PHONGOLO-MKUZE IRRIGATION SCHEME:

PRELIMINARY REPORT

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Introduction

The Institute for Cultural Resource Management was subcontracted to conduct a phase 1 archaeological and palaeontological survey at the proposed pumpstation and purification plant site along the Phongolo River (see map) - roughly S 27^0 02' 29"; E 32^0 15' 14.3"

The research area is situated in Northern Kwazulu-Natal, a few kilometers south of the Ndumu game reserve. It is well watered by the Phongolo River and the numerous pans in the vicinity. Geologically the topsoil is a silt most probably dating to the Pleistocene. Beneath this is a Cretaceous dark sand that overlays a Quaternary deposit. The common raw material, or geological formation, is rhyolite.

Methodology

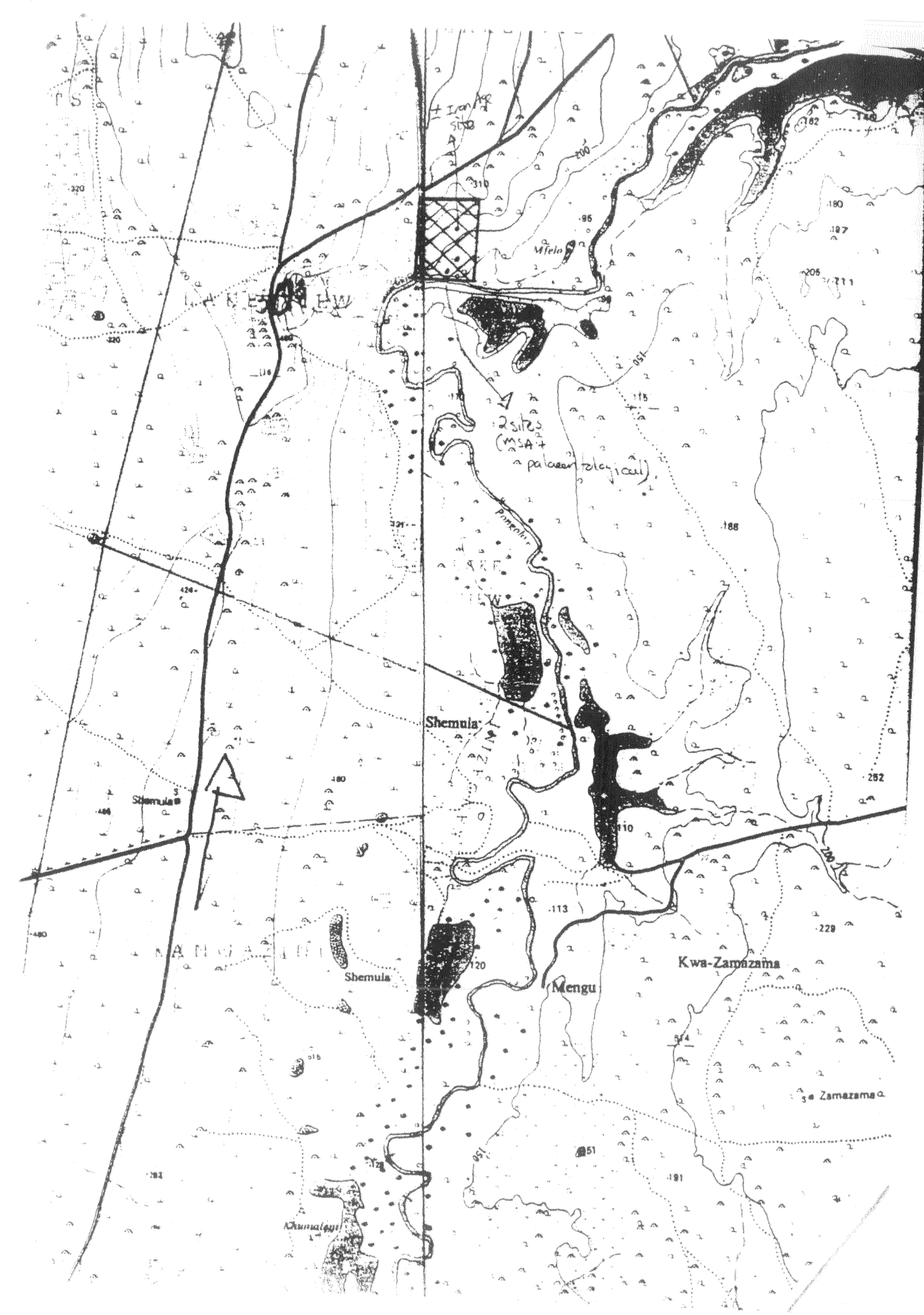
A 300x300m area was initially surveyed for archaeological and palaeontological sites. In addition to the required surveyed area, about 20 meters outside the above area was surveyed. The survey was also conducted along the river bed. The floodplain was not fully surveyed since only a pump station is planned, and there will be no flooding of the area. Sites were recorded using the standard archaeology department, Natal Museum, site record forms. Sites were then plotted onto a 1:50 000 map by means of a GPS.

Results

Three main site categories were found: palaeontological, Stone Age, and agriculturist. The palaeontological site was found on the banks of the river where the phyolite outcrop occurs. The palaeontological fossil remains found are common, and thus do not warrant any further attention. The Stone Age remains consist of a diffuse scatter of Middle Stone Age (MSA) lithics and a Late Stone Age (LSA) lithic, that lie between the topsoil and the cretaceous deposit. The LSA lithic was a utilised agate flake. The MSA lithics were made mostly on the locally available phyolite, and a few were made on quartz and quartzite - the last raw material occurs some 200-300 kilometers away. The MSA flakes tended to be utilised flakes - not formally retouched flakes. Since this *site* is most probably the result of outwash, it cannot be considered to be *in situ*, and is thus not important, nor warrants further attention. The last type of site was found above the river. These sites were recent occupations of agriculturist people, probably dating to within the last 100 years. Sites were visible due to localised area of cleared ground, a few paths, and the presence of a recent lower grindstone. No pottery, or any other material culture was found.

Conclusion

In general, neither the palaeontological nor archaeological sites have any potentially important information, nor do they hold any form of tourists attraction. Development can therefore continue.


Mfela
2 sites (MSA + palaeontological)
Shemula
Shemula
Shemula
Kwa-Zamazama
Mengu
Zamazama