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**AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE RESOURCES WITHIN
THE TRANSHEX WEST COAST DIAMOND CONCESSIONS**

Prepared for

Trans Hex Mining Ltd.

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Prepared by

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the request of Transhex, a visit was undertaken during the period 7th to 11th August 2000, to examine specific diamond concessions on the Namaqualand coast. These lie primarily between Doringbaai and the southern edge of the Anglo American Namakwa Sands operation, with a smaller one being located at Hondeklipbaai.

The visit took the form of an initial reconnaissance to establish if in fact any archaeological material would be impacted by the mining activities undertaken within the concessions. David Halkett of the Archaeology Contracts Office was accompanied by Herman Bruwer (Transhex Environmental Manager), who pointed out the location and extent of the concessions.

Much of the coastal strip examined was impacted by past mining activities, conducted prior to the introduction of environmental legislation. As a result, the activities of many of the earlier operations are still clearly visible where rehabilitation was not a requirement.

2. AREA OF INVESTIGATION

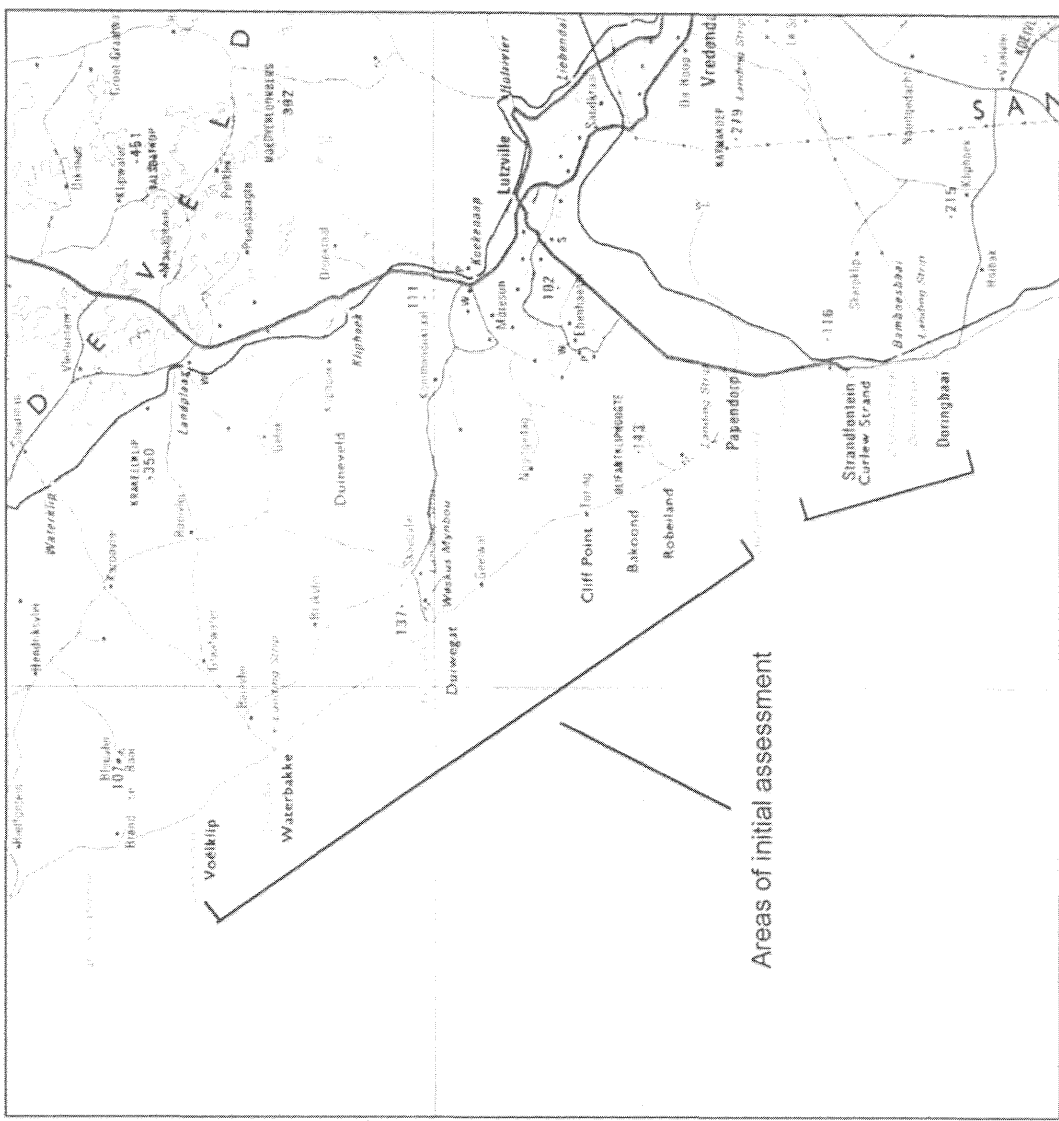
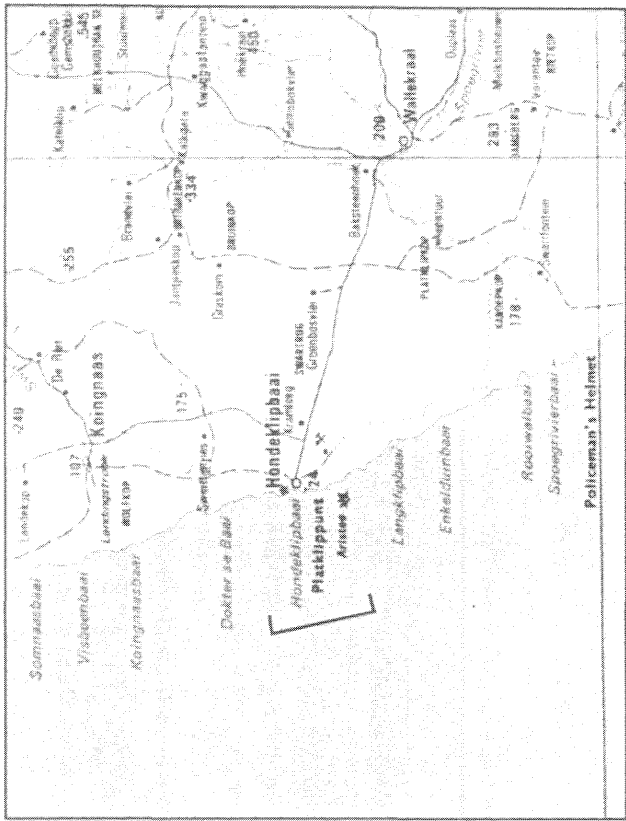
The location of the areas that have been assessed is shown in Figure 1. While the map scale is too large to show all the coastal detail, written descriptions of the concessions (excluding marine concessions) are presented below to assist with the placement. Although the concession extends to the top of the admiralty zone (100ft above HWM), mining and processing will only occur below the High Water Mark. Sorted gravels will be transported by road to processing plants at De Punt and Port Nolloth.

