

## **SITE INSPECTION 23 (2004)**

HWC Ref No. C13/3/6/2/1/1/1/C1

**Date: 1st - 3rd November 2004**

**Locality: Matzikama Municipality area**

**Area(s)/sites:**

- Vredendal
- Strandfontein
- Vanryhnsdorp
- Koekenaap

**HWC representatives present: Dr. A. Jerardino**

**Other attendants: see below for names of people met in various instances**

**Date of this report: 11 -24 November 2004**

### **Background:**

I have followed up the various professional contacts made since June 2004 with Matzikama municipal staff via telephonic conversation and emails with good results. One of the purposes of this follow-up was to monitor the possibility of development immediately north of Strandfontein where many archaeological sites were observed during site inspections in June and July this year.

In my telephonic conversations with Ms Annali van der Westhuizen, she informed me that the land immediately north of Strandfontein had been recently targeted for development. Matzikama Municipal Council had given the developer (Mrs Esté Maritz) a year's time to come forward with a proposal. I asked Ms van der Westhuizen to request a full HIA as a matter of urgency. I supplied names and contact numbers of Heritage practitioners who would be able to undertake this study where archaeological resources feature prominently. Besides the threat to archaeological sites, there is also an issue of cultural landscapes, as very few stretches of coastline have remained untouched between Dooringbaai and the northern provincial boundary by diamond mining and farming activities. Strandfontein lies between these two points.

Ms van der Westhuizen gave me via email the names and contact numbers of staff from the tourism office in Vredendal, Mrs Esté Maritz, Nature Conservation staff, and a local enthusiast from Strandfontein (Ms Suzanne du Plessis) who is undertaking conservation projects in the area. I deemed it necessary to meet them personally in order to provide them with information (legal and professional) on cultural heritage conservation and management guidelines, and in this way establish a good working relationship with them for now and the future. Also, Ms Suzanne du Plessis had manifested a strong interest in showing me some archaeological sites and historical graves located within the area that she is interested in protecting as a nature reserve. Clearly, some recommendations would need to be made.

Pisces Environmental Services (Pty) Ltd had also circulated a Background Information Document regarding a prospecting mining application submitted by Tormin Mineral Sands to be undertaken in the seashore area adjoining farm Geelwal Karoo 262, Vredendal Magisterial District. During one of my earlier visits to Koekenaap in June, I had made contact with Mr. Wynie Wickens who besides farming in the area, he also organizes eco-trails along this part of the coast. He and other locals informed me that the area was very rich in archaeological and palaeontological resources. Consequently, it was important to visit the area personally and assess the possible impact that prospecting operations of heavy minerals would have on heritage resources in that area.

## Observations:

### Vredendal

I arrived to Vredendal on the morning of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2004 from Lamberts Bay. Before checking in the Vredendal Hotel, I paid a visit to the Matzikama Municipality offices. Ms. Annali van der Westhuizen was waiting for me to give me a map of Strandfontein town and surrounding land targeted for the development marked on it. Ms van der Westhuizen assured me that a full HIA will be conducted for the land north of Strandfontein and that heritage practitioners were in the process of being contacted. I was then informed that the intended development of the land north of Strandfontein consisted of a Golf course and nodes of semi-retirement cottages plus shops and services. The Urban Planning section of the Matzikama Municipality had been contacted and visited in the past by DEA&DP staff regarding development in the area and the need for EIAs. The contact person in DEA&DP is: Ms Suretha van Rooyen, tel: 021-483 3763, email: [suvrooy@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:suvrooy@pgwc.gov.za).

