



Hilland Environmental

Environmental Assessment Practitioners

SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION REPORT (SSVR) FOR HOOGELAND FARMS



Submitted by	Hilland Environmental
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SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION REPORT (SSVR) FOR HOOGELAND COASTAL FARMSTEADS**Submitted to:****NOI AND PRE-APP BAR****Conditions of report use:**

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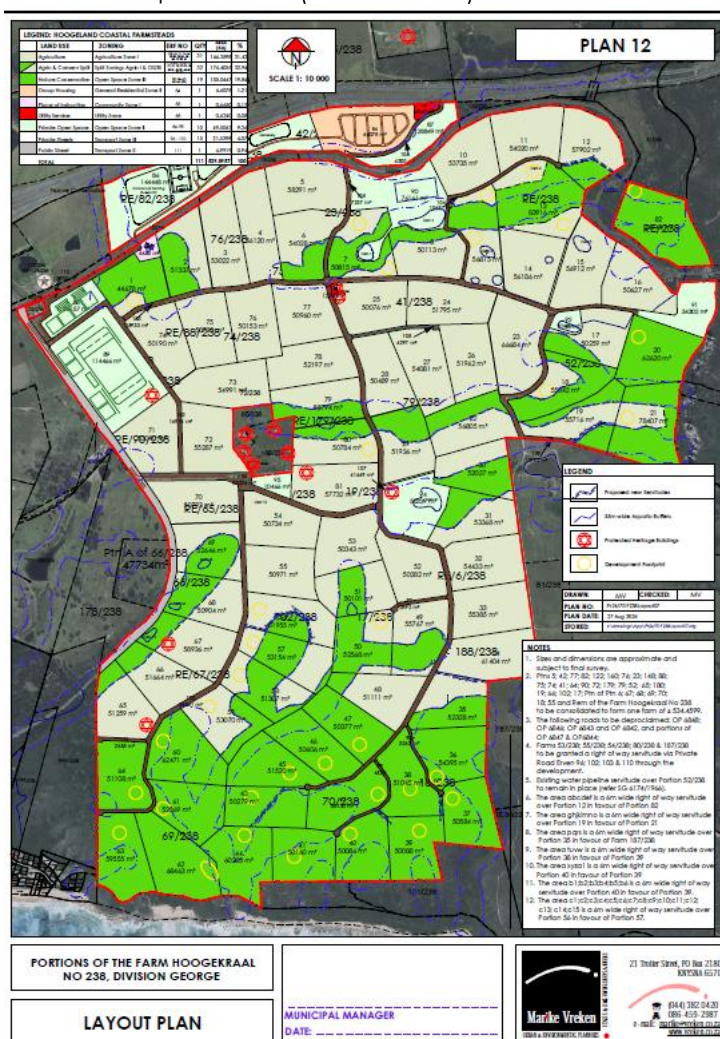
1 INTRODUCTION

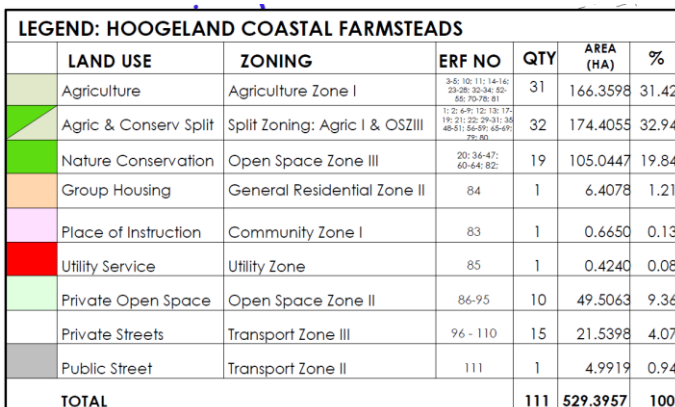
HillLand Environmental (Pty) Ltd., independent Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs), have been appointed by the applicant, **Attwood Property Developments**, to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, No. 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 (as amended).

The proposal will consist of 82 farm portions and an “agri- / residential” village for the 110 beneficiaries in terms of the ESTA (Extension of Security of Tenure Act 62 of 1997).

The land-uses will include:

- Agriculture Zone I (Farms of ± 5 ha), with equestrian
- General Residential Zone I (Group Housing for the farm worker residential village)
- Open Space II (Private Open Space) for horse riding club, communal equestrian facilities & polo field
- Open Space Zone III (Nature Conservation Area), for the environmentally sensitive farms
- Community Zone (Place of instruction) to formalise the existing school
- Utility Zone (for utility services)
- Transport Zone III (Private Roads)





The "Protocols for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes ("the protocols") were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320, published in Government Gazette No. 43110 on the 20th of March 2020 and which came into effect on the 9th of May 2020. The Protocols are allowed for in terms of Sections 25(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (as amended) (Act No. 107 of 1998) ("NEMA").

