

**A CULTURAL HERITAGE  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
FOR THULAMELA HERITAGE  
SITE**

by

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## SUMMARY

### A CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THULAMELA HERITAGE SITE.

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This mini-thesis serves as an introduction to the drawing up of a Cultural Resource Management (CRM) plan for Thulamela Heritage Site in the Kruger National Park. It is envisaged that this will be a strategy by which Thulamela heritage resources (including natural and cultural elements) will be identified, their significance assessed, and interpretations constructed to guide their conservation and presentation in a manner that is consistent with their availability for public appreciation or enjoyment. Thulamela Project involves the process of locating, assessing, and dealing appropriately with the Thulamela heritage resources which are represented by the physical manifestation of humanity's interaction with the natural world around the site and surrounding landscape of Thulamela.

This thesis will serve as a guideline towards designing a CRM plan for Thulamela Heritage Site that will be practical. Most of the issues here are management plan issues that the KNP should start implementing

in order to preserve and conserve the site for future generations. This study is a result of fieldwork undertaken in the KNP. Problem areas and opportunities are identified. Goals and objectives of a Management Plan for Thulamela Heritage Site are identified and solutions are proposed.

Three appendices have been added at the end of the thesis. These are additional recommendations that can be implemented concurrently with the implementation of the CRM plan. The additions are:

- ❖ Professor Tom Huffman's "*Standard interpretation brochure*". This is a brochure that is intended to be used by Thulamela Tour Guides during trips. It emerged as a result of differing information from different tour guides at Thulamela. The brochure that is attached herewith is still a draft. It will have to be perused and approved by the Thulamela Heritage Site Board of Trustees.
- ❖ The "*Suggested excursion plan or booking system*" for Thulamela. This is designed in order to allow a free flow of tourists to the site.
- ❖ Of most importance is the "*Proposed heritage agreement*" to be reached between the South African National Parks (SANP) and Thulamela Board of Trustees. Other members may be added in the process, depending on the agreement between the two most important key stakeholders.

The KNP is encouraged to evaluate the thesis and decide which issues are to be dealt with as a priority. The author strongly believes that the

implementation of some of the proposals as outlined in this thesis will add value to the preservation and conservation of Thulamela Heritage Site. The thesis will also be helpful to the assessment and management of other heritage sites within the KNP and SANP in general. The document gives the Social Ecology (SE) department the option to utilize the document as it is or to expand it if necessary.

## KEYWORDS

Heritage

Heritage Site

Cultural Resource Management

University

Thulamela

Cultural Resource Management Plan

Significance

Conservation

Preservation

Site

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No less do I thank officials of the KNP, namely Ms Heidi Hansen, CRM Officer in the Kruger National Park for supplying me with relevant literature and assisting me with accommodation during my field trips to the Lowveld and Pafuri area of the Kruger National Park.

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High School, Mhinga Primary School, Maphophe Primary School from Ka-Mhinga village of Chief Mhinga, Ranndogwana High School, Mushiru Primary School from Ha-Lambani village of Chief Mphaphuli and lastly Makuleke Primary School from Ka-Makuleke village of Chief Makuleke.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

In this mini-thesis, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions will apply:

**Archaeological** means material remains resulting from human activity that are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and are older than 60 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features and structures.<sup>1</sup>

**Conservation**, in relation to heritage resources, includes protection, maintenance, preservation and sustainable use of places or objects so as to safeguard their cultural significance.<sup>2</sup>

**Cultural resource** is a broad generic term meaning any physical and spiritual property associated with past and present human use or occupation of the environment, cultural activities and history. The term includes sites, structures, places, natural features and fauna of palaeontological, archaeological, religious, symbolic, or traditional importance to specified groups.<sup>3</sup>

**Cultural Resource Management** is the conservation and selective investigation of prehistoric and historic remains, specifically the development of ways and means, including legislation, to safeguard the past.<sup>4</sup>

**Cultural significance** means possessing historical, archaeological, architectural, technological, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance associated with human activity.<sup>5</sup>

**Development** means any physical intervention, excavation or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of a heritage authority in any way result in a change of the nature, appearance or physical

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<sup>1</sup> National Heritage Resources Act/25/99, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> National Heritage Resources Act/25/99, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> J. Verhoef, *Proposed policy guidelines for Cultural Resource Management in National Parks*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> W. Ashmore and R.J. Sharer, *Discovering our past. A brief introduction to archaeology*, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> ICOMOS New Zealand Charter, *Conservation of places of cultural heritage value*, p. 5.

nature of a place or influence its stability and future well-being, including construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of the place.<sup>6</sup>

**Heritage** is the sum total of wild life and scenic parks, sites of scientific and historical importance, national monuments, historic buildings, works of art, literature and music, oral traditions and collections of their documentation which provide the basis for shared culture and creativity in the arts.<sup>7</sup>

**Heritage site** means a place declared to be a National Heritage Site by the SAHRA or a place declared to be a Provincial Heritage Site by a Provincial Heritage Authority.<sup>8</sup>

**Interpretation** is the process of making the value or significance of an environmental and cultural resource understood. Interpretation is therefore a significant activity in conservation because it is a primary tool for educating the public. It involves the revelation of connections among environmental and cultural resources.<sup>9</sup>

**Maintenance** means the protective care of a place.<sup>10</sup>

**Management** in relation to Heritage Resources management includes the conservation, presentation and improvement of places protected.<sup>11</sup>

**Material** means a physical matter which is the product of human activity or has been modified by human activity.<sup>12</sup>

**Natural Resources** are those resources which did not originate from and are not dependent on human activities. They comprise biological, physical and

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<sup>6</sup> National Heritage Resources Act, 25/1999, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Draft White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage/1996, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> National Heritage Resources Act/25/1999, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> A. Galla, *Heritage interpretation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: draft developmental framework*, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> ICOMOS New Zealand Charter, *Conservation of places of cultural heritage value*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> National Heritage Resources Act/25/1999, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> ICOMOS New Zealand Charter, *Conservation of places of cultural heritage value*, p. 3.

chemical processes and are found in the form of animals, plants, ecosystems, soil, water, air, rocks, minerals, oil and natural gas.<sup>13</sup>

**Natural heritage** means the products of the natural world such as plants, animals, minerals and the landscape that are conserved either in their natural state or as specimens that are preserved for future study.<sup>14</sup>

**Social ecology** is a strategy and process that conveys the philosophy and approach of South African National Parks to neighbouring communities and establishes mutually beneficial dialogues and partnerships with these communities. The process ensures that the views of the community are taken into account as much as possible and acted upon, that any park's existence is a direct benefit to them and, in turn, that the community welcomes the conservation efforts of the SANP. The process is also interdisciplinary, participatory, community oriented and educational in nature. It seeks to facilitate mutually beneficial partnerships between National Parks and neighbouring communities, thus building institutional and community capacity to effectively participate in managing our natural and cultural heritage.<sup>15</sup>

**Preservation** in Museology means the collection, conservation, restoration and documentation of objects and/or information. These objects can either be movable (vehicles, household items, clothing, books, etc) or immovable (structures, buildings, farming lands etc).

**Reconstruction** means to build again in the original form using old or new material.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> R. De Jong, Caring for the earth: Functions, services and productions of the National Cultural History Museum, *Museum memo* 22 (1), March 1994, p. viii.

<sup>14</sup> ACTAG, *Draft proposal for heritage*, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> South African National Parks, *Corporate plan*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> ICOMOS, New Zealand Charter, *Conservation of places of Cultural Heritage Value*, p. 5.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTAG	Arts and Culture Task Group (Heritage)
ARDP	Archaeological Resource Development Programme
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CRM	Cultural Resources Management
COMRASA	Conservation and Management of Rock Art in Southern Africa
FGASA	Field Guiding Association of South Africa
HR	Human Resources
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
KNP	Kruger National Park
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999
NMC	National Monuments Council
NMMZ	National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SANP	South African National Parks
SE	Social Ecology Department in the Kruger National Park
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

#### 1. Evaluation of key sources used

The concept of CRM has proved to be an interesting one throughout the process of the research. It was very clear from the beginning that South Africa does not have enough CRM researchers. Most of the sources used herein were produced by people from Australia, Canada, US and UK. South African academics are concentrating on the rival field of archaeology. In their struggle for supremacy they believe that CRM is a branch of archaeology.

The following key sources were used:

JM. Jacobs and Fay Gale's *Tourism and the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Sites*, was published in September 1985 for the Australian Heritage Commission. It is a handbook that analyzes visitor pressure at selected cultural sites in Australia. The book also prescribes ways of assessing and controlling the kinds of damage caused by the increasing pressure on heritage sites. Although the book has taken its experimental data from Aboriginal art sites in various parts of Australia, many of the issues outlined in the book can be utilized widely in the heritage field. This means that the basic principles in this book are applicable to all heritage sites, be they natural, cultural, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. The book extensively covers tourism and conservation issues of cultural heritage sites, and this has been covered extensively and therefore a very useful source for CRM issues.

A book edited by Myra Shackley, *Visitor Management: Case studies from World Heritage Sites*, is an innovative collection of case studies from around the world. It identifies the problems involved with the management of heritage sites. It emphasizes the fact that cultural heritage sites are extremely attractive

to contemporary visitors, but that at the same time this popularity causes many problems for site management, notably the need to preserve a delicate balance between interpretation, conservation and the provision of visitor facilities. Therefore the book is a valuable source for CRM.

*A rock art Management training manual* is a compilation of a document for the course held at the Matopos National Park (Zimbabwe) in 1999. The course was planned and offered by UNESCO, in conjunction with NMC and NMMZ. The manual provides a guideline for a framework regarding writing a Cultural Resource Management Plan for heritage sites. This plan of this thesis is centred around that framework, which has been used in Australian Heritage Sites for years. It proves to be a very good guideline as it is simple and straightforward. It is a relevant resource for the drawing up of a Cultural Resource Management Plan for heritage Site.

There is also a book entitled *Management guidelines for world cultural heritage sites*, edited by B.M. Feilden and J. Jokilehto. This is the second edition of a book published by ICCROM. The book reconsiders the management guidelines that were first published in 1993. It gives a summary of important principles in the conservation and management of cultural heritage sites in general. Even though this book covers a wide scope in terms of a CRM Plan, it is obvious that alone, it can hardly deal with all possible situations. Key issues in a CRM Plan are covered here, such as a statement of significance, conservation, management, administrative and visitor management issues. Combined with the Rock Art Management manual and a publication by the Heritage Lottery Fund of the UK, *Conservation Plans for Historic Places*, it simplifies the design of a CRM Plan.

Schiffer and Gunnerman's *Conservation Archaeology: A guide for Cultural Resource Management* outlines the CRM as a concept. This book outlines the history of CRM and is a very good start for people interested in CRM as a career.

Professor A. Galla, who is currently a Director of Studies for the Sustainable Heritage Development Programmes at the Research School for Pacific and Asian Studies, Canberra, Australia was of help to the KNP and SANP in general. His three workshop reports were of use to this study: *Cultural heritage and neighbouring communities* and *Thulamela Heritage Project: corporate plan and interpretation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. These three reports have covered all the aspects of a CRM plan that will assist in preserving the site for future generations.

The *Outcomes of the teachers workshop report* compiled by the author is one of the most important documents as it outlines the wishes of an important stakeholder grouping in the development of Thulamela Heritage Site.

Of utmost importance is the Thulamela Research Report written by the contract archaeologist, Sidney Miller, *The Archaeological investigation of the walls and the public presentation of the Thulamela site in the KNP, 1200-1600 AD* and Professor Tom Huffman's *Gold Fields Thulamela Project*. Professor Tom Huffman was Sidney Miller's supervisor during the research work. His report is not as detailed as Miller's. However all the reports provide detailed background on the history of Thulamela and the work done there from the beginning of the developmental phase to the operational phase. Without this background information, it would not be possible to determine the significance of the site, which is the most important aspect of a CRM plan.

The other sources that are not mentioned here are also important. The only difference is that they deal with specific issues in the CRM plan. Without them a CRM plan would not be complete.

## 2. Introduction

Once a site has been selected as a public or open site, different sets of management questions arise. A site chosen for public use must, according to Jacobs and Gale, be equipped with management measures that will ensure that any increase in the number of visitors will have minimum impact on the site.<sup>1</sup> Given the economic factors involved in opening and maintaining a public site, managers must ensure the maximum usage possible within satisfactory limits. Management procedures implemented at cultural heritage sites that experience heavy utilization have varied between sites and over time. At a few places controls are introduced but are often of a rudimentary design, and while they may have protected the site, they seriously impaired the visitor's experience of the site.<sup>2</sup>

Jacobs and Gale contend further that planning for cultural heritage sites must aim to counter not only the pressures arising from large-scale visits to sites, but also the specific behavioural patterns of visitors, such as crowding, unequal use patterns, vandalism, general attrition and souvenir hunting.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted however that the successful management of a cultural heritage site is complex as each site is different, both in terms of the structures on the site and the nature of the visitor usage. The conservation and management of a site often occurs within a broader context of conflicting interests and variable access to adequate management resources.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. M. Jacobs and F. Gale, *Tourism and protection of Aboriginal cultural sites*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Jacobs and F. Gale, *Tourism and protection of Aboriginal cultural sites*, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Jacobs and F. Gale, *Tourism and protection of Aboriginal cultural sites*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> J. M. Jacobs and F. Gale, *Tourism and the protection, of Aboriginal cultural sites*, p. 65.

### 3. Definition of Cultural Resource Management (CRM)

CRM refers to Cultural Heritage, Archaeological Resources Management and Cultural Resources. All the above-mentioned terms are embedded in CRM as a concept, which means that all the terms complement each other.

