Commercial and Visitor Services

Landscape classification system for visitor management

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, (incorporating the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Purpose

This policy establishes a standard classification system for characterising the biophysical, social and management attributes of sites and areas within QPWS managed areas, from a visitor management perspective. This policy can be applied to all terrestrial sites down to the low tide mark.

Background

There is considerable variation in the naturalness of landscapes across QPWS managed areas. At some sites there is significant evidence of human modification of the environment while at others the natural condition appears unaltered. QPWS managed areas also host a diverse range of visitor activities, and the people undertaking these activities have different preferences in terms of the biophysical, social and managerial features of the sites and areas they use.

The Master Plan for Queensland's Parks System emphasises that the parks system is to be managed to support a range of styles of nature-based visitation, and that management should provide a variety of settings catering for different visitors without compromising conservation outcomes. Policies for management of QPWS managed areas have also sought to provide a range of settings catering for different visitor activities and experiences.

To meet the goal of providing a diversity of settings the Agency requires a standard system for assessing the key attributes of sites and areas for visitors. Ultimately, the use of a landscape Classification System (LCS) will allow QPWS to characterise the settings at all QPWS managed areas, providing an important information resource for a range of management and planning decisions.

The LCS framework for assessing a site or area systematically describes settings on the basis of three sets of criteria. These criteria are:

- Biophysical
- Social
- Managerial.

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The LCS is a tool for assessing the naturalness of landscape settings from a visitor use and management perspective. It does not distinguish areas on their beauty and is not a system for describing the nature conservation or other values of sites or areas. It does not replace or compromise existing assessment and planning frameworks, including state and regional coastal management plans and World Heritage Area management plans and it does not infer that any particular management strategy, work program or other action ought to be implemented at a particular site or area.

Classification of sites using the LCS allows staff to consider the implications of proposed activities and other changes that may alter the biophysical, social or managerial attributes of a site or area, and to assess and monitor more gradual change due to increasing visitation. However decisions about desired management outcomes and changes to the physical, social or managerial environment at sites and areas must take a range of additional matters into consideration.

The LCS has been used extensively in visitor site and landscape inventory programs across protected areas and State forests in Queensland over recent years. Information about the landscape classes of particular sites and areas may be held at local, regional or central office levels.

The following process and guidelines are provided to assist the user in applying the LCS to determine the landscape class, or setting of a given site or area.

Definitions

QPWS managed areas include:

- Protected areas (State land) dedicated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, including areas of national park, national park (scientific), national park (recovery), resources reserve and conservation park.

- State forests (other than areas of State plantation forest) and forest reserves managed under the *Forestry Act 1959*.

- Marine parks declared under the *Marine Parks Act 2004*.

- Recreation areas declared under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*.

- All other lands managed by the QPWS regardless of tenure.

Nature includes all aspects of nature such as (and without limiting to):

- Ecosystems and their constituent parts.

- All natural and physical resources.

- Natural dynamic processes.

- The characteristics of places, however large or small, that contribute to:

  – their biological diversity and integrity, or

  – their intrinsic or scientific value.

Natural refers to existing in or formed by nature.

Naturalness is expressed on a range from completely untouched, wild, natural or remote to completely modified, built or developed depending on the proportion of natural and human-modified elements (post 1788) in the landscape. However, naturalness is not an absolute condition. The naturalness of a particular site or area can vary over time and natural events do not change the degree of naturalness although they may change the natural look of an area.

Over-storey refers to trees and shrubs greater than 2 metres tall.

Setting is a term used to describe the character of a site or area which takes into account its physical, social and managerial attributes.

Understorey refers to all vegetation less than 2 metres tall including sub-aquatic vegetation.

Process

Determining landscape class

Steps for determining landscape class are set out as follow:

- Use the 'Landscape Classification System (LCS) for Visitor Management' table (Appendix 1) to conduct assessments. Start by assessing the site or area using the descriptors under the physical category and then assess the social and managerial categories in turn.

- For each of the criteria listed in each category (e.g. viewscape, indicative appearance), identify the description (from class 1 – 9) that best suits the site you are assessing. Record the description class for each criterion. Use the 'LCS Scoring Sheet' (Appendix 2) for recording purposes. Print off and copy as many scoring sheets as required or develop your own paper-based or electronic scoring sheet if you wish.

