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EUROPEAN LOCAL LANDSCAPE CIRCLE STUDIES IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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Secretariat document
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Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage

The Conference is invited to examine the report prepared in the framework of the CoE Work Programme of the European Landscape Convention 2007-2008 and to decide on possible follow-up.

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Preface

Introduction

Summary

Step 1 - Scoping the Study Area

Step 2. Research

Step 3. Creating an Image Observatory

Step 4. Information gathering

Step 5. Evaluating your landscape

Step 6. Identifying actions and actors

Step 7. Completing the Report

Case Study

Appendix 1 - Landscape relevant Legislation applicable

Appendix 2 - Reference Lists of Typical Landscape Ingredients

Appendix 3 - Research References

Appendix 4 - Practical Considerations

Appendix 5 - Sample Record Sheets

Preface

The landscape of Europe is everything you can see throughout and around the continent and its offshore islands. It is not a two-dimensional painting or even a three-dimensional model, it is multi-dimensional, reaching deep into the soil and rocks of the ground, under the water and up into the sky. It embraces all of our shared heritage; the diversity of nature and the diversity of the marks and manifestations of humans. It is experienced through all our senses.

Your piece of the landscape of Europe is not just the land that you may or may not occupy, but the place or places that are important to you, that figure in your memories of the past, your sense of the history of your landscape, your consciousness of well-being and belonging in your present landscape and your vision of its future. You might say that you own your landscape, but it is deeper than mere ownership – you are part of your landscape and it is part of you – a relationship that is very organic and close – almost bionic.

You can however be torn from your landscape or it can be torn from you. You never entirely lose your landscape, but you can lose a landscape that is rich and rewarding, that is important to you, only to have it replaced with a landscape that is impoverished, dispiriting and alienating.

In the past in Europe as a largely agricultural society we depended on our landscape in obvious ways. Today we still depend on it, but we largely lack the comprehension to see this. The balance has shifted and our landscape is now more dependent on us. If we could understand its language we would hear its call for our help.

Change in our landscape is as inevitable as the seasons (annual cyclical change). It can be naturally slow (the growth of trees and bushes), naturally gradual (changes in agricultural crops and animals). It can also be naturally abrupt (storm damage). Our actions can respond to and contribute to such natural changes (global warming). Man-made landscape change can also be slow (occasional new buildings), gradual (regular new buildings) and abrupt ('overnight' housing developments, wind farms, motorways, shopping malls etc).

In the recent past the ordinary citizen had very little say in landscape interventions by others. Increasingly today legislation at all levels is providing citizens with a democratic role in the process of landscape change and management. This role is perceived by many citizens as being very limited and they often feel powerless. The processes of landscape change are complex and often far from transparent. Playing a constructive, responsible role in these processes requires a structured, informed, strategic response from ordinary citizens.

Whether you are an 'ordinary' citizen, a community group, second or third level students; undertaking a landscape circle study is your opportunity to respond to the call of your landscape. You can make it as simple or as comprehensive as you wish – the choice is yours. You are however guaranteed you that if you undertake a 'Landscape Circle Study' of your landscape you will at the very least enrich the rest of your life and you will be in a more informed and empowered position to become actively involved in the management of your landscape – the choice is yours!

Introduction

Decisions that profoundly affect the quality of your landscape are invariably taken in offices very far from where you live. The politicians, administrators and businesspeople taking those decisions are more likely to demonstrate sensitivity towards landscape quality in a society that demonstrates an informed knowledge and understanding of their landscape/surroundings. Undertaking a 'Landscape Circle' study will assist you and your community in being party to those decisions.

We all tend to take our landscape for granted – whether we regard it as good or bad. However, in much of Europe we have been fortunate to inherit a landscape of an exceptionally high quality in parts. As with many things that come easy we have not always appreciated our good fortune. We have not always actively participated in the processes that are impacting on the quality of our landscape. That might have been acceptable in times past when the pace of change was leisurely and the landscape often managed to heal its own wounds. Times have changed dramatically in the past 50 years and problems arise when someone decides that as we put no value on it, they will 'take' it from us and replace it with something that may be very inferior.

This guide is intended to assist all those individuals, groups, communities, organisations, societies, clubs or schools who would wish to exercise responsible ownership over their landscape, in undertaking a 'Landscape Circle Study' of their area. A landscape circle study involves selecting a circle of landscape and studying and recording its history, its evolution, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the actions and actors who might respond to those characteristics. The guide offers advice on ways to undertake and complete a successful landscape circle study.

You do not need to be an expert to undertake the study. You will not require specialised terminology and the depth of the study is at your discretion. All that is required is an interest in landscape and a desire to influence the nature and extent of the changes it undergoes in your lifetime and beyond. As with all successful human ventures you should however draw on expert knowledge where possible.

The quality of landscape is decided by its different elements, natural and human-made and the extent of their representation, distribution and most importantly their overall composition in the landscape.

It is easy to forget the urban landscape with so many books written about the rural landscape. Yet we increasingly live in an urban landscape, the landscape circle works just as well in the city as in the countryside.

It should be possible for anyone to undertake an effective landscape study using this handbook and the Council of Europe publication *'The European Rural Heritage Observation Guide'*. The Council of Europe will encourage the organisation of workshops to assist those undertaking 'Landscape Circle' studies.

The key outcome of the study will centre round a report documenting the scoping of the study area, its history and evolution, its landscape elements, an in-depth critical analysis of its characteristics and an action plan for the future management of the landscape being studied.

The study report will provide the basis for many other powerful initiatives such as exhibitions, DVD's, web sites, planning submissions, proactive engagement with those intervening in the landscape such as government officials, developers, etc.

All studies are open to the accusation of subjectivity and indeed most if not all studies reflect a degree of subjectivity. The more systematic and thorough the study is the more it will overcome this potential weakness. Testing the conclusions of the study with the residents of the area is useful in defending the report. The fact that everything in the circle, good and bad, must be considered is in itself a defence against subjectivity.

