

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Proposed cultivation of 40ha of indigenous grassland on Riverlea Farm near Underberg, KwaSani Municipality

April 2013



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ Inform Interested & Affected Parties (IAPs) about the proposed project and request their participation;
- ◆ Provide a brief background on the proposed project; and
- ◆ Explain the aims and objectives of the Basic Assessment Process.



WHAT IS PROPOSED?

Mr Spurgeon Flemington of Riverlea Farm proposes to cultivate approximately 40ha of indigenous grassland on his property, for the purposes of additional fodder for dairy cattle.

The project would entail the clearance of approximately 40 ha of grassland ('veld') to enable the planting of an annual crop, such as maize, to provide fodder for dairy cattle. The 40ha is made up of two separate areas.



WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS HAVE INITIALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED?

The following potential impacts have been identified and will, amongst other issues, be investigated during the Basic Assessment Process:

- ◆ Loss of indigenous vegetation;
- ◆ Loss of habitat for indigenous fauna;
- ◆ Impact on nearby natural water resources; and
- ◆ Expansion of farming operation ensuring sustainability and additional employment opportunities.



WHERE IS THE PROPOSED SITE?

The property, Rem of Lot FP 107 No. 7705, is located approximately 7km northwest of Underberg, within the KwaSani Municipality. The property is 700ha in size, of which, approximately 450ha is indigenous veld.

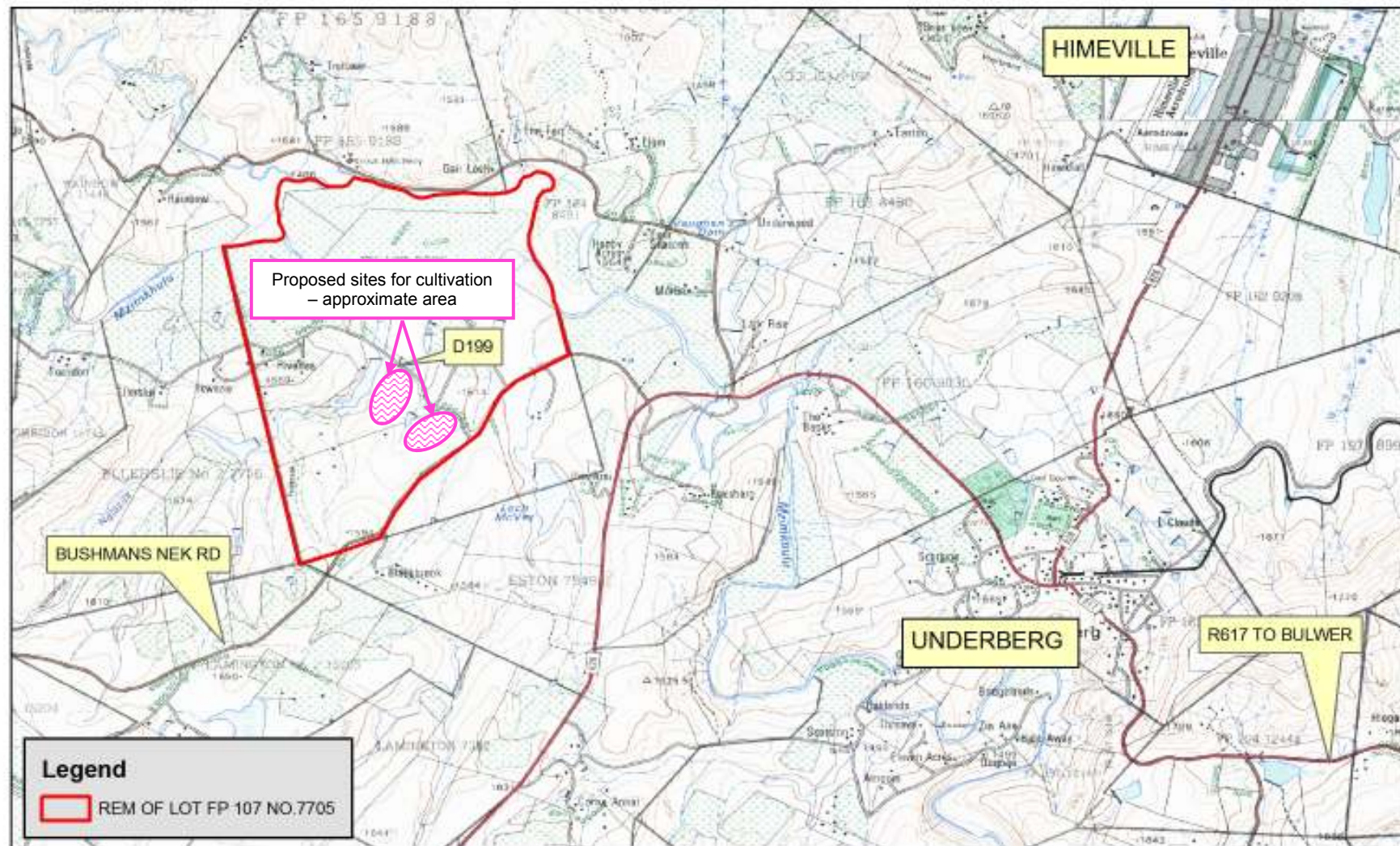
Directions to the site are as follows:

From Pietermaritzburg, travel straight through Underberg towards Kokstad on the R617. Approximately 5km along the R617, turn right onto the Bushman's Nek Road. Travel for 2km along the Bushman's Nek Road and take the D199 road to the right. The site is located approximately 200m along the D199, on the left hand side. Please refer to Figures 1 and 2.

Co-ordinates for the sites are as follows:

Site 1: 29° 46' 33.72" S and 29° 26' 02.06" E

Site 2: 29° 46' 42.54" S and 29° 26' 17.10" E



	P O Box 239, PMB, 3200 Tel: 033 940 0450 Fax: 086 219 9059 Email: garth.jec@edelnat.co.za Website: www.jecenviro.co.za	PROPOSED RIVERLEA CULTIVATION SITE LOCATION		SCALE 1:50 000  Kilometers	
	Author: G. Glaum Date: 19 MARCH 2013				

FIGURE 1: Topographic map showing location of proposed cultivation sites on Riverlea Farm, near Underberg (Topographical Map 2929CD)



FIGURE 2: Aerial photograph showing location of proposed cultivation sites on Riverlea Farm (Source: Google Earth).



WHAT IS THE APPLICABLE ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION?

In terms of the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations** promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), certain Listed Activities are specified for which either a Basic Assessment (GNR 544 and 546) or a Scoping and EIA (GNR 545) is required.

The following Listed Activity in Government Notice (GN) R 546 (Listing Notice 3), requiring a Basic Assessment (BA) Process will be applicable to the proposed cultivation:

- ◆ *G NR 546 - Item 14: The clearance of an area of 5 hectares or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetation cover constitutes indigenous vegetation (a) in KwaZulu-Natal (i) in all areas outside urban areas.*



WHAT IS THE AIM OF A BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

The Basic Assessment Process aims to:

- ◆ Inform and involve all potential IAPs of the proposed development;
- ◆ Identify the potential impacts (positive and negative) that the proposed development may have on the ecological and socio-economic environment;
- ◆ Provide recommendations based on the identified impacts and conduct any necessary Specialist Studies; and
- ◆ Provide the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (DAEA) with enough information to make an informed decision regarding the proposed development.



WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

The Basic Assessment Process can be described as follows:

1. Submission of Application Form:

The EAP will complete the official Application Form and submit it to the relevant DAEA office. This Application Form includes relevant maps and declarations from the EAP and Applicant. The DAEA will acknowledge receipt of the Application Form and will assign the application a reference number.

2. Public Participation:

The public and relevant Authorities will be notified of the proposed development through adverts, site posters and direct consultation. This Background Information Document forms part of this stage.

3. Identification of Impacts and Alternatives

Environmental issues, concerns, development constraints and possible development alternatives will be identified using professional judgement, project information, experience of similar projects, a review of available literature, site visits, and consultation with the Applicant, authorities and the public.

4. Impact Evaluation

The significance of environmental issues will be evaluated in terms of their expected extent, intensity, duration and probability of occurrence.

5. Mitigation and Management Measures

Measures to manage and minimise impacts to within acceptable levels, as well as measures to maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with the development, will be identified in the Basic Assessment Report.

6. Environmental Reporting

The Draft Basic Assessment Report will be made available for review and comment by all IAPs and relevant Authorities. A Final Basic Assessment Report will be compiled including all comments received on the Draft Basic Assessment Report and submitted to the Competent Authority (DAEA) for consideration.

7. Authority Decision

The Final Basic Assessment Report will be used by the DAEA as the basis for the decision on whether the project should be approved or not. The DAEA can refuse permission or grant permission with conditions.