- For each category of criteria (physical, social and managerial) add the numbers to obtain a total score and then divide the total by the number of criteria to obtain an average score for that category of criteria. Record the average score for the category.

- When the average scores for the physical, social and managerial categories of criteria have been identified, the highest of these scores (i.e. the category with a score closest to '9') is the overall landscape class.

  Note: Use moderation where a particular score is inappropriately skewing the overall class. The reasoning behind any such moderation should be based on sound judgement and be clearly set down on the 'LCS Scoring Sheet' for future reference.

Evaluating sites or areas

Evaluations of the landscape class of a given site or area should be taken from a representative location of the site or area that is being assessed and where you are able to accurately characterise the setting of the site or area. For example, if the site you are assessing is a camping area which has some facilities located at one end and natural bushland at the other, you should stand in a location where the facilities and the bushland would be reflected equally in your assessment of the site. You should avoid standing right beside the facilities so that they dominate the viewscape or standing in the bushland where you couldn't see the facilities.

Evaluating landscape class along linear features

Some visitor activities are likely to cross a range of settings. For example, progressing along a walking track may take you in a range of settings as the walking track passes through areas of different landscape class. For example, the trailhead may be located at a visitor centre where visitors are likely to concentrate in larger numbers and where the physical conditions are likely to be substantially modified. The track may then lead to a less modified environment, where fewer people are likely to venture. Walking even further along the track may take you into an even less modified setting, where little evidence of human presence is discernible.

When evaluating the landscape along a linear feature such as a walking track, it is better to take multiple assessments. Changes in setting may not be immediately obvious and you may need to backtrack to make an assessment from a location that better characterises the setting.

Assessing current condition

An assessment should always reflect the actual or current condition of the site. The site's current condition may differ to the preferred condition of the site. However, it is vital to assess only the current condition.

Excluding irrelevant criteria

If a particular criterion does not apply to the site you are assessing, do not give the setting a score for that criterion. For example, if there is no water (i.e. creek, lake or other water feature) at the site, do not give it a value for 'Water quality'. Some criteria (e.g. inter-party encounters while at nodes or destinations) relate only to site-based activities (e.g. picnicking) while others (e.g. Inter-party encounters while travelling) relate only to travel-based activities (e.g. walking, mountain bike riding). When completing an assessment at a given site or area, only consider relevant criteria.

Assessing natural condition

Knowledge of the natural condition of the site will also influence assessment. For example, if you have no knowledge of the site's natural condition it could be difficult to determine its 'naturalness'. If needed, seek advice as to the natural condition of the site. Do not assume that what you currently see is the natural condition of the site.

Assessing social condition

When evaluating the social class of a site, assessment should be based on the site's social condition, as most people would experience it. For example, if the site is hardly used during the week, heavily used on weekends and number of visitors is peaking on long weekends, you should assess the social conditions as per a 'normal' weekend.

Guidelines

The LCS is meant as a useful guide for visitor management, rather than a detailed forensic analysis of settings. The field application of the tool and the time devoted to assigning a setting score should be commensurate with its purpose.

Working at different scales

Assessments of landscape class may be undertaken at a range of scales, from discrete locations (e.g. at a point along a walking track through a forest) to broader areas (e.g. a forested planning area may be mapped as landscape class units). The aim of each exercise is to characterise the physical, social and managerial conditions or settings that are likely to be encountered in those sites or areas. Assessments may be undertaken partly as desktop exercises, but only where the physical, social and managerial conditions are well understood by the person(s) undertaking the assessment.

Overlapping

The LCS criteria are not designed to be mutually exclusive. There is overlapping between the factors to be considered in some of the criteria. Having a range of criteria ensures that more than one feature of a site is responsible for its landscape classification. Overlapping in criteria also ensures that a site's features will be well reflected in its landscape classification.

Note: Where the characteristics of a given site or area are not completely consistent with any one of the class descriptions for a particular criterion (i.e. it is half-way between 2 classes), it is appropriate to give a half-score for that criterion.

