

# Managing open rock art sites for tourism, in the central uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



*Claire Louisa Fordred\* & Kevin Mearns^*  
*University of South Africa*



**Key words:** rock art, sustainable tourism, impacts, management, conservation, awareness

## What is rock art and why must we conserve it?

- Irreplaceable
- Vulnerable
- Heritage and cultural resource
- Tradition 30 000 years old
- Earliest forms of communication
- Ancestor's ways of living
- Damaged - Human impacts
  - Natural impacts



Rock Paintings  
(Pictographs)



Rock Engravings  
(Petroglyphs)

Management and conservation  
**NEEDS**  
to be a priority!!

**The artist:** Bushmen, known as The San who were indigenous and nomadic.

**Where they painted:** They lived in over hangs/shelters

**Study Area:** uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, KZN, South Africa

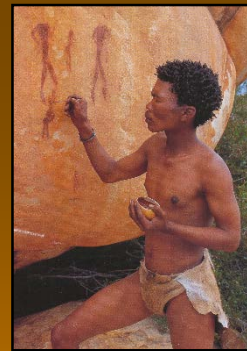
- SA's first environmental and Cultural World Heritage Site, Nov 2000

### Reason for the study?

Research and documentation on the location, conservation, interpretation and archaeological importance of rock art in southern Africa.

**BUT:** little has been written on the complexities of tourism at rock art sites in the UDP.

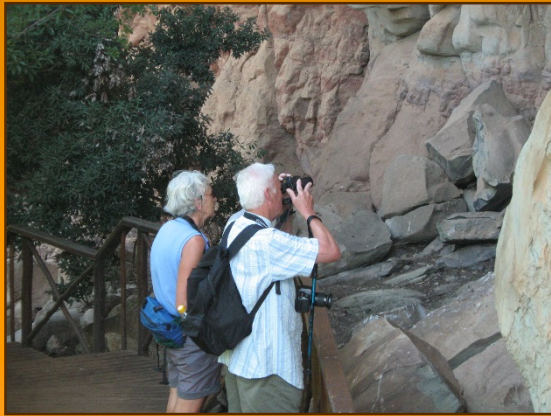
**Aim:** contribute to understanding the impacts of tourism on rock art sites



# The way tourism is managed determines the extent of impacts on the physical and cultural environment



Rock deterioration



Tourists

- Some rock art sites that are not open to the public thus negative reaction to site closure.
- The behaviour of tourists at rock art sites needs to be constantly monitored.
- An unmanaged site appears neglected and dirty and is more likely to be intentionally and unintentionally damaged by humans
- While managed sites that are clean and consist of conservation interventions that display the importance of the site, gain more respect and are less likely to suffer human damage.

# Three criteria were investigated at each study site namely the:

1. Deterioration of the site and rock art: caused by human visitation and natural impacts;
2. Tourism and development: of the study sites; and
3. Management and conservation methods: of the rock art sites and paintings.

## Methods:

- Photographs and brochures, visitors books
- Interaction: staff, rock art tour guides and tourists
- Sites: Assess, photograph and compare sites in tables

## Evaluation at each site:

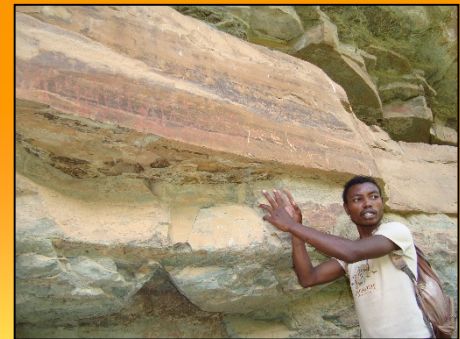
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| 1. Camp area and rock art awareness              | 2. On route to the site                  |
| 3. Upon arrival at site                          | 4. Rock art surface and paintings        |
| 5. Weathering and deterioration of the surface   | 6. General and intentional human impacts |
| 7. Tourism factors at the camp and rock art site | 8. Management methods at the site        |





# Common findings

Common Management methods	Common missing management methods
Entrance fee to visit	Better advertising of the rock art guided tours, providing necessary information
Tours conducted by rock art guides at specific times	Need for a pamphlet on the specific rock art site
Rock art sites are fenced or the greater area	Pamphlet on art generally, other sites to visit
Sense of direction flow with viewing areas	More viewing space. Barriers to prevent touching the art
Parking area, dustbin found at a distance from rock art site	Guides need training



Unexpected findings	Recommendations
Archaeological research is destructive	Pamphlets and more information and awareness at camps, interpretive display
Research equipment at sites were not signed or discussed by the guide	Better signage on the rock art protection and the etiquette at sites
At the camps, little or no interpretation, information and face to face interaction about the rock art and sites	Better direction flow at sites, viewing area space and ground surface management
No visitors book for the rock art sites or pamphlets	Areas to be fenced, no camping in sites, visitors book, good condition path to site
Rock art guides need more information and knowledge on the sites. Guides touch the art	Training of guides, barriers at open sites to prevent visitors touching and monitor visitors

