

## MIDLANDS HIKING FIXTURES – JANUARY – MARCH 2024

DATE	GRADE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES	LEADER
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> Dec to Tuesday 2nd Jan	3 nights +hiking Grade 3	<b>BUSHMANS NEK HUT</b> Two day hikes from Bushman's Nek, visiting Painters Cave and Tomatu Cave weather permitting. Book individually at Bushmans Nek Hut by emailing <a href="mailto:bookings@kznwildlife.com">bookings@kznwildlife.com</a> . Please contact Kevin prior to making a booking as the hike will only take place if there are sufficient interested members.	Kevin Stoffberg 071 434 7444
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	Grade 2	<b>BEACON HILL – WILD FLOWER WALK – Nikki Brighton</b> Please join us for a walk and talk demonstration by Nikki Brighton who is a legend on endemic wild flowers . Meet at Scout Hall off Plane Crescent to walk along the uMngeni Howick River Conservancy. No day packs needed (3 hours max). Bring water and a hat. Picnic at the river optional.	Hettie Randall 072 909 2807 Cost R30 pp cash donation to Conservancy. <b>MEMBERS ONLY</b>
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Grade 2 12 kms	<b>KILGOBBIN – CRAB APPLE</b> Day hike on Kilgobbin Farm. Walk through the indigenous forest, up onto the grasslands to the old Oak Tree. There is a dam on the farm where we may stop for a break. Lovely views.	Libby Deysel 060 737 4999 Cost: R50 pp
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> January		<b>DARGLE, TEKWANI</b> This walk will take us up into the hills above the Umgeni Valley. Some will be through plantation forests and some through indigenous forests, with a visit to a waterfall and a swim in the river on our return into the Valley.	Iain Kerr For bookings, fill in your contact details online using this link: <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdG-L424vw5LCz-a18l0rrAFcRCd4Stt8eTj0IrtzAuE9Y-4w/viewform?usp=sf_link">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdG-L424vw5LCz-a18l0rrAFcRCd4Stt8eTj0IrtzAuE9Y-4w/viewform?usp=sf_link</a>
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> January	Grade 3 6kms	<b>GRAY MARE'S TAIL FALLS (BOTTOM), KARKLOOF</b> Meet and hike from Shawswood Farm, up through the plantations and into the enchanted, magical forest across a few rivers to the bottom of the spectacular 101m Grey Mare's Tail Falls. Enjoy a braai and or picnic after the hike in the shade at Shawswood Farm. I will provide the fire. Bring your own plates, cutlery, meat, snacks, drinks etc... R45.00 per person however this may be subject to change in the new year.	Vanessa Taylor 0718514005
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> February		<b>HILTON COLLEGE</b>  <b>TBA</b>	Alistair Nixon 083 660 6657
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> February	Grade 3	<b>SUNRISE DWARFS DAWDLE, UMGENI VALLEY</b> Dwarfs Dawdle is a circular walk follows along the dolerite cliff line which overlooks the eastern part of the reserve. There are excellent views of the Umgeni River Valley. The upper path is mainly along level ground making this an ideal trail for families, although the lower section of the walk is slightly more difficult. Depending on the heat of the day and how everyone is feeling we can end by having lunch at Indulo Camp. Approximately 8 kms hike (to be confirmed) which will take 4 to 5 hours. Hike will commence <b>early</b> to view sunrise. Time will be confirmed.	Ali Engelbrecht Click here for the booking form: <a href="https://forms.gle/Hv22r4WJAvNriPPC7">https://forms.gle/Hv22r4WJAvNriPPC7</a>
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Grade 3 9 kms, elevation 350m	<b>FERNCLIFFE</b> Situated at the top of Town Bush Road, Pmb. A state owned reserve in the mist belt forest. Circular hike past the interesting Boulder Dam and Breakfast Rock lookout before returning to our starting point. Join us in this mystical place where secretive creatures dwell in the profusion of the indigenous plants that grow here.	Hettie Randall email <a href="mailto:hjrandall01@gmail.com">hjrandall01@gmail.com</a> <b>MEMBERS ONLY</b>

Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Grade 3 to 4	<b>MAHAI</b> Arrive at Mahai campsite on Friday to set up. Communal braai fire, to meet and greet. Saturday: drive to car park below Tendele camp. 14 km hike to Thukela Gorge ( grade 3 to 4) Communal braai fire Saturday evening. Sunday morning hike to Cascades and Lookout rock. (or alternative) Pack up camp in the afternoon. Please make own bookings through Central Reservations on 033 8451000	Carolee Thompson <a href="mailto:caroleejoy@gmail.com">caroleejoy@gmail.com</a> 078 482 5003
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> to Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Grade 3	<b>MOUNTAIN SPLENDOUR</b> Arrive on Friday. Saturday an 18 km hike from Monks Cowl parking to Blue Grotto. A short walk on the Sunday morning. Day hikers are welcome for the Saturday. Braai on Saturday evening. Accommodation: camping, glamping and cottages available at Mountain Splendour. Please contact Mountain Splendour to do the booking at 034681172.	Rob Melis 082 744 5368 rob@pro-seed.co.za
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Grade 2 10kms	<b>HIGHMOOR CARACAL CAVE</b> Open moorland walk there and back with superb panoramic views of the mighty Drakensberg. A good chance of game sightings, with great views of the sleeping giant looming in the foreground. We will make our way down to Caracal cave, highest elevation reached will be 2000m and then we drop down to the cave where we will break for lunch. Water is essential 2 liters minimum. Ezemvelo park fees apply, Golden Rhino is advantageous	Dusty Shaw dusty.shaw@gmail.com
Sunday 17th March	Grade 3 10 kms	<b>MINERVA HEIGHTS</b> A challenging but spectacular hike through the natural forest at Enon Forestry. A steep climb from the carpark up onto the krantz above. Beautiful views.	Hettie Randall <a href="mailto:hjrandall01@gmail.com">hjrandall01@gmail.com</a> <b>MEMBERS ONLY</b>
Saturday 23rd March		<b>HOWICK FOREST</b> We will depart from Amber Ridge gate and ascend through the plantation forest to the Firetower and then on from there to some dams located in an open grassland area. This is a 14km fairly strenuous walk on mainly footpaths, with a total vertical ascent of about 350m. The cost of the walk is as per Karkloof club fees: (currently R30 for seniors over 65 and R80 for adults). The 2024 rates have not been announced as yet.	Ali Engelbrecht and Iain Kerr For bookings, fill in your contact details online using this link: <a href="https://forms.gle/bV6iJvXGf3apo">https://forms.gle/bV6iJvXGf3apo</a> <a href="#">nwT8</a>
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> to Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Grade 2 & 3	<b>GARDEN CASTLE, SWIMAN HUT - EASTER WEEKEND</b> Day hikers welcome to join either Saturday or Sunday's hike. Arrive on Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> March, set up and enjoy Mermaid Pool & Hippo Pool close by with a braai on Friday evening to meet, greet & bond. Saturday is a beautiful hike to Pilar Cave and Annex. Sunday's hike is to Sleeping Beauty Cave. Kindly book direct by contacting QEP Central Booking on 033 845100 to secure your booking for Garden Castle – Swiman Hut 29 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024. Kindly also mention that you are booking through Midlands Hiking Club as Ezemvelo are holding 10 bookings for the club. This would need to be done before 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024.	Vanessa Taylor 0718514005
Friday 12 April to Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> April	Grade 3 for 5 days	<b>GIANTS CUP TRAIL – SLACKPACKING MULTI DAY HIKE</b> First paid 15 hikers. Cut off payment date 10 <sup>th</sup> December. We will overnight at Sani Backpackers to leave cars there for the duration. Walk to Pholela on Saturday, Mzimkhulwana (no electricity, no mattresses) on Sunday. Winterhoek (no electricity) on Monday, Swiman on Tuesday, walk out Bushmans Nek on Wednesday. Huts are very basic!! Meals and luggage transfers included. Leader: Deon Small <b>SEE BELOW FOR ADVANCE NOTICES</b>	Hettie Randall email <a href="mailto:hjrandall01@gmail.com">hjrandall01@gmail.com</a> <b>MEMBERS ONLY</b>

### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT HIKING

1. Hikes are graded so that members can select the activity best suited to their own level of fitness and do not cause unreasonable delay to fellow hikers.

2. Contact the leader of a day hike at least 3 days in advance of your intention to participate. If you need to cancel please contact the leader as soon as possible. Numbers are often limited and there may be a waiting list.

3. Contact the leader of a camping weekend at least one week in advance of your intention to participate.

4. If accommodation bookings are required please contact the leader at your earliest convenience to secure yourself a booking.

5. Leaders have the prerogative to exclude a member if they doubt their health condition, physical fitness or suitability of their hiking gear for a particular activity.

6. Advise the leader of any medical condition prior to any hike & carry the necessary medication - The leader will not administer First Aid.

7. Carry your medical aid, doctor and close family friend contact details in your backpack at all times. We encourage all hikers to attach their membership badges to their backpacks with these details available.

<b>GRADINGS OF HIKES</b>	
FF	Family friendly
PF	Pet friendly
Grade 1	Very easy. Minimal fitness required
Grade 2	Not too strenuous. Moderate fitness
Grade 3	Moderate. Physical fitness advisable
Grade 4	Strenuous. Physical fitness essential
Grade 5	Very strenuous - high level of physical fitness essential

#### ADVANCE NOTICE:

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June – Day Hike, Table Mountain – Vanessa Taylor