Excluding a criterion

If an assessing officer does not have a sound knowledge of site parameters for assessing a particular criterion (e.g. a criterion relating to site use), it is best to simply exclude that criterion and base the assessment of landscape class for that category on the scores for the remaining criterion in that category.

Interpreting the LCS criteria

Physical class criteria

- Prevalence and permanence of visitor impacts:
    - Assess the frequency and permanence of visitor impacts at the site.
    - Consider aspects such as vegetation, soil disturbance and changes to fauna behaviour.
- Viewscape (360°):
    - Assess the extent to which the natural condition of the landscape has been modified from its natural state.
    - In determining the setting class, consider foreground, mid-ground and background views as well as the proportion of the natural landscape modified in each.
- General landscape appearance (360°):
    - Consider the extent of visible modifications to the landscape, whether the modifications are temporary or permanent and whether they blend into or dominate the landscape.
- Prevalence and durability of impacts from non-recreation land or marine uses:
    - Assess the site for evidence of past and present non-visitor use of the site.
    - Is there evidence of non-visitor land uses such as mineral exploration, logging, grazing or flower harvesting?
    - Are these land uses still active, and in what proportions? If these uses have ceased, is the site regenerating?
- Naturalness of over storey:
    - Assess the percentage of natural over storey cover that remains.
    - What percentage of the over storey is intact?
    - Is it regenerating?
    - Consider the naturalness of the over-storey for the whole area that you can see, not just the over-storey directly above you.
- Naturalness of understorey (including aquatic biota):
    - Assess this criterion in the same way as the 'over storey' criterion.
- Naturalness of terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna:
    - Assess the percentage of natural fauna populations.
    - Assess the percentage of feral fauna species.
    - Consider the health of fauna species.

- Water quality:

    – Where there is water at a site, identify the extent to which human-induced changes in the aquatic or marine ecosystem have occurred.

Social setting criteria

- Evidence of other people (e.g. sites, sounds and smells):

    – Assess the evidence (sights, sounds and smells) of other people, including industrial and residential presence at a site.

    – How aware are you of other people?

    – Is the evidence just at nodes and along main routes, or throughout the whole site?

    – Is the evidence of other people short term and minor, permanent and pervasive or somewhere in between?

- Sense of isolation:

    – Consider factors such as sighting, hearing or interacting with other people.

    – How aware are other people of you?

    – What opportunity is there for solitude?

    – What sense of isolation can be achieved?

- Inter-party encounters while travelling:

    – If the assessment site is along a track, trail, road or watercourse, how many encounters with other groups could be reasonably expected?

- Inter-party encounters while at nodes and destinations:

    – Assess the likelihood of meeting other people or groups while you are at the visitor site.

    – Can contact with other people be avoided or expected?

    – If contacts can be expected, are they rare, frequent, or unavoidable?

- Dependence upon outdoor skills:

    – Assess the level of outdoor skills required by visitors at a site. Outdoor skills include fitness, strength, specialized outdoor recreation skills (e.g. technical climbing or canoeing skills) and skills such as navigation and first aid. They also include the judgement required to assess the risk involved and the necessity to carry water or food in, or rubbish out.

    Note: Outdoor skills do not include attributes that could be also called common sense, such as knowing how to cross a road. The level of outdoor skills required by a visitor generally decreases with increasing levels of site development and facilities.

Managerial class criteria

- Access:

    – Consider the nature and extent of visitor access to the activity site.

    – What form of tracks or roads do people use to get to the site?

    – Is motorised access provided to a site?

- – Do people require non-motorised modes of transport?

- – Are trails, tracks and roads marked, formed, maintained, sealed, single or double lane?

- Evidence of management personnel:
  - – Consider factors such as construction and maintenance activity and the patrolling of a site.
  - – How evident or obvious is management presence at a site?

- Presence and extent of signage:
  - – What is the level and nature of signage at a site?

  Note: Signage may be regulatory, directional, informative, interpretive or advertising. For the purpose of the LCS, regulatory signage refers to any signage that attempts to directly control the behaviour of visitors to the site. The signage does not have to be legally enforceable to be considered as regulatory signage for the purpose of determining a site or area's landscape class.

