

Heritage impact scoping report for the
**PROPOSED ESKOM HIGHVELD NORTH, WEST LOWVELD
STRENGTHENING PROJECT, MPUMALANGA
AND LIMPOPO PROVINCES**



THE PROJECT:

Development of 400kV electricity transmission lines.

THIS REPORT:

HERITAGE IMPACT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ESKOM
HIGHVELD NORTH, WEST LOWVELD STRENGTHENING PROJECT,
MPUMALANGA AND LIMPOPO PROVINCES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HERITAGE IMPACT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ESKOM HIGHVELD NORTH, WEST LOWVELD STRENGTHENING PROJECT, MPUMALANGA AND LIMPOPO PROVINCES

Due to an increased demand for electricity in the region, Eskom propose the development of a 400kV transmission line between the town of Middelburg, north west wards past Marble Hall, towards Mokopane (formerly Potgietersrust). For this purpose, the following routes, each with alternatives, as well as associated infrastructure developments are proposed:

- Rockdale B Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Rockdale B to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Mokopane to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Steelpoort to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Wolwekraal Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure.

South Africa's heritage resources, also described as the 'national estate', comprise a wide range of sites, features, objects and believes. However, according to Section 27(18) of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), Act 25 of 1999, no person may destroy, damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of any heritage site without a permit issued by the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of such site.

Large sections of the study area have not yet been subjected to archaeological surveys, creating huge gaps in available knowledge. Furthermore, most information that was generated in other areas is based on impact assessments done for the purpose of development projects of some sort. It therefore covered these regions only selectively.

However, based on the available information, this scoping study has revealed that a variety of heritage resources occur in the study area and therefore there is a likelihood that the development activities would have an impact on some of them. Heritage resources manifest in a wide variety of forms, ranging from stone tools found as surface scatters, rock shelters, some of which may contain rock art, to stratified sites showing long sequences of occupation, and sites containing structures such as stone walling or buildings, cemeteries and places to which cultural significance is attached. These resources were contextualised in this scoping study. In terms of Section 7 of the NHRA, all the sites currently known or which are expected to occur in the study area are evaluated to have Grade III significance.

In determining the areas that are suitable for the proposed development, we were led by two considerations:

- Areas with the least known heritage sites, and
- Areas with the least likely chance of heritage sites occurring in them

Based on current knowledge, we recommend the following options to be selected for the proposed development:

- Rockdale B Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Can be located at any of the three proposed alternatives;
- Rockdale B to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Option 1 would have the least impact on known sites. It is also the route in which the least unknown sites are expected to occur.

- Mokopane to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Option 3 would have the least impact on known sites. It is also the route in which the least unknown sites are expected to occur.
- Steelpoort to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Option 2 would have the least impact on known sites. It is also the route in which the least unknown sites are expected to occur.
- Wolwekraal Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Can be located at any of the three proposed alternatives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J A van Schalkwyk', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

J A van Schalkwyk
Heritage Consultant

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Study area: Refers to the entire study area as indicated by the client in the accompanying Fig. 1 - 2.

Stone Age: The first and longest part of human history is the Stone Age, which began with the appearance of early humans between 3-2 million years ago. Stone Age people were hunters, gatherers and scavengers who did not live in permanently settled communities. Their stone tools preserve well and are found in most places in South Africa and elsewhere.

Early Stone Age	2 000 000 - 150 000 Before Present
Middle Stone Age	150 000 - 30 000 BP
Late Stone Age	30 000 - until c. AD 200

Iron Age: Period covering the last 1800 years, when new people brought a new way of life to southern Africa. They established settled villages, cultivated domestic crops such as sorghum, millet and beans, and they herded cattle as well as sheep and goats. These people, according to archaeological evidence, spoke early variations of the Bantu Language. Because they produced their own iron tools, archaeologists call this the Iron Age.

