

## **11. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

The archaeological and historical sites within the study area were identified through the use of the database at the Archaeology Department of the Albany Museum (i.e. the data recording centre for the Eastern Cape Province), as well as records from the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown and the Cory Library at Rhodes University.

The distributions and concentrations of visible archaeological and historical sites detailed below are mainly the result of personal observations by archaeologists, and the reporting of observed sites by members of the public to the above-mentioned institutions. No systematic professional survey of archaeological and historical sites in this area has been undertaken. However, the study area has been identified as an area which is potentially rich in archaeological and historical sites. The sites listed below probably represent a small percentage of what may actually be present.

### **11.1. Heritage Site and Cultural Resources Survey**

A survey of the recorded data for the study area highlighted the following heritage sites and cultural resources which have been identified to date, and which are required to be avoided.

#### ***11.1.1. Golden Valley Area***

The first archaeological excavation in Southern Africa took place near Cookhouse. In January 1776, Anders Sparrman excavated a large stone cairn, which was probably an *isivivane* (usually found along paths at river crossings and mountain passes. Individuals passing such stone heaps usually added a stone, and prayed for a safe journey).

Several open-air Later Stone Age sites were reported from the region close to the existing Transmission lines near Middleton, and where these lines cross the Great Fish River. It is also predicted that a concentration of Later Stone Age sites, and possibly also Middle Stone Age sites can be found close to the river. This may include freshwater mussel shell middens of San hunter-gatherers and Khoekhoen pastoralists.

Middleton, a small railway hamlet, is situated in the vicinity of the existing Transmission lines, and is characterised by several historical buildings. Here the African Irrigation Land Company built an irrigation scheme in 1918.

The Slagter Nek rebellion, an important historical event in the region, is symbolised through a monument erected on the west bank of the Great Fish River. Other historical events which may have resulted in material remains is the Port Elizabeth-Kimberley railway which reached Cookhouse in 1880. Situated on the west bank of the Great Fish River, Cookhouse was initially a military outpost called Roodewal.

### ***11.1.2. Kommadagga Area***

Few archaeological sites have been reported from this area. The existing Transmission lines pass in the vicinity of well-preserved rock paintings at Biesenfontein, and surface scatters of Later and Middle Stone Age stone tools near Kommadagga. In addition, a human skeleton (reported as a “Bushman female”) was found and excavated in 1945 on a farm 2 km west of Kommadagga.

Due to the topographical nature of this area, archaeological sites and/or remains should be relatively easy to locate. Stone tools, pottery and other archaeological material and features are more readily found within open terrain areas. The portions of rugged terrain may contain large numbers of rock art which have not been reported or found.

Historical sites and/or remains are predominantly as a result of the farming and military activities of the 3 000 British soldiers which disembarked from the train at Kommadagga.

### ***11.1.3. Zuurberg Area***

Due to the thick, almost impenetrable vegetation, few archaeological sites are reported from this area. The Zuurberg mountain range is well known for its caves and shelters where San hunter-gatherers lived for at least the past 15 000 years. Most of these contain well preserved rock paintings.

Some 15 human skeletons were reported to be removed from the Zuurberg by amateur archaeologists from different shelters and other sites. One of these was found close to the Zuurberg Hotel in the Addo Pass. Two more were found and scientifically excavated during 1969. One of the skeletons was found in layers dating some 7 300 years old.

The existing Transmission lines are in the vicinity of one of the most important South African archaeological sites, Melkhoutboom Cave. The bone dry deposits in the cave contain the oldest well-preserved botanical remains in Southern Africa dating some 6 000 years old.

