

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF  
NONOTI HOUSING DEVELOPMENT,  
KWADUKUZA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,  
KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA



Assessment and report by



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For **Sustainable Development  
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### **Management summary**

eThembeni Cultural Heritage was appointed by Sustainable Development Projects to undertake a heritage impact assessment of a proposed housing development in the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act No 10 of 1997. Two eThembeni staff members inspected the area on 18 March 2009, and completed a controlled-exclusive surface survey, as well as a database and literature search.

We identified a Shembe place of worship on the periphery of the proposed development area. This heritage resource has high heritage significance to a specific community and at the local and regional levels, at least, and may not be altered in any way without the permission of the relevant church authorities and a permit from Amafa.

No other specific places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage were identified within the proposed development site, although the general area is one of living heritage. We have assumed that compensation for the loss of agricultural and grazing land has been addressed during the public participation process. If not, such negotiations must occur through the project management team.

The proposed development site is located adjacent to the Indian Ocean and the Nonoti River estuary and comprises scattered human settlement surrounded by communal grazing lands and commercial agriculture. The proposed development will alter this landscape significantly and permanently, but could be considered in keeping with dynamic, managed landscape change.

It is possible that ancestral graves occur within the proposed development area. If so, they will be located within homestead precincts and be known to and managed by the families concerned. Accordingly, there is little danger that they will be affected adversely by construction activities. The developer should note that all graves and burial grounds have high heritage significance at all levels for their social value and may not be altered in any way without a permit from Amafa.

We recommend that the development proceed with the proposed heritage mitigation and have submitted this report to Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali in fulfilment of the requirements of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act. The client may contact Ms Wesiwe Tshabalala at Amafa's Pietermaritzburg office (telephone 033 3946 543) in due course to enquire about the Council's decision.

If permission is granted for the development to proceed, the client is reminded that the Act requires that a developer cease all work immediately and notify Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali should any heritage resources, as defined in the Act, be discovered during the course of development activities.

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## Introduction and legislation

eThembeni Cultural Heritage was appointed by Sustainable Development Projects to undertake a heritage impact assessment of a proposed housing development in the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act No 10 of 1997. Section 27(1) of the Act requires such an assessment in case of:

- (a) construction of a road, wall, power line, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300 m in length;
- (b) construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length; and
- (c) any development, or other activity which will change the character of an area of land, or water –
  - (i) exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent;
  - (ii) involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or
  - (iii) involving three or more erven, or subdivisions thereof, which have been consolidated within the past five years; or
- (d) the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations; or
- (e) any other category of development provided for in regulations.

A heritage impact assessment is not limited to archaeological artefacts, historical buildings and graves. It is far more encompassing and includes intangible and invisible resources such as places, oral traditions and rituals. In the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act 1997 a heritage resource is defined any place or object of cultural significance i.e. of aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance. This includes the following wide range of places and objects:

- (a) places, buildings, structures and equipment;
- (b) places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- (c) historical settlements and townscapes;
- (d) landscapes and natural features;
- (e) geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- (f) archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- (g) graves and burial grounds, including -
  - (i) ancestral graves,
  - (ii) royal graves and graves of traditional leaders,
  - (iii) graves of victims of conflict,
  - (iv) graves of important individuals,
  - (v) historical graves and cemeteries older than 60 years, and
  - (vi) other human remains which are not covered under the Human Tissues Act, 1983 (Act No.65 of 1983 as amended);
- (h) movable objects, including -
  - (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
  - (ii) ethnographic art and objects;
  - (iii) military objects;
  - (iv) objects of decorative art;
  - (v) objects of fine art;
  - (vi) objects of scientific or technological interest;
  - (vii) books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings; and
  - (viii) any other prescribed categories,
 but excluding any object made by a living person;
- (i) battlefields;
- (j) traditional building techniques.