Early Iron Age	AD 200 - AD 900
Middle Iron Age	AD 900 - AD 1300
Late Iron Age	AD 1300 - AD 1830

Historical Period: Since the arrival of the white settlers - c. AD 1840 - in this part of the country

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRC	Archaeological Data Recording Centre
ASAPA	Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists
EIA	Early Iron Age
ESA	Early Stone Age
LIA	Late Iron Age
LSA	Later Stone Age
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
MSA	Middle Stone Age
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act
PHRA	Provincial Heritage Resources Agency
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency

HERITAGE IMPACT SCOPING REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ESKOM HIGHVELD NORTH, WEST LOWVELD STRENGTHENING PROJECT, MPUMALANGA AND LIMPOPO PROVINCES

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to an increased demand for electricity in the region, Eskom propose the development of a 400kV transmission line between the town of Middelburg, northwest wards past Marble Hall, towards Mokopane (formerly Potgietersrust). For this purpose, the following routes, each with alternatives, as well as associated infrastructure developments are proposed:

- Rockdale B Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Rockdale B to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Mokopane to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Steelpoort to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure;
- Wolwekraal Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure.

South Africa's heritage resources, also described as the 'national estate', comprise a wide range of sites, features, objects and beliefs. However, according to Section 27(18) of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), Act 25 of 1999, no person may destroy, damage, deface, excavate, alter, remove from its original position, subdivide or change the planning status of any heritage site without a permit issued by the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of such site.

In accordance with Section 38 of the NHRA, an independent heritage consultant was appointed by **Nemai Consulting** to conduct scoping survey as part of a larger Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to review the situation in the larger Highveld North West Lowveld project area. The aim of this scoping study is to outline the history of the region in order to determine if any fatal flaws exist that would prevent the project from continuing, as well as indicating which of the alternative routes would be better suited for the proposed development.

The subsequent Phase I HIA will determine the full range of sites, features or objects of cultural heritage significance that occur within the boundaries of the area where it is planned to develop the power line. If any sites, features or objects of cultural significance are found to be endangered by the proposed development, applicable mitigation measures have to be applied to these resources. This is commonly referred to as Phase II studies and consists of the documentation and archaeological excavation of a site, whereby sufficient information and material is recovered in order to study the site in its cultural context even though it has been destroyed as a result of the development.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The scope of work for this study consisted of:

- Conducting of a desk-top investigation of the area, in which all available literature, reports, databases and maps were studied;
- A short five-day visit to the proposed corridor routes.

The objectives were to

- Identify possible archaeological, cultural and historic sites within the proposed mining area;
- Evaluate the potential impacts of construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed development on archaeological, cultural and historical resources;
- Recommend mitigation measures to ameliorate any negative impacts on areas of archaeological, cultural or historical importance.

3. HERITAGE RESOURCES

3.1 The National Estate

The NHRA (Act No. 25 of 1999) defines the heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations that must be considered part of the national estate to include:

- places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- historical settlements and townscapes;
- landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- graves and burial grounds, including-
 - ancestral graves;
 - royal graves and graves of traditional leaders;
 - graves of victims of conflict;
 - graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
 - historical graves and cemeteries; and
 - other human remains which are not covered in terms of the Human Tissue Act, 1983 (Act No. 65 of 1983);
- sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa;
- movable objects, including-
 - objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
 - objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
 - ethnographic art and objects;
 - military objects;
 - objects of decorative or fine art;
 - objects of scientific or technological interest; and
 - books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996).

3.2 Cultural significance

In the NHRA, Section 2 (vi), it is stated that “cultural significance” means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance. This is determined in relation to a site or feature’s uniqueness, condition of preservation and research potential.

According to Section 3(3) of the NHRA, a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of

- its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa; and
- sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.

4. STUDY APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Extent of the Study

This survey and impact assessment covers the area as presented in Section 5 and as illustrated in Figures 1 - 2.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Preliminary investigation

4.2.1.1 Survey of the literature

A survey of the relevant literature was conducted with the aim of reviewing the previous research done and determining the potential of the area. In this regard, various anthropological, archaeological and historical sources were consulted.

