

# **The archaeological survey of the Hillendale Mine**

**For Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd**

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# INTRODUCTION

Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd contracted Umlando to undertake archaeological surveys at the Hillendale Mine. This is in accordance with an agreement made between the then Ticor, now Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd, Amafa KZN, and Umlando. It was agreed that we would undertake surveys on a monthly basis, and that if we could not attend to an emergency then we would subcontract an archaeologist to undertake the work for us.

The archaeological surveys in 2006 occurred on a near monthly basis.

The aim of the surveys is to make sure that archaeological material that was not previously recorded, sampled, or excavated, may be observed in subsequent visits. The current method is to survey the area that has been stripped ahead of the mine, and to monitor any other sites that were previously noted.

## RESULTS

No new archaeological sites were recorded throughout the year. However, isolated artefacts were observed in the cleared areas. These artefacts included:

- Middle Stone Age stone tools
  - These are mostly standard flakes made on quartz or quartzite
- Early Iron Age sherds
  - This included one Mzonjani sherd dating to between 1 700 to 1 500 years old.
- Late Iron Age, or Historical Period artefacts
  - These were undecorated sherds or grinding stones

We noted that there were artefacts in the mining area ahead of the current mine. These occur in the new mine lease. We are planning to resurvey this area in February 2007.

We excavated an iron smelting site in 2005. Throughout 2005 and 2006 we requested that we be informed when the area will be cleared of vegetation so that we could monitor the site in case further smelters occurred. This area was cleared and mined during the one month that we could not undertake a survey.

While this is partially our fault in that we did not undertake our monthly survey, Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd is also responsible in that they did not inform us of the vegetation clearance, despite repeated requests in the monthly reports. We could have subcontracted a colleague to undertake the monitoring.

This is initially a negative impact. However, issues only remain negative if they cannot be resolved and if a better management plan cannot be engaged. This is especially the case when a company such as Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd has had a good working relationship with heritage matters, and this has been the only mistake in the two years of monthly monitoring.

We have resolved the problem in the following ways:

1. We will be supplied with a mining path map. This map indicates when certain areas will be mined in the future. This will enable us to ensure that possible sensitive areas are monitored.
2. We will attempt to set fixed dates for surveys. If not dates, then a specific week. This will allow all parties concerned some form of notice as to our survey dates. Currently, we are required to be escorted to the mining area with Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd personnel. We suggest that the survey will occur in the first week of every month.

We believe that the above will inhibit other problems in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

Umlando was contracted to undertake the archaeological surveys and the Hillendale mine. These surveys occurred on nearly a monthly basis. No new sites were observed, however, several artefacts dating from various periods were noted. We also noted that the additional mining lease has sites and that these were reported in the initial 1995 Environmental Impact Assessment, with the CSIR. We intend to undertake a resurvey of this area in February 2007, and then monitor it accordingly.

One problem occurred during the 2006 year where a potentially sensitive area was mined. We have ensured that this will not re-occur. This will be enabled by Exxaro KZN Sands (Pty) Ltd supplying us with mining path maps, and we in return supplying dates of surveys.