

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

As part of the

BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

For the

PROPOSED KOKSHILL 1 CEMETERY, WITHIN THE UMZIMKHULU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

1. Introduction

The Umzimkhulu Local Municipality has identified the need to establish two cemeteries in the town of Kokshill. Kokshill 1 cemetery is one of the two proposed cemetery sites. Before the expansion of the cemetery can commence, environmental authorisation from the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs, in compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2010, is required. In order to obtain this authorisation a Basic Assessment is currently being undertaken by Enviroedge on behalf of the Umzimkhulu Local Municipality.

2. The Project

The village of Kokshill is located in ward 13, in the southern region of the Municipality, approximately 26km south west of the Umzimkhulu central business district. The proposed site is located near the R56 road, to the south east of the village centre on a vacant portion of land which land use is subsistence agriculture. An existing grave yard exists and it is proposed that the proposed current cemetery incorporates the existing grave sites. The existing site has reached burial capacity and the proposed cemetery expansion is aimed to provide burial sites which will directly cater to the Kokshill and nearby communities for the next twenty (20) years, and as such approximately 2 hectares (2ha) of land will be required. The project is aimed to provide a burial location in close proximity for the local community, so as to prevent 'back yard burials' and also to help reduce the need to travel to district cemetery sites. The cemetery establishment aims to cater for all cultural needs within the municipal area. The site is located at co-ordinates 30° 27'9.42"S 29°52'10.48"E.

3. The Biophysical Environment

Rivers and topography: The proposed cemetery site is located to the south east of Kokshill at an elevation of approximately 780masl. The site is located 200 metres from a perennial stream, which is a tributary of the Mahobe River. The Mahobe River joins the Bisi River further to the north east. The site is located on an east facing open valley, with deeply incised drainage features, and an average gradient of approximately 1:9.

Vegetation: The study area falls within the Savanna Biome, and Mucina and Rutherford (2006) classify the vegetation group as Ngongoni Veld (SVs 4). Common features of this vegetation class is dense tall grassland that is overwhelmingly dominated by unpalatable, wiry Ngongoni grass and with a low species diversity. The study area presented indications of a forb rich grassland with some scattered alien invasives. One large *Syzgium cordatum* (Water Berry) was noted to the east of the site which would not be disturbed. A stand of *Eucalyptus sp.* (Gum trees) were noted to the west of the site.

Geology and Soils: Mucina and Rutherford (2006) describe the geology as acidic, leached, heavy soils derived from Karoo Supergroup sediments and intrusive Karoo Dolerites. Glenrosa and Mispah soils also occur.

Conservation Value: The Ngongoni Veld is classified as vulnerable with an associated target value of 25%.

Climate: The study area mainly receives summer rainfall with some winter rainfall. Infrequent frosts do occur. Some valleys are sheltered and may show weak rain shadow effects. The average annual precipitation ranges from 700mm to 1100mm.

4. Public Participation

Members of the public have the opportunity to be consulted during the Public Participation Process. If you would like additional information or would like to be part of this process please register with Steven Whitaker using the contact details below.

Consultants: Enviroedge

PO Box 1009, Kloof, 3640
Tel: 031 764 2569; Fax: 086 654 6598
Email: steven@enviroedge.co.za