- A number of publications deal with the area in a general sense, e.g. Praagh 1906, Bergh 1998, Mönnig 1967 and Mason 1968. In contrast, others deal with specific topic in the region, e.g. Moore 1981, De Jong et al 1988, Huffman & Steel 1996 and Schoeman 1997.
- Various heritage impact assessment reports (Van Schalkwyk 1999, 2007) deals with different development projects in the larger region.

- **A large amount of information that was region or topic specific was obtained from there resources**

4.2.1.2 Data bases

- The following databases were consulted: *Heritage Atlas Database*, the *Environmental Potential Atlas*, the *Chief Surveyor General* and the *National Archives of South Africa*.
 - **Of the above, the Heritage Atlas Database produced information on the existence of a large number of sites. In contrast, the others contributed virtually nothing that was usable for the purpose of this study.**

4.2.1.3 Other sources

- Aerial photographs, topocadastral and other maps were also studied - see the list of references below.
 - **Information of a very general nature were obtained from these sources.**

4.2.2 Field survey

The area that had to be investigated, was identified by members of **Nemai Consulting** by means of maps and during a five day site visit.

- **A few sites were identified during the site visit and was added to the known ones.**

4.2 Limitations

The following has a bearing on the results of this study:

- The information presented below is based almost totally on a desktop study;
- Access to the routes was limited by stopping at accessible locations and then viewing the proposed route.
- In all areas the vegetation cover was high and very dense, which seriously limited archaeological visibility.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Site location

The study area consists of an area some distance northeast of the town of Mokopane (formerly Potgietersrust) in Limpopo Province, all the way in a south-eastern direction towards Middelburg (Fig. 1 & 2).

5.2 Site description

As can be expected with a study area ranging across such a large area, the environment changes drastically from south to north. The south forms part of a highveld area typified by an undulating landscape. Going down the escarpment to the middle veld, the area is typified by mountains. The central section is largely very flat, being part of the Springbok flats. In contrast, the northern section is again marked by mountains and hills, creating a broken type of environment.

Most of the region has been subjected to agricultural activities, with ploughing in the highveld and central regions changing the environment drastically. One example is the Loskop Dam Irrigation Scheme, in which irrigation, based on 480km of canals, is practiced. A second example is the Springbok flats, on which extensive dry-land farming is practiced.

