



Local Structure Plan
Wilderness • Lakes • Hoekwil

March 2011

DRAFT LOCAL STRUCTURE PLAN FOR WILDERNESS, THE LAKES, HOEKWIL AND THE ADJACENT AGRICULTURAL AREAS

(Wilderness Structure Plan or WSP)
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Summary of Structure Plan Proposals / Opsomming van Struktuurplan Voorstelle

<p><u>Chapter Two:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining and protecting this landscape character is the main focus of this WSP The Planning Intervention Scenario In implementing the 'planning intervention' scenario, a strategic approach is to be used, rather than a broad brush 'blueprint planning' approach. 	<p>2.1.2</p> <p>2.2.2</p> <p>2.2.2</p>	<p><u>Hoofstuk Twee:</u></p> <p>Die hoof fokus van die WSP is om die landskap karakteristiek van die area te definieer en te beskerm.</p> <p>Beplanning Ingryping Benadering.</p> <p>Die beplannings ingryping benadering behels "n strategiese benadering eerder as 'n breë bloudruk beplanningsbenadering.</p>
<p><u>Chapter Three:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is in fact the main focus of this structure plan to ensure that the landscape character of the study area, particularly those areas in view from these tourist routes, be protected from inappropriate developments or infrastructure that could harm its special character. This structure plan should be read in conjunction with the findings of this Landscape Character Assessment of the Garden Route EMF 	<p>3.4</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p><u>Hoofstuk Drie:</u></p> <p>Dit is die hoofdoel van die struktuurplan om seker te maak dat landskap karakter van die studiegebied bewaar word veral die gedeeltes wat sigbaar is van die toeriste roetes van onwenslike ontwikkelings of infrastruktuur wat hierdie spesiale karakter kan skaad.</p> <p>Hierdie dokument moet saamgelees word met die bevindinge van die Landskap Karakter Ondersoek wat deel gevorm het van die Garden Route EMF.</p>
<p><u>Chapter Four :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following policy statements are the basis and points of departure for the entire structure plan. Land use changes including large-scale infrastructure that may have an impact on the sensitive landscape and visual resources mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 should be avoided as far as possible. If development has to occur in these sensitive landscapes or along scenic drives due to existing rights or other circumstances, it must be sensitive to the landscape and natural visual resources. In evaluating development applications these guidelines should however not be seen in isolation, other appropriate guideline documents that describe and map elements that defines the specific landscape character of Wilderness should also be consulted. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Garden Route Initiative CBA Handbook (2009) The Garden Route Environmental Management Framework (2009) 	<p>4.2.3.</p> <p>4.2.3(a)</p> <p>4.2.3(b)</p> <p>4.2.4(b)</p>	<p><u>Hoofstuk Vier :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Die volgende beleidstellings vorm die basis en vertrekpunt vir die hele struktuurplan. Grondgebruik wysigings, insluitende grootskaalse infrastruktuur projekte wat "n impak op die sensitiewe landskap en visuele bronne kan hê moet so vêr moontlik vermy word. Indien ontwikkelings wel in hierdie sensitiewe gebiede moet voorkom of langs visueel sensitiewe roetes gebou moet word, moet dit sensitief gedoen word en die landskap en visuele bronne in ag neem in ontwerp. By die evaluering van aansoeke moet die riglyne van hierdie struktuurplan nie in isolasie gesien word nie. Ander relevante dokumente wat die spesiale karakter van Wildernis beskryf en definieer moet ook in ag geneem word. Laasgenoemde sluit die volgende in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Garden Route Initiative CBA Handbook (2009) The Garden Route Environmental Management Framework (2009)

