



Attention Bernadet Pawandiwa

Dear Ms Pawandiwa

**Heritage Scoping Report - Proposed KZN Afforestation Project
Environmental Impact Assessment for the Department of Agriculture and Forestry
Sisonke District Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal
(DEA Ref.14/12/16/3/1/5/36)**

Project description¹

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), with the mandate to promote rural development through plantation forestry and to meet the growing need for timber in South Africa, encouraged various rural communities and individual landowners, predominantly in KwaZulu-Natal, to submit expressions of interest to receive assistance to develop woodlots and plantations. Out the many requests for assistance, this EIA is assessing 80 applicants from KZN and one from the Eastern Cape.

The majority of sites are privately-owned and relatively small, with almost 50% of them being less than ten hectares (ha). Only 3 sites are larger than 100 ha. There are several sites in communal areas, administered through a variety of mechanisms: eight are owned by community-based projects, four are owned by trusts, two by CPAs and one by a Co-operative. Together, the sites represent approximately 5,000 ha of land. The proposed development is for the planting of commercial Eucalyptus timber plantations. The majority of sites are concentrated in the Sisonke DM, Umzimkhulu region of southern KZN (see Figure 1) ² and kml loaded to the SAHRIS Case File.

Heritage Assessment

A Heritage Desktop Assessment for the project was submitted by an independent practitioner, Mamoluoane Seliane, to Amafa in March 2016 (See SAHRIS Case File). Amafa's response comments to the applicant, Sigwela and Associates, Environmental Consultants, was that a field verification of heritage sensitivities was required of the areas proposed for afforestation.

eThembeni was subsequently appointed by the Sigwela and Associates to undertake the field assessments of 30 proposed applicants respective sites, all within the Sisonke District Municipality. Five field trips were undertaken (19-20 July, 29-30 August [C.Thornhill /L. Sibiyi] and 14-15 November 2016 [L. le Roex /L. Sibiyi*]; and 4-5 June and 16-18 July 2017 [L. van Schalkwyk]) to assess these 30 sites.

* eThembeni intern and Field Technician.

¹ Environmental Impact Assessment (DEA Reference: 14/12/16/3/1/5/36) for the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries KZN-EC Afforestation Project. BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID).

² 1:50 000 map sheets are 2930 CC/CD; 3029 BC/BD and 3030 AC/AD

Partial walk-overs were achieved on all of the sites, as well as being visually assessed and confirmations obtained from local residents, landowners and aspirant afforestation Co-Operative members.

It was clear from our community interactions that the planned afforestation projects had been inclusively work shopped, were supported by the interviewees, and that Traditional Authority structures were also informed and supportive of the initiatives.