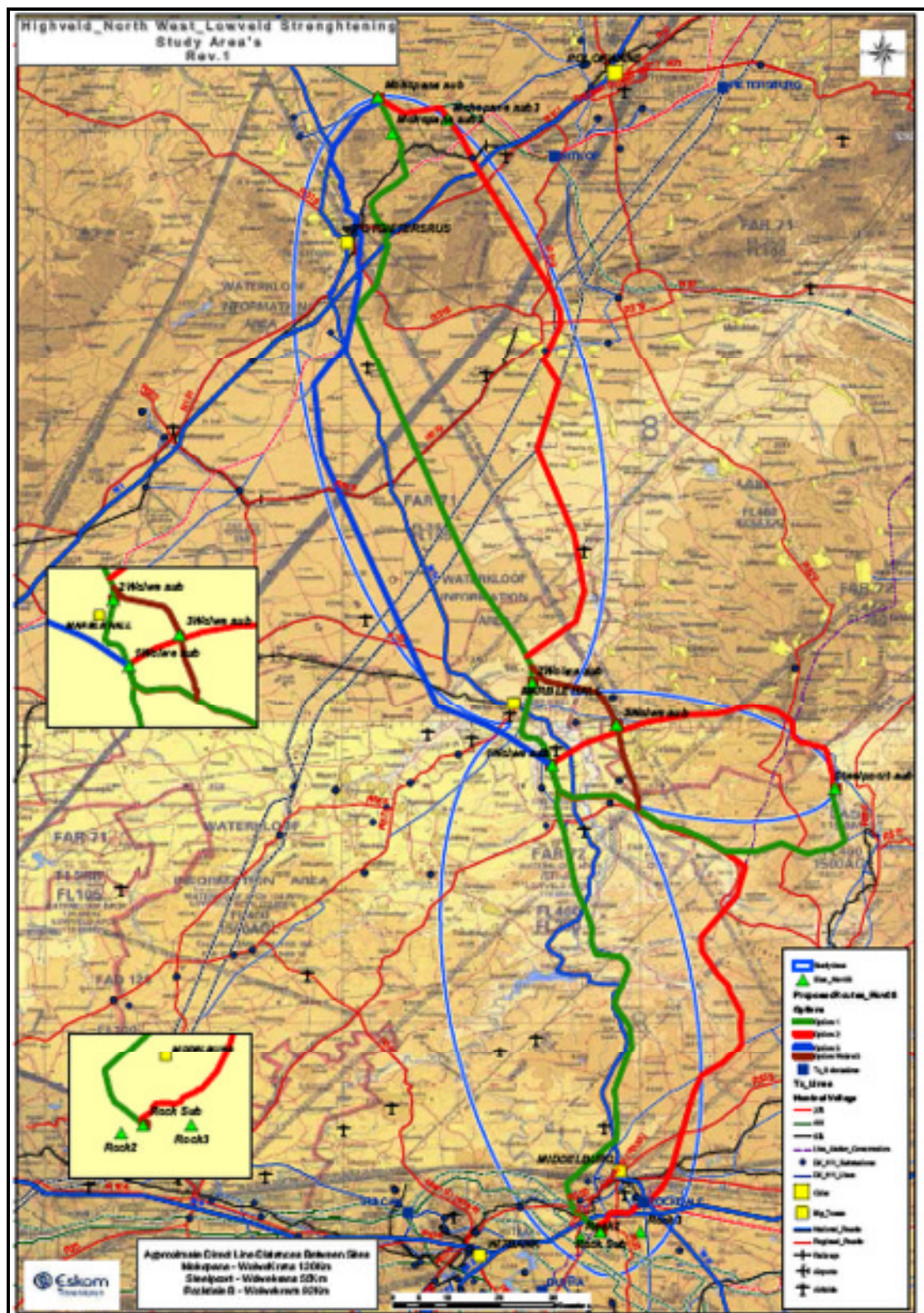


Fig. 1. Location of the study area (blue polygon) in regional context.

