

Mapping and Characterizing the Jefoure Cultural Landscape Which Provides Multiple Ecosystem Services to the Gurage People in Ethiopia

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Abstract : Jefoure land use system is one of the traditional landscape human settlement patterns, and it is a cultural design and peculiar art of the people of Gurage in Ethiopia via which houses and trees flank roads left and right. Assessment of the multiple benefits of the traditional road that benefit society and development could enhance the understanding of the land use planners and decision makers to pay attention while planning and managing the land use system. Recent trend shows that the Jefoure land use is on the threshold of change as a result of flourishing road networks, overgrazing, and agricultural expansion. This study aimed to evaluate the multiple ecosystem services provided by the Jefoure land use system after characterization of the socio-ecological landscape. Information was compiled from existing data sources such as ordnance survey maps, aerial photographs, recent high resolution satellite imageries, designated questionnaires and interviews, and local authority contacts. The result generated scientific data on the characteristics, ecosystem services provision, and drivers of changes. The cultural landscape has novel characteristics and providing multiple ecosystem services to the community for long period of time. It is serving as road for humans, livestock and vehicles, habitat for plant species, regulating local temperature, climate, runoff and infiltration, and place for meeting, conducting religious and spiritual activities, holding social events such as marriage and mourning, playing station for children and court for football and other traditional games. As a result of its aesthetic quality and scenic beauty, it is considered as recreational place for improving mental and physical health. The study draws relevant land use planning and management solution in the improvement of socio-ecological resilience in the Jefoure land use system. The study suggests the landscape needs to be registrar as heritage site for recognizing the wisdom of the community and enhancing the conservation mechanisms.

Keywords : cultural landscape, ecosystem services, Gurage, Jefoure

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