Proponent Umzimkhulu Local Municipality

P.O. Box 53
Umzimkhulu
3297
Tel: 039 259 5000
Fax: 039 259 0839

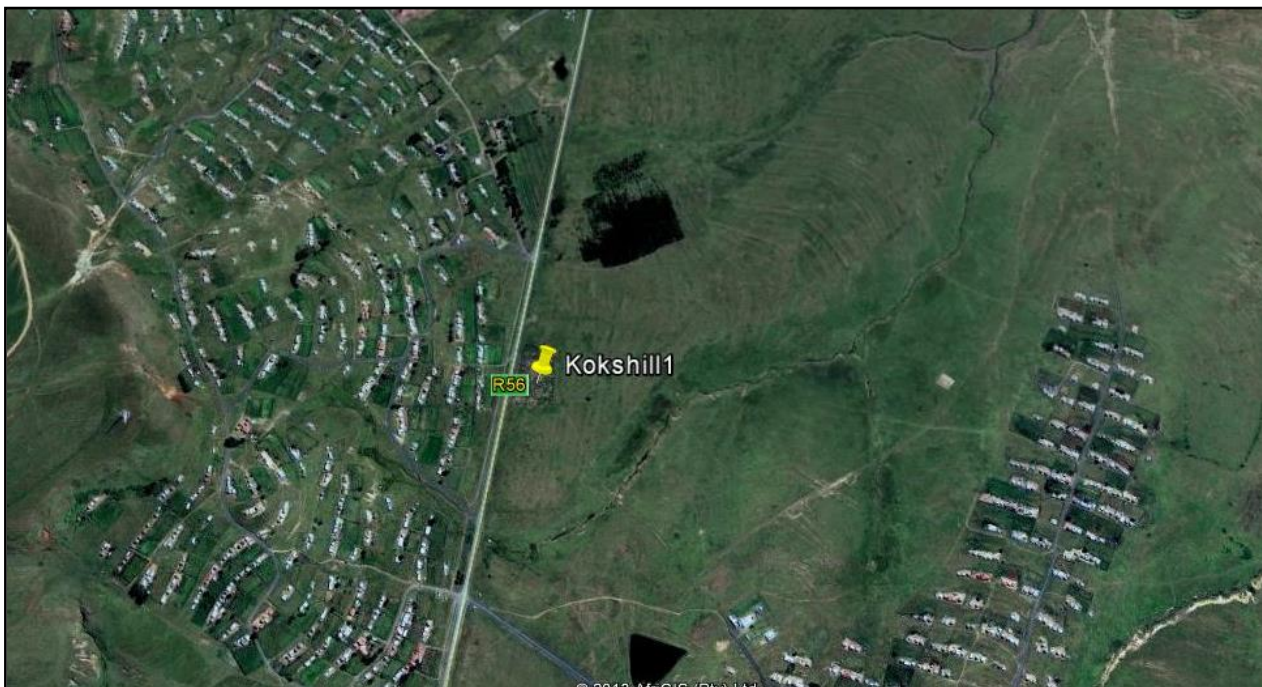


Figure 1. Google Earth Image showing location of the proposed cemetery site expansion.

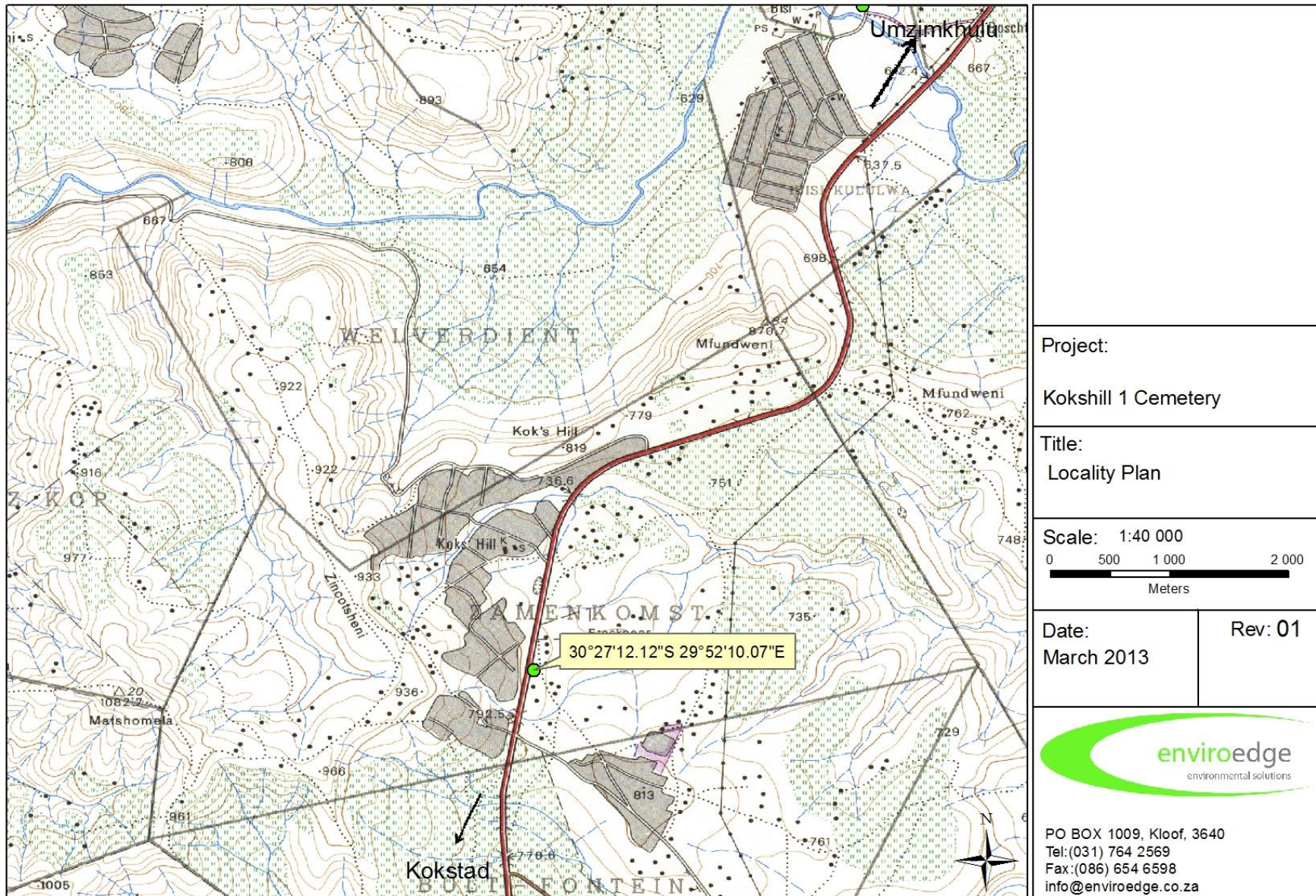


Figure 2. Topographical Plan showing the Kokshill cemetery site location. s