It is expected that studies will vary in scope and depth depending on whether they are individual studies or group studies. It would be the aim of the Council of Europe that in time communities undertaking studies will meet other communities at state and European level to compare results, experience, challenges and solutions. Subject to available resources the Council of Europe will facilitate such gatherings.

Summary

The landscape circle template is intended to encourage and assist individuals and groups to undertake an in-depth analytical study of their landscape incorporating a dynamic landscape observatory and resulting in a landscape management action plan.

It involves 7 integrated steps and could be completed in 6 to 12 months. Completing such a study will heighten and inform your awareness of your landscape and place you in a very strong position to participate in the inevitable processes of change taking place in your landscape.

Step 1 - Scoping the Study Area: using the most readily available map of the area (a scale of 1:50,000 would appear to be appropriate), a landscape circle is selected for the study area. (permission to copy or reproduce maps may be required from the relevant agency). The radius of the circle should be at least 1 km for urban studies, 2 - 3 kms for a small town or village plus its hinterland and up to 5km for rural landscapes of low complexity.

Step 2. Research: There are three interrelated sections to researching your study – 1. - understanding landscape, 2. - understanding the landscape of the state and 3. - understanding the landscape of your selected circle. This will involve your own reference book resources, libraries, bookshops, local authority facilities and the internet. The readily available European Rural Heritage Observation Guide – CEMAT is a recommended study text. The research should result in a written description of the history and evolution of your landscape.

Step 3. Creating an Image Observatory:- This exercise involves sourcing old images of your landscape and comparing them with photographs of the same landscape today. In addition a current representative photographic portfolio of the existing landscape must be compiled to be replicated in subsequent years.

Step 4. Information gathering: The objective of the identification process is to list the elements of the landscape in each circle – separated into the landscape strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A specific location for each element should be identified on the map, although for dispersed elements it may be adequate to refer to a particular quadrant of a circle.

The identification of landscape elements will range over the built (old and new), the natural and archaeological heritage as well as ‘non-heritage’ elements. It also adds its own important component – an understanding of the composition of the landscape and the interrelationship between existing built and natural heritage, and present-day interventions, e.g., construction work or changed land use practices.

The extent by which landscape elements are common, occasional or rare must be recorded and the pattern of their occurrence should be indicated by shading or cross-hatching a map section.

Step 5. Evaluating your landscape: Because the landscape is a composition of many elements and ‘jigsaw pieces’, an analytical process is required. The LANSWOT analysis (Landscape Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is highly suited to evaluating the diverse elements of our landscape in the context of their role in defining and deciding landscape quality.

It lends itself to everyday use in avoiding the complexity of deep scientific analysis, whilst inviting individuals and communities to adopt a structured, critical approach in their assessment of their landscape. It has the added advantage of enabling communities in different locations to compare and contrast their conclusions in a comparative framework.

Step 6. Identifying Landscape Management Actions and Actors: Landscape Management involves identifying/recording the actors and the actions needed in response to the prioritised lists produced by the LANSWOT analysis, encouraging best practice; where possible leading to the conservation of landscape elements (or at least a continuity of these elements within the landscape); and determining

the character of interventions in order to - reinforce the strengths, address the weaknesses, capitalise on the opportunities and avert or mitigate the threats.

This stage is about identifying with the landscape and participating actively, rather than passively, in the landscape management process, in a manner appropriate to the scale involved.

Step 7. The Landscape Study Report and other Outputs: A landscape study report will feature the following:

- An introduction to the study identifying the study area – the selected circle;
- A description of the landscape of the selected circle, its history and evolution;
- A landscape observatory of the circle;
- A prioritised listing of its landscape strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- An associated listing of the actions and actors involved in the landscape management of the area;
- An action plan to publicise and give effect to the conclusions of the study

Completing a landscape circle study report will achieve much in informing and alerting you about your landscape. We recommend you to take some further important steps to communicate and validate your work to your immediate and greater community by progressing to one or more measures and thus become a landscape active community and/or individual.

How to undertake a landscape circle is described in detail over the following pages:

Step 1 - Scoping the Study Area

The use of the circle to scope a landscape study derives from many influences not the least being the many ancient circles that mark the European landscape constructed of timber, earth and stone.

The circle has a simple inescapable logic in the landscape. If you stand in a flat landscape or better still on an isolated hill or high building anywhere in Europe, the limits of your vision is a circle.

A circle avoids the complexities of requiring communities to take on board potentially contentious decisions regarding the different landscape character areas occurring in their own locality.

Using the most readily available map (a scale of 1:50,000 or similar is recommended), a landscape circle is selected for the study area (permission to copy or reproduce maps may be required). You can choose to work from a chosen centre point, but it is easier to concentrate on the landscape to be enclosed in the circle. A clear plastic template marked with circles of different radii is the simplest and most effective way to carry out this exercise (see fig. 1). Draw a number of circles with a compass and a narrow permanent marker on a sheet of clear plastic. You can move the plastic sheet over the map rather than drawing and re-drawing circles on the map with a compass.

As well as assisting in selecting a landscape circle to study the plastic template provides an awareness of the greater landscape outside the study area.

Your choice of study area will depend on your objectives – you may simply want to study your home place, or you may wish to study an area that is important to you, whether it is facing threats or not. You should write out your objectives and develop a brief for your study – what do you want to achieve and how do you intend to realise your objectives.

