6. Report on Salvage Archaeological Excavations: Portion 22 of Farm 386 Wysersdrift, Rawsonville, Worcester Magisterial District by Prof AB Smith, University of Cape Town (June 2010)
Report on Salvage Archaeological Excavations:
Portion 22 of Farm 386 Wysersdrift, Rawsonville, Worcester
Magisterial District

June 2010

Prepared for

BolandEnviro
P.O. Box 250
Worcester 6850
e-mail: Nik@BolandEnviro.co.za

Andrew B. Smith
Department of Archaeology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7700
Tel: (021) 650-2354
Fax: (021) 650-2352
e-mail: andrew.smith@uct.ac.za
Executive Summary

A 24G rectification was demanded by HWC to gain amnesty from work done on Portion 22 of Farm 386 Wysersdrift, Rawsonville. An AIA by Agency for Cultural Resource Management (Kaplan 2010) identified an LSA site, which HWC (Unique ROD 888; Unique Case ROD 834, dated 2 March 2010) deemed needed mitigation by sampling and excavation. BolandEnviro commissioned the work to be done, and on 2-3 June 2010 an excavation was conducted to collect a sample of the cultural material.

The site is a two metre high dune with lithic material on the side, washing down onto a hard surface. This surface was formed by heavy earth-moving equipment in the process of setting up an avenue of trees which will be the main entrance to the new farm house on the property.

A profile of the dune was created by shovel-testing on one side, and a grid laid out. As no cultural horizon could be seen in the dune profile, surface stones were plotted. Five squares were laid out on one side of the dune and excavated. All deposit was passed through a 3mm mesh sieve. In addition, another square, 15m from the first area, was also excavated in an area where larger tools had been identified by Kaplan (2010).

The limited lithic material found was all in the top 10cm, or on the surface. In two of the squares almost nothing was retrieved. As no horizon was seen in the dune profile, this suggests that all the material was originally close to the surface.

In all, 217 pieces of stone were recovered. One hundred and forty three pieces were flakes, of which 62% were small secondary retouch flakes, mostly in quartz, indicating a site where stone tool fabrication had taken place.

The small sample size is an indication of a limited camp site close to the Breede River. No pottery was found, so the initial suggestion by Kaplan of a possible herder site remains questionable.

Since most of the surface stone was retrieved for analysis, and there were no indications of any more in the area, the site is deemed to have been sampled, but the compromised nature of the dune by heavy equipment limits any spatial integrity.

It is recommended that no further work is needed to fulfill the needs of the ROD.
Table of Contents

Executive Summary i
1. Introduction 2
2. Methodology 4
3. Results 6
4. Conclusions & Recommendations 8

List of Figures
Figure 1: Location of Wysersdrift Map Reference 3319CB 1:50,000 2
Figure 2: Wysersdrift showing location of excavated site 3
Figure 3: View of dune (on left) from Goudini Road 3
Figure 4: The dune, showing damage around it by heavy machinery 4
Figure 5: View of the tree-lined avenue, with the dune on the left 4
Figure 6: Profile of the dune 5
Figure 7: Plan of excavated area, and location of dune face exposure in Figure 6 5
Figure 8: Excavated squares A1-C1 6
Figure 9: Excavated squares T1, with A1-D1 at top of picture 6
Figure 10: Surface scrape 6
Figure 11: Kaplan’s photographed collection, four months later
Table 1: Wysersdrift, total stone 7
1. Introduction

As noted in the initial AIA by Agency for Cultural Resource Management (Kaplan 2010), after purchase in 2002, new vineyards were developed on Portion 22 of the farm 386 Wysersdrift, outside Rawsonville without the relevant authorisation from commenting authorities. This included the provincial heritage authority, Heritage Western Cape (HWC). An application to DEA DP for amnesty was made to complete a section 24G rectification.

An ROD from HWC (Unique ROD 888, Unique Case ROD 834, dated 2 March 2010) as part of the 25G rectification, stipulated that the Later Stone site identified by Kaplan (2010) needed to be mitigated by way of sampling and excavation. In consultation with HWC it was agreed that excavation to identify any possible in situ material would take place, and collection of surface artefacts made.

