



**The historical impact of tribal authorities on cultural heritage in the proposed Witsieshoek
Community Conservation and Tourism Development Area**

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The former independent homeland of Qwaqwa comprised three kingdoms/ chieftaincies which were originally situated in the mountainous areas of the region. Within the historical context of the chieftaincies lies hidden a wealth of heritage information that is regarded as significant to the tribal authorities and their followers to this day. To address tourism as well as heritage preservation issues of the proposed Witsieshoek Community Conservation and Tourism Development Area, it is vital to put these issues squarely into historical perspective within the socio-political and economic contexts of the region. By tracing a historical line from the pre-historic San dwellers, Shaka's *mfecane/difaqane* wars, the Mantatise/Sekonyela rivalry, the arrival of the Voortrekkers, the Basotho wars and the locating of the present traditional Kingdoms in Qwaqwa, historical perspective will be provided on the present political, social and cultural contexts in which the ARU intends to play a meaningful role. In the history of the eastern Free State, these tribal Kingdoms played an important role in reforming the social, economic and political environment, but tangible evidence of the roles that history and cultural heritage have played has not been fully understood and limited historical knowledge is available. This project seeks to address the lack of scientific historical knowledge of the area and contribute towards the promotion of heritage tourism, which can play a meaningful role in restoring and displaying heritage sites and historical events of these mountainous communities.

For more information: Refer to Dr McDonald's profile listed under Researchers/Project leaders