<p>to ensure that the overall landscape character of the study area is retained and improved through appropriate measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondly the approach is to prevent further development of smallholdings or extensive residential lifestyle properties in the rural landscape. • No further extensions to the demarcated smallholding areas should be considered. • No land outside of the smallholding outer boundaries may be subdivided to form new smallholdings or agricultural portions that are smaller than the minimum viable agricultural units prescribed by Department of Agriculture, Western Cape. • Subdivision of small holdings inside the demarcated small holding areas should not be granted automatically; it is also subject to the overarching guidelines that protect the special landscape character of Wilderness and should be refused if it does not comply with these guidelines. • Guidelines for Development Applications for Smallholdings <p><u>Residential Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except for Hoekwil and Towsranten, no expansion of existing residential areas are proposed. • The urban edge indicate the extent of urban and residential development for the study area; • Only two areas are earmarked for residential development beyond the existing urban area, namely: a new node at Hoekwil and further expansion of Towsranten to accommodate growth in Towsranten itself as well as the need for housing in other areas of the study area such as Kleinkrantz and Wilderness Heights. • The development of infill opportunities within the approved urban edge should be managed within the general principles contained in this WSP (Refer to chapter four) to ensure that the sensitive environment and unique character of the study area is not adversely affected. • The two informal residential areas in Kleinkrantz and 	<p>4.4.1</p> <p>4.4.3</p> <p>4.4.3</p> <p>4.4.3</p> <p>4.4.4</p> <p>4.5.3</p> <p>4.5.3</p> <p>4.5.3</p> <p>4.5.3</p>	<p>karakter en gevoel van hierdie areas beskerm word en om te verseker dat die algehele landskap karakter van die studiegebied behoue sal bly deur middel van geskikte en toepaslike maatreëls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In die tweede plek is die benadering om die verdere skep van kleinhoewes te verhoed asook ekstensiewe lewenstyl ontwikkelings in die landelike area. • Geen verdere uitbreiding van die afgebakende kleinhoewe areas moet oorweeg word nie. • Geen nuwe kleinhoewes mag buite die kleinhoewe buitengrens geskep word nie en landbougrond mag nie in gedeeltes kleiner as die minimum volhoubare landbou eenhede wat voorgeskryf word deur die Departement Landbou: Weskaap onderverdeel word nie. • Die onderverdeling van kleinhoewes binne die afgebakende kleinhoewe areas mag nie-automaties toegeken word nie. Dit is ook onderworpe aan die oorbruggende riglyne wat die spesiale landskap karakter van Wildernis beskerm en moet afgekeur word indien dit nie aan die riglyne voldoen nie. • Riglyne vir ontwikkelingsaansoeke vir Kleinhoewes <p><u>Residensiële gebiede:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buiten Hoekwil en Touwsranten word geen uitbreiding van bestaande residensiële gebiede voorgestel nie. • Die stedelike grens dui die perke van stedelike en residensiële ontwikkeling vir die studiegebied aan. • Slegs twee gebiede word vir uitbreiding buite die bestaande ontwikkelingsgebiede voorgestel. "n Nuwe node by Hoekwil en verdere uitbreiding van Touwsranten om groei te akkomodeer van Touwsranten self asook die ander gebiede soos Kleinkrantz en Wildernis Hoogte. • Die ontwikkeling van infill geleenthede binne die goedgekeurde stedelike grens moet bestuur word kragtens die algemene beginsels in hierdie struktuurplan (verwys na Hoofstuk vier) om te verseker dat die sensitiewe omgewing en unieke karakter van die studiegebied nie nadelig getref word nie.
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<p>Wilderness Heights should not be formalized. The proposal is to entice or encourage these families to relocate to Towsranten where community facilities can be provided. No forcible relocation should be considered, but any housing assistance should be provided where the other services can also be provided.</p>	4.5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Die twee informele nedersettings in Kleinkrantz en Wildernis Hoogte moet nie geformaliseer word nie. Die voorstel is om hierdie families te oorreed om vanself na Touwsranten te verskuif waar beter gemeenskapsdienste verskaf kan word. Gemeenskappe moet nie geforseer word om te verhuis nie, maar enige behuisingsbystand moet slegs voorsien word waar daar ook ander dienste is of verskaf kan word.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines For Development Applications In Residential Areas 	4.5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riglyne vir ontwikkelingsaansoeke in Residensiele gebiede.
<p><u>Business Areas:</u></p>		<p><u>Sakegebiede:</u></p>
<p>a) Four Business Nodes are proposed for the study area, i.e.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Village in Wilderness itself is the primary business node and also the tourism destination of choice. The Dunes Node is a secondary node with limited potential for expansion to incorporate more facilities for passing tourists, accommodation and local businesses. The growth of this node to the north of the N2 is not supported currently. The Hoekwil node has already been established for service industries and shops. It is proposed that this node be expanded by the inclusion of opportunities for conventional residential development as well as business use. Towsranten requires the full spectrum of business and community facilities. 	4.6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vier sake nodusse word voorgestel vir die studiegebied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Die Village in Wildernis self is die primêre sake nodus en ook die hoof toerisme bestemming Die Duine node is 'n sekondêre node met beperkte potensiaal vir uitbreiding vir hoofsaaklik toeriste, akkommodasie en plaaslike sakegebruike. Die groei van die node na die noorde van die N2 word nie tans ondersteun nie. Die Hoekwil node is reeds geskep vir diensindustrie en winkels. Die voorstel is dat hierdie node uitgebrei word deur die insluiting van geleenthede vir konvensionele residensiële ontwikkelings sowel as sakegebruik. Touwsranten benodig die volle spektrum sakegebruike en gemeenskap fasiliteite.
<p>b) The Village to become the premier tourism destination in the area. Consideration should be given to proposals for tourism facilities outside and in close proximity to this area.</p>	4.6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Die Village moet beskou word as die primêre toeriste bestemming in die area. Die munisipaliteit moet oorweeg om fasiliteite te skep vir toeriste in en rondom die area.
<p>c) Guidelines for Development Applications In Business Areas</p>	4.6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riglyne vir ontwikkelingsaansoeke in Sakegebiede.
<p><u>Natural Areas:</u></p>		<p><u>Natuur gebiede:</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The natural environment in Wilderness is one of the most important factors in categorizing this area as such as a valuable landscape and giving it such an important status. 	4.7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Die natuurlike omgewing is een van die belangrikste faktore wat die Wildernis area as 'n waardevolle landskap karakteriseer en dit so 'n belangrike status besorg.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protection of these natural areas from undesirable developments is one of the fundamental points of departure of the structure plan as stipulated in the overarching guidelines in section 4.2. 	4.7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Die beskerming van hierdie natuurlike areas van onwenslike ontwikkelings is een van die fundamentele vertrekpunte van die strukturplan soos uitgespel in die algemene riglyne in afdeling 4.2.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines For Development Applications affecting the 		

<p>Natural Environment</p> <p><u>Infrastructure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale infrastructure projects should take cognizance of the special landscape character of the study area and every effort should be made to ensure that negative impacts as a result of new infrastructure are avoided as far as possible. The policy as stipulated in paragraph 4.2.3 is applicable to infrastructure projects. <p><u>Implementation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use Management: The three step land use management system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step One : Primary Rights - Step Two : Impact on Landscape Character - Step Three : Other Guidelines • Issues requiring further attention, planning and priority funding 	<p>4.7.4</p> <p>4.8.3</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.1.1</p> <p>5.1.2</p> <p>5.1.3</p> <p>5.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riglyne vir ontwikkelingsaansoeke wat die natuurlike omgewing beïnvloed. <p><u>Infrastruktuur:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grootskaalse infrastruktuur projekte moet die spesiale karakter van die studiegebied in ag neem en spesiale aandag moet gegee word om seker te maak dat negatiewe impak as gevolg van infrastruktuur projekte is vermy so vër as moontlik. Die riglyne soos uitgespel in paragraaf 4.2 is ook van toepassing op infrastruktuur projekte. <p><u>Implementering:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grondgebruik Bestuur: Die drie stap grondgebruik bestuur stelsel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stap Een : Primêre regte - Stap Twee : Impak of landskap karakter - Stap Drie : Ander Riglyne • Aspekte wat verdere aandag benodig, beplanning en prioriteit finansiering.
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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The Need for a Structure Plan for Wilderness

1.1.1 Special Character of Wilderness

Wilderness and The Lakes area, including Hoekwil and the agricultural areas to the north have a specific and unique character that defines the area, attracts vast numbers of tourists to our area and contains very sensitive and valuable landscapes. To assist decision takers and developers to manage the future development of this area, the George Town Council approved guidelines to ensure the sustainable use and protection of the positive landscape characteristics of this area. The George Municipality stated the following goals for the structure plan:

- Define the space economy for Wilderness in both the regional and George context.
- Associated development objectives, guidelines and strategies;
- Densification guidelines and strategy;
- Management Strategy for the coastal dune belt and estuarine rivers.

