

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

As part of the

BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

For the

PROPOSED KOKSHILL 2 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 2 cemetery is one of 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

Kokshill currently has two existing burial grounds. 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 along a local road off the R56 road, to the north of the village centre on a vacant portion of land which land use is residential and subsistence agriculture. An existing grave yard exists and it is proposed that the current cemetery incorporates the existing grave sites which are currently scattered in clusters across the burial grounds. The proposed cemetery establishment 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 two 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 the cultural needs within the municipal area. The site is located at 30° 26'16.87"S 29°51'58.69"E.

3. The Biophysical Environment

Rivers and topography: The proposed cemetery site is located to the north east of Kokshill on the higher reaches of an open valley, at an elevation of 800*masl*. The site's slope presents gentle gradients. The northern portion of the site drains towards non-perennial streams approximately 150 metres to the north, which are tributaries of the Bisi River flowing in an easterly direction. The southern portion of the site drains towards a perennial stream which is a tributary of the Mahobe River 450 metres to the south.

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 Midlands Misbelt Grassland (Gs9) vegetation group is located to the north of the study area. The site shows evidence of previous disturbance and is grazed by livestock. Alien invasives including *Senna didymobotrya* (Peanut butter bush) were noted.

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. The soil cover was noted to be thin with patches of rock over areas with sparse vegetation cover.

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.

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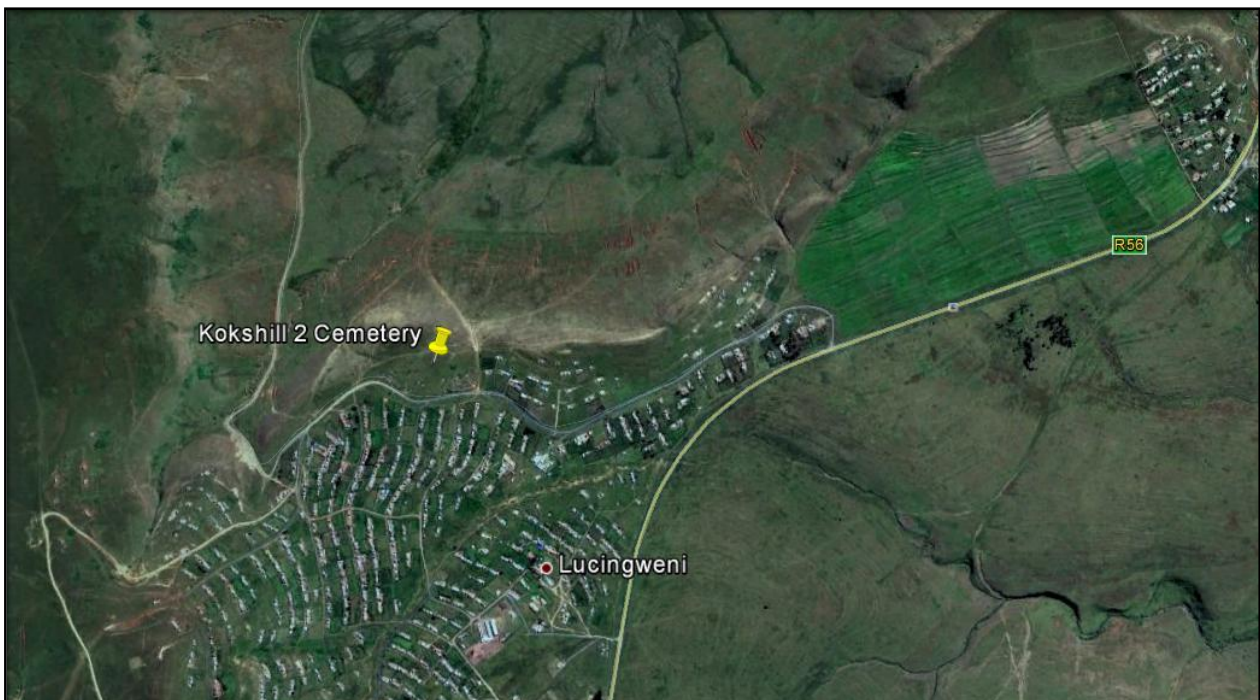


Figure 1. Google Earth Image showing location of the proposed cemetery site expansion.