The term CRM had its formal beginnings in the United States of America.<sup>5</sup> It became a reality when the Antiquities Act was passed in 1906, owing to the urgings of archaeologists who were unhappy about the rapid rate at which cultural remains were being despoiled on public land. This Act protects any “historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the government of the United States”.<sup>6</sup> As a result, CRM evolved in the USA because of the promulgation of Federal historic preservation laws that require the inventorization, assessment and management of cultural resources whenever development occurs on public (Federal) land, with Federal funding or under federal licensing. In this way CRM involves the documentation, assessment, management and sometimes excavation or conservation of irreplaceable cultural resources. These resources include heritage buildings, prehistoric sites, monument sites and even landscapes deemed significant to the public and other communities, including historians, architects and archaeologists.<sup>7</sup>

The concern over the state of preservation of a country’s cultural heritage spread all over the world. Many countries passed legislation against the plundering of this heritage. South Africa was one of the countries that passed some laws that were amended over the years. In South Africa CRM is associated with the inventorization, assessment and management of cultural resources. It is not restricted to state programmes and public land as is the case in America.

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<sup>5</sup> W. Ashmore and R.J. Sharer, *Discover our past: A brief introduction to archaeology*, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> M.B. Schiffer and G.J. Gunneman, *Conservation Archaeology. A guide for cultural resource studies*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> I. Coetzee, *Cultural Resource Management defined*, p. 2.

Contrary to the American course, it was environmental legislation, not culture conservation legislation, to first introduce the concept of taking into account the impact of activities and policies on cultural resources in South Africa. Although the National Monuments Act of 1969 (Act 28 of 1969), provided an important impetus for the introduction of CRM in South Africa, by stipulating that a register of immovable conservation-worthy cultural resources must be compiled and maintained, it was the promulgation of the Environment Conservation Act of 1989 (Act 73 of 1989) that provided a formal mandate for CRM.<sup>8</sup>

In South Africa, cultural resources are also referred to as Heritage Resources. Matero et al have their own view about CRM. To them, Cultural Heritage means both movable and immovable cultural property. They then define Cultural Heritage Management as the planning, direction and conservation of the cultural heritage with the ideological objective of maintaining and establishing cultural continuity and identity. The management of cultural heritage serves an educational function through the preservation and promotion of a culture's history and material property.<sup>9</sup>

The SANP policy defines a Cultural Resource as follows:

A broad generic term meaning any physical and spiritual property associated with past and present human use or occupation of the environment, cultural activities and history. The term also includes sites, structures, places, natural features and fauna of paleontological, archaeological, historical, aesthetic, scientific, architectural, religious, symbolic or traditional importance to specified groups. Cultural resources also include traditional systems of cultural practice, belief or social interaction.<sup>10</sup>

In Canada's parks, the practice of CRM requires that four elements be in place in all decision-making that affect is cultural resources:

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<sup>8</sup> I. Coetzee, Cultural Resource Management defined, *Munivro 8 (1), February*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> F. Matero et al (eds.), *Archaeological site conservation and management. An appraisal of recent trends*, p. 141.

<sup>10</sup> J. Verhoef, *Proposed policy guidelines for cultural resource management in South African National Parks*, p. 1.

- ❖ The inventory of resources.
- ❖ The evaluation of resources to determine which are to be considered as cultural resources and what it is that constitute their historic value.
- ❖ The consideration of historic value in actions affecting conservation and presentation.
- ❖ Monitoring and review to ensure that conservation and presentation objectives continue to be met effectively.

The practice of Cultural Resource Management in Canada provides a framework for decision-making rather than a set of predetermined answers. Its aim is to ensure that the historic character for which resources are valued is identified, recognized, considered and communicated.<sup>11</sup>

It is very clear that the definition of Cultural Resource Management and its use differs from one country to another, according to their particular heritage preservation, planning and environmental management legislations and systems. It seems however that the definition which emerged from the Social Ecology Department of South African National Parks (SE) covers all definitions stipulated above. The SE department defines Cultural Resource Management as the strategy by which Cultural Heritage Resources (including natural elements) are identified, their significance is assessed, and interpretations are constructed to guide their conservation and presentation consistent with their availability for public appreciation or enjoyment and study.<sup>12</sup>

From the definitions given, it is evident that CRM has various objectives. It is also clear that these goals and objectives are difficult to generalize and that they can include but might not be limited to the following:

- ❖ Detection and identification of previously unknown cultural resources and assessment of current cultural resources, to determine whether they are significant.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/library/CIS/english/pcis\\_2\\_1\\_e.htm](http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/library/CIS/english/pcis_2_1_e.htm), 2002-03-15.

<sup>12</sup> A. Galla, *Cultural Heritage and neighbouring communities*. SAMA-National Parks Board Workshop report, p. 6.

- ❖ Planning the most appropriate long-term use of cultural resources and assessment of the risks to cultural resources.
- ❖ Protecting significant heritage resources for the use or enjoyment of present and future generations.
- ❖ Making recommendations as to how to manage, develop or protect those resources.
- ❖ Building and testing predictive models, sometimes called potential models or sensitivity models, to provide a reliable basis on which to design future archaeological surveys.

On the basis of the information provided on CRM, it is evident that different perspectives on the definition of the concept can form the basis for the development of a Cultural Resources Management Plan that could be implemented to safeguard the cultural resources.

#### **4. A Cultural Resource Management Plan**

A Cultural Resource Management Plan is an operational guide for managers at all levels. This plan is often defined as administrative direction or as the control of the elements that make up the physical and social environment of a site, its physical conditions, land use, human visitors and interpretation. Management of a heritage site might be aimed at preservation, or if necessary at minimizing damage or destruction.<sup>13</sup>

In some countries a Cultural Resource Management Plan is interchangeable with Conservation Plans. In this case, a Conservation Plan is a document that explains:

- ❖ Why the asset is significant or has merit.
- ❖ How this significance is vulnerable or sensitive to change.
- ❖ What policies one would adopt for retaining the significance.

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<sup>13</sup> J. Deacon and S. Sullivan (eds.), *Rock art management training manual*, p. 7.

This gives the impression that a Cultural Resource Management Plan should cover every aspect of a site's heritage merit, including associated collections. It is also a valuable tool in managing the day-to-day operations and maintenance of a site and can in addition be used as a baseline against which to evaluate the impact of any new proposals on the heritage merit of the site.<sup>14</sup>

A Cultural Resource Management Plan, as a finalized document, should include the following:

- ❖ The purpose of the plan. This will include a statement of legal responsibility, philosophy and general policy that will be the basis of the plan.
- ❖ A description of how the plan was made, and who was involved.
- ❖ A summary of the physical information about the place and its management history.
- ❖ A statement of significance that should be based on an assessment of the value of the place, and if done properly it will solve some of the decision-making problems commonly encountered in management planning.
- ❖ A summary description of all the management issues: a brief description of key issues.
- ❖ A statement of goals and objectives.
- ❖ The strategies to meet objectives: this will include strategies for conservation, maintenance, and for use including visitor use.
- ❖ Funding resources and the availability of other resources.<sup>15</sup>

In some cases, as this differs from one country to the other, the structure of the plan should amongst others include the following:

- ❖ A definition of the overall significance and character of the heritage site which should be maintained and enhanced, its current management and the planning and policy context of the site.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund, *Conservation plans for historic places*, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> J. Deacon and S. Sullivan (eds.), *Rock Art Management Manual*, p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> C. Blandford Associates, *Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan*, p. 4.

- ❖ The identification of the main issues affecting the physical conservation of the site that needs to be addressed.<sup>17</sup>
- ❖ Suggestions as to how the plan might be implemented and the supporting information provided as Appendices at the end of the Plan.<sup>18</sup>

Although the principles of conservation may be universal, Ndoro argues that the solution for each ruined site depends on the local situation. The nature of the problem also dictates the practical solutions in many cases. It can thus be concluded that the management of cultural heritage sites can be a long-term experiment based on the values that are attached to those sites and how the general public perceive them. The values heritage sites have and the public perceptions are also continuously changing with time.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> C. Blandford Associates, *Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> C. Blandford Associates, *Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> W. Ndoro, The evolution of a Management Policy at Great Zimbabwe, in G. Pitwi (ed.), *Caves, monuments and texts: Zimbabwean archaeology today*, p. 115.

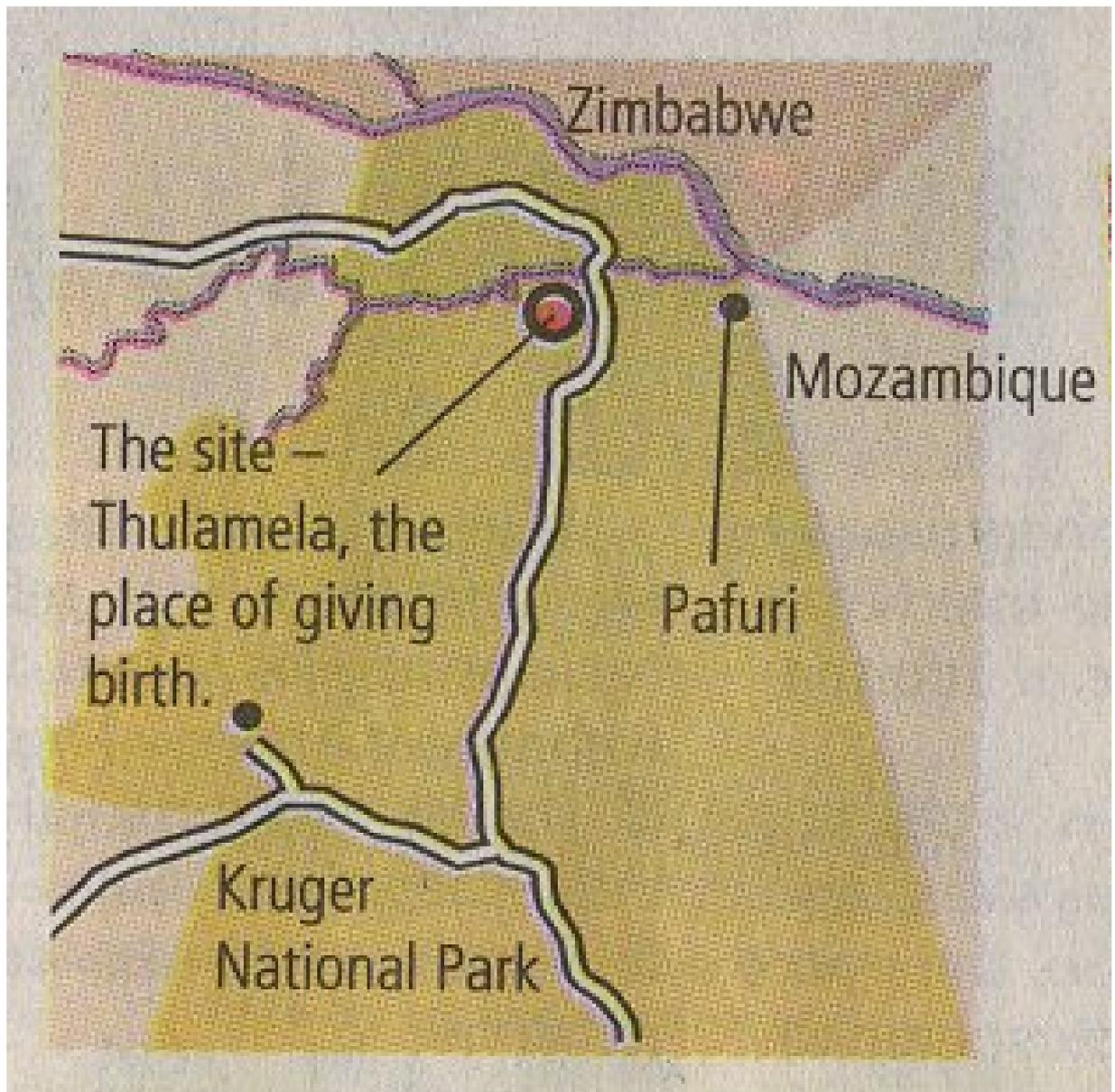


Figure1: A map showing the location of Thulamela Heritage Site  
From: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6398/thulamel.htm>