After my visit to Ms. Van der Westhuizen, I talked to Ms. Thesmé van Zyl of the Tourism Information Center (tel: 027-201 3376), dependant also from the Matzikama Municipality. Our conversation revolved around the use of heritage sites as tourist attractions in the area and their vulnerability. Most of the tourists (domestic) who visit Matzikama do so for its natural beauty. This region offers little in terms of sites of archaeological or palaeontological relevance despite the wealth of heritage sites within its boundaries. To some extent, the exception to this pattern is the local museum in Vanrhynsdorp. I informed to Ms van Zyl of the legal protection that heritage resources have and the need for Archaeological or Heritage Impact Assessments when development takes place or when heritage sites are made accessible to visitors. I detected little awareness on this subject matter and promised to send the web address where the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) can be found. This has been done so.

### Strandfontein

After checking in the Vredendal Hotel around mid-morning, I drove to Strandfontein and met two Nature Conservation staff, namely: Mr. Kobus Kritzinger (tel: 027-219 1480; cell: 072 456 8848) and Mr. Albie Cloete (tel: as with K. Kritzinger; cell: 082 455 5992; email: [ejcloete@xsinet.co.za](mailto:ejcloete@xsinet.co.za)). After showing them the map I received from Ms. A. van der Westhuizen, they told me that they were totally unaware of the intentions of developing the land immediately north of Strandfontein. I also explained Heritage Western Cape mandate and responsibilities as they were still under the impression that SAHRA was the authority responsible for protection and conservation of heritage resources in the Western Cape Province.

We proceeded to visit the area in question (Portion 13 of the Farm Hollebakstrandfontein No 270). As staff members of Nature Conservation, Mr. Kritzinger and Mr. Cloete were not fully aware of the presence of archaeological sites in the natural landscape, but they quickly started recognizing archaeological features (stone artefacts, faunal remains such as marine shell and animal bones, Ostrich Eggshell [OES] fragments... etc) after pointing these out to them. As stated in an earlier site report, the area is very rich in archaeological sites. Mr. Kritzinger and Mr. Cloete pointed also out to me that some rare types of euphorbia are present in the area just north of the steep and narrow kloof (southern edge of property) that gave the town its name. These euphorbia are growing among archaeological sites.

No photographs were taken in this instance as a number of digital photographs were made in July 2005 (see Fig. 1 as an example).

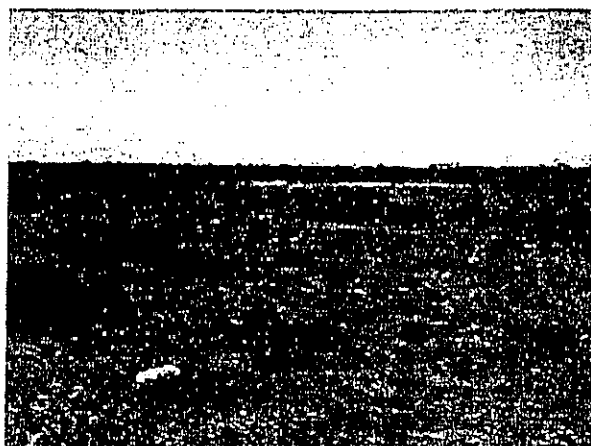


Fig. 1: Archival photo (07/2004), archaeological sites shown by plant denuded areas

After finishing with the inspection of sites north of Strandfontein in the early afternoon, I drove to the house of Ms. Suzanne du Plessis (tel: 027-215 1685; cell: 083 383 8420; email: kwela@intekom.co.za) in Strandfontein. Ms. Du Plessis is a local enthusiast and project leader of several initiatives in the area. Her involvement ranges from raising money from international sources for the protection of natural areas along the Matzikama coast to requesting local authorities the erection of public phones for the humble inhabitants of the little village of Papendorp (no public phones were available there until recently).

As with Ms van Zyl and Nature Conservation staff, Ms du Plessis was not fully aware as to where the institutional responsibilities for the protection and conservation of heritage sites rest. After clarifying this and pointing out that no archaeological material should be collected from sites, and that those who had done so should register their private collections with SAHRA, we left for the area south of Strandfontein. Ms. Du Plessis has an interest in protecting and conserving this area because of the presence of rare botanical species in this area. Ms du Plessis was the leader of a project that aimed at establishing a private reserve south of Strandfontein in a stretch of land owned by Mr. J. Loubscher (farm 423 Karelshoek/Pikkersbaai). In her numerous visits to this area, Ms du Plessis identified the presence of archaeological sites. She was interested in obtaining information regarding their possible age, the meaning of their contents, their significance and possible ways to manage them.



