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**RE: SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSULTATION:**

**PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT – MINING RIGHT APPLICATION:  
FARMS KLEIN RIVIER (713-32) AND BUFFELSBOSCH (742-14), HUMANSDORP DISTRICT,  
EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA.**

**1) INTRODUCTION:**

This report aims to comment on socio-cultural consultation with the Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council, with reference to the abovementioned development. The SAHRA SIA or socio-cultural consultation is required in terms of Section 38(3)(e) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act No 25 of 1999 (NHRA 1999), to form part of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), often submitted as subsection to a specified section thereof. This report on socio-cultural consultation is submitted as part of the Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) and reported on after submission of the Phase 1 AIA for reasons as described in the Phase 1 AIA report.

**2) GAMTKWA KHOISAN COUNCIL CONSULTATION:**

Socio-cultural consultation was done on 2012-08-04. The meeting was held at the Naniqua Jewellery Project studio, Hankey. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council, including:

1. Chief R. Booyesen – Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council Chief;
2. Hettie Booyesen – Vice-chief and Arts & Culture Representative;
3. Kobus Reichert – Heritage Representative;
4. Josef Prins – Council Elder;
5. Johannes Baartman – Council Elder; and
  
6. (Karen van Ryneveld – ArchaeoMaps.)

(Due to prior commitments Chief Booyesen excused himself from the meeting after the formal comment by the Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council was raised).

The meeting took the following format: The introduction to the meeting centred on a basic explanation of the archaeological findings of the assessment as well as a brief explanation of the archaeological timeline, archaeological site formation processes, the SAHRA site significance rating system and how this relates to the types of recommendations then made as a norm by a project archaeologist (ArchaeoMaps). This was followed by a brief consultation session amongst representatives of the Council upon which they raised their formal comment (Hettie Booyesen and Kobus Reichert). Hereafter much more informal discussion followed, highlighting some significant Gamtkwa cultural concerns (Hettie Booyesen, Kobus Reichert, Josef Prins and Johannes Baartman), selected aspects of which are reported on in this report in bulleted format, after which the meeting was adjourned.

## **2.1) FORMAL COMMENT BY THE GAMTKWA KHOISAN COUNCIL:**

The Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council opposed the proposed Mining Right Application development. Reichert highlighted the fact that the Council have opposed the Thyspunt Nuclear Power development throughout the process to date and stated that by implication they cannot approve related infrastructural or support developments. In addition Council involvement in the declaration of the cultural landscape, initially as World Heritage Site but currently more focussed on a National Heritage Site status, is ongoing. The area under consideration includes the landscape from Klassies River Mouth to Cape St. Francis with a 5km corridor inland from the coast, in which the Council is hoping for a 'no development' zone should the cultural landscape heritage status be approved or passed.

Booyesen provided a more personalized community based explanation to serve as background for the above statements and initiatives. She stated that from a Gamtkwa cultural point of view it is their spiritual value that is most treasured, a spiritual value with strong and direct roots in their past. The Gamtkwa is a people that have over the past more than 200 years suffered great territorial, cultural and economic marginalization. This has led the community feeling literally 'robbed' of an identity and a '*sense of being*'. It is specifically within their emphasis on spiritual values, and thus the past, where they as a people find '*healing*'.

To further explain Booyesen used the example of 'Apartheid' forced removals: The Gamtkwa was removed from their land (in cases minimal compensation applied), houses were forcefully vacated, destroyed and bulldozed, and traditional cemeteries flattened to provide land for commercial citrus farming, ironically enough land on which the Gamtkwa today serve as seasonal farm labour. As Booyesen explained: 'We have nothing. Everything was taken from us... All we have are the memories from *those* days, memories of a better, distant past... We have nothing to touch,... no photographs we could keep... Can you try to understand why every single stone is important to us? Every single place of every single stone... These are our memories, our only *photographs* of the past. Our only evidence of who we used to be,... of who we are.' Booyesen continued 'If we as the Council approve more of *this* past to continue, how do we explain ourselves to the next generation?... There is no excuse or explanation, no price-tag to or sum of money that can compensate for the tremendous sense of '*loss of self*' and loss of '*sense of being*' that the Gamtkwa has suffered. We cannot let this go on.'

Two events dominate upliftment in the more recent Gamtkwa cultural arena, the first and most prominent being the return and re-internment of the remains of Sarah (Sara / Sarah / Saartjie) Baartman. The second being a 2011 visit to the Thyspunt Nuclear Power study site for a 50/50 documentary production.

1. Council representatives emphasized the tremendous sense of recognition and *'healing'* associated with the 2002 return and re-internment of the remains of Sarah Baartman. However, controversy surrounding the events is still fresh in the minds of the people, leaving them with the reality that even attempts of *'right'* are still clouded by *'wrongs'*, a situation that is everything but contributory to a trust relationship that reflects directly in the development, environmental and heritage management spheres.
2. The 2011 visit to the Thyspunt Nuclear Power study site is described as the *'most spiritual experience ever'* where an extreme sense of *'presence'* was felt. Council representatives commented that the spiritual significance of the site visit is closely tied with a first time experience and true recognition of the depth of their heritage and thus the magnitude of their spiritual value. However, Booyesen concluded that it went along with an *'immense sense of pain and loss'*: A first time experience and true recognition of the depth of their spiritual value in the face of development and according to the community excavation and immediate destruction thereof.