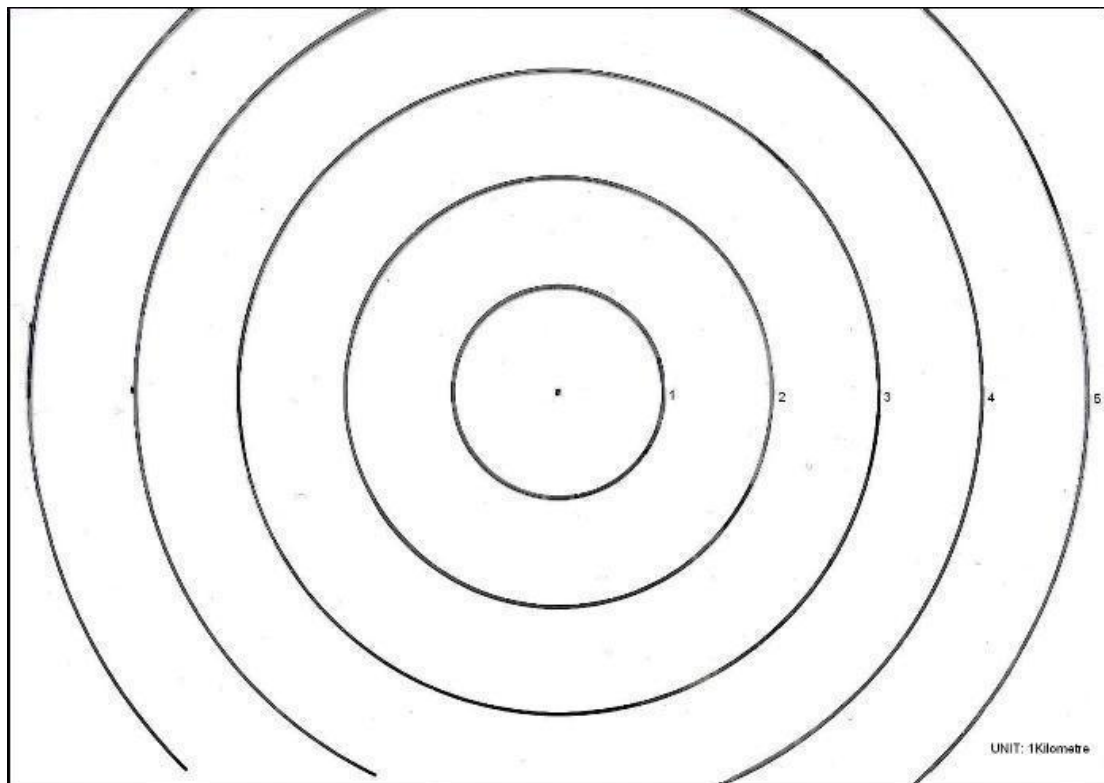


Fig 1 Template to assist selecting study circle.

Initial research on landscape circle studies suggests a radius of at least 1 km for urban studies and a typical radius of 2 - 3 kms for a small town or village plus its hinterland. Rural landscapes of low complexity could have significantly higher radii.

The circle should be small enough to be studied having account of the time and resources available, but must be large enough to encompass a range of landscape diversity - local knowledge will guide the choice. The study itself commences at the centre of the circle and works out in concentric bands and may be enlarged or reduced in response to the progress of the study.

In a sense the circle recognizes the scale at which communities work best – the village, it little matters whether it is a village in the accepted sense – a small physical village settlement or a more dispersed settlement that occurs in parts of the European rural landscape or it may be one of the ‘urban villages’ that combine to form the ‘honeycomb’ of our towns and cities.

Urban or rural we recommend that you start small and enlarge the study rather than the reverse – it is a less wasteful strategy.

The circle can be given the identity of the settlement or place-name located closest to the centre of the circle.

Disciplined scoping is desirable – the study area may have landscape of consistent character and distinctiveness, or there may be a number of centres of intense landscape character and distinctiveness which will wax and wane from area to area.

If the study is undertaken by a group and involves a large, complex area, it may be decided to select a number of overlapping circles, requiring thought and discussion on the different landscapes considered to exist in the study area. We would still recommend that one circle be selected and its study completed before commencing a second or more. Where there are a number of overlapping circles it is recommended that they overlap to ensure full coverage of the study area and they are likely to extend

to places outside the targeted study area. In this case each circle can again be given the identity of the settlement or place-name located closest to the centre of the circle.

If the area being considered is very large and diverse and a range of interlaced landscapes is involved, spreading into neighbouring areas, separate studies will be required, creating the exciting possibility of neighbouring communities undertaking concurrent studies. This might require the assistance of a project co-coordinator and additional funding.

Neighbouring communities undertaking independent studies should, wherever possible, overlap each other's circles.

Step 2. Research

There are three interrelated sections to researching your study:

1. - understanding landscape in general,
2. - understanding the landscape of the state in question
3. - understanding the landscape of your selected circle.

You can be systematic and work through from 1 to 3, or in reverse from 3 to 1. We believe that the best approach is to engage with all three levels concurrently from the start of the study.

The best way to research landscape is to experience it in a state of alert awareness and then read the books. It would be easy to get bogged down in the research alone and some of the published 'expert' material on landscape is not as accessible as it ought to be – due to –technical terms or 'jargon'.

Research guidance may be provided to a study group by a trained and experienced facilitator, but may also be gleaned from many publications.

Your local library, bookshops (new and second hand) and the internet will all be invaluable. There are many web sites with extensive free material on landscape. (See appendix 3)

A general understanding of the meaning of landscape will be gained from reading the European Landscape Convention and particularly the explanatory notes.

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.

Understanding the practical meaning of landscape in a European context will be provided by the readily available European Rural Heritage Observation Guide – CEMAT – a highly recommended text, speaking clearly of reading the landscape.

There are many books available on local, national and the European landscape. The authors will enrich your understanding of landscape and cannot fail to enthuse and inform you with their sense of landscape - space, place and time.

Landscape relevant legislation is listed in Appendix 1, it is useful to acquire a working knowledge of the relevant legislation.

You must also research images such as paintings, postcards, drawings and photographs - old and new to gain a visual understanding of the process of change or evolution in your landscape.

Increasingly there is useful information to be found in government development plans at a local, district, regional and national level.

Step 3. Creating an Image Observatory

An Image Observatory might be called a landscape photograph album – but it is much more than that.

“One picture is worth ten thousand words”. The word-value of appropriate landscape images is beyond measure. Images of the same landscape over time further multiply the value and provide the best understanding of landscape, its evolution and the process of change. The Observatory will serve as an invaluable tool to assist communities in understanding, and communicating the concept of landscape quality and monitoring the process of change taking place in their landscape.