Fig. 2: General view to the east of Die Hel. Archaeological sites found in rock shelters located on southern slopes (right) of kloof.

Several shelters with archaeological shell middens were identified in the kloof known as Die Hel located immediately south of Strandfontein town (Erf 270 portion 13 Hollebakstrandfontein farm). Sites were numbered from east to west. Site 1 was only identified at the end of the visit to Die Hel and no GPS fix was obtained for it due to lack of time.



Fig. 3a: Die Hel, site 1



Fig. 3b: Die Hel, site 2, note large talus with archaeological deposit



Fig. 3c: Die Hel, site 3, note large talus also with archaeological deposit

Site 1 is located at the top of Die Hel, a locality also known as Friars Cove.

Site 2 was a small shelter with a surface of 10 m x 3 m, with the edge of the roof about 5 m high. This site has an extensive talus surface (50 m semi-circumference). GPS fix: 31°45'34.4"S; 18°13'55.9"E (17 feet accuracy). Dense shell deposits characterize the surface of the shelter where several species of molluscs were observed. These were *Patella granatina*, *P. argenvillei*, *Burmupena* spp (whelks) with few *Choromytilus meridionalis* (black mussels). Faunal remains from tortoises, small-sized bovids (Steenbok/Grysbok), medium-sized bovid and OES fragments were also observed. One red silcrete adze and one OES bead were also observed. No pottery was seen on the surface of the site but one potsherd was seen at the bottom of the kloof when walking towards Site 3.

Site 3 is located also on the southern slope of Die Hel kloof and is similar in contents to Site 2. This site has a smaller surface area than Site 2 (8 m x 2 m) with a 10 m high-sloped talus covering a semi-circumference of approximately 25 m. GPS fix: 31°45'35.6"S; 18°13'54.9"E (13 feet accuracy). All mollusc and terrestrial species observed in Site 2 were also seen in Site 3, plus *Argobuccinum pustulosum* (large sub-tidal whelk).



Fig. 4a: Archaeological site visible among bushes

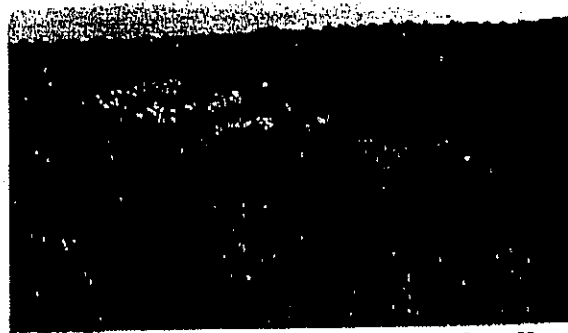


Fig. 4b: Historical graves, possibly older than 60 years

The area south of Strandfontein and along the cliff face was also visited. Numerous informal dirt roads cross this land. Many of these roads have cut into archaeological sites causing damage and loss of cultural heritage. It was not possible to record each and every site as the afternoon was coming close to an end and I still had to visit Mrs Esté Mauritz. Consequently, I only recorded one largely intact site and a row of historical graves.

Site 4 is an open site consisting of medium to high-density shell deposits among bushes (Fig. 4a) and extending over an area of approximately 30 m x 30 m. *P. argenvillei* was probably the most frequent mollusc species in the site, a feature not unusual for sites further north in Namaqualand. *P. granatina* and *P. barbara* were also present in relatively high numbers. No pottery was observed on the surface of this site, but quartz and quartzite flakes and chunks were observed. GPS fix: 31°45'37.9"S; 18°13'34.7"E (13 feet accuracy).