The Protocols are applicable to all applications for Environmental Authorisation (EA) that are submitted after 9 May 2020. According to the Protocols, the EAP must verify the current use of the site in question and its environmental sensitivity as identified in the screening tool to determine the need for specific specialist inputs.

3 SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION AND METHODOLOGY

According to the protocols Site Sensitivity Verification must be undertaken by the EAP or in some circumstances by a specialist and must include the following:

- Desktop analysis
- Site inspection
- Other relevant information which can inform the sensitivity rating assigned by the screening tool.

This site sensitivity verification statement was compiled by the EAP, HillLand Environmental, based on the following:

- Site visits.
- Historic application information (aerial imagery);
- A desktop investigation aerial photography and the various mapping tools (biodiversity and land use mapping, Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Biodiversity, CBA & ESA mapping, NBA mapping and Cape Farm Mapper).
- Input from specialists

4 RESULTS OF SCREENING TOOL

Application category (**main activities**):

- Transformation of land | From agriculture or afforestation
- Transformation of indigenous land

The area is currently agricultural, however the areas have not all been farmed historically and certain of the farm portions support natural vegetation (mostly invaded with alien vegetation), while there will be changes to the agricultural land areas for the establishment of an agricultural workers village and for new homesteads on the new agricultural subdivisions.

The following themes are identified in the Screening Tool.

Theme	Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Agriculture Theme	X			
Animal Species Theme		X		
Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	X			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme	X			
Civil Aviation Theme	X			
Defence Theme				X
Paleontology Theme			X	
Plant Species Theme			X	
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	X			

4.1 SENSITIVITY THEMES

The table below serves to:

- Indicate the theme sensitivities identified in the screening tool report (generated in November 2025).

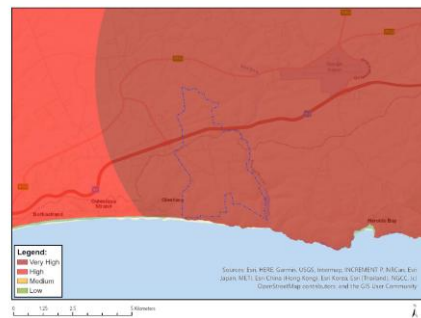
It is necessary to confirm / dispute the sensitivity rating and need for the various specialist inputs called for in terms of the screening tool report.

Based on the screening tool reports and the environmental sensitivity of the site, the following themes are identified:

Theme	Sensitivity rating
Agriculture theme	MAP OF RELATIVE AGRICULTURE THEME SENSITIVITY The area will continue to be used for agricultural use – agricultural assessment is being undertaken together with management recommendations.
Animal species theme	MAP OF RELATIVE ANIMAL SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY Specialist appointed to confirm sensitivity.
Aquatic biodiversity theme	MAP OF RELATIVE AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY Specialist appointed to confirm sensitivity
Archaeological and cultural heritage theme	MAP OF RELATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THEME SENSITIVITY Specialist appointed to confirm sensitivity

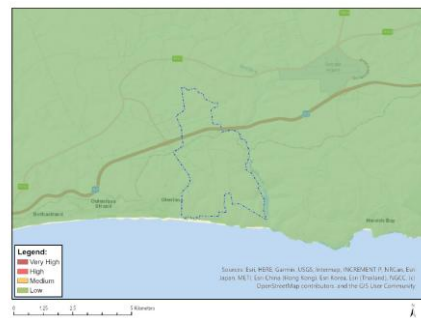
Civil aviation theme

MAP OF RELATIVE CIVIL AVIATION THEME SENSITIVITY



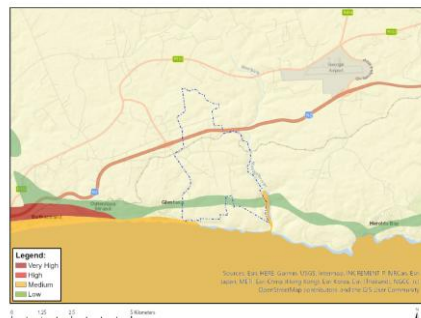
Defence theme

MAP OF RELATIVE DEFENCE THEME SENSITIVITY



Paleontology theme

MAP OF RELATIVE PALEONTOLOGY THEME SENSITIVITY



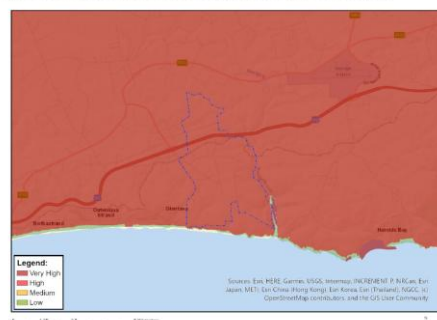
Plant species theme

MAP OF RELATIVE PLANT SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY



Terrestrial biodiversity theme

MAP OF RELATIVE TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY



4.2 ASSESSMENTS IDENTIFIED IN THE SCREENING TOOL REPORT

The screening tool identified the following assessments as being potentially necessary based on the selected classification and environmental sensitivities:

- Agricultural impact assessment (general agriculture assessment protocol);
- Landscape/visual impact assessment (general protocol);
- Archaeological and cultural heritage impact assessment (general protocol);
- Palaeontology impact assessment (general protocol);
- Terrestrial biodiversity impact assessment (terrestrial biodiversity assessment protocol);
- Aquatic impact assessment (aquatic biodiversity assessment protocol);
- Hydrology assessment (general protocol);
- Socio-economic impact assessment (general protocol);
- Plant species assessment (plant species assessment protocol);
- Animal species assessment (animal species assessment protocol);

In addition, the following assessments will be undertaken as part of the process:

- Traffic assessment

5 RESULTS OF SITE VERIFICATION

5.1 DESKTOP ASSESSMENT

5.1.1 LOCATION

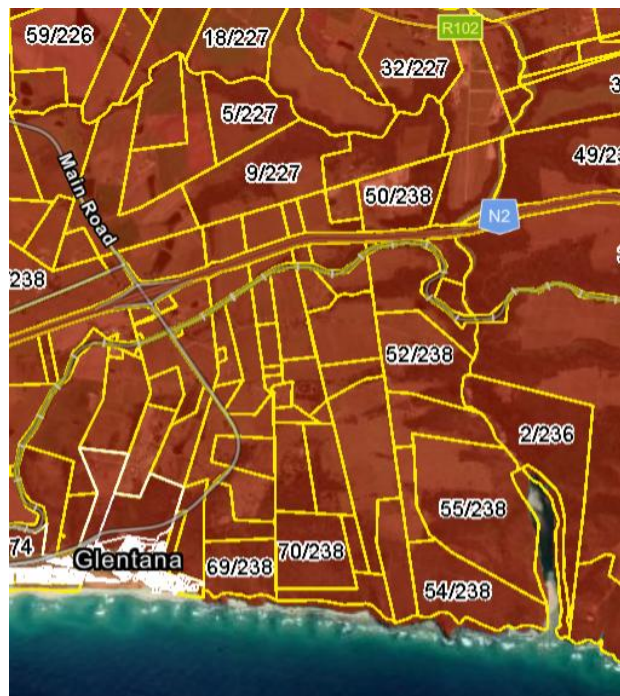
The project falls outside of the George urban edge and is a rural farming area zoned as Agriculture I.



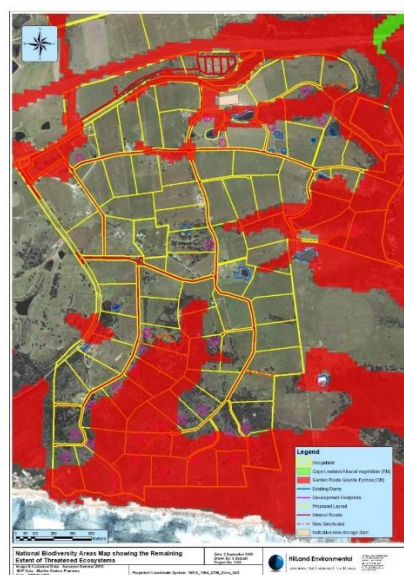
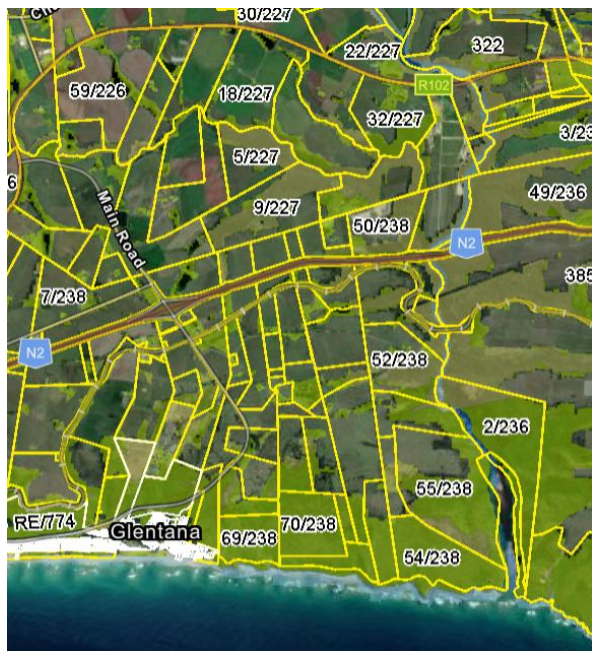
5.1.2 BIODIVERSITY

The WCBSP (2023 data) maps the majority of the properties as falling within CBA 1 – natural, terrestrial small portions of CBA 2 – degraded. The proposal will result in these areas being mostly restored through alien vegetation removal and biodiversity management. Only minimal disturbance in these areas is proposed and will be assessed by the specialists.