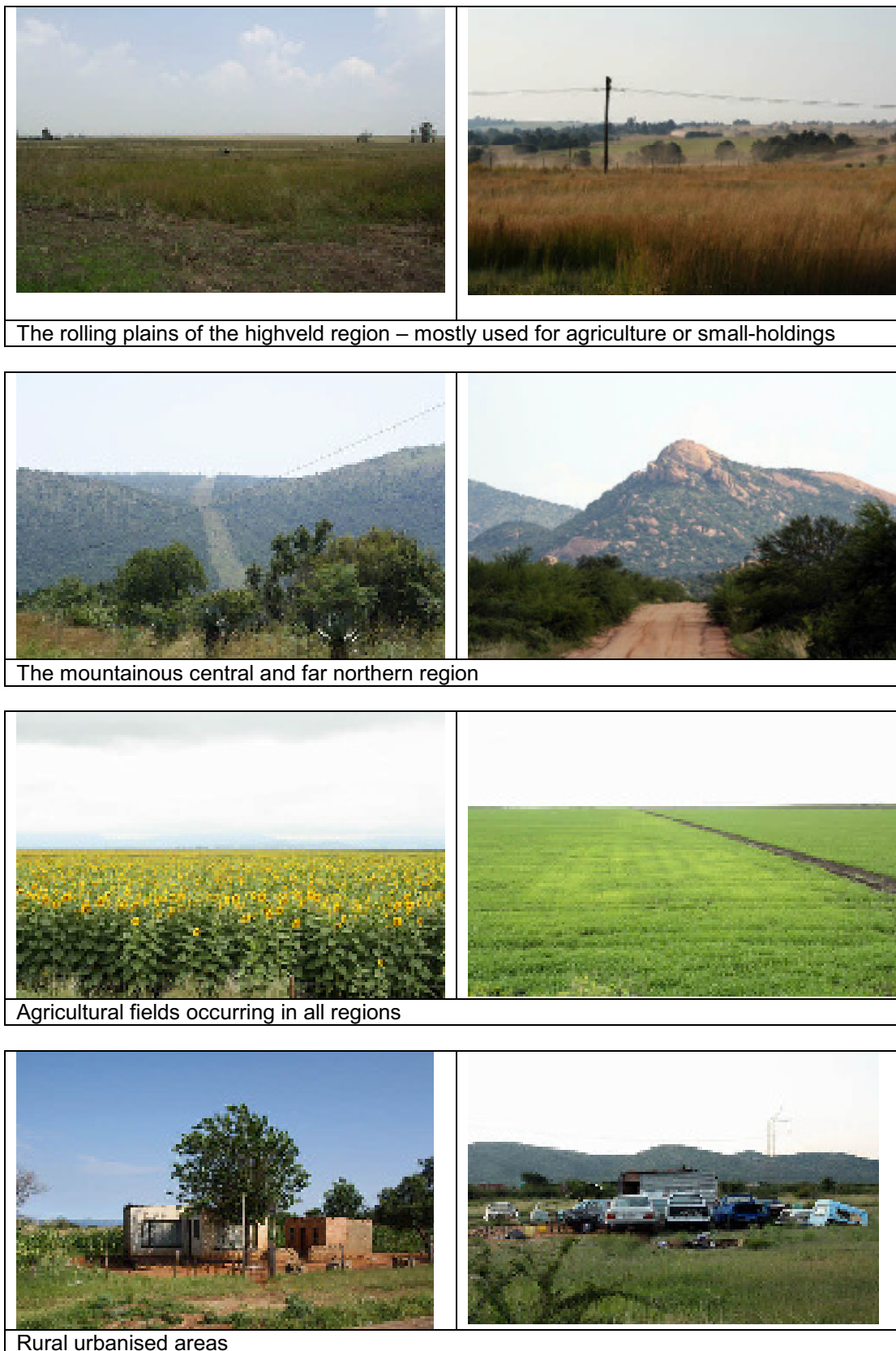


Fig. 2. The different environments through which the power line might pass.

