

The archaeological survey of the Farm Verkocht, Luneberg

For Mr R. Gevers and Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage

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Introduction

Mr Ralf Gevers contracted Umlando to undertake an archaeological survey of the farm Verkocht No. 13, near Luneberg. Approximately 20 hectares of the farm will be used for new afforestation.

One archaeological/historical site was recorded during the course of the survey. The site consists of five graves and a management plan is required before afforestation occurs.

The site

VKT1 consists of five human graves near the top of a hill. Several large boulders occur to the south of these graves. Four graves belong to adults, while the fifth grave belongs to a juvenile. The graves are made from packed stone in an oval shape. Each grave lies in a north-south orientation. The adult graves are 1 m x 2 m in size, while the juvenile grave is ~1 m in radius.

The graves appear to be similar to Ndwandwe-type graves in construction style. However, this area is probably too far north to be influenced by Ndwandwe traditions. The graves appear to be relatively old and probably date to the Historical Period.

We did not observe the remains of a settlement near these graves.

Significance: The graves are of high significance and are protected by various Acts.

Mitigation: The landowner has two options regarding the human graves:

1. Demarcate the area with a 5 m boundary from the end of each grave. This area becomes a no-development zone. Thus, no impact will occur on the site and no further mitigation would be required.
2. If the area must be developed then two phases would be required:

2.1. Consultation with local communities would need to occur to determine if anyone claims the ancestors of the graves. If anyone claims the graves then they would need to provide proof to Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage.

2.2. If no claims were made on the graves, then they would need to be exhumed and stored at Kwa-Zulu Natal Heritage store rooms.

We believe that the first option is the preferable option.

Conclusion

The archaeological survey on the Farm Verkocht No. 13 located five human graves. These may be affected by the proposed afforestation. We propose that no afforestation occurs in this area and that a 5 m boundary is placed around the effected area and thus it should not be affected.

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