

# PHASE 1 HERITAGE RESOURCES SCOPING REPORT

## TSHIVHASE NATURE RESERVE VONDO DAM, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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The application constitutes the development of a Nature Reserve, by Vondo Dam, which may potentially be harmful to heritage resources that may occur in the demarcated area. The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA - Act No. 25 of 1999) protects all structures and features older than 60 years (section 34), archaeological sites and material (section 35) and graves and burial sites (section 36). In order to comply with the legislation, the Applicant requires information on the heritage resources, and their significance that may occur in the demarcated area. This will enable the Applicant to take pro-active measures to limit the adverse effects that the development could have on such heritage resources.

In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (1999) the following is of relevance:

### **Historical remains**

**Section 34(1)** No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

### **Archaeological remains**

**Section 35(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

### **Burial grounds and graves**

**Section 36 (3)(a)** No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority-

(c) 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

(b) 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 detection or recovery of metals.

### **Culture resource management**

**Section 38(1)** Subject to the provisions of subsection (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development\* ...

must at the very earliest stages of initiating such development notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature, and extent of the proposed development.

**\*‘development’** means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of the heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including-

- (a) construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- (b) carry out any works on or over or under a place\*;
- (e) any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land, and
- (f) any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

\*"place means a site, area or region, a building or other structure\* ..."

\*"structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to the ground, ..."

The author was contracted to undertake a heritage scoping survey of the proposed new Tshivhase Nature Reserve, on state-owned land adjacent to Vondo dam, Limpopo Province (Refer to map, South Africa 1:50 000 2230DD). The aim was to determine the presence or not of heritage resources such as archaeological and historical sites and features, graves and places of religious and cultural significance, and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures that may be required at affected sites / features.

The report thus provides an overview of the heritage resources that may occur in the demarcated area where development is intended. The significance of the heritage resources was assessed in terms of criteria defined in the methodology section. The impact of the proposed development on these resources is indicated and the report recommends mitigation measures that should be implemented to minimize the adverse impact of the proposed development on these heritage resources.

## 2. METHOD

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### 2.1 Sources of information and methodology

The source of information was primarily the field reconnaissance and referenced literary sources.

A pedestrian survey of the demarcated area was undertaken, during which standard methods of observation were applied. The area was traversed to provide as thorough a survey as possible. As most archaeological material occur in single or multiple stratified layers beneath the soil surface, special attention was given to disturbances, both man-made such as roads and clearings, as well as those made by natural agents such as burrowing animals and erosion. Locations of heritage remains were recorded by means of a GPS (Garmin Etrex 10). Heritage material and the general conditions on the terrain were photographed with a Nikon Coolpix L25 Digital camera.

### 2.2 Limitations

The scoping survey was thorough, but limitations were experienced due to the fact that archaeological sites are subterranean and only visible when disturbed. Vegetation was relatively dense in areas where visibility was compromised.

### 2.3 Categories of significance

The significance of archaeological sites is ranked into the following categories.

• No significance: sites that do not require mitigation.
• Low significance: sites, which <i>may</i> require mitigation.
• Medium significance: sites, which require mitigation.
• High significance: sites, which must not be disturbed at all.

The significance of an archaeological site is based on the amount of deposit, the integrity of the context, the kind of deposit and the potential to help answer present research questions. Historical structures are defined by Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999, while other historical and cultural significant sites, places and features, are generally determined by community preferences.

*A crucial aspect in determining the significance and protection status of a heritage resource is often whether or not the sustainable social and economic benefits of a proposed development outweigh the conservation issues at stake. Many aspects must be taken into consideration when determining significance, such as rarity, national significance, scientific importance, cultural and religious significance, and not least, community preferences. When, for whatever reason the protection of a heritage site is not deemed necessary or practical, its research potential must be assessed and mitigated in order to gain data / information which would otherwise be lost. Such sites must be adequately recorded and sampled before being destroyed. These are generally sites graded as of low or medium significance.*

## **2.4 Terminology**

**Early Stone Age:** Predominantly the Acheulean hand axe industry complex dating to + 1Myr yrs – 250 000 yrs. before present.