- Rules, regulations and law enforcement:
  - – Assess the messages that are being communicated about the site.
  - – Are rules and regulations communicated on-site (managers present, signage, registration shelters) or off-site (permits obtained prior to visit, use conditions explained in a book)?
  - – Are visitors aware of the management presence?

- Presence of management and visitor infrastructure:
  - – Assess the nature and extent of management and visitor infrastructure at the activity site.
  - – Are structures present?
  - – Where they are present, how apparent or obtrusive are they?
  - – Are they designed to blend into the natural environment (e.g. according to departmental standards for a particular type of setting)?
  - – Are they designed to stand out and provide a focus for recreational activity (e.g. brightly coloured playground equipment)?

Appendix

- Appendix 1: Landscape Classification System (LCS) for Visitor Management
- Appendix 2: LCS Scoring Sheet

Legislation

- *Nature Conservation Act 1992.*
- *Forestry Act 1959.*
- *Marine Parks Act 2004.*
- *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006.*

References

- *Master Plan for Queensland's Parks System*

Disclaimer:

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Approved By

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Appendix 1: Landscape Classification System (LCS) for Visitor Management

Physical	1 Wild-natural-remote	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Urban - commercial – industrial -
Prevalence and permanence of visitor impacts: **Site factor***	No impact on natural condition.	Minimal evidence of visitor impacts. Impacts which have occurred recover quickly (e.g. temporary loss of local native vegetation, scuffing of leaf litter, etc. in small areas which recover to pre-impact condition seasonally). Local native fauna/fish behaviour is unaffected by use.	Temporary, minor visitor impacts evident (e.g. temporary loss of local native vegetation, scuffing of leaf litter, minor soil/coral/seabed disturbance, etc.). Impacts not permanent, however, recovery to pre-impact condition unlikely. No hard evidence that local native fauna/fish behaviour is affected by use.	Moderate visitor impacts evident in heavily used areas. Some permanent loss of local native vegetation (e.g. herbs and forbs), loss of leaf litter, soil/coral/seabed disturbance evident. Impacts persist at nodes and along walking tracks. Sensitive local native fauna / fish may be displaced as a result of use. Behaviour of other local native fauna/fish is occasionally modified. Native fauna/fish population changes are noticeable.	Physical changes as a result of visitor use are obvious and widespread with little chance of recovery. Some altering of vegetation characteristics /structure. A significant proportion of the local native fauna/fish displaced. Local native fauna/fish behaviour and population changes are altered.	Physical changes as a result of visitor use are obvious, widespread and permanent with little chance of recovery. Vegetation characteristics and floral structure altered. Native fauna/fish behaviour and population changes are obvious. The natural condition is unlikely to recover.	Physical changes as a result of visitor use are obvious, widespread and permanent. Vegetation characteristics and floral structure altered. A few native fauna/fish populations abnormally increased because of human interaction. Some species may display signs of aggressiveness. The natural condition exists only in very small remnant areas.	Physical changes as a result of visitor use are obvious, widespread and permanent. Vegetation characteristics and floral structure completely altered. Some native fauna/fish populations abnormally high because of human interaction. Some species may display signs of aggressiveness. The natural condition exists only in very small remnant areas.	Physical changes as a result of visitor use are obvious, widespread and permanent. Vegetation characteristics and floral structure completely altered. Many native fauna/fish populations are grossly changed (or absent) because of human interaction. Some species may display signs of aggressiveness. The natural condition is non-existent.