## 2.2) GAMTKWA CULTURAL CONCERNS (INFORMAL DISCUSSION):

### o GAMTKWA ANCESTRAL TRIBAL LAND (EIA's and HIA's):

In accordance with oral tradition the Gamtkwa Ancestral Tribal Land can be described as the area between the Storms River in the west and the Van Staden's River in the east, from the coast across the Baviaans with the valleys of the Groot and Kouga Rivers to the north having been widely settled. The greater Gamtkwa (or Gamtomakwa) tribe comprises of 2 groups, the *Gamtkwa*, a people of direct Khoe descent and the *Gamtouers*, a people of mixed Khoe-Settler descent.



**Figure 1:** Map indicating the general area of the Gamtkwa Ancestral Tribal Land

Socio-politically the tribe is managed by an elected Council, the Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council, traditionally headed by a ceremonial chief. Recent (2005/6) political dispute resulted in a division within the traditional structure between ceremonial Chief Williams and the Council, upon which Chief Booyesen was elected to head the Council. Reichert

commented that the Council represents the majority view of the people. For purposes of EIA and HIA within the Gamtkwa Ancestral Tribal Land area the Council would request direct consultation with them, taken cognisance of recognition of ceremonial Chief Williams. Where both parties are consulted it is important for EAP's and cultural heritage practitioners to take the opinions of both parties in account; opinions and concerns cannot be weighed against each other and the most suitable for purposes of development selected.

Reichert requested on behalf of the Council that HIA documentation for developments in the Gamtkwa Ancestral Tribal Land area include a more specific description of Gamtkwa and Khoer history in the area. It was explained that problems within the SAHRA/ASAPA system relating to database access at the Albany Museum, the SAHRA accredited regional data recording centre for the Eastern Cape region, was being addressed. The concern raised by the Council is equalled by CRM practitioners and has affected more than the Gamtkwa as indigenous community.

Additional concerns raised by the community regarding the SAHRA heritage compliance system included:

1. The Albany Museum, Grahamstown, as regional repository, implying that all excavated artefacts need to be deposited at the museum for permanent curation. Council concerns relate specifically to distance and accessibility to 'their heritage' (again not a community heritage concern restricted to the Gamtkwa only). (Loan agreements of parts of collections currently form part of the SAHRA system). This concern has already been raised within the framework of HIA by the Gamtkwa and to the knowledge of the author discussions surrounding this is ongoing on SAHRA / EC PHRA level.
2. Community need to not limit 'heritage appraisal' to an enclosed museum environment. Council members placed a strong emphasis on their culture and the direct connection thereof with the environment: 'Open-air museums' or a type of 'garden of remembrance' where culture can be experienced in a natural environment may well be a more suitable solution. Again to the knowledge of the author this has already been raised within the framework of HIA and is under SAHRA / EC PHRA consideration.
3. The SAHRA system currently makes provision for community consultation in the event of the discovery of unidentified human remains during the course of development. However, consultation in the event of discovery of unidentified archaeological remains during the course of development do not form part of the formal SAHRA system. In accordance with their spiritual value Gamtkwa heritage concerns are not limited to human remains only. A tailored localized system of continuing consultation may well serve to address this concern.

○ **SARAH BAARTMAN (GAMTKWA NAMES & HERITAGE):**

Baartman recognized that Sarah Baartman has become nationally and internationally significant as a symbol of atrocities committed in the past against indigenous communities, but stated that because she was of the Gamtkwa tribe, consultation with the family / Council should be done in cases where her name is used or her history displayed or published.

Council members raised concern about large scale name changes of places across South Africa, fearing the possible loss of Gamtkwa names, a significant part of their intangible heritage, as a result of poor consultation and irresponsible decision making.

○ **NOTES ON CONTEMPORARY GAMTKWA:**

Poverty and unemployment continues to plague contemporary Gamtkwa, with the majority of employment being restricted to seasonal farm work. Economically the community will benefit from a small percentage shareholding in

a tourism development. Additional economic investment may result from development in the area, pending RoD's on a number of development proposals. However, aside from negotiations regarding development little prospect for economic upliftment is on the horizon for these people. Community projects are focussed on cultural projects, specifically in the arts and crafts fields, some of which are in part sponsored by government, but with the majority thereof being Gamtkwa initiatives and financed by the community, in cases with the assistance of private investment. The general emphasis on the 'African Renaissance' or 'Naissance' closely associated with post-1994 Democracy in the country, with its associated commitment to community upliftment, and that according to Council members has failed to distinguish 'black' and 'brown' cultures, has to date eluded them as a community. Council members stated that little has changed in daily community life from the 'Apartheid' to 'Democracy' regimes.