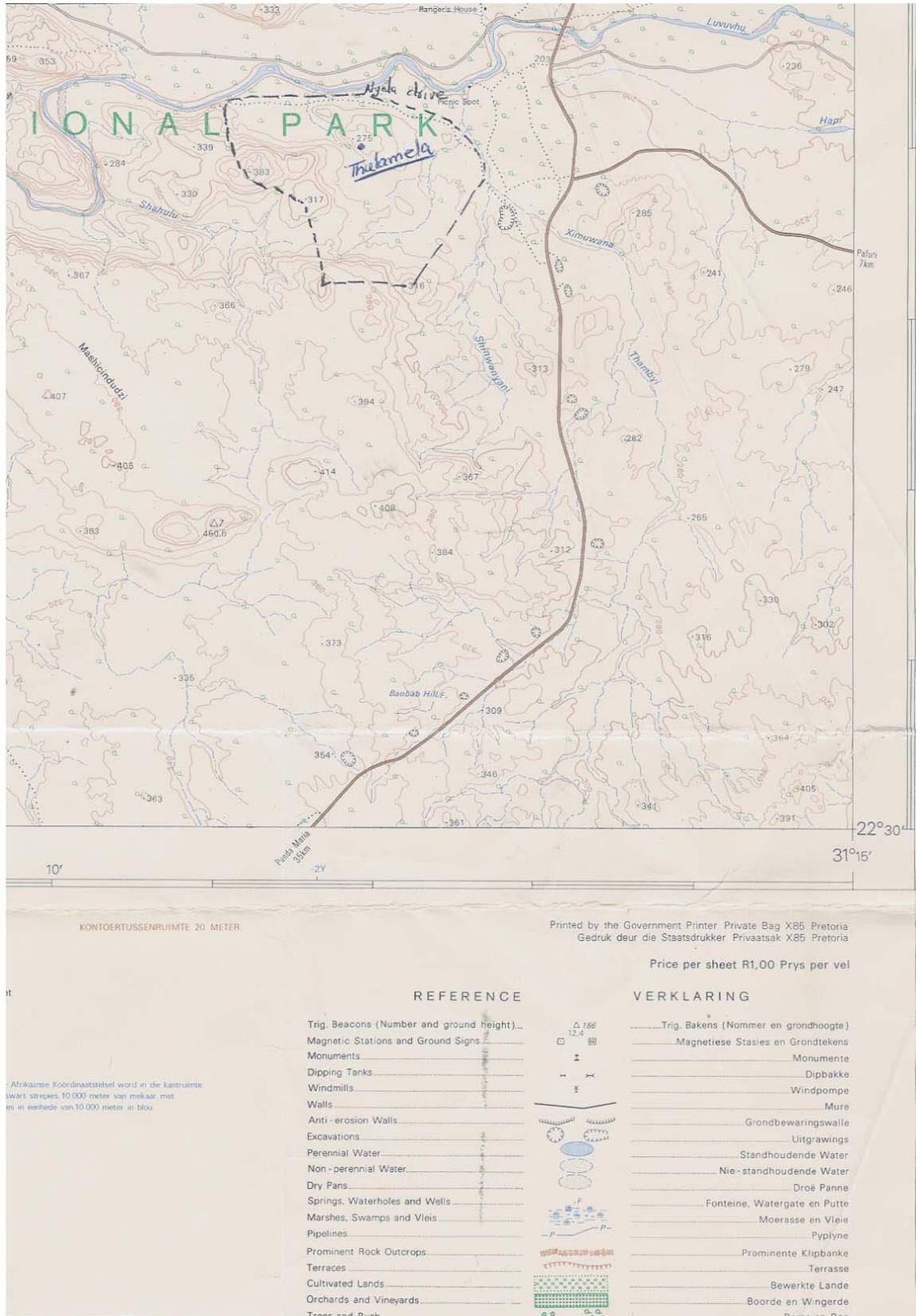


Figure 2: South Africa 1:50 000 Sheet **2231AC MABILIGWE** (3<sup>rd</sup>. ed)  
From: Government Printer, (Mowbray, 1985)

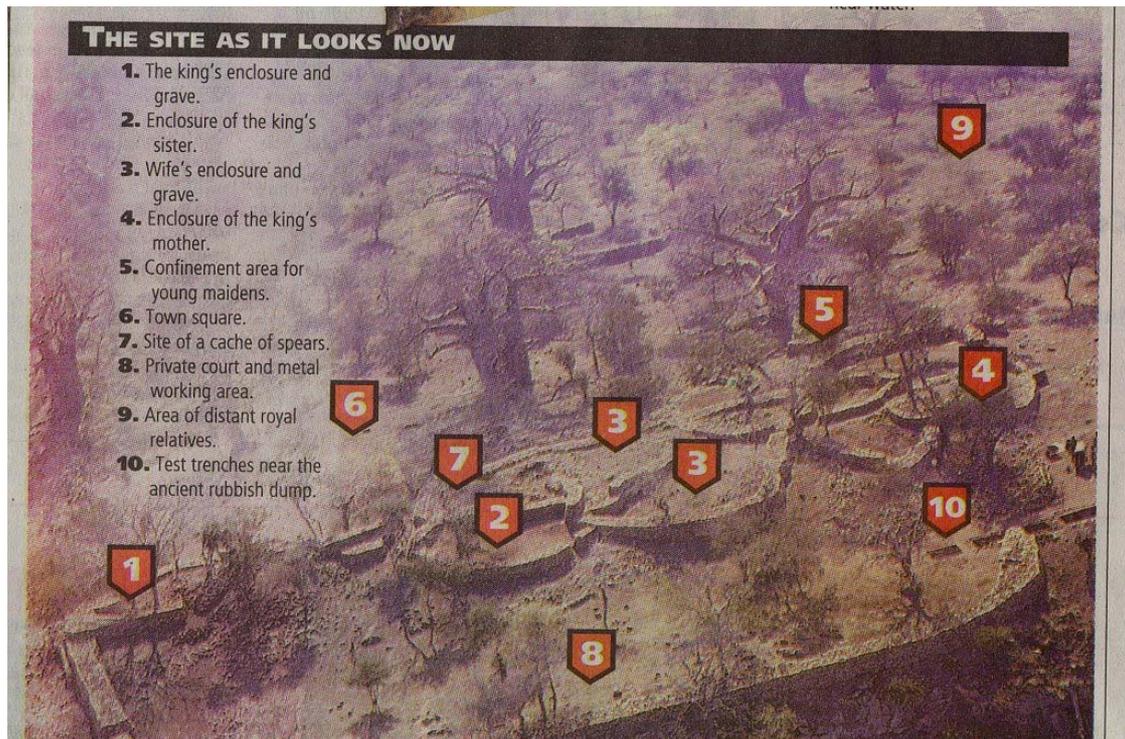


Figure 3: An aerial photograph of Thulamela showing numbered enclosures  
From: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6398/img/lugfoto.jpg>



Fig 4: Aerial photograph of Thulamela during the last phase of excavation  
Photograph: E. Risinger, 17/07/1996

## CHAPTER II

### A CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THULAMELA HERITAGE SITE

#### 1. Background history

The area in which Thulamela Heritage Site is found is Pafuri in the far northern part of the KNP. It is a heritage site on a mountain plateau high above the Luvuvhu River floodplains.<sup>1</sup>

The foundations for the acquisition of this heritage site in the KNP were laid with the establishment of the Sabie Nature reserve in the far south of the park. The Shingwedzi and Pafuri area followed over the years. The formation of the so-called present-day Kruger National Park culminated in 1969 when a long-standing and acrimonious battle for land between the authorities and the Makuleke community in the north ended.<sup>2</sup>

For years the Kruger National Park has been used to attract tourists on the basis of maximum conservation of natural resources and visitors to this territory go there for spiritual inspiration from conservation as it can be experienced in a framework of certain recreational worth. With the emergence of new dispensation in South Africa, that perspective has changed completely. The Kruger National Park also presents a large number of cultural landscapes that the park administration and its Social Ecology Unit wish to rehabilitate. More than 254 cultural sites were identified, which demonstrates that the Kruger National Park is rich in vestiges of the Iron Age that are proofs of a technological mastery spread over nearly 2,000 years. Evidence shows that this technology was accompanied by numerous socio-economic and commercial activities carried out through contacts with neighbouring populations of the Monomotapa empire and with foreign visitors, Arabs and

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<sup>1</sup> J. Verhoef, Thulamela. A case study for cross-cultural communication, in S. van der Merwe (ed.), *Custos*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History*, p. 99.

Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> One such example in the Kruger National Park is the Thulamela Heritage Site.

In 1983, a ranger in the Pafuri area of the Kruger National Park found the remains of dry stonewalls at Thulamela. A few days later, an *in situ* investigation found that the area was probably a Late Iron Age site associated with habitation during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that the Lembetu clan (presently found among the Vendas) have the closest affinity to the Thulamela people.<sup>4</sup> According to Ralushai, a retired professor in Anthropology and Vice Principal of the University of Venda, Thulamela was built by the Nyai of Makahane.<sup>5</sup> This Nyai group is one of the first Venda clans to occupy mountains south of the Limpopo river.

The process to excavate at Thulamela Heritage Site started in 1993. The discovery of the site marked the beginning of a partnership project between the Kruger National Park and neighbouring communities of the Venda and the Tsonga cultural groups. This process led to the establishment of the Thulamela Board of Trustees that comprised members from the four chieftainship areas of the Venda and Tsonga areas ( Mutele-Venda, Makuya-Venda, Mhinga- Tsonga and Mphaphuli-Venda). This group was tasked to oversee the work of the archaeologists, their actions and also to ensure that their respective communities derive maximum benefits from the existence of Thulamela Heritage Site.<sup>6</sup>

Research done at Thulamela reveals that the site was at one stage or another occupied by the ancestors of the Venda and Shangaan cultural groups and between 1200 and 1600 at a time when there was regular contact with traders on the East African Coast. Huffman however, maintains that the excavation work at Thulamela Heritage Site showed that the site history is linked to the

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<sup>3</sup> G. Saouma-Forero (ed), *Synthetic report of the expert meeting of African cultural landscape*, p.10.

<sup>4</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, The reburial of human remains at Thulamela, Kruger National Park, South Africa, in: Fforde, C (et al) , *The dead and their possessions: repatriation in principle, policy and practice*, p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> N.V. Ralushai, *A preliminary report on the early history of Thulamela archaeological site*, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, The reburial of human remains at Thulamela, Kruger National Park, South Africa, in: Fforde, C (et al) , *The dead and their possessions: repatriation in principle, policy and practice*, p. 256.

Zimbabwe Culture. He adds that Thulamela characterizes the Venda specifically. It is pre-Venda, and its affinities are with the Zimbabwe culture, which encompassed the people who later became Venda, while Venda is a specific ethnic expression of the wider cultural tradition. Therefore, the practices of the Zimbabwe culture imply that the Thulamela palace would have had one section reserved for the chief containing his hut and the audience chamber and another section for the Senior Sister.<sup>7</sup>

After the site was discovered and some artefacts uncovered, its fortunes changed completely as the site suddenly became a place of country-wide fascination. For two months, articles about Thulamela appeared almost weekly in the popular press. Tourists as far as Cape Town pester their perplexed guides for information about where they can see Thulamela gold jewellery, which as yet they cannot. There is even a web page on the archaeological proceedings at Thulamela (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6398/>). After the site was officially opened by Dr Pallo Jordan, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. His address to the nation was widely reported. This was the first time a South African archaeological site has been granted such a public acknowledgement of its national importance.<sup>8</sup> Thulamela Heritage Site was earmarked for development into a centre for environmental education in 1990 with the ruins of the archaeological site as a springboard. This project was sponsored by the Goldfields Foundation. According to Sidney Miller archaeological investigation at Thulamela started in May 1993 and continued through to 17 July 1997, when the rebuilding of the fallen walls done.<sup>9</sup> A contract that outlined the objectives of the project was signed between the National Parks Board and the Gold Fields Foundation. The objectives of the project were outlined as specified in the sponsor/ guardian contract to:<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> T.N. Huffman, *The Goldfields Thulamela Project. A report prepared for National Parks Board*, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.uni-ulm.de/~rturrell/antho4html/Miller.html>, 2003-06-21.

<sup>9</sup> S.M. Miller, *The archaeological investigation, the rebuilding of the walls and the public presentation of the Thulamela Site in the Kruger National Park, 1993-1997 AD*, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> S.M. Miller, *The archaeological investigation, the rebuilding of the walls and the public presentation of the Thulamela Site in the Kruger National Park, 1993-1997 AD*, p. 8; J. Verhoef, Thulamela. A case study for cross-cultural communication, in S. van der Merwe (ed.), *Custos. The National Parks magazine*, p. 18.

- ❖ Promote community involvement and participation during all phases, i.e. Research, preservation and interpretation of this dry Stone-walled site.
- ❖ Investigate by means of archaeological excavations (including conservation, preservation and interpretation). The scientific results of these investigations shall underpin the development of the resource.
- ❖ Utilize Thulamela as the kingpin of the Broader Environmental Education Programme for the far north of the Kruger National Park. This will include the development of a series of sites, representative of all cultural periods spanning many years – from the Stone Age to the present times.
- ❖ Market the area as an educational, heritage, scientific and eco-tourism asset.
- ❖ Promote broader scientific investigation and contextualization of related sites in the region - including Mozambique and Zimbabwe, for further enhancement of the historical perspective and educational resource materials.
- ❖ Evaluate the different phases using the method of participation-experience-reflecting-learning-contextualization-adapting.
- ❖ Approach the project in a holistic manner to include both natural and cultural resources and their inter-relatedness over time.
- ❖ Develop an environmental education plan which will emphasize the interaction between past cultures and the Thulamela Environment.
- ❖ Publicise the activities of the Thulamela project among the wider public. To this end the contractor was urged to liaise with staff of the South African Nature Foundation's Communication Division to ensure that the optimal exposure was obtained.

It was also agreed that the project shall be known as the “Gold Fields Thulamela Project” and that this name shall be reflected in all publications,

media releases and interviews arising from the project, endeavouring to acknowledge the sponsorship of the “South African Nature Foundation” and “Gold Fields”.<sup>11</sup>

The research by Sidney Miller brought to light part of the history of the far north region with participation by the representatives of the Venda and Tsonga/Shangaan communities, academic institutions and the National Parks Board. The project was jointly managed and developed. A century before Jan van Riebeeck came to Africa in 1652, the indigenous people of Thulamela mined and traded gold for hundreds of years prior to the influx of Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is reflected by numerous gold objects found at Thulamela.<sup>12</sup> Considering the artefacts uncovered, the people of Thulamela seem to have been skilled goldsmiths and the main currency would have been gold.



Fig. 5: Golden wire around the bones and golden beads on the bones a female skeleton.

