



The Mountain Club of South Africa
KwaZulu-Natal Section

Established 1919

EXPLORE • DISCOVER • CONNECT • PROTECT

98th JULY CAMP 2017 – CATHEDRAL PEAK AREA

Saturday 8th to Saturday 22nd July 2017

PLEASE NOTE: The Camp dates accommodate the school holidays for all provinces.

This year July Camp will be held in the Northern Drakensberg in the Didima (Cathedral Peak) area, one of the best known parts of the Drakensberg (correctly called, the Maloti-Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site). July Camp has not been in this area since 2006, so 11 years later seems a good time to return! July Camp 2017 again will be a 'Camp with a difference' adding yet another, very different, facet to the total July Camp experience!

In 2006, we were very fortunate in being allowed to camp in Catchment 8 of the Cathedral Peak Research Area, but at present there is active research being conducted in that area. So, instead, the Base Camp will be near the Cambalala hut in a young forest of the iconic *umtshitshi* bushes (*Leucosidea sericea*), one of the most evocative plant associations of the Drakensberg. Older specimens with their knarled trunks speak of veld fires from years past. All this makes for an unusual camp site differing from the more open grasslands where we usually camp. The hut, which the KZN Section of the Mountain Club of South Africa leases from Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, is available throughout the year to be booked by members of the MCSA but **will not be available during July Camp 2017**.



A low angle perspective of the Cathedral spur from Mike's Pass.

Photo by Carl Dreyer.

Base Camp offers a wide range of distant vistas with striking views of a rim of peaks, starting in the south with Intunja (Gatberg), Amphlet, Turret, Sterkhorn, then the High Berg with Cathkin, Cowl around to the closer Ndumeni Dome, Cleft Peak and the Cathedral Ridge itself with the Horns, Bell and Cathedral Peak.

The closer view features the rolling hills of the Little Berg, numerous deep gorges that enfold many rivers and forests. There are several high waterfalls and sparkling pools to delight the brave who want to swim, or the photo-enthusiast who prefers to experience the Berg through the lens of a camera. Both the Little Berg and the Escarpment call to the hiker to come and explore them. For those who want to hike but prefer not to carry tents, there are some convenient caves.

Mountain-biking is an option that is permitted on the extensive tracks in the Research Area above the Base Camp Site. We suggest that a person who brings a mountain bike, rides (pushes?) it up the Mike's Pass road to the Base Camp, since bikes can't be accepted on the limited bakkie transport (no tractor and trailer at this stage) we have available this year. Then after the Camp, they can enjoy the less arduous ride down the Pass.

The position of our Base Camp site will be in the general vicinity of Cambalala House, off the Mike's Pass road. It can be found easily on the maps of the area. These are the new Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Drakensberg Park Hiking Map no 2 (CATHEDRAL PEAK - Culfargie, Monk's Cowl) or the older Department of Forestry Map of the Northern Berg (Cathedral Peak to Injasuti). The Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife map is available from the Shop in the Didima reserve at a cost of R50. The latter map is out of print, but a fortunate few old-timers still have these gems. Of course, Google may also suffice. The relevant black and white MCSA July Camp maps will be available in Base Camp.

For those who want to do day trips, there is an unlimited number of beautiful trips to 'there and back' as well as the more defined trips from Base Camp to specific objectives such as the old fire-lookout with its stunning views (12 km), then a couple of considerably longer walks such as Phillip's Folly (20km), the Tryme circular walk (20km), the top of Organ Pipes Pass (22km), Rainbow Gorge (12km), Tseke tseke hut site (repaired and painted in 2015) (27km), Ribbon Falls Cave (20 km)

Of course, each of these could serve as part of a longer sub-camping trip. There are a number of caves in the area. (Please note those caves with Bushman Paintings may be visited, but may not be used for over-nighting.) Caves in the area include Leopard's, Poacher's (both painted), Xeni, Twin's, Bell, Roland's, Ribbon Falls and Ndumeni caves and Gravel and Sherman's Shelters. Of course, if the trip you really want to do lacks a convenient cave, carrying tents is the answer. For those who want to go up to the top and then traverse, or come back down the same way, the main passes in the area include Tlanyaku, Organ Pipes, the Camel, Cockade, Tseke tseke, Mlambonja and then there is the Bell Traverse. Those planning to do a traverse starting from Base Camp and ending at the Hotel should be aware that there is a very long walk back to Base, unless they arranged transport for the home ride.