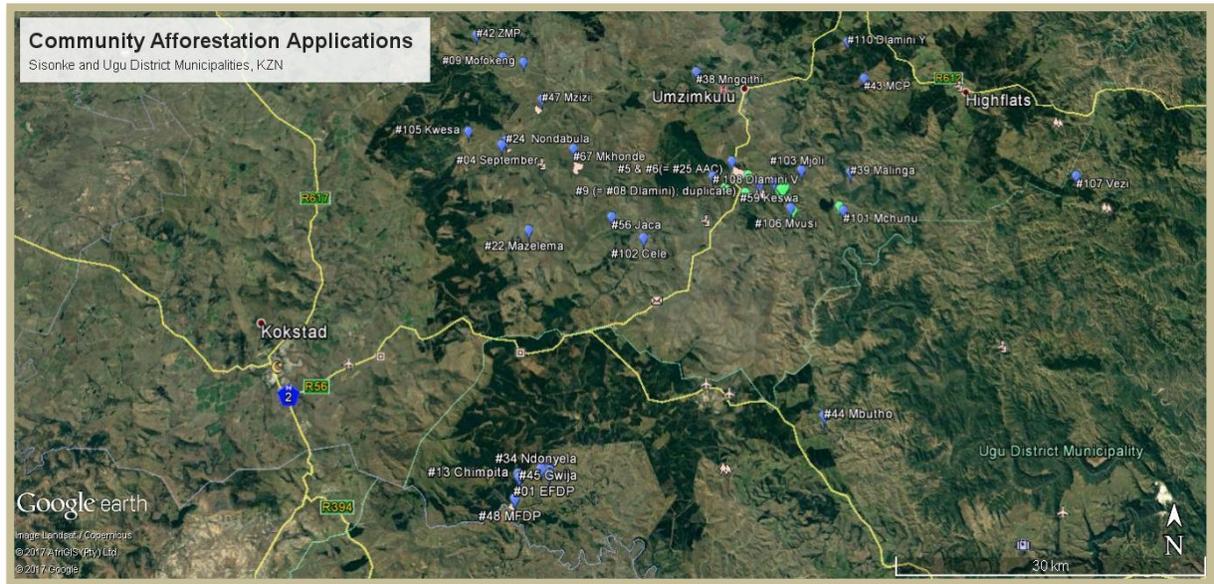


Figure 1 Study Area _ Sisonke District Municipality

Observations

Vegetation in the study area comprises predominantly sour grassland of the Midlands Mistbelt Grassland and Drakensberg Foothill Moist Grassland units (*sensu* Mucina & Rutherford 2010)³. Historically however, in the greater part of the survey area, these grasslands have been ploughed. Most have been left fallow for several decades and now comprise secondary grasslands; many infested with scattered alien vegetation, particularly along drainage lines. Virgin grasslands comprised slopes too steep to support residential settlement or were rock strewn with exposed dolerite boulder beds. The latter are traditionally eschewed for settlement due to a perceived greater incidence of lightning strikes. These grasslands are extensively utilised as communal grazing areas and for the cutting of thatch grass. Remnant scarp forests occur on higher elevations along south and west facing slopes.

The underlying geology of the study area is, from east to west, Ecca and Beaufort Group shales with extensive Karoo dolerite intrusion (Karoo Supergroup). Whilst the Beaufort group shales are considered to be palaeontologically sensitive the dolerite intrusions would significantly reduce this potential. Further, upslope overlying soils are derived from the deeply weathered parent rock and down slope comprise deep colluvial overburden. Tree planting is unlikely to reach or impact on the underlying parent rock.

³ The vegetation of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. *Strelitzia* 19. South African National Biodiversity Institute. Pretoria.

Human settlement is largely dispersed, with some aggregation of settlement in the lower valley areas and along interfluves. More recent settlement is axial, following the local and district road network. From a heritage resource perspective the location of graves associated with both current and abandoned homesteads and settlements is pertinent. Our informal interviews with both aspirant planters and residents indicate that known graves are considered sacrosanct and will be protected should afforestation permits be issued. Consensus and accepted protocols on this issue has been resolved at community level. Visual assessments were also conducted with community informants of areas of either virgin grasslands or areas with no settlement. Confirmation was received of either the absence of graves or, where abandoned homesteads were pointed out, that the above protocols would prevail. For the most, more recent graves comprise cemeteries or burial plots associated with specific families and located within or immediately adjacent to their respective residences and will not be affected by the proposed afforestation. The foregoing was a repetitive pattern throughout the study area.

Cultural History

The sour-veld grasslands of southern KZN generally exhibit a very low surface Stone Age cultural footprint (KZN Museum Archaeology database). Recorded Stone Age sites are largely confined to deposits occurring in shelters and overhangs and rock art. There is no doubt that the study area was traversed and exploited by hunter-gatherer communities for millennia but material evidence in this grassland biome is sparse and scattered.

The Iron Age footprint is equally as sparse. Sour-veld grasslands have a very brief window of grazing palatability and were consequently eschewed for permanent settlement by cattle-keeping farming communities. The cold winters of these higher altitudes was also avoided. Seasonal transhumance into the grasslands for the short Spring/Summer grazing window has not left any significant evidence of these herders presence.

