

Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment on the remainder of  
Portion 2 of the farm Montrose 290 JT, Mbombela Municipality,  
Mpumalanga.

Compiled by

# Kudzala Antiquity



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10 July, 2009

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## 1. Introduction

Kudzala Antiquity was commissioned to conduct an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) on portion 2 of the farm Montrose 290 JT, Mbombela Municipality, Mpumalanga Province. This study was conducted for Enpact Environmental Consultants, based in Nelspruit.

The study forms part of an Environmental Impact Assessment as required by legislation, the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25, 1999). This act requires of individuals (engineers, farmers, mines and industry) or institutions to have impact assessment studies undertaken whenever any development activities are planned. This is to ensure that heritage features or sites that qualify as part of the National Estate are not damaged or destroyed.

Heritage resources considered to be part of the national estate include those that are of cultural significance or have other special value to the present community or future generations.

The national estate may include:

- places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- historical settlements and townscapes;
- landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- graves and burial grounds including:
  - (i) ancestral graves;
  - (ii) royal graves and graves of traditional leaders;
  - (iii) graves of victims of conflict;
  - (iv) graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*;

(v) historical graves and cemeteries; and  
other human remains which are not covered in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No. 65 of 1983);

- sites of significance relating to slavery in South Africa;
- movable objects including:
  - (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
  - (ii) objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
  - (iii) ethnographic art and objects;
  - (iv) military objects
  - (v) objects of decorative or fine art;
  - (vi) objects of scientific or technological interest; and

books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1 of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996).

Van Vollenhoven (1995:3) describes cultural resources as all unique and non-renewable physical phenomena (of natural occurrence or made by humans) that can be associated with human (cultural) activities. These would be any man-made structure, tool, object of art or waste that was left behind on or beneath the soil surface by historic or pre-historic communities. These remains, when studied in their original context by archaeologists, are interpreted in an attempt to understand, identify and reconstruct the activities and lifestyles of past communities. When these items are disturbed from their original context, any meaningful information they possess is lost, therefore it is important to locate and identify such remains before construction or development activities commence.

An AIA consists of three phases, this document deals with the first phase. This (phase 1) investigation is aimed at getting an overview of cultural resources in a given area, thereby assessing the possible impact a proposed development may have on these resources.

When the archaeologist encounters a situation where the planned project will lead to the destruction or alteration of an archaeological site, a second phase in the survey is normally recommended. During a phase two investigation, the impact assessment of development activities on identified cultural resources is intensified and detailed investigation into the nature and origin of the cultural material is undertaken. Normally at this stage, archaeological excavation is carried out in order to document and preserve the cultural heritage.

Phase three consists of the compiling of a management plan for the safeguarding, conservation, interpretation and utilization of cultural resources (Van Vollenhoven, 2002).

Continuous communication between the developer and surveyor after the initial report has been compiled may result in the modification of a planned route or development to incorporate or protect existing archaeological sites.

## 2. Description of surveyed area

The study area falls within the Mbombela local municipal area and the Greater Ehlanzeni District Municipality within Mpumalanga Province. The survey was carried out on approximately 6 ha of land located on a portion of the farm Montrose in the vicinity of the Schoemanskloof. The survey was conducted on foot and with the use of a motor vehicle in an effort to locate cultural remains. The area where a proposed water canal is to be constructed (See Appendix C) was transected in order to locate archaeological and cultural remains

## 3. Methodology

The methodological approach for this study should meet the requirements of relevant heritage legislation. A desktop study followed by a physical survey of the impacted areas was conducted.

SAHRA recently (2005) issued the "*Minimum standards for archaeological and*

*palaentological components of impact assessment reports*". This is a draft document which suggests that the following components be included in a heritage impact assessment:

- Archaeology
- Shipwrecks
- Battlefields
- Graves
- Structures older than 60 years
- Living heritage
- Historical settlements
- Landscapes
- Geological sites
- Palaeontological sites and objects

All the above-mentioned heritage components are addressed in this report, except shipwrecks, geological sites and palaeontological sites and objects.

The purpose of the archaeological study is to establish the whereabouts and nature of cultural heritage sites should they occur on the surveyed area. This includes settlements, structures and artifacts which have value for an individual or group of people in terms of historical, archaeological, architectural and human (cultural) development.

It is the aim of this study to locate and identify such objects or places in order to assess whether they are of significance and warrant further investigation or protection. This study consisted of foot surveys, a desktop archival study as well as a study of the results of previous archaeological work in the area.