1.1.2 Consolidation of Existing Planning

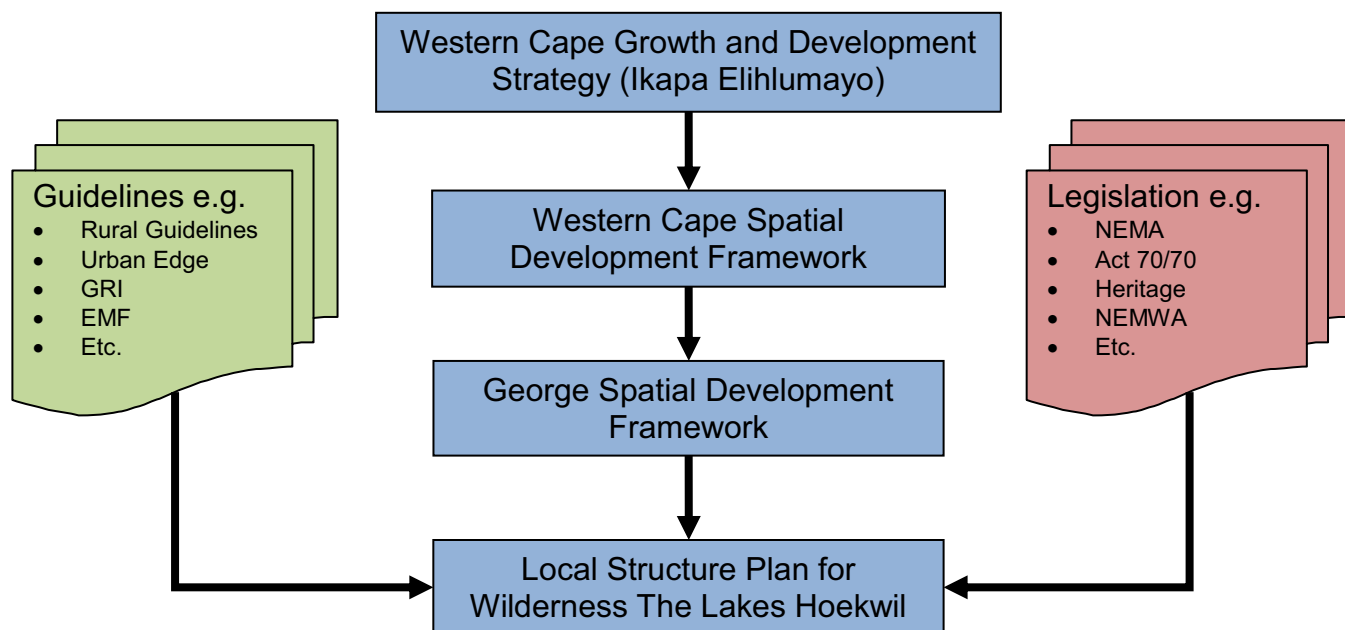
The Wilderness Area is managed currently by a plethora of planning tools, ranging from documents more than 20 years old, national guidelines, provincial planning guidelines as well as local planning guidelines. These documents contain conflicting guidelines and planning proposals for this area which creates uncertainty amongst the local community, investors and developers and difficulties in land use management on the part of the George Municipality and Provincial Government.

One of the aims of the WSP is to consolidate these planning guidelines into one planning guideline for the area. The following planning guidelines are currently applicable in the Wilderness area and will be repealed with the approval of the WSP.

- Structure Plan For Hoekwil And Towsranten
- Structure Plan For Wilderness Heights
- Wilderness Local Structure Plan
- South Cape Sub-Regional Structure Plan (1997)
- Sub-Regional Structure Plan For Coastal Area Of Outeniqua And Humansdorp
- Knysna – Wildernis – Plettenberg Bay Guide Plan / Regional Structure Plan

1.1.3 Strengthening the George and Western Cape Spatial Development Frameworks

The overarching development principles contained in the Western Cape Spatial Development Framework as well as the Draft George Spatial Development Framework provides very broad planning guidelines that is refined further to provide in the specific needs of the Wilderness, Lakes and Hoekwil areas. The following diagramme indicates the relationship with other planning guidelines that applies to the area.



It is important to note that the WSP does not replace, summarise or copy any other guideline, process or legislation. These documents will co-exist along with the WSP and should be consulted when required.

1.2 The Planning Area

The planning area is referred to as Wilderness, The Lakes, Hoekwil and the agricultural areas adjacent to it. In practice the WSP will be applicable from the Kaaimans River in the west, along the coast to the Municipal Boundary between George and Knysna in the east and along the Outeniqua Mountains in the North. The Structure Plan Map does not cover the entire area as the landscape categories particularly to the north of the seven passes road are very similar in nature. The principles do however apply to this area as well.

1.3 Alignment of the WSP with Neighbouring Areas

Wilderness is a very unique area that is functionally and in terms of landscape character separated from the rest of George. It is important however to ensure that the policy and guidelines pertaining to similar areas (e.g. small holdings) are co-ordinated and aligned.

The Lakes Area continue into the Knysna Municipal area and functionally as well as in terms of the landscape character there are many similarities and systems that function over the boundaries of the municipalities. It was important therefore to ensure that the policies applicable in Knysna Municipality are consulted and that the relevant policy guidelines are aligned and co-ordinated.

SECTION 2 CONCEPTS

2.1 Key Development Challenges for Wilderness, The Lakes and Hoekwil

2.1.1 Demographic and Socio-economic Challenges

The biggest challenge facing the study area is poverty and accommodating the poor. Currently three settlements have emerged that requires assistance from the various spheres of government for almost all their daily requirements. These are:

- Towsranten
- Kleinkrantz
- Wilderness Heights

a) *Towsranten*

Towsranten has grown into a large residential area that requires higher order functions based purely on the number of people residing within its boundaries. Negotiations for land and planning for its expansion has finally resulted in a new project being initiated during 2010. This expansion will undoubtedly not be the last and the planning of subsequent phases should be initiated immediately, particularly as approval processes take so long. Planning projects should furthermore focus on community facilities and business areas as these are sadly lacking in subsidized housing projects.

b) *Kleinkrantz*

A poor community has also established themselves to the east of Kleinkrantz within an area not suitable for housing. They are situated within the 800m radius around the sewerage treatment plant and is actually in a very unhealthy location. The George Municipality is in constant negotiations with the residents and is considering the formalization of these families in this location. From a planning point of view this approach is not supported and in the Kleinkrantz Spatial Development Plan, the following approach have been adopted:

- From a planning point of view it is undesirable to establish a subsidised housing development in this location.
- The community that requires housing, clearly needs to be supported with community facilities such as schools, clinics, municipal offices, crèches, shops, sporting facilities, community halls, etc. None of these facilities are currently available in Kleinkrantz and the population is too small currently to justify this expenditure in this location.

