

PART II

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Objective: To implement, monitor and maintain conservation measures in order to further prevent natural and unnatural deterioration of the *NORTHDENE 1A* & *NORTHDENE 1B*, rock art sites at the Roburnia Plantation, Amsterdam / Lothair.

- **Current Status:**

NORTHDENE 1A & *NORTHDENE 1B* are both painted on loose standing boulders, within a cluster of prominent sandstone boulders. The panels are relatively small and *NORTHDENE 1A* is close to the ground while *NORTHDENE 1B* is approximately 2m above ground / surface level (figs. 43 & 44). Both sites are extensively faded as a result of natural exposure as well as unnatural (human) elements (chip and scratch marks). No illegal excavations were observed at these sites, which are often the case at rock art sites in the area.

The panel at *NORTHDENE 1A* was done in monochrome, bi-chrome and possibly poly-chrome colours of red ochre, light brown or orange ochre. The white or black paint (which is more fugitive), have already faded and are no longer visible. One image (probably an eland in a dark red ochre), is more prominent than the other images and the colour is still clearly visible (figs. 17 & 18). *NORTHDENE 1B* was done in a monochrome red ochre of more or less the same colour tone throughout the panel.

Most of the images at both these sites were severely chipped or scratched (See Appendix 3 and figs. 50 – 52). Severe ochre wash damage occurs at *NORTHDENE 1A*, which results that most of the images are obscured and barely visible. Ochre wash damage also obscures some of the images at the *NORTHDENE 1B* panel (figs. 53 – 56).

NORTHDENE 1A has a number of images related to the trance experience of the San shamans, and it must have been a spectacular sight before natural deterioration and human interference took place. Both these sites are on huge sandstone boulders which are facing north north-west and overlooking a seasonal stream or drainage line, below. *NORTHDENE 1B*, is directly exposed to the elements, although a large tree in front of the *NORTHDENE 1A* site protects it from direct sun, wind and rain. The tree itself must be controlled so that leaves and branches do not rub on or against the images in future (figs. 45 – 47).

Natural deterioration such as water seepage and lichen growth are further threats to these images. Water seepage to the far right at *NORTHDENE 1A* has obscured some of the images. Water seepage is visible and affected all of the images at *NORTHDENE 1B*. Lichen growth, is also evident at *NORTHDENE 1B* (figs. g, k, l, 48 & 49).

The art at both sites is currently vulnerable as it is close to the Fernie settlement. Local people use the area to graze their cattle. Uncontrolled visits to these sites are obvious as was stated in the report. Chipping of the paint on the images, is the greatest threat to the paintings as some cultures believe that the paint contains supernatural powers which are used in traditional medicines (figs. 50 – 52). Fires in the shelter below the images at *NORTHDENE 1B* might also be a threat to the site, as the paintings can be damaged by direct or indirect heat from fire and carbon deposits over the paintings.

Current Management Actions:

Brief management prescriptions are recorded in SAFCOL: Komatiland Forests' *Areas of Special Interest* register, stating that:

- Conduct annual weed control;
- Weeds to be removed from the sites;
- Protect rock art from fires;
- Keep a buffer of 5m.¹

Future Priorities

The responsibility by Komatiland Forests' officials and the plantation manager of the specific section, is crucial to implement the recommendations in the management guidelines. It is recommended that a yearly audit by a heritage specialist be done to prevent further deterioration of the site and to recommend immediate action and remedial measures, if necessary.

- **Inventory**

The frequent updating of the rock art inventory, their content and significance will contribute to the cultural heritage responsibility of all institutions (SAFCOL: Komatiland Forests) as specified

¹ SAFCOL Integrated Management System: ASI Record, 18/04/2018.

by the NHRA (section 5), and will also contribute to crucial research and general knowledge of the rock art in the area.

- Hard copies of the information contained in the survey should be made available to each plantation manager for implementation.
- The rock art sites within its control should be recorded on 1:50 000 maps which are kept at each station.
- Each station is required to send details of all new sites discovered to a heritage specialist who will notify SAHRA for inclusion in the provincial and national databases.