A 'place' is defined as:

- (a) a site, area or region;
- (b) a building or other structure (which may include equipment, furniture, fittings and articles associated with or connected with such building or other structure);

- (c) a group of buildings or other structures (which may include equipment, furniture, fittings and articles associated with or connected with such group of buildings or other structures); and
- (d) an open space, including a public square, street or park; and in relation to the management of a place, includes the immediate surroundings of a place.

'Structures' means any building, works, device, or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land and any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith older than 60 years.

'Archaeological' means -

- (a) material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features and structures;
- (b) rock art, being a form of painting, engraving or other graphic representation on a fixed rock surface or loose rock or stone, which was executed by human agency and is older than 100 years including any area within 10 m of such representation; and
- (c) wrecks, being any vessel or aircraft, or any part thereof, which was wrecked in South Africa; whether on land or in the maritime cultural zone referred to in section 5 of the Maritime Zones Act 1994 (Act 15 of 1994), and any cargo, debris or artefacts found or associated therewith, which are older than 60 years or which in terms of national legislation are considered to be worthy of conservation;
- (d) features, structures and artefacts associated with military history which are older than 75 years and the sites on which they are found.

'Palaeontological' means any fossilised remains or fossil trace of animals or plants which lived in the geological past, other than fossil fuels or fossiliferous rock intended for industrial use, and any site which contains such fossilised remains or trace.

'Grave' means a place of interment and includes the contents, headstone or other marker of and any other structures on or associated with such place. Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali will only issue a permit for the alteration of a grave if it is satisfied that every reasonable effort has been made to contact and obtain permission from the families concerned. Since Amafa has not yet formulated guidelines or regulations for the removal of human remains, eThembeni adheres to the following procedures, compiled in discussion with the South African Heritage Resources Agency and used by professional colleagues:

- Notification of the impending removals (using English and Zulu language media and notices at the grave site);
- Consultation with individuals or communities related or known to the deceased;
- Satisfactory arrangements for the curation of human remains and / or headstones in a museum, where applicable;
- Procurement of a permit from Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali;
- Appropriate arrangements for the exhumation (preferably by a suitably trained archaeologist) and re-interment (sometimes by a registered undertaker, in a formally proclaimed cemetery);
- Observation of rituals or ceremonies required by the families.

**Nature of proposed activities** (information provided by the client)

The Iquba Trust assisted by the Department of Land Affairs and KwaDukuza Municipality wish to establish a development comprising 400 units of subsidised housing of approximately 80m<sup>2</sup> homesteads, a community hall, primary school and crèche facility.

The applicant intends to provide water by means of groundwater extraction and to utilise a "self contained recyclable sewerage disposal system" for all units. Power will be supplied by existing 11kV supply from the KwaDukuza grid. Water is presently abstracted from boreholes situated on the site. The applicant intends to formalise this abstraction and contain it within a reservoir to serve the formalised community. Further consideration is being provided to sustainable resource utilisation including solar and wind powered energy supplementation, water harvesting and recycling.

Access roads are present on site and it is envisaged that where applicable these roads will be hard topped with storm water control systems set in place. Alternative design and layout options will be considered in the EIA process pending outcomes from the specialist input and public comment.

Application is made under R387 of the National Environmental Management Act for the following activities;