5.3 Regional overview

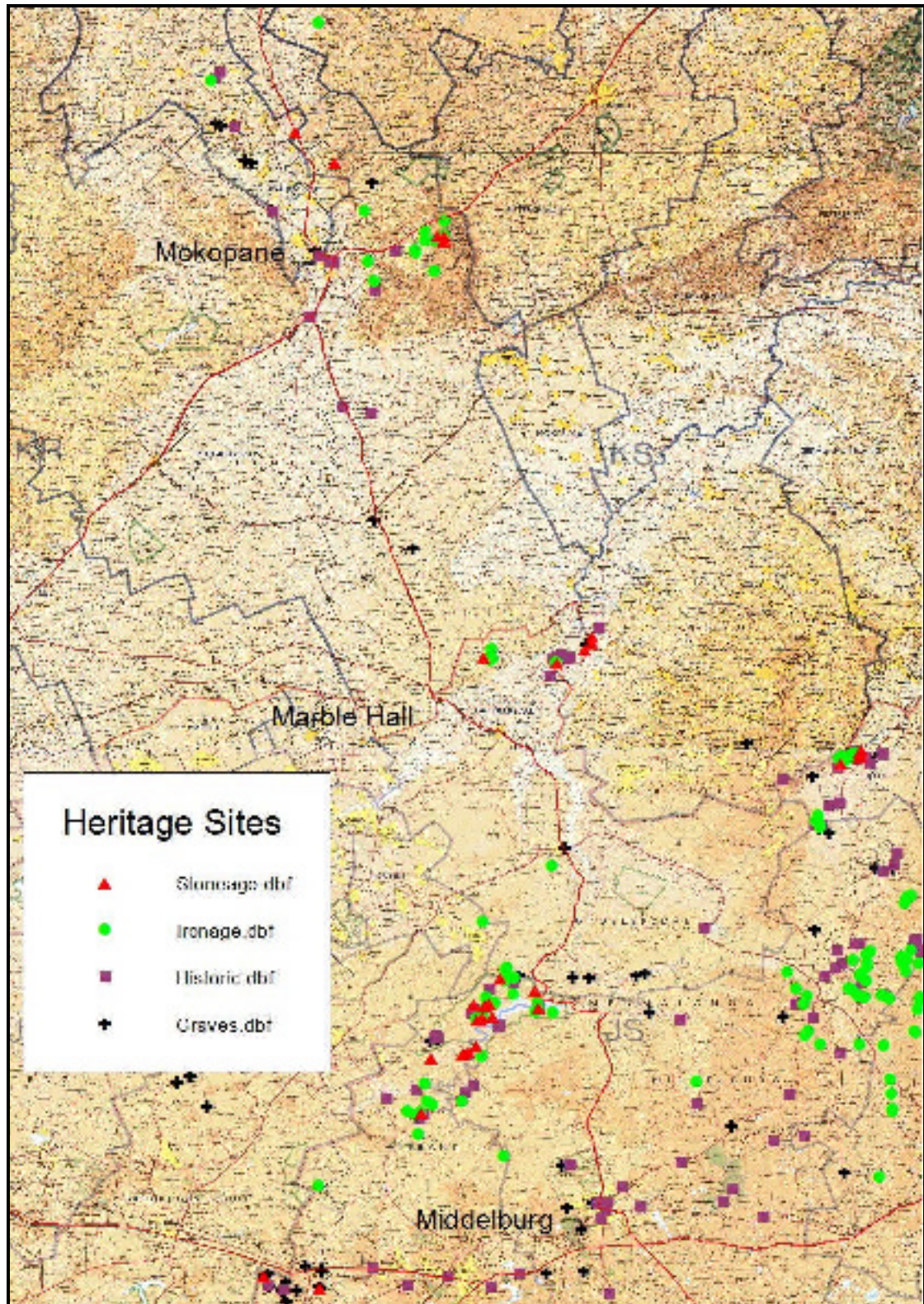


Fig. 3. Location of known heritage sites in the region of the study area.

5.3.1 Stone Age

Occupation of the larger region has taken place since the Early Stone Age time and continued right up to Later Stone Age times. Various habitation sites occur in the larger region, and some, e.g. in the Loskop Dam and Makapansgat area were previously excavated.

5.3.2 Iron Age

Iron Age people started to settle in southern Africa c. AD 300, with one of the oldest known sites at Broederstroom south of Hartebeespoort Dam dating to AD 470. Some sites dating to the Early Iron Age are known from the Steelpoort River valley.

The occupation of the larger geographical area (including the study area) did not start much before the 1500s. As this was also a period of great military tension, people tended to cluster together in large settlements on hills or the slopes of mountains. Mzilikazi raided the plateau extensively between 1825 and 1837. The White settlers trekked into this area in the 1830s.

5.3.3 Historic period

White settlers moved into the area during the first half of the 19th century. They were largely self-sufficient, basing their survival on cattle/sheep farming and hunting. Few towns were established and it remained an undeveloped area, with farming the most dominant economic activity. During the Anglo-Boer War, a number of skirmishes occurred in the larger area, especially alongside the railway line to Mozambique. Gold was discovered at Eersteling east of Mokopane in the 1880s and coal mining started by 1905, with Witbank becoming the centre of this type mining activity.