North of the Olifants River mouth:

- Weskus Mynbou Concession – covering certain strips of State land abutting the farms Graauw Duinen 152, Karoo Kop 153, and Geelwal Karoo 262 and extending seawards to 31.49m below the low water mark (LWM);
- on the farm Bethel from 37.78m above the high water mark (HWM) and extending seawards to 31.49m below the LWM;
- on the farm Strykloof, covering state land between the western boundary of the farm and extending seawards to 31.49m below the LWM;
- on the farm De Punt, covering state land between the western boundary of the farm and extending seawards to 31.49m below the LWM;
- in the surf zone opposite the farm Hondeklip;

South of the Olifants River mouth:

- from the western boundary of the remainder of Portion 15 (a portion of Portion 11) of the farm Hollebakstrandfontein 270, extending seaward to 31.49m below the LWM;
- on state land, seaward from Farm 423, from the HWM to 31.49m below the LWM;
- on state land, seaward from the western boundary of a portion of Portion 14 (a portion of Portion 13) of the farm Hollebakstrandfontein 270 from HWM to 31.49m below LWM;
- on state land, seaward from the farm Papendorp 269 from the HWM extending to 31.49m below LWM;



1 Location of the assessments

0 15km

↑

3. RESULTS

The area below the HWM will, for obvious reasons, not contain any terrestrial archaeological material. Most of the sites located therefore lie between the HWM and the upper boundary of the admiralty zone (although it is difficult to establish precisely where on the ground this demarcation is unless it is surveyed). Some sites may therefore lie outside the area. At Hondeklipbaai, some sites have been included that were located within the main mining area on the farm Hondeklip, and Portion 5 of the farm Avontuur.

