

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED ROUTE FOR THE KOKSTAD-MT FRERE TRANSMISSION LINE

ESKOM is currently surveying a proposed route for the Kokstad-Mt Frere transmission line. The Institute for Cultural Resource Management was approached to undertake the archaeological survey of the proposed route in order to locate archaeological sites, assess their significance and suggest mitigatory procedures for these sites.

Prior to the survey I consulted the archaeological data base at the Natal Museum in order to determine whether any known sites existed in the area. In addition to this Feely (1986) undertook a systematic archaeological survey of specific areas in the Kokstad and the then Transkei areas. He found several Iron Age sites in the vicinity of the transmission line, but he had not surveyed the exact areas of the transmission line. This additional information allowed me to make predictions on site localities and significance.

LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural sites are protected by various forms of legislation. The main legislation pertaining to archaeological, historical and palaeontological remains is the National Monuments Act No. 20 of 1969, Sect. 12 (2A)(a-f). This Act makes it an offence to damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original site any archaeological, historical and palaeontological material, as well as human graves, without permission from the National Monuments Council. Permission is granted in the form of a permit, which may include restrictions regarding the development of that site. This restriction often necessitates some form of archaeological mitigation.

The National Monuments Act makes it clear that all cultural sites older than fifty years, as well as palaeontological and meteorological sites, require a permit if they are to be damaged or destroyed. Engineering activities are not excluded from this legislation. The only occasion a permit is not required for engineering activity, is if the cultural remains are to be moved from their original site. Nonetheless, an institute such as a museum or the National Monuments Council have to be informed prior to the removal of the remains, and preferably be on site during the removal. Failure to do so is an offence. 'Removal' and 'damage' are not synonymous actions.

DEFINITION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Archaeological sites have been defined using various criteria. I use the definition used by the Natal Museum for a recent project to determine site significance and predictive modelling (Wahl 1996). These definitions vary according to the type of site analysed, and are:

Stone Age:

"ten or more stone artefacts; or fewer than ten stone artefacts but which occur in association with other stone Age and/or Iron Age artefacts";

"other...artefacts" include art, beads, grinding stones, engravings, pottery, and places of spiritual/religious importance.

Iron Age:

more than "ten sherds, but [including] sites with fewer than ten sherds, but that occur in association with other Iron Age and/or Stone Age artefacts";

"other artefacts" include engravings, graves, grindstones, stone walling, settlements, and places of spiritual/religious importance (Wahl 1996:11).

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE STUDY AREA

A total of four archaeological sites were located during the survey. These sites belong to the Early Stone Age (ESA) and Middle Stone Age (MSA) period in southern Africa. The ESA dates from 1.8 million years ago to 120 000 years ago, while the MSA dates from 120 000 years ago to 30 000 years ago. The geographical location of the sites is given in Appendix A.

Site 1: MF1

This site is located near the top of a hill on the southern side of the Umsimvubu River. The site is a scatter of MSA flakes and cores, and ESA handaxes and cleavers - all of these are stone tools - extending over most of the hill. The stone tools tend to be demineralised indicating their age. The stone tools were made on dolerite and sandstone.

The site is of low archaeological significance and no mitigation is necessary.

Site 2: MF2

This site is located on the top of a hill near the Mt Ayliff substation. The site is a scatter of MSA flakes and cores, and ESA handaxes and cleavers, extending over most of the hill. The stone tools tend to be less demineralised than MF1 indicating their age. The stone tools were made on dolerite.

The site is of low archaeological significance and no mitigation is necessary.

Site 3:

This site is located near the top of a hill on the northeast side of the Mzintlava River. The site is a scatter of MSA flakes and cores, extending over most of the hill. The stone tools tend to be demineralised and made from dolerite. The stone tool flakes from this site tend to be larger than those from the other sites and often exceed 20cm in length.

The site is of low archaeological significance and no mitigation is necessary.

Site 4:

This site is located at the top of the hill in the 'island of the Mzintlava River. The site is a scatter of MSA flakes and cores, extending over most of the hill. These tools are less demineralised than those at MF3. Several tools showed signs of utilisation and were formally retouched to produce a specific type of tool. The stone tools were made on dolerite.

The site is of low archaeological significance and no mitigation is necessary.

MITIGATION & CONCLUSION

Four archaeological sites were recorded during the survey. These sites date to the ESA and MSA. Both the ESA and MSA are problematic periods in terms of dating in southern Africa, since they fall beyond the maximum age for radiocarbon dates and often do not have the correct chemicals for other types of radiometric dating methods. Those sites occurring in stratified archaeological deposits tend to be significant, however, in southern Africa ESA and MSA sites mostly occur as open scatters on the landscape. These scatters are often disturbed or the result of water outwash. They are thus rarely in a primary context and are mostly of low significance.

Those sites recorded during the survey are of low archaeological significance and no further management would be required.

A permit from the National Monuments Council will be required if any of these sites are affected.

REFERENCES

- Feely, J. 1986. *The early farmers of Transkei*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Pietermaritzburg.
- Wahl, B. 1996. *The construction of an archaeological sensitivity model for KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*. Report on a project commissioned by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

APPENDIX A

GPS LOCATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

GPS readings were taken as close to the transmission line as possible, however the sites are large scatters and extend beyond the transmission lines.

MF1: S30⁰ 51' 31"; E29⁰ 02' 02"

MF2: S30⁰ 47' 56"; E29⁰ 20' 18"

MF3: S30⁰ 47' 15"; E29⁰ 20' 37"

MF4: S30⁰ 47' 29"; E29⁰ 20' 34"