The creation of an Observatory involves sourcing old landscape images in different media to provide the basis for a time-series of images. Old maps and written descriptions of the landscape will also be useful.

A current photographic portfolio of the existing landscape must also be compiled. Ideally this should comprise key indicator landscapes within your particular circle experiencing, or likely to experience, active change and, where possible, earlier images should be replicated with present day images.

The study will involve selecting and carefully recording in detail a number of key photographic viewpoints, the combination of the images recorded will capture the cumulative essence of the local landscape and by repeating the photographs from the same locations each year you can record and track the changes taking place, in the process creating a wonderful local planning and landscape heritage resource.

Study areas that enjoy distant panoramic views to landscape features located outside the study area may require an outer `vista ring`.

We must stress that viewpoints and camera positions must be carefully mapped and described for future recording of the landscape on a systematic basis.

Each image selected for inclusion in the report must be accompanied by text explaining why the image was chosen and included.

Step 4. Information gathering – listing the landscape ingredients in the circle.

Landscape Identification is about seeing the landscape with fresh, perceptive eyes.

We often move through our landscape blind to our surroundings – it is a blur outside the train window of our busy lives. Identifying and listing the elements of our landscape is a way of drawing back the curtain or cleaning life’s window.

The objective of the identification process is to list the elements of the landscape in each circle; a specific element location should be identified on the map, for dispersed elements it may be adequate to refer to a particular quadrant of a circle.

The identification of landscape elements will range over the built, natural and archaeological heritage as well as ‘non-heritage’ elements. It also adds its own important component – an understanding of the composition of the landscape and the interrelationship between existing built and natural heritage, and present-day interventions, e.g., construction work, or changed land use practices.

The extent by which landscape elements are common, occasional or rare must be recorded and the pattern of their occurrence must be indicated (by shading or cross-hatching a map section)

In time, reference lists of the landscape elements that might occur in different areas will emerge as a by-product of the process.

We provide a general list in Appendix 2, but a locality specific list might be prepared for each study area as a customized response to match the distinctiveness of each local landscape.

Step 5. Evaluating your landscape– the LANSWOT analysis – prioritising the lists.

Because the landscape is a composition of many elements and `jigsaw pieces`, an analytical process is required. A critical analysis approach to landscape management is essential if a high quality landscape is to be conserved, enhanced or created. . The LANSWOT analysis (Landscape Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is highly suited to analysing the diverse elements of our landscape in the context of their role in defining and deciding landscape quality.

It lends itself to community use in avoiding the complexity of scientific jargon-led analysis, whilst inviting communities to adopt a structured, critical approach in their assessment of their landscape. It has the added advantage of enabling communities in different locations to compare and contrast their conclusions in a comparative framework.

Categorising Landscape Elements into the LANSWOT columns

Landscape assessment involves classifying and ranking the elements in order of their importance. This is about understanding the landscape. The reason why a landscape is distinctive may not always be immediately obvious. Elements will be important because of the extent to which they shape and define the landscape, for better or worse. They will be very important where they add to or remove distinctiveness from the landscape.

A landscape strength adds to or enhances the quality of the landscape.

A landscape weakness needs to be restored/reinvigorated/reinstated..

A landscape opportunity involves a new situation with the potential to create a new landscape strength.

A landscape threat is poised to damage or destroy existing landscape quality by removing existing strengths/weaknesses and not compensating with new strengths.

A keynote element identifies or characterises a landscape on its own and influences our perception of landscape, even when it is not very obvious: it has a presence in the landscape. It may be an old or a new building, a church with spire or tower. It may be an iconic mountain or hill – each state will have its own classic examples. On some ‘flatter’ landscapes less imposing hills and even chimney stacks take centre stage.

A landscape pattern relates to a recurring element such as hedgerows, stone walls, fencing, terracing etc. Land use activities create their own patterns in the landscape; agriculture is the main influence that we are familiar with in Europe, with distinctive field patterns being associated with different crops and farm animal enterprises.

A particular style of wall construction or an ensemble of buildings may define a landscape – urban or rural, or the design consistency of a particular artifact. A busy craftsman may have influenced the building styles in an area and thereby defined the distinctive landscape character of an area with some particular ornamentation or building style.

Threats might include the homogenising effect of replicated building designs, which are now creating a new characteristic low-diversity landscape in many parts of Europe.

A native or, more commonly, introduced plant species may define the landscape in a positive manner. However, many other introduced plants are visually and ecologically alien in the landscape.

The composition of a landscape is very important. Two different landscapes could have a similar list of elements, but one could be more pleasing than another because, intentionally or otherwise, it is more successfully composed or strategically arranged. New interventions must to be assessed in relation to their wider impact on the composition of the greater landscape.

Landscape composition is often defined by the public face of the private realm – a fact not always easily acknowledged. For example, a large private building (a mansion or industrial plant) located on private property, in a prominent location, can influence the landscape character of a large tract of land.

The importance attached to landscape elements may have local, district, county, regional, national, European or international significance.

Step 6. Identifying actions and actors linked to the prioritised lists.

Landscape Management involves identifying/recording the actors and the actions needed in response to the LANSWOT analysis, encouraging best practice; where possible leading to the conservation of landscape elements (or at least a continuity of these elements within the landscape); and determining the character of interventions in order to:

- Reinforce the Strengths;
- Address the Weaknesses;
- Realise the Opportunities;
- Avert or mitigate the Threats.

This stage is about identifying with the landscape and participating actively, rather than passively, in the landscape management process, in a manner appropriate to the scale involved. On the larger scale, the activities of the major forces for change in the greater landscape can give rise to profound and widespread change across a large area. In such cases, the actors may be remote from the landscape concerned, be they experts or government and company officials.

On a smaller scale the immediate local landscape can be dramatically changed by quite small interventions, such as the demolition of a prominent building, the construction of a new prominent building, the felling of a few large trees, the clearing of a large thicket, the clear-felling or conversely the planting of a small area of woodland/forestry. Here the actors may be very local, even a neighbour.