The study area lies geographically along the borders of the 19th C Cape and Natal colonies in what came to be known as “Nomansland”⁴. The area was briefly settled in episodes during the early 19th C by refugee groups fleeing the expanding Zulu Kingdom and later as a result of the *mfecane*. By 1820, Griqua bands had begun to explore the area but later settled further south, in the vicinity of Kokstad and Matatiele. The low population of people and the broken topography incised by deep river valleys, made the area sought after by the amaTola Bushmen and other raiding and renegade bands as a refuge from the law.

Mpondo and Bhaca people settled and have lived in the area since the late 19th C and the Dumisa clan were granted reserved land in the upper Mkhomazi River basin by Theophilus Shepstone in the 1880's. Land consolidations during the establishment of the KwaZulu and Transkei Homelands in the late 1970's, and the concomitant resettlement of people out of “White” zoned areas, provides the template of current settlement and land use in the study area. As is attested to in the reports of the Mzimkulu Afforestation projects⁵ and confirmed by our own observations, the impact of the proposed afforestation areas will have a low to negligible impact on discrete heritage resources. Whilst afforestation fundamentally changes the nature of the historical landscape the proposed activities are in keeping with current land use practices and the aspirations of an emerging farmer class.

⁴ Challis, S. 2012. Creolisation on the Nineteenth-century Frontiers of Southern Africa: A Case Study of the AmaTola 'Bushmen' in the Maloti-Drakensburg. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38;2 p265-280.

⁵SAHRIS Case Files: Mzimkulu Afforestation projects: Magove Njovo. *EnviroXcellence*.2014.

Conclusion

The proposed areas of afforestation should be supported with no further heritage mitigation required. A protocol for dealing with chance finds of cultural material during operations is appended (Appendix 2) as well as a protocol for graves' management (Appendix 3).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Len van Schalkwyk". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Len van Schalkwyk
Principal Investigator.

Appendix 1

Field Notes: East Griqualand

Objectives : Heritage screening of proposed forestation sites,
: Determining the presence of graves, and other culturally sensitive features.

No. of sites visited : 16

Index

1. Cover,
2. Site map (1-4) ; Site 1,
3. Sites 2 – 3,
4. Sites map (5 – 16); Site 4 – 5,
5. Sites 6 – 8,
6. Sites 9 – 11,
7. Sites 12 – 14,
8. Sites 15 – 16,
9. Site 16.

Part 1 (20 July 2016)

Site 1:

Site description

The site sits against a north eastern aspect, sloping towards the Umkomazi River and borders against a northern tributary. The area is predominantly covered in tall grass with spots of trees

The area looks well used, with remnants of cultivated fields, terracing, homesteads, the presence of grazing cattle and footpaths. Previous occupation also leaves behind stone walling and an unknown number of graves.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Stone walling	29°45'24.2"S 29°56'37.0"E	IMG_0045
2	Graveyard	29°45'19.9"S 29°56'35.8"E	IMG_0038
3	Remnant homestead	29°45'18.4"S 29°56'37.1"E	IMG_0013
4	Graves	29°45'18.5"S 29°56'33.0"E	IMG_0018; IMG_0020
5	Graves	29°45'18.3"S 29°56'32.4"E	IMG_0022
6	Stone walling	29°45'14.4"S 29°56'33.5"E	IMG_0012
7	Graves	29°45'14.3"S 29°56'32.0"E	IMG_0006; IMG_0009
8	Stone walling	29°45'13.8"S 29°56'31.8"E	IMG_0001s
9	Remnant homestead	29°45'15.1"S 29°56'30.9"E	IMG_0015
10	Stone walling	29°45'15.1"S 29°56'28.4"E	IMG_0024; IMG_0025
11	Remnant homestead	29°45'17.4"S 29°56'27.1"E	-----
12	Graves	29°45'18.8"S 29°56'27.2"E	IMG_0027; IMG_0029

Site 2: Site description

The site sits against a south western aspect which includes small tributaries, some soil erosion, short grass, spots of trees and a wattle plantation.