3.1 Sites located between Doringbaai and Strandfontein (SFDN)

▲ SFDN 1 31°45.740'S 18°13.543'E

Stone artefactual material and marine shell exposed in a track. The stone material includes characteristic Middle Stone Age (MSA) forms on a variety of materials including quartz, quartzite, silcrete and chert. Shell occurs in deflated patches away from the track and consists primarily of the limpet *Patella argenvillei*. It would appear that the scatter is extensive and that most is buried below more recent reddish sands to a depth of 30-40cm. Material seems to rest on a hard substrate often encountered along the Namaqualand coast and referred to as the Dorbank.

Significance: High

Action: No widening or deviation of existing tracks must occur in this vicinity unless the archaeology is properly documented beforehand.

▲ SFDN 2 31°45.881'S 18°13.504'E

A single grave with a simple wooden cross made from two sticks. Glass jars, stones and a single shell are found in association. This would appear to be relatively recent.

Significance: High

Action: Graves may not be moved or disturbed without authority from the relevant local authority.

▲ SFDN 3 31°45.961'S 18°13.563'E

Additional exposure of MSA stone artefactual material in vehicle tracks.

Significance: High

Action: No widening or deviation of existing tracks must occur in this vicinity unless the archaeology is properly documented beforehand.

▲ SFDN 4 in a gully immediately north of SFDN 5

Small cave in the side of the gully. Some archaeological deposit is present in the shelter and towards rear wall are indications of shell midden of probable Late Stone Age (LSA) age.

Significance: Medium

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated.

▲ SFDN 5 31°46.779'S 18°13.656'E

Exposure of a lens of limpet shells. Primarily *Patella argenvillei* but with some *P. cochlear*, *P. granularis* and *P. granatina*. A few flakes of quartz and quartzite are present which have some MSA characteristics.

Significance: Medium

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated.

▲ SFDN 6 31°47.569'S 18°13.944'E

Exposure of a naturally deposited? shell lens composed primarily of a species of bivalve similar to the white mussel.

Significance: ?

Action: This may be of interest to palaeontologists.

▲ SFDN 7 31°48.499'S 18°14.034'E

Small LSA shell scatter. No artefactual material was observed.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation is necessary.

3.2 Sites located between Olifants River mouth and Namakwa Sands (DP)

▲ DP 8 31°40.697'S 18°10.378'E

A large stone artefact scatter in a deflated area. MSA artefacts are clearly present and some Early Stone Age (ESA) could also be represented. Cores, hammerstones, manuports, flakes and blades are made on a variety of raw materials including quartz, quartzite, hornfels, chert and silcrete. No bone or ostrich eggshell was observed. The site is disturbed as a result of deflation possibly enhanced by surrounding mining activity.

Significance: Low - medium

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated.

▲ DP 9 31°38.805'S 18°09.004'E

A very extensive shell scatter with associated MSA artefactual material exposed by deflation and disturbance. The shell is composed primarily of *Patella argenvillei* although *P. granatina* and *P. granularis* are also present. No bone was observed but the presence of crayfish mandibles was noted.

Significance: High

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated. Most likely disturbance will result from vehicular activity or road deviation.

▲ DP 10 31°38.635'S 18°08.883'E

Heavily disturbed shell midden composed primarily of *Patella argenvillei* but with quite a substantial black mussel (*Choromytilus meridionalis*) component. Quartz flakes are present.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ DP 11 31°38.512'S 18°08.947'E

Large quartz scatter in deflated area.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ DP 12 31°37.062'S 18°08.059'E

A midden of *Patella argenvillei* shells with associated quartz artefactual material.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ DP 13 31°37.062'S 18°08.059'E

An LSA shell midden with associated artefactual material including ostrich eggshell fragments, 1 ostrich eggshell bead, bone, stone artefacts including 1 upper grindstone.

Significance: Medium-low

Action: Some sampling of this site should occur before disturbance, but it is unlikely that the surf zone mining will cause any damage here.