From: <http://www.geocites.com/Athens/6398/thulamel.htm>

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<sup>11</sup> S.M. Miller, *The archaeological investigation, the rebuilding of the walls and the public presentation of the Thulamela Site in the Kruger National Park, 1993-1997 AD*, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.geosites.co.za/historicalgold.htm>, 2003-06-21



Fig 6: A photograph of a gold bangle and some 192 gold beads removed from the female human remains at Thulamela

Photograph: Marius Loots, University of Pretoria, 27/06/1996

## 2. Significance of Thulamela Heritage Site

The development of Thulamela Heritage Site and its tourism objectives expose it to dangers of deterioration. In addition the Site has various significances that need to be protected for future generations. The appropriateness and extent to which protection measures can be afforded to a site will depend on the different types of significances that the site holds.<sup>13</sup>

In the first instance Thulamela has a *prehistoric and historical significance* as research work reveals that the site was settled between 1200 -1600. This is argued by Nemahehi in a BBC documentary, when he reveals that the site information will contribute to the reconstruction of South African history which, during the apartheid years, started apparently with the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in the Cape Colony in 1652. There is evidence that Black indigenous people were the first people to occupy the area and South Africa in general

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<sup>13</sup> J. Deacon and S. Sullivan (eds.), *Rock Art Management Training Manual*, p. 17.

which however dispels the above myth. Indigenous Black people were already living in the interior a long time before Van Riebeeck's arrival.<sup>14</sup>

This was supported by the then Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Dr Pallo Jordan, during the official opening of Thulamela Heritage Site on 24 September 1996:

History books always taught that black people had never created anything of worth, which was a lie. Now we can produce evidence that it was untrue. On the foundations of this African civilisation we will build a better future for all South Africans. Our true origins have been captured by Thulamela and not by colonialism which was just a passing phase in our history.<sup>15</sup>

Thulamela also possesses *Religious significance* in the sense that there are monoliths in and around the confinement enclosure. This is the place where pregnant wives of the king and other respected people in the village were confined. The monoliths are believed to be symbolic spears raised skywards, invoking the protection of the ancestral spirits for the future leaders, the children. This is argued by Nemaheni who, as chief organiser of the reburial function (see below), found it strange when some of the local communities did not want to be associated with the remains of people they were not related to. A Shangaan traditional doctor was requested by the community forum to conduct rituals before the function. To many people's amazement, after throwing the bones on the ground, the traditional doctor, Ms German Mabasa, announced that Thulamela Heritage Site belonged to the Venda people. She also urged the Makahane Community to continue with the rituals on a yearly basis.<sup>16</sup>

This traditional ceremony was held when Thulamela was introduced to the public, in order to appease the ancestors and to request their blessing of the place before its being used by the public.

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<sup>14</sup> H.L. Gates, *Into Africa: Lost Cities of the South* (BBC Version-documentary) 1999.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/1996/news0925>, 2003-06-21.

<sup>16</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, The reburial of human remains at Thulamela, Kruger National Park, South Africa, in: Fforde, C et al (eds.) , *The Dead and their Possessions: Repatriation in principle, policy and practice*, p. 258.

An *educational significance* is also attached to the site as schools and institutions of higher learning nationally and internationally visit the site on a regular basis. The Social Ecology Department of the Kruger National Park commissioned the Archaeological Resource Development Programme of the University of the Witwatersrand to develop educational materials for the teachers in schools bordering the Pafuri area of the Kruger National Park. The rationale behind these educational materials development was to enable teachers to include the site of Thulamela and the prehistory of the area in their curriculum. In doing so, teachers would introduce learners to the social and natural history of the area in a way that would promote notions of heritage and pride in the cultural and natural landscape of the present.<sup>17</sup>

During the developmental phase an Environmental Education Committee was formed. Its main aim was to see to it that the educational aspect of the project was addressed in its development through the use of oral history. This oral history, coupled with scientific investigations, provided the sound understanding of the history and culture of Thulamela.

Thulamela is also an extraordinarily important site, not just because of the inherent historical interest of the reconstructed ruins themselves, but also because they epitomise an entirely new approach to heritage resources on state-owned land. With the extensive community consultations that took place during the reconstruction of this project, it is celebrated as the centre of the cultural hub of the far northern region of the Limpopo Province<sup>18</sup>. During the official opening of the site and the reburial functions, traditional dances were performed. According to the teachers' workshop held in July 2002, it is rare to find Venda chiefs practising the Thulamela culture. To the teachers, Thulamela resembles African tradition in the sense that safety and security are embodied in a form of settlement pattern in which royalty reside on top of the hills for security purposes while commoners live below.<sup>19</sup> This is a common picture at Thulamela and it reflects the rich cultural planning of the Iron Age period. The

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.wits.ac.za/science/archaeology/ardp/thula.html>, 2003-06-21.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.uwc.ac.za/arts/english/lamp/projects.html>, 2003-06-21.

<sup>19</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 4.

visibility of the granary, burial patterns and arrangement of enclosures of the royal settlement is culturally enriching.

*Political significance:* The fact that when the project was started problems arose between Venda and Shangaan cultural groups is a political issue, the value of which should not be separated from the political landscape of the area. There were people who wanted to use the story of Thulamela to further their political agendas. Thulamela Heritage Site, however, also served as a reconciliatory project between the Venda and Shangaan cultural groups. After the arguments about the ownership of the site began, these two groups have learnt to work together. A good example is the renaming of the Greater Thohoyandou Local government to Thulamela Municipality that covers both the Venda and the Shangaan cultural groups.<sup>20</sup>

*Economic significance:* Thulamela has an economic potential because it generates income for the Kruger National Park and the local communities. There are two established craft markets at Punda Maria Gate and Masisi village. When international tourists visit Thulamela they extend their visits by going to the local communities where they buy local products.<sup>21</sup>

*Social significance:* The site has social significance because it is strengthening the relationship between the Venda and the Shangaan cultural groups. It also serves as the meeting point of the two cultures, for example during the reburial function and the official opening of the site by the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Dr Pallo Jordan.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of Teachers Workshop Report*, P. 3.

<sup>22</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of Teachers Workshop Report*, P. 4.



Fig 7: Makahane Royal family members cleans the burial area of Thulamela chief.

Photograph: A.L. Luula, 16/05/1998

*Natural significance:* The Thulamela landscape is unique in the sense that it has trees that bear edible fruits such as the Baobab trees. The original Thulamela people could have utilized the Baobab fruits. There are also other medicinal plants such as the Buffalo thorn,<sup>23</sup> that was used to treat ailing individuals and domestic animals. This shows that the Thulamela people interacted harmoniously with nature and they used it sustainably, which is why these plants are still available in and around the Thulamela landscape.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Jacana Education, *Kruger National Park. Find it*, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> T.I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of Teachers Workshop Report*, P. 4.

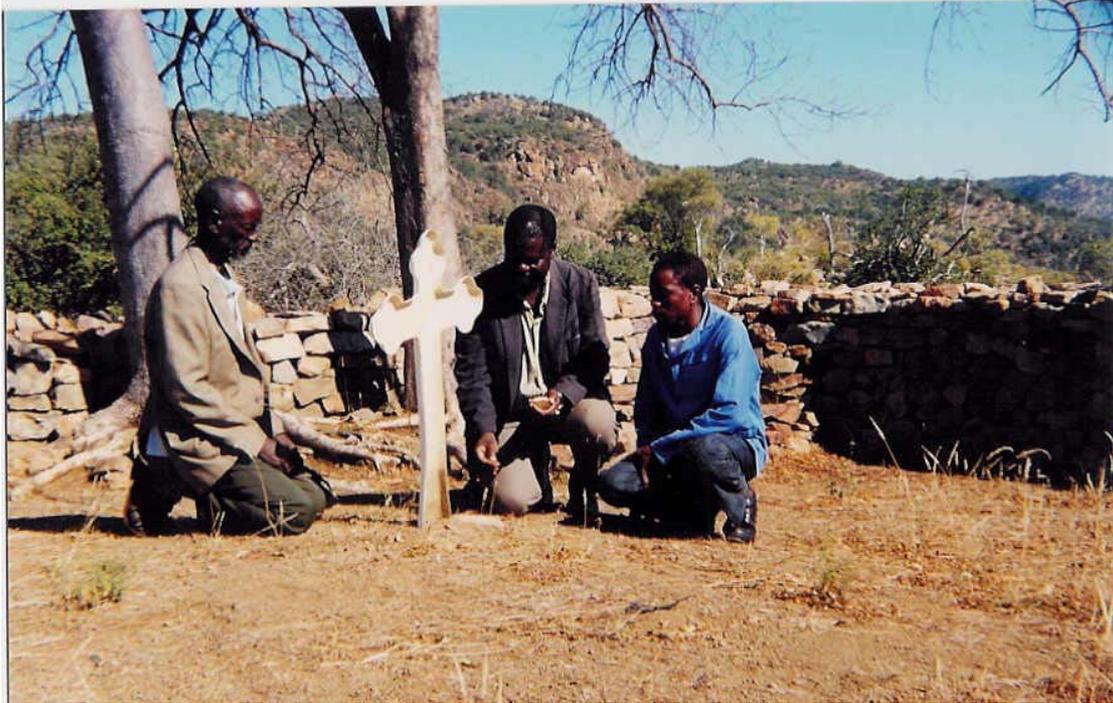


Fig 6: Makahane royal family members performing rituals on site  
Photograph: A.L. Luula, 16/ 05/ 1998, KNP employee

### 3. Goals and objectives

Statements of goals and objectives express what is needed as the outcome of the future management of the site. Goals and objectives are worked out by considering the cultural significance of the site, the main issues affecting its management and what people want for the community. Statements of goals should aim to preserve Thulamela Heritage Site. They should be broad and built upon agreement between interest groups. Goals are long-term while objectives are short-term and more specific.<sup>25</sup>

#### 3.1 Goals

The Thulamela Heritage Site will be managed as follows:

- 3.1.1. To conserve and enhance the cultural continuity of traditional rituals associated with the site.

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<sup>25</sup> J. Deacon and S. Sullivan (eds.), *Rock Art Management Training Manual*, p. 121.

- 3.1.2 To promote awareness and knowledge about the site to visitors, local communities and all interested parties at large.
- 3.1.3 To promote mutual understanding and cooperation among stakeholders regarding the site.
- 3.1.4 To increase people's knowledge of conservation and the content of heritage conservation.
- 3.1.5 To improve the socio-economic status of the surrounding communities.
- 3.1.6 To promote educational opportunities for all local schools in the western border of the far northern region of the Kruger National Park. The areas referred to are Giyani, Thohoyandou, Malamulele, Mutale and Vhembe District in general.

### 3.2 Objectives

The objectives for managing Thulamela Heritage Site are as follows:

- 3.2.1 To have measurably improved the administration, visitor management and presentation of the site so as to achieve the protection, conservation and preservation of Thulamela Heritage Site.
- 3.2.2 To have ensured the safe keeping and the physical and cultural conservation of the site.
- 3.2.3 The research work to be done at Thulamela Heritage Site should conform to the standards set by the South African National Heritage Resources Agency Act No 25 of 1999 (NHRA) and the National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998 (NEMA).

#### 4. Challenges and strategies to manage Thulamela Heritage Site

This is the most important section of the management plan. Problem areas are identified and strategies are deal with these problems or issues are outlined. The condition of the site as it is now and the management issues and strategies are dealt with. Conclusions are drawn regarding management issues by formulating recommendations for the general management of the site.<sup>26</sup>

In July 1997 Thulamela Heritage Site was officially introduced to the public in a two-pronged process. This involved the traditional ceremony and the official opening. The traditional ceremony was held on 20 July 1997 with the local chiefs and local community members, to appease the ancestors and to request their blessing on the place before its use by the public. Rituals were performed at Thulamela, inside the chief's enclosure. These were performed only by the elders of both Venda and Tsonga cultural groups. The traditional function was then held at Pafuri Picnic Spot, where traditional beer was served and traditional dances performed. A week after the traditional ceremony, on 27 July 1997, the site was officially opened, with, among others, dignitaries of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Defence and Limpopo Government.

When Thulamela was officially opened, no strategies were put in place to prevent it from being exposed to threats such as tourist, natural, management, and animal damages. Some of the concerns that existed in 1993 are still as relevant today. Because no management plan was put in place, little was done in order to manage the site in an acceptable manner.

##### 4.1 Conservation

Conservation, as it is, is an essential part of the management process. Therefore the theory that guides conservation actions must be understood and used by a multidisciplinary management team.<sup>27</sup> Conservation is also seen as the first requirement of site management. Once this requirement is fulfilled, the

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<sup>26</sup> J. Deacon and S. Sullivan, *Rock Art Management Training Manual*, p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> B.M. Feilden and J. Jokilehto, *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites*, p. 2.

site can be used for a number of other purposes such as education, research, and tourism.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Inventory report

The site has been researched since 1993. Tourism has been permitted since 27 July 1999 and the site was surveyed by the then National Monuments Council (now South African Heritage Resources Agency) and yet there is no inventory report about the finds discovered during the developmental phase of the project<sup>29</sup>. The Thulamela Manager is unable to manage the site because there is no record of the previous state of the site.<sup>30</sup>

The Kruger National Park should draw Terms of reference for the appointment of a consultant to develop a detailed inventory of the site. The contract archaeologist who worked on site may be available to serve as a consultant for a specific period.<sup>31</sup> The Kruger National Park should also use the University of Venda's Archaeology Department in an effort to train the previously disadvantaged students and to capacitate local black archaeologists in the field. The National Cultural History Museum could assist with professional training in keeping records. They always do this consultancy work at a cost.

#### 4.1.2 Rehabilitation and excavations

The most widely reported risk to heritage sites like Thulamela is the lack of maintenance and conservation of *in situ* excavated remains. Damage to archaeological heritage is almost certain when excavated cultural features are left exposed without any management plan or resources for their protection, conservation or management. Sub-surface structures and artefacts generally deteriorate very rapidly when exposed to new environmental conditions above

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<sup>28</sup> B. Feilden and J. Jokilehto, *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites*, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Personal information: A. Galla, Lecturer, National University of Australia, Canberra, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Personal information: L. R. Seani, Interpretive officer, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2002-07-18.