5.4 Identified sites

The following cultural heritage resources are known to exist or are expected to exist in the study area:

5.4.1 Stone Age

During the site visit, stone tools were noticed to occur sporadically all over the study area. However, as all of these are surface finds, they are viewed to be out of context and have a low significance. As yet, no stratified sites, usually located in rock shelters or caves, are known from the study area.

- **Some sites might exist in the various hills and rocky outcrops. This is especially true for the more mountainous regions in the middle and northern section of the study area. The sites making up the Makapansgat cultural landscape is part of a World Heritage site and it therefore of high significance**

Rock paintings are known to occur in the larger region.

- **Some sites are known to exist to the north of Mokopane, whereas others are located in the vicinity of Loskop Dam.**

5.4.2 Iron Age

During the Early Iron Age, people preferred to settle close to rivers, utilising the fertile alluvial soil for cultivation. These sites were usually large and open and are distinguished by the occurrence of the remains of huts, cattle kraals and refuse middens.

	
Iron Age rock art in the Loskop Dam area	Iron Age stone walled site
	
An old farmstead on the Springbok flats	Grave of a farm labourer
	
Infrastructure: old telephone lines	Water furrows in the Loskop dam system

Fig. 4. Types of heritage features known to exist in the region.

During the Late Iron Age, due to unstable conditions, people feared for their lives and congregated in towns that were developed in areas that could be better defended, e.g. on top of hills. These sites are usually distinguished by extensive stone walling.

- **Some sites might exist in the broken region north of Mokopane, whereas others are known from the central area in the vicinity of Loskop Dam, as well as in the vicinity of the Steelpoort substation.**

5.4.3 Historic period

It is possible, but yet to be confirmed, that settlements that were relocated also existed in the study area.

- **The Loskop Dam and associated canal system dates to the 1930s.**
- **The railway line passing Middelburg forms part of the old NZASM and was constructed during the 1890s.**
- **Some burial sites occur sporadically on farms, and close to the various rural villages.**

6. SITE SIGNIFICANCE AND ASSESSMENT

6.1 Heritage assessment criteria and grading

The NHRA stipulates the assessment criteria and grading of archaeological sites. The following categories are distinguished in Section 7 of the Act:

- **Grade I:** Heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance;
- **Grade II:** Heritage resources which, although forming part of the national estate, can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or a region; and
- **Grade III:** Other heritage resources worthy of conservation, on a local authority level.

The occurrence of sites with a Grade I significance will demand that the development activities be drastically altered in order to retain these sites in their original state. For Grade II and Grade III sites, the application of mitigation measures would allow the development activities to continue. If it is impossible to avoid an impact, the Heritage Act allows for mitigation measures to be implemented. This usually entails the documentation and archaeological investigation (excavation) of sites that are to be impacted, and can usually only be done after a valid permit has been issued by SAHRA to a qualified archaeologist.

6.2 Statement of significance

In terms of Section 7 of the NHRA, all the sites currently known or which are expected to occur in the study area are evaluated to have

- Grade III significance.

6.3 Impact assessment

Impact analysis of cultural heritage resources under threat of the proposed development, are based on the present understanding of the development.

- As it is likely that some heritage sites would be impacted on by the proposed development activities the next step would be the conducting of a full Phase I

archaeological survey of the selected routes in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(3) of the NHRA.

7. CONCLUSIONS

As indicated above, large sections of the study area have not yet been subjected to archaeological surveys, creating huge gaps in available knowledge. Furthermore, most information that was generated in other areas is based on impact assessments done for the purpose of development projects of some sort. It therefore covered these regions only selectively.

However, based on the available information, this scoping study has revealed that a variety of heritage resources occur in the study area and therefore there is a likelihood that the development activities would have an impact on some of them. Heritage resources manifest in a wide variety of forms, ranging from stone tools found as surface scatters, rock shelters, some of which may contain rock art, to stratified sites showing long sequences of occupation, and sites containing structures such as stone walling or buildings, cemeteries and places to which cultural significance is attached. These resources were contextualised in this scoping study. In terms of Section 7 of the NHRA, all the sites currently known or which are expected to occur in the study area are evaluated to have Grade III significance.