- **Site Monitoring**

Sites within SAFCOL: Komatiland Forests' jurisdiction should be monitored at least quarterly by the plantation manager and annually by a heritage specialist to determine whether impacts (if any) are having an unacceptable effect upon the rock art sites and to take appropriate action thereafter. These measures are crucial as uncontrolled visits to the sites already take place.

The plantation manager and heritage specialist should have a set of the site record forms, photographs and a copy of any tracings, pertaining to the known sites under its administration as well as a map with the exact locations. It is recommended that the management status for monitoring *NORTHDENE 1A & NORTHDENE 1B*, be assessed by a heritage specialist before each winter season, in order to guide the fire management control programme.

- An annual plan should be developed to ensure the quarterly and annual visits as required. This should be tasked to the responsible official who will also arrange with a heritage specialist.
- Site monitors should be aware that they are not allowed to interfere with cultural resources in any way at these sites.
- Photographs of the sites should be taken during each visit.
- Non-contact tracings of the art, indicating damage and seep lines should only be done by a specialist.
- An evaluation report should be sent to the responsible official in charge.
- A buffer zone of at least 10 meters (as specified in the NHRA, section 2) should be maintained around the cluster of boulders;
- Care should be taken not to allow dust, from visiting or weeding activities, to settle at the paintings.

- **Site Vegetation**

Vegetation surrounding sites should be retained unless it poses a direct threat to the rock art. Natural vegetation has value as a shield to reduce the impact of direct sunlight, for site microclimate control, to buffer daily extremes in temperature and humidity and for the consolidation of shelter deposits and soils for assistance in the suppression of airborne dusts.

- The large tree at *NORTHDENE 1A* should be kept intact, but must be monitored on a quarterly basis to keep side branches and leaves from rubbing against the panel (figs. 43 – 47);
- The bush in front of the *NORTHDENE 1B* site must be monitored and trimmed if necessary, to prevent contact with the images on the rockface (figs. g, k & l).

Currently all vegetation is low and not a direct threat to the rock art. This should be monitored quarterly to check the size of the plants or trees. The paintings at *NORTHDENE 1A* are very close to the ground surface (approximately 30 - 50cm), and even grass may pose a threat if not controlled.

- The vegetation which is directly damaging the painted surfaces by rubbing contact, must be removed at both sites;
- Alien vegetation is not currently observed at these sites, but whenever it is observed, it must be monitored and eradicated.
- All other natural vegetation should be retained to shield the paintings against extremes in temperature and humidity.
- The impact of vegetation should be monitored by a heritage specialist on an annual basis to prevent that vegetation gets out of control;

- **Fire Management**

Vegetation surrounding rock art sites should always be protected from both scheduled and unscheduled burns, to prevent fire damage to the sites.

- When doing a pre-burn assessment of the rock art sites, the responsible officer should take steps to eliminate fire damage by burning a firebreak around the site;
- Immediate steps should be taken by the responsible official to avoid potential damage by unscheduled burns;
- Vegetation (for example grass) should be cut with slashers to keep it short. No brushcutter equipment should be used, as stones may damage the painted surfaces and dust will be deposited on the art; **No slasher equipment** should be used to any site which is close to the ground, such as *NORTHDENE 1A*. It is recommended that vegetation is removed with pruning shears only.

- Long term strategies for the protection of the rock art sites from fire damage should be developed due to the frequency of uncontrolled fires;
- Rock art sites must be placed on the list of vulnerable features for all management sections.

- **Site Interventions**

Various forms of intervention are appropriate for rock art sites which include removal of bird and insect nests or vegetation to reduce risk of fire damage. The removal of graffiti should only be executed by a rock art specialist. All interventions should be done in consultation with a cultural heritage resources specialist. No bird or insect nests were observed at the *NORTHDENE* sites.

The lichen that is currently a threat to the art, should not be removed as it will only further damage the art (figs. g, k, l, 48 & 49).

- **Animals in shelters**

Rock art sites, paintings and archaeological deposits are easily damaged by animals rubbing against the rock and trampling of the shelter floors. This is especially problematic where domestic animals graze close to the sites, or where the site provides an overhang which may be used for protection against the elements. It was observed that small animals use both sites as a shelter as animal faeces were observed. If the vegetation (grass) is kept low, this action will also be discouraged.

- **General Visitor Management**

Uncontrolled use of rock art sites is undesirable as it may result in unnecessary and often irreversible deterioration of such sites.

