

MIDLANDS HIKING CLUB - HIKE REPORT - MAR 2025

KRANTZKLOOF NATURE RESERVE, KLOOF



Hike Leader
Brian Henwood



The first section of the Molweni Trail which starts at the Kloof Falls picnic site, is in the gorge of the Molweni River. The trail descends to the river. We chose to switch to the Beacon Trail and head up to the old Trig Beacon. These beacons were used by Land Surveyors to fix any position relative to longitude and latitude lines. Surveyors now use satellites. Here we are on a rock ledge overlooking the swollen Molweni River. Overcast but still no rain.



An example of some of the steep ascents along the Beacon Trail as you climb out of the gorge.

This hike was scheduled for Saturday 15 March and the response had been overwhelming. No less than 36 hikers had added their names to the hike list. However heavy rains had fallen over large parts of KZN coastal areas during the week prior to the hike. The wet and slippery conditions had resulted in substantial damage to the trails in the Krantzkloof Nature Reserve, causing it to be closed until further notice.

A second date was announced but that was also cancelled due extended wet weather.

A third attempt was arranged for Wednesday 26 March. This time the leader had 6 eager hikers that were even prepared to bring along their 'water wings', if that be necessary. They were Kate Brown, Rhona Lang, Dale Bosiger, Graham Keit, Steve Phaup and Mike Richmond. With three hikers from Howick and another three from Westville, their instructions were clear. The hike leader was to stick to the trails and stay away from the banks of the swollen Molweni River.

To make any progress with this hike, we needed to cross the river at the Ronalds Kloof Weir, immediately upstream of a beautiful little waterfall. The source of this river is located near the High School, the river then passes through the Memorial Park and flows into the gorge. It was flowing strongly across slippery flat rock, so we needed to exercise caution. We removed our boots to cross the river, then walked across the weir. We also crossed the Uve River before climbing up to the Ntombeni Grasslands. This area is home to about 10 to 15 Burchells Plain zebras.

The Uve Trail ends in a small, wooded area with a stunning viewpoint at a popular rock-climbing site known to the locals as 'Rumdoodle'.

On the return journey we rested at the view site overlooking the Uve Falls. An ideal spot to relax, drink water, eat lunch snacks and enjoy the beauty of the Falls.

Mist was moving up the valley and finally it was the light drizzle that encouraged us to move along and head back to the Kloof Falls Picnic Site where we had parked our vehicles.



Lunch break at an amazing view spot overlooking the Uwe Falls. If it wasn't for the mist and light rain moving up the valley below us, we wouldn't have been motivated to pack up and move on.



The Uwe Falls was looking spectacular

On our return journey we once again needed to cross the swollen river at Ronalds Kloof Weir. This time one of the hikers slipped, resulting in a pair of hiking boots and a hiking pole disappearing over the edge of the waterfall. But Graham Keit was quick to react. He clambered down the rocky waterfall and managed to retrieve the boots. He also waded across the waist-deep river to collect the floating hiking pole.

Having hiked for about 11 km through rugged terrain, we needed to reward ourselves with something special. The capuchino coffee at La Verdure in Gillitts did the trick. We were then ready to 'hit the road'.

The Krantzklouf Nature Reserve was proclaimed in 1950 and enjoys the highest level of legislative protection. Land donations over subsequent years have increased the area of the reserve to over 670 ha. It contains a wealth of diversity, making it a critically important reserve in a heavily urbanised environment.

We will be back!