- |          |      |  |
|----------|------|--|
| 387 2006 | 2    | Any development activity, including associated structures and infrastructure, where the total area of the developed area, is intended to be 20 hectares or more  |
| 386.2006 | 1(k) | The bulk transportation of sewage and water including storm water in pipelines with  |
|          | 1.   | an internal diameter of 0.36m or more or 2. a peak throughput of 120l per second   |
|          | 1(m) | The construction of facilities or infrastructure, including associated structures or infrastructure, for any purpose in the one in ten year flood line of a river or stream, or within 32 metres from the bank of a river or stream where the flood line is unknown, excluding purposes associated with existing residential use, but including (i) canals; (ii) channels; (iii) bridges; (iv) dams; and weirs |
|          | 2    | Construction or earth moving activities in the sea or within 100 metres inland of the high water mark of the sea, in respect of (d) embankments, (e) stabilizing waters, (f) buildings and (g) infrastructure  |
|          | 3    | The prevention of the free movement of sand, including erosion and accretion by means of planting vegetation, placing synthetic material on dunes and exposing sand surfaces within a distance of 100m inland of the high water mark of the sea  |
|          | 5    | The removal or damage of indigenous vegetation of more than 10 square metres within a distance of 100m inland of the high water mark of the sea  |
|          | 6    | The excavation, moving, removal, depositing or compacting of soil, sand, rock or rubble covering an areas of 10 square metres in the sea or within a distance of 100 metres inland of the high water mark of the sea   |
|          | 13   | The abstraction of groundwater at a volume where any general authorization issued in terms of the National Water Act 1998 (36 of 1998) will be exceeded.   |
|          | 15   | The construction of a road that is wider than 4m or that has a reserve wider than 6m   |
|          | 18   | The subdivision of portions of land 9ha or larger into portions of 5 ha or less  |



### Site access, description and environmental issues

The property is situated at S29° 18' 44.83"; E31° 24' 15.93' and is approximately 470 hectares in extent. The site lies adjacent to the Nonoti River estuary and extends along the coast in a southerly direction. The site lies upon a Pleistocene dune form which grades towards the estuary and beach. As such, the site serves as a watershed for both the Nonoti catchment and minor coastal catchments feeding directly onto the beach.

The site is hydrologically linked to the Nonoti estuary and includes areas of coastal scrub, coastal grasslands with vestiges of palm veld, and coastal forest. These habitat forms are considered to be of high significance and value. Of further interest is the presence of two retreating valley lines associated with surface and sub-surface drainage through highly erodable prehistoric dune soils. It is suggested that such erosion may have been exacerbated by the presence of cattle and other livestock.

The Nonoti estuary is ranked 121 (*Turpie et al 2002*) and is considered significant in terms of its aesthetic value, as well as the adjacent grasslands. The continuum of vegetative habitats associated with the estuary and coastal dune cordon are significant within the KwaDukuza region. At present, semi formal and informal housing are located along the highest ridges of the site and in close proximity of the estuary. Approximately 380 people reside in the area at present.

### Methodology

Two eThembeni staff members inspected the area on 18 March 2009. We completed a controlled-exclusive surface survey, where 'sufficient information exists on an area to make solid and defensible assumptions and judgements about where [heritage resource] sites may and may not be' and 'an inspection of the surface of the ground, wherever this surface is visible, is made, with no substantial attempt to clear brush, turf, deadfall, leaves or other material that may cover the surface and with no attempt to look beneath the surface beyond the inspection of rodent burrows, cut banks and other exposures that are observed by accident' (King 1978<sup>1</sup>).

We consulted various provincial databases, including historical, archaeological and geological sources and sourced a concise account of South Africa's pre and postcolonial history (available on request). We assessed the value and significance of heritage resources, as defined in the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act 1997 and the criteria contained in Appendix A. Culturally significant landscapes were assessed according to the criteria in Appendix B.

The client has provided a map of the area, submitted to Amafa separately. Geographic coordinates were obtained with a handheld Garmin GPS72 global positioning unit. Photographs were taken with a Nikon Coolpix S200 digital camera and submitted to Amafa on compact disc. A statement of independence and a summary of our ability to undertake this heritage impact assessment are available on request.

The assumptions and limitations of this heritage impact assessment are as follows:

- We have assumed that the description of the proposed project, provided by the client, is accurate.
- We have assumed that the public consultation process undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment is sufficient and adequate and does not require repetition as part of the heritage impact assessment.
- Soil surface visibility was poor. Heritage resources might be present in densely vegetated areas and we remind the client that the Act requires that a developer cease all work immediately and notify Amafa should any heritage resources, as defined in the Act, be discovered during the course of development activities.
- No subsurface investigation (including excavations or sampling) were undertaken, since a permit from Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali is required to disturb a heritage resource.