Few regions have played such a prominent role in South African history than the Zuurberg area. Many battles took place between the AmaXhosa, European settlers, British military and Khoekhoen. Therefore, there is a distinct possibility of finding old remains of military weapons, abandoned forts and other equipment, as well as many artefacts of trekboers and hunters that moved into the Zuurveld within this area. These include, among others the following:

1. Remains of Xhosa Chief Habona's kraal near the Zuurberg Pass, and Chugwe's kraal near Paterson.
2. Several large stone cairns, known as *isivivane*.
3. Enon Mission Station.
4. Remains from the Fourth Frontier War, 1811-1812, in the vicinity of the Fish River. These include 27 military posts and fortified farms in the region.
5. In the Zuurberg, there are two known abandoned military posts that have not yet been located. Ritberg Hill post and Stoltz post in the Zuurberg mountains lie between Hayterdale and Buffelskruil, and the existing Transmission lines run between these two places.
6. Many inns and coach houses were built in this area, for example at Addo Drift on the Sundays River. These were used by many famous travellers between 1775 and 1813 on their journeys into the Eastern Cape.
7. Ann's Villa (close to the existing Transmission lines) was built in 1857 and was a roadside inn that consisted of a bar, blacksmith, stables, store and lodgings. This complex was later commandeered as a military headquarters for the Albany Colonial Defence Force under the command of Major Arthur Douglas. This complex is still in use today.
8. There are rock paintings in the hills in close proximity to Ann's Villa.

#### **11.1.4. Addo Area**

Several reports referred to Earlier Stone Age stone artefacts in primary and secondary contexts in the vicinity of Grassridge. The extensive gravel terraces exposed by streams and rivers contain large numbers of flaked cobbles and other debris of stone tool production.

Early Stone tools and handaxes were reported from Coega Kop and also collected previously from the banks of the Coega River and Sundays River (Albany Museum collections). These stone artefacts have, over time, been exposed and discovered due to large scale disturbance, i.e. the construction of roads, farming activities and other human development.

One of South Africa's most important Earlier Stone Age finds and excavations was conducted west of Grassridge, at Amanzi Springs. In a series of spring deposits, a large number of stone

tools were found *in situ* to a depth of 3-4 m. Wood and seed material preserved within these spring deposits was recorded as possibly dating to between 250 000 to 800 000 years old.

Occurrences of fossil bone remains and Middle Stone Age stone tools were reported south of Coega Kop. During excavations the remains were found in the surface limestone, but the bulk of the bone remains were found some 1-1,5 m below the surface. The excavations exposed a large number and variety of bones, teeth and horn cores strongly suggesting that they were deposited there by Man. The bone remains included warthog, leopard, hyena, rhinoceros and ten different antelope species. A radiocarbon date of greater than 37 000 years was obtained for the site.

It is unknown if there are any further remains in the area. However, lime deposits elsewhere suggests that similar fossil bone accumulations may be found in other parts of the area. For example, a human skeleton was also found in a lime quarry near Addo station adjacent to the railway line.

Two additional Middle and Earlier Stone Age sites were reported adjacent to the Addo road near Addo and Coerney, and adjacent to the Sundays River west of Addo.

Several Later Stone Age sites are situated next to the Sundays River close to the existing Transmission lines (Binneman, *pers. observ.*). These included mainly freshwater mussel shell middens and/or thin scatters of shell and archaeological material. Two types of shell middens were identified. The shell middens which contained pottery were associated with Khoekhoen pastoralist origin, and middens without pottery were of San hunter-gatherer origin. The latter carried stone tools which are typical of San hunter-gatherer life styles.

The area has witnessed much activity in historical times, but little material evidence probably survived, except in cases where people were living at one site for a number of years. Such a site was reported by a group of Dutch hunters who passed through the area in 1702. They reported that a Khoekhoen group under chief Snel was living in the vicinity of Grassridge/Brakrivier. They used Snel's kraal as a base camp from where they raided other Khoekhoen groups in the area for their cattle and sheep.

## **11.2. Discussion**

### ***11.2.1. Frequency and Importance of Archaeological and Historical Sites in the Study Area***

It is clear from the database survey that, although the history of the area is well-recorded, only a few archaeological sites were reported, and little is known about the density and visibility of sites and cultural material. However, the data available provides sufficient information to predict what types of sites are likely to be encountered during the construction of a new Transmission line.