The cumulative impact of many small actions can also significantly change the overall character and quality of a landscape; for instance the growing of certain plants by many individual gardeners can change the character of a landscape in quite a short time.

Actions to mitigate impacts on landscape would involve a balanced mix of landscape preservation, protection, planning, design, creation and restoration. Interventions in the landscape might be guided in such a fashion as to enrich and enhance the landscape, whilst reducing or avoiding ill-considered developments which can take from or homogenise the character of the landscape.

The forces for landscape change must be landscape-sensitised at an early stage: this template provides communities with the foresight, understanding and confidence to engage in that process. Individual and community activists must not only identify the actions and actors, but also the mechanisms and communication channels, legislative and otherwise, available to the local citizen and the community to influence the actors.

The discipline of carrying out an audit on landscape interventions is useful. The balance sheet for proposed change in the landscape may show a loss, gain or a neutral outcome. The LCT provides the data base for landscape auditing and is intended to result in a very healthy landscape balance sheet.

Step 7. Completing the Report, Publicising/Communicating its Conclusions and becoming a Landscape Active Community.

Completing a landscape circle study report will achieve much in informing and alerting you about your landscape. We recommend you to take some further important steps to communicate and validate your work to your immediate and greater community by progressing to one or more of the following:

Questionnaire: as a survey of the views of other members of the community this might form part of the project and/or subsequent feedback – a representative response from the community would be valuable in reinforcing the credibility of the study findings.

Exhibition: involving posters with outcome of SWOT analysis, images/photographs illustrating the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape, photographic and image sequences over time illustrating landscape change and evolution and photographs if possible of successful interventions in the landscape. Illustrations of unsuccessful or damaging interventions in the landscape need to be presented diplomatically to avoid alienating neighbours or even possible conflict and litigation.

Booklet: a booklet can be costly if printed in large numbers and become dated, but they are a reassuring ‘product’. Print to order, rather than printing large quantities which may tie up scarce funds.

Video/DVD: more ambitious but versatile and ideal for landscape.

Web Site: more ambitious again, but great for reaching a wider audience - is likely to require updating. It may be possible to set up a European Landscape Circle web site.

Note: all of the above measures as outputs of the study have a long term historical landscape value but unless they are reviewed and updated their role in having an on-going active impact on landscape interventions has a limited ‘shelf life’ of between 1 and 3 years. Reviewing and updating would not be an onerous task if undertaken on a regular basis (every 3 years is suggested).

Further Landscape Circle Outputs

Implementing a Landscape Circle Study enables Landscape Management Actions to be undertaken in an informed and effective manner as follows:

- Creating landscape awareness via normal community social contact;
- Providing informal advice to prospective actors;
- Participating in the processes of Development, Local Area Action Plans, Village Design Statements;
- Intervening in planning applications;
- Lobbying politicians;
- The study sets a benchmark for the local landscape;
- A Landscape Circle Archive - the studies could form the basis of a county or city landscape archive – a historical and dynamic landscape management resource.

Case Study:

It would be desirable to include a case study or example of a typical landscape circle or circles as an integral part of the handbook.

This may not be essential as examples may be available on the internet before too long.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Landscape relevant legislation applicable in the state concerned

Appendix 2

Indicative Reference Lists of Typical Landscape Ingredients

Topography:

Mountains, uplands, moorlands, valleys, hills, ravines, rock faults, exposed rock, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, mudflats, beaches, islands, the sea, coastal features.

Field Enclosure:

Earthen banks (ditches), stone and earth banks (ditches), hedgerows, tree-lines, stone walls, fencing, etc.

Vegetation

Trees, woods, forests, shrub thicket, hedgerows, fields, marsh, fen, bog, sand dunes.

Historical Associations

Archaeological sites, Ambush sites, battle sites, military campaign routes, pilgrimage routes

Buildings and their curtilages

Towns, Villages, one-off housing, Heritage ruins, derelict ruins, civic buildings, heritage buildings, farm buildings, town houses, streetscapes, rural houses, industrial buildings, graveyards, gardens

Travel Infrastructure

Roads, footpaths, bridges, railway lines, stations, signposts, road-markings, vehicles

Productive Land Uses

Fields for silage, pasture, hay and the farm animals, fields for arable use, stud farms, timber production, orchards and soft fruit.

Productive Sea Uses

Harbours, piers, shellfish farms, fish farms, boats

Leisure Land Uses

Gardens, Parks, Golf courses, race courses, playing fields, forest parks

Extractive Land Uses

Peatlands, Quarries, mines, sand & gravel pits

Waste Infrastructure

Landfill sites, Civic Amenity sites, sewers, storm water pipes, gullies & drains, manhole covers,

Artefacts

Stone walls, stone edging, water pumps, gateposts, gates, weirs, quays, steps, letterboxes, bus shelters

Communications & Power Infrastructure

Letter boxes, Telegraph poles, Electricity pylons, Mobile & telecommunications masts, junction boxes, manhole covers,

Commercial Manifestations

Billboards, Advertising signs, Garish Nameplates

Distant Views and Prospects

A landscape may enjoy distant views and prospects located outside of the study area; these are also landscape components/ingredients 'belonging' to the study area.

Wildlife Habitats and Designated Areas

These may form overlays over combinations of other landscape elements. They are a more complex composition in the landscape that further enrich the landscape quality.

They heighten the value of landscape elements that might otherwise be regarded as of a lesser value on a purely two-dimensional assessment.

Appendix 3**References/Reading List**

List 1 – essential and readily available – many downloadable from websites

European Landscape Convention – Council of Europe

European Rural Heritage Observation Guide – CEMAT, Council of Europe

Web Sites:

<http://coe.int/Europeanlandscapeconvention>

<http://landscape-forum-ireland.com>

List 2 – General Reference list:

Appendix 4**Practical Considerations**

Undertaking a Landscape Circle Study involves some practical considerations. These are more onerous for a group study than for an individual study, but are equally important for either approach.