The NBA (2021) data maps the properties as falling within the original extent of Garden Route Granite Fynbos, while the remnant areas shows the remaining natural areas which mostly correspond with the valleys and coastal areas that have not been historically farmed. The proposed layout respects these areas by keeping agricultural uses in the areas that have historically been cultivated, while the areas that should support natural systems (mostly alien invaded) will be cleared of alien vegetation and will be managed for their biodiversity value. The homesteads on these portions will be limited to a 2000m² footprint disturbance area to prevent disturbance outside of these areas.



Remnant areas of Garden Route Granite Fynbos marked in red (left) and the original extent indicated on the right.



CBA mapping (left) which largely corresponds to the remaining areas of "natural" vegetation indicated in green on the right.

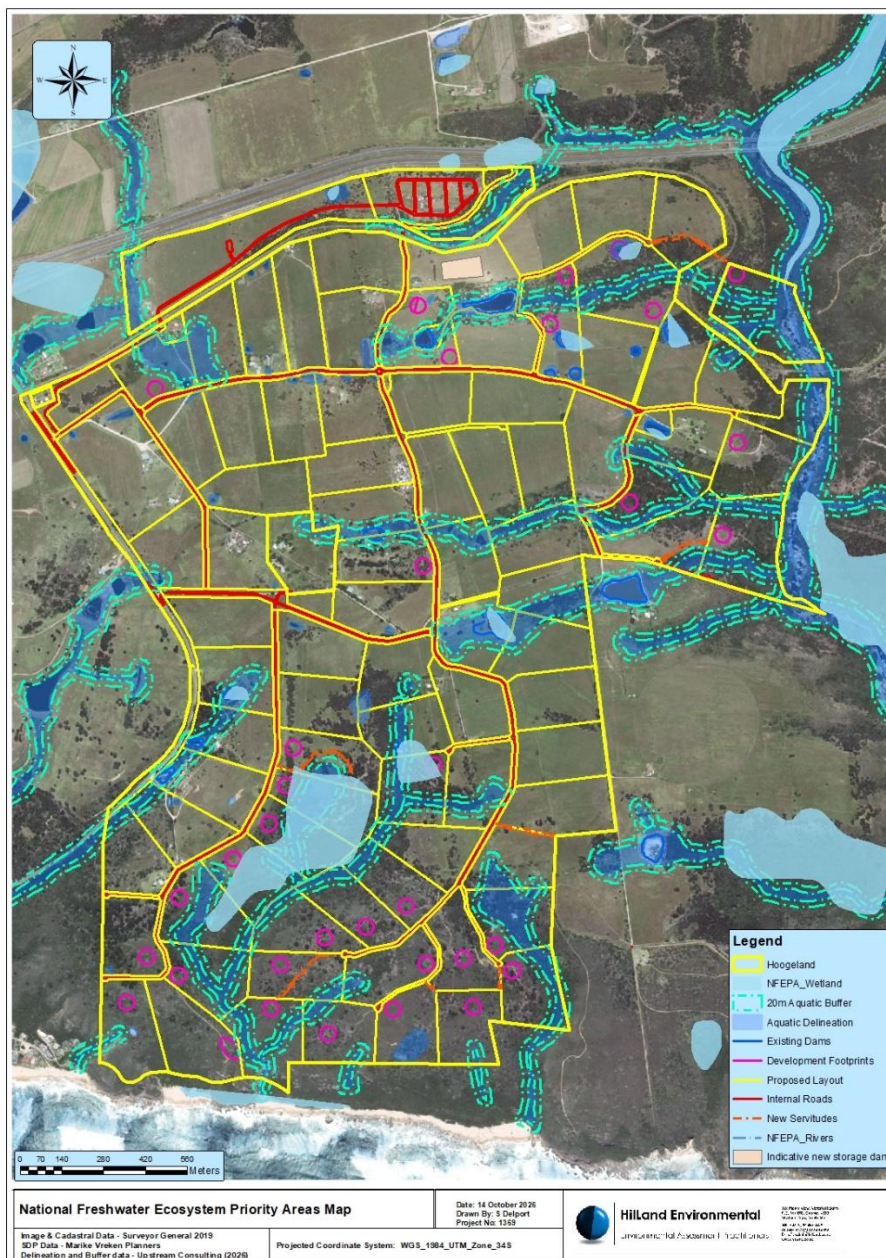


Current status of the areas mapped as "natural" where alien invasive species have taken over and need to be cleared so that the natural fynbos areas can be restored.

