

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE WILLOWFORD WEMBEZI TEE  
POWERLINE AND MDWEBU SUBSTATION AND FEEDER POWERLINES.**

**For ESKOM**

**By**

**By Gavin Anderson**

**Institute for Cultural Resource Management, Natal Museum, Private Bag 9070,  
Pietermaritzburg, 3200**

**30 October 2001**



## INTRODUCTION

The ICRM was contracted by Eskom to undertake an archaeological survey of the proposed Willowford Wembezi Tee 62 (Mdwebu Tee) 33 kV powerline and the Mdwebu 33/11 kV substation and Mdwebu 11 kV feeder powerlines. The powerlines have the standard wooden pole structures and thus would do minimal impact on possible archaeological sites.

I was accompanied by an Eskom environmentalist and surveyor while we surveyed the road. The survey concentrated on those areas where the structures would be placed, and an areas of high archaeological sensitivity.

A total of three archaeological site were recorded during the course of the survey. The powerline will have a low impact on all of the sites. No further mitigation will be required on this powerline.

## THE SITES

### WEM1

WEM1 is situated near structure 15. The site is a scatter of various pottery sherds on the top of the hill. The sherds are thin-walled with a red or orange burnish,. A possible grave exists on the side of the road. One millet lower grinding stone on shale was observed as well as two upper grinding stones. A few Middle Stone Age flakes are located on this hill top as well.

The site dates to the Late Iron Age and/or Historical Period

Significance: The site is of low-medium archaeological significance:

Mitigation: The Eskom structures are unlikely to damage parts of the site. The deposit, where it exists, is shallow, and has been mostly disturbed but modern day farming.

The possible grave should not be disturbed.

### WEM2

This site is located near the substation side of the line, and on the top of a hill. The site is located between Structures 57 – 59.

The site consists of various stone-walled featured such as cattle kraals and terraces. There are three stone-walled cattle kraals on this site. The far western kraal is rectangular in shape and  $\pm 10$  m x 5 m in size. There is a maize lower grinding stone inside this kraal. The remains of secondary enclosure walling occurs inside this kraal.

The second kraal is  $\pm 10$  m in diameter and circular in shape. The wall is made of a double row of large stones that have a small rubble infill. The entrance to this kraal faces downslope. There are two secondary enclosures within this kraal. The kraal appears to use a natural rock outcrop as its rear walling. Three smaller stone features are located to the north and south of the

entrance. These may either be old graves, the floors of granary bins, or small kraals for lambs/kids.

The far eastern kraal is also circular in shape, however it is  $\pm 25$  m in diameter. The entrance to this kraal faces upslope.

Amongst these kraals are several terraces indicating potential living areas.

The site dates to the Late Iron Age and/or Historical Period

Significance: The site is of medium archaeological significance due to the spatial component.

Mitigation: If the stone walling and terraces are to be damaged then the site needs to be mapped and/or partially excavated. However, on-site discussions have placed the powerline to the north of the stone-walled features. I suggest that the powerline keeps at least 10 m clear of the stone-walled features, and specifically do not come closer than 5 m to any of the features. This is possible if the structures are placed at the base of the hill, halfway up the hill in an eroded area, and at the top of the hill (which has wattle trees).

### **WEM3**

WEM3 is located near the Wembezi side of the line. The site is part of the general flood plain of the Little Bushman's River. The site consists of Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age stone tools that have been extensively scattered along this flood plain

### **CONCLUSION**

The Willowford Wembezi Tee and Mdwebu powerlines were surveyed for archaeological sites. Three sites were recorded in the vicinity of the powerline, however only two of the sites will be minimally affected by the powerline. The impact on the sites will be negligible as the electricity structures are small.

Eskom will need to apply to KwaZulu-Natal Heritage for permits for the partial damage to sites WEM1 and WEM3.