The Cathedral Peak area is well known for its impressive list of birds that have been sighted in the reserve and various antelope are common visitors in the area. The nearby Ndedema Valley is the veritable art gallery of Bushman art in the Drakensberg and the subject of Harald Pager's book of the same name.

FEATURES OF JULY CAMP 2017

We shall be enjoying last year's refinements to the traditional style of July Camp. These include the solar lighting system and the gazebo shelters that did such a great job of sheltering us from the rain or the sun at meal and tea times. Of course, if you are sun-seeker, you are welcome to move beyond their shelter.

This year there will also be ample opportunities for:

- superb mini sub-camps, longer sub-camps and longer hikes in the Little Berg and/or on the Escarpment
- satisfying day walks with interesting views of forests, waterfalls, wildlife and streams
- excellent opportunities for bird-watching and Berg photography
- comparisons between Berg grassland, Protea open woodland and patches of indigenous forest
- game viewing could include eland, oribi, reedbuck, grey rhebuck, blesbok, duiker, jackal and caracal
- climbs such as Cleft, Pyramid and Column *etc*, if leaders come forward to take on this role
- campfires and sing songs
- mountain biking

- access to the painted caves of the Ndedema Valley in the company of a registered guide.

DIRECTIONS - HOW TO GET THERE

The GPS co-ordinates are, according to Google Earth:

S 28 degrees 58 minutes 03.98 seconds

E 29 degrees 14 minutes 18.67 seconds

Elevation 1766 metres.

- **From Durban:** take the **N3** towards Harrismith. Take the **R74** turnoff to Winterton and then follow the *Didima/ Cathedral Peak/Berg resorts signs to Cathedral Peak Park. From the boom at the entry to the Park, follow the July Camp signs to the parking area and luggage Dump site. As a guide, the travelling time from Pietermaritzburg is two and a half hours.*
- **From or through Harrismith:** take the **N3** towards Durban. As above, take the **R74** turnoff to Winterton and from Winterton then follow the *Didima/ Cathedral Peak/Berg resorts signs to Cathedral Peak Park. From the boom at the entry to the Park, follow the July Camp signs to the parking area and luggage Dump site*

LUGGAGE AND PARKING

N.B. On arrival at the Cathedral Peak Reserve gates/boom, please follow the MCSA July Camp signs to the Parking Area and unload your luggage at the Dump Site and then park your vehicle. The Parking Area will be sign-posted. The transport of packs *etc.* from the Dump Site to the Base Camp will be via a limited number of private 4x4 vehicles and for this reason we ask you to keep your luggage to a **MINIMUM**. The Mike's Pass road is officially closed to normal traffic due to the condition of the road after a serious landslide a few years ago. We are being accorded a special privilege in being allowed to use the road so that we can hold July Camp at Cambalala. We all must be very careful not to jeopardize this privilege.

APPLICATIONS TO ATTEND JULY CAMP 2017: Please book early to avoid disappointment.

N.B. Bookings close on 22nd June 2017

- Each camper please to apply on a separate copy of the attached application form and indicate preferences, abilities, and membership status of MCSA.
- Non-member visitors, children and teenagers are potential members of the MCSA and so are **MOST WELCOME**.
- Please indicate clearly whether you would like to join **day trips, Little Berg hikes or Escarpment hikes**.
- Those wishing to lead parties **please indicate the type of trip/s** you would like to lead.
- Leaders of overnight trips should **let the Committee know well in advance** if they want to Book caves.
- All Campers, for their own convenience and safety, should be reasonably fit and well equipped with, and should carry, any **medical supplies** that they know they might need.
- Please bring your own snacks and tipple – no glass bottles please!
- **Large volumes or weights of luggage are strongly discouraged as the Mike's Pass road is severe - reducing the number of vehicle trips is both necessary and sensible.**

MCSA CARDS, PASSPORTS and RESCUE PROTOCOL FORMS

- MCSA members are encouraged to carry their **current membership cards** with them.
- Campers intending to go up to the Escarpment **MUST carry their passports** with them.
- For every excursion out of Base Camp, no matter how long or short, every Camper **MUST fill in the Mountain Register** before leaving and the **Leader must carry the tear-off counterfoil which contains the vitally important details of the protocol in case of an accident.**