Aquatic biodiversity will be protected through remaining outside of aquatic features and ensuring that the stormwater management is such as limiting disturbance or concentration of water and any resultant erosion.



In terms of NFEPA – there are various aquatic features, non-perennial and perennial watercourses and farm dams. Various wetland areas are identified and will be assessed and verified by the specialist. The proposal avoids the watercourses and wetland areas, while farm dams will remain and be used for agricultural irrigation purposes.



Actual aquatic features and buffers which has been conserved in the SDP

5.1.3 HERITAGE

Heritage resources on the farms relate to various buildings and structures that are older than 60 years and these are being assessed by a specialist to advise the process going forward in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act. In addition to buildings, there are various gravesites across the properties, both historic and more recent. These sites will be surveyed and respected in perpetuity.



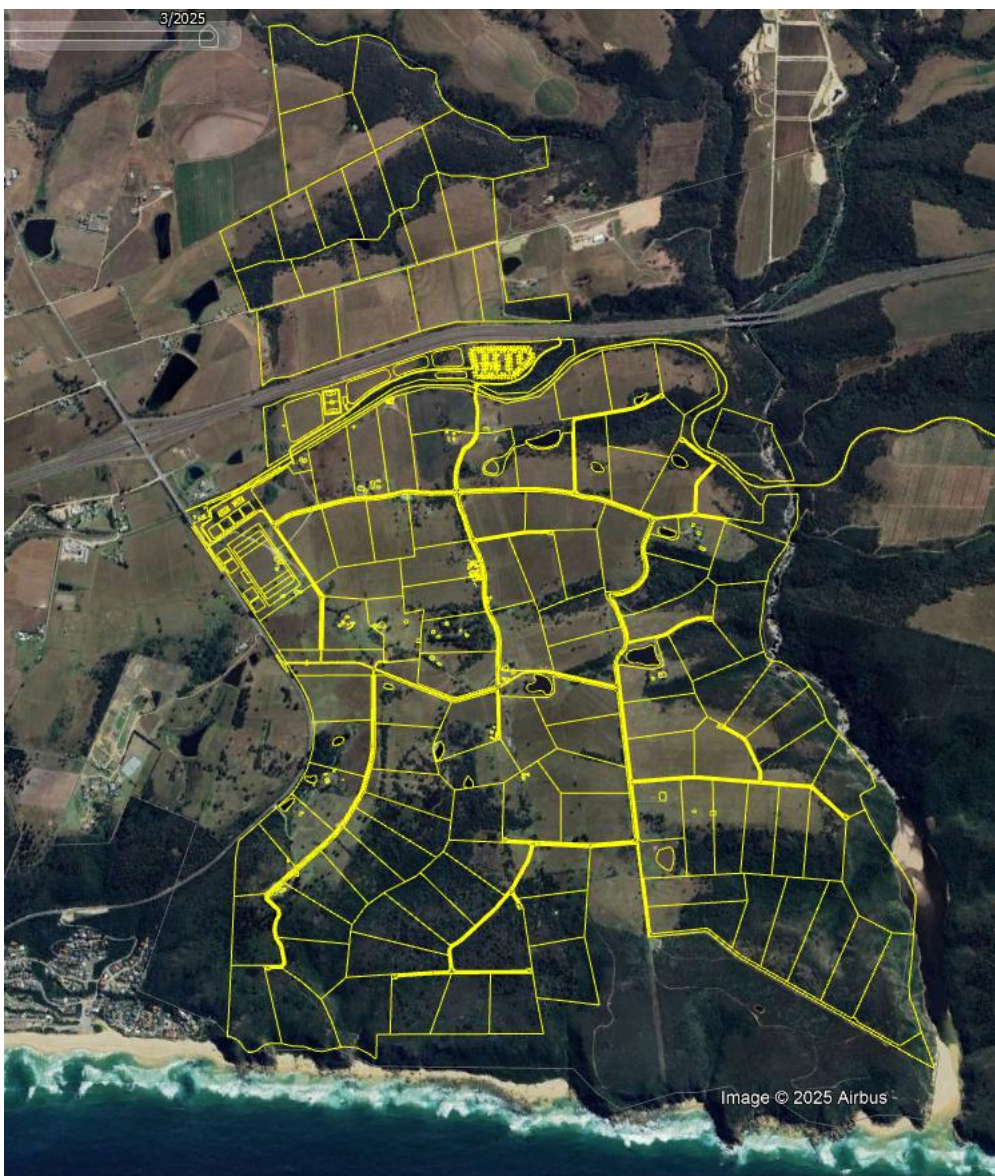
A full survey of the built environment was undertaken in 2005 by the late Henrie Aikman, this will be updated to reflect the current status of the built environment – Jenna Lavin, **CTS Heritage** – has been appointed and an HIA and PAIA have been done.