<sup>31</sup> Personal information: A. L. Luula, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2002-07-18.

ground. The impacts range from physical deterioration – such as the cracking and spalling of monumental stone structures and the weathering and crumbling of mud features – to the erosion and slumping of unexcavated cultural layers, as well as vandalism and looting. The consequences include the destruction of the features that are excavated, together with damage to unexcavated evidence.<sup>32</sup>

After the exposition of human remains at Thulamela Heritage Site, some underground artefacts and the audience chamber, a decision was taken that they should be rehabilitated. Rehabilitation of this area was done selectively, but what is lacking is photographs of the excavation period and a display of the area during the excavation period. Those excavation areas that are not rehabilitated are deteriorating rapidly.

The Kruger National Park should request the Archaeology Department of the University of Venda to assist with the rehabilitation of the site. This work can be funded by the South African Heritage Resources Agency, Limpopo region as they do have access to lottery funding. ( **add more**)

#### 4.1.3 Permits for excavation

In order to excavate a site, an archaeologist needs to obtain a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.<sup>33</sup> During the excavation at Thulamela, the students did not have permits to excavate. It was only research supervisors who were permitted to excavate. The same applies to local people who were assisting the contract archaeologist. In most cases these people were left alone in the absence of their supervisors, for a day or two while digging.

There is only one way to deal with this issue. The Kruger National Park, South African Heritage Resources Agency and respective agency should sign a

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/2001/icahtm2001.htm>, 2003-06-21

<sup>33</sup> National Heritage Resources Act/25/1999, p. 74.

memorandum of understanding in order to foster the the South African Heritage Resources Act.

#### 4.1.4 Nomination of Thulamela as a National Monument

Basic work to declare Thulamela Heritage Site a National Monument was done by National Monuments Council and Kruger National Park before the establishment of SAHRA. What remains now is the finalization of this declaration through the newly established South African Heritage Resources Agency. Should this happen according to the National Heritage Resources Act/25/1999 the site will be protected against any developmental intervention. The area to be declared a national monument was surveyed and peg marks were placed in demarcated areas (see the topographical map that is attached). The demarcated area map is at the provincial office of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).<sup>34</sup>

The Kruger National Park should initiate communications with the South African Heritage Resources Agency in order to revive the issue. SAHRA is in a position to assist in completing the process that has already been initiated.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.1.5 Physical Conservation of Thulamela Heritage Site

Every summer, dry-stone walls at Thulamela fall down because of rain.<sup>36</sup> Baboons and rabbits also disturb the walls.<sup>37</sup> Plants that grow in between rocks also cause stonewalls to fall. Soil erosion next to dry-stone walls basements affects the walls badly.<sup>38</sup> The hut floor in the eastern corner of the

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<sup>34</sup> Personal information: M. Silidi, Cultural officer, South African Heritage Resources Agency, Limpopo, 2003-03-15.

<sup>35</sup> Personal information: M. Silidi, Cultural officer, South African Heritage Resources Agency, Limpopo, 2002-08-15.

<sup>36</sup> Personal information: E. Maluleke, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2002-07-18.

<sup>37</sup> Personal information: E. Maluleke, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2002-07-18.

<sup>38</sup> Personal information: E. Mahada, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2001-10-12.

walls is exposed to deterioration in the sense that no rehabilitation was done after excavations. The enclosure for court officials is always vulnerable to elephants that damage the Baobab tree and pass through the small entrance. The best solution is for the Thulamela Heritage Site Management Team to draw up yearly monitoring programme.<sup>39</sup> Assistance from Great Zimbabwe National Monument should be sought by the Kruger National Park. Develop a visitor management strategy that will take into account the carrying capacity of the site as regards tourists. Draw up annual work plans on the basis of management planning, programming and budgeting. Suitable experts must be selected to advise on the work plan and to assist in its execution. A site commission, the main responsibility of which will be to conserve and manage the site should be established. For proper management of the site, there should be a routine schedule that will include, daily tasks, weekly tasks, monthly tasks, quarterly tasks, seasonal tasks and annual tasks. The scheduled routine should also have flexibility in order to allow emergency situations to be tackled promptly, such as: after heavy rain, after high winds, after fire, floods or other natural disasters.

The best way to discourage litter is to immediately pick up any that is dropped. Litre bins at the parking area at Thulamela and Pafuri Picnic Site should be emptied regularly and parking lots should be kept clean.

#### 4.1.6 Vulnerability of artefacts on the ground surface

Tourists and school children still pick up artefacts from the surface on site without being warned by the guides.

The South African National Heritage Resources Act, 25 (1999), protects artefacts from being picked up by tourists and Field Rangers. Furthermore, Thulamela Interpreters should convince the tourists and school children not to damage the site. In order to maximise this Thulamela Guides should be trained on the South Africa Heritage Resources Act.

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<sup>39</sup> Personal information: E. Mahada, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, 2000-12-10.

## 4.2 Presentation and interpretation issues

### 4.2.1 Site identification/ Signage and directions

Thulamela is envisaged as a tourist attraction heritage site in the far northern region of the Kruger National Park. Surprisingly there is a complete lack of signage that shows directions to Thulamela Heritage Site. There are many cases of people who became lost while trying to access Thulamela Heritage Site.

The Marketing Department of the South African National Parks, in conjunction with the National Cultural History Museum in Pretoria, should map the Thulamela Environment and develop environmental friendly signage.

### 4.2.2 Standard Interpretation

The information on site interpretation is very limited. Professor Tom Huffman of the University of the Witwatersrand prepared a standard document for interpretation of the site in 1999. The document was not utilized nor updated. No more information brochures were developed to attract tourists and students, both locally and internationally.<sup>40</sup> In addition, Bunn has recognized that over a period of three years of visiting Thulamela, there have been significant changes in the way the site is narrated.<sup>41</sup>

A draft standard interpretation document drawn by Professor Tom Huffman of the University is available. The Kruger National Park should submit this document to the Board of Trustees for assessment and approval before utilising it as a standard interpretation document.<sup>42</sup>

### 4.2.3 Museum to house Thulamela materials

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<sup>40</sup> Personal information: A. L. Luula, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2002-10-19.

<sup>41</sup> D. Bunn, From Crook's Corner to Thulamela, in: Dladla, Y (ed.), *Voices, Values and Identities Symposium*, Kruger National Park, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> Personal information: T.J. Ramovha, Trustee, Thulamela Board of Trustees, Kruger National Park, 1999-06-15.

It was the wish of the Thulamela Board of Trustees and the Thulamela that once excavation was finished, all the artefacts uncovered from Thulamela Heritage Site would be repatriated to the northern region of the Kruger National Park where they would be interpreted in a museum through display and verbal interpretation.<sup>43</sup> This museum is not yet in place and the communities are disparately waiting for this opportunity to arise.

The Kruger National Park, in collaboration with the Thulamela Board of Trustees should source funding from international organisations for the building of a museum.

#### 4.2.4 Language

Interpretation on site is done in Tshivenda, English and Tsonga. However all the documents published thus far are in English only.

The South African National Parks should develop information materials in many different world languages for marketing purposes.<sup>44</sup> Local languages like Tshivenda and Xitsonga are included as well.

#### 4.2.5 Integrated heritage interpretation

Much of Thulamela interpretation is historic narration of the site rather than social and natural interpretation. It does not include a holistic approach of interpretation of the Pafuri and Thulamela landscape.<sup>45</sup>

The Cultural Resource Management Unit of the Kruger National should develop an integrated heritage interpretation plan.

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<sup>43</sup> Personal information: M. G. Ligege, Trustee, Thulamela Board of Trustees, Kruger National Park, 2000-05-25.

<sup>44</sup> Personal information: R. P. Chauke, Senior Social Ecologist, Kruger National Park, 2001-05-16.

<sup>45</sup> Personal information: E.S. Mhlongo, General Manager Social Ecology Department, Kruger National Park, 1999-06-15.



Fig 8: North Western University students (USA) glaring at Thulamela  
Photograph: Tshimangadzo Nemaheni, 05/09/1999



Fig 10: Nemaheni interpreting the story of Thulamela to North Western University students (USA)  
Photograph: Dr. D. Bunn, 05/09/1999

### 4.3 Visitor management issues

#### 4.3.1 Frequency of visitors

Since Thulamela was opened to the public on 27 July 1997, tourists did not and still do not visit the site as frequently as it was or is expected and the situation does not seem to be improving.<sup>46</sup> One of the reason is that the local communities are not going to the site<sup>47</sup>. Not even a single week has been fully booked and the average number of people (apart from school tours) visiting the area is between 2 and 5 per week. Thulamela is therefore operating at a loss.

In order to alleviate this problem, the South African National Parks' Marketing Department should develop a marketing strategy in order to attract both local and international tourists to the site. In the mean time, the Social Ecology Department staff should go out and familiarise Thulamela Heritage Site to the neighbouring communities.

At the same time the Kruger National Park should determine the actual visitor-carrying capacity of the site and its surrounding. A visitor management strategy that will take into account the carrying capacity of the site as regards tourists. Free entry for spiritual purposes should be allowed. A comprehensive Conservation policy framework that will inform the Cultural Resource Management Policy.

#### 4.3.2 Booking system

The booking system for tours of Thulamela is in a state of confusion. The problem is that this system is managed by two people: the Punda Maria Rest Camp Manager and the Social Ecology Interpretive officer. In most cases, confusion occurs. Tour Guides take leave without the knowledge of the camp manager and at some stages they cancel the bookings without informing anyone and when tourists go to the site only to find out that there are no tour guides it always become a mess. Tourists frequently find themselves stranded

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<sup>46</sup> Personal information: A. L. Luula, Tour Guide, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2000-10-15.

<sup>47</sup> Personal Communication: W. Ntlemo, Punda Maria Camp Manager, Kruger National Park, 2001-05-10.

because of the disorganized booking system. Because of this state of confusion unqualified students who are doing their apprenticeship for the Nature Conservation Diplomas are thrown into the deep end of interpreting what they do not know or understand. At times payments are made only after the tours have taken place.

***(Booking system attached)***

#### 4.3.3 Tourist facilities

There is a lack of facilities for visitors to rest when it is hot. The only possible place, is the court area under the big Baobab tree, which becomes chaotic when school groups take tours to the site. They are scattered all over the area and this always make students and tourists become uncontrollable.<sup>48</sup>

The Kruger National Park should develop a training plan for their guides in order to deal with these chaotic situations. Apart from that facilities that are not going to damage the site should be built in order to control the tourists.

#### 4.3.4 Founding of a Museum

The current situation at Thulamela is that people go there to see dry-stone walls and nothing else. The lack of a museum is one factor that contributes to low tourist statistics for and another is the fact that when school groups book to go to Thulamela, they are tempted to go further to Shingwedzi and Letaba tourist camps.

The Kruger National Park Management and the Board of Trustees should utilise the Norwegian government funding to build a museum that will include an interpretation centre.

#### 4.3.5 Communication systems

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<sup>48</sup> Personal information: A. Galla, Lecturer, National University of Australia, Canberra, 1998-08-25.

The Thulamela Heritage Site Tour guides do not have a communication system that can help them in case of danger when they are with tourists. They cannot even communicate with the nearest resident ranger. On the other hand, tourists feel that the risk clause in the Kruger National Park and Thulamela indemnity forms does not protect them and they feel that the Kruger National Park does not want to be responsible. The risk clause put all risks to tourists for entering the Kruger National Park and that if anything unbecoming happens to them, the Kruger National Park won't be liable.<sup>49</sup>

The ThulamelaTour Guides should be provided with two-way radios for communication. In case of danger, they should be able to communicate with the Pafuri resident ranger and the Punda Maria tourist camp.<sup>50</sup> In case of the risk clause, it should be reviewed.

#### **4.4 Public participation**

##### **4.4.1 Community benefits**

Currently Thulamela Heritage Site belongs to the Kruger National Park. There is no community ownership of it. There are also no community benefits strategies developed that will ensure that local communities derive maximum benefits.<sup>51</sup> Accessibility to the site is limited to foreign and white tourists because they have money. Most local people are unemployed and they do not have money.<sup>52</sup> The Board of Trustees established in 1999 is not yet fully registered. This prevents them from gaining the lion's share of the profits made out of Thulamela activities. Twice a local company printed merchandise in the form of T-Shirts. The printing has now ceased. Only the Kruger National Park has benefited from the sales.

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<sup>49</sup> Personal information: D. Munzhelele, Teacher, Fhetani High School, Mutele Village, 2002-07-18.

<sup>50</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> Personal Information: J. Muleka, Teacher, Maphophe Primary School, Mhinga Village, 2002-07-18.

<sup>52</sup> Personal Information: J. Muleka, Teacher, Maphophe Primary School, Mhinga Village, 2002-07-18.

No active arts and craft centres are operating in the name of Thulamela. The arts and craft centre in Punda Maria is an initiative of the Hlanganani Forum while the Dishume Art and Craft Centre is an initiative of the Thulamela activities. It is evident that community participation in any kind of development is the key factor in the success of the developmental process of any project.

Field Guiding has become an important field in the tourism industry. At Thulamela it has the status of a noble profession, and people from the local communities envy field guides as well.<sup>53</sup> Heritage Day celebrations are held yearly throughout the country. Kruger National Park has never celebrated this day, which is important and rated highly by the international community. Thulamela has never celebrated this day either.