▲ DP 14 31°35.788'S 18°07.282'E

Heavily disturbed black mussel midden also containing a number of *Patella* species. Informal quartz and quartzite artefactual material was also observed.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation suggested.

▲ DP 15 31°35.836'S 18°07.096'E

A lens of black mussel shell cut by track with *in situ* material still present in the embankment. Some limpet species are present but these are in very low numbers. I believe that this to be an example of what is referred to as an LSA "megamidden".

Significance: High

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated. Most likely disturbance will result from vehicular activity or road deviation.

▲ DP 16 31°30.126'S 18°02.333'E

LSA *Argenvillei* midden cut by track. Quartz and quartzite artefactual material is present and tortoise bone was also observed.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation suggested.

▲ DP 17 31°26.699'S 17°59.311'E

Heavily disturbed LSA midden containing black and ribbed mussel, whelks and several *patella* species. Very little stone was observed but 5 pot sherds were noted.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ DP 18 31°24.561'S 17°57.219'E

A scatter of quartz without shell.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ DP 19 31°24.042'S 17°56.809'E

Heavily disturbed shell midden exposed in the side of a borrow pit.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ DP 20 31°23.436'S 17°56.418'E

A small LSA shell scatter in a near shore deflation bay. Accompanying artefactual material includes quartz, chert and quartzite artefactual material including side scrapers and a backed blade, ostrich eggshell fragments and 1 bead, and small amounts of bone and crayfish mandibles.

Significance: High

Action: The site is best preserved by ensuring that vehicles do not deviate from existing tracks.

▲ DP 21 31°23.349'S 17°56.434'E

An area containing at least three discrete LSA shell patches containing mixed *patella* species. One of the patches contains a lot of charcoal suggesting that the patches may be related to hearths. A single large ostrich eggshell bead was observed. Stone artefactual material is present but sparse.

Significance: High

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated. Most likely disturbance will result from vehicular activity or road deviation.

▲ DP 22 31°23.109'S 17°56.336'E

The ruins of 2 vernacular buildings that were probably farmhouses. One seems to be older than the other. A refuse heap behind the older house contains ceramics, glass, bone, glass beads and copper fragments.

Significance: High

Action: Although unlikely to be impacted by current mining activity no disturbance of the site should occur until it has been investigated. Most likely disturbance will result from vehicular activity or road deviation. An area of 50 meters around each building should be considered sensitive.

3.3 Sites located at Hondeklip Bay (HKB)

▲ HKB 23 30°17.803'S 17°16.201'E

An LSA shell midden containing mixed *patella* species heavily impacted by vehicle tracks. Some stone artefactual material was noted.

Significance: Low

Action: No mitigation necessary.

▲ HKB 24 30°17.791'S 17°16.239'E

A line of 8 upright stones which I believe are headstones of graves. These appear to date to the colonial period and may well represent the resting place of shipwreck victims.

Significance: High

Action: These historic graves may not be removed or disturbed without the authority of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

▲ HKB 25 30°18.534'S 17°16.370'E

A large area within the dunes containing numerous LSA shell scatters with associated artefactual material. Many are disturbed by vehicle tracks and deflation but some *in situ* material was observed. A spring is located at the southern edge of the area but has been heavily impacted by mechanical excavations. An historic building ruin lies not far from the spring.

Significance: Low-high

Action: To preserve both the archaeological material and the dune system, it would be advisable to prevent vehicles deviating from the existing main coastal track.

▲ HKB 26 30°21.291'S 17°17.312'E

Large LSA shell scatter on the crest of a dome-shaped dune. Mixed *patella* species, stone artefactual material and pot sherds were observed.

Significance: Medium-low

Action: No mitigation suggested.

▲ **HKB 27** 30°21.220'S 17°17.391'E

A large area containing several discrete LSA shell scatters. The shell is composed of black mussel and mixed *patella* species. A few pieces of quartz are present as is ostrich eggshell. Pot sherds and an old brass flint striker (“tonteldoos”) were found in association with shell.

Significance: Medium-high

Action: The sites must be fully documented before any disturbance. These are not however threatened by the surf zone mining.

▲ **HKB 28** 30°21.170'S 17°20.679'E

A low granite outcrop surrounded by an LSA shell scatter. Stone artefactual material including 1 side scraper was observed. Historic material is also present in the form of green glass bottle, and stoneware fragments. Several catchment basins on the granite outcrop have been artificially dammed to collect water.

