

# Agency for Cultural Resource Management

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## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCOPING ASSESSMENT: THE PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY SCHEME FOR BOTSWANA, MIDDELPUTS AREA**

**August, 2012**

### **1. OUTLINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

Middelputs is a border control area on the South African/Botswana border and about 120 kms north of Upington (Figure 1). The area is rural, and livestock farming is the main source of income.

The Botswana Government has identified the need for potable water for the Middelputs area as a priority project. The source for the water will be an extraction point on the D-Line of the Kalahari East Water Supply Scheme in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa.

The pipeline system comprises the following components:

- A 250 mm, diameter PVC gravity main.
- The water will flow under gravity for a distance of approximately 19 kms (Figure 2).

The proposed pipeline will ultimately assist the Botswana Government with water related challenges in the affected area.

The project is being sponsored by the Botswana Department of Water Affairs, and the Botswana Water Utilities Corporation.

For the first 14 kms, the route (blue line in Figure 2) which the proposed pipeline follows is directly adjacent to the existing D-Line pipeline (yellow line). This route is already registered as a servitude. For the last 5 km the route will be next to a subordinate road, nr. 340.

The proposed pipeline will be both buried, as well as above ground. Where the pipeline will cross natural watercourses, it will be buried at least 1.5 m below the riverbed.

Direct impact on the environment is therefore expected to be minimal and contained.

The geology of the area consists mainly of sand dunes, with flat parts for the last  $\pm$  3 kms. The engineers estimate that 10% of the trench excavations will be classified as hard rock and 90% will be classified as soft material (i.e. sand).

The project is currently undergoing a Basic Assessment Process that is being conducted by EnviroAfrica.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE**

According to Dr David Morris (pers. comm. 16 August, 2012) head of the Archaeology Department at the McGregor Museum in Kimberly, the dunes to the left of the road as one descends from the South Africa side into the river bed marking the border, is rich in Later Stone Age microlithic tools, ostrich eggshell and pottery. Morris is of the opinion that similar settings along the valley would have a similar wealth of archaeological material.

Pacher<sup>1</sup> also reports that a number of 'Bushman' skeletons were exhumed by the German anthropologist H. Poch who collected skeletons from the Khuis/Middelput area in the early 1900s.

'Red-flag' areas are particularly where the pipeline cuts through and out of the Molopo Valley dunes (Morris pers. comm.).

## **3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A walk through survey of the proposed pipeline route is not required as most of the route is aligned alongside an existing pipeline servitude, or minor service road.

Unmarked burials, as well as buried caches of ostrich eggshell water containers may, however, be uncovered during excavations for the proposed pipeline, and pit latrines. According to Morris (pers. comm.) this is a 'distinct possibility'.

Should any such remains be uncovered, or exposed during excavations, these must immediately be reported to Dr David Morris at the McGregor Museum in Kimberly (082 222 4777 or 053 839 2706), and the area sealed off. Burials or ostrich eggshell caches must not be removed until inspected by the archaeologist.

Jonathan Kaplan  
Director: Agency for Cultural Resource Management  
24 October, 2012

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<sup>1</sup> Pacher, H.M. 1961. Rudolf Pochs Nachlafs. Anthropologische Untersuchungen an den skeleten der Rudolf Poch'schen Buschmannsammlung.

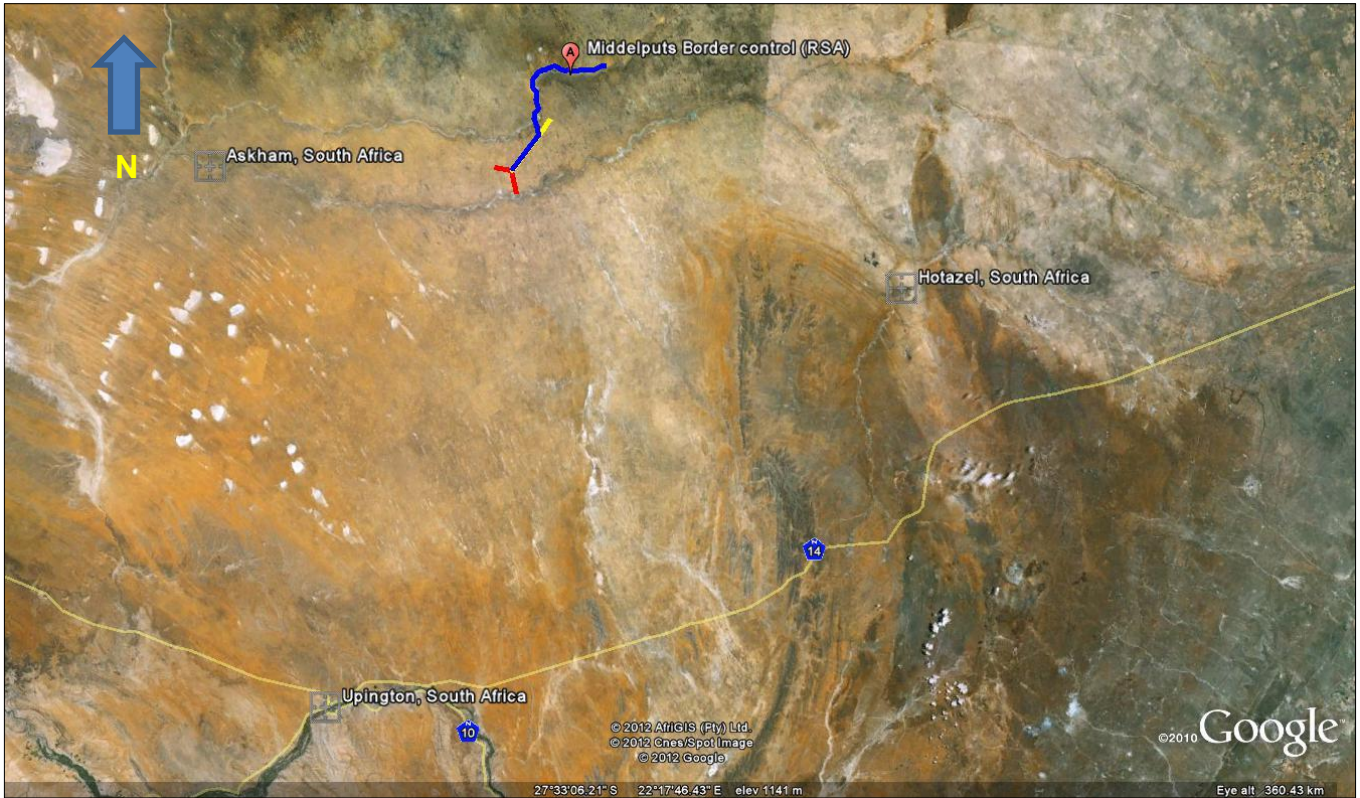


Figure 1. Google Satellite photograph of the locality area. Note Uptington at the bottom of the plate alongside the N10



Figure 2. Google Satellite photograph illustrating the proposed (blue) Middelputs water pipeline. The red and yellow lines are existing pipelines

