

## Hike Report - Boogaloo and the Crunch 31 January 2026

Report by; Iain Kerr

The Karkloof Country Club has carved out a myriad trails radiating out from the club into the Sappi plantations. The ones we were about to hike are part of a network mountain bike trails leading up through blue gum forests and culminating at some farm dams located on a cattle farm. Sadly, the cattle farms I intended to traverse were closed off to hikers and mountain bikers alike, in order to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth disease to the cattle on these farms. Twelve of us started out up the trail through the bluegum plantation, known as Boogaloo which was unusually dry for this time of the year, and littered with leaves and twigs which gum trees tend to drop in copious amounts. We left at just after 07H00 to beat the heat, but the route was almost entirely through the plantations, so I was not that worried about the heat becoming a problem.

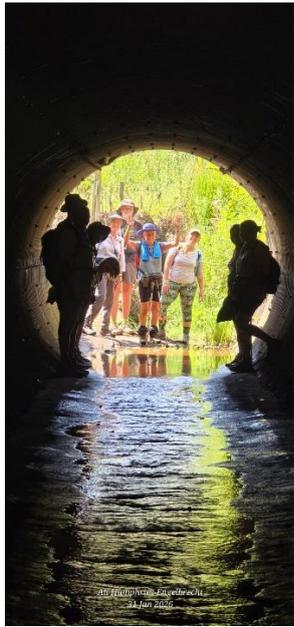


The route continued along a forest road and then dropped down into a single track known as the Crunch. The descent is not too steep due to a number of switchbacks cut out of the side of the hill. Here some of the hikers noticed a blue colouration on the bark of some of the gum trees – hence the name bluegum. Some had suspicions that a herbicide had been sprayed on the trees because all of the lower branches are dead, but this is due to lack of sunlight as the trees grow taller. The trail ends at the entrance to the farm where the dams are located. We stopped there for snacks and to admire the view.



The benefit of the return journey was that most was in the shade of plantation trees along plantation roads until we crossed to the other side of the karkloof road. The route took us down to a tunnel which passes under the main Karkloof road and which presented a good photo opportunity for Ali. On the way down there was an abundance of red hot poker flowers in bloom. No poker faces in the photo though.





After the tunnel we joined up with a trail called Newby at the top of which we all decided that it was a good idea to drop down to the river. On the way, some hugging of obelisks became the order of the day. At the river a refreshing swim was enjoyed by some and a paddle by others before the final leg of 1.6km back to the club via the River Walk, through the bamboo field. We arrived back before the hottest part of the day and several members partook of a beer or two at the club bar.