**Middle Stone Age:** Various lithic industries in SA dating from ± 250 000 yr. - 30 000 yrs. before present.

**Late Stone Age:** The period from ± 30 000-yr. to contact period with either Iron Age farmers or European colonists.

**Early Iron Age:** Most of the first millennium AD

**Middle Iron Age:** 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD

**Late Iron Age:** 14<sup>th</sup> century to colonial period. *The entire Iron Age represents the spread of Bantu speaking peoples.*

**Historical:** Mainly cultural remains of western influence and settlement from AD1652 onwards – mostly structures older than 60 years in terms of Section 34 of the NHRA, though more recent remains can be termed historically significant should the remains hold social significance for the local community.

**Phase 1 assessment:** Scoping surveys to establish the presence of and to evaluate heritage resources in a given area

**Phase 2 assessments:** In depth culture resources management studies which could include major archaeological excavations, detailed site surveys and mapping / plans of sites, including historical / architectural structures and features. Alternatively, the sampling of sites by collecting material, small test pit excavations or auger sampling is required.

**Sensitive:** Often refers to graves and burial sites although not necessarily a heritage place, as well as ideologically significant sites such as ritual / religious places. *Sensitive* may also refer to an entire landscape / area known for its significant heritage remains.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND TERRAIN

Geological : The site is situated on basalt and sandstone of the Sibasa Formation and sandstone, conglomerate, shale and basalt of the Fundudzi Formation all belonging to the Soutpansberg Group.

Moderate deep brown clayey sandy soils exist over the site, indicative of North Eastern Mountain Sourveld with cleared lands and exotic planted forests.

Ecological: The proposed Tshivhase Nature Reserve is located within the Soutpansberg Mountain Bushveld (Svcb 21), which forms part of the Savanna Biome, as classified by Mucina and Rutherford (2006).

The site is divided into 3 activity areas: High, Medium and low density areas.

The high and medium intensity areas will include resort accommodation and activity areas, while the low intensity area will include hiking trails, bush huts for overnight hikers and a king's residence.

High intensity GPS: S22° 56' 29.7" E30° 20' 21.4"



Fig 1. General view of high intensity area



Fig 2. General view of high intensity area



Fig 3. General view of high intensity area

Medium Intensity area GPS: S22° 56' 50.2" E30° 19' 35.5"



Fig 4. General view of medium intensity area



Fig 5. General view of medium intensity area





Fig 6. General view of medium intensity area

Low intensity area GPS: S22° 57' 55.4" E30° 17' 13.5"



Fig 7. General view of low intensity area



Fig 8. General view of low intensity area





Fig 9. General view of low intensity area

#### **4. RESULTS OF THE SCOPING SURVEY**

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##### **4.1 HISTORICAL PERIOD**

No remains from the historical period were recorded.

##### **4.2 GRAVES**

One formal modern grave was recorded during survey in the medium intensity area. The grave is known.

GPS: S22° 56' 39.8" E30° 19' 31.3"



Fig 10. Grave of Wilson Tshibvumo Netshifhire

##### **4.3 IRON AGE REMAINS**

No remains dating the Iron Age Period were recorded on site.

##### **4.4 STONE AGE REMAINS**

No remains from the Stone Age were recorded in the area. Drainage lines and rocky outcrops were specifically checked for remains from this period.

## 4.5 INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

No remains relating to intangible heritage or socio-political or socio-religious heritage were recorded. The development is the conceived idea of the King and the Tribal Authority, who have no misgivings regarding the development. In addition, special care was taken by the council when deciding on areas to develop.

## 5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The project area falls within a rich archaeological region where both Stone Age and Iron Age periods are represented. Evidence suggests that Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age occupations occurred in the region, with Middle Stone Age most visible.

In pre-colonial times, various Eastern Bantu-speaking people inhabited South Africa, including Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, and Tsonga. However, they were not the first groups to occupy southern Africa. About 1800 years ago their predecessors brought a new way of life to the region replacing the Stone Age hunter-gatherers. For the first time, people lived in settled communities, cultivating such crops as sorghum, millets, ground beans and cowpeas, and they herded cattle as well as sheep and goats. Because these early farming people also made their own iron tools, many archaeologists call this block of time the **Iron Age**. For convenience and to mark widespread events, it is divided into three periods: the Early Iron Age (AD 200-900), the Middle Iron Age (AD 900-1300) and the Late Iron Age (AD 1300-1820).

In terms of Huffman's distribution sequences of the Iron Age the project area may contain the remains of the under-mentioned culture historical groups:

**1. The URUWE TRADITION**, originating in the Great Lakes area of Central Africa, was a secondary dispersal centre for eastern Bantu speakers. It represents the eastern stream of migration into South Africa.