- A decision to accommodate the subsidised housing component must be supported with actions to bring facilities closer to these families and Kleinkrantz, even fully developed, is too small to justify any of the facilities mentioned in the previous paragraph. There are too many other communities that require these facilities before spending this funding in this location is justified.
- A non-viable residential area will be created, one which will require municipal and social infrastructure, which is needed much more in the other established residential areas of George.
- It is proposed therefore that provision be made for these families in the other residential areas of George (including Towsranten) where facilities and even employment opportunities are available. This does not however include forcibly moving families. Families should be enticed to relocate by offering housing and a better quality of life.
- Should relevant decision takers decide to proceed with the subsidised housing project regardless of these policy guidelines, this decision should be supported by providing the necessary infrastructure a community such as this require.

c) Wilderness Heights

Like Kleinkrantz, it is undesirable from a planning point of view to formalize the existing informal settlement at Wilderness Heights. The PSDF clearly stipulates that government funding should be spent in areas and on communities where the highest return is possible. George Municipality cannot afford to create new residential areas which they cannot support with appropriate services and facilities. It is harsh and unfortunate but the most appropriate solution for the approximately 80 families is to relocate to the established Towsranten or one of the projects in George itself.

In the rest of the study area undue pressure for further densification or expansion does not exist, probably because the sensitivity of this area has for years restricted any substantial growth opportunities. The area that is receiving the most attention recently is the small holding areas where smaller subdivisions are requested to accommodate more people in the study area.

d) Economic Base and relationship with George

Wilderness attracts many visitors to the Garden Route. To many Wilderness is the heart of the Garden Route experience. Yet Wilderness does not have many shops, or employment opportunities that profits from this source of income. George in many ways enjoys these benefits from this source of tourists. Wilderness remains the draw card or tourist attraction. It accommodates many overnight visitors and meals are served to passers' by. That is almost the extent of the business contribution of the beautiful area to the regional economy. It is an important contribution, but what is much more important is to ensure that the attraction that brings the tourists, should be protected and developed further. That attraction is Wilderness. In this document an attempt will be made to identify those special characteristics that attracts the tourists and to protect it with appropriate measures.

2.1.2 Natural Systems

The very high value of the Wilderness landscape character is to a large degree due to the unique and intact natural systems found in the study area. The combination of the large water bodies of the various lakes, surrounded by forest and fynbos, which in turn is flanked by a beautiful coastline to the south and the Outeniqua Mountains to the north creates a landscape that is not only unique and valuable, it is also very sensitive to change.

Defining and protecting this landscape character is the main focus of this WSP.

The area will undoubtedly still grow and land use changes within its boundaries will still be requested, but this should be managed as best as possible to ensure that this vulnerable system is protected for the future generations and that it continues to function effectively and attract the visitors to our area as it does currently.

2.1.3 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement structure within the study area has changed dramatically over the last ten years. The Village in Wilderness has always been the main centre in terms of function and size. A smaller node at the so-called Holiday-Inn area, developed over time into a tourism accommodation establishment and petrol filling station. However the most dramatic change has been the growth of Towsrante. This area certainly represents the largest concentration of people and in terms of where facilities are required, Towsrante in future will require significant investment from the George Municipality. It is also set to grow even further as well.

The informal settlements in the study area remains the biggest challenge for the municipality as well as the integrity of the area and the sustainability of the landscape character. The establishment of a new urban node at Wilderness Heights and a subsidized housing project in Kleinkrantz not only will change the landscape character of this area dramatically, it will create new pockets of poverty where the already scarce resources of the municipality should be allocated.

2.2 Possible Development Scenario's

The current state of the study area has been shaped by the development trends that have persisted over the past number of decades. Although a number of options are available, two divergent possibilities exist in terms of how it will be shaped in the future. These are the *'business as usual scenario'* and the *'planning intervention scenario'*. Both are hinged upon the **role the George Municipality chooses to play** in reinforcing and counteracting specific development trends.

2.2.1 Business as Usual Scenario

In terms of this approach, growth and development within the study area could continue along its current path. This implies no significant intervention by the municipality, resulting in the perpetuation of the existing unsustainable and inequitable social and spatial development patterns and ultimately the destruction of this very unique and special place. This will also have far reaching cost implications for utility service provision by the Municipality. This approach will see the following scenario's materialize:

a) Future N2 Alignment

Without strong planning intervention the construction of the planned future N2 national road through the very heart of The Lakes system will have disastrous consequences for the character of this area. Alternatives for this proposal will have to be sought and investigated.

b) Uncontrolled subdivisions

The rural character of the Wilderness Heights area as well as Hoekwil and the Langvlei Dunes are due to a special rural ambience created by specific distances between residential buildings. This distance is maintained mainly through minimum sizes for the small holdings as well as strict adherence to building lines. If the municipality should give in to development pressures to reduce the minimum sizes of the small holdings and the resultant building lines, the very nature of the area could change into an peri-urban environment. Strong planning control and intervention is required to maintain this special character.

c) Pockets of Poverty

One of the biggest threats to this area is the establishment of further nodes of subsidized housing, creating more pockets of poverty. This is a real danger with extreme pressure on politicians to accommodate the current informal residents at both Kleinkrantz as well as Wilderness Heights. Not only will it create unsustainable residential areas that will have severe financial implications for the Municipality, it will destroy significant portions of an already vulnerable landscape.

d) Eroding the Landscape Character

An attitude of allowing small departures from the vision to protect the special landscape character of Wilderness, over time will destroy the area as well. The area consists of so many small properties with so many opportunities for small departures that this could also have devastating consequences for the area over time. (*The so-called death by a thousand cuts*). This implies that buildings on the skyline (however small) and developments on steep south facing slopes (consisting of only a few units), and houses on the beach front encroaching over building lines (only small distances) collectively, over time will destroy Wilderness.

These are just some of the examples to illustrate the principle. The business as usual approach will see the destruction of this special place.