- Visitors to the sites should be managed, monitored and regulated;
- Visible paths to the sites should be allowed to overgrow and be closed;
- Directions to the sites should not be made public;
- Site information is kept confidential and is not made available to the public.

- **Staff Education & Site Visits**

Public visitation should not be allowed at the rock art sites without the company of the responsible official for the plantation / environmental officer. Field staff should not be allowed to direct people to the sites. The *NORTHDENE* sites are not well known in general, which is a benefit to the further preservation of the art.

- Staff working in the area should be made aware of the sensitivity of rock art sites;
 - Staff should be made aware of the SAHRA's principles of what is, and is not allowed at rock art sites (see SAHRA's principles for rock art conservation);
 - A copy of SAHRA's principles should be visible at each office and used as part of the induction training of new staff;
 - Staff should report any new rock art sites to the Plantation manager;
 - Site visits should take place by prior arrangement;
 - Field staff should not supply directions to specific sites;
 - Visitors should be accompanied by a responsible official from SAFCOL: Komatiland Forests;
 - Researchers should provide details of their institutional affiliation and a motivation for the visit;
 - Researchers in rock art, may be allowed to visit a site unaccompanied.
- **SAHRA's principles for rock art conservation includes:**
 - The National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999 protects all rock art sites. Anyone found guilty of removing or damaging rock paintings can be fined or imprisoned or both;
 - Water and any other substance will destroy the paintings. Salts are drawn to the rock surface by water. The salts then expand and weathering is accelerated;
 - Touching the painted surfaces, rubbing or chipping at paintings will destroy them;
 - Do not put your name or any other writing on or near the rock art;
 - Rock art must not be removed from its original setting as this destroys its meaning;
 - Dust and soot from fires obscure rock paintings, so avoid using rock art sites as camping places;
 - Rock shelters with paintings should not be used as kraals since animals rub against the painted surfaces.²

These management guidelines were compiled with the assistance of the *Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Natal Drakensberg Park*,³ although most of it is specific for the *NORTHDENE 1A & NORTHDENE 1B* rock art sites at Roburnia plantation.

²SAHRA, Rock Art, <http://www.sahra.org.za/rockart.htm> Access: 2008-10-16.

³E.J. Wahl, A.D. Mazel & S.E. Roberts, *Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Natal Drakensberg Park*, pp. 6-23.

**NORTHDENE 1A & 1B: THREATS TO THE IMAGES: VEGETATION, CHIP MARKS,
WATER SEEPAGE & LICHEN DAMAGE**



Fig. 43: General view of the NORTHDENE 1A panel. A large tree grows in front of the panel. Water seepage and lichen growth is visible to the far right.

