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**New Multi Product Pipeline
(NMPP) Project**

Damaged Graves at KP370+600

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Revision 00



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1 Introduction

Gavin Anderson, of Umlando, and the Heritage Specialist for the NMPP, was informed on the 18 August 2011 that several graves had been damaged near KP370 + 600. The damage occurred on the 11th August and that there was an attempt to restore the graves. Umlando's response to the damage was as follows (email dated 18th August 2011):

1. Why were the vehicles driving outside of the RoW, as they had no reason to go beyond the servitude? What are the exact co-ordinates of these graves?
2. It appears that these graves were more than driven over, but rather flattened and cleared by a bulldozer or similar vehicle. The pictures of the reconstruction attempt indicate a total makeover of the graves and that new material was brought in to cover the cairns. This is an illegal activity in Municipal and SAHRA laws/legislation.
3. The HIA should have been informed the minute this happened, as has happened with other similar incidents, rather than after it happened, and was then corrected. This is not acceptable and contrary to the RoD, general NMPP management plans, as well as to SAHRAs permit.
4. It is immaterial if these graves were not recorded previously, as only those graves in the RoW, for which NMPP had access to, were demarcated.

I will need to do the following:

1. Report this to SAHRA
2. Request full community consultation as to the extent of the damage to the graves
3. Request NMPP to undertake a full enquiry

A site meeting was held with NMPP, SAHRA, and Umlando on 2 September 2011 where the incident was discussed. At the meeting a draft incident report was issued to Umlando (NMPP Project KP370+600; PL1 Disturbance of Graves).

This report is only intended to assess the damage to the graves and forward a management plan.

2 Methodologies

The site was inspected for several reasons. These are:

1. To determine the extent of the damage
2. To determine if all graves had been covered
3. To determine if any graves had been damaged and not covered
4. To determine if the graves had been correctly covered
5. To determine if any other graves existed in the immediate area
6. Provide a management plan for this site

Each grave was photographed, as well as areas where presumed graves occurred. The report will look at each grave individually.

3 Results and Discussion

A total of 15 identifiable graves occurred in the cemetery, while two more graves may occur, but were omitted from mitigation.

The people responsible for 'restoring' the graves have claimed that they have piled up rocks in areas where it looked as if graves occurred, and/or where there were indentations in the land. The rocks from the area were then used to place an assumed grave position and style over these indentations. Assumptions were made about headstones and positions of the graves, as well as if they were adult or juvenile graves.

The landowner stating that the graves have been correctly restored has signed an affidavit.

Fig. 1a-c illustrates the graves before they were "restored". These are the only pictures made available and are of low resolution.

Fig. 2 indicates the location of 14 of these graves and is numbered according to the text below.

Fig. 1a: Ten graves prior to mitigation



Fig. 1b: Eight Graves prior to mitigation



Fig. 1c: five Graves prior to mitigation



Fig. 2: Positions of restored graves



3.1 Grave 1

Fig. 3: Grave 1



Grave 1 consists of a circle of stones with a central mound of sand. There is no record of this grave in the initial photos (fig. 1); however, they may be part of the indentation without stones. It appears as if the entire grave cairn has been removed.

The grave has been incorrectly restored.

The boundary fence pole occurs within 30cm of the grave. This could have affected any skeletal remains underneath the surface, as there is no knowledge of where the grave was exactly placed.

3.2 Grave 2

Fig. 4: Grave 2



Grave 2 consists of a pile of stones that have been piled on top of a recent infill of sand.

The shape of the grave is rhomboid and not semi-circular as is the norm.

The grave has been incorrectly "restored"

3.3 Grave 3

Fig. 5: Grave 3



Grave 3 is a possible grave that was missed during the “restoration”.

I think it may be a grave as there was a depression between two graves, but it had not been covered with stones.

The living descendants should be consulted to assist in this matter.

3.4 Grave 4

Fig 6: Grave 4



Grave 4 has partially restored with loose rocks from the area.

The upper half of the grave has been mostly affected by 'restoration'.

The grave is rhomboid in shape and does not resemble a traditional grave.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.5 Grave 5

Fig. 7: Grave 5



Grave 5 has partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The upper half of the grave has been mostly affected by 'restoration'. The grave is rhomboid in shape and does not resemble a traditional grave.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

There may be a grave to the left of Grave 5, and this was not covered in rocks.

3.6 Grave 6

Fig. 8: Grave 6



Grave 6 has partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The entire grave has been mostly affected by 'restoration'. The grave is rhomboid in shape and does not resemble a traditional grave.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.7 Grave 7

Fig. 9: Grave 7



Grave 7 has partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The entire grave has been affected by 'restoration'. The grave is rhomboid in shape and does not resemble a traditional grave.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.8 Grave 8

Fig. 10: Grave 8



Grave 8 has partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The entire grave has been affected by 'restoration'. The grave is rhomboid in shape and does not resemble a traditional grave.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.9 Grave 9

Fig. 11: Grave 9



Grave 9 has partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The entire grave has been mostly affected by 'restoration'. The grave is rhomboid in shape and does not resemble a traditional grave.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.10 Grave 10

Fig. 12: Grave 10



Grave 10 has been partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The grave is generally in the correct shape however, the lower end is too narrow.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.11 Grave 11

Fig. 13: Grave 11



Grave 11 has been partially restored with loose rocks from the area. The grave is generally in the correct shape however, the upper end is too narrow.

