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**Attention Mr. Sello Mokhanya**

**Heritage Scoping Report**

**THE UPGRADING AND FORMALISATION OF THE TSHISANE GRAVEL ACCESS ROAD  
MOUNT AYLIF, UMZIMVUBU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE**

**Project Description<sup>1</sup>**

The Umzimvubu Local Municipality has recently appointed ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants (ACER) as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) responsible for obtaining environmental authorisation, and the relevant permits, licenses and approvals required for the proposed upgrade and formalisation of the Tshisane gravel access road in the Mzimvubu Local Municipality, Eastern Cape<sup>2</sup>.

To this end eThembeni Cultural Heritage Management was appointed by ACER to undertake a heritage resources assessment of the proposed road upgrades and construction.

The proposed developments entails the upgrade and formalisation of the existing informal access road between the villages of Ambros and Zimpofu to Tshisane. In total, approximately 2 km of gravel road will be constructed and will include the construction of storm water infrastructures and culvert crossings across drainage lines. The proposed alignment of the gravel road will follow existing informal road alignments (See Figure 1).

Additionally, the proposed project will include the following infrastructure and design components: The construction of a 5 m wide gravel access road approximately 2 km in length with:

- Start Point at: 30°39'27.84"S and 28°41'45.98"E
- Mid Point at: 30°39'32.08"S and 28°41'17.15"E
- End Point at 30°39'41.61"S and 28°40'50.04"E

<sup>1</sup> As provided by the EAP: ACER (Africa) Environmental Consultants (ACER)

<sup>2</sup> See Project Description loaded to SAHRIS Case File

- The construction of cut-out drains and dish drains where required along the alignment.
- The provision of traffic signs.
- The proposed gravel road will consist of G5 gravel and will be compacted to a height of approximately 200 mm.
- The construction of pipe crossings (600 m diameter pipes) across drainage lines at the following locations:
  - 30°39'40.12"S and 28°40'52.97"E
  - 30°39'32.06"S and 28°41'13.88"E

Pipe crossings will be protected against erosion through the installation of gabion baskets and headwalls and catch pits.



**Figure 1** Locality Map: proposed Tshisane Gravel Road and track log<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See Track Log loaded to SAHRIS Case File

## Site Assessment and Observations

eThembeni staff inspected the proposed Tshisane road on 19 June 2018.

No significant archaeological residues were observed along transects walked along the existing tracks proposed for upgrade and formalisation.

At c. 1800 m amsl this environment characteristically comprises mist-belt grasslands with the woody vegetation component comprising fire retarded *Budleja* and *Leucosidea* thickets along the lee of the south facing scarp ranges. It is a harsh environment prone to extreme winter weather.

In precolonial times this environment would have only been exploited seasonally by hunter gatherer bands in search of spring-flowering geophytes and in pursuit of game drawn to the emerging sweet veld *Themeda* grazing. Iron Age pastoralists would have made use of this grazing too during a short transhumance window in spring and early summer from their settled homesteads in the lower and middle reaches of the Umzimvubu and its secondary drainage basins, the Tina, Ncome and Kinira rivers. Consequently, the archaeological footprint on the landscape is expected to be negligible to non-existent.<sup>4</sup>

Increased population and land pressures during the 19<sup>th</sup> C witnessed increasing use of these higher altitude areas by pastoral and subsistence farmers, especially refugee clans moving south from the internecine conflicts flowing out of the Zulu Kingdom. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> C these clans (eg. Bhaca, amaPondo and Mpondomise) were settled in disparate nuclear homesteads across this landscape under established chieftaincies. Late 19<sup>th</sup> C colonial governance and 20<sup>th</sup> C social engineering was however to change this ethnographic pattern, culminating in the scattered nuclear homesteads being settled into consolidated villages (*amalali*) during the 1960's, as a consequence of State driven betterment schemes.<sup>5</sup>

In and around the extant village communities at Tshisane and Ncome evidence of abandoned homesteads and abandoned and fallow fields were observed. However, no abandoned homesteads with attendant graves were observed within 50m of the proposed road upgrade. Consequently no impact on these is envisaged (see Protocol below).

### Recommendations with regard to the possibility of graves being discovered in the course of development activities

It is recommended that the following protocol be made binding in the Record of Decision (R.o.D.): "During the Public Participation Processes, the project Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and the Environmental Control Officer (ECO) shall engage with stakeholders to ascertain the presence of unmarked or invisible grave sites.

Any identified grave sites should ideally be left with a twenty metre (20m) buffer from construction activities and be fenced pending engagement with the relevant Authorities and any identified family members having an association or interest in the grave. In the event of unintentional exposure of a grave or a request from a family for exhumation and re-interment the CLO/ECO shall immediately contact the

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<sup>4</sup> Feely, J.M. 1987. The early farmers of Transkei, southern Africa: before A.D. 1870. Oxford: B.A.R.  
Feely, J.M. & Bell-Cross, S.M. 2011. The distribution of Early Iron Age settlement in the Eastern Cape: Some historical and ecological implications. South African Archaeological Bulletin **66**: 105–12.

<sup>5</sup> The Tomlinson Commission. 1956: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/segregation-apartheid>.

Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Agency to obtain the necessary protocols and procedures for the management of such human remains”.

Whilst the study area falls within the red sensitivity modelling on the SAHRIS Palaeo-sensitivity map due to the underlying Molteno Formation, intensive dolerite intrusion and deep weathering of the Karoo Supergroup overburden suggest that the palaeontological potential within the project activity area is significantly diminished. No deep excavation of the underlying bedrock is anticipated in order to limit impacts on the receiving environment.

It is our considered opinion that the potential impact to heritage resources through implementation of the proposed road are very low. No heritage resources were identified within the proposed spheres of activity.

Accordingly, and given the nature of the projects as an upgrade within existing servitudes and services infrastructure, it is requested that the proposed project area be exempt from the requirements of a full Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment.

On behalf of the client, ACER (Africa), we are applying for exemption from an HIA for the project.

Please could you convey the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resource's Agency decision on this matter to the appointed Environmental Practitioner, Mr. Giles Churchill, of ACER (Africa), [giles.churchill@acerafrica.co.za](mailto:giles.churchill@acerafrica.co.za)

Yours sincerely



Len van Schalkwyk.  
Principal Investigator.