

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE LEBALELO PIPELINE,
SEKHUKHUNELAND, NORTHERN PROVINCE**

A Phase-1 report prepared for SRK Consulting

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SYNOPSIS

A few Stone Age and Historical sites were noted along the proposed pipeline, but none were significant.

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- Croydon Reservoir
- Croydon to the Burgersfort / Pietersburg Road
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INTRODUCTION

A group of mines in the Sekhukhuneland district in the Northern Province have applied for licences to abstract water from the Olifants River at its confluence with the Motse. The licences serve as an interim measure until the Arabie Dam can be raised. Known as the Lebalelo Water User Association, the Association commissioned a joint venture between Ninham Shand Consulting Engineers and SRK to prepare the preliminary design for the project.

The project itself includes a bulk supply pipeline that will deliver raw water to approximately five mine complexes: Havercroft next to the Motse / Olifants junction (Havercroft 99 KT), Winaarshoek Dam (Clapham 118 KT / Driekop 253 KT), Clapham Dam (Clapham 118 KT), Diloikong (Mooihoeck 255 KT) and Maandagshoek Dam (Hendriksplaats 281 KT). One reservoir will be sited in the neck of a hilly range on Croydon 120 KT.

SRK commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to examine the proposed site for the Croydon Reservoir in particular, and the pipeline route in general, for sites of archaeological interest.

METHOD

Two ARM staff visited the area on 1 October 2000. They examined the proposed route on foot and by vehicle. Special attention was paid to the proposed Croydon Reservoir, to open stretches through agricultural land and to branch lines servicing Winaarshoek, Diloikong and Maandagshoek. That portion of the proposed route inside the servitude of the main Burgersfort / Pietersburg road did not need detailed examination.

Archaeological sites in these areas were first recorded with a GPS instrument and then transferred to the 1:50 000 maps 2430 AC Mecklenburg and 2430 CA Steelport, 1975 editions.

RESULTS

Havercroft to Croydon

The recent paintings near TP 7 (24.19.20S 30.09.36E) were noted in the minutes of the technical site visit with regulatory authorities on 2 August 2000. The painted writing has little significance (Figure 1).

Middle Stone Age artifacts (\pm 250 000 to 25 000 years ago) lie scattered across the river terrace between TP 10 and TP 11 (24.19.57S 30.08.44E). The MSA scatter extends down towards the river for a few hundred metres, and the area that will be impacted by the pipeline has no significance (Figure 1).

Nothing was found in a foot survey between TP 16 and TP 20, except for a modern threshing floor in the fields.

Croydon Reservoir

The hill and slopes designated for the reservoir are devoid of archaeological material. There are signs (writing on stone and a cairn), however, of use by church groups (24.22.42.8S 30.07.43E) near the proposed reservoir site and on the slopes below (Figure 2).

The foundations of modern Pedi households stand in the saddle on the slope of the hill (eg 24.22.51S 30.07.27.5E). These households are shown in use on the 1975 edition of the map 2430 AC (Figure 2).

Croydon to the Burgersfort / Pietersburg Road

Nothing was found between TP 81 and TP 82. Recent Pedi pottery and some Middle Stone Age (MSA) artefacts occur around TP 82 where the pipeline crosses the Mabogwane stream (24.24.24S 30.06.27E) (Figure 2). This material is of no significance.

A high concentration of MSA material lies in the eroded area at the base of the Thokame ridge (24.25.37S 30.05.95.5E) near TP 71. More MSA artefacts occur on the flat



Figure 1. Archaeological finds from Hovercroft to Croydon: MSA = Middle Stone Age. Map = 2430AC Mecklenburg.