The site also looks to be well used, with footpaths, cultural debris and terracing. Furthermore, it seems to host the remnants of older homesteads and graves are evident.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Graves	29°50'44.0"S 29°50'02.6"E	IMG_0079; IMG_0085; IMG_0087
2	Possible remnant homestead	29°50'43.9"S 29°50'02.1"E	IMG_0083; IMG_0084
3	Remnant homestead	29°50'40.6"S 29°49'60.0"E	IMG_0090
4	Possible Graves	29°50'40.7"S 29°50'00.8"E	IMG_0090
5	Remnant homestead	29°50'38.1"S 29°50'02.8"E	IMG_0090
6	Possible Graves	29°50'38.1"S 29°50'02.8"E	IMG_0092; IMG_0093
7	Landscape/terrain	29°50'43.2"S 29°50'00.1"E	IMG_0075; IMG_0076; IMG_0077

Site 3:

Site description

The site sits against a steep Northern aspect which borders a drainage line, includes short to long grass, and is partially covered in a thick wattle forest.

Time constraints and terrain limited our ability to investigate the site in depth. However, were able to make contact with Mr Joseph Mtembho (079 496 2098 – 082 844 4754), the head of the homestead located at the bottom end of the proposed site. A short interview revealed by his account the presence of "old" graves scattered along the slopes. Additionally, Mr Mtembho expressed concern over the proposed forestation of

the area, particularly over the implications to water availability and the impact to the stream that passes his stead, while also stating that a forest would attract animal pests (snakes).

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	29°49'02.6"S 29°53'39.5"E	IMG_0050; IMG_0051; IMG_0052; IMG_0055; IMG_0057
2	Landscape/terrain	29°49'49.0"S 29°53'27.5"E	IMG_0059; IMG_0058; IMG_0066; IMG_0068; IMG_0069

Site 4:

Site description

The site spans over a hillside, touching an existing forestry boundary. The area is open, covered in tall grass, and looks scarred, with erosion and evidence of cultivation.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/Terrain	29°50'25.4"S 29°57'03.9"E	IMG_0094; IMG_0095

Part 2 (30 August)

Site 5:

Site description

The site lay within an existing mature eucalyptus plantation with low visibility.

An interview with a local resident, Mr Jabu Zanhele, revealed the presence of graves in and amongst the plantation, and was able to point out the location of one grave (complete with sinkhole). He further added that there are remnants of homesteads and likely more graves in the plantation, but are hard to find.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Possible remnant Homestead	30°21'07.4"S 29°55'29.9"E	-
2	Graves	30°21'16.9"S 29°55'30.2"E*	DSCN0473; DSCN0474;
3	Possible remnant Homestead	30°21'16.9"S 29°55'30.2"E*	DSCN0473; DSCN0474;

*Low accuracy.

Site 6a:

Site description

Sits in a corner of site 5, is a small open patch of grass.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/Terrain	30°21'22.3"S 29°55'29.5"E	DSCN0478

Site 6b:

Site description

Bordering the R56, it is similar to 6a, also a small patch of land partially covered in grass, with thickets of bug weed and tree trunks.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/Terrain	30°21'22.3"S 29°55'29.5"E	DSCN0521

Site 7:**Site description**

The site fits in a fairly large valley bordering the west side of the R56. The slopes show largely agricultural scars, with examples of terracing and erosion in some areas. Within the valley on the western aspect rests a graveyard with a relatively larger amount of graves.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Grave yard	30°22'51.6"S 29°54'41.4"E	DSCN0489
2	Landscape/Terrain	30°22'38.5"S 29°54'40.6"E	DSCN0482s
3	Landscape/Terrain	30°22'15.9"S 29°55'45.8"E	DSCN0532s

