

APPLICATION FOR AN EXHUMATION AND REBURIAL PERMIT UNDER SECTION 35 OF THE NHRA, KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

During a patrol by field rangers in 2022, human bones were discovered along the edges of a river within Kruger National Park. On further assessment by rangers, it became evident that these bones were part of a grave. These bones had become exposed over time because of continuous erosion on the banks of the river – exposing a human skull.

Following notification by colleagues based at Kruger, I conducted a site visit and confirmed as well that this was indeed a grave. I further notified the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) of this discovery. It was clear to me that this is not a recent grave, but one that has been in existence for a long period. SAHRA advised that this matter be first reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS) – to confirm that the human bones could not be potentially linked to a crime scene (Figures 1, 2, 3). We followed the advice and the Section Ranger for Mooiplaas officially opened the case with the SAPS (Appendix A) – case number that was allocated is 1583/11/2022.

There has been no indication by the SAPS that the human bones now exposed were part of any criminal investigations. SAPS has not undertaken a site visit the discovered grave.

The idea is to have the exposed grave exhumed and reburied in an area that will be identified in consultation with colleagues. This chosen locality will be within the park, and not too far from the current burial area – but in an area not threatened by environmental factors. Such an intervention, through exhumation and reburial, will ensure that ongoing expansion of the riverbanks do not pose a continued threat to this grave.

addo elephant
agulhas
IAi-IAis / richtersveld
augrabies
bontebok
camdeboo
garden route
golden gate highlands
groenkloof
karoo
kgalagadi transfrontier
kruger
mapungubwe
marakele
mokala
mountain zebra
namaqua
table mountain
tankwa karoo
west coast



Figure 1: The geographical context of a grave, along a riverbank at the Kruger National Park.



Figure 2: A compressed human skull – probably because of compacted soil above it.



Figure 3: Two human teeth found in the vicinity of the exposed skull.

Social consultation

There was no social consultation undertaken, after it became evident that the grave is not recent, and thus will not be linked to any memory. Indications, therefore, are that this grave is more than 60 years old and is in an area of the park that has not had a community leaving within it for many decades. Furthermore, Section 35 regulations do not require that social consultation be undertaken.

Exhumation and reburial

The grave will be exhumed by a qualified archaeologist with over 20 years' experience. The permit holder shall be Dr Ndukuyakhe Ndlovu. As the Principal Investigator, Dr Ndlovu is employed as the Manager for Archaeology within the SANParks. Dr Ndlovu shall be ably assisted by colleagues within the Cultural Heritage Unit. There shall be strict adherence to appropriate archaeological techniques and the use of necessary tools.

The SANParks Guidelines for Burials, Scattering of Cremated Ashes, Erecting of Memorials, Placing of Plaques and Access to Gravesites in National Parks shall be adhered to and the new grave location will be appropriately marked so that its existence is not easily lost in memory.

Conclusion

SANParks aims to have the exhumation and relocation undertaken as soon as possible, to ensure that the grave is not further exposed to soil erosion threats.

ANNEXURE A – CASE NUMBER ALLOCATED BY THE SAPS

SAP 21

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

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Posbus/Post Office Box 253

Verwysing Reference	3/15/2/1
Navrae Enquiries	
Telefoon Telephone	(015) 781 9277
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THE STATION COMMISSIONER
S A POLICE SERVICE
PHALABORWA
1390

Date: 2022-11-08

Mr/Ms: MARIMA MIZILYSON
Res/Address: MOOPLAAS RANGER
KNP
082 718 4173
Tel/Cell:

NOTIFICATION OF CASE REFERENCE NUMBER:

1. Welcome to our quality service.
2. Your ref no is OB 1583 111/2022.
3. The investigation official is still unknown but rest assure that you will be informed of his/her particulars within 24 hrs.
4. Thank you once more and have a good day/night.

71096769 serg
NKWIHLA mp

Ver/Notification of case number