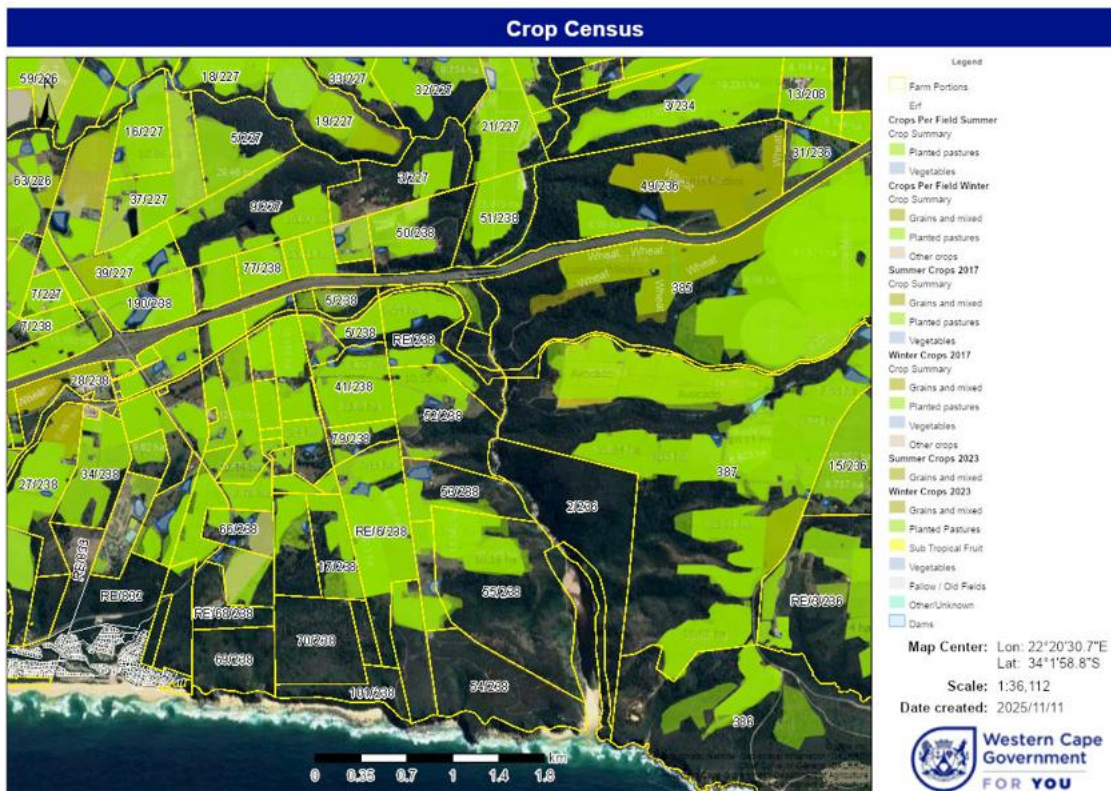




5.1.4 AGRICULTURE

Current agricultural land use of the area is indicated on the 2025 aerial photo with the proposed layout overlay.