Expenses

A study can be undertaken at minimal cost, but to produce a 'professional' report and especially for group studies the following expenses are likely to arise:

- Purchase of Ordnance Survey maps and sheets
- Photographic equipment & materials
- Photocopying
- Printing
- Insurance
- Transport
- Miscellaneous – binding, stationery, CD's etc

Funding

Before seeking funding prepare a brief outline of the project to accompany your applications for funding.

Grants may be available from a variety of sources.

List the possible sources here.

Local businesses may also provide sponsorship or assistance in kind (see list of expenses above).

Insurance

An individual or a couple of friends undertaking a study are unlikely to encounter insurance problems. Larger groups should consult an insurance agent or company about the possible need for public liability and personal accident insurance

Maps

The maps available and appropriate to the study should be described here

Copyright

The issue of copyright only becomes relevant if or when you publish and circulate your report, but sources should always be acknowledged in the report.

Maps: To copy maps permission may be required.

Provide details here.

Images: where relevant permission to reproduce images (paintings, photographs etc) should be sought from the owners.

Text: It is generally permitted to include short quotations from books provided the source is acknowledged and the details of the publication are included in the report.

Permission should be sought for long extracts and poems.

Other Legal Concerns

A landscape circle study should largely be based on what can be seen from the public realm and accessible private lands – roads, streets, and footpaths, the foreshore, parks, national parks etc. Private lands should not be trespassed on. In most cases a reasonable request for access will be successful. It is vital that such permission is respected and acknowledged.

A separate and potentially contentious issue relates to the taking of photographs. There should be no problem with landscape photographs taken of streets, villages, towns and rural scenes. Problems might arise with photographs that highlight private property in a negative context. Permission may have to be obtained in certain circumstances.

In all cases it will be helpful to prepare a short letter explaining your project and requesting permission /co-operation from the land-owners concerned.

Safety and Health

An interest in landscape can distract one from a sensible regard for one's safety and health. Walking and particularly photographing along roads urban or rural today can be extremely dangerous. The bright yellow Hi-vis vests are a very worthwhile investment. Clambering over ditches, streams and along shores/riverbanks are all hazardous exercises. Always ensure one's stability and safety before taking photographs. Preferably explore your landscape with a companion or 'minder'. If alone, always let someone know your intended itinerary and time programme and take a (charged) mobile phone with you.

Appendix 5

Sample Record Sheets

Sample record sheets are illustrated on the following pages. They are intended for guidance only.

The Council might provide them on their web site or as printed sheets to those who request them.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are all shown on the one page, in practice they will have a separate sheet or more each.

The landscape observatory sheet only provides for one image, if you are illustrating landscape change over time with a series of images, you might use one sheet for images and carry the explanatory text on the opposite page.

<p>Landscape Circle Study Record Sheet Date.....</p>	
<p>Recorder:</p>	<p>Survey Area:</p>

Landscape Strengths:	Location:	Photo Ref:
Landscape Weaknesses:	Location:	Photo Ref:
Landscape Opportunities:	Location:	Photo Ref:
Landscape Threats:	Location:	Photo Ref:

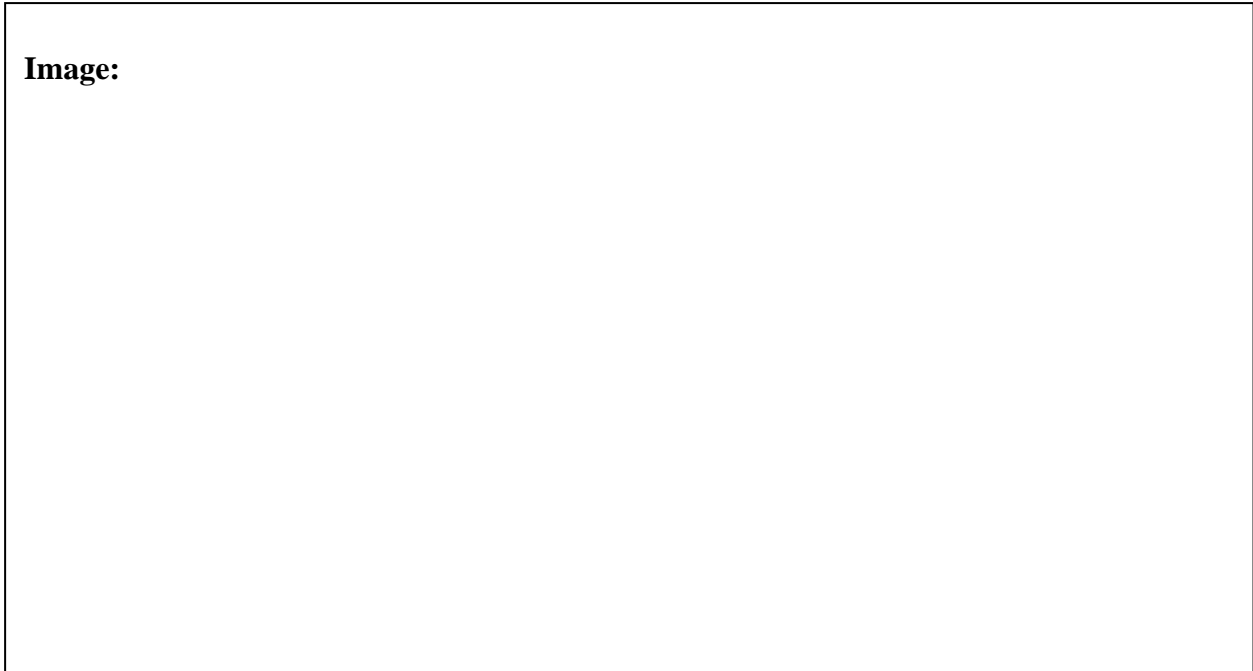
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Landscape Circle Study Action Sheet Date:	
Recorder:	Survey Area:

Landscape Strengths	Location	Ranking	Action Response	Actors
Landscape Weaknesses	Location	Ranking	Action Response	Actors
Landscape Opportunities	Location	Ranking	Action Response	Actors
Landscape Threats	Location	Ranking	Action Response	Actors

