

PERMIT APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESCUE EXCAVATIONS OF AN EXPOSED HUMAN BURIAL LOCATED ON THE BANKS OF THE NGQUTURA RIVER, NEAR DUTYWA, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE.



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1. INTRODUCTION

An exposed human skull was identified on the banks of the Ngqutura River by a passer-by from the local community and reported to Chief Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa of the Pokwana Royal Council, Ntlekiseni Location, kwaZangashe Basin, who is the traditional authority within the area.

Chief Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa was referred to contact the Albany Museum for assistance. The exposed burial was reported to Albany Museum on Monday 7 March 2022.

2. SITE VISIT (31°57'12.40"S; 28°05'25.10")

The site visit was conducted by Celeste Booth from the Department of Archaeology, Albany Museum accompanied by Mr Manzandonga Vabaza, Albany Museum Manager. We met with Chief Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa and members of the local community at the site of the burial area.

The burial has been exposed due to recent heavy rains in the area and therefore, increase in flow of the river. The concrete slab that was utilised as a bridge over the was also washed away in the recent rains. The bridge was situated next to the burial. Currently only a portion of the skull is exposed, however, slightly rib bones were also noted. The burial is still *in situ*.

Due to the interest from the community, the exposed portion of the skull was covered with clay and packed with rocks as a temporary measure before rescue excavations commence.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

It is highly likely that future rain and erosion will expose the burial further over time resulting in the skeletal remains being washed into and down the river. There is also the human impact of the risk that skeletal remains may be disturbed and / or removed.

It is therefore, recommended that rescue excavations be conducted to ensure the safety and conservation of the skeletal remains. Further studies will be conducted to identify the individual, e.g., determination of age, sex, ethnicity and possible dating of the skeletal remains.

4. PERMIT APPLICATION

4.1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION THAT WILL CURATE THE MATERIAL RECOVERED.

The skeletal remains will be curated by the Department of Archaeology, Albany Museum, in Makhanda / Grahamstown.

4.2. NATURE OF SITE (a short description including type and approximate date)

The site is an exposed portion of a human skull. Some ribs are slightly exposed that could indicate that the burial is still *in-situ*. The site is located on the banks of Ngqutura River, near Dutywa and is at risk of being washed away by the flooding of the river during heavy rains.

4.3. PURPOSE OF APPLICATION

The purpose of the permit application is for the rescue and removal of the burial which is at risk of being washed away and / or human impact.

4.4. NATURE OF ACTIVITY

The nature of the activity will be the excavation and disturbance and removal from the original site for the rescue and removal of the skeletal remains. The burial will be carefully excavated so as to expose the burial in-situ to determine type of burial which would indicate possible ethnicity of the buried individual.

4.5. LANDOWNER CONSULTATION

The rescue and removal of the burial has been discussed with Chief Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa of the Pokwana Royall House which the traditional authority of the area.

Chief Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa has signed the permit application on behalf of landowner consent.