### **3.1. Desktop study**

The purpose of the desktop study is to compile as much information as possible on the heritage resources of the area. This helps to provide an historical context for located sites. Sources used for this study included published and unpublished documents, archival material and maps. Material obtained from the following institutions or individuals were consulted:

- Lydenburg Museum, Lydenburg
- Published and unpublished archaeological reports and articles

### **3.2. Significance of sites**

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) formulated guidelines for the conservation of all cultural resources and therefore also divided such sites into three main categories. These categories might be seen as guidelines that suggest the extent of protection a given site might receive. They include sites or features of local (Grade 3) provincial (Grade 2) and national (Grade 1) significance.

For practical purposes the surveyor uses his own classification for sites or features and divides them into three groups, those of low or no significance, those of medium significance, those of high significance.

Within the establishment of the significance of a site or feature there are certain values or dimensions connected to significance which may be allocated to a site. These include:

- **Types of significance**

The site's scientific, aesthetic and historic significance or a combination of these is established.

- **Degrees of significance**

The archaeological or historic site's rarity and representative value is considered. The condition of the site is also an important consideration.

- **Spheres of significance**

Sites are categorized as being significant in the international, national, provincial, regional or local context. Significance of a site for a specific community is also taken into consideration.

It should be noted that to arrive at the specific allocation of significance of a site or feature, the specialist considers the following:

- Historic context
- Archaeological context or scientific value
- Social value
- Aesthetic value

More specific criteria used by the specialist in order to allocate value or significance to a site include:

- The unique nature of a site
- The integrity of the archaeological deposit
- The wider historic, archaeological and geographic context of the site
- The location of the site in relation to other similar sites or features
- The depth of the archaeological deposit (when it can be determined or is known)
- The preservation condition of the site
- Quality of the archaeological or historic material of the site
- Quantity of sites and site features

In short, archaeological and historic sites that contain data which may significantly enhance the knowledge that archaeologists currently have about our cultural heritage should be considered highly valuable. In all instances these sites should be preserved and not damaged during construction activities. When development activities do however jeopardize the future of such a site, a second and third phase in the Cultural Resource



Management (CRM) process is normally advised which entails the excavation or rescue excavation of cultural material along with a management plan to be drafted for the preservation of the site or sites.

Graves are considered very sensitive sites and should never under any circumstances be jeopardized by development activities. Graves are incorporated in the National Heritage Resources Act under section 36 and in all instances where graves are found by the surveyor, the recommendation would be to steer clear of these areas. If this is not possible or if construction activities have for some reason damaged graves, specialized consultants are normally contacted to aid in the process of exhumation and reinterment of the human remains. This implies that construction activities at the particular grave site will be brought to a halt temporarily.

## 4. History and archaeology

### 4.1. Historic background

The first inhabitants of the eastern Lowveld were probably the San or Bushmen. They were a nomadic people who lived together in small family groups and relied on hunting and gathering of food for survival. Evidence of their existence is to be found in numerous rock shelters throughout the Lowveld where some of their rock paintings are still visible. A number of these shelters have been documented in the Nelspruit area (Bornman, 1995; Schoonraad in Barnard, 1975).

It has been argued that the red ochre source for these paintings is to be found at Dumaneni, near Malelane (Bornman, 1995).

It was only later that Bantu-speaking tribes moved into this area from the northern parts of Southern Africa and settled here. This period is referred to as the Early Iron Age (AD 200-1500 approx.). These were presumably Sotho-Tswana herder groups.

Various historians and ethnographers describe that the Lowveld was frequented by Swazi, Ndebele and Sotho-Tswana groups in historic times i.e. Late Iron Age times during the period AD 1500-1800. (Myburgh, 1949; Herbst, 1985; Bornman, 2002; Pienaar, 1990; Barnard, 1975).

Farms in the Schoemanskloof valley were allocated to various families in 1848. The kloof is named after P.A. Schoeman who settled on the farm Mooiplaas. Citrus and grain are produced in this valley (Barnard, 1975:56; Bulpin, 1989:241; SA Encyclopedia: 518a).

The Montrose Falls, near the Sudwala Caves, is characterized by a 12-meter high rock face where the Crocodile River descends into a series of pools. There are two falls, one above and one below the main cascade. The Schoemanskloof road was constructed in 1928 (Bornman, 1979) it then follows that the falls must have been known by this name at least since that time.