The South African National Parks (Kruger National Park in particular) should be able to involve local communities through the Thulamela Heritage Site Board of Trustees. They should also organise the celebrations of National Heritage Day annually.<sup>54</sup>

In order to promote Thulamela Heritage Site as a place that should be visited by the various sections of the local communities and for them to participate fully in the development and management of the site, the Kruger National Park should develop a travelling exhibition of the Thulamela environment for the local communities and beyond. Thulamela Heritage Site should continue to be advertised in the local media network, including newspapers, TV, mass meetings, posters and brochures in all community spaces. The campaign should be coordinated by the Marketing Department of the South African National Parks. The local communities should be allowed to develop and sell Thulamela merchandise.

The Kruger National Park should

#### 4.4.2 Entrance fees

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<sup>53</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Personal information: H. P. Chauke, Social Ecologist, Punda Maria, Kruger National Park, 2002-10-10.

Currently, all local schools, communities, and church groups, on educational tours do not pay at the entrance gate to KNP or to Thulamela. This means that all schools are treated equally.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately there is no well-documented strategy for local people in this regard.

The South African National Parks should develop a strategy through which local communities can benefit from profits made at Thulamela.

## 4.5 Education

### 4.5.1 Educational activities

Currently Thulamela educational activities are taking place at Thulamela Heritage Site and Punda Maria tourist camp. Those that are taking place at Punda Maria are not entirely connected to Thulamela, but to the entire northern region of the Kruger National Park.<sup>56</sup>

Some schools book for Thulamela Tours, but end up in Shingwedzi and Letaba in the name of Thulamela Heritage Site. This is due to the fact that there is not enough space where they could gather for educational activities.<sup>57</sup>

The Kruger National Park should use the initial contract signed between South African National Parks and Goldfields Foundation. The contract stipulated that Thulamela will have to serve as a linch-pin to a broader environmental aspect in the far north region of the Kruger National Park. In addition, the Kruger National Park should speed up the process of building a museum that will include an interpretation for the school kids. About R1m was funded by the Norwegian Government. This budget could be utilised for this course.

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<sup>55</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Personal information: L. R. Seani, Interpretive officer, Thulamela Heritage Site, Kruger National Park, 2000-07-19.

<sup>57</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 7.



Fig 11: Nemaheni taking notes for the development of Thulamela educational materials  
From: <http://www.wits.ac.za/science/archaeology/ardp/thula.html>

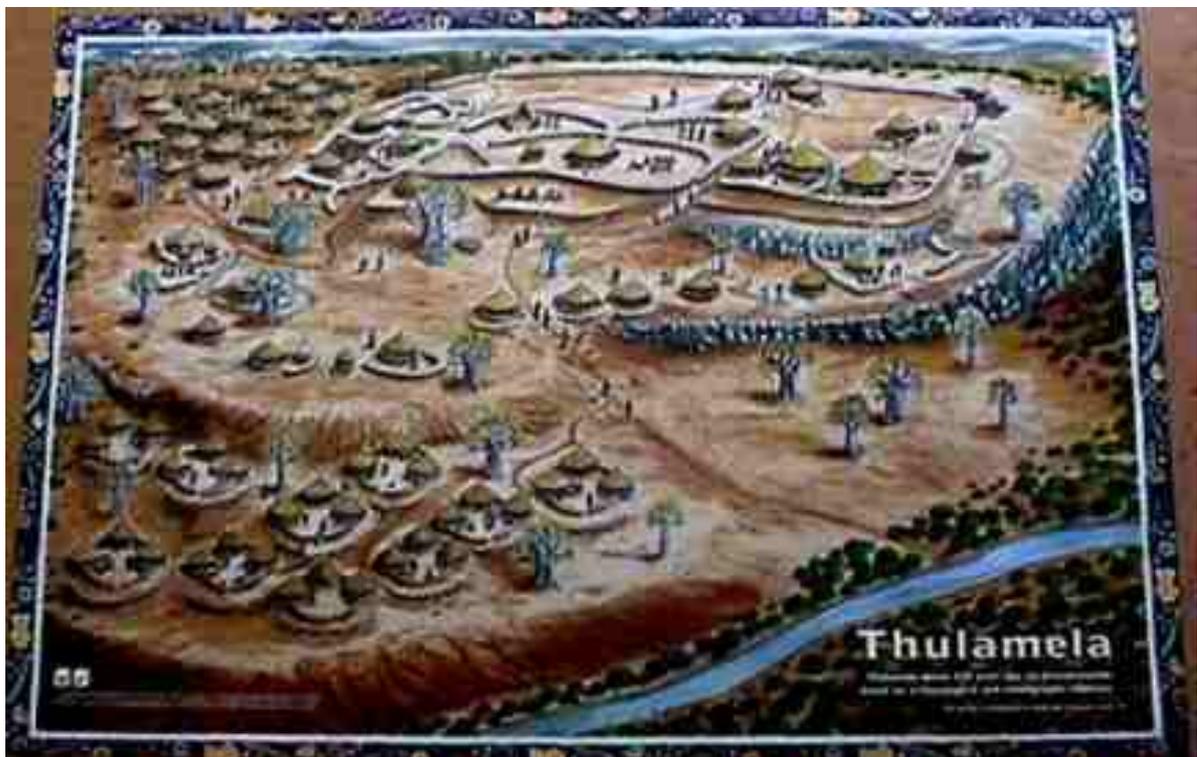
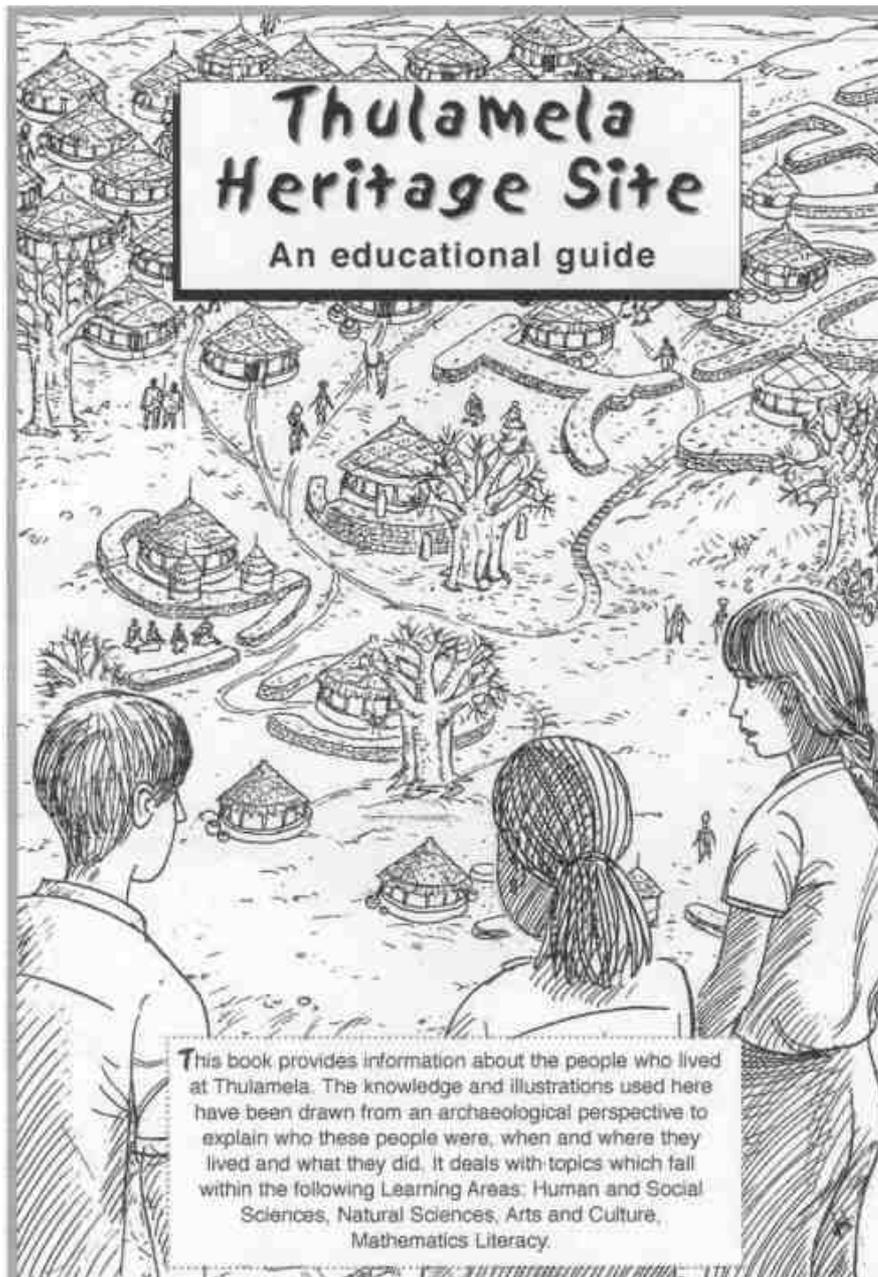


Figure 12: A poster that accompanies the educational guide for Thulamela  
From: <http://www.wits.ac.za/science/archaeology/ardp/thula.html>



# Thulamela Heritage Site

An educational guide

This book provides information about the people who lived at Thulamela. The knowledge and illustrations used here have been drawn from an archaeological perspective to explain who these people were, when and where they lived and what they did. It deals with topics which fall within the following Learning Areas: Human and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Arts and Culture, Mathematics Literacy.

Fig 13: Thulamela educational guide cover  
From: <http://www.wits.ac.za/science/archaeology/ardp/thula.html>

### 4.5.3 Educational materials

Educational materials for Thulamela Heritage Site were produced in 1999, but have not been finalized. Schools are still waiting to be able to use these educational materials.<sup>58</sup>

The Kruger National Park, in collaboration with the Department of Education in Limpopo and Wits University's Educational Archaeology programme should review the educational materials and approve them for printing and distribution to schools. This will maximise the culture of learning in archaeology and heritage studies in the Limpopo province.

## 4.6 Administration and general management issues

### 4.6.1 Tours and tour guiding management

Apart from the confusion mentioned above in managing the activities of the Thulamela Guides and the booking system, unqualified Nature Conservation students find themselves guiding tourists through Thulamela Heritage Site. This is done because there is a shortage of tour guides to take tourists to Thulamela on a daily basis. Like the tour guides, these students do not have formal training in heritage interpretation.<sup>59</sup> In most cases, tour guides take tourists payments on site and it happens that some funds disappear without clear information.<sup>60</sup>

In order to provide good service to the tourists, the Kruger National Park should send these tour guides for attachments to Great Zimbabwe National Monument and Khami ruins in Zimbabwe for training. It should also be noted that without a system in place, tour guides will continue to operate loosely. In

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<sup>58</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Personal information: R.P. Chauke, Senior Social Ecologist, Kruger National Park, 2001-05-16.

<sup>60</sup> Personal information: W. Ntlemo, Punda Maria Camp Manager, Kruger National Park, 2002-10-13.

order to avoid this kind of situation, a well thought booking system should be developed and implemented. In the mean time, disciplinary measures for the proper running of their tours in general, should be put in place. Most importantly more tour guides from the local communities should be employed.<sup>61</sup>

## **4.7 Research issues**

### 4.7.1 Information

When Thulamela Heritage Site was excavated, not all areas were exposed. The information available is not the final truth concerning the site. There are more secrets lying underground. The current information available for Thulamela is still sketchy. In order to get more information further research should be undertaken.

### 4.7.2 Local universities

Previous research work done at Thulamela was led by other Universities like Witwatersrand and Pretoria. Universities in the Limpopo Province such as Venda and North played minimal roles.

Local universities of Venda and Limpopo should be encouraged to contribute to the shaping of the history of the far northern region.

## **4.8 Safety risk**

### 4.8.1 Safety audit

Thulamela Heritage Site is found in a wilderness area where no safety audit of wildlife on access roads and in parking areas has been done. Nature Conservation Division of the KNP personnel should execute this responsibility.

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<sup>61</sup> Personal information: R.P. Chauke, Senior Social Ecologist, Kruger National Park, 2001-05-16.

#### 4.8.2 Safety on Site

Visiting Thulamela is a risk for school-going children and other tourists because Thulamela guides do not provide them with water, first aid kits or food at the Pafuri Picnic Site.<sup>62</sup> The Thulamela tour guides should be trained to deal with these safety risk issues in order to safeguard the tourists on site.

### 4.9 Training issues

#### 4.9.1 Unqualified staff component

The current staff of the Social Ecology Unit of the Kruger National Park are not trained heritage specialists. Also, none of the Thulamela staff component is a heritage specialist.

South Africa now has plenty of Heritage Education Training Institutions for both full-time and distance learning students. The Kruger National Park should therefore seek assistance from institutions like the Universities of Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Western Cape for in-house heritage management training.

#### 4.9.2 Field Ranger Training

Thulamela Heritage Site is not fenced in. It is in the Kruger National Park where dangerous animals like elephants, leopards and lions wonder around as they wish. As Thulamela Guides are taking tourists around they are exposed to these dangerous animals. None of the Thulamela Staff has attended Field Ranger Training course.

It is therefore important that the Kruger National Park uses its HR training budget for this cause.

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<sup>62</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 8.

## **4.10 Accessibility**

### 4.10.1 Disabled persons

In all the meetings and workshops that were held regarding the development of Thulamela Heritage Site, nothing was said about disabled people being able to access Thulamela Heritage Site. There is also no provision for the blind.<sup>63</sup>

Alternative route for all the disabled should be established. Explanatory brail reading should be set up on site.

### 4.3.1 Access roads

Access roads to Thulamela Heritage Site, where tours start, are completely unmarked.<sup>64</sup> In order to avoid embarrassment from the tourists, signage in and around Thulamela Heritage Site should be erected.