From a more specific socio-cultural point of view it is evident that much is done to keep Gamtkwa culture alive and time and effort is invested in ensuring that the youth be actively involved in cultural activities: Traditional dance, including the 'Riemdans' and the 'Kieriedans', music, story-telling and the informal collection of oral history form integral parts of the daily life of the people. However, the noticeably positive attitude towards their culture should not guise the fragile and vulnerable emotional state of the people. 'Owner rights' during years of slavery and atrocities committed there under specifically towards women, affecting marriages and families, are still prevalent in the community's *'sense of self'*. More than 200 years of forced acculturation, including the loss of their tribal land and restrictions on movement closely associated with the pass system, 'owner right' preference and limitations associated with missionary property demarcation (Mission Stations at Hankey, Kruisfontein, Bethelsdorp and Clarkson), followed by 'Apartheid' forced removals, the total loss of their language, years of oppression relating to the transfer of cultural traditions including medicinal as well as religious and spiritual practice and ceremony have taken a considerable toll on the 'integrity' of the culture. Despite attempts to 'revive' Gamtkwa culture, the total loss of cultural aspects, such as language, will have to be done in accordance with 'neo-Gamtkwa' methodology, i.e. incorporation of Nama as 'traditional language', as the only surviving Khoe language in South Africa. However, in other instances the Gamtkwa have embraced aspects of acculturation. The community is today a Christian people, a religious system that is much treasured by the people. Booyesen stated that specifically Easter and Old Year's Eve are spent with family celebrating Christian religious aspects. However, traditional Gamtkwa spiritual tradition, where ceremony is closely associated with the full moon, celebrating the connection between the people, the creator and nature, had for many decades been practiced on a low keyed level, in large as a result of restrictions on movement and to escape prosecution.

### **3) PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED DURING THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSULTATION PROCESS:**

Despite the fact that arrangements for submission of socio-cultural consultation with the Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council after compilation of the Phase 1 AIA were made in advance with both Site Plan and SAHRA, the Council is reminded that consultation in terms of Section 38(3)(e) of the NHRA 1999 should be done within the framework of the Phase 1 HIA or specified subsection thereof and within the timeframe of the specialist studies section in order to best address concerns raised within the EIA.

Council insistence to not forward basic concerns in writing, despite the invitation letter (2012-06-08) and additional e-mail requests did have a negative effect on the process. (Concerns raised by other parties, in writing, as per the invitation, could be assessed and brought to the attention of Site Plan. More adequate ways were found in which to best address these parties' concerns.)

#### 4) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The objection raised by the Gamtkwa against the proposed *Mining Right Application on Klein Rivier (Farm 713-32) and Buffelsbosch (742-14), Humansdorp District Project*, is primarily tied to their objection against the Thyspunt Nuclear Power development and largely based on cumulative impact on the landscape. However, should the Nuclear Power Project proceed, it can reasonably be expected that related infrastructural and support developments will be necessary. Should the proposed mining right application thus be approved as support development, recommendations relating to archaeology, as described in the Phase 1 AIA report, should be complied with. Should the Gamtkwa KhoiSan Council request an additional consultation session in the event of development, it is recommended that this be considered by the developer.

**NOTES:** Cumulative impact of a development such as the Thyspunt Nuclear Power development remains a concern. However, the SAHRA heritage compliance system, just over a decade in place and in effect still in its infancy, and with initial focus centred on the fields of archaeology and palaeontology, leaves a void in system related support for socio-cultural mitigation. Socio-cultural mitigation, in the case of the greater Thyspunt development, may well be best approached also in a cumulative manner, recommendations of which are thus outside the scope of this mining right application.

Socio-cultural specific mitigation measures relating to the greater Thyspunt development remain virtually untouched in available project documentation: To date the collection of oral history has been briefly mentioned, whilst it seems as if a local museum or 'garden of remembrance' type of open-air museum is also being considered on SAHRA / EC PHRA level. One important 'loophole' identified during the consultation session is the emphasis on the Gamtkwa's spiritual value, a value with strong and direct roots in their past, and directly associated with 'healing', be this directly spiritual or medicinal ('shamanic' is the term often used in literature to differentiate commercial traditional healing from *shamanic* practices, with its strong spiritual undertones). Across the globe there is an increase in cases where indigenous communities are making use of traditional sites, often archaeological sites, for *shamanic* use, ritual and ceremony. Practitioners make use of various methods to harvest 'vibrational energy' from energetically 'potent' places, often archaeological sites with significant stratigraphy or long periods of occupation. It is more than often the reoccupation or long periods of use that raises the 'resonance' of the energetic levels of the place. Whilst a museum and 'garden of remembrance' may address a select facet of the community's concerns, consideration of use of ancestral sites for *shamanic* use, ritual and ceremony, as socio-cultural mitigation should be considered to ensure that this aspect of Gamtkwa culture be revived and kept alive in the midst of increasing development impact.

Yours sincerely,

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