Physical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Viewscape (360°): **Context factor**	0% of visual landscape /seascape modified from natural condition.	<1% of visual landscape /seascape modified from natural condition. Little, if any, evidence of modification.	1-5% of visual landscape /seascape modified. Minimal evidence of modification to natural condition. Some structures or moored vessels may be evident in the distance.	5-10% of visual landscape /seascape modified. Some evidence of modification to natural condition. Some structures or moored vessels are/may be evident.	10-25% of visual landscape /seascape modified. Modification of natural condition. Structures or moored vessels are evident.	25-50% of visual landscape /seascape modified. Modification of natural condition is evident. Structures or moored vessels are plainly evident.	50-75% of visual landscape /seascape is modified. Modification of natural condition is very evident. Structures or moored vessels are clearly evident in landscape /seascape but do not dominate.	75-99% of visual landscape /seascape modified. Modification of natural condition is plainly evident and dominates the visual landscape /seascape.	100% of visual landscape /seascape modified.
General landscape appearance (360°): **Context factor**	A wild, totally natural site or landscape /seascape that has not been affected by post-1788 use.	An almost totally natural site or landscape /seascape with very few modifications. Modifications are temporary, small/minor and very dispersed.	A very natural site or landscape /seascape. Modifications are semi-permanent, small/minor and restricted to a few dispersed nodes. Natural elements dominate away from nodes.	A very natural appearing site or landscape /seascape. Modifications are permanent, small/minor and restricted to a few dispersed nodes. Natural elements dominate outside these nodes. Built structures are very rare unobtrusive and rustic (e.g. graded walking tracks, narrow infrequently used vehicle tracks, timbered picnic tables).	A somewhat natural appearing site or landscape /seascape. Modifications may be permanent, moderately large and obvious. Large blocks of native vegetation interspersed with small areas of cleared land. Built structures are dispersed but readily apparent (e.g. walking tracks with hardened surfaces, well maintained unsealed roads, timbered picnic areas, unobtrusive facilities).	A somewhat natural appearing site or landscape /seascape. Natural elements just dominate over other elements in the landscape /seascape. For example, rural areas with large areas of remnant native vegetation separated by grassland. Built structures may be obvious and quite common (e.g. roads are sealed, picnic areas paved and facilities are in harmony with surroundings).	Managed parkland with small to large areas of open space. Built structures and other modifications to the natural landscape /seascape dominate. Natural elements exist as scattered remnants, some of which may be quite large.	Managed urban parkland with large areas of open space/playing fields. Built structures and other modifications to the natural landscape /seascape dominate. Natural elements exist only as small scattered remnants.	Managed urban parkland with playing fields. Built structures and other modifications to the natural landscape /seascape dominate. Natural elements are more or less non-existent.

Physical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Prevalence and durability of impacts from non-recreation land or marine uses: **Site factor**	Totally natural landscape /seascape. No history of post-1788 land use.	Predominantly natural landscape with some evidence of post-1788 land/sea use limited to a few isolated small sites that are regenerating. None of these land / sea uses are active.	Predominantly natural landscape /seascape with evidence of post-1788 land use limited to small sites that are regenerating. None of these land/sea uses are active.	Regenerating natural landscape /seascape with obvious evidence of past land/sea use (e.g. regenerating mineral exploration, selective logging, grazing, flower harvesting, commercial fishing and diving etc). Some of these land/sea uses may still be active (covering up to 5% of the area).	Regenerating natural landscape /seascape with obvious evidence of past and present land/sea use. Current land/sea uses (e.g. regenerating mineral exploration, selective logging, grazing, flower harvesting, commercial fishing and diving etc). Currently active in a small proportion (5-20%) of the landscape.	Part natural landscape. Land uses (e.g. regenerating mineral exploration, selective logging, grazing, flower harvesting, commercial fishing and diving etc). currently active in a large proportion (20-50%) of the landscape.	Managed parkland with small to large areas of open space. Built structures and other modifications to the natural landscape dominate. Natural elements exist as scattered remnants, some of which may be quite large. A wide range of land uses that modify the natural landscape are active. Impacts are widespread, pervasive and permanent. Part of the natural landscape remains but most of this is modified to some extent.	Managed urban parkland with large areas of open space/playing fields. Built structures and other modifications to the natural landscape dominate. Natural elements exist only as small scattered remnants. A wide range of land uses that modify the natural landscape are active. Impacts are widespread, pervasive and permanent. Very small areas of the natural landscape remains but most are obviously modified.	Managed urban parkland with playing fields. Built structures and other modifications to the natural landscape dominate. Natural elements are more-or-less non-existent. Impacts are widespread, pervasive and permanent. Land use has completely changed the natural landscape.
Naturalness of over-storey: **Site factor**	100% of natural vegetation intact.	97-100% of natural vegetation intact. <3% regenerating.	90-97% of natural vegetation intact. <10% cleared or regenerating.	85-90 % intact or regenerating. Remainder cleared or non-endemic species.	70-85% intact or regenerating. Remainder cleared or non-endemic species.	50-70 % intact or regenerating. Remainder cleared or non-endemic species.	25-50 % intact or regenerating. Remainder cleared or non-endemic species.	10-25% intact or regenerating. Remainder cleared or non-endemic species.	<10% intact or regenerating. Remainder cleared or non-endemic species.

