IRENE, Museum Human Scientist, Pilgrim's Rest Museum, Tel. 013 – 7681471, 2008-07-29.
- REINDERS, JOHN, Inhabitant Graskop/Pilgrim's Rest, Tel.: 013-7681080, 2008-06-25.
- SMIT, EHRENS, Retired forester Blyde Plantation, Tel.: 013-7642413, 2008-07-15.
- STEYN, DAVE, Retired forester, Tel.: 013-7414247, 2008-07-02.
- VERMAAK, COEN, ex forester, Komatiland, Cell.: 0832286176, 2008-06-2.

APPENDIX 1:

LOCALITY OF STONE FOUNDATION: LISBON

LISBON 531 KT: POSITION OF STONE FOUNDATION



APPENDIX 2:
INFORMATION FROM OFFICIALS AND OTHER
PEOPLE

APPENDIX 2

INFORMATION FROM OFFICIALS AND OTHER PEOPLE

- **Karel Pauw, Manager Blyde Plantation, Komatiland Forests (25-06-08).**

Have seen the structures but did not know the history or age of the two structures and suggest that I contact retired foresters and consult maps.

- **John Reinders, Inhabitant Graskop/Pilgrim's Rest (25-06-08).**

Have seen the structures but did not know the history or age of them. He was able to give me contact details of many retired foresters and prospectors.

- **Coen Vermaak, ex Komatiland forester (25-06-08).**

Did not know the structures and could not help with information.

- **Leonora Botha, Official at Komatiland Forests, Nelspruit (25-06-08).**

Were not able to help with any maps or plans of the structures in the archives of Komatiland Forests.

- **Dave Lang, retired forester Blyde (26-06-08).**

Worked as a forester at Blyde Plantation from 1983-1989. He has seen the dome houses but was not sure when they were built, his guess was that they were built during the 1960's. He was not able to recall the stone foundation.

- **Dave Steyn, retired forester (02-07-08).**

Were able to assist with other contacts. He could only guess about the dome houses. According to him, a lot of white foresters were brought to this area in 1945, from the Eastern Cape. Some stayed on Bergvliet plantation where tin houses were built during the 1960's.

- **Briganza Johnson, retired forester (26-07-08).**

He was forester at Blyde Plantation from 1982-1986. He remembered the dome houses and said that they were built in the early 1960's as workers accommodation. He also remembers the stone foundation and guessed that it was a gold prospectors house but possibly not very old.

- **Koos Pohl, retired forester (08-07-08).**

Worked at Blyde since 1972 and the loose stone foundation was already there. It was said to him that it was the house of white people in early years, possibly nomads. The dome houses were there when he worked at Blyde, and it was built by the government.

- **Daan Killian, retired gold prospector (02-07-08).**

Did not have any information on the dome houses, but remembered the stone foundation. According to him, it was a prospectors house (hut) dating to the 1890's, and the gully next to it was a gold prospecting gully of which the soil has also been eroded.

- **Frik Myburgh, retired from Blyde Sawmill (02-07-08).**

He started work at the Blyde Sawmill in 1956 and stated that he thinks that the dome

houses were already there. That was 52 years ago. He guessed that the houses were built during the 1940's. Afforestation started in 1932 during the Great Depression years. He did not remember the stone foundation. Mr. Myburgh is 84 years old.

- **Waldo Hinze, retired from DWAF, District offices (10-07-08)(e-mail: 11-07-08).**

He had seen the dome houses and guessed that they were constructed during the depression years when white settlers were accommodated on plantations. He did not remember the stone foundation. Referred me to other retired foresters.

- **Neels Esterhuysen, SA Forestry Institute (10-07-08).**

He was in the area during the 1970's for only a very short time, but had no information with regard to the dome houses or stone foundation. According to him the houses were maintained well and painted every 7 years. He did say the Blyde Plantation is in existence for a very long time, possibly close to a 100 years.

- **Willie Lacoek, retired forester (10-07-08).**

He was at Blyde Plantation since 1994-2002. He was aware of the dome houses and the stone foundation although he did not know the history of either of them. He guessed that the stone foundation was an old farmhouse or that it was used as a resting place for the workers when oxen were used to pull wood out of the forest. There were also dip tanks in the plantations.

- **Herma Kruger, Komatiland Forestry Museum (14-07-08)(e-mail 14-07-08).**

There is no information regarding the dome houses or stone foundation in the Komatiland Forestry Museum.

- **Willem Olivier, retired from Sabie Forestry and SAPPI (14-07-08).**

He was at Sabie Forestry from 1970-1975 and at SAPPI from 1980-1997. He was aware of the dome houses but did not know the age. He did not think that they were built during the depression years, as corrugated iron (tin) houses with ablutions outside were mainly built during that time. He did not know the loose stone foundation near Lisbon waterfall.

- **Dave Malloch-Brown, Forestry Consultant, York Timbers (14-07-08) (e-mail 15-07-08).**

He looked at the photo's I send him, and stated that the design is very similar to worker compound buildings that were built in the 1940's or early 1950's. The "dome" design is similar to the curved corrugated iron sheets which were a common design in the late 1930's and early 1940's. The absence of ablution facilities inside indicate that it was used for labour accommodation, as houses with ablutions inside were only built around the late 1950's.

- **Ehrens Smit, retired forester Blyde Plantation (15-07-08).**

He had no idea when the dome houses were built or for which purpose.

- **Peet Reyneke, retired forester, (14-07-08).**

He was not able to give me any information.

- **Nandus Minnaar, Komatiland Forests, Head of Building team, (14-07-08).**

The only concrete evidence that I was able to find were faxed to me by Mr. Minnaar.

He was able to provide the buildings valuation (1962) form and floorplan (1959) of the houses. These specific houses were built at several plantations, such as Blyde and Spitskop, and were called "Latré" type houses, as "marrried native quarters".