### 1.1. Early Iron Age Kwale Branch:

- Mzonjani facies (Broederstroom) AD 450 – 750 (Early Iron Age)

### 1.2 Middle Iron Age Moloko (Sotho-Tswana) Branch

1. Icon facies AD 1300 – 1500: This pottery is associated with the first Sotho Tswana people entering the country.

**2. THE KALUNDU TRADITION**, originating in the far North of Angola, was another secondary dispersal centre for eastern Bantu speakers and represents the western stream of migration into South Africa.

### 2.1 Benfica Sub-branch

1. Bambata facies AD 150 – 650 (Early Iron Age)

### 2.2 Happy Rest Sub-branch

1. Happy Rest facies AD 500 – 750 (Early Iron Age)
2. Malapati facies AD 750 – 1030 (Early Iron Age)
3. Eiland facies AD 1000 – 1300 (Middle Iron Age)

4. Mutamba facies AD 1250 – 1450 (Middle Iron Age)
5. Khami facies AD 1430 – 1680 (Late Iron Age)
6. Tavatshena facies AD 1450 – 1600 (Later Iron Age)
7. Letaba facies AD 1600 – 1840 (Later Iron Age)

The Venda and Soutpansberg area have a long history of archaeological enquiry. Ethnographical studies have been used to determine linguistic origins of the Venda cultural group. Studies by Loubser (1989), indicate to a Shona-Sotho interaction, which resulted eventually in a common Venda identity by the mid-sixteenth century. Most sites excavated to determine Venda origins and culture are based west of the area surveyed in this report, and are in relative proximity to major rivers in the area such as the Sand, Nzhelele and Luvubu.

This proposed development lies to the east of known major sites such as Dzata, Schoemansdal, Tavhatshena and Tshirululuni.

The Soutpansberg and Venda area also have a long history of missionary activity, especially among the Berlin Missionaries and the Swiss Missionaries. The development area is not near any of these missions.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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It is recommended that the grave mentioned be appropriately cordoned off with fencing to prevent damage.

This report serves to confirm that *no other significant heritage resources* such as archaeological or historical material or places of social or religious significance were found on the site of the proposed development. *From a heritage resources management point of view, we have no objection with regard to the development.*

*The discovery of previously undetected subterranean heritage remains on the terrain must be reported to the Limpopo Heritage Authority or the archaeologist, and may require further mitigation measures.*

## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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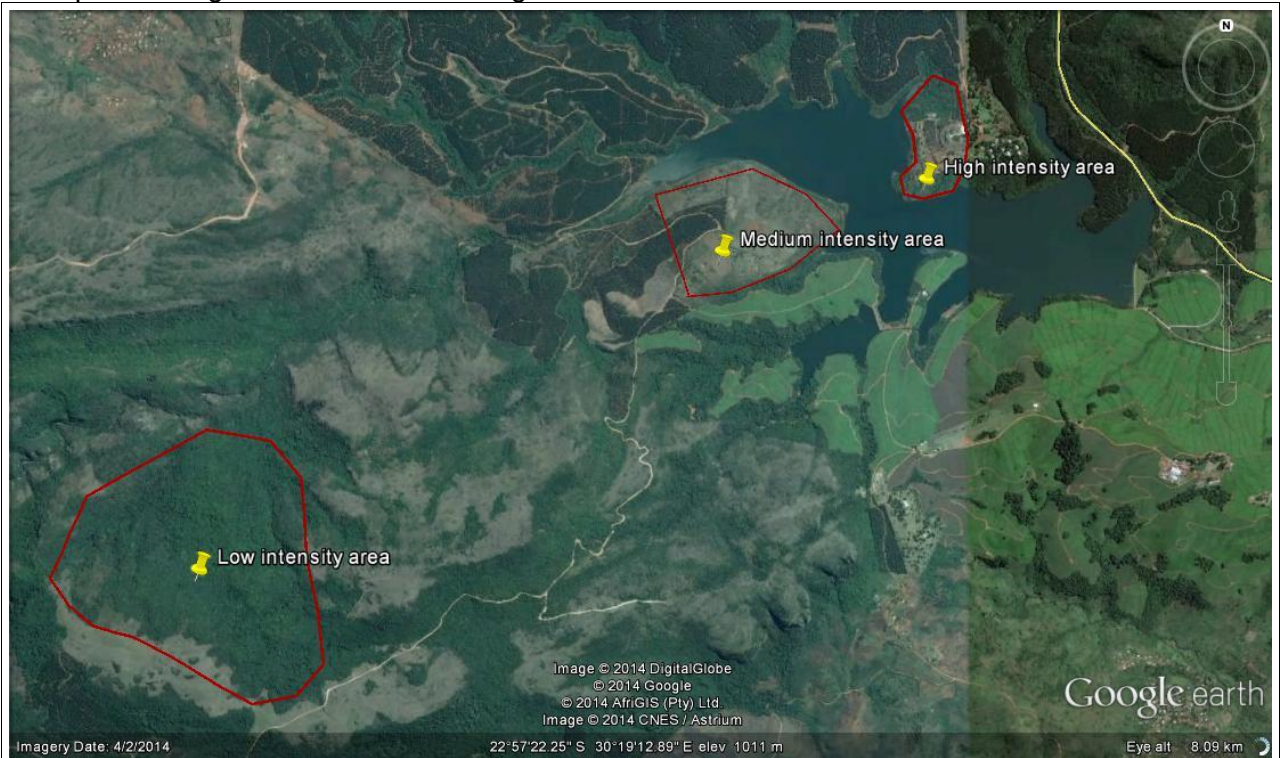
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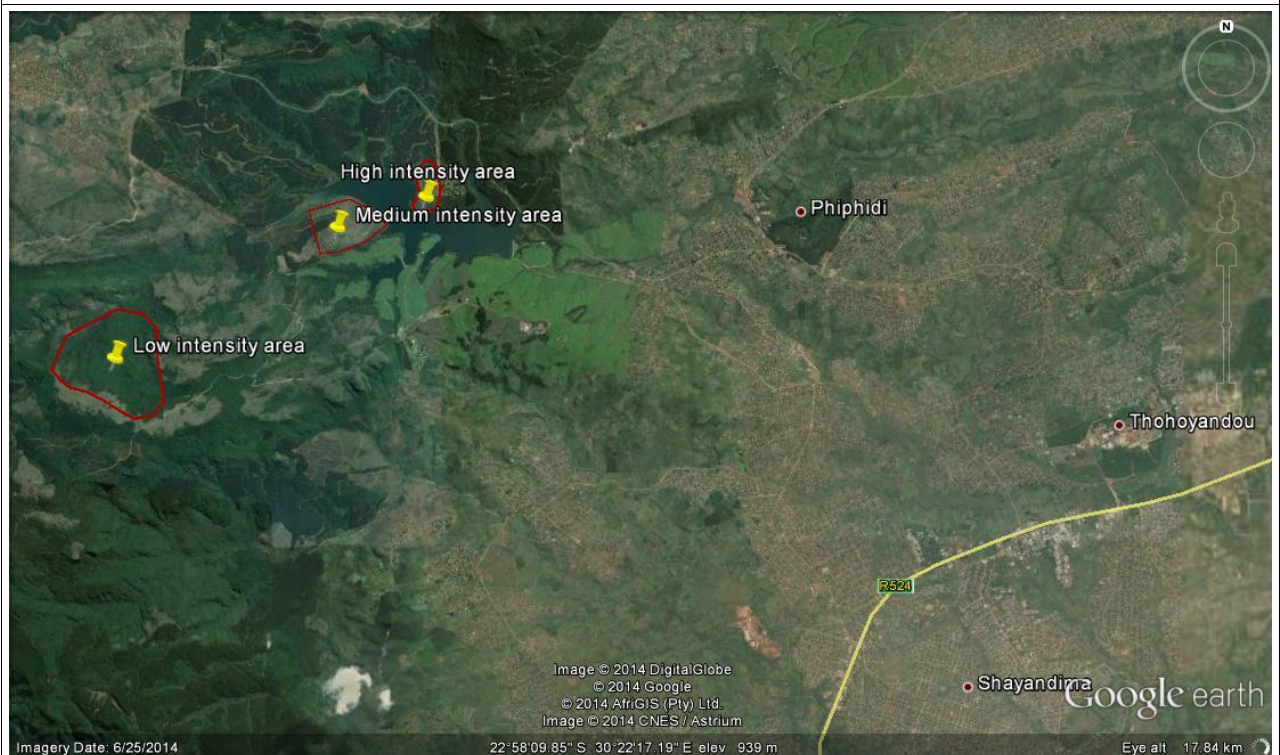
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Map 1. Google Earth image of the project area. Google used due to the outdated nature of Limpopo 1:50000 topographical maps



Map 2. Wide view of the locality in relation to Thohoyandou and Louis Trichardt (Makado)