Montrose is a Scottish name and is not derived from either a "mont" (hill) or a rose but from the gaelic description of " a Moor on a peninsula" (Scottish place names:

<http://www.rampantscotland.com/placenames/placenames2.htm>)

## **4.2. Archaeological history of the area**

Little formal archaeological research have been conducted in the Schoemanskloof area which in close proximity to the surveyed site. Surveys by archaeologists identified clustered, large-scale Late Iron Age stone walled settlements (Celliers, 2007, 2008). These were probably constructed by Ndebele and Koni between the mid 1600's AD and the beginning of the 19th century.

### **Koni**

The Pedi is surely the most famous tribe to have inhabited the Lydenburg area in historic times. The area in which these people settled is historically known as Bopedi but other groups resided here before the famous Pedi came onto the scene. Among the first of these were the Kwena or Mongatane, who came from the north and were probably of Sotho origin. A second tribe to settle in Bopedi before the arrival of the Pedi were the Roka, followed by the Koni (Mönnig, 1967).

Some Koni entered the area from the east and other from the north-west. According to historians, most Koni trace their origin to Swaziland and therefore claim that they are related to the Nguni. After the first Koni settled in the southern part of Bopedi, the area became known as Bokoni. Many people who were previously known as Roka also adopted the name Koni as the name "Roka" was not always held in esteem by other groups (Mönnig, 1967).

Historically the Pedi was a relatively small tribe who by various means built up a considerable empire. The Pedi are of Sotho origin. They migrated southwards from the Great Lakes in Central Africa some five centuries ago. The names of their chiefs can be traced to a maximum of fifteen generations. Historical events can be deduced reasonably well for the last two centuries, while sporadic events can be described another two centuries preceding the former.

Some 150 years before the Voortrekkers entered the area, some battles took place between the Koni (Zulu under Makopole) and Swazi (under Moselekatse). At that time the Mapedi resided in the Steelpoort area.

The Bakoni (Koni) was attacked and defeated by the Matabele and their chief, Makopole, was killed. The Matabele, not yet satisfied with their victory, moved further north towards the Bapedi headquarters. At Olifantspoortjie the whole Bapedi regiment was wiped out as well as all the sons of Thulare, the Bapedi chief (except for Sekwati who managed to escape).

After four years, Sekwati together with a few followers who had also managed to escape the Matabele, now slowly started to rise. In 1830 Sekwati invaded some of the smaller tribes and eventually the Koni (under Marangrang) was ambushed and defeated. Now the empire of Maruteng (Bapedi) ruled the Koni (Bulpin, 1984; Mönnig, 1967).

When Potgieter and his followers entered the area in 1845 a Peace Treaty was signed between himself and Sekwati. Sekwati also asked for protection against the larger tribes in the area.

## **Ndebele**

Under leadership of the well known Mzilikazi, the Ndebele kingdom arose during the Zulu wars of the early 1820's and this assisted in the spreading of these people among the predominantly Sotho-speaking inhabitants of the South African interior (Rasmussen, 1978).

The kingdom grew rapidly as a consequence of two decades of absorption of conquered peoples and Nguni refugees, this movement occurred across the Transvaal from east to west until the Ndebele finally settled in the modern Matabeleland, north of the Limpopo River.

The name Ndebele is an Anglicized form of the Nguni word *Amandebele*, which in turn

comes from the Sotho word *Matebele*. This Sotho word presumably means “strangers from the east” (Rasmussen, 1978: 161). The Sotho, residing in the central regions of South Africa generally applied this name to Nguni-speaking peoples from the eastern coast.

The best-known part of Ndebele history must surely be that of the chief Nyabela (Mapoch) who gave refuge to the murderer of the Pedi king Sekhukune. Providing Mampuru, the half brother of Sekhukune with protection put Nyabela in a difficult position with the ZAR (Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek). His kraal, situated near Roossenekal is commonly known as Mapoch’s Caves and is a popular tourist attraction in modern times.

This kraal was besieged by ZAR forces and a battle raged for several months after which Nyabela surrendered and Mampuru was delivered on July 7, 1883. The war ended with the commando burning down Nyabela’s capital. His people were once again scattered over the Transvaal as indentured labourers (Bulpin 1969; Jansen van Vuuren 1983).

The Southern Ndebele is classified under the Nguni nation and divided into three tribes namely the Manala, Ndzundza and Hwaduba. The Manala represents the majority of the Southern Ndebele of KwaNdebele (Jansen van Vuuren, 1983: 9-10).