As far as I could identify, the gravesite consists of a row of six graves oriented on a west-east direction (Fig. 4b). Long piles of beach boulders gave shape to the graves with Euphorbia bushes planted on top. Two of the graves had large flat boulders on the west end, perhaps intended as head stones, and a third one had a wooden cross (falling apart) also on the west end. According to Ms du Plessis, these graves are likely to be those of fishermen and could possibly be older than 60 years. GPS fix: 31°45'41.3"S; 18°13'29.3"E (17 feet accuracy).

Once returning to Ms du Plessis home, I drove around the block to visit Mrs Esté Mauritz, the intended developer of the land immediately north of Strandfontein. Much of the conversation with Mrs Mauritz revolved around the procedures involved in Heritage Impact Assessments, their importance and the legal requirements around it. Mrs Mauritz confirmed the information supplied to me by Ms van der Westhuizen regarding the intentions of developing a Golf course and nodes of houses for semiretirement plus services north of the present town border. Mrs Mauritz showed me the sketch plans drawn for this effect. I did not ask for a copy as I was not offered one, and at this stage it was more important to keep a good foundation of understanding between HWC and her. The conversation was amicable and we confirmed our mutual intention to keep in contact.

#### Vanrhynsdorp

I was advised by Mr. Albie Cloete to visit the Van Rhijn Museum and to meet with Mr. Christo Paulsen who is the Manager of this museum (PO Box 28, Vanrhynsdorp 8170, tel/fax: 027-2191552, email: Vanrhynsdorp@matzikaamun.co.za). Private consultants, various authorities and developers/mining companies contact Mr. Paulsen regarding Environmental Impact Assessments and the encountering of archaeological and palaeontological resources. I decided that it would be important to talk with him about some cases he had had to deal with in the past, as there could be a need to inform him about the various aspects of the current legislation and procedures to be followed when managing heritage resources.

I visited the Van Rhijn Museum in the morning of Tuesday 02 November 2004 until the early afternoon. Mr. Paulsen took me around the different exhibits offering comments. These exhibits were organized within each room of the old house that serves as a museum. Considering the small funding made available to run this museum, Mr. Paulsen has done a very good job. The exhibit followed a chronological sequence, starting with the basics about the Geology and Palaeontology of the area and Stone Age material. The whole of the Stone Age was represented in this material, namely from Early Stone Age (ESA) to Later Stone Age (LSA) stone artefacts. Much of this material was obtained from collections of surface material as a result of mining activities in the past. Mr. Paulsen would be called to

collect already displaced material or to remove artefacts in primary context before excavations would take place. Mr. Paulsen assured me that none of the fossils and archaeological artefacts were collected deliberately, and that he has not been called to do collections lately as mining prospectors and developers seem to be more aware of present legislation pertaining to environmental conservation and management.

After viewing the exhibits in detail, I had a long conversation with Mr. Paulsen about our mutual areas of interest. Mr. Paulsen was very eager to receive any information that would add value to the work done in and from the museum. He had received some material from the days of the National Monuments Council (poster with booklet) and a booklet on rock art in the Cedarberg published by Dr. J. Deacon. He asked me to send any printed matter that would be published by either SAHRA or HWC. At that stage I remembered that I had some SAHRA pamphlets regarding the registration of private collections of fossils and artefacts. I left at least a dozen of these pamphlets printed in Afrikaans and the same quantity of pamphlets printed in English.

Mr Paulsen informed me of a recent application submitted to Matzikama Municipality for mining prospecting rights north of Vanrhynsdorp on the farm Quaggaskop 215. Mr. Paulsen made the Environmental Management Programme Report (see bibliography below) available to me and made photocopies of the relevant pages. This EMP report dedicated no more than a page to "Archaeological and other Cultural resources". The responsible consultants for compiling this report, namely Bohlweki Environmenatl Consultants, will be contacted in due course.