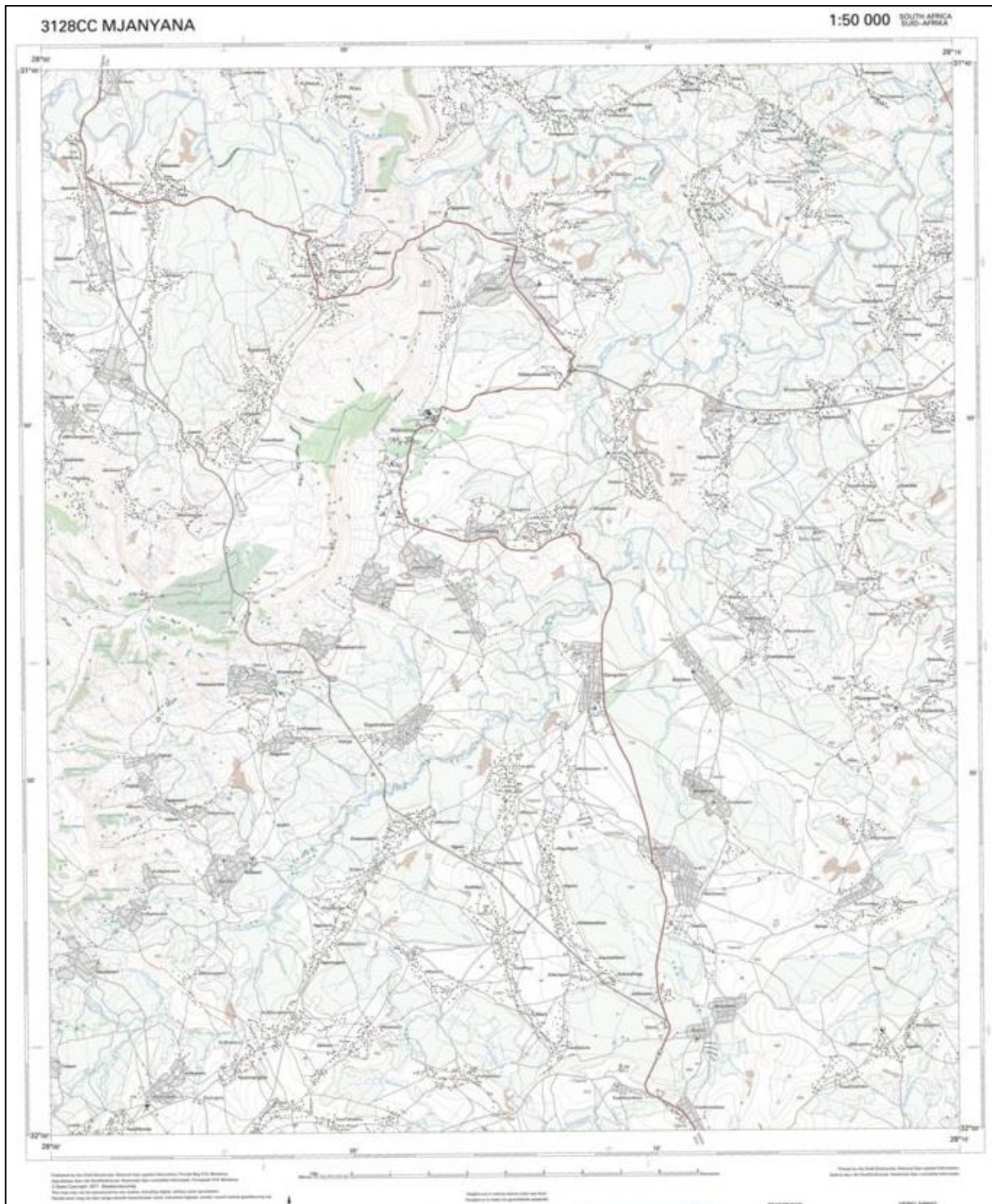


Figure 1. 1:50 000 topographic map 3128 CC MJANYANA showing the location of the exposed human burial on the banks of the Ngqutura River.



Figure 2. Google Earth generated map showing the location of the human burial on the banks of the Ngqutura River showing the surrounding towns.