2.2.2 Planning Intervention Scenario

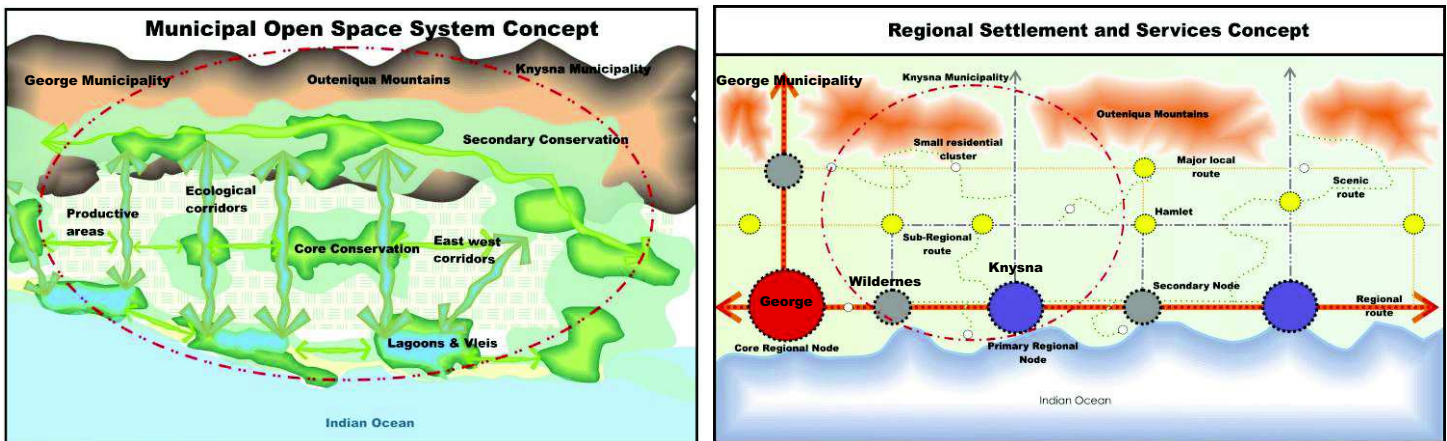
Alternatively, the municipality could decide to pro-actively embrace the guidance set by recent legislation and policy at national and provincial level, as well as the spatial principles of growth and equity, integration and sustainability. This would result in a fundamental shift in the management of growth and development pressures in the Wilderness area, towards a more sustainable approach. The decision by the municipality to prepare a structure plan for this area provides an opportunity to realign the current pathway. A more sustainable development path requires immediate commitment to being more pro-active in guiding spatial development, commitment to change the trends of infrastructure investment patterns and taking a long term view on resultant outcomes.

It is noted that at the time that the Municipality decides to change from a 'business as usual' to a 'planning intervention' scenario, there may be initial impacts on growth and associated costs. These will, however, be greater the longer it takes for such a step to be initiated. (Refer the informal settlements in Kleinkrantz and Wilderness Heights)

In addition, unless there is strong commitment to such an approach, there is a chance that a 'business as usual' approach will again set in. In implementing the 'planning intervention' scenario, **a strategic approach** is to be used, rather than a broad brush 'blueprint planning' approach. As such, certain key sectors will be focused on, to direct the future of the area, rather than trying to address all the challenges at once. This approach is outlined in Section 3 'Wilderness Development Framework'.

SECTION 3 WILDERNESS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

A sound conceptual framework is the basis (along with contextual realities) for the WSP. The *Planning Intervention* scenario focuses on managing growth by using the following key spatial structuring elements:



These diagrammatic concepts are included in the Knysna SDF but includes the lakes area of Wilderness as well. The reason these drawings have been included in the Wilderness Structure Plan is to highlight the linkages between these areas, specifically the environmental corridors and conceptual frameworks.

3.1 Open Space System

This structure plan is focused on the identification of all the 'green' land use activities that should be protected from urban development as they are important from an environmental, tourism, productive, recreational, and social perspective and also to accommodate future growth. This also includes the lakes, indigenous vegetation, forests, rivers, floodplains, coastal and inland dunes, agricultural land uses, etc.

Detailed studies such as the Garden Route Environmental Management Framework and the GRI Handbook to name only two, has already been undertaken, and has provided an informed basis for this structuring element.

3.2 Urban Areas

The very strong focus on protecting the open space system in the study area results almost automatically in a policy whereby urban development will be restricted to exiting

built-up areas. No extension to any of the residential areas are proposed on the coast and Wilderness itself.

Only two exceptions are proposed. The first being the necessary expansion of Towsranten to accommodate future growth in this area. A new node is also proposed for Hoekwil to accommodate growth in this area and to relieve pressure from the further subdivision of all the small holdings. It is envisaged that Hoekwil could be developed as a rural hamlet with a special character that could attract visitors to the area and create jobs for the nearby Towsranten where a large number of families live in absolute poverty.

3.3 Urban Edges

They define the outer limits of development for the next three to five years. These may be revised as more information becomes available from further studies. Their main purpose is to encourage better use of existing urban land (through strategic infill and densification) and to manage the future growth and development within the Wilderness area. Two types of edges are proposed in the study area, namely urban edges, already referred to as well as Small Holding Outer Boundaries. These boundaries contain the small holding areas to ensure that they do not encroach into the neighbouring agricultural areas.

3.4 Movement Systems

The movement systems through the study area not only serve to accommodate the internal movement of its residents, the regional traffic between larger centres such as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, it also accommodates tourists through and to the study area. The majority of the routes in the study area are recognized tourist routes and not only is it important that the physical quality and efficiency of the roads be maintained. It is also very important how the landscape along these routes are treated to ensure that the landscape character is protected and enhanced. It is in fact the **main focus of this structure plan to ensure that the landscape character of the study area, particularly those areas in view from these tourist routes, be protected from inappropriate developments or infrastructure that could harm its special character.**

The focus of these planning tools is on directing development and infrastructural utility service investment in Wilderness, as well as managing and directing ongoing private sector development applications, in particular those on the edge and outside of existing urbanised areas. Employment opportunities in rural areas, especially in respect of small-scale tourism development should also be considered however.

SECTION 4 POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

This section represents the application of the concepts highlighted in the previous section to the contextual realities in Wilderness. It focuses on proposals and broad land-use guidelines for each component. Furthermore, in cases where significant growth management implications exist, these issues are discussed and focused policies are offered to facilitate decision-making and action in relation to these growth management issues.

As eluded to on several occasions already, the main focus of this structure plan is the protection of the landscape character of Wilderness. The basis of the entire section therefore is contained in Section 4.2 which highlights this special character and proposes guidelines that all development applications should adhere to.

4.2 Landscape Character

4.2.1 Strategic Perspective

This section of the Garden Route contains some of the most spectacular but also most sensitive view sheds along the entire Garden Route. It is a recognized and very important tourist route which accommodates a large percentage of tourism traffic to and through our area. Not only is it an important tourism route, the integrity of the ecosystems, lakes and last remaining remnants of forest are equally important from a conservation and ecological perspective. It is vitally important that the landscape character and view sheds along this tourism route be protected by appropriate guidelines and even regulations to ensure that this landscape and visual resource is protected for the generations to come. The various elements that contribute to the importance of this landscape are as follows:

- a) Wilderness qualities and pristine eco-systems – the forests and lakes and the coastline on either side of the tourism routes.
- b) Areas with formal protected status such as the Garden Route National Park.
- c) Heritage sites or Scenic routes – the views from various routes through the area includes spectacular visual experiences particular the forested south facing slopes of the steep escarpment north of the lakes.
- d) Outstanding rural and townscape qualities;
- e) Wilderness' special character and sense of place;
- f) Important tourism and recreation value;
- g) Important Vistas or scenic corridors – visually prominent ridgelines and slopes – in Wilderness this is a very important component of the landscape character.