The Site

The Wysersdrift Later Stone Age site (named Sym 10 by Kaplan, 2010) is on the south bank of the Breede Rivier (Fig. 1), with the eastern boundary the Goudini Spa road (Figs. 2 & 3). The archaeological significance of the site was identified by surface stone tools, possibly leaching out of a 2m high dune (Fig. 4). On inspection, the dune had been partially excavated by earth moving equipment as part of construction of an avenue of trees (Fig. 5) that will be the entrance from the Goudini Road to the new farmhouse. The heavy machinery caused a relatively hard surface to form at the base of the

Figure 1: Location of Wysersdrift, Map Reference 3319CB, 1: 50,000
surviving dune, and it is on top of this surface that most of the artefacts were to be found. Any spatial integrity of the site had probably been compromised by the heavy machinery.

Figure 2: Wysersdrift showing location of excavated site

Figure 3: View of dune (on left) from Goudini Road
2. Methodology

A shovel test was conducted to create a profile of the dune to see if any in situ material might be seen as an indicator of the surface where the artefacts were originally laid down (Fig. 6). No in situ artefacts were noted.
A grid was then laid down and surface artefacts plotted on what seemed to be the least disturbed side of the dune (Fig. 7). Excavation of five square metres subsequently took place on the side of the dune (Fig. 8).

Figure 7: Plan of excavated squares, plotted stones, and location of the dune face exposure in Figure 6.
A further one metre square, 15m from the previous grid was laid, and labelled T1 (Fig. 9). This was where Kaplan (2010) had identified large flaked cobbles (named Sym 11).

In addition, a surface scrape of the hard surface was done in the area below where the dune profile was created, roughly 3 x 3m in area, which allowed an increase in stone corpus (Fig. 10).

3. Results

Square B1 produced 30 pieces of stone in the top 10cm, mostly small, secondary retouch flakes in quartz. Square C1 had 16 pieces in the top 10cm, and squares A0, A1 & D1 almost nothing.
The surface scrape across the hard surface below the dune produced 38 pieces (26 <10mm in size), and collection of surface material across the entire area, another 112 pieces. From T1, 21 pieces of stone were recovered, six of which were flaked river cobbles. T1 was considered a part of the dune site and the artefacts combined in the total stone. All told, 217 pieces of stone were recovered (Table 1), of which only one piece showed any secondary retouch. Of the 143 flakes in the total assemblage, 89 (62.2%) were small, less than 10mm in length, and most probably represent secondary retouch flaking debris, mostly in quartz.

Table 1: Wysersdrift, Total Stone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quartz</th>
<th>Silcrete</th>
<th>Quartzite</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chips</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunks</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flakes</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blades</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cobble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manuports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cores</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esquillees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was no pottery, so we have no indication of the age of the industry beyond the vague designation ‘Later Stone Age’.

An indication of the sheet wash down the dune surface is that in the 4 months between Kaplan collecting a few pieces for photographing (Kaplan 2010: Fig. 20) for his report, and the work done for the this report, these tools had already become embedded in the land surface (Fig. 11).

Figure 11: Kaplan’s photographed collection, four months later
4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The high incidence of secondary flaking debris does suggest that this was a site where stone tools were fabricated. Although the plotting exercise may have little (if any) value due to the compromised nature of the present state of the dune, it is possible that the 15m separating D1 from T1, with the large flaked cobbles in the latter, could reflect spatial activity differences. Only one 'finished' tool, however, was found on the site, and this does help suggest that the site was of Later Stone Age. The lack of pottery reduces the suggestion that the site may have been occupied by herders, in spite of its proximity to the river.

While there is little archaeological information from this area of the Breede River Valley, this small sample is a trace of the former inhabitants of the valley. Unfortunately, it does little to enhance our knowledge, other than tell us people were there in the past.

The site was constrained around the dune area where excavation took place, so was probably originally a very limited encampment. There were no obvious signs of further occupation elsewhere in the immediate vicinity.

Kaplan (2010:5) noted: "While SYM10 is considered to be quite an important archaeological occurrence and has been documented and described, the context in which the tools occur has been compromised".

It is recommended that the original assessment of Kaplan (2010) be accepted, and no further mitigation necessary.

5. Reference