Site 8:**Site description**

The area is on the top SE slope of a small valley, is open and covered in short grass. Graves stand along the roadside and evidence of a remnant rondavel can be found a short distance from the graves.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Graves	30°22'03.4"S 29°56'18.7"E	DSCN0526; DSCN0528
2	Remnant homestead	30°22'02.8"S 29°56'18.3"E	DSCN0529
3	Landscape/Terrain	30°22'02.8"S 29°56'17.1"E	DSCN0531

Site 9:**Site description**

The area stretches down the slope of a drainage line, is mostly covered with grass, a few spots of trees and with an outcrop of shale towards the end of the area. Near the outcrop is what seems to be terracing, however no cultural debris was visible.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Terracing	30°23'09.9"S 29°56'03.5"E	DSCN0552; DSCN0547s
2	Landscape/terrain	30°23'07.4"S 29°56'26.9"E	DSCN0554
	Landscape/terrain	30°23'10.5"S 29°56'00.5"E	DSCN0547s

Site 10a:**Site description**

The area is within an existing mature eucalyptus plantation with some open spaces covered with short grass.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°22'29.7"S 29°56'56.8"E	DSCN0540

Site 10b:**Site description**

The area is within an existing mature eucalyptus plantation with no open spaces.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°22'31.0"S 29°57'10.3"E	DSCN0542

Site 11:**Site description**

The area sits on a slope with a Northern aspect, is predominantly covered with long and short grass with a few thickets of vegetation, some trees and borders a treeline at the bottom of the slope.

A local resident claimed that there are graves in the bushes but none were visible.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°22'31.0"S 29°57'10.3"E	DSCN0598s

Site 12:**Site description**

The area covers a slope with a North Eastern aspect and is in between two drainage lines. The area is also predominantly covered in short grass with some thickets of trees. The site also features terracing and a grave site.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Graves	30°22'55.9"S 29°58'18.5"E	DSCN0566
2	Terracing	30°22'57.8"S 29°58'19.9"E	DSCN0556
3	Landscape/terrain	30°22'57.8"S 29°58'19.9"E	DSCN0556
4	Landscape/terrain	30°22'55.9"S 29°58'18.5"E	DSCN0558

Site 13:**Site description**

Area sits on a slope with a north eastern aspect. The slope is eroded, is mostly covered with grass and with a line of trees along a ridge.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°23'14.1"S 29°58'35.0"E	DSCN0569s

Site 14:

Area sits on a slope with a northern aspect. Is covered in tall grass with a few trees marking the location of is possibly an old homestead as well as a grave yard.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Possible remnant homestead	30°23'32.4"S 29°59'01.5"E	DSCN0575z1
2	Graveyard	30°23'33.9"S 29°59'01.9"E	DSCN0575z
3	Landscape/terrain	30°23'28.9"S 29°58'53.0"E	DSCN0574s

Site 15:**Site description**

Area sits on the south western slope of a valley. The area looks fairly damaged, with the presence of soil erosion covering most of the area. The site also hosts abandoned homesteads next to the road and two grave yards with one associated with a second abandoned homestead.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Abandoned Homestead	30°24'16.9"S 29°59'13.6"E	DSCN0581
2	Graves	30°24'14.7"S 29°59'15.2"E	DSCN0584
3	Abandoned Homestead	30°24'13.3"S 29°59'22.9"E	DSCN0580z
4	Graves	30°24'13.3"S 29°59'22.9"E	DSCN0595
5	Landscape/terrain	30°24'17.1"S 29°59'12.5"E	DSCN0582s

Site 16a:**Site description**

Area sits on a slope with a south western aspect and is predominantly covered in grass, with thickets of vegetation in the more northern part.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°24'01.6"S 30°02'20.6"E	DSCN0606

Site 16b:**Site description**

Area sits on the opposite side of the drainage line to 16a with a more westerly slope, and is mostly grass covered with the presence of occupied homesteads. Access to 16b was made difficult due to mist descending whilst in the field. However, a passing local on horseback indicated that he lives in that particular zone and claimed that there are no unmarked graves in the area.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°24'01.6"S 30°02'20.6"E	DSCN0611