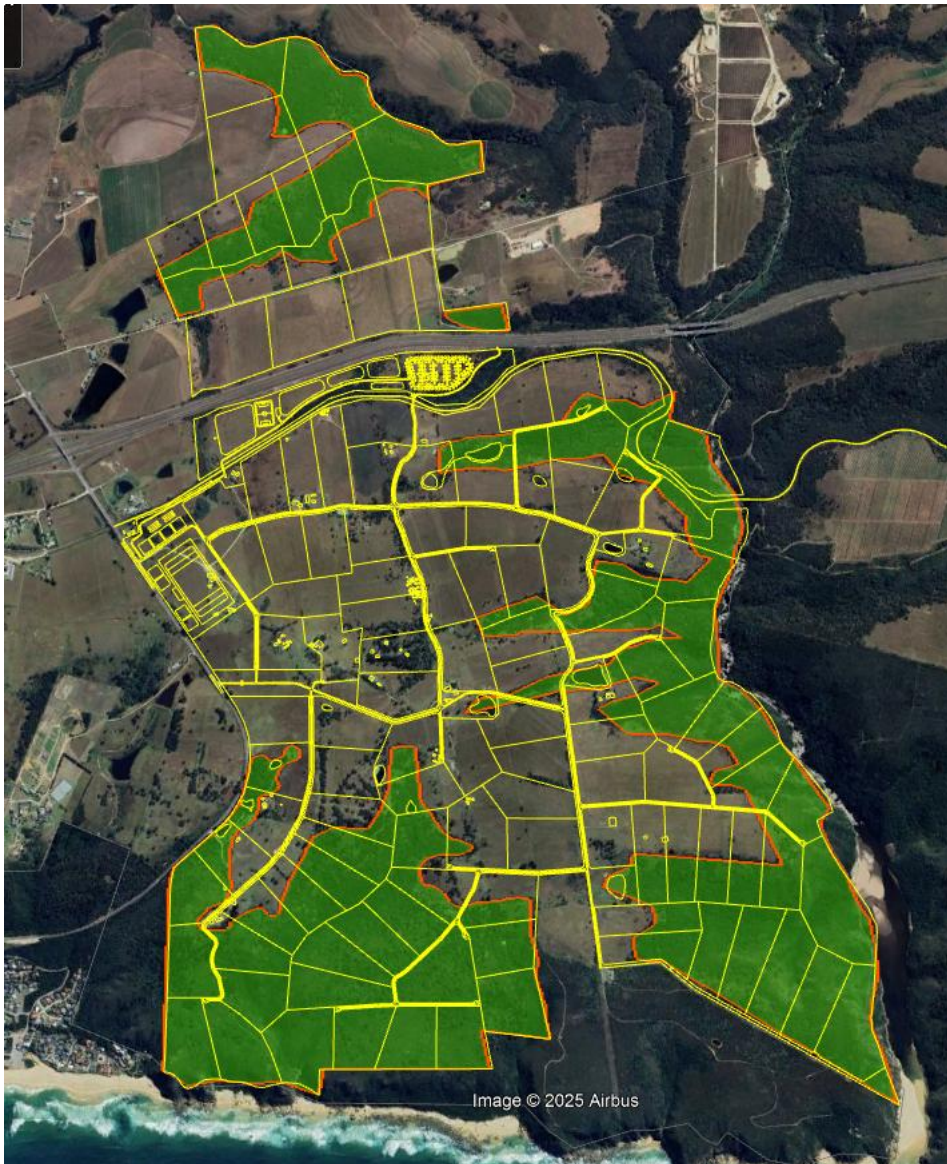




The various crop census surveys by Department of Agriculture, indicate the areas of agricultural use and those areas that have not been used for agriculture historically.



The 2003 aerial shows the historical agricultural use of the property which was more extensive than the current agricultural use areas.



The Green portions are mostly areas infested with alien vegetation where alien control is required in order to determine the biodiversity value going forwards. Granite Fynbos will restore in the areas of natural fynbos, thicket or forest will restore in the valleys and where alien species have encroached into farmland, grazing pastures will restore.

Agricultural activities on site are being assessed by an agricultural specialist and will agricultural guidelines going forward will be provided.

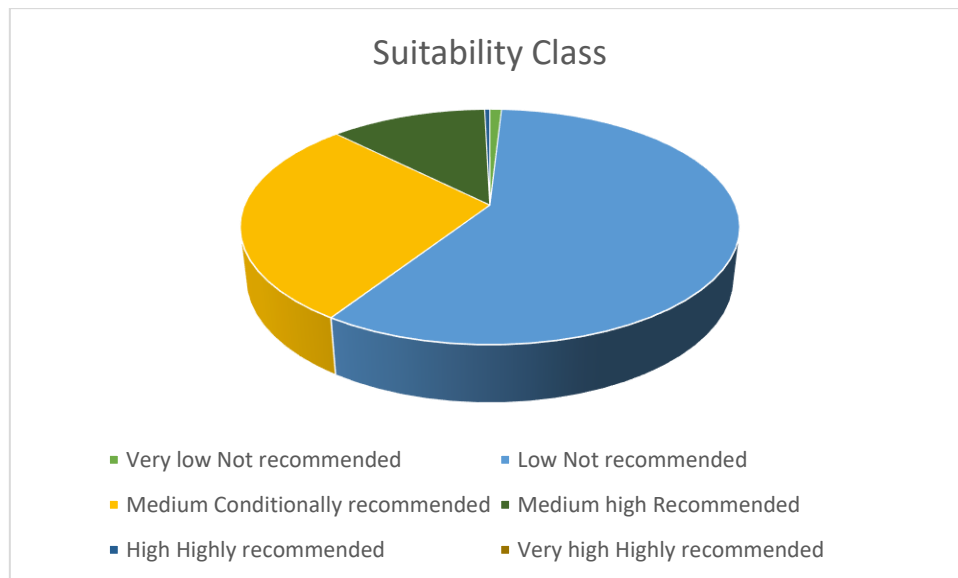
The specialist indicates the following in relation to existing agricultural potential:

Existing Agriculture Potential:

Currently the land is being used for grazing of cattle. Historically the property was used for grazing and planted pastures (Kikuyu, perdewkeek and buffelkweek). According to the land capability assessment done by B Schloms & J Lambrechts the site is not financially suitable for perennial or annual crop production on a commercial scale. This is in part due to the limiting soil potential and available irrigation water.