Physical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Naturalness of understorey (including aquatic biota): **Site factor**	100% of natural vegetation intact. No weed species.	97-100% of natural vegetation intact. <3% cleared or regenerating. No weed species.	Ecosystem is substantially natural. 90-97% of natural vegetation intact. <10% cleared or regenerating. <3 weed species.	Ecosystem is substantially natural. 85-90 % intact or regenerating. < 15% cleared or dominated by non-endemic species. <5 weed species.	70-85% intact or regenerating. < 30% cleared or dominated by non-endemic species.	50-70 % intact or regenerating. < 50% cleared or dominated by non-endemic species.	25-50 % intact or regenerating. < 75% cleared or dominated by non-endemic species.	10-25% intact or regenerating. < 90% cleared or dominated by non-endemic species.	<10% intact or regenerating. Almost entirely cleared or dominated by non-endemic species.
Naturalness of terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna: **Site factor**	100% Natural Fauna populations (species and structure). No feral species.	97-100% of fauna species intact. <3% recovering. No feral species.	Ecosystem is substantially natural. 90-97% of fauna species intact. <10% recovering. <3 feral species.	Ecosystem is substantially natural. 85-90 % of fauna species in good health. <15% absent or recovering. < 5 feral species.	70-85% of fauna species in good health. <30% absent or recovering.	50-70 % of fauna species in good health. <50% absent or recovering.	25-50 % of fauna species in good health. <75% absent or recovering. Some native species populations abnormally high or low	10-25 % of fauna species in good health. <90% absent or recovering. Some species populations totally abnormal.	<10 % of fauna species in good health. >90% absent or recovering. Limited range of fauna.
Water quality: **Site factor**	Completely pure water.	No detectable effect/change in water quality.	Short-term and minor changes to natural stream/beach dynamics and/or water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load or sand/sediment load).	Short to medium term moderate changes to natural stream/beach dynamics and/or water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load or sand/sediment load).	Mid-term and/or moderate changes to natural stream/beach dynamics and/or water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load or sand/sediment load).	Long-term and/or substantial changes to natural stream/beach dynamics and/or water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load or sand/sediment load).	Long-term and/or permanent changes to natural stream/beach dynamics, structures and/or water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load, channelling or sand/sediment load).	Permanent changes to natural stream/beach dynamics, structures and/or water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load, channelling or sand/sediment load).	Permanent changes to natural stream/beach dynamics, structures and water chemistry (e.g. increased turbidity, nutrient load, channelling or sand/sediment load).

