



LE MORNE  
HERITAGE TRUST FUND



LE MORNE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE:  
**UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

### NOMINATION

The Nomination of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is built on tangible and intangible information:

- Commemorative celebrations: Worship or deep appreciation of the mountain, its consideration as an icon
- Literature: the mountain has inspired various books and other writings
- Music, oral and written stories, history and traditions
- Expression of national identity, values of humanity, feelings.

### ACCESS TO LE MORNE BRABANT MOUNTAIN

Access to Le Morne Brabant Mountain has opened since July 2016. The trail is accessible to the public from Monday to Sunday 7.00 hrs - 16.00 hrs including Public Holidays. The site is closed in case of bad weather condition.

### MANAGEMENT

The Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund has been established by the *Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund Act 2004*, as the authority responsible for administering, regulating and monitoring activities within the Cultural Landscape. The Le Morne Heritage Trust is a parastatal body under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts & Culture.

A series of documents, legislations, policies, regulations, planning guidelines are in place to protect the landscape and regularize activities related to it so that its Integrity and Authenticity are safeguarded.

### CONTACTS

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## LE MORNE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Le Morne Cultural Landscape has been respectively proclaimed a National Heritage on 24 January 2006 and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on 10 July 2008.

### SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Le Morne Cultural Landscape lies approximately between Longitudes 57°17'57" and 57°21'28" and between Latitudes 20°25'22" and 20°29'31" on the most spectacular view of Le Morne Brabant Peninsula at the southwest of Mauritius.

There are two essential parts to the landscape:

- (i) A Core Zone of about 349 hectares comprising most of the foothills and all the higher reaches of the Le Morne Mountain. This monolithic mountain of volcanic origin which rises to 556m dominates the landscape from any direction. The Core Zone is preserved by way of a "no touch" approach where only absolute minimalist interventions are allowed to make the site accessible.
- (ii) The surrounding Buffer Zone encompasses the entire peninsula and the lagoon bordered by fringing reefs. It forms an integral part of the overall landscape where development may be allowed only if it does not impinge on the authenticity and integrity of the landscape.

### HISTORICAL VALUE

- Le Morne holds great importance in the history and memory of Mauritius.
- Le Morne is also a symbol of resistance to slavery and has now become a focal point for commemorating the Abolition of Slavery in Mauritius.
- Le Morne is associated with maroon slaves who used the mountain as a fortress, as a shelter. Difficult access to the plateau at the top of the mountain was across a deep and narrow gap in the cliffs – the "V shape-Gap". Evidence of

occupation of the cave shelters by maroons on the mountain came to light through the discovery of lamb bones indicating, through carbon dating, the likely period of occupation to be between 1736 AD and 1807 AD.



- Le Morne has also become a rallying point for all Mauritians who are deeply concerned about the country's heritage in terms of its history, its culture as well as the natural environment
- The inscription of Le Morne as a World Heritage Site reminds us all that Mauritius has a shared history of suffering of millions of people who were captured mainly from the African coasts.

### TRADITIONS



Innumerable traditions associated with the people of Le Morne enrich the cultural value of the site:

- the sega folkloric dance
- use of local plants in traditional medicine



- artisanal fishing technique devices
- beliefs and culture brought mainly from Africa and India.

### BIODIVERSITY

The Landscape has special significance with regard to biodiversity:



- A rich flora on the Morne Mountain with some 73 of the 311 species of indigenous flowering plants found in Mauritius, including at least two endemic plants to the mountain namely the Boucle d'Oreille (*Trochetia boutoniana*) which is the National flower of the Republic of Mauritius and the L'Immortelle du Morne (*Helichrysum mauritianum*).
- The fauna of Le Morne consists of few species such as the Mauritian grey white eye, ornate day gecko, Mauritian fruit bat, and paille-en-queue .

### OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

*An Act of defiance against the system of Slavery.*

- Le Morne is known above all for its association with runaway slaves, engaged in the globally displayed act of defiance against the system of slavery, generally referred to as maroonage.
- Le Morne stands out as a symbol of high price that humans paid to retain their freedom by retreating into a dangerous mountain, confronting frightening heights and negotiating narrow passes in hazardous conditions. In extreme cases, maroons chose death over captivity.
- Le Morne Cultural Landscape is an exceptional testimony to maroonage or resistance to slavery in terms of the mountain being used as a fortress to shelter escaped slaves, with physical and oral evidence to support that use.
- It is a symbol of slaves' fight for freedom, their suffering, and their sacrifice, all of which have relevance, beyond its geographical location – and represented by the Creole people of Mauritius and their shared memories and oral traditions.

