

Langalibalele Ridge

day hike – Giants Castle

Leader: Deon Small

Date: 5 July 2025

Distance: ± 16 km

Weather: Sunny and clear skies

Number of hikers: 9

Severity of hike: A steep climb from the bottom of the ridge to the top of the pass

Report by: Deon Small

The day was ideal for hiking, cool to cold in the shade, not a cloud in the sky and a slight breeze coming off the mountain. After all the gear was checked and packed, we set off at a steady pace following the standard route past Rock 75. This section is still relatively easy until we crossed the river at Grysbok Bush, from here the climb started. It is a steep, steady slog up, the path cutting through the side of the ridge and then eventually onto the ridge. We made slow progress and soon we were edging our way closer to our destination.



Deon Small



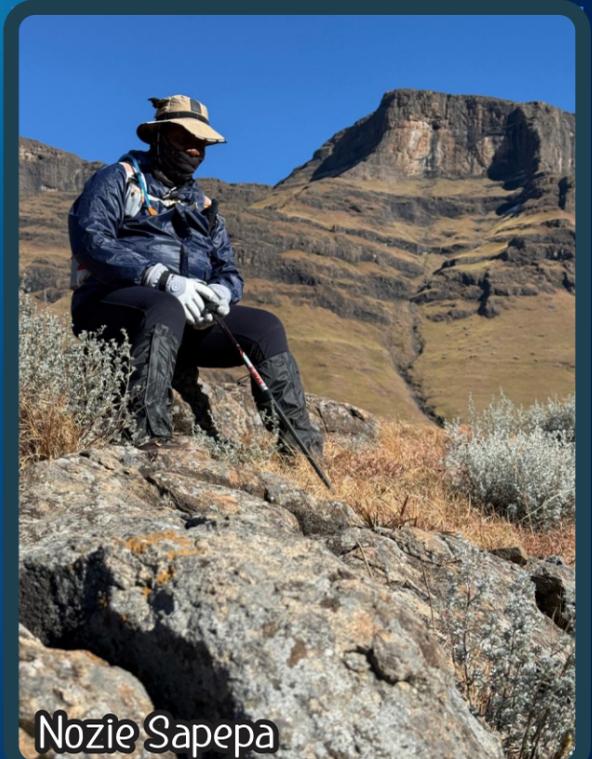
Beth Bester



Nonhlanhla Chiliza



Dawn Norton



Nozie Sapepa

The weather was still “warm” and easy going, but the breeze now turned into a strong and freezing cold wind. The climb seemed to ease off a bit, just to get steeper and steeper again. Our rest breaks seemed to come a bit more frequent and a bit longer and before long we managed to get to the contour junction. Here we had a rest break, but the cold wind kept the break short and we pushed on. From this section onwards the gradient gets steeper and soon we were huffing and puffing and the gap between the group started to get wider. I had a cut-off time set at 12:00 to reach the top of the pass, and at our current pace, we were running a bit behind schedule. If we were not at the river by 11:00 we would have to rethink our whole trip and make a call, as I did not want to walk back in the cold and dark. By now the wind was freezing cold and constantly battering us, and if you stood still, it would blow you over, so we just kept moving.

We reached a small knoll where we could hide from the wind, and we had to make a very hard decision – do we carry on or turn back? I could see that some of the group was cold and tired, and the constant up hill was beginning to take its toll on each of us. The wind was cold and gusts of at least 50km/h at times made us not think twice to turn back. We found a small section out of the wind and enjoyed our lunch, while basking in the sun. Coffee and lunch finished, we packed up and slowly started to make our way back down the steep slopes. Soon we were back at the Grysbok Valley and we took a nice long rest break before heading back. The path from here is easier and before long we were standing at Rock 75. I quickly told the group about the history of the conflict between the AmaHlubi and the British and after a bit of chatting in the warm sun we set off again.



Beth Bester



Nonhlanhla Chiliza

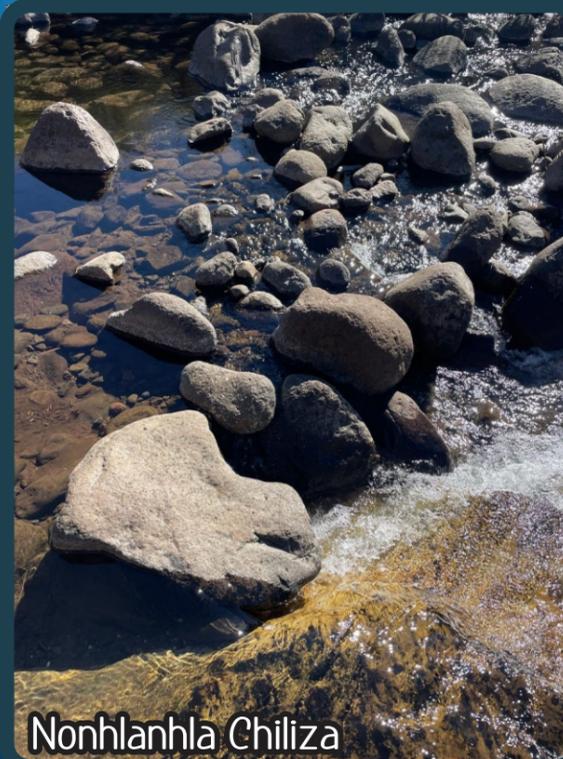


Nozie Sapepa

The walk in to Giants Castle was easy and without any issues, and it was still early enough for all of us to still travel back home in a decent time frame. A quick unpack and farewells said, we all set off home. Sometimes the mountains beat us and other times we win, however we must always remember that it's never a defeat, it's just more opportunities to learn and grow in our personal growth. We'll be back.



Nozie Sapepa



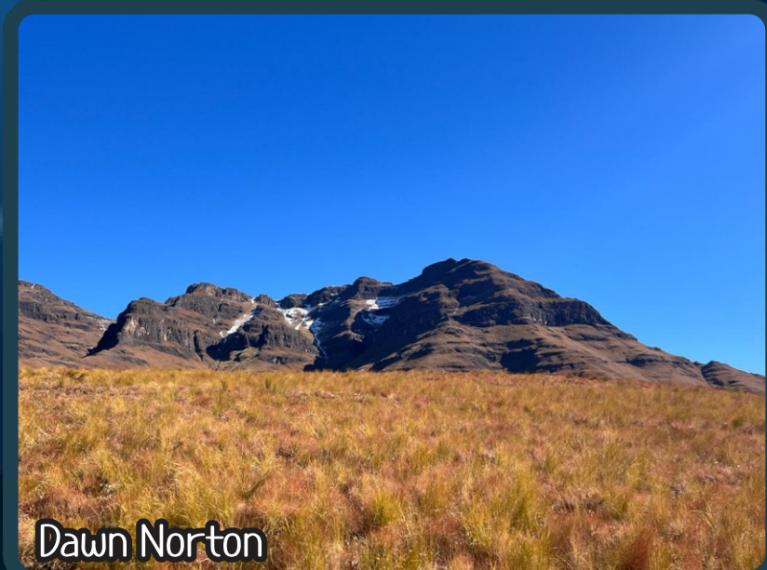
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