Mr. Paulsen informed me of the current plans for a large Biosphere reserve in the Kneersflakte, for which a Scoping Report has been produced. Mr. Paulsen also informed me of another similar initiative south of Vanrhynsdorp, namely the Greater Cedarberg Biodiversity Corridor. Cultural Heritage is only briefly mentioned in the colourful leaflet/pamphlet published about this project. Rock art is the only concrete example of cultural heritage resource mentioned in this pamphlet. The interest and legislative mandate of HWC regarding heritage resources should be brought to the attention of those responsible for spear heading these projects.

I left the Van Rhijn Museum with a distinct feeling that another important contact was made with local interest parties within the Matzikama Municipality area. Moreover, Mr. Paulsen is the source of a wealth of information about the local history (colonial), geology and hydrology all of which can become most useful to anyone conducting work (surveys, research, monitoring of EIAs and HIAs, ...etc) in this area. Mr. Paulsen is a most valuable human resource at the service of heritage conservation within the Matzikama Municipality area.

#### Koekenaap (Geelwal Karoo farm 262)

After a visit to Ebancezer and Papendorp to familiarize myself with the known and unknown heritage resources there, I visited Mr. Wynie Wickens in his farm house of Koekenaap at 14:00 hr on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. Mr. Wickens had offered in the past to show me some of the sites he has seen north of the Olifants River mouth. After a short conversation regarding the sites we were going to visit, we travelled in the direction of Die Punt. Mr. Paul Kleinhans, also a local from Keokenaap and with an interest in archaeological and palaeontological matters, came along with us to visit these sites. I was particularly interested in assess the possible impact that the prospecting of heavy minerals would have on archaeological sites located in the Geelwal Karoo farm 262.

Many of the archaeological sites were located on top and along the edge of cliffs, while palaeontological sites were generally located on the slopes of these cliffs. A few palaeontological sites were observed on top of the cliffs and not far from the entrance to Transhex property (managers of Geelwal Karoo farm 262). Many of the dirt roads that give access to the beaches in Transhex property have damaged severely many archaeological and palaeontological sites. In fact, some of the damaged fossil sites near Transhex gate are fairly unique.

Archaeological sites consisted mainly of LSA shell middens and also lithic scatters of much older age dating to the MSA. Stone artefacts (mainly flakes, hammerstones, and flaked cobbles) were also observed in at least half of the shell middens visited. Quartzite is the main stone raw material, followed by fair quantities of quartz and less frequent occurrences of silcrete (brown-yellow). One very large shell midden is located at the top of the locality known as Bakoond that got its name from a giant hollow rock on the beach. A GPS fix was obtained next to this geological feature: 31°37'19.6"S; 18°08'00.4"E (16 m accuracy).



Fig 5a: Archaeological site on the top of Bakoond cliff face, view from below



Fig. 5b: View of site towards the east



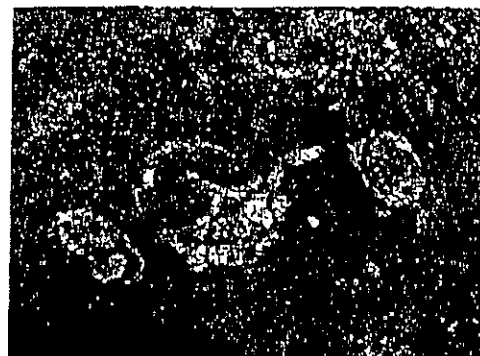
Fig. 5c: Bakoond rocky reefs below archaeological site