## **4.11 Strategies to manage Thulamela Heritage Site**

This section will be devoted to introducing strategies (Key result areas) for administration, maintenance, physical conservation, visitor management and interpretation. These strategies are designed to achieve the aims and objectives of preserving the significances of Thulamela Heritage Site for future generations.

### 4.11.1 Conservation strategy

To conserve the significant heritage values embodied in Thulamela Heritage Site and the surrounding landscape by developing ways of conserving the heritage significances of the site and the surrounding landscape through a stakeholder community-driven management process.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> T. I. Nemaheni, *Outcomes of a Teachers Workshop Report*, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> A. Galla, *Thulamela Heritage Project: Draft Corporate Plan*, p. 1.

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Determine the actual visitor-carrying capacity of the site and its surroundings.
- ❖ Develop a monitoring programme for the maintenance of the site.
- ❖ Develop a comprehensive conservation policy framework that will inform the Cultural Resource Management Policy.

#### 4.11.2 Thulamela local communities marketing strategy

To promote Thulamela Heritage Site as a place that should be visited by the various sections of the local communities. This will be done to encourage these communities to participate fully in the development and management of the site.<sup>66</sup>

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Develop a travelling exhibition of the Thulamela environment for the local communities and beyond.
- ❖ Continue to advertise Thulamela in the local media network, including newspapers, TV, mass meetings, posters and brochures in all community spaces. This campaign should be coordinated by the Marketing Department of the South African National Parks.
- ❖ Develop and reprint Thulamela merchandise for local businesses and the Thulamela Board of Trustees, who are struggling to make ends meet in managing their day-to-day activities.

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<sup>66</sup> A. Galla, *Thulamela Heritage Project: Draft Corporate Plan*, p. 2.

The Kruger National Park should, as a matter of priority, develop strategic partnerships with the Thulamela community and public sector agencies to organize special events, meetings, festivals and conferences.

- ❖ Of special importance is to plan and organize Heritage Day Celebrations that take place on 24 September annually.
- ❖ Organise two visits to Thulamela by politicians and business people in the Limpopo Province.

#### 4.11.3 Presentation, education and interpretation strategy

To communicate the values of significance embedded in the Thulamela Environment to diverse audiences or publics ranging from local school children to international visitors.<sup>67</sup>

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Advise Thulamela Board of Trustees to establish a subcommittee on Thulamela interpretation. This will lead to the development of a Thulamela Interpretation Plan.
- ❖ Evaluate existing information on the site.
- ❖ Develop a communication strategy through interpretation signage, detailed maps and sketch plans.
- ❖ In order to revive the site, the local communities, in conjunction with the Social Ecology Division, should arrange activities through performances and drama.
- ❖ The existing heritage interpreters or Tour Guides should be trained.
- ❖ Tour Guides should interact with other educators in the Limpopo Province in the development of curricular and educational materials.

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<sup>67</sup> A. Galla, *Thulamela Project: Draft Corporate Plan*, p. 3.

#### 4.11.4 Training strategy

The aim is to create an effective community participation programme for the development and management of Thulamela that will bring people and parks together by establishing a community membership base with the necessary skills and competencies for the development and management of the site.

The most important method is the guided tour. It is the oldest of all interpretation techniques. The guide requires a natural flair and enthusiasm for the job as well as considerable experience in talking to parties of people of different ages and interests. A good guide can be inspiring and a poor one can quickly extinguish any spark of interest.<sup>68</sup>

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Develop a projection of the numbers, functions and levels of staff, volunteers and the Community Forum for the next two years.
- ❖ Conduct the Skills audit work required for the development of Thulamela Heritage Site. This should include the projected numbers of personnel, both paid and unpaid.
- ❖ Appoint trained staff and train more where needed, provide in-service training for employees ensure employment of personnel with adequate skills who are from the local communities and provide the necessary training to build their capacity.
- ❖ Train and employ local community guides for Thulamela Heritage Site and also consider their language proficiency in Tshivenda and Tsonga.
- ❖ Establish an integrated education and education programme for employees through distance education or modular delivery combined with workplace skills development. This can be done through the University of Pretoria and Technikon South Africa.

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<sup>68</sup> T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museum Basics*, p. 77.

- ❖ Embark on professional development measures by way of study tours to other Southern African countries such as Zimbabwe, starting with the existing Thulamela Tour Guides.
- ❖ Evaluate the performance of the candidates and the trainers on a regular basis.

#### 4.11.5 Cultural product development strategy

To develop the diverse cultural products of the far northern part of the KNP manufactured by the neighbouring communities and to see to their effective marketing through the Thulamela Project. The Social Ecology Unit should assist the Thulamela Board of Trustees to conduct a cultural mapping exercise and then develop a cultural Plan for product development and marketing through Thulamela Project.<sup>69</sup>

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Market Thulamela as a responsible, community-based cultural tourism product.
- ❖ Develop Pafuri Picnic spot as a selling point for community cultural products of the Hlanganani and Dishume Art and Craft Associations.
- ❖ Consider the establishment of a Section 21 Company for cultural product development by the Board of Trustees, as a commercialization pilot programme for the National Parks Board.
- ❖ Promote and profile Arts and Crafts from the neighbouring communities through travelling exhibits and other media.
- ❖ Develop newsletters, souvenirs, publications, calendars, Thulamela information booklets, cards, Thulamela stationery with locally hand-made paper and designs.

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<sup>69</sup> A. Galla, *Thulamela Project: Draft Corporate Plan*, p. 5.

- ❖ Establish an annual cultural festival and an environmental festival surrounding Thulamela Heritage Site. Heritage Day celebrations would be an ideal time for this.

#### 4.11.6 Policy development strategy

To continuously develop policies that will inform all aspects of the development of the Thulamela Heritage Site.

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Identify policy development for senior citizens, young people and toddlers.
- ❖ Develop an admission policy that takes into account access and equity concerns.
- ❖ Develop an environmental policy that includes the management of flora and fauna at Thulamela within the framework of the visitor management strategy.
- ❖ Develop a tourism policy that covers: ensuring security, accommodation, access times, visitor management strategies, festivals and special events (proposed booking system attached as appendix).
- ❖ Develop Community heritage policy that puts community living heritage and history at the centre of development.
- ❖ Develop a policy concerning community capacity-building including, employment, education and training and a fair search recruitment policy.
- ❖ Draw up a policy regarding research, development and planning.

#### 4.11.7 Visitor management strategy

The impact of tourism on Thulamela Heritage Site could within a short space of time become a concern. Growth within this sector should be tempered by the

need to ensure that the natural and the cultural resources are not placed at risk.<sup>70</sup>

Strategic activities:

- ❖ Counts of visitor numbers.
- ❖ Self-administered questionnaire.
- ❖ Interview-administered questionnaire.
- ❖ Direct management strategies: Because Thulamela has already been chosen for public use, it must be equipped with management measures which will ensure that any increase in the number of visitors will have the minimum impact on the site.
- ❖ An innovative management strategy should include advance bookings, a limited tourist season, limited daily opening hours, a restriction on group sizes and the number of groups to be admitted in a day.
- ❖ In order to ease the pressure of large-scale visits, the car park at Pafuri Picnic Spot should be extended and signage should be placed there.
- ❖ There should be control along the pathway to the site.
- ❖ Tour Guides should avoid overcrowding in this heritage site.
- ❖ A physical barrier should be constructed around the house floor exposed on the ruins.

In general terms, it is believed that it is the significance of a heritage site that will act as a magnet for visitors, meaning that all issues of accessibility, transport, accommodation and other service provision have to be tactfully dealt

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<sup>70</sup> J.M. Jacobs and F. Gale, *Tourism and the Protection of Aboriginal Cultural Sites*, p. 3.

with in order to avoid swamping the site with commercial outlets while still providing for visitor needs.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> M. Shackley, *Visitor Management: Case Studies from World Heritage Sites*, p. 8.

## CHAPTER III

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PRIORITIES AND CONCLUSION

For Thulamela Heritage Site Cultural Resource Management Plan to be a success important key issues have been identified and a proposed Business Plan designed for the Social Ecology Division to implement. It is Social Ecology's prerogative to decide when they the action planning as proposed should be implemented. This business Plan should be implemented in order to move Thulamela Heritage Site to another level of management.

TASK	COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Appoint two local people and train them as tour guides.	R50000-00	Consultant
Training and assessment of current Tour Guides. This should include exposure trips to the Great Zimbabwe and Khami Ruins in Zimbabwe.	R60 000-00	Consultant
Building of six single quarters for Thulamela Tour Guides and volunteers.	R300 000-00	Kruger National Park
Organize and celebrate Heritage Day.	R200 000-00	Interpretive Officer Tour Guides. SANP Marketing
Finalize interpretive brochure	R100 000-00	Marketing and Communications.
Finalize Thulamela Educational Materials	R500 000	Social Ecology & Marketing and Communications and Regional

TASK	COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
		Manager.
Buying of one vehicle for tourists to Thulamela.	300 000-00	Regional Manager
Construction of a selling point for local communities' arts and craft work at Pafuri Picnic Site.	R50 000-00	Regional Manager
Reprinting of Thulamela T-Shirts by Ba-phalaborwa Foundation.	R500 000	Service providers
Designing of a travelling exhibition for the local communities and for major events	R200 000-00	Marketing and Tourism
Advertise Thulamela to local media networks including newspapers, TV, mass meetings, posters and brochures in all community spaces.	R500 000-00	Marketing and Communications
Organise two report-back meetings for the community forum through Thulamela Heritage Site open days.	R150 000-00	Social Ecology
Organise three visits to Thulamela by politicians, business people and church leaders.	R15 000-00	Social Ecology
Develop signage that will direct tourists to Thulamela Heritage Site.	R10 000-00	Regional Manager
Take all trainees through a First Aid Training Course	R50 000-00	Regional Ranger
<b>TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:</b>	<b>R2 985 000-00</b>	

**Table 1:** Financial implications of priorities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Thulamela Cultural Resource Management Plan was developed by a process that involved consultation with the management of the site, site description, site analysis and identification of threats and opportunities. These were followed by the development of recommended strategic activities to achieve the stated objectives and an allocation of responsibilities and costs.

Key strategic areas were identified as important to the preservation of Thulamela Heritage Site. It is here that site sensitivities are indicated and threats are outlined together with suggested approaches to solve the problems.

The main text is followed by appendices that outline the international best practice on various aspects of the management of a site of national and international stature. These include: a booking system for the tours, standard interpretation information for tour guides and a proposed Heritage Agreement that should be agreed upon by the parties that the Kruger National Park deems appropriate.

## APPENDIX 1

### PROPOSED HERITAGE AGREEMENTS

#### 1. Introduction

According to the South African Heritage Resources Act:

SAHRA, or a provincial heritage resources authority may negotiate and agree with a provincial authority, local authority, conservation body, person or community for the execution of a heritage agreement to provide for the conservation, improvement or presentation of a clearly defined heritage resource: provided that the consent of the owner of such resource must be given.<sup>1</sup>

Such a heritage agreement must be in the form of a binding contract and may provide for:

- ❖ The maintenance and management of the place;
- ❖ The security of the place and the duties of any person who may be employed in connection herewith;
- ❖ The occupation or use of the place by the owner or otherwise;
- ❖ The restriction of the right of the owner or occupier to perform certain acts on or near the place;
- ❖ The access facilities for the public and for persons deputed by the guardian to inspect or maintain the place;
- ❖ The presentation of the place;
- ❖ Notice to be given to the guardian in case the owner intends to offer the land on which the place is situated for sale, lease or other disposal, and the right to be reserved to the guardian to have first refusal of such sale, lease or other disposal;

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<sup>1</sup> National Heritage Resources Act/25/1999, p. 69.

- ❖ The payment of any expenses incurred by the owner or by the guardian in connection with the maintenance of the place;
- ❖ Any other matter connected with the protection or management of the place which is agreed to by the owner and the guardian;
- ❖ The procedure for the resolution of any dispute arising out of the agreement.

## **2. Preamble of a proposed Thulamela Heritage Site Agreement**

- A. Thulamela Heritage Site is acknowledged as a place of significance to the nation and the KNP is the custodian of this heritage resource.
- B. Thulamela Heritage Site in the Kruger National Park has special national significance and has been identified and categorized as a Grade 1 Heritage Resource in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act section 7.
- C. SAHRA is to establish national principles, standards and policy for the identification, recording and management of the national estate in terms of which heritage resources authorities and other relevant bodies must function with respect to the South African Heritage Resources Act, coordinate the management of national estates by all agencies of the state and other bodies and monitor their activities to ensure that they comply with national principles, standards and policy for heritage resources.
- D. In terms of Section 42(1)(a) of the NHRA, SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority may negotiate and agree with a provincial authority, local authority, conservation body, person or community regarding the execution of a heritage agreement to provide for the conservation, improvement or presentation of a clearly defined heritage resource: provided that the consent of the owner of such a resource must be given.
- E. The South African National Parks has, in terms of the National Parks Act, been delegated the responsibility for the conservation and management of all cultural heritage sites in the Kruger National Park.

F. The provisions of the NHRA specifically include archaeological and National Heritage Sites as part of the South African National estate, as described in section 3 of the NHRA.

G. The parties wish to implement this heritage agreement in terms of the NHRA, in such a manner as to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ To retain and conserve the significance of the Thulamela Heritage Site.
- ❖ To encourage appropriate use of the site, interpretation, education and tourism, and
- ❖ To ensure the conservation and total protection of the site.

### **3. The significance of Thulamela Heritage Site**

The significance of Thulamela Heritage Site is set out in Chapter 1 of the Cultural Resource Management Plan (attached hereto).