4.2.2 Background and Analysis

A detailed Landscape Character Assessment of the study area was conducted and incorporated into the Garden Route EMF. The assessment identified the character of the area and those factors that are particularly important in creating that character. To protect the character of the area, those positive key characteristics should be protected from adverse land use changes. This structure plan should therefore be read in conjunction with the findings of this Landscape Character Assessment. The structure plan will highlight an appropriate planning response to the assessment through broad planning policy and guidelines, but the authorities should take cognizance of the Garden Route EMF's Landscape Guidelines when evaluating applications.

Landscape Guidelines are the results of this analysis, and are established to indicate the actions required to ensure that the distinctive character of Wilderness is maintained. These guidelines are sub-divided according to both the landscape type and the main pressures likely to result in landscape change, namely agriculture, natural open space, conservation areas, settlement and built development etc.

a) *Status of Landscapes*

Certain landscape types and areas have been identified for special recognition, based upon considerations such as:-

- i. **Natural Beauty** - This encompasses flora, fauna, geological and physio-graphical features.
- ii. **Recreational Opportunity** - Opportunities afforded for open-air recreation, having regard both to landscape character and position in relation to centre's of population.
- iii. **Natural Beauty and Amenity** - This is a composite term. It regards natural heritage as including the physical elements of flora, fauna, geology, physio-graphic features and natural beauty and amenity. This combination of terms covers the physical landscape, but also the less tangible aspects such as remoteness or tranquility, and aspects of landscape experience which appeal to senses other than sight.

b) *Landscape Value*

Refers to the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes, and reasons for valuation. Criteria for the evaluation includes:

- i. **Landscape Quality** - The intactness of the landscape and the condition of features and elements;
- ii. **Scenic Quality** - Used to describe landscapes which appeal primarily to the visual senses;
- iii. **Rarity** - Presence of rare features and elements in the landscape, or the presence of a rare landscape character type such as the lakes;

- iv. **Conservation Interests** - Presence of features of particular wildlife, earth science or archaeological, historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- v. **Wildness** - The presence or wild character in the landscape which makes a contribution to sense of place;
- vi. **Associations** - With specific people, artists, writers, media or historical events; such as Prime Minister P W Botha and Victor Smith, the first man to fly open cockpit from Cape town to London over Africa.
- vii. **Tranquillity** - Is a composite feature related to low levels of built development, traffic, noise and artificial lighting.

c) *Landscape Capacity*

The application of the Landscape Character Assessment will assist in making decisions about the ability of a specific area to accommodate change. Judgments must be based on an understanding of the ability of the landscape to accommodate this change without a significant effect on its character. Capacity is informed by potential effects on character and/or particular features and elements.

The Landscape Character Assessment clearly shows that the landscape value as well as the status of the landscape in the study area is very high. On the other hand, the assessment unfortunately also clearly shows that **the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change, is low and hence the sensitivity of the environment to land use changes. Land use changes in the study area should therefore be dealt with, with utmost care and due recognition of these factors.**

4.2.3 Proposals and Policy guidelines

The following guidelines are applicable to all development applications for any change in land use, including rezoning, departures, special consents, subdivisions and even building plan approvals:

- a) Land use changes including large-scale infrastructure that may have an impact on the sensitive landscape and visual resources mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 should be avoided as far as possible. These include the following:
 - A change in land use from the prevailing use;
 - A use that is in conflict with an adopted plan or vision for the area;
 - A significant change to the fabric and character of the area;
 - A significant change to the townscape or streetscape;
 - Possible visual intrusion in the landscape such as developments that are proposed on skylines, are out of scale and causes light pollution during the night, etc.;
 - Obstruction of views of others in the area.

b) If development has to occur in these sensitive landscapes or along scenic drives due to existing rights or other circumstances, it must be sensitive to the landscape and natural visual resources. The layout, buildings, density, landscape treatment and infrastructure should:

- Be visually unobtrusive,
- Utilise materials and colours that originate from or blend into the surrounding landscape,
- Be grouped in clusters with open spaces between clusters,
- Not interfere with the skyline, landmarks, major views and vistas,
- Respond to the historical, architectural and landscape style of surrounding layout and buildings,
- Incorporate existing man-made or natural landmarks and movement patterns
- Keep and protect a visual buffer along the N2 National Road as far as possible.

These policy statements are the basis and points of departure for the entire structure plan. All the other guidelines and policy statements should be informed by it and every application for a change in land use should be measured against these overriding principles.

4.2.4 Guidelines for applications affecting the Landscape Character of Wilderness

This section contains further details of the landscape character analysis and importance with a view to implementing the policy statements contained in paragraph 4.2.3.

a) Regional Landscape Character Assessment

Wilderness is situated in the heart of the Garden Route. The area is commonly known as the Garden Route for obvious and very clear reasons – due to its very high aesthetic and landscape appeal.

The entire study area is topographically diverse in many respects. The area is flanked by the high Outeniqua Mountains to the north, and the Garden Route coastline to the south. Similarly the western extent of the study area encompasses the scenic Kaaimans River valley, and the pristine Swartvlei Estuary in the east.

The extreme northern extent of the study area is topographically very diverse comprising the Outeniqua Mountains. The 'Outeniquas' provide a dramatic backdrop and setting to the Garden Route, constantly framing the landscape quality with its covering of mountain fynbos, indigenous forest and forestry plantation. The foothills of the Outeniquas are characterised predominately by a mix of agricultural landscapes, in the upper reaches and catchments of the larger Garden Route

Rivers. Water abstraction for pivot irrigation purposes are concentrated around the head waters of permanent water sources, in areas where slopes are more gradual.

The interphase between the agricultural landscape and the indigenous forest and plantation areas forms a distinctive fringe (forest fringe). The overarching cultural landscape is composed predominantly of small farm units and small holdings, interspersed throughout the characteristically diverse topographical landscape. Closer towards the coastline along the inland plains, urban and rural residential landscapes emerge more prominently. There is an extensive mix of rural residential (which includes smaller home industries, hospitality industry and tourism related land uses), commercial forestry, and farmsteads all interspersed by natural vegetation and indigenous forest mosaics.

The inland plain is separated from the coastal plateau by a series of low foothills. The coastal hamlet of, Wilderness is situated on the periphery of the coastal lake system which gives the Garden Route its very unique *genus loci*. Similarly, this is further enhanced by the fact that the lakes are protected areas. Wilderness and Knysna are particularly difficult areas to manage from a landscape and aesthetic quality perspective as the National Parks are intertwined by urban and residential development, making these Parks relatively unique in the South African context of traditionally recognized protected areas. The study area is similarly characterised by a dramatic and equally diverse coastline.