A headstone has been placed on this grave

The grave has been incorrectly "restored:"

3.12 Grave 12

Fig. 14: Grave 12



Grave 12 consists of a mud and cattle dung capstone and head stone. There is no writing or dates on the headstone.

The grave is in a good condition however, the headstone has been slightly damaged.

3.13 Grave 13

Fig. 15: Grave 13



Grave 13 consists of a mud and cattle dung capstone and head stone. There is no writing or dates on the headstone.

The grave is in a good condition but appears to have been partially damaged at some stage. I do not believe the capstone was damaged by NMPP as the edges of the fragments have a patina on them.

3.14 Grave 14

Fig. 16: Grave 14



Grave 14 consists of a mud and cattle dung capstone and head stone. There is no writing or dates on the headstone.

The grave has not been damaged

3.15 Grave 15

Fig. 17: Grave 15



Grave 15 consists of a stone cairn~1m wide and 1.8m long. The centre of the cairn has collapsed inwards; however, this is a natural occurrence, and not the result of the contractor.

The grave appears to be in its original condition and should be used as an example when restoring the other graves.

3.16 Grave 16

Fig. 18: Grave 16



Grave 16 consists of a stone cairn~0.9m wide and 1.5m long. The centre of the cairn has collapsed inwards; however, this is a natural occurrence, and not the result of the contractor.

The grave appears to be in its original condition and should be used as an example when restoring the other graves.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Graves at KP370+600 were exposed after vehicles had driven over them to avoid berrns. The graves were then “restored” without authorisation or reporting it to the Heritage Specialist. In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, it is illegal to damage or alter any graves older than 60 years, or ancestral graves, without a permit from SAHRA. The aim of the site meeting was to assess the extent of the damage to the graves and the degree of authenticity of the “restoration”. A total of 15 graves are currently visible, however, two more graves may have been missed. Of the 15 graves, only five have had minimal to no impact. The other 10 graves have been incorrectly restored and do not resemble Graves 15 and 16 in any manner.

In southern Africa, graves have two aspects: the grave itself, and the human remains within it. Traditional beliefs would note that ancestral spirits are related to the graves, and thus any damage to the grave, would be damage to the ancestral spirits. The bones of the human remains are even more important, and would have more serious implications for ancestral spirits, if disturbed. One could even argue that the process behind building the grave has certain rituals for the living descendents.

The damage to the graves via vehicles was unfortunate, and given the height of the grass, acceptable that they were not observed. The “restoration” to the graves is unacceptable, as not only was it incorrectly undertaken, but also does not resemble a traditional grave, for the following reasons:

1. The graves should be roughly oval, not rhomboid or rectangular
2. We do not know if there were headstones on the original graves, and adding them, as is the case here, may be contrary to the tradition of the deceased.
3. The graves would have been lined up in three straight rows. They have now been placed in asymmetrical lines. This is also a disturbance to the ‘sense of place’ of the cemetery.
4. The graves are inconsistent in length and width, as there is a general trend to the sizes/shapes of graves.

These graves will need to be restored in a proper manner acceptable to the living descendents. To undertake this social impact assessment specifically related to the graves will be required. A company specialising in social impacts and interviews relating to graves will need to be contracted. Since the living descendents are known, there will not be a need for advertisements in newspapers and radios.

The living descendants should be interviewed before being taken to the cemetery. In this interview they should identify how many graves existed, and if possible who they were. The age of death for the ancestral remains is important as this may determine the size of the graves, e.g. juvenile vs. adult. In addition to this, it will also determine whether an archaeologist will need to be on site. All graves older than 60 years require an archaeologist to be present.

NMPP will probably need to pay some form of compensation.

The NMPP will have servitude access to this area, and several other areas with graves and archaeological sites occur along the line. In order to avoid similar incidents, all graves and archaeological sites that fall within 100m of the line will need to be demarcated. However, this will be difficult in KwaZulu-Natal since some sites occur within the 100m mark, but are along hills, etc, in areas where access vehicles would not go. These areas should be demarcated as being sensitive and vehicles should not be allowed to deviate from the servitude. In addition to this, some of the KZN sites extend for 500m+ and this would be difficult to fence off, and would deny grazing land to farmers.

I believe that graves and sites within 30m of each side of the centre point should be fenced off, and where a site extends for a distance it should have metal poles at regular intervals, so as not to deny grazing areas. All graves can be fenced off, as they are not that large. SAHRA will need to give a ruling on this.