### **4. The parties accordingly agree as follows:**

#### **4.1. Definitions and Interpretations**

In this Agreement and the preamble above, unless the context requires otherwise:

- ❖ “Access” means the legal right to enter the Kruger National Park and Thulamela Heritage Site.
- ❖ “This agreement” means this Agreement.
- ❖ “the National Heritage Site” means the Thulamela National Heritage Site.
- ❖ “managing Agent” means the party responsible for the conservation, presentation and improvement of the National Heritage Site.
- ❖ “the Landowner” means the Kruger National Park.

- ❖ “NHRA” means the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999.
- ❖ “the permit” means a permit issued by SAHRA to the excavator in terms of sections 35 and 48 of the NHRA.
- ❖ “SAHRA” means the South African Heritage Resources Agency, a government agency established in terms of the NHRA.
- ❖ “tourists” means visitors who are required to pay a fee to enter and visit the National Heritage Site, excluding excavators or their colleagues, students and their employees.
- ❖ This agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the Republic of South Africa.

#### **4.2. Cultural Resources Management Plan**

- ❖ The Kruger National Park shall in consultation with the Thulamela Board of Trustees and at the cost of the Kruger National Park draw up a Management Plan for Thulamela Heritage Site to ensure its conservation and retain its significance (Management Plan is attached herewith).
- ❖ The Management Plan will stipulate terms of management and maintenance of the National Heritage Site.
- ❖ The parties agree that the activities of all parties to this Agreement shall be carried out in accordance with the Management Plan.
- ❖ The parties to this Agreement shall appoint from among themselves a site supervisor or heritage inspector, to execute and ensure compliance with the Management Plan.

#### **4.3. Access and maintenance**

- ❖ The landowner shall grant access to the Board of Trustees, SAHRA, excavators, and tourists on the terms and conditions set out in the management plan.

- ❖ In the event that the access road is damaged, it will be repaired by the landowner.

#### **4.4. Liability for damage, loss and injury**

- ❖ SAHRA will take the responsibility of inspecting the National Heritage Site on a quarterly basis in conjunction with Kruger National Park's Heritage officers.
- ❖ SAHRA will indicate on the permit issued to excavators that they must take measures to ensure the safety of any person who may enter the National Heritage Site.
- ❖ The KNP undertakes and confirms that as a tourism operator, the KNP will be responsible for the safety of the tourists entering a National Heritage Site.
- ❖ The parties acknowledge that all artefacts found on the National Heritage Site are the property of the State in terms of the Act and may not be sold, exported or donated to any third party.
- ❖ In order to regulate such scientific research, excavations and projects SAHRA shall, in terms of the Act, be entitled after consultation and upon written approval by the landowner to grant an excavating permit to a suitably qualified person.
- ❖ The KNP and the Board of Trustees have the right to discuss with SAHRA appropriate conditions that may be added to the permit.
- ❖ SAHRA may withdraw an excavating permit at any time and will inform the Thulamela Board of Trustees and the landowner of this action.
- ❖ The current excavating permits (if there are any) will be appended to and will form part of this Agreement.
- ❖ In case of further research at Thulamela Heritage Site, scientific research, excavations and projects may only be undertaken by the excavator or

excavators whose name or names appear on the permit issued by SAHRA in terms of Section 35 of the NHRA or by a colleague, student or employee under the direct supervision of the excavator or excavators whose name or names appear on the permit issued by SAHRA.

- ❖ The parties agree and SAHRA undertakes that the permit will make provision for the following: The licensed excavator shall be responsible for the activities and impacts of all colleagues, students and employees under his supervision and for their compliance with the terms of this Agreement, the Management Plan and the excavating permit; the permit will require that all licensed excavators, including colleagues, visitors, students and employees under their supervision, must carry documents of identification indicating their right to be on the National Heritage Site; the permit will stipulate that the licensed excavator and the institution designated by SAHRA to curate the material recovered are fully responsible to SAHRA for the permanent safe-keeping of all artefacts in a condition that allows ongoing research; KNP and Board of Trustees may visit and inspect any aspects of the National Heritage Site at any time to ensure compliance with this Agreement, the Management Plan and relevant legislation.

#### **4.5. Tourism**

- ❖ A tourism operator may, with the consent of the landowner, be contracted by Kruger National Park to operate at a National Heritage Site.
- ❖ The landowner may allow tourists to visit the National Heritage Site and may derive an income there-from or he may appoint a Tourism Operator to conduct tourism operations on his behalf.
- ❖ All Tour Guides will be trained and qualified to a standard deemed satisfactory by the parties to this agreement. The trained staff will be subject to regular monitoring, so that their reliable interpretation should lead to good business.

- ❖ All facilities will be maintained at a standard satisfactory to all parties to this Agreement.

#### **4.6. Conservation and presentation**

- ❖ The parties agree to conserve the natural, cultural and historical resources and overall environment as stipulated in the Management Plan.
- ❖ All parties will be responsible for any litter, pollution or disturbance created by themselves and those for whom they are responsible.
- ❖ Costs of cleaning, clearing or restoring damage to the dry-stone walls and the environment will be borne by Kruger National Park.
- ❖ Presentation of the site, including signage and information boards, shall be subject to the approval of all the parties.

#### **4.7. Inspection, monitoring and reporting**

- ❖ Kruger National Park and SAHRA will jointly appoint inspectors to monitor the National Heritage Site and confirm compliance with this Agreement and the Management Plan on a quarterly basis.
- ❖ SAHRA may appoint heritage inspectors and will inspect the site on a regular basis.

#### **4.8. Notices**

Any notices to be given in terms of this Agreement shall be in writing and delivered by hand during ordinary business hours or posted by prepaid registered post or dispatched by facsimile during normal business hours to the addresses mentioned hereunder:

- SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY - NATIONAL OFFICE
- KRUGER NATIONAL PARK - SKUKUZA

c) THULAMELA BOARD OF TRUSTEES - PUNDA MARIA

**4.9. Entire Agreement**

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and save as otherwise expressly provided no modification, amendment or waiver of any of the provisions of this Agreement or any agreement to cancel or terminate shall be effective unless made in writing specifically referring to this Agreement and duly signed by the parties:

Signatures:

**SANP..... and**

**SAHRA.....**

## APPENDIX 2

### EXCURSION PLAN TO THULAMELA HERITAGE SITE

In order to avoid management problems, the following booking system for a Thulamela excursion is proposed:

Aim: To provide a guided tour and experience of the far North of the Kruger National Park to tourists and school groups, using Thulamela as the focal point.

1. Starting point: It is proposed that the Thulamela excursion start at the Pafuri Picnic Site. This means that the Kruger National Park should devise a means of relocating the Tour Guides to Pafuri, either WNLA, Section Ranger's workers village or Pafuri Gate. This will be cost-effective as they will not need to drive 140km from Punda Maria to guide one or two tourists.
2. Tour Guides: Thulamela Heritage Hite has one tour guide and one assistant tour guide as well as an Interpretive officer to whom the guides report. For Thulamela tours to be a success, the Kruger National Park should appoint two further local people and train them as tour guides for the site. The Kruger National Park should consider training more local people as volunteers who could take tourists to the site. Nature Conservation students who come to do practicals at Thulamela should receive vigorous training to provide tourists with value for money.
3. Times for the tours: It is proposed that due to the high temperatures in the Pafuri area, there should be at least two excursions for the tourists per day, one in the morning (7:00 to 10:00 during summer, 8:00 to 11:00 during winter) and the last one from 12:00 to 15:00. School groups are encouraged to take morning tours as they should have ample time to be guided through the northern region of the park.
4. Number of people per trip: In order to conserve the site for future generations the number of tourists and school groups should be limited. School groups should be limited to 30 per group. A group of more than 30

learners should not be allowed at all as this will endanger the integrity of the site. General tourists should be limited to 15 people per tour. The Kruger National Park should consider introducing a minimum number of people to be taken on a tour and this should be strictly enforced. In case where there are no tours to the site, the Tour Guides should be kept busy by the interpretive officer in the Northern Region of the Kruger National Park.

5. Transport: It is unsatisfactory when tourists drive their own cars to Thulamela Heritage Site. They are disadvantaged in not receiving any interpretation of natural resources along the way to Thulamela Heritage Site. The Kruger National Park, through the Punda Maria Camp Manager and the Regional ranger, is advised to buy a vehicle that will accommodate enough people to be taken on a guided tour. School groups can be taken by bus to the site. While one group is touring the site, another group could be taken to WNLA and Mozambique border.
6. Frequency of trips: Seven days a week.
7. Guides Management: Punda Maria Camp Manager. He/she should manage their activities except for the content of interpretation, which should be the responsibility of the interpretation officer.
8. Payments: The Kruger National Park should structure the payments to such an extent that school groups should pay as low an amount as possible. Local communities and school groups should be encouraged to enter the Kruger National Park free and pay at Thulamela. Other schools should pay at both. Foreign tourists should pay according to the foreign exchange rate for their currency.
9. School groups: Should not be allowed to visit the site during Saturdays and other school holidays.
10. Marketing: The Department of Marketing and Communication in the Kruger National Park should

## APPENDIX 3

### PROPOSED STANDARD INTERPRETATION BROCHURE FOR GUIDES

Thulamela is one of about 10 known stone-walled Zimbabwe capitals in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The Zimbabwe Culture is an archaeological name for a society that was stratified into commoner and noble classes. A noble ruler's power was based in part on a direct connection to royal ancestors who could intercede with God for the fertility of the land and its people. Archaeologists call this "sacred leadership"

The Zimbabwe culture was the product of Shona-speaking people who became immensely wealthy from the East Coast gold and ivory trade. It was also the centre of an extensive trade within Southern Africa for items such as salt, copper, tin and iron objects.

#### History

The Zimbabwe culture evolved between 1000 and 1200 in the Limpopo Valley west of Thulamela, where present-day Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa meet. The capital was located around a hill now called Mapungubwe.

At about 1300 the climate changed and the upper Limpopo Valley had to be abandoned. Some Mapungubwe people moved into the Soutpansberg, and their distinctive pottery has been found under the walls of Thulamela.

With the abandonment of Mapungubwe, trade and power shifted to Great Zimbabwe, near present-day Masvingo. Great Zimbabwe remained the largest and most important capital until its abandonment between about 1420 and 1450.

At this time, several Zimbabwe chiefs moved with their people south across the Limpopo. The Lembetu clan was one of these groups. Over the course of time they built two stone-walled capitals: Thulamela and Makahane, about 15 kilometres away. It is not yet known which one was built first.

The Lembedu incorporated the previous Mapungubwe people, while elsewhere other Zimbabwe chiefs incorporated Sotho-Tswana speakers. These three groups later created the Venda language. In the 1690s another group of Shona people moved south and conquered the country, forming a Venda state. Thulamela thus represents the formative years of the Venda nation.

## **Court**

Every Zimbabwe settlement had a court. This was the place where men met to discuss political matters and resolve disputes. It was also the hub of public activity.

The court was associated with the leader of the settlement and ranked in a hierarchy of political importance. The leader at Thulamela was a senior chief and therefore had men subordinate to him who were equivalent to petty chiefs, neighbourhood headmen and family heads.

As the senior capital, the court at Thulamela acted as the final court of appeal for cases that “overcame” the lower courts. It also reserved for itself the right to hear cases that affected the whole nation.

The court was one of the first areas marked off when a new settlement was established, and it was often located next to a tree. The public court at Thulamela was most likely under the large Baobab.

## **Palace complex**

A Zimbabwe leader was supposed to be aloof. He was not a public figure but stayed inside the palace walls separated from his people.

The chief was associated with crocodiles and therefore his palace was sometimes referred to as a pool. The idiom, “The crocodile does not leave its pool”, referred to his ritual seclusion.

The palace was located on a hill, or otherwise on a raised area, because the majesty of leadership was comparable to the majesty of a mountain. Mountains

were symbols of political and spiritual authority. The phrase “to climb the mountain”, for example, meant to approach the chief.

### **Chief’s area**

The chief stayed in the front section of the palace with two special officials. One official was his messenger, a close and trusted confidant who kept him informed about proceedings in the court and the business of the visitors.

The other official was the chief’s personal diviner and herbalist. He safeguarded the chief’s health, and he scrutinized the intentions of people visiting the chief.

Visitors would have met the chief in a special audience chamber. These chambers were either divided by a central wall or consisted of a hut within a larger hut. In both cases the division served to separate the chief from his visitors.

At Thulamela the large hut complex in the western section was the audience chamber. The messenger’s hut was probably next to the entrance, but the location of the diviner’s hut is unknown.

### **Ritual sister**

The other front section was reserved for the chief’s ritual (senior) sister. This important person - usually a half-sister- was a national advisor. She had to be kept informed of all the discussions of the chief’s council, she had to agree with the decisions before they could be implemented, and she was instrumental in the appointment of the new chief. As a result she was treated with the same formality and respect as the chief.

This sister also represented the female side of the ruling line. She therefore had to be present at all occasions when the royal ancestors were propitiated.

### **Ritual area**

In the Zimbabwe culture the front was associated with public and secular activities, while the back was associated with sacred and life-giving forces. The

large open area at the back of the palace at Thulamela was therefore a sacred location. It was here that the chief, his ritual sister and other officials petitioned the royal ancestors who were concerned with national problems, such as epidemics, locust swarms and rain.

### **Court official**

The chief himself seldom attended court. He instead gave the duty to a close relative, such as an older half-brother, who was a legal expert. The large enclosure near the court was probably the office of this senior court official. This area has not been excavated and so it is not known if this was a residence or just an office. If it was only an office, then this official lived with his family in the residential area reserved for the royal class.

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