Vegetatively the area is characterised by fynbos, coastal thicket and extensive indigenous forests. Similarly, the area is also characterised by extensive forestry plantations. Although these plantations are not indigenous they do contribute to the overall quality of the Garden Route sense of place, whilst the undiscerning traveler would not find them particularly offensive. The qualitative value of the fynbos and indigenous forest cover varies substantially, from pristine to modified, with areas of extensive alien vegetation infestation (particularly along the lower reaches of the more significant rivers), and mixed exotic and indigenous forest mosaics patches. The azonal coastal dune vegetation has similarly in areas been impacted significantly on by alien infestation of 'Rooikrans'.

Generally speaking the Regional Character can be considered as having a **significant scenic landscape value**, with a complex mosaic of high quality visual experiences, from numerous prominent visual receptors and view sheds throughout the study area. The *Genus Loci* of the area is not only limited to the natural and topographical splendour, but is similarly enhanced by the quaint villages and hamlets, which have largely retained their character and developed around the existing sense of place.

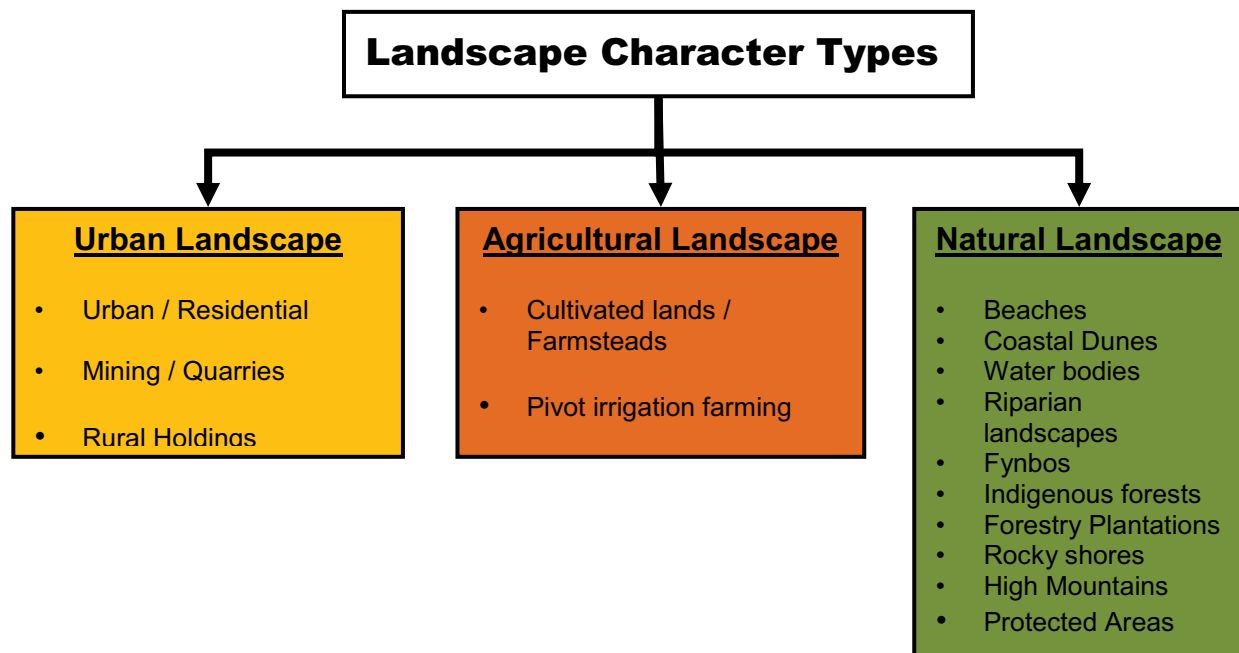
b) Assessment of Individual Landscape Character Types

Various assessments of the landscape character have been done of the study area. As this is such an important aspect of the structure plan and the future management of the area, a brief summary of these assessments is included as part of the

structure plan. In evaluating development applications these guidelines should however not be seen in isolation, other appropriate guideline documents that describe and map elements that defines the specific landscape character of Wilderness should also be consulted. Currently these include:

- The Garden Route Initiative CBA Handbook (2009)
- The Garden Route Environmental Management Framework (2009)
- George Municipality : Landscape Characterisation and Visual Resource Analysis (May 2009)

The following tables summarise the landscape character analysis as contained in the Garden Route EMF.



The criteria to assign 'values' to a specific landscape area based upon the sensitivity of its character is as follows:-

- 0 - Low or no inherent character quality of value
- 1 - Medium level of character quality or value
- 2 - High or exceptional landscape character value.

Landscape Character	Urban Landscape
Local Character Area	Settlement / Urban
Description	Small towns, hamlets and villages. The larger of which are positioned along the coast on the lakes of the Garden Route. Knysna, the largest is positioned around the Knysna Estuary, with commanding views across the estuary towards the ocean. Wilderness and Sedgfield are similarly

	positioned around The Serpentine and Touws River, and Eilandvlei; and Swartvlei respectively. The hamlets comprise predominantly of residential land use and supporting industries such as limited industry (local market predominantly), retail and commercial. Further, this landscape also includes social amenities such as cemeteries. This landscape also constitutes formal as well as informal settlements. Associated with various topographical areas and features. Infrastructure in the Garden Route tends to contribute to the Sense of Place through its utilisation as a conduit for visual reception. Although the main infrastructure contributor to the area, the N2 has influenced the Genus Loci negatively, it is the same element which affords the visitor the opportunity to experience the Garden Route. The N2 can be considered as a Scenic Highway.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential neighbourhoods • Open space amenity • Cultural and heritage areas
Landscape Capacity	Certain urban residential landscapes have a very low ability to accommodate change, such as residential and heritage precincts, and urban open space.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential precincts are to be protected from visual deterioration, • Central business districts with defined heritage sense of place to be protected and enhanced, • Open space amenity should be retained, • Urban heritage precincts are to be protected.
Landscape Value	1