Stone-walled ruins situated in the escarpment area of Mpumalanga have been classified as:

track ways, terraces and settlement units. Settlement units have been subdivided by Collet (1982:34) as:

- (i) Simple ruins which consist of an isolated circular enclosure, and
- (ii) Complex ruins which consist of two or more contiguous circular or semi-circular enclosures. Both settlement types are, spatially, closely related to terrace-walling.

Mason conducted an aerial survey of archaeological sites on the northern plateau and eastern escarpment of South Africa (represented by the drainage basins of the Steelpoort, Sabi, Crocodile and Komati Rivers) in 1968. With the focus on site layout he identified 8

distinct ruin classes (Mason 1968:169).

These are as follows:

**Class 1:** Isolated circle or a few adjacent but isolated circles (Simple ruin)

**Class 2a:** Circular open space defined by several attached semi-circular enclosures (Complex ruin)

**Class 2b:** Two or more large circles composed of interlocking small circles (Complex ruin)

**Class 3:** Circular enclosures enclosed by periphery-walling (may be scalloped) (Complex ruin)

**Class 4a:** Scattered circular enclosures forming a closely related whole; no enclosing periphery walling (Complex ruin)

**Class 4b:** Closely related circular enclosures covering a large area; no enclosing periphery walling (Complex ruin)

**Class 4c:** A dispersed set of isolated circles seeming to form a related whole (Complex ruin)

**Class 5:** Scattered irregular walling with no definite plan identified (Complex ruin)

## 5. Located sites, their description and suggested mitigation

No significant archaeological sites and features were documented.

### **5.1. Site MF 1.**

**Location:** See Appendix B and C.

**Description:**

Packed stone terracing probably constructed to minimize water flow against the steep slope which leads to the weir in the river. Not associated with Late Iron Age stone walling.

**Impact of the proposed development/ activity:**

None

**Mitigation:**

None recommended

### **5.2. Site MF 2**

**Location:** See Appendix B and C.

**Description:**

This is a ruin of a building which probably served as small single rooms. On the 1:50 000 map 2530 BC a hotel is indicated but it no longer exists, this building may have served as guest rooms or staff quarters.

**Impact of the proposed development/ activity:**

Not known.

**Mitigation:**

None recommended.

### **5.4. Site MF 3**

**Location:** See Appendix B and C.

**Description:**

A structure which probably served as a service point for a water pump.

**Impact of the proposed development/ activity:**

Not known.

**Mitigation:**

None recommended.

**TABLE 5.1. General Significance of located sites.**

Site No.	Description	Type of significance	Degree of significance	Sphere of significance
MF 1	Terracing	None	Social significance	Social
MF 2	Ruin of rooms	None	None	Ruined structure
MF 3	Service point for water pump	None	None	Reticulation

**TABLE 5.2. Significance allocation of located sites**

Site no.	Unique nature	Integrity of archaeological deposit	Wider context	Relative location	Depth of deposit	Quality of archaeological/ historic material	Quantity of site features	Preservation condition of site
MF 1	None	N/A	None	N/A	N/A	Archaeologically: low potential Historically: low quality	N/A	Good
MF 2	None	N/A	None	Limited knowlegde	N/A	Archaeologically: low potential Historically: low quality	N/A	Good
MF 3	None	N/A	None	Limited knowledge	N/A	Archaeologically: low potential Historically: low quality	N/A	Good

It must be noted that the bulk of archaeological remains are normally located beneath the soil surface. It is therefore possible that some significant cultural material or remains were not located during this survey and will only be revealed when the soil is disturbed. Should excavation or large scale earth moving activities reveal any human skeletal remains, broken pieces of ceramic pottery, large quantities of sub-surface charcoal or any



material that can be associated with previous occupation, a qualified archaeologist should be notified immediately. This will also temporarily halt such activities until an archaeologist have assessed the situation. It must also be noted that if such a situation occurs it may have further financial implications for the developers the developers.

## 6. Findings and recommendations

Mitigation measures were allocated to each site as discussed in section 5: Located sites and their description. None of the buildings or structures which were documented are regarded as significant or worthy of protection. Recommendations regarding mitigation as set out in section 5 should be followed.

There is no question that the Montrose falls currently has some social significance. It is marketed as a tourist attraction by various tourism offices. Therefore the falls also has potential heritage value. It has however not been nominated as an area which has specific heritage value and therefore has not been properly assessed in this regard.

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## Appendix A

## Terminology

**“Alter”** means any action affecting the structure, appearance or physical properties of a place or object, whether by way of structural or other works, by painting, plastering or other decoration or any other means.

