

### 1.1.2 Ecomuseums--an approach for Continuing Landscape

In general, the ecomuseum – as new museology (Par 2005) -- is a tangible kind of open-air/outdoor museum that retains buildings and people within their original site. Its theoretical and practical origins evolved in France with Georges-Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine. Rivière and de Varine coined the concept in 1971, during a dinner with the aide the French Minister of Environment. The intention was to link heritage protection with the environment (De Varine 1985, 2013). Rivière's 'evolutive definition' defined it as: ... an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and a local population ... an expression of man and nature ... an expression of time ... an interpretation of space ... a laboratory ... a conservation centre ... a school ... (Rivière 1985, pp. 182-3) In recent decades, the ecomuseum concept has been universally acknowledged as a new paradigm for the holistic interpretation of cultural heritage, in which communities conserve, interpret, and manage their heritage consistent with sustainable development objectives (Istituto Ricerche Economiche E Sociali (IRES) 2004). Several ecomuseums have been established for scattered heritage sites, including the holistic interpretation of both tangible and intangible cultural landscapes on a large geographical scale. This is what has happened in Italy, after the diffusion of the European Landscape convention (2000), many ecomuseums, and the best of them, have adopted the landscape as their primary preoccupation, and often added it to their official name, such as 'Ecomuseo del Paesaggio' (1) The other important role of the ecomuseum concept is for the restoration of cultural landscapes by relating heritage elements to contemporary life and values. All these characteristics give ecomuseums a significant role in the management of 'Continuing Landscapes' which may not enabled World Heritage Site status but of significance in the eyes of local people and does meet the UNESCO criterion of 'retaining an active social role in contemporary society associated with a traditional way of life and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress' (UNESCO 2012, p. 86)

(1) Please refer to the official website at

<http://ecomuseo.comune.parabiago.mi.it/ecomuseo/ECOMUSEOev.htm> (retrieved on December 12 2013 )