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<sup>1</sup> King, T. F. 1989. The archaeological survey: methods and uses. Quoted in Canter, L. W. 1996. Environmental impact assessment. Second Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

### Observations and recommendations

Road widening and construction had started at the time of our visit, as indicated in the following photographs.





⇒ Places, buildings, structures and equipment

None were identified within the proposed development area.

⇒ Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage

A Shembe place of worship is located on the periphery of the proposed development area (see following photograph).



This heritage resource has high heritage significance to a specific community and at the local and regional levels, at least, and may not be altered in any way without the permission of the relevant church authorities and a permit from Amafa.

No other specific places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage were identified within the proposed development site, although the general area is one of living heritage. We have assumed that compensation for the loss of agricultural and grazing land has been addressed during the public participation process. If not, such negotiations must occur through the project management team.

⇒ Historical settlements and townscapes

None were identified within the proposed development area.

⇒ Landscapes and natural features

The proposed development site is located adjacent to the Indian Ocean and the Nonoti River estuary and comprises scattered human settlement surrounded by communal grazing lands and commercial agriculture. The proposed development will alter this landscape significantly and permanently, but could be considered in keeping with dynamic, managed landscape change.

⇒ Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance

None were identified within the proposed development area.

⇒ Archaeological and palaeontological sites

None were identified within the proposed development area.

⇒ Graves and burial grounds

It is possible that ancestral graves occur within the proposed development area. If so, they will be located within homestead precincts and be known to and managed by the families concerned. Accordingly, there is little danger that they will be affected adversely by construction activities. The developer should note that all graves and burial grounds have high heritage significance at all levels for their social value and may not be altered in any way without a permit from Amafa.

⇒ Movable objects excluding any object made by a living person

None were identified within the proposed development area.

⇒ Battlefields

None were identified within the proposed development area.

⇒ Traditional building techniques

None were identified within the proposed development area.

**Summary of findings in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act 1997 Section 27(3)**

**(a) the identification and mapping of all heritage resources in the area affected**

A Shembe place of worship.

**(b) an assessment of the significance of such resources in terms of the heritage assessment criteria set out in regulations**

This heritage resource has high heritage significance to a specific community and at the local and regional levels, at least.

**(c) an assessment of the impact of development on such heritage resources**

It will be possible to incorporate the resource into the development with no adverse effects.

**(d) an evaluation of the impact of the development on heritage resources relative to the sustainable social and economic benefits to be derived from the development**

Not applicable.

**(e) the results of consultation with communities affected by the proposed development and other interested parties regarding the impact of the development on heritage resources**

The client has undertaken such consultation in terms of statutory requirements and retains the relevant documentation.

**(f) if heritage resources will be adversely affected by the proposed development, the consideration of alternatives**

The resource may not be altered in any way without the permission of the relevant church authorities and a permit from Amafa.

**(g) plans for mitigation of any adverse effects during and after completion of the proposed development**

If permission is granted for development to proceed, the client is reminded that the Act requires that a developer cease all work immediately and notify Amafa should any heritage resources, as defined in the Act, be discovered during the course of development activities.

## Conclusion

We recommend that the development proceed with the proposed heritage mitigation and have submitted this report to Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali in fulfilment of the requirements of the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act. According to Section 27(4) of the Act:

The report shall be considered timeously by the Council which shall, after consultation with the person proposing the development, decide -

- (a) whether or not the development may proceed;
- (b) any limitations or conditions are to be applied to the development;
- (c) what general protections in terms of this Act apply, and what formal protections may be applied to such heritage resources;
- (d) whether compensatory action shall be required in respect of any heritage resources damaged or destroyed as a result of the development; and
- (e) whether the appointment of specialists is required as a condition of approval of the proposal.

The client may contact Ms Wesiwe Tshabalala at Amafa's Pietermaritzburg office (telephone 033 3946 543) in due course to enquire about the Council's decision.

## APPENDIX A

## SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF HERITAGE RESOURCE SITES

The following guidelines for determining site significance were developed by the South African Heritage Resources Agency in 2003. We use them in conjunction with tables of our own formulation (see that for the Southern African Iron Age, below) when considering intrinsic site significance and significance relative to development activities, as well as when recommending mitigatory action.