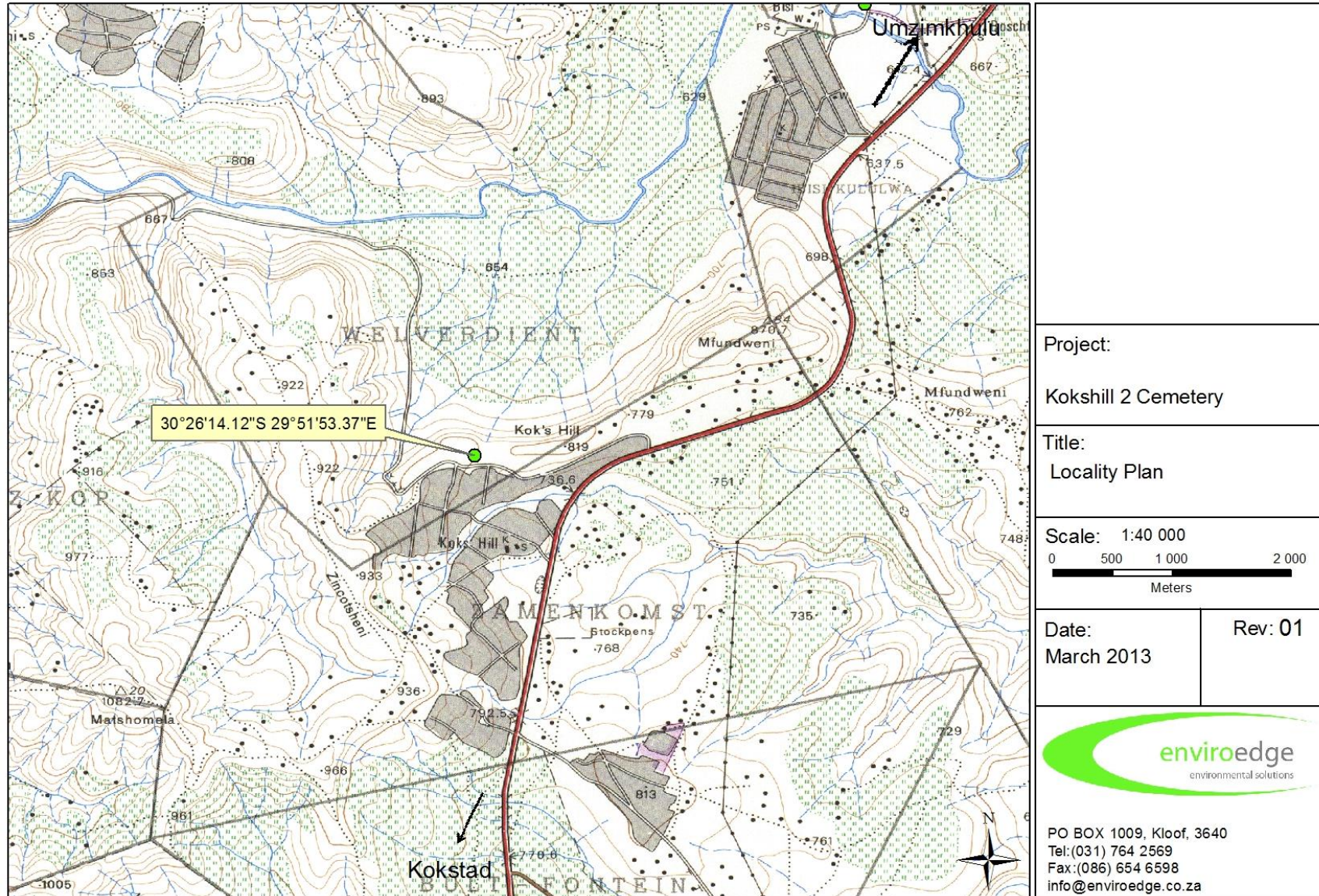


Figure 2. Topographical Plan showing the Kokshill 2 cemetery site location.