The most important archaeological features in the study area are the caves, shelters, rock art, freshwater mussel shell middens and the Earlier and Middle Stone Age deposits. The cave, shelters and rock art sites are mainly situated in the Zuurberg region, but may also be found in the numerous hills and rocky outcrops included in the study area. These are not likely to be impacted on by construction activities associated with a new Transmission line.

There are possible Earlier Stone Age (may date older than 500 000 years) and Middle Stone Age sites with fossil bone remains (older than 40 000 years) in the Addo area. These sites, buried by spring and lime deposits are not only important for studying human ways of life, but also for reconstructing the previous environments for the past half a million years.

Most of the Later Stone Age sites anticipated to be concentrated near or along the banks of the Sundays River. The freshwater mussel shell middens (may date to 6000 years old) are also important for studying Khoesan subsistence strategies, as well as for providing data on past environments which are locked in these sites. Relatively little is known from these sites because they have not yet been extensively studied. Burials are usually associated with these sites, but may be found anywhere throughout the study area. All human remains and graves are extremely sensitive to local communities, and should be treated with care should any remains be found.

Historical sites and material are reported throughout the area. These range from indigenous kraal settlements, military camps and foundations of buildings to scatters of artefacts. The area is a vault of information for historians and historical archaeologists. All features and material are protected by law and may not be casually collected.

### ***11.2.2. Potential Impact on Heritage Sites as a Result of the Construction of the Proposed Transmission Line***

There will be both positive and negative impacts on heritage sites as a result of the construction of a new Transmission line.

A positive impact is that sites previously not known of/identified will be discovered (before or during construction activities), primarily through excavation activities associated with development. Artefacts can be retrieved, and these sites can then be recorded/reported, which will enlarge site records and assist in managing and conserving the region's heritage resources and provide insights for future research.

As cultural heritage resources are non-renewable and economic values cannot be placed on these resources, should damage or loss of these resources occur, potential destruction of the sites is considered as a significant negative impact. Care should, therefore, be taken such that minimal damage occurs to these sites during the construction of access roads, camps, tower sites and during other worker activities. No historical artefacts should be removed by unqualified personnel at any time.

It is difficult to establish what the impact will be on the cultural and historical resources with construction activities taking place, as the number and location of sites is largely unknown. However, in general, the construction of a Transmission line should have little impact on the local archaeological and historical sites.

### **11.3. Recommendations**

All archaeological remains, artificial features and structures older than 100 years, and historic structures older than 60 years are protected by the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA, No 25 of 1999). In order to remove, disturb or demolish these, a permit is required from the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) and in certain cases, permission from the local communities (e.g. the removal or disturbance of human remains) must be negotiated.

The following is required to be considered and incorporated into a management plan prior to construction activities being initiated.

1. Plans of construction infrastructure, i.e. access roads, camps and tower positions should be made available to archaeologists/historians to inspect and visit. Archaeologists should

inspect a number of identified tower and other construction sites to investigate and assess the nature and density of possible heritage sites and cultural material on and around them. From this it would be possible to make recommendations and to motivate for the removal of material before construction starts.

2. Following the inspections, archaeologists and historians should then inform construction managers, prior to construction activities commencing, of what heritage sites and cultural material may be encountered, and the procedures to follow in the event of such sites being encountered.
3. It is recommended that all construction workers are informed not to disturb historic sites, make any collections of material (i.e. medallions, cartridges or other artefacts), and not to disturb (dig, camp or make fires within) cave or shelter deposits, or to touch or throw fluids on rock paintings.
4. If heritage sites and/or cultural material are found (refer to Appendix F), work should be stopped at that site, and archaeologists immediately informed. Sufficient time should be allowed for archaeologists to excavate, remove or collect material from the site, should it be deemed necessary.