Significance: Medium-low

Action: The site must be fully documented before any disturbance. These are not however threatened by the surf zone mining.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This initial assessment has showed that archaeological sites do exist along the coastal area where Transhex is involved with diamond recovery. While the recovery and initial processing takes place below the HWM, and can therefore have no possible impact on heritage resources, transport of the diamondiferous gravels to the processing plants traverses existing coastal tracks alongside of which archaeological sites have been found.

The range of heritage resources includes pre-colonial sites, primarily shell middens, and colonial sites in the form of building ruins and graves. Pre-colonial sites date to both the Late Stone Age and the Middle Stone Age, the latter in some instances appearing to be in association with shell middens. Because of the age of the material it is fairly rare to find shells preserved. As such these sites are highly significant.

While unable to comment on the physical presence of shipwrecks that may occur in the mining zone, a list of wrecks is supplied in Appendix 1 that indicates the number of ships known to have been lost in the area. Precise co-ordinates are unknown for many of these, which are predominantly 19th century events. It is entirely possible that earlier wrecks may be present.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The nature of the surf zone mining does not appear to pose any major threat to the heritage resources of the area. Possible damage may however result from vehicles deviating off of existing tracks, or the preparation of new, or modification of old tracks. The significance of the sites and recommended actions have been highlighted in Section 3.

5.2 Shipwrecks, both known and unknown may be encountered during surf zone mining. The presence of wrecks or material relating to wrecks should be reported to SAHRA.

5.3 Archaeological sites and shipwrecks are protected under the South African Heritage Resources Act of 1999.

6. STUDY TEAM

Fieldwork

Dave Halkett
Herman Bruwer
Dave Halkett

Report

APPENDIX 1

SHIP	REGION	AREA	PLACE	EVENT	VESSEL CATEGORY	DATE WRECKED
Clipper	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay		Wrecked	Sailing Vessel	01/01/1873
Diligence	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay		Wrecked	Sailing Vessel	07/01/1863
Maria Smith	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay			Sailing Vessel	01/10/1858
Marsden	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay				
Rachel	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay			Sailing Vessel	09/08/1854
Robert Brown	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay			Sailing Vessel	08/24/1867
Volunteer	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay			Sailing Vessel	10/11/1869
Manhegan	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	32 km (20 miles) south of Hondeklip Bay	Wrecked	Sailing Vessel	08/26/1887
Aristea	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	8 cables SSE of Platklip Point	Wrecked	Motor Vessel	07/04/1945
Catherine Marie	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Bar	Wrecked	Wooden Sailing Vessel	10/23/1892
Queen	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Bar	Wrecked	Sailing Vessel	05/18/1882
Ianthe	Namaqualand	Oliphants River	Cliff Point / Holgapunt	Wrecked	Wooden Sailing Vessel	07/19/1890
Catherine Isabella	Namaqualand	Oliphants River	Elephants Rock (north of river)	Wrecked	Wooden Sailing Vessel	05/17/1845
Natal	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Espiegle Bay	Wrecked	Sailing Vessel	03/05/1852
Espiegle	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Espiegle Rock	Wrecked	Sailing Vessel	03/04/1852
Gambia	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Hondeklip Bay			01/01/1871
Maria	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Hondeklip Bay		Sailing Vessel	01/01/1862
Jonquille	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Jonquille Rock		Sailing Vessel	07/16/1866
Stephen Hinchcliff	Namaqualand	Thorn Bay (Doring Baai?)	Near	Foundered	Motor Vessel	01/01/1954
Luna	Namaqualand	Hondeklip Bay	Off / near Hondeklip Bay	Wrecked	Steamship (Wooden)	01/01/1945
Meteren	Sandveld	Oliphants River & Elands Bay	Between	Wrecked	Wooden Sailing Vessel	01/01/1723
Elizabeth	Sandveld	Oliphants River	Oliphants River Mouth		Wooden Sailing Vessel	01/01/1818
Australia	West Coast ?	Oliphants River	17.7 km north of Oliphants River Mouth	Foundered	Wooden Sailing Vessel	12/27/1840