**“Archaeological”** means –

- Material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and which are older than 100 years, including artifacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features or structures;
- Rock Art, being any form of painting, engraving or other graphic representation on a fixed rock surface or loose rock or stone, which was executed by human agency and which is older than 100 years, including any area within 10m of such representation;
- Wrecks, being any vessel or aircraft, or any part thereof, which was wrecked in South Africa, whether on land, in the internal waters, the territorial waters or in the maritime culture zone of the Republic, as defined respectively in sections 3, 4 and 6 of the Maritime Zones Act, 1994 (Act No. 15 of 1994), and any cargo, debris or artifacts found or associated therewith, which is older than 60 years or which SAHRA considers to be worthy of conservation; and
- Features, structures and artefacts associated with military history which are older than 75 years and the sites on which they are found;

**“Conservation”**, in relation to heritage resources, includes protection, maintenance, preservation and sustainable use of places or objects so as to safeguard their cultural significance;

**“Cultural significance”** means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance;

**“Development”** means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of a heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including –

- construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- carrying out any works on or over or under a place;
- subdivision or consolidation of land comprising, a place, including the structures or airspace of a place;
- constructing or putting up for display signs or hoardings;
- any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and
- any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

**“Expropriate”** means the process as determined by the terms of and according to procedures described in the Expropriation Act, 1975 (Act No. 63 of 1975);

**“Foreign cultural property”**, in relation to a reciprocating state, means any object that is specifically designated by that state as being of importance for archaeology, history, literature, art or science;

**“Grave”** means a place of internment and includes the contents, headstone or other marker of such a place, and any other structure on or associated with such place;

**“Heritage resource”** means any place or object of cultural significance;

**“Heritage register”** means a list of heritage resources in a province;

**“Heritage resources authority”** means the South African Heritage Resources Agency, established in terms of section 11, or, insofar as this Act (25 of 1999) is applicable in or in respect of a province, a provincial heritage resources authority (PHRA);

**“Heritage site”** means a place declared to be a national heritage site by SAHRA or a

place declared to be a provincial heritage site by a provincial heritage resources authority;

**“Improvement”**, in relation to heritage resources, includes the repair, restoration and rehabilitation of a place protected in terms of this Act (25 of 1999);

**“Land”** includes land covered by water and the air space above the land;

**“Living heritage”** means the intangible aspects of inherited culture, and may include –

- cultural tradition;
- oral history;
- performance;
- ritual;
- popular memory;
- skills and techniques;
- indigenous knowledge systems; and
- the holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships;

**“Management”** in relation to heritage resources, includes the conservation, presentation and improvement of a place protected in terms of the Act;

**“Object”** means any moveable property of cultural significance which may be protected in terms of any provisions of the Act, including –

- any archaeological artifact;
- palaeontological and rare geological specimens;
- meteorites;
- other objects referred to in section 3 of the Act;

**“Owner”** includes the owner’s authorized agent and any person with a real interest in the property and –

- in the case of a place owned by the State or State-aided institutions, the Minister or any other person or body of persons responsible for the care, management or control of that place;
- in the case of tribal trust land, the recognized traditional authority;

**“Place”** includes –

- a site, area or region;
- a building or other structure which may include equipment, furniture, fittings and articles associated with or connected with such building or other structure;
- a group of buildings or other structures which may include equipment, furniture, fittings and articles associated with or connected with such group of buildings or other structures;
- an open space, including a public square, street or park; and
- in relation to the management of a place, includes the immediate surroundings of a place;

**“Site”** means any area of land, including land covered by water, and including any structures or objects thereon;

**“Structure”** means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith;



## Appendix B

## 9. List of located sites

The located sites were numbered MF 1-3. The initials MF represent Montrose Falls on route to Nelspruit. A spatial location with the aid of a GPS (Global Positioning System) was added to each site.

### 9.1. Site name: MF 1 (Site 1)

Date of compilation: 20/06/2009

GPS reading: 25.44893 S

30.71203 E

Altitude: 803 m

Photo: Fig. 1-3.

### 9.2. Site name: MF 2 (Site 2)

Date of compilation: 20/06/2009

GPS reading: 25.44985 S

30.71172 E

Altitude: 820 m

Photo: Fig. 4.

