



### Heritage Scoping Report

**Proposed construction of 3.6 km Mbilane Access Road situated between Mbewunye and Pentsana  
Location, Ward 8, Nquthu LM, Zululand District DM  
KwaZulu-Natal.**

#### Project Area and Project description <sup>1</sup>

The Mbilane Access Road project involves the construction and upgrade of 3.6 km of road between the Mbewunye and Pentsana Locations in Ward 8, Nquthu (Molefe Traditional Authority Area); within the Nquthu Local Municipality and Zululand District Municipality, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

<b>Road Start</b>			
Latitude/Longitude	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
South	28	14	43.4
East	30	44	29.8
<b>Road Middle Point</b>			
Latitude/ Longitude	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
South	28	14	53.03
East	30	45	17.89
<b>Road End Point</b>			
Latitude/ Longitude	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
South	28	15	02.8
East	30	46	19.8

The gravel road will be constructed as Standard Type District Road in accordance with the Department of Transport specifications. The final road carriageway width will be six (6m) meters.

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations require a Basic Assessment to be undertaken in terms of NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended.

<sup>1</sup> Information provided by EAP: Isolendalo Environmental Consulting



**Figure 1** Locality map of the proposed Mbilane road upgrade alignments

### Observations

eThembeni staff inspected the study area on 26 April 2019. The proposed road upgrade is aligned along an existing road and, in places, well used tracks. The area falls within Reserve No.18 and the designated land has been settled at least since 1913, and even earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> C. The area was incorporated into the previous KwaZulu Homeland in 1979, and subsequently settled in agricultural allotments.

Consequently family graves and cemeteries are observed to occur within the fenced allotment precincts and outside of the proposed 6 m road reserve. Local informants were aware of the proposed road upgrades and are supportive of the initiative. No observed graves or burial sites are anticipated to be potentially impacted by the new road alignments, and none were mentioned by informants in the adjacent communities during the field survey.

Episodic palaeogully erosion episodes in the Nquthu/Nondweni area have revealed Middle Stone Age (MSA) *debitage* deposits within palaeosol formations dated to c. 55 kyr.<sup>2</sup> However, apart from randomly scattered colluvially washed and patinated hornfels MSA *debitage* flakes washing out of water courses and

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<sup>2</sup> Botha, G.A; Wintle A.G; Vogel J.C. 1994. Episodic late Quaternary palaeogully erosion in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Catena* 23: 327-340.

along rill lines, no concentrations of archaeologically significant Stone Age material were observed. Such debitage is ubiquitous in the landscape, out of primary context, and of little scientific significance.

Adiagnostic pottery fragments (< 1-2 cm) are also ubiquitously observed in the vicinities of both extant and abandoned homesteads. These fragments appear to move downslope under colluvial action and are generally rounded and abraded by water action. They are considered to be of historically recent origin and of little heritage significance.

The SAHRIS Palaeontology sensitivity map indicates the area to be of insignificant to moderate sensitivity (grey-green). The predominant lithology of the region is Dwyka tillite overlain by Vryheid and Pietermaritzburg formation shales of the Eccca group; and a network of dolerite sills, sheets and dykes, mainly intrusive into the Karoo Supergroup<sup>3</sup>, consequently restricting significant fossil occurrence.<sup>4</sup> No further palaeontology assessment or monitoring is recommended.

No other heritage resources of any significance were observed within the proposed road alignments surveyed.



**Figure 2** Mbilane access road to be upgraded along existing roads and tracks

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<sup>3</sup> Litho-chronostratigraphic shape files. South African Council for Geoscience. Pretoria. <http://geoscience.org.za/cgs/>

<sup>4</sup> Palaeontological Technical Report for KZN. Groenewald, G. 2012.



**Figure 3**      **Landscape of survey area**

### **Recommendations**

Accordingly, as a consequence of the scoping exercise undertaken, we request that Amafa grant an exemption from an HIA for the proposed road project, allowing the enterprise to proceed with no further heritage resource mitigation. The protocols contained in Appendix 1 should be adhered to with oversight by the appointed project CLO (Community Liaison Officer) and ECO (Environmental Control Officer).

In this regard, please can you notify us timeously via the loaded SAHRIS case file as to the decision of the KwaZulu-Natal Amafa and Research Institute.

Yours sincerely

Len van Schalkwyk  
Principle Investigator.

## Appendix 1

### Protocol for the identification, protection and recovery of heritage resources during construction and operation

It is possible that sub-surface heritage resources will be encountered during the construction phase of this project. The Project Engineer, Environmental Control Officer and all other persons responsible for site management and excavation should be aware that indicators of sub-surface sites could include:

- Ash deposits (unnaturally grey appearance of soil compared to the surrounding substrate);
- Concentrations of humanly modified stone and stone tools;
- Bone concentrations, either animal or human;
- Ceramic fragments, including potsherds;
- Stone concentrations that appear to be formally arranged (may indicate the presence of an underlying burial); and
- Fossilised remains of fauna and flora, including trees.

In the event that such indicator(s) of heritage resources are identified, the following actions should be taken immediately:

- All construction within a radius of at least 20m of the indicator should cease. This distance should be increased at the discretion of supervisory staff if heavy machinery or explosives could cause further disturbance to the suspected heritage resource.
- This area must be marked using clearly visible means, such as barrier tape, and all personnel should be informed that it is a no-go area.
- A guard should be appointed to enforce this no-go area if there is any possibility that it could be violated, whether intentionally or inadvertently, by construction staff or members of the public.
- No measures should be taken to cover up the suspected heritage resource with soil, or to collect any remains such as bone or stone.
- If a heritage practitioner has been appointed to monitor the project, s/he should be contacted and a site inspection arranged as soon as possible.
- If no heritage practitioner has been appointed to monitor the project Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali (Heritage KZN must be notified [Tel. 033 3946543; [archaeology@amafapmb.co.za](mailto:archaeology@amafapmb.co.za)]
- The South African Police Services should be notified by a SAHRA staff member or an independent heritage practitioner if human remains are identified. **No SAPS official may disturb or exhume such remains, whether of recent origin or not.**
- All parties concerned should respect the potentially sensitive and confidential nature of the heritage resources, particularly human remains, and refrain from making public statements until a mutually agreed time.
- Any extension of the project beyond its current footprint involving vegetation and/or earth clearance should be subject to prior assessment by a qualified heritage practitioner, taking into account all information gathered during this initial heritage scoping and assessment.