Site 16c:**Site description**

Situated just below 16 a, the area sits below a small ridge facing south west, is mostly covered with grass and open

Findings

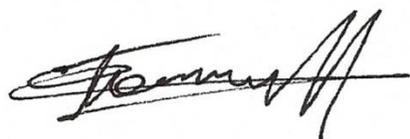
#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°24'33.1"S 30°02'23.9"E	DSCN0620

Site 16d:**Site description**

The area sits on top of a south eastern slope and is mostly grass covered and open. A Mr Mdlala Dlamini, who claimed to be the owner of the land was on site and able to give assurance that there are no graves or stonewalling in the vicinity where none were seen.

Findings

#	Type	Coordinates	Photo ID:
1	Landscape/terrain	30°24'06.4"S 30°02'51.3"E	DSCN0627s



Christopher Thornhill

Appendix 2

Protocol for the Identification, Protection and Recovery of Heritage Resources During Construction and Operation

It is possible that sub-surface heritage resources could be encountered during the construction phase of this project. The Environmental Control Officer and all other persons responsible for site management and excavation should be aware that indicators of sub-surface sites could include:

- Ash deposits (unnaturally grey appearance of soil compared to the surrounding substrate);
- Bone concentrations, either animal or human;
- Ceramic fragments, including potsherds;
- Stone concentrations that appear to be formally arranged (may indicate the presence of an underlying burial, or represent building/structural remains); and
- Fossilised remains of fauna and flora, including trees.

In the event that such indicator(s) of heritage resources are identified, the following actions should be taken immediately:

- All construction within a radius of at least 20m of the indicator should cease. This distance should be increased at the discretion of supervisory staff if heavy machinery or explosives could cause further disturbance to the suspected heritage resource.
- This area must be marked using clearly visible means, such as barrier tape, and all personnel should be informed that it is a no-go area.
- A guard should be appointed to enforce this no-go area if there is any possibility that it could be violated, whether intentionally or inadvertently, by construction staff or members of the public.
- No measures should be taken to cover up the suspected heritage resource with soil, or to collect any remains such as bone or stone.
- If a heritage practitioner has been appointed to monitor the project, s/he should be contacted and a site inspection arranged as soon as possible.
- If no heritage practitioner has been appointed to monitor the project, the head of archaeology at Amafa's Pietermaritzburg office should be contacted; telephone 033 3946 543.
- The South African Police Services should be notified by an Amafa staff member or an independent heritage practitioner if human remains are identified. No SAPS official may disturb or exhume such remains, whether of recent origin or not.
- All parties concerned should respect the potentially sensitive and confidential nature of the heritage resources, particularly human remains, and refrain from making public statements until a mutually agreed time.
- Any extension of the project beyond its current footprint involving vegetation and/or earth clearance should be subject to prior assessment by a qualified heritage practitioner, taking into account all information gathered during the initial assessment.

Appendix 3

Protocol for Graves' Management

- ◆ All grave sites occurring within proposed afforestation sites must be fenced and no planting should be permitted within a 20 m buffer from the graves.
- ◆ All grave sites occurring within 50 m of the proposed afforestation sites and within 20 m of a service road or track must be demarcated and fenced.
- ◆ Signage should be hung from all grave sites identifying them as such and indicating their sensitivity.
- ◆ Consultation with the relatives of the deceased should be recorded by the respective project implementers indicating their recognition of the sanctity of such burial places.
- ◆ Exhumation of graves should only be considered as a last resources; cannot take place without consent of the families concerned; and will have to follow procedures laid down by SAHRA's grave relocation and permit application policy; and the requirements of CoGTA in terms of the provisions of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No. 65 of 1983) as amended, as well as the regulations (22 May 2013) relating to the management of human remains under the National Health Act, 2003 (Act No. 61 of 2003). This would constitute a Phase II mitigation exercise.