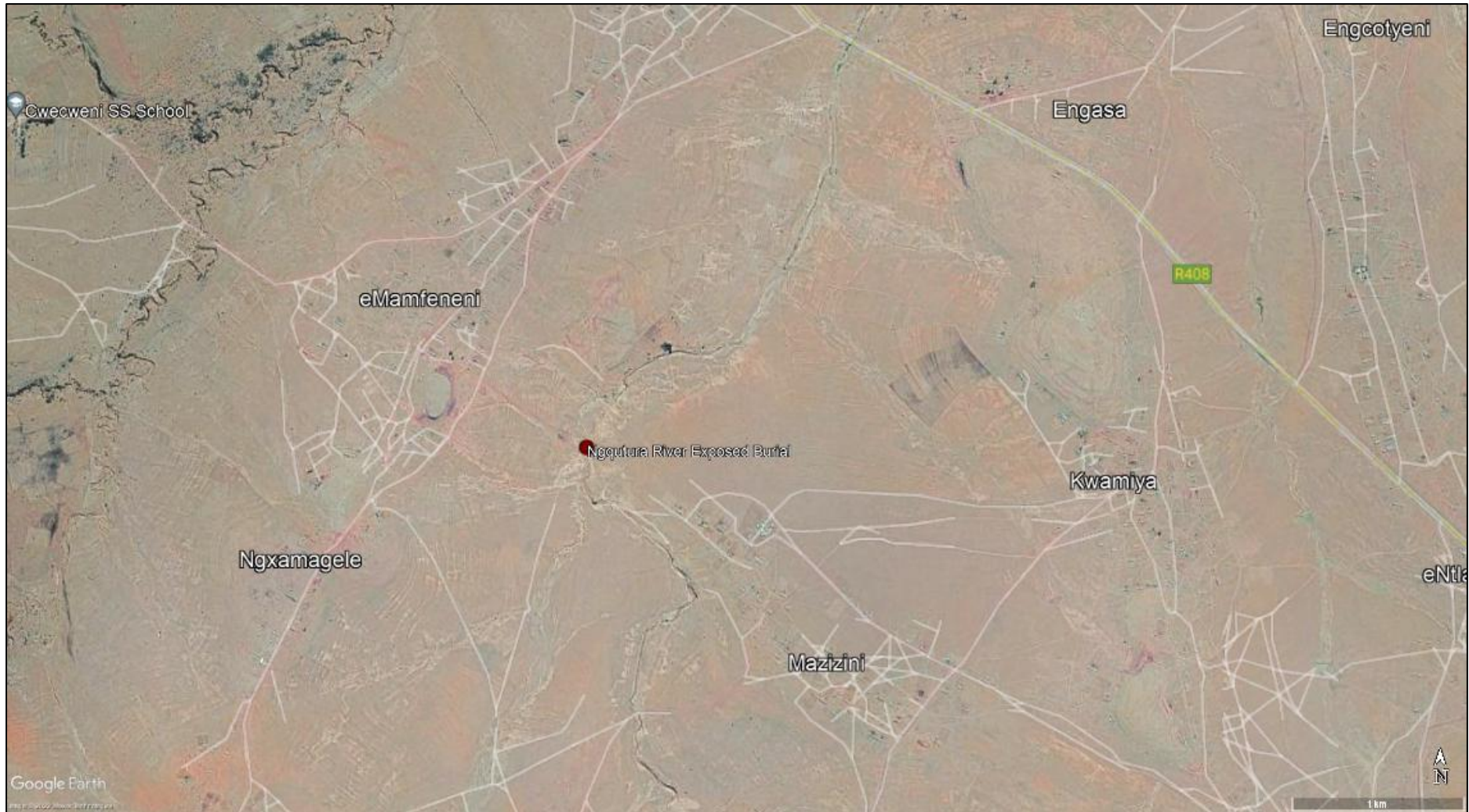


Figure 3. Google Earth generated map showing the location of the human burial on the banks of the Ngqutura River showing the surrounding villages.

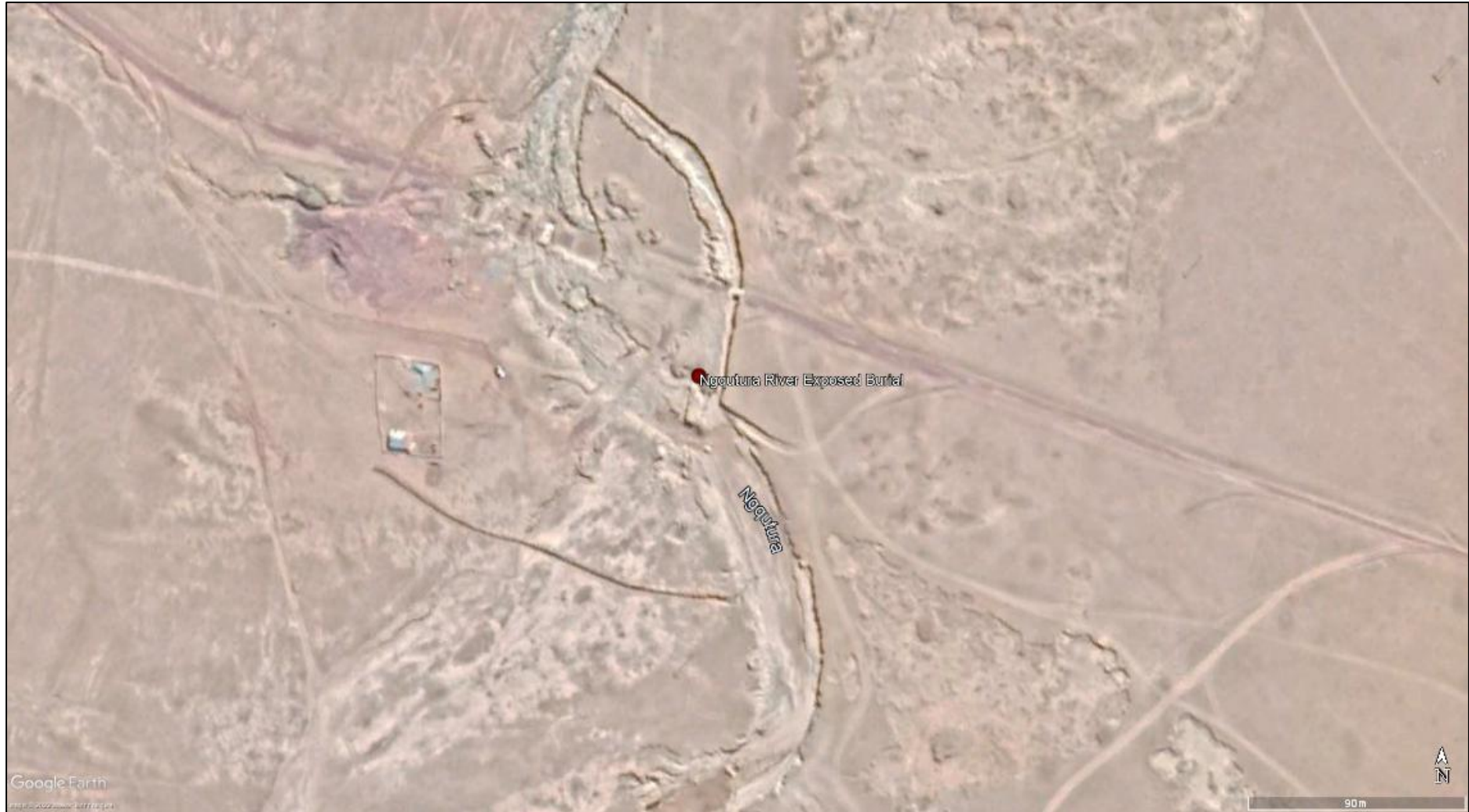


Figure 4. Close-up aerial view showing the location of the human burial on the banks of the Ngqutura River



Figure 5. View of the location of the human burial on the banks of the Ngqutura River.



Figure 6. View of the general landscape.



Figure 7. View of the exposed portion of the skull.



Figure 7. View of the exposed portion of the skull.