### 9.3. Site name: MF 3 (Site 3)

Date of compilation: 20/06/2009

GPS reading: 25.44941 S

30.71166 E

Altitude: 820 m

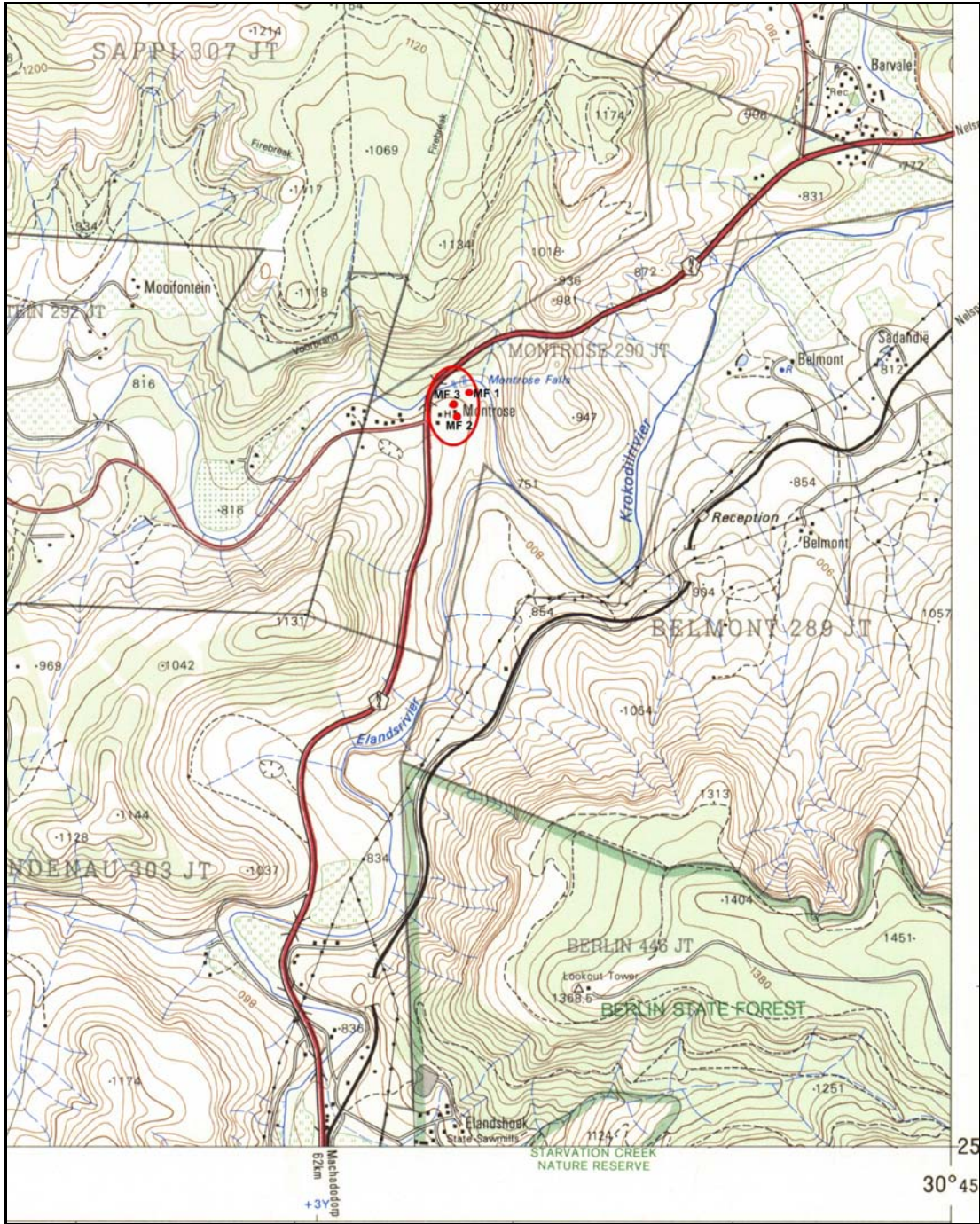
Photo: Fig. 5.

## Appendix C – Maps



Yellow border indicates project area

White line represents proposed water canal



Map 2530 BC Boshalte (1:50 000)

## Appendix D





Fig.1. Site 1. Terracing on the side of the dirt road leading to the weir in the river.



Fig. 2. Site 1. Terracing photographed from below, standing in the dirt road.



Fig. 3. Site 1. Terracing directly opposite fig. 1 and 2 on the other side of the dirt road.





Fig.4. Site 2. Ruin of communal dwelling.



Fig. 5. Site 3. Water pump enclosure.