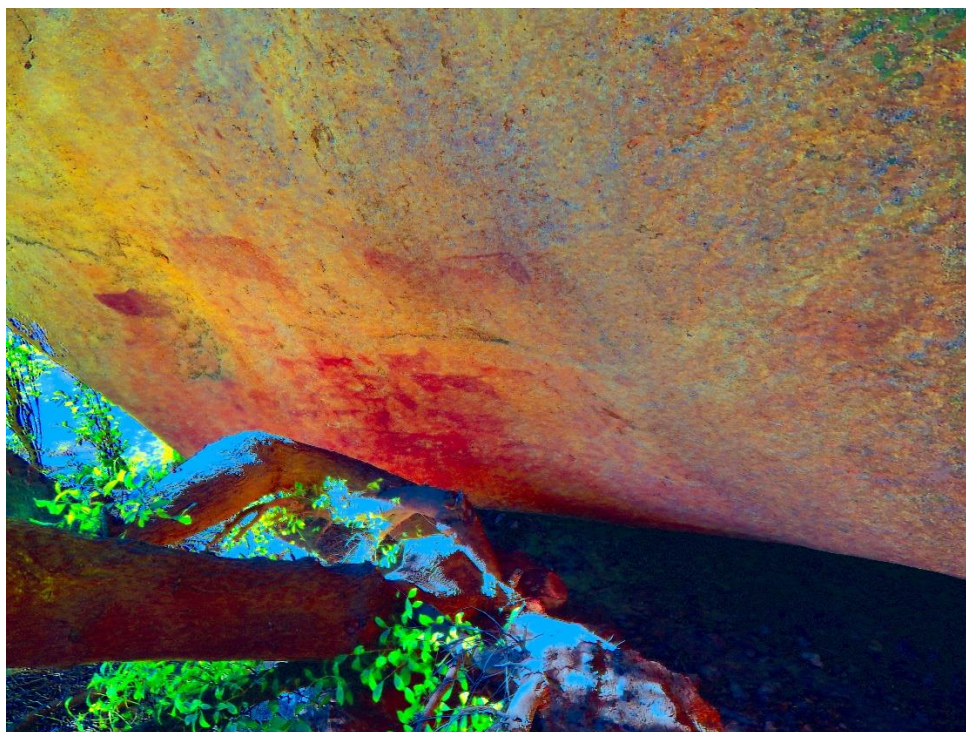


Fig. 44: A colour enhanced photograph to indicate the tree directly in front of the images (1A).



Fig. 45: Vegetation against the images was removed (1A).



Fig. 46: New growth from the tree is a direct threat to the images (1A).



Fig. 47: Another view of the tree against the images (1A).



Fig. 48: Water seepage and lichen growth is seen towards the far right of the panel (1A).

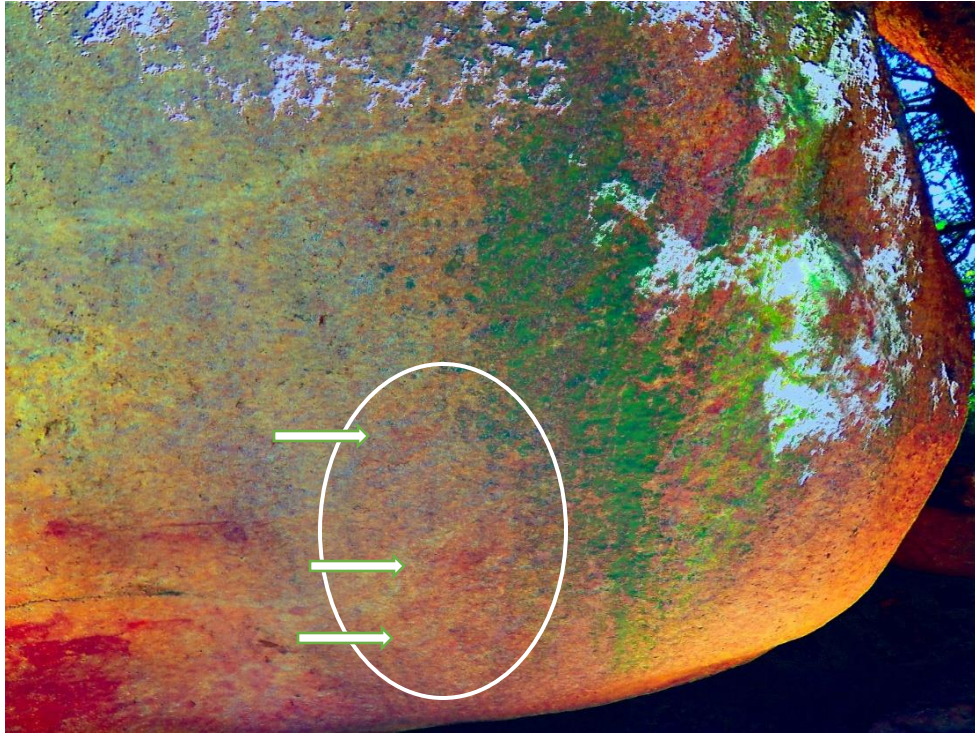


Fig. 49: A colour enhanced photograph show that some (faint) images are affected by the lichen growth to the far right of the panel (1A).