Social	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Evidence of other people (e.g. sights, sounds and smells): **Context factor**	Non-existent. No evidence present.	Short-term and insignificant evidence at nodes and along main routes. Nodes are small, low impact and dispersed. No evidence (sights, sounds, smells) elsewhere.	Some permanent evidence at nodes and along main routes. Nodes are small, low impact and dispersed. Negligible evidence (sights, sounds, smells) of use elsewhere.	Significant permanent evidence at nodes and along main routes. Nodes may be moderate in size and concentrate activities and people. Some evidence (sights, sounds, smells of people) elsewhere.	Apparent evidence of use (i.e. sights, sounds, and smells) pervades nodes, main routes and their surrounds. Nodes may be extensive with occasional concentrations of people and activities.	Apparent evidence of use (i.e. sights, sounds, and smells) pervades nodes, main routes and their surrounds. Nodes may be extensive with frequent and significant concentrations of people and activities.	Clearly apparent evidence of other people at nodes, along main routes and their surrounds except in relatively small remnant areas. Open areas may be extensive with heavy concentrations of people and activities.	Widespread, all-encompassing and permanent.	Widespread, pervasive and permanent.
Sense of isolation: **Context factor**	Total. No evidence of human habitation, visitation or use. Communications with other parties extremely rare.	High	Moderate	Moderate to low	Low	Very low	Extremely low.	None	None. Site dominated by human habitation, visitation or use. Voice communication with other parties is possible.
Interparty encounters while travelling: **Context factor**	Very few. <1 group** a day	Low. < 5 groups a day	Low to Moderate, <10 groups a day	Moderate <25 groups a day.	Moderate to high. <40 groups a day	High <50 groups a day	Very high >50 groups a day	Usually constant	Always constant
Interparty encounters on-site: **Context factor**	Non-existent. Chance encounters with others are rare and usually avoidable.	Low. Users are most often alone and should be surprised to have to share locations with others.	Low to moderate. Frequent opportunities for solitude. Contact with others should be expected, however, it may be avoided.	Moderate to high. Frequent opportunities for solitude. Contact should be expected and usually cannot be avoided.	High. Infrequent opportunity for solitude during the day. Frequent contact should be expected and unlikely to be avoided.	Very high. Almost no opportunity for solitude during the day. Frequent and unavoidable contacts should be expected.	No opportunity for solitude during the day. Frequent and unavoidable contacts should be expected.	Continuous and unavoidable contacts should be expected.	Continuous and unavoidable contacts should be expected.

Social	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dependence upon outdoor skills: **Site factor (but includes access routes)**	Total Persons visiting must be very well prepared, experienced and highly trained to ensure their safety.	Very high	High	Moderate Persons visiting this site need some preparation, knowledge of the site or specialist training to ensure their safety.	Moderate to low	Low Persons visiting this site need little or no preparation, knowledge of the site or training to ensure their safety.	Very low	N/A	N/A Persons visiting this site need no preparation or knowledge to ensure their safety.

Managerial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Access: **Site factor (but includes access routes)**	No motorised access whatsoever. No tracks, roads, channel or hazard markers or buoys. Some unmarked trails may exist. Maps/charts may be unreliable.	Trails exist. Some marked unformed maintained trails may exist. Some evidence of vehicle tracks may exist but these are regenerating. Small unpowered or electric motor powered (e.g. outboards) craft may be evident (canoes, small sail boats, kayaks etc). Maps / charts may be unreliable.	Rough, unsurfaced and infrequently maintained vehicle roads may exist. Some formed but not hardened trails present. Reliable maps/charts available.	Well-maintained roads and tracks. Gravel roads following natural features with some steep grades and tight corners. Some formed tracks may be present. Reliable maps/charts available. Some channel markers, all significant hazards marked, mooring buoys may be present, natural surface boat launching points, small landings. Roads/marked channels blend with environment.	Unsealed roads with engineered and modified alignments. Mostly one lane, however, some two-lane sections may exist. Some narrow sealed roads may be present. Formed and hardened tracks may be present (boardwalk/sealed track sections). Reliable maps/charts available. Channels marked, all significant hazards marked, mooring buoys present, hardened boat ramps, landings, small jetties/pontoons.	Most roads and tracks are sealed and regularly maintained. Two lane roads are common. Channels marked, all significant hazards marked, mooring buoys present, hardened boat ramps, substantial jetties/pontoons.	Roads and tracks are usually sealed. Some use of paving may be present. Unsealed roads and tracks are maintained at a high standard. Two lane roads are common. Channel markers may be lit, lighthouses visible, all significant hazards marked, mooring buoys present, hardened/sealed boat ramps, swing basins, large jetties/pontoons.	All roads, tracks, and paths are sealed or paved. All marine launch, navigation and mooring services available.	All roads, tracks, and paths are sealed or paved. All marine launch, navigation and mooring services available.