The site located on top of the cliffs of Bakoond is fairly large (100 m x 50 m approximately) and consisting of large quantities of marine shell. The dominance of the mollusc species in relative order is: *P. argenvillei*, *P. barbara* and *P. granatina*. Activity areas were identified at the edge of the cliff face with concentrations of large good quality quartz rocks (several kilograms in weight), split beach cobbles and quartzite flakes. This site is probably a campsite and not just a processing site, as it is argued for many large sites <sup>like this</sup> where marine shell dominates overwhelmingly. I would make a case for this to be so because it doesn't make any sense to collect vast quantities of shellfish from rocky reefs and then transport these to a location about 40 m above sea level to process this catch. If the interest were in just processing shellfish in order to transport these to other locations, for instance, to the interior where such resources were not readily available, then this would have been done so at the foot of the cliffs and immediately behind the beach. Moreover, the presence of activity areas related to stone artefact manufacture at the site of Bakoond lends support to the characterization of this site as a campsite.

Several palaeontological sites were observed in this property. The most impressive were on sections of the cliffs' slopes and about 50 meters above sea level. Due to lack of sufficient time and several sites in need to be visited in the afternoon, no GPS fixes were obtained, but some photographs were taken.



**Fig. 7a: Fossilized mangrove roots**



**Fig. 7b: Fossilized tortoises**

Fossilized mangrove roots are preserved on the steep slopes of the cliffs in at least two locations (Fig. 7a). The thickness of this palaeontological occurrence is about 10 m wide, below which an horizon of fossilized oyster shells occurs. Mr. Wickens informed me that a geological study has been done on this area including the description of fossil sites. A copy could be obtained from the author. Clearly, the oceanographic regime of this coastline was completely different sometime in the deep past. Either high sea levels or upliftment of the coastal sediments must explain for the present position of the fossilized mangrove roots high up on the slopes of the cliffs. Also, sea surface temperatures must have been much warmer than at present to allow for mangroves to grow along these shorelines.

Fossilized tortoises were also observed in at least three locations, one not far from the entrance to Transhex property. Whole carapace, and sometimes also plastron, was seen preserved in a matrix of orange sandy clays. The length-size of these fossils was around 400 mm, sometimes being difficult to estimate given that fossils were exposed at angles on the visible surfaces. The above-mentioned geological report would hopefully have identified the species name(s) and its (their) palaeoecology. To my knowledge, there are not many fossilized tortoise bones, and in this observed state of preservation.



**Fig 7a: Coastline of Geelwal Karoo 262 targeted for prospecting**



**Fig. 7b: Coastline of Geelwal Karoo 262 targeted for prospecting**



**Fig. 7c: Exploitation of heavy minerals north of Geelwal Karoo 262**

Prospecting of sands along the beaches adjacent to Geelwal Karoo 262 will not impact directly on the cultural and palaeontological heritage sites of the area, as such activities will take place on the centreline of targeted beaches. However, there is a high probability that these sites would be impacted if new roads will be built in order to gain access to these beaches. The BID states that "...Only existing roads and tracks will be used during this prospecting programme". Consequently, I would strongly recommend that prospecting activities adhere to this decision. Such recommendations with summary observations have already been submitted to Pisces Environmental Services (Pty) Ltd at the time of finalizing this report.



**Bibliography:**

Bohlweki Environmental (Pty) Ltd, 2004. Environmental Programme Report: Mining and Prospecting Activities on the farm Quaggaskop 215 (Mining Licence: ML 22/94), District of Vanrhynsdorp, Western Cape Province (3 May 2004). PO Box 11784, Vorna Valley, Midrand, 1686, tel: 011-466 3841 fax: 011-466 3849, email: [info@bohlweki.co.za](mailto:info@bohlweki.co.za), web: [www.bohlweki.co.za](http://www.bohlweki.co.za).

**Acknowledgements:**

I am most grateful to Matzikama municipality and Nature Conservation staff for assisting with logistics and information. Many thanks are also due to Christo Paulsen and Suzanne du Plessis for sharing their wealth of knowledge on their respective areas of interest, and to Wynie Wickens and Paul Kleinhans for sorting out the necessary transport and access approval to Geelwal Karoo farm 262. I am also in debt to Mrs Esté Mauritz for her hospitality and willingness to talk about her project.