Proposed Development Effect on Agricultural Output:

The proposed development will market plots of roughly 5ha agriculture land to be kept in agriculture production. Although marketed for lifestyle farming, the agriculture output is not subject to the financial feasibility of the plot.



Percentage Class (Permanent Crops)
Not Recommended **59%**

Conditionally Recommended **28.3%**

Recommended **12.1%**

Highly Recommended **0.4%**

Proposed Agricultural Activity
Grazing / Planted Pastures / Dryland Bale production. Vegetables(i)
Potential for Permanent crops – Avocado, Macadamia, Wine Grapes
High Potential for Permanent Crops - Avocado, Macadamia, Wine Grapes
High Potential for Permanent Crops - Avocado, Macadamia, Wine Grapes

Proposed Agricultural Activities:

Grazing / Planted Pastures (**Dryland -59%**):

- Horses (Breeding, Stabling etc.)
- Cattle (Meat)
- Sheep (Meat)
- Winter grains for baling (Oats)

Although supplemental feeding might be required for large stock animals, other small holdings might produce and supply neighbouring plots.

Potential for Permanent Crops (**Supplemental Irrigation 40%**)

- Protea and Fynbos cut flower production
- Wine grape production (Micro winery)
- Blueberry production
- Kiwi (low chill unit requirement)
- Avocado & Macadamia (Subtropical)
- Vegetable gardening (Village + Plots)

With an average annual rainfall of 600mm only supplemental irrigation will be needed in the dryer summer months.

Most vegetable production in the George area is done on shallow duplex soils, which is abundant on this property. This might also be the activity that is mostly practised by land owners for own use.

General:

- *Irrigation and household water will be supplied to each plot from the existing dams and water rights (pending) from the Maalgaterivier.*
- *Rainwater harvesting will be compulsory for each plot, which can in turn be used to irrigate gardens.*
- *Road reserves will either be planted with horticultural crops or mowed and baled.*
- *Horse paddocks is planned for keeping and training horses.*
- *Small space farming can be implemented such as microgreens and mushrooms.*

Conclusion:

Given the development is approved, a substantial number of unskilled labour will be employed for aforementioned activities and grounds keeping. The agricultural diversity will increase as each plot decides their own agriculture activity. It's important to realise no commercial farmer will be able to develop several separate small (<2ha) plots of high value crops (niche crops) due to the logistical constraints, however this is highly possible on a life style farming concept. " Gert Malan, 2025

6 CONFIRMATION OF THEME SENSITIVITY AND ASSESSMENTS

Based on the site verification, the following table confirms/disputes the sensitivities as indicated in the screening tool report (Green shading highlights the rating proposed where the rating is disputed).

Theme	Very High sensitivity		High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity		Low sensitivity	
Agriculture theme	X						Agricultural theme not disputed – agricultural use to continue – specialist to assess the impacts and recommended agricultural uses.
Animal species theme			X	x			BioCensus did an assessment and confirmed that the animal species theme is of medium sensitivity
Aquatic biodiversity theme	X			x	x		Upstream Consulting did an aquatic biodiversity assessment and confirmed the proposal will have medium-low impacts. A WULA application is in process.
Archaeological and cultural heritage theme	X						Specialist assessment undertaken
Civil aviation theme	X					X	Land use will not impact on civil aviation SACAA will be requested to comment on the process Sensitivity disputed
Defence theme						X	No impact on the defence theme – no further action required.
Paleontology theme	X						Specialist assessment undertaken
Plant species theme				X	x		BioCensus did an assessment and confirmed that the plant species theme is of medium sensitivity
Terrestrial biodiversity theme	X	x					BioCensus did an assessment and confirmed that the terrestrial species theme is of very high sensitivity

Additional recommended studies (not linked to a theme):

Visual assessment – a visual impact assessment form part of the environmental process.

Socio-Economic – socio-economic impact assessment form part of the environmental process

Traffic – Traffic Impact Assessment form part of the process

7 CONCLUSION OF SITE SENSITIVITY VERIFICATION

Based on the above, the continued agricultural use in the agricultural areas and sensitive layout and footprint use in the areas which may have environmental sensitivity, is not anticipated that the proposal will have any significant negative impacts on the biodiversity of the area. Impact on Biodiversity is anticipated to be positive and impact on agriculture is anticipated to be positive.

The following will form part of the environmental process:

- Terrestrial biodiversity, plant and animal assessment
- Aquatic biodiversity assessment
- HIA and PAIA
- Visual impact assessment
- Agriculture assessment
- Socio-economic assessment
- Traffic impact assessment