In determining the areas that are suitable for the proposed development, we were led by two considerations:

- Areas with the least known heritage sites, and
- Areas with the least likely chance of heritage sites occurring in them

Based on current knowledge, we recommend the following options to be selected for the proposed development:

- Rockdale B Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Can be located at any of the three proposed alternatives;
- Rockdale B to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Option 1 would have the least impact on known sites. It is also the route in which the least unknown sites are expected to occur.
- Mokopane to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Option 3 would have the least impact on known sites. It is also the route in which the least unknown sites are expected to occur.
- Steelpoort to Wolwekraal 400kV Power Line and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Option 2 would have the least impact on known sites. It is also the route in which the least unknown sites are expected to occur.
- Wolwekraal Substation and Associated Secondary Infrastructure: Can be located at any of the three proposed alternatives.

8. REFERENCES

8.1 Data bases

Chief Surveyor General

Environmental Potential Atlas, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

Heritage Atlas Database, Pretoria.

National Archives of South Africa

8.2 Literature

Acocks, J.P.H. 1975. *Veld Types of South Africa*. Memoirs of the Botanical Survey of South Africa, No. 40. Pretoria: Botanical Research Institute.

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Van Schalkwyk, J.A. 1999. *A survey of cultural resources in the Arabie dam, Groblersdal District, Mpumalanga*. Unpublished report 1999KH09. Pretoria: National Cultural History Museum.

Van Schalkwyk, J.A. 2007. *Final survey report and mitigation recommendations for cultural heritage resources in the De Hoop Dam, Steelpoort River, Limpopo Province*. Unpublished report DHD2007/01. Pretoria: National Cultural History Museum.

Van Vuuren, L. 2008. Loskop Dam: early local engineering ingenuity. *The Water Wheel*, September 2008.

Van Warmelo, N.J. 1935. *A preliminary survey of the Bantu tribes of South Africa*. Ethnological Publications No. 5. Pretoria: Government Printer.

8.3 Maps and aerial photographs

1: 50 000 Topocadastral maps

Jeppe, F. 1899. *Jeppe's map of the Transvaal or South African Republic*. Pretoria: Surveyor General.

Google Earth

APPENDIX 1. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

All archaeological and palaeontological sites, and meteorites are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (Act no 25 of 1999) as stated in Section 35:

(1) Subject to the provisions of section 8, the protection of archaeological and palaeontological sites and material and meteorites is the responsibility of a provincial heritage resources authority: Provided that the protection of any wreck in the territorial waters and the maritime cultural zone shall be the responsibility of SAHRA.

(2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (8)(a), all archaeological objects, palaeontological material and meteorites are the property of the State. The responsible heritage authority must, on behalf of the State, at its discretion ensure that such objects are lodged with a museum or other public institution that has a collection policy acceptable to the heritage resources authority and may in so doing establish such terms and conditions as it sees fit for the conservation of such objects.

(3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority offices or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

(4) No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority-

- (a) destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- (b) destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- (c) trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- (d) bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assist in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.

In terms of cemeteries and graves the following (Section 36):

(1) Where it is not the responsibility of any other authority, SAHRA must conserve and generally care for burial grounds and graves protected in terms of this section, and it may make such arrangements for their conservation as it sees fit.

(2) SAHRA must identify and record the graves of victims of conflict and any other graves which it deems to be of cultural significance and may erect memorials associated with the grave referred to in subsection (1), and must maintain such memorials.

(3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority-

- (a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- (b) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- (c) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

(4) SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may not issue a permit for the destruction or damage of any burial ground or grave referred to in subsection (3)(a) unless it is satisfied that the applicant has made satisfactory arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the contents of such graves, at the cost of the applicant and in accordance with any regulations made by the responsible heritage resources authority.