

DRAFT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE SMARTT/RISSIK MINE,
NORTHERN CAPE

A Phase-1 report submitted to SRK Consulting

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INTRODUCTION

Samancor intends to mine manganese on the farms, Smartt 314 and Rissik 330 near Hotazel, Northern Cape (Figure 1). The project area encompasses about.....hectares and will include open pits, dumps and roads. The environmental coordinators for the project, SRK,

commissioned Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to conduct a survey for sites of archaeological interest in the project area.

METHOD

Two ARM staff visited the project area on April 10 and 11, 2001. They were introduced to the area by Mr S van der Merwe, geologist for Samancor. The two staff traversed the area on foot, paying particular attention to the proposed pits and dumps. Sites of interest would be recorded by a GPS instrument and located on the 1:10 000 plan of the proposed mine, prepared (with C.Arthur and O. van Antwerpen) and supplied by the project manager, Mr I. Thomson.

RESULTS

A thick mantel of Kalahari sand covers the entire project area, except for the open pit left from previous mining. The sides of this pit show that a thick lense of banded ironstone lay on top of the ore body, under the sand. This ironstone occurs in relatively thin slabs unsuitable for Earlier Stone Age (about 1.5 million to 250 000 years ago) tools. In fact no stone of any sort outcrops in the project area, and archaeological sites were not located during the survey.

One Middle Stone Age (ca. 250 000 to 25 000 years ago) artefact, made from banded iron stone, was found in the dump area on the east side of the mine. This artefact has no significance. Although not significant itself, this artefact suggests that the banded ironstone overlaying the manganese has probably been a source of raw material. If this conclusion is true, then the red sands were deposited later, perhaps during one of the cold, glacial periods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No sites of archaeological interest exists within the project area, and thus, there is no archaeological reason why the mining development should not proceed.