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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The area of the Northern Cape between the Vaal, Riet and Orange Rivers is known for its richness of archaeological sites and cultural heritage (Beaumont & Morris 1990; Maggs 1973; Humphreys 1972; Morris 1988). Schutsekama itself has been noted for its archaeological and rock art sites (McGregor Museum records), and the Battle of Kudusberg Drift took place over part of the farm. Schutsekama is thus particularly sensitive from a heritage perspective. However, mining during the twentieth century has devastated some sites on the property, and the few remaining sites are either highly endangered or already damaged to some extent. Several noteworthy rock engraving sites were recorded there in the late 1980s/early 1990s, and every effort is required to protect what remains.

Concerning Stone Age sites in the Northern Cape, C.G. Sampson has observed: "It is a great and spectacular history when compared to any other place in the world" (Sampson 1985). President Mbeki, in his *State of the Nation Address*, 4 Feb 2000, referred to the need to protect our rich heritage - this was something "to which we must surely respond," he said. Archaeological sites "can...be powerful tourist attractions," the President added, "thus emphasising the importance...of looking after what we have inherited which is as old as the origins of humanity."

LEGISLATION

The National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999) provides protection for archaeological resources, including sites of, or relating to, conflict that are 75 years old or more (hence, all Anglo Boer South African War sites), and structures that are 60 years old or more. This Act replaced the National Monuments Act on 1 April 2000.

It is an offence to destroy, damage, excavate, alter, or remove from its original position, or collect, any archaeological material or object, without a permit issued by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

Archaeological and rock art sites adjacent to the river and on hills

Stone Age artefacts of Pleistocene and Holocene age were noted on the hills and river-side silt terraces, while rock engravings are known at several localities.

All engraving sites on the property should be protected and mining prevented from proceeding at those places.

2.2 Later Stone Age and Acheulean sites

Sites were found on and within the sediments on the south bank west of Kudusberg Drift.

Recommendation

At least one LSA surface site requires to be salvaged before it is destroyed by mining (disturbance in the area indicates that other similar sites may already have been lost).

An abraded handaxe and large Acheulean flakes were noted in mining debris in this area. The nature and extent of Acheulean material in the gravel levels needs to be determined and sampled where necessary.

Battlefield debris

In a few places metal items that possibly date from the period of the Battle of Kudusberg were found.

British war graves were exhumed near Kuduberg Drift in the 1960s.

There is a well known engraving of a British soldier from the period of the Anglo Boer War, along the Riet River not far upstream from the intended mine.

CONCLUSIONS

Where salvage of heritage resources is necessary, and where such resources are likely to be negatively impacted by mining, a SAHRA permit should be sought.

Training

A training programme should be developed to sensitise mining groups concerning the nature and significance of heritage sites.

Education and tourism

Information from this and follow-up surveys may be suitable for educational and tourism purposes. Ways will be explored to disseminate the information appropriately.

REFERENCES

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