Landscape Circle Study Photographic Observatory Sheet	Date:
Recorder:	Survey Area:

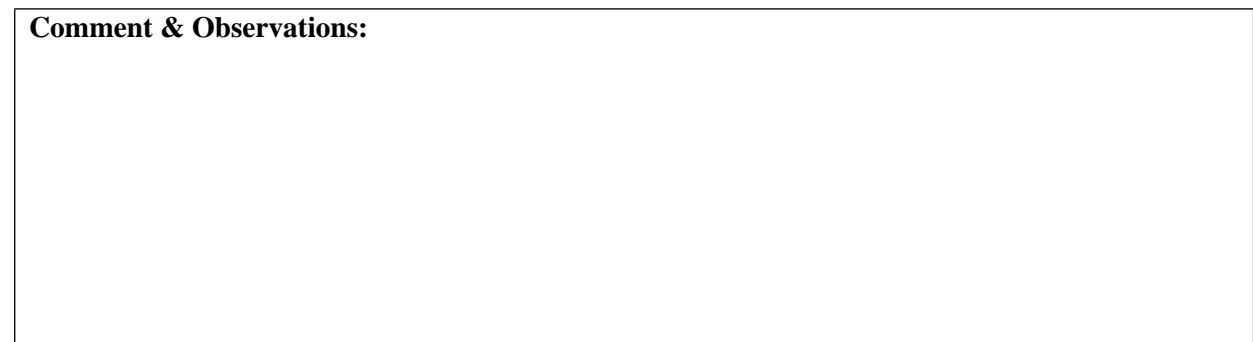
Image:

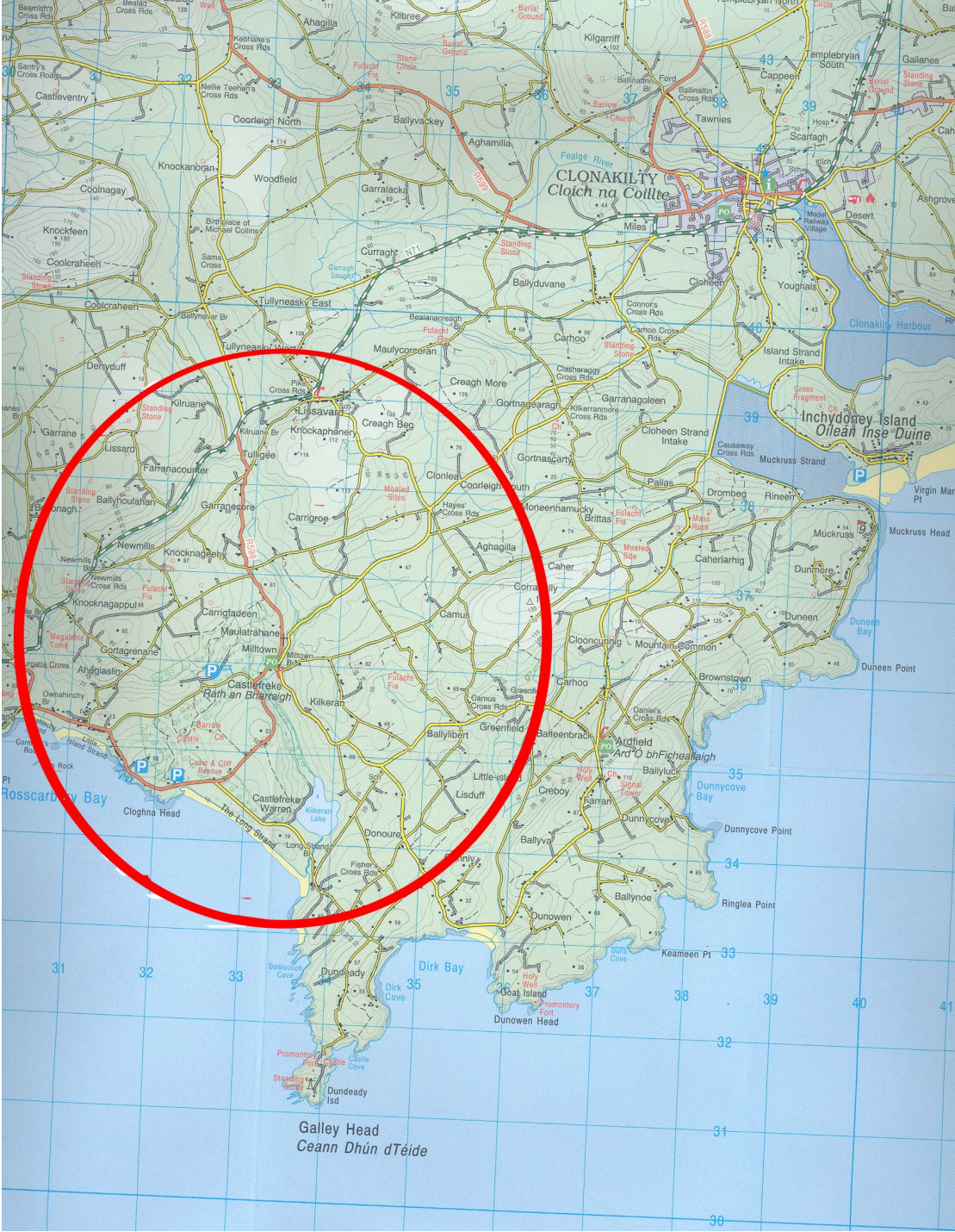


Location	Date of Image
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Viewpoint	Sketch Map
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Comment & Observations:





Example of a Landscape Circle in Ireland using Osi Discovery Map © Osi

'The Rathbarry/Castlefreke Landscape Circle'

Addendum

Introduction

Terry O'Regan as landscape activist and consultant undertook, on the conditions, within the limits and in the manner laid down by common agreement on behalf of the Council of Europe to prepare a report on developing a European version of the Local Landscape Management Template that he has developed for use in Ireland.

