

The Archaeological Survey Of Zulti North: AMS10 Skeleton

For Richards Bay Minerals

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By Gavin and Louise Anderson

Umlando: Archaeological Tourism and Resource Management

PO Box 102532, Meerensee, 3901



RBM contacted Umlando in May 2006 to recover the human remains retrieved at the new AMS plant, near MPC. Part of a human cranium had been observed in the sieves of the mining operation.

We inspected the area where the cranium occurred but did not observe any other archaeological material. The dune face was the most likely area for archaeological material to be exposed; however, this is an unsafe area for work. We could thus not access the area from the base of the dune (i.e. the mine working area)

We walked up the sides of the mine face, and did not observe any material on either side. The central mine face was not accessible due to dense vegetation.

This has created a problem for the assessment of the skeleton. We cannot access the site (i.e. up the front of mine face) as it is considered an unsafe act according to RBM safety standards¹. We cannot access the likely areas of the possible site from the sides of the mine face, as it is covered in dense vegetation.

We suggest a combination of the two scenarios for the future:

1. The top of the mining face is cleared before dry mining occurs. This would be as per process for the other sites. This would allow us to survey the area for archaeological remains, and thus be able to better date human skeletal remains. This dating is via association of artefacts in the general area of the skeletal remains.
2. **All** non-botanical material from the area of the mine face that passes through the sieve is kept, or stockpiled, on the side of the site. If these “archaeological” stockpiles are deposited according to dates of sieving, then we may be able to retrieve some sort of archaeological resolution. We would then search these “stockpiles”

¹ The mine face is unstable and can collapse at any time, and this can lead to a fatality.

for potential human remains and archaeological artefacts. The staff at AMS are not trained to identify archaeological or human material

The above is important, as we currently have the upper parts of a human cranium, which is acontextual and thus ahistorical. We have no means, apart from radiocarbon dating, to assess its possible age. In turn, we cannot make an assessment as to whom these remains may belong.