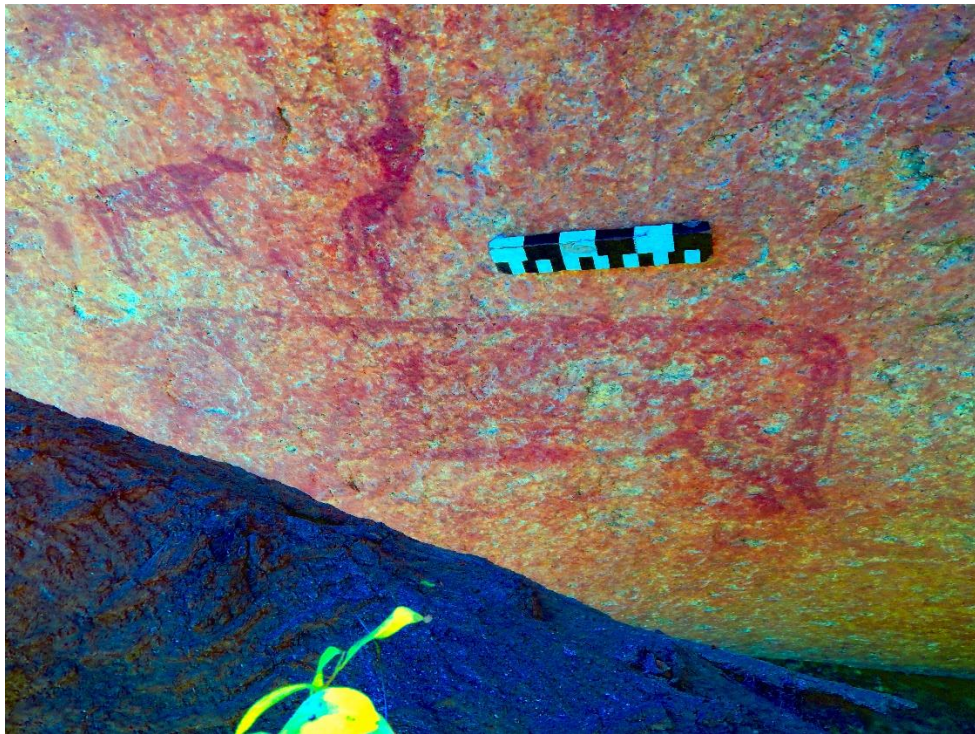


Fig. 50: The entire panel is damaged by severe chip marks on the images (1A). Note the tree in the foreground near the images.

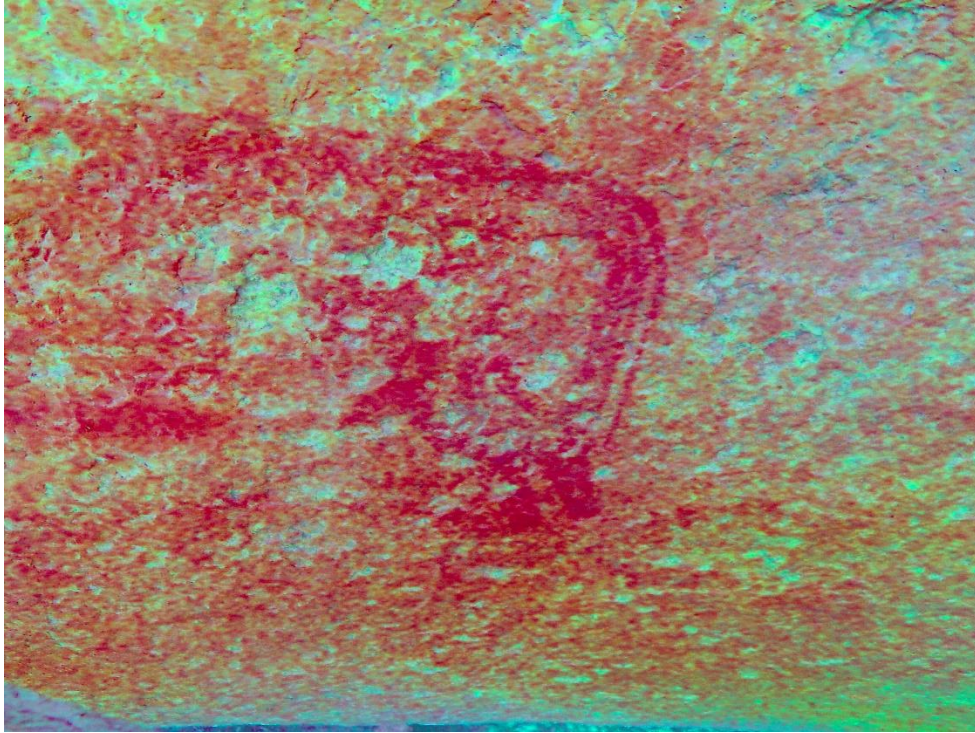


Fig. 51: Chip marks are clearly visible on this image (1A).

