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2011-05-10
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INVESTIGATING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A HERITAGE SITE: THE CASE OF WITSIE'S CAVE IN QWA QWA.

ABSTRACT.

Witsie's Cave is one of the places that are acknowledged as heritage sites. It has tourism potential but because of controversies surrounding it, the process of awarding this site its official status has been dragging on. Stories of the cave are linked to the Makholokoe, a group of people that arrived in the North Eastern part of the Free State around 1800 and came into contact with the Boers.

This study seeks to investigate the significance of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site in line with the requirements of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999 and the general interpretation of heritage as presented through scholarly research.

It has been discovered that issue of heritage cannot be isolated from traditional leadership, as the result, the role of local government and traditional leadership is also examined in the light of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41, 2003. Living heritage associated with the cave is also explored.

Examples are drawn from other existing heritage sites that were transformed after the implementation of the National Heritage Act and stories told around these sites were revised.