Terms of Reference

Prepare a landscape management template for the Contracting Parties of the European Landscape Convention. The landscape management template must be developed to assist local activists and communities to undertake local landscape studies and thus be proactively involved in an informal way in the key processes of preservation, management and planning called for under the European Landscape Convention.

This contract is intended to enable the author to develop a template as a 20 page report that could be customized to suit each country and yet ensure that the results of the local studies could be compared and collated at a European level.

Background

I have been involved with landscape interventions and the planning process in Ireland in relation to landscape management for many years as both a practising landscape consultant and a landscape/environmental/heritage activist involved with various non-governmental organisations.

I had convened 7 National Landscape Forums over the period 1995 to 2003 inclusive and provided a platform for many people to express concern at their perceived deterioration in the Irish landscape and their powerlessness in the face of the effective exclusion of local communities from the processes at work despite inferences that there were adequate participatory measures available. It became increasingly obvious that real participation could only occur if communities were prepared in advance of the arrival of the forces for change. Otherwise their participation would be passive and ineffective.

I had become very conscious that concerned citizens in the community are thus often placed at a significant disadvantage when trying to engage with the forces for change in their landscape and the associated administrative planning procedures.

The European Landscape Convention clearly recognises the role that must be played by local communities in the management of their landscape if the landscape quality standards envisaged by the convention are to be achieved. The Landscape Circle Template is an instrument that should achieve significant capacity-building in the participating community with regard to landscape knowledge, participatory empowerment and leadership.

Work undertaken over the course of the project

At the time of the commencement of the project in early 2007 a draft document had been prepared setting out the outline of the Irish version of the Local Landscape Management Template.

The template had been introduced to a community study group pursuing a heritage management course in West Cork, Ireland in the autumn of 2006. The landscape module was intended to provide a framework for the built and natural heritage modules of the course as well as introducing the participants to the concept of landscape protection, management and planning as per the European Landscape Convention.

March 2007

At the conference of the Council of Europe on the European Landscape Convention on the 22nd and 23rd of March 2007 a brief power-point illustrated presentation was made to the delegates outlining the Irish version of the Landscape Management Template.

April 2007

On the 12th April I arranged to meet the group that participated in the West Cork Heritage Study Group in autumn 2006 in order to obtain feedback from them as to the usefulness of the template.

This session was most encouraging as all of the participants indicated that the template had changed how they viewed their landscape, in some cases the change was quite dramatic.

Common across all of the responses was the degree of spatial awareness that they gained through the use of the circle and also the fact that many of them found that it encouraged them to confront the bad parts of the landscape as well as the parts they liked.

Perhaps the most significant response came from a participant who said that at first he thought that the template was anti-progress and change in the landscape, but he accepted that the template was in fact pro-active and could resolve conflict.

This was a very useful exercise in validating the use of the template as a community landscape management tool.

Summer 2007

For the summer edition of the Irish Heritage Council regular publication 'Heritage Outlook' I prepared an article entitled "Recapturing your Landscape" to introduce the concept of the Irish Landscape Management Template to a wider audience in Ireland.

The article has generated a response from people in different parts of the island of Ireland who are interested in undertaking a landscape circle study. Again this was most encouraging and it is hoped that these will commence work on a studies early in 2008.

October 2007

A penultimate draft of the Irish version of the Landscape Circle Study Template was submitted to the Irish Heritage Council as a possible project for funding under their publications grant section. A decision is awaited on this application.

As part of the process in making this submission the draft document was circulated to a number of associates with a strong interest in landscape and these people kindly carried out a proof reading and editing exercise and made useful suggestions to further improve the document.

November 2007

In November 2007 I was invited to present lectures to students undertaking a Masters in Planning and Development course at University College Cork and as part of the presentation I gave the students, twenty nine in all, an exercise to examine a 1: 50,000 scale map of Ireland using a plastic template marked up with circles with different radii.

All students found the exercise valuable in alerting their sense of awareness of landscape and in particular the spatial dimension of landscape.

Also in November I presented a paper at a seminar in Sheffield organised by the Landscape Research Group on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and as part of that presentation I briefly introduced the concept of the Landscape Circle Template and again it evoked great interest from the delegates from the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

January 2008

In January 2008 the first copies of the Irish Landscape Management Template Handbook will be circulated. It is expected that studies will commence thereafter in many different locations. Landscape Alliance Ireland will organise a supporting workshop for the participants in spring or early summer 2008.

Relationship of project to the CEMAT publication 'European Rural Heritage Observation Guide'

I would note that the proposed template is intended to be complementary to the CEMAT publication 'European Rural Heritage Observation Guide'.

The guide prompted me to consider the possibility of a European wide publication.

I have found that the guide is a very effective text for informing local communities about their heritage in a landscape context and the Landscape Circle Template should enable them to combine the European Rural Heritage Observation Guide with a landscape study in a process that would be both educational and empowering.

Outline of how the template might be customised for use in each participating state

I enclose the main body of the report which is a version of the handbook which can with some further work be customised as a general European handbook and also serve as a template for the use of each state to create their own handbook, adapting it to suit their own particular landscape, legislation, resources available to the communities in each country and appropriate references.

Provided that the basic structure of the template is consistent in each state it will lead to a situation where the studies undertaken by different communities throughout Europe will be comparable and will facilitate the exchange of information between communities in different states.

The template is intended to support other landscape management initiatives and instruments in the participating states and should provide a data base of local information across the whole of Europe that will be invaluable.

Illustrations

The enclosed document is presented without photographic images. The Irish version will obviously feature images from Ireland. The European version will require a selection of images from across the continent and each state version will make their own selection.

Enclosures

Template for proposed publication 'European Local Landscape Circle Studies – Implementation Guide'

Plastic tool for scoping the study using an Ordnance Survey Ireland 1:50,000 Discovery Map.

Copy of Ordnance Survey Ireland 1:50,000 Discovery Map for the West Cork area where the sample Rathbarry-Castlefreke Landscape Circle is located.

Copy of the summer edition of 'Heritage Outlook' containing the 'Recapturing Your Landscape' article.