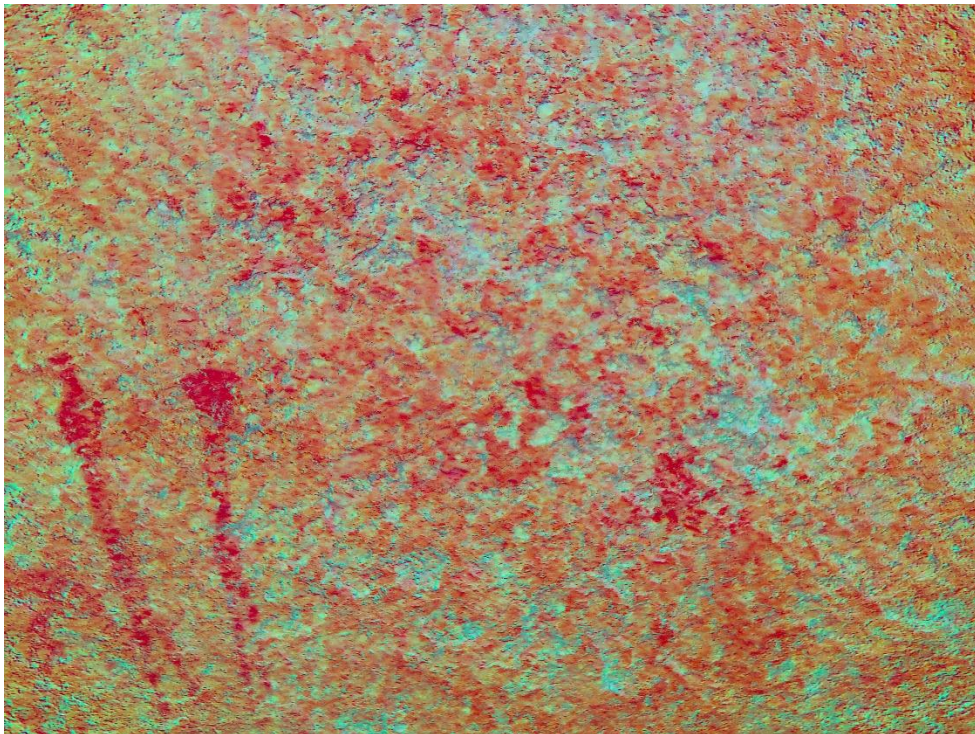


Fig. 52: Chip marks also occur extensively at NORTHDENE 1B.

