

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis effectively proposes a systematic for the cultural landscapes of South Africa. The sub-problems investigated each of the aspects to compile such a systematics.

The first sub-problem: *"How are conservation policies of South African concerned with cultural landscapes?"*, addressed the policies and procedures currently available in the South African context and looked at the various agencies currently working in the field of conservation of cultural landscapes. At first the findings of the study indicates that culture is recognised as a component of conservation and that it supplements the biophysical components of our heritage. However, there is no recognition of the concept of cultural landscapes anywhere in the literature, the policies or procedures of the agencies. Verbal credence is given to the concept, but no systematics or substantial recognition is given to the aspect.

Hypothesis one *"There are shortcomings in current South African conservation policies regarding the systematics of culturally significant landscapes"* is substantiated through the investigation of the South African legislation and procedures currently being applied.

The second sub-problem: *"How are international conservation policies, and the resultant implementation systems, concerned with cultural landscapes?"* investigated the international policies and procedures available for the systematics of cultural landscapes. The findings of this chapter are valuable because substantial recognition is given to international cultural landscapes and the systematics for these places. The review of legislation of mainly African countries revealed topics worthy of inclusion in the identification and recognition of aspects of culture for use in South Africa.

Hypothesis Two: *"The international administrative systems pertaining to heritage and cultural landscapes can inform South African systematics for cultural landscapes"* is substantiated through the investigation into the international policies and procedures applied in the countries currently active in the field of cultural landscapes.

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The third sub-problem: *"How can the cultural landscapes within South Africa be characterised?"*, investigated how the South African cultural characteristics can be identified inside the requirements for use in cultural landscape systematics. The review of three case studies revealed that the similarities between these places are of significance.

The case studies were:

- a. Colonial/Urban - Johannesburg Fort.
- b. Autochthonous/ Archaeological - Mapungubwe.
- c. Biophysical conservation area that encompass cultural heritage - Au-grabies Falls National Park.

Although the application and interpretation are varied, the cultural topics are unifying and common among the case studies. This does not mean that it is universally applicable, but it provides a base from which to complete the evaluations and conclusions. In addition, South African literature was scanned to identify additional topics that could be included in the identification of cultural significance for the study. Additional topics were identified that focussed mainly on the spiritual and intangible aspect of culture.

Hypothesis Three: *"The South Africa cultural landscapes have characteristics that can be systematised"* is shown to be positive and the characteristics of the South African landscape can be identified, qualified and systematised.

The fourth sub-problem: *"Can suitable methods be found or developed to display the characteristics of the cultural landscape?"* investigated the potential to find a method that could display the parameters for cultural landscape characteristics. It was found that the relational model as applied in a geographic information system provide the most useful method. Programs and applications exist that can be modified or adapted to comply with the requirements for such a systematics.

Hypothesis Four: *"Suitable discrete methods can be found to systematise cultural landscape characteristics"* is substantiated by the study and it has been demonstrated that discrete methods can be found to systematise cultural landscapes.

The fifth sub-problem: *"Could the systematics for South African cultural landscapes be formed by developing implementation requirements (sub-problems one and two), by characterising cultural landscapes (sub-problem three) and by defining displayable parameters (sub-problem four)?"* completes the study by proposing a systematics for cultural landscapes for South Africa that are in keeping with the National Heritage Resources Act under which such a systematics will be implemented. The chapter starts

University of Pretoria etd – Breedlove, G (2002)

with a definition of cultural landscapes as being defined by this study.

The proposed systematics incorporates the knowledge obtained in chapters three, four and five of the study and it supplements the shortcomings in the South African system as identified in chapter two. The systematics proposes that a database management system be implemented from the beginning of a heritage valuation procedure. The process begins with an identification and verification step. This step allows anybody to identify and motivate a site, or landscape for review for a Grade III grading by a local council. Secondly, a recording, documentation, archiving and publication phase is recommended. These are combined, because the work necessary to prepare a motivational statement requires the database to be designed to allow all the aspects of documenting through to archiving and publishing.

The third step requires the assessment and grading of the cultural landscape. It is proposed that the assessment of the cultural landscape be completed within the framework of the existing National Heritage Resources Act Chapter 1 Part 1, Item 3(1) to (3). However, it is proposed that the relational model be used for the assessment and that a point system be implemented to indicate the most relevant categories or significance determination. This is the most controversial and potentially debatable step in the process since a subjective and motivational statement must be prepared as to the significance of a cultural landscape. The grading of the cultural landscape into a Grade I, II or III, requires an assessment of the particular value of the cultural landscape to a single community or a nation. Again a point system is proposed to provide an implementable solution to aspects of the current system that is subjective and that can be interpreted differently in different communities.

In order to establish credibility and to determine flaws or areas that would need revisions and improvements it was decided to test the proposed systematics for cultural landscapes in an application. The ENPAT 2002 was selected as a suitable vehicle for the implementation as was indicated in Chapter Five of this thesis.

The Pondoland cultural landscape mapping project recently completed under the ENPAT 2002 contract between the University of Pretoria and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism was used as the case study. Each part of the proposal as described in Chapter Six Item 6.2.2 was applied and evaluated for both its value as a component in a systematics and to the extent the Pondoland cultural landscape mapping project could utilize the systematics.

It was found that the Proposed Systematics for South African Cultural Landscapes was

University of Pretoria etd – Breedlove, G (2002)

satisfactorily applied to the Pondoland cultural landscape-mapping project. However, some areas could not successfully be completed. These form part of the management, maintenance and monitoring aspects of both the procedures and the database requirements and can only be evaluated once the systematics are fully implemented in Pondoland. This is not a shortcoming in the proposed systematics, but an affirmation that a systematics for cultural landscapes in South Africa is critically needed.

To make the proposed systematics as applied in the ENPAT 2002 fully functional as a cultural landscape decision-making system it is required to add a management or monitoring database component. A sustainability indicator system could be linked simultaneously.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Individual recommendations stemming from the research as discussed in the thesis is combined into the systematics for cultural landscapes in Chapter Six.

For additional research this thesis recommends that the research into cultural differences and the relationship of various cultures to the biophysical landscape be extended. The reason that this recommendation is made is that the study found a lack of understanding among practitioners and academics - at least in South Africa - of the cultural relationship the people of South Africa have to their biophysical landscapes. The cultures of Australia have been studied and very good studies are completed in the way that one may begin to incorporate the autochthonous, that are largely intangible, aspects of culture into a database that can be documented, stored, retrieved and updated.

Furthermore, an alternative to the western way of documentation and mapping culture must be sought. Even in Australia where the customs and ways of the Aboriginal people are thoroughly studied, there is not an aboriginal way of documentation that disseminates their knowledge to the non-aboriginal people. The systematics proposed here has been built on the western "pigeon-hole" or compartmentalised system of assigning a label to a cultural landscape. The reason is that the requirement to work within the existing new National Heritage Resources Act is greater than the need to change the system completely. But in future, when the citizens of South Africa freely recognise the value of their cultural landscapes, and are willing to recognise the value in remaining true each to our own heritage, maybe at that time South Africa will be susceptible to a spiritual way of mapping and knowing our cultural landscapes.

7.3. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that the following areas be investigated for further study:

- a. Ethnographic relationship to biophysical characteristics in South Africa.
- b. Biophysical characteristics of tribal areas and the relationship of the people to these characteristics.
- c. Documentation of landscape characteristics for their cultural value.
- d. A geographic information system to display and query landscape characteristics for their cultural value.
- e. The amalgamation of the study of ethnography with spatially displayable parameters.