

Taung Heritage Site- Report to SAHRA (2015-2016)

Permit #: 9/2/036/0003

Brian F Kuhn

Department of Geology
University of Johannesburg
Email: kuhnbf@gmail.com

In May of 2015 Permit #: 9/2/036/0003 was issued for continued work at the Type Site, Equus Cave and Black Earth Cave, as well as the surrounding tufa and flow stones for dating and isotope studies. Unfortunately due to student unrest and managements capitulation to student demands, our field season scheduled for 2015 was cancelled. That being said we continue to work on material collected under the previous permits (since 2010) and have two papers accepted and due out later this year. We will also be going back into the field in late July and early August of 2016 to continue our research program.

In the lab we are continuing our examinations of hundreds of fossils that were left behind after the 1994 season ended. Sadly many of these fossils lost the tags indicating where they came from, and we also recovered multiple tags with no associated fossils. Fortunately due to the current geological work being done by the team we are able to place many of these fossils back into a geological context, i.e. the pink palaeosol deposits (associated with the Taung Child), and the reddish infil deposits from a younger age. In addition we are working on the fauna recovered from both Black Earth Cave and Equus Cave in 2014 as well as numerous archaeological remains recovered from Equus Cave.

Other news to add is the addition of Dr. Matthew Caruana, an archaeologist at the University of Johannesburg, to the permit. Dr. Caruana is an expert in lithics and is running the excavations at Equus Cave when we are in the field. He has been a part of the team since the original permit issued in 2010 and has intimate knowledge of the sites we work on. Additionally, Dr. Kuhn, the permit holder, has moved from the University of the Witwatersrands' Evolutionary Studies Institute to the Department of Geology at the University of Johannesburg.