## Type of Resource

Place

Structure

Archaeological Site

Palaeontological Site

Geological Feature

Grave

## Type of Significance

## 1. Historical Value

It is important in the community, or pattern of history

- Importance in the evolution of cultural landscapes and settlement patterns
- Importance in exhibiting density, richness or diversity of cultural features illustrating the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or locality.
- Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases that have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, Province, region or community.
- Importance as an example for technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement in a particular period

It has strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in history

- Importance for close associations with individuals, groups or organisations whose life, works or activities have been significant within the history of the nation, Province, region or community.

It has significance relating to the history of slavery

- Importance for a direct link to the history of slavery in South Africa.

## 2. Aesthetic Value

It is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group

- Importance to a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community.
- Importance for its creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.
- Importance for its contribution to the aesthetic values of the setting demonstrated by a landmark quality or having impact on important vistas or otherwise contributing to the identified aesthetic qualities of the cultural environs or the natural landscape within which it is located.
- In the case of an historic precinct, importance for the aesthetic character created by the individual components which collectively form a significant streetscape, townscape or cultural environment.

## 3. Scientific Value

It has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of natural or cultural heritage

- Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or benchmark site.
- Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the origin of the universe or of the development of the earth.
- Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the origin of life; the development of plant or animal species, or the biological or cultural development of hominid or human species.
- Importance for its potential to yield information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of the nation, Province, region or locality.

It is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

- Importance for its technical innovation or achievement.



## 4. Social Value

It has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

- Importance as a place highly valued by a community or cultural group for reasons of social, cultural, religious, spiritual, symbolic, aesthetic or educational associations.
- Importance in contributing to a community's sense of place.

## Degrees of Significance

## Rarity

It possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of natural or cultural heritage

- Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon structures, landscapes or phenomena.

## Representivity

It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of natural or cultural places or objects

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a range of landscapes or environments, the attributes of which identify it as being characteristic of its class.

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of human activities (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique) in the environment of the nation, Province, region or locality.

Sphere of Significance	High	Medium	Low	
International	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
National	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provincial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Regional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Specific Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----

What other similar sites may be compared to this site?

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 .....  
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 .....  
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 .....

**Southern African Iron Age**

	Significance		
	- low	- medium	- high
Unique or type site			Yes
Formal protection			Yes
Spatial patterning	?Yes	?Yes	?Yes
Degree of disturbance	75 – 100%	25 – 74%	0 – 24%
Organic remains (list types)	0 – 5 / m <sup>2</sup>	6 – 10 / m <sup>2</sup>	11 + / m <sup>2</sup>
Inorganic remains (list types)	0 – 5 / m <sup>2</sup>	6 – 10 / m <sup>2</sup>	11 + / m <sup>2</sup>
Ancestral graves			Present
Horizontal extent of site	< 100m <sup>2</sup>	101 – 1000m <sup>2</sup>	1000 + m <sup>2</sup>
Depth of deposit	< 20cm	21 – 50cm	51 + cm
Spiritual association			Yes
Oral history association			Yes
> Research potential			High
> Educational potential			High

Please note that this table is a tool to be used by qualified cultural heritage managers who are also experienced site assessors.

## APPENDIX B

## THE MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

**The Cultural Landscape Foundation<sup>2</sup> defines cultural landscapes as follows:**

A cultural landscape is a geographic area that includes cultural resources and natural resources associated with a historic event, activity, or person. Sometimes cultural landscapes are the result of one person or group of people acting upon the land. Other times they are the result of an idea one person or a group had and then created at that time. Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural lands to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. They include grand estates, farmland, public gardens and parks, college campuses, cemeteries, scenic highways and even industrial sites.