Landscape Character	Urban Landscape
Local Character Area	Urban Fringe / Small Holdings
Description	The interphase between formal settlements and larger farmsteads and commercial agricultural landscapes. This would include the interphase between the villages and forestry / large scale natural vegetated areas as well, comprising rural residential units. Usually well structured small holdings of between 1 -10 ha in extent, usually located on the outer limits of structured residential areas. At times forming the buffer between residential settlements and forestry / natural areas. In urban growth areas experiences significant pressure from denser residential, commercial and light industrial development. Characterised predominantly by single dwelling units with rights for a second dwelling. Small scale farming activity associated with classic land use, as well as a mosaic of commercial activities centered on resorts and tourism, cottage industries etc. In affluent areas, small holdings are primarily utilised exclusively for residential purposes. Usually areas of higher landscape character value due to strong rural / natural residential character, within lower residence densities.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large rural properties • Large component of natural environmental features • Rural 'sense of place'
Landscape Capacity	Low ability to absorb development change. Night and light pollution is a concern on escarpments.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural 'sense of place' to be protected • Tranquil country lifestyles • Largely natural environmental features
Landscape Value	1

Landscape Character	Urban Landscape
Local Character Area	Mining and Quarrying
Description	Identifiable large scale mining and quarrying activities. Restricted in the study area to sand and stone quarrying activities. Located on fringes of settlements or within the rural / natural or agricultural landscapes. Very low landscape character value due to the level of qualitative degradation associated with this type of activity. Mining landscapes can usually accommodate a high level of detrimental change. This landscape is characterised by large scale sand extraction activities.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually poor landscape • Associated with polluting activities, ie dust.
Landscape Capacity	Medium ability to absorb change.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally large capacity for landscape improvement • Medium ability to absorb reasonable negative change
Landscape Value	0

Landscape Character	Agricultural Landscape
Local Character Area	Pivot Irrigation Crop Production
Description	Medium scale agricultural landscapes comprising predominantly of identifiable circular irrigated fields mostly in close proximity to surface water resources, such as dams, rivers or 'spruits'.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monoculture dominated landscapes • At times scenic diverse areas • Rural landscape character • Defined sense of place • Natural ecological areas (functional) • Certain of the older agricultural landscapes have cultural and heritage significance
Landscape Capacity	Medium to high ability to accommodate moderate change, only due to the low possibility of viewer incidences. Certain rural agricultural landscapes will however have a low ability to absorb change.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural 'sense of place' to be protected • Tranquil country lifestyles • Interspersed with natural environmental features
Landscape Value	1

Landscape Character	Agricultural Landscape
Local Character Area	Rural Farmsteads
Description	Rural residences without definite signs of large scale commercial farming. Identifiable as smaller units than the larger commercial practices. Usually an intermediate between formal large scale agricultural landscapes and urban fringe landscapes which are easily identifiable by their critical mass and size. At times no distinguishable agricultural practices associated with the residences.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At times scenic diverse areas • Rural landscape character • Defined sense of place

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural ecological areas (functional) Certain of the older agricultural landscapes have cultural and heritage significance
Landscape Capacity	Medium to low ability to accommodate moderate change, only due to the low possibility of viewer incidences.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural 'sense of place' to be protected Tranquil country lifestyles Interspersed with natural environmental features
Landscape Value	1

Landscape Character	Natural Landscape
Local Character Area	Sandy Beaches
Description	The sensitive azonal area between the water level of the sea and the dune system. Usually unvegetated, but may comprise low hummock dunes and azonal vegetation. A landscape utilised for recreation purposes and appreciated visually for its visual access to the sea.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenic diverse areas Natural landscape character Defined sense of place Natural ecological areas (functional)
Landscape Capacity	Low ability to accommodate moderate change, due to the exposed nature of this landscape, and the very high viewer incidence associated with it.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural 'sense of place' to be protected Often associated with extreme tranquillity Interspersed with natural environmental features Associated with conservation areas
Landscape Value	1

Landscape Character	Natural Landscape
Local Character Area	High Mountains
Description	The Outeniqua mountains form a dramatic backdrop to the Garden Route in the north. The National Lakes area / Garden Route is nested or cradled between the Indian Ocean in the south and the Outeniqua Mountains in the north. The mountains "frame" the viewshed of the Garden Route. A sensitive landscape in the study area. Comprising significant areas with distinctly identifiable topographical diversity. The vegetated slopes of the Outeniquas are similarly important in emphasising the natural sense of place.
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topographically scenic diverse areas Often social amenity structure Well defined sense of place Natural ecological areas (functional) Associated at times with conservation areas
Landscape Capacity	Usually with a physically higher ability and capacity to accommodate change, especially in the lowland areas associated with this landscape. However, the sensitivity of the landscape (social, cultural and visual perspective) does not support change well.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas which serve as places of active social amenity – passive and active recreation, require protection, Scenic and visually sensitive environmental features require protection,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological and amenity functionality – landscape linkages to be protected, • Strong visual sense of place to be protected, • Protected environment status.
Landscape Value	2

Landscape Character	Natural Landscape
Local Character Area	Indigenous Forest
Description	<p>A critically important landscape within the larger South African context. The landscape comprises the vegetation of the Southern Afrotemperate Forest vegetation type. It forms an extensive network across the study area, and is a significant contributor to the Garden Route Genus Loci. This landscape is similarly emphasised by the underlying diversity in topography</p> <p>Southern Afrotemperate Forest Mostly confined to the pediment, plains and river valleys extending through the area but absent from the coastal plain. The vegetation is characterized by tall closed canopy forest comprised of typical species such as Yellowwood <i>Afrocarpus falcatus</i>, <i>Podocarpus latifolius</i>, <i>Olea capensis</i> ssp. <i>macrophylla</i>, <i>Nuxia floribunda</i>, <i>Cassine peragua</i>, <i>Elaeodendron croceum</i>, <i>Ekebergia capensis</i>, <i>Cunonia capensis</i>, <i>Curtisia dentata</i>, <i>Rhus chirindensis</i> and <i>Rapanea melanophloeos</i> among others.</p> <p>The largest areas within the GREMF area include Groeneweide and Bergplaas Forests, both falling within the Garden Route National Park. Smaller remnants occur along the Touw and Duiwe Rivers, but many others, mostly in sheltered valleys on south facing slopes, are on private land.</p>
Landscape Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic diverse areas • Natural and Rural landscape character • Defined sense of place • Natural ecological areas (functional)
Landscape Capacity	A medium to low ability to accommodate change.
Positive Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas which serve as places of active social amenity – passive and active recreation, require protection, • Scenic and visually sensitive environmental features require protection, • Ecological and amenity functionality – landscape linkages to be protected, • Strong visual sense of place to be protected,
Landscape Value	2

Landscape Character	Natural Landscape
Local Character Area	Riparian Landscapes
Description	<p>Aquatic and riparian landscapes occurring throughout the study area, but excluding those associated with residential / urban settlement landscapes. Consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers • Dams • Wetlands