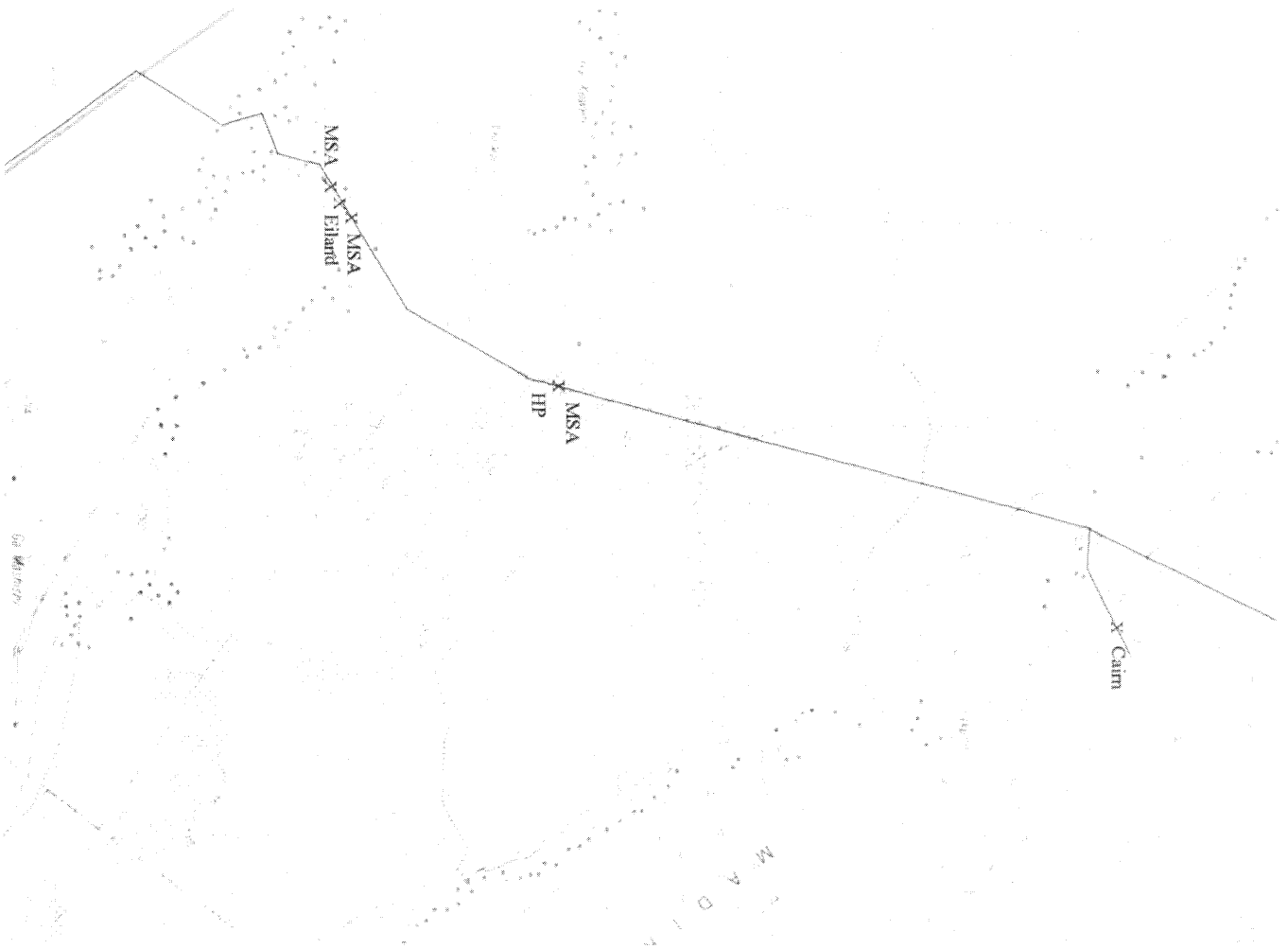


Figure 2. Archaeological finds at Croydon Reservoir and from Croydon to the Burgersfort / Pietersburg Road: MSA = Middle Stone Age, HP = Historic Pedi. Map = 2430AC Mecklenburg.

plateau above, near TP 70, especially in the eroded stream bed (24.25.43S 30.05.48E). A few Eiland-style (\pm AD 1000) pot sherds were also noted near TP 68 on the plateau (24.25.42S 30.05.55E) (Figure 2).

Although interesting, these MSA and Iron Age finds are not *in situ* and thus have little significance.

Winnarshoek Branch

Historic Pedi households once stood near TP 85 and TP 86, where the route crosses the Matodi stream. Grindstones and pottery on the east side (24.28.21S 30.06.01.5E) and the same finds as well as stone cores of mud walls on the west side (24.28.24S 30.05.54E) mark the location of at least two households. A third was noted near TP 86 (24.28.30S 30.05.51E) at the base of the small conical hill (Figure 3).

The remains of a fourth homestead stands on the other, west side of the hill (24.28.40S 30.05.37E) (Figure 3).

Dilokong Branch

Nothing was found

Maandagshoek Branch

A relatively large African cemetery (24.36.16S 30.08.27E) with more than 50 graves stands about 75m from the road on a small pinnacle of soil in an otherwise eroded terrain (Figure 4). The cemetery is still visited, and its obviously important to the community.

Another, smaller cemetery (24.36.21.9S 30.08.18.8E) lies just 20m from the road near TP 100. This cemetery contains about 14 graves, some of them of children (Figure 4). This graveyard too is important to the community.

Towards the end of the pipeline, white poles numbering HDP 17 and 18 mark the route.



Figure 3. Archaeological finds on the Winnershoek Branch: HP = Historic Pedi. Maps = 2430AC Mecklenburg and 2430CA Steelpoort.

Only a few highly weathered MSA artefacts occur here (24.37.13S 30.06.55E) (Figure 4). They have no significance.

A large mound of iron smelting debris was previously noted by Wiis geologists about 500m north of the pipeline. The mound contains broken clay blowpipes and furnace slag. An iron smelter must have operated in the immediate vicinity (Figure 4). This site is important but it is not endangered by the pipeline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The main pipeline route, reservoir and branches will not endanger any archaeological site of significance. Thus, there is no archaeological reason why the Lebalelo Water Supply Scheme project should not go ahead.

The two cemeteries along the Maandagshoek Branch, however, require special consideration. The larger cemetery will probably not be endangered, but the small one is threatened. It should be fenced off during the construction phase of the project.