Four general types of Cultural Landscapes, not mutually exclusive, are:

- Historic Sites
- Historic Designed Landscapes
- Historic Vernacular Landscapes
- Ethnographic Landscapes

Cultural Landscapes can:

- Be man-made expressions of visual and spatial relationships.
- Serve as texts and narratives of cultures.
- Be valuable expressions of regional identity.
- Be works of art that are part of our national heritage.
- Exist in relationship to their ecological contexts.

**What are cultural landscapes? by Alice E. Ingerson, Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies<sup>3</sup>**

Virtually all landscapes have cultural associations, because virtually all landscapes have been affected in some way by human action or perception. Therefore, the Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies does not use the phrase "cultural landscape" to mean a special type of landscape. Instead, we use "cultural landscape" to mean a way of seeing landscapes that emphasizes the interaction between human beings and nature over time. ICLS also works with many other organizations, some of which have contrasting or even conflicting definitions of "cultural landscape":

individual, special, aesthetic, collective, representative, useful, cultural, related to the arts (consciously designed objects), ideas of enduring value related to the everyday beliefs and practices of a group of people, the work of landscape architects or garden designers, scenery portrayed in a painting or photograph, or that is seen as worth painting or photographing, the land that can be seen from a single vantage point (usually larger than a "site", smaller than a "region"), "nearly everything we see when we go outdoors" — Peirce Lewis 1979

<sup>2</sup> Though professional techniques for identifying, documenting, and managing cultural landscapes have evolved rapidly in the past 30 years, the results of the professionals' work often fails to reach the general public. Consequently, many of the places in which we live, work, and play often change considerably—sometimes over years and sometimes overnight! The Cultural Landscape Foundation is the only not-for-profit foundation in America dedicated to increasing the public's awareness of the importance and irreplaceable legacy of cultural landscapes. Through education, technical assistance, and outreach, the Cultural Landscape Foundation aims to broaden the support and understanding for cultural landscapes nationwide in hopes of saving our priceless heritage for future generations. The CLF achieves this mission by: (1) heightening the awareness of those who impact cultural landscapes; (2) assisting those groups and organizations who are working to increase the appreciation and recognition of cultural landscapes; and, (3) developing educational tools for young people to better connect them to their cultural landscape environs.

<sup>3</sup> From the website of the Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies of the Arnold Arboretum (<http://www.icls.harvard.edu>), © The President and Fellows of Harvard College. The Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies was formed in 1997 to support the emerging community of professionals and volunteers who manage and interpret landscapes with a significant history of human use, particularly in the northeastern United States. These practitioners work with a wide variety of places, from historic gardens and public parks to urban streetscapes, broad agricultural or industrial regions, and conservation or ecological reserves. These landscapes are neither static nor self-contained. Managing them requires active experimentation and continuous learning, to understand how past events and decisions produced today's landscapes, and how today's decisions and events are already producing tomorrow's landscapes. The Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies worked with nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and colleges and universities to capture place-based knowledge about cultural landscapes, and to respond to emerging issues.

The National Park Service and the National Register of Historic Places, as well as organizations that look to these agencies for management models and standards, use the operational definition of "cultural landscape" from the 1996 Secretary of the Interior's . . . Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes:

a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

Historic landscapes, unlike works of art, have to function as contemporary environments — we have literally to enter and become involved with them. — Catherine Howett 1987

Much public discussion about cultural landscapes is about preserving special or historic places. Yet the definition of "special" varies over time, among different cultures, and in different places. A landscape valued by one group may be simply invisible, or even offensive, to another. Next to an official historic district may be a neighborhood that is not eligible for any special treatment but has deep meaning and associations for the people who live there. Mobile homes may be critical to a farm economy, though they jar the sensibilities of visitors expecting to see only white clapboard houses and wooded hillsides from a "scenic overlook" in a state forest. The historic district and the ordinary neighborhood, working farms and protected forests, are all cultural landscapes.

Even when landscape preservation standards are broadened to include a wide range of landscape types, strict preservation is not always an appropriate stance. Designers and communities may also choose to transform existing landscapes or create new ones. Managing cultural landscapes thus involves planning for positive change as well as preventing negative change.