Managerial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Evidence of management personnel: **Site factor**	Infrequent, usually only to monitor resource conditions.	Minimum management presence, only to achieve minimum necessary management obligations.	Minimum management presence. Infrequent construction and maintenance activity. Infrequent patrols by enforcement staff.	Some management presence. Occasional construction and maintenance activity. Occasional patrol by enforcement staff.	Active management presence. Common construction and regular maintenance activities. Regular infrequent patrol by enforcement staff.	A strong and visible management presence. Users commonly aware of management activities.	Management presence active. Frequent and regular construction and maintenance activity. Frequent and regular patrol by enforcement staff.	Management and enforcement personnel are obvious and semi - permanent.	Management and enforcement personnel are obvious and permanent.
Presence and extent of signage: **Site factor (but includes access routes)**	None	Unlikely, however a few, dispersed signs may be present for resource protection.	Minimal road/track/beach names, regulatory notices and directional signage.	Regulatory and directional signs located at key points. Minimum interpretation signage.	Interpretation, regulatory notices, boundary, and directional signs sufficient to orientate and inform all visitors. Signage blends into natural background.	Comprehensive interpretation, regulatory notices, boundary, and directional signs sufficient to orientate, educate and inform all visitors. Signage can be large and apparent.	Interpretation signs and regulatory notices common. Boundary and directional signs at all intersections and along roads and tracks. Some advertising signs may be present. Signage is obvious and may be a focus of activity.	Interpretation signs and regulatory notices frequently encountered. Boundary and directional signs at all intersections and along roads and tracks. Advertising signs may be present.	Unlimited.
Rules, regulations and law enforcement: **Site factor (but includes access routes)**	Communicated off site. Users unaware of management.	Communicated off site. Infrequent patrol for sustainability monitoring and life preservation. Users mostly unaware of management.	Predominantly communicated off site. Sporadic patrol for sustainability monitoring and life preservation. Users occasionally aware of management.	Some on-site communication. Signage and supervision as required for safety and sustainability. Users occasionally aware of management.	An occasional and visible management presence. Frequent on-site communication. Users commonly aware of management.	A regular and visible management presence. Frequent on-site communication. Users commonly aware of management.	An active management presence. Frequent and regular on-site communication. Users commonly aware of management, rules and regulations.	Frequent and regular education, reinforcement or enforcement.	Constant education, reinforcement or enforcement

Managerial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Presence of management and visitor infrastructure : **Site factor (but includes access routes and site service facilities)**	None	Only constructed where no other alternative can be found (e.g. communication towers). Structures are inconspicuous and widely dispersed.	Only constructed where no other alternative can be found (e.g. communication towers).	Structures are small but apparent. However, they are dispersed and blend into the natural background.	Structures are somewhat apparent; can be quite large but blend in to the natural background.	Structures are readily apparent; they may be designed to blend into their surroundings however, some may stand out.	Built structures are large and readily apparent. Some infrastructure may be provided as a focus for visitor activity.	Built structures are readily apparent and often designed to stand out. Infrastructure is usually provided in all public spaces and may be the focus of visitor activity.	Large, obvious and attention grabbing. Built structures dominate all senses. Unavoidable.

* Site factors are those present on the actual site being assessed. Context factors are elements of the broader landscape that relate to the site being assessed.

**A group constitutes the number of people belonging to one party (it could be a tour group, family or group of hikers or a large group broken into parties).

Appendix 2: LCS Scoring Sheet

Date: _____

Recorder: _____

Site type & name: _____

Site location: _____

Overall Landscape class (Category with average closest to 9)	

Category	
Physical criteria	**Score**
Prevalence and permanence of visitor impacts	
Viewscape (360°)	
General landscape appearance	
Prevalence and durability of impacts from non-recreation land uses or marine uses	
Naturalness of over - storey	
Naturalness of understorey (including aquatic vegetation)	
Naturalness of terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna.	
Water quality	
Total (Sum of scores)	
Average (Total divided by number of criteria) scored)	

Category	
Social criteria	**Score**
Evidence of other people (e.g. Sights, sounds and smells)	
Sense of isolation	
Interparty encounters while travelling	
Interparty encounters on-site	
Dependence upon outdoor skills	
Total (Sum of scores)	
Average (Total divided by number of criteria scored)	

Category	
Managerial criteria	**Score**
Access	
Evidence of management personnel	
Presence and extent of signage	
Rules, regulations and law enforcement	
Presence of management and visitor infrastructure	
Total (Sum of scores)	
Average (Total divided by number of criteria scored)	

The score