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Letter of Thanks for Hosting the University of Pretoria's 2nd Year Archaeology Fieldschool in 2010

Dear Zwahili Lodge

"It was the best experience I have had in my life" a German exchange student told me of this year's 2nd year Archaeology fieldschool hosted by Zwahili Lodge.

The other 14 students held similarly positive opinions. The success of the fieldschool (25th September – 1st October) is attributable to two primary factors:

- The quality and range of archaeological sites and artefacts on the property;
- The helpfulness of the staff especially Jannie, who had the initiative to make first contact with our Department and facilitate the fieldschool.

The fieldschool was both an opportunity to locate and record archaeological sites unknown to science and to transfer professional skills to students. The fieldschool had 2nd and 3rd year students as well as Honours students. Each day involved an early start to survey the main topographic features for signs of past human activity (see description on next page), which were then recorded and constitute the first step towards researching and managing these heritage resources.

Do note that all archaeological sites and artefacts older than 60 years are protected by the **National Heritage Resources Act** 25 of 1999. This Act makes it an offence to damage or remove artefacts or sites. Fortunately, Zwahili is in good hands. On a reconnaissance trip a brief information session for staff alerted them to the best course of action being to leave any new or old sites as is, take photographs and send to us or any other Archaeologists. One of our ways of repaying Zwahili will be to generate a management plan for the property's cultural; heritage. Note that no artefacts were removed during the fieldschool, only photos, co-ordinates, notes, sketches etc were done.

As to the Archaeology located during the fieldschool, we found and made preliminary recordings of 25 archaeological sites. Many sites were known to Jannie, Donald and other staff, but some were new. The sites we found can be classified chronologically as follows (more detailed report to follow):

- **Later Stone Age** sites between c. 20 000 – 300 000 years ago that consist of stone tools (usually from imported stone) and archaeological deposit in at least three rock shelters. Some of the rock art, cupules and grooves (see below) also belong to this gatherer-hunter or ‘San’ (Bushman) period.



Rock shelter with San and Khoekhoen rock paintings



San digging stick weight

- **Later Iron Age** remains from the last thousand years that include the significant Witkop rain-control site used by Bantu-speakers, possibly in conjunction with San, and many stone walls, pot sherds, some beads and ashy middens or rubbish dumps. One location has large stone walls that date to the past few hundreds years, and probably represents a defensive or refuge site from *Mfecane* times.



Witkop rain-control and habitation site



Decorated potsherds from the last 400 years

- **Rock art and markings** of unknown age but incorporating both hunter-gatherer 'San' and Khoekhoen ('Khoi') herder rock arts. The property also has enigmatic 'cupules' – small, semi-spherical hollows ground out into the rock (but not used as grinding hollows); and 'grooves' ground into vertical rock face, usually in horizontal rows.



Left – Khoekhoen finger stripes. Right – San animal and human figure

Grooves in rock face

- **Historic Period** (last 300 years or so). This includes what may be a *Vierkleur* engraved on the Witkop during the Anglo-Boer War, the spring site, some of the stone walling and isolated camps of early travellers and hunters.



Stone walling from last two centuries



Possible Vierkleur flag engraving, Witkop

Do note that this is by no means an exhaustive list of sites on the property as only about 15% of it was surveyed and there are without doubt other sites still to be found, enjoyed and managed in a sustainable way. To this end we will produce a management plan for the sites found, so that guests may be informed of our deep and diverse past in a direct but responsible way.



We commend Zwahili and its staff on their custodianship of this valuable cultural and archaeological heritage, and thank you for supporting research through hosting our fieldschool.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Sven Ouzman". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Sven Ouzman

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