

**The archaeological survey for the RBM Zulti North
Mining Lease**

For Richards Bay Minerals

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Umlando undertook its monthly archaeological survey of the Richards Bay Minerals Zulti North mining lease. This report incorporates the July and August 2006 surveys.

The July survey recorded one new site and the August survey undertook a rescue excavation of a human skeleton from AMS9. AMS9 had been previously recorded as a human skeleton had been exposed when a dune face had subsided.

MPC87

This site is located between the first and second dune cordons from Lake Nhlabane. A track cutting has minimally exposed the site. The site consists of a relatively intact shell midden that occurs over a 10m x 10m radius. We presume that more of the site occurs under the vegetation on either side of the road.

The midden consists of black mussels in an archaeological deposit. Medium-large bovid bones were observed as well as thin-walled pottery. This suggests that the site dates at least to the Late Iron Age or Historical Period.

We intend to sample the site by a small test-pit excavation in the near future.

AMS9

We have continuously monitored AMS9 since it was first recorded in the beginning of the year. We have done this at it has yielded a high concentration of artefacts as well as on human skeleton. There have been suggestions of another human skeleton to the north of the first skeleton; however, we have not been able to locate its exact location. Alternatively, the bones that we have observed belong to the original skeleton. Nonetheless, this site has been continuously monitored and sampled.

A new skeleton was observed during our last survey of this site. The cranium, parts of the forearm and vertebrae had been exposed when the dune had subsided. The rest of the remains were *in situ*, albeit poorly preserved. The remains were very soft, fragile and wet during the excavations. The remains had also been moved, or compressed, by bulldozer activity and dune slumping. The pelvis had split open, and thus the femora, tibia and fibulae

had moved and/or rotated. Furthermore, the forearms had been realigned with post-depositional movements, and occurred along the “sides” of the skeleton.

The remains originally faced southeast (towards sunset) and in a kneeling position. The foot bones (metapodials) appear to have been extended backwards, with the pelvis resting on the calcanium / astragalus (ankle and heel of each foot). Only a few of the metapodials were located, and we presume the rest had disintegrated through time. It also appears that the forearms had been in a flexed position. Only one forearm was *in situ* and it was in a flexed position from the elbow towards the heart/chest area.

In general, the human remains are part of the general burial practice observed amongst Nguni-speaking people in KZN. The “uniqueness” of this burial is that the feet were extended backwards. Other human burials in the area tend to have the feet flexed and facing the same direction as the face.

The site dates to the earlier part of the Late Iron Age. The pottery is associated with Group 6 and 7 pottery, and thus dates between AD 1200 to AD 1700.

We will continue to monitor this site, and intend to undertake test-pit excavations in the near future.