TRANSPORT OF CAMPERS' KIT

- Campers are not required to attend the entire Camp and may attend for any period that they wish.
- However, Campers arriving or leaving at times other than those printed below will be responsible for getting all their own kit to and from the Base Camp. Please note: there are no porters!
- In the event of very bad weather and if the arranged transport cannot access the Camp, or is involved in fire fighting, it may be necessary for Campers to carry ALL their own kit to and from the Base Camp so, in your own interests, please limit your kit to a sensible minimum and pack it securely.
- Folding armchairs may be used only next to your tent. However, they are not appropriate in the communal areas. Moreover, since transport space is severely limited, they will not be carried on the bakkies. You will be asked to carry such chairs up to (and down from) the Camp.
- Official transport for kit will leave at the following times, sharp:

Saturday 8 July 2017, from the Dump Site to Base Camp – 11h00 and 14h00

Saturday 15 July 2017, from Base Camp to the Dump Site – 08h30

Saturday 15 July 2017, from the Dump Site to Base Camp – 11h00 and 14h00

Saturday 22 July 2017 from Base Camp to the Dump Site –08h30

- There are two walk-in routes between the Parking Area and the Base Camp. One is an 8km walk following the Mike's Pass road (N.B. The short cut is closed due to severe erosion and will be clearly sign-posted 'No Entry') and the other starts from the Education Centre, follows the river then zig- zags up to the Camp and is roughly the same distance, but is more scenic, enjoyable and gets you into that Berg feeling right away.
- Whichever route you decide to walk, please make sure to carry **hats, water, warm clothes, windproof top and a torch.**
- Please note the hours of access to the reserve are **06:00 to 18:00**



The view from Cambalala of the Chi-chi forest, Sterkhorn and Cathkin Peak.

Photo by Merv Gavin.

BASE CAMP

- All campers bring their **own mountain tents** - sub-zero temperatures can be expected. Strong winds, snow or rain are not uncommon.
- If you take your tent sub-camping, there is a **MCSA tent** where you may store your excess kit.
- Base Camp meals are prepared and served by the **Camp staff**.
- We all wash what we use at meal times. Hot water is provided for this purpose and for rinsing.
- Hot water will be available at the camp-style **bathrooms**.
- Weather permitting, we gather around the **campfire for our own drinks and snacks**, a chat or sing-song and a hot drink after supper.
- Base Camp is protected by **firebreaks** burnt by Ezemvelo KZNWildlife.

KIT REQUIRED – Please keep to a MINIMUM, but include:

1. Lightweight tent and bedding suitable for sub-zero temperatures with wind, snow and/or rain
2. Clothing (generally, the days are sunny and mild, but the nights are intensely cold)
3. Waterproof and windproof gear
4. **Personal first aid kit, sun-hat, sun-barrier creams, plasters and any medication you regularly require**
5. Torch and spare batteries. Headlights are most convenient.
6. Toiletries including **biodegradable** soap/ shampoo which can also be used for washing clothes! It is available from camping and outdoor shops
7. Boots -sturdy, supportive, water-repellant, strong Vibram–type soles!
8. Water bottle
9. Self sealing plastic bags for food and other purposes
10. Rucksack appropriate for intended activities
11. Two eating kits - one for use in Base Camp (to be retrieved at the end of Camp), the other for your trips
12. Plastic bucket/ basin to carry water, to have water at your tent and to wash clothes and hair
13. A clothes' line and a few pegs are useful
14. If required, a folding stool or **small folding chair (NO ARMCHAIRS)**
15. **Money for tips for the staff of five. They do a marvellous job under very difficult conditions and, otherwise, are unemployed except for occasional' togt' labour.**
16. Sweets, drinks and snacks to share at the campfire or while out on sub-camps and/or day trips
17. Two large rubbish bags – the 'carry in, carry out' principle applies. Please keep all the rubbish you generate whether in Base Camp or on day-trips/sub-camps and take all of it (including personal hygiene items in Ziplock bags) away with you.
18. To acquaint yourself with the area in advance, the relevant maps is the **KZNatal Drakensberg Park Hiking Map no. 2 Cathedral Peak** which is available from Ezemvelo KZNWildlife, P O Box 13609, Cascades, 3202 or customerservice@kznwildlife.com It will also be available from the shop in the Didima Hutted Camp.
19. Black and white **MCSA Berg maps** will be available in the Camp.
20. If you plan to join a **sub-camping party**, please bring **cooking utensils/billy cans, matches, containers, plastic bags, stove** plus **all your fuel, and gas** if using a gas stove