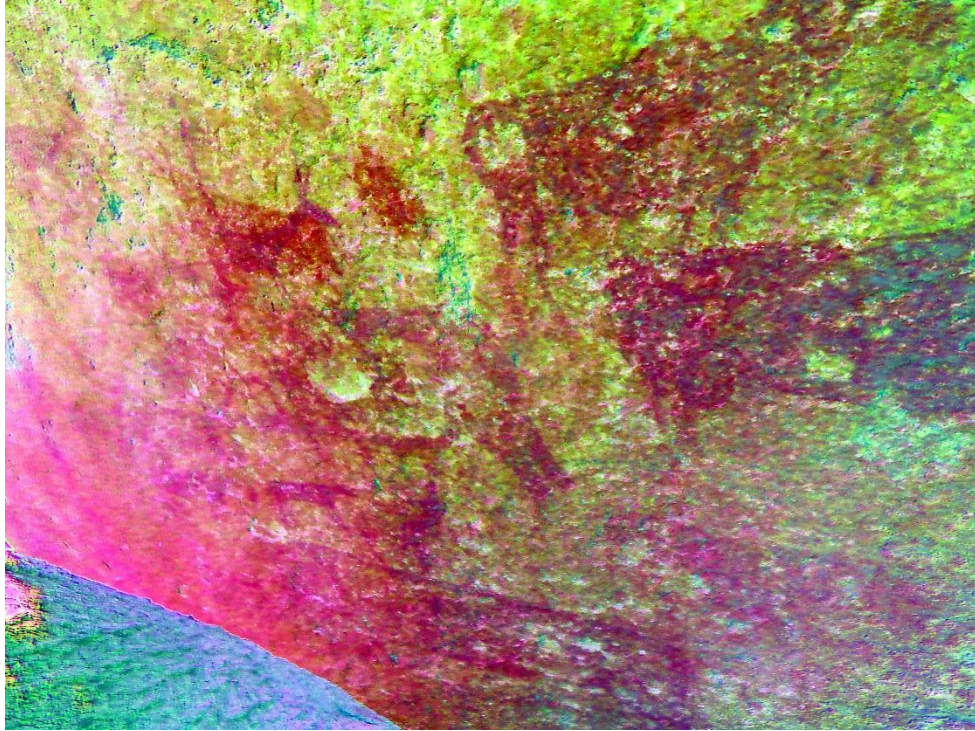


Fig. 53: Many images are obscured by extensive ochre washing over the years (1A).

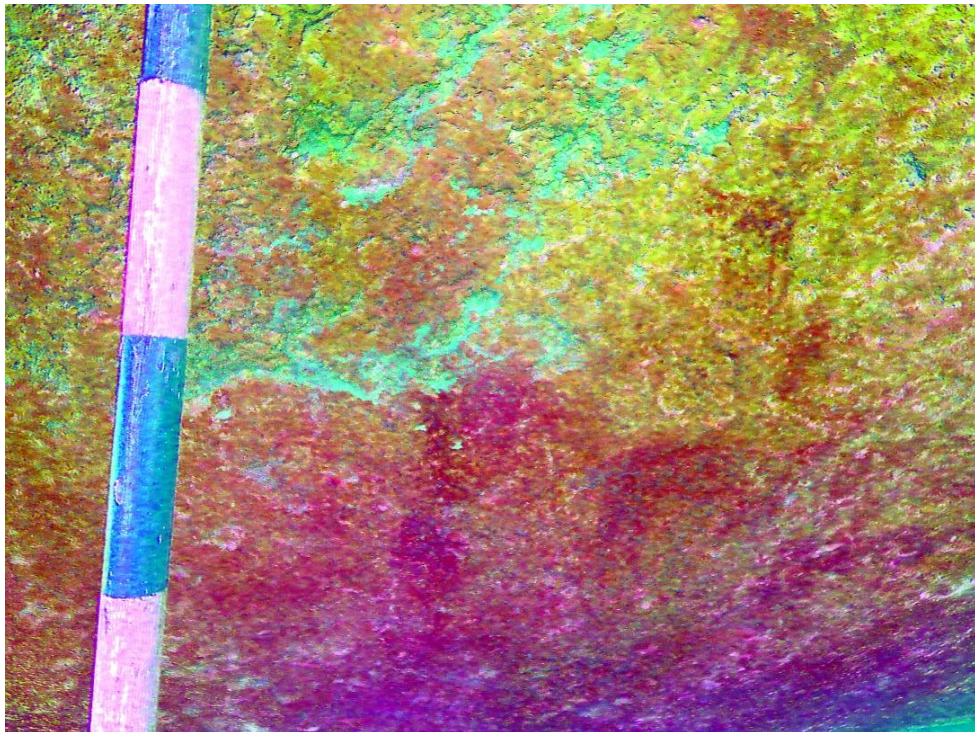


Fig. 54: Ochre washing is visible especially at the lower end or curve of the boulder (1A).

