

Sibhudu Cave now a national heritage site

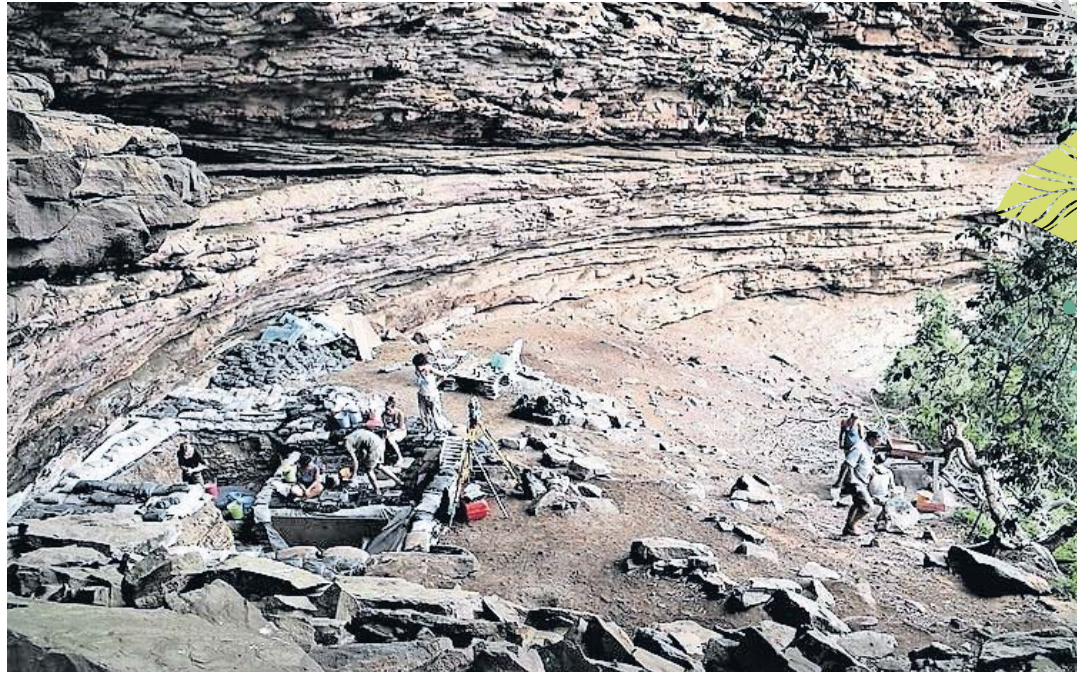
Penny Fourie

The Sibhudu Cave, a rock shelter that lies under a curve of sandstone and shale cliff carved out by the uThongathi River, has finally been awarded the status it deserves.

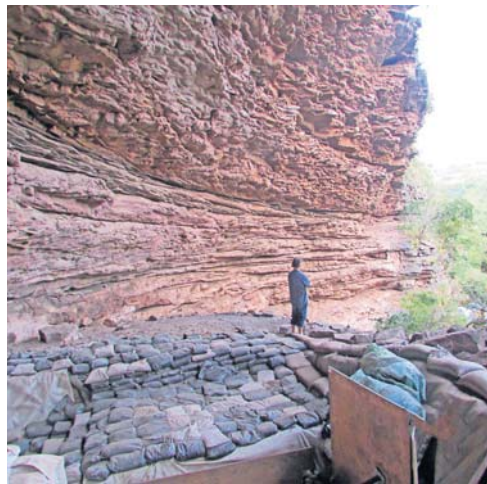
The prehistoric site, which is believed to hold answers about early human behaviour, was declared a national heritage site by the South African National Heritage Resources Agency (SANHRA) and gazetted on December 18, 2020.

Discovered in 1967, Sibhudu was first excavated in 1983 by archaeologist Aron Mazel of the Natal Museum. His excavation revealed that the uppermost layers of the cave contained Iron Age occupations while the layers immediately below this contained Middle Stone Age occupations.

Between 1998 and 2011, Wits University directed the site's excavations, but since 2011 excavations have been directed by Nicholas Conrad, a professor and chair of the early history department at the University of Tübingen in Germany, under the licence from the South



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African Historical Monuments Commission. Conrad has said that few places on earth have such a "complete and wonderful record from the Middle Stone Age" as Sibhudu.

The cave boasts a long record of occupation between 77 000 and 35 000 years ago during the Middle Stone Age. Among its prolific finds, Sibhudu has some of the earliest examples in the world of sea-shell beads, a wide variety of bone tools, bone arrowheads for hunting, use of herbal medicine, and preserved plant bedding dating back 77 000 years.

SANHRA CEO Lungi Malgas said they identified the site as having qualities so exceptional that it was of special national significance and warranted declaration as a national heritage site. As such it is a protected site and may not be interfered with in any way, except under permit from SANHRA.

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Advertorial

Siza Water invests in solar

Siza Water is working on a number of projects to improve its services to the North Coast.

From solar panels to variable speed drives, right through to simple standpipe replacement, it's all technical jargon but let's break it down.

Siza Water have started a project which will see to the replacement of standpipes within its concession area - these have been redesigned to also allow for dual taps and, the design is more robust and steady. The design hopes to curve vandalism and theft.

Improving its security aspects and ensuring a spotlight is placed on all pump stations and reservoirs, Siza Water will be installing solar lights at these sites ensuring that infrastructure remains well-lit, further acting as a deterrent to would-be-thieves.

To reduce its reliance on electricity, Siza Water is also investing in advanced solar technology at its Frasers and Sheffield treatment plants. Siza Water trainee



With this project, we aim to operate a section of the treatment works off the grid during daytime - Kimolin Venkatesan.

engineer, Kimolin Venkatesan said: "With this project, we aim to operate a section of the treatment works off the grid during daytime. Further reducing electrical needs, the

installation of variable speed drives - this allows pumps to ramp up and down gradually, reducing water hammer and pressure on pipelines - will see to the reduction of the start up current.

"It's also about proper water service delivery, Venkatesan said.

"We will be replacing the asbestos cement pipelines at Zen Drive, Basil Hulett, Wilkes and Lenora Drive - this is part of a larger asbestos water pipe replacement project

and we are planning to institute reliable water control measures to reduce water losses on old infrastructure," he said.

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