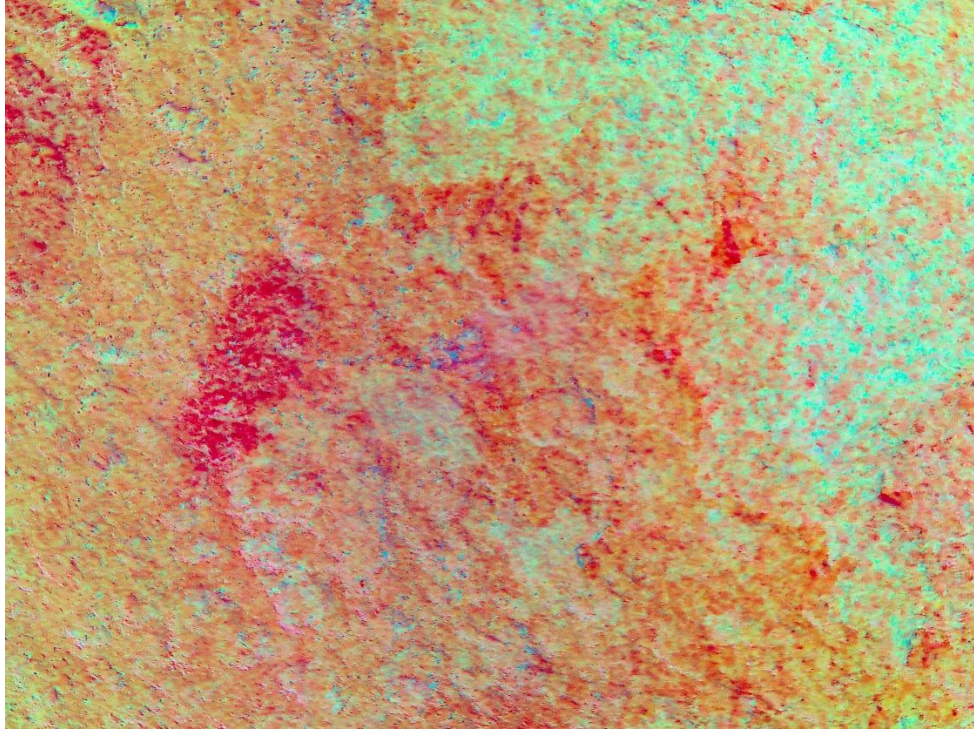


Fig. 55: Ochre washing at *NORTHDENE 1B* is responsible that many images cannot be identified (1B).

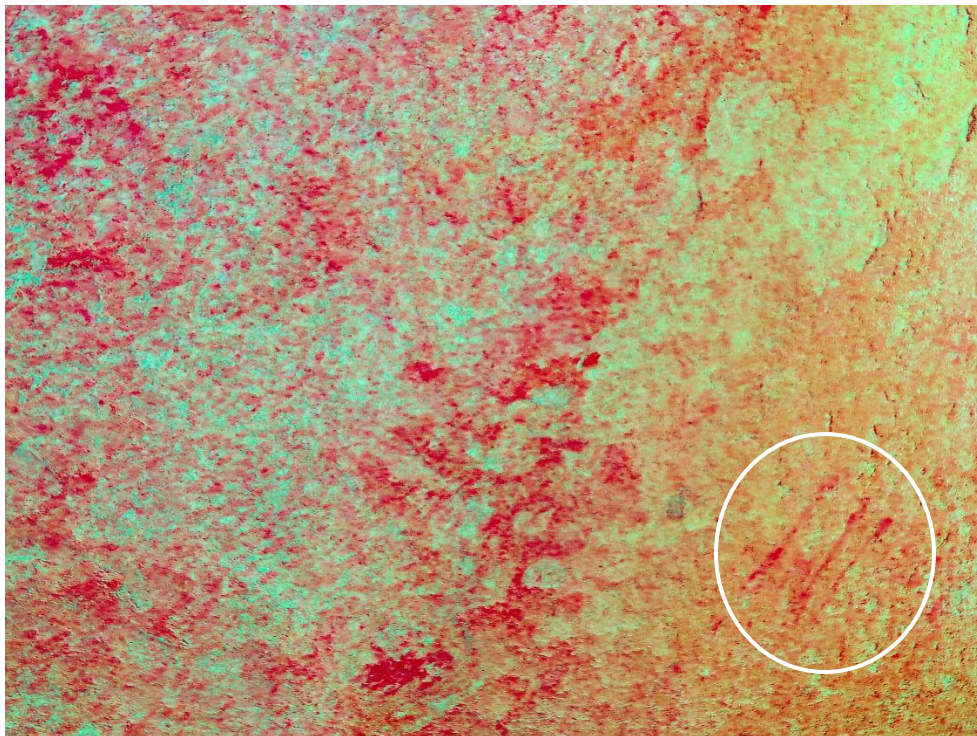


Fig. 56: Ochre washing to the left of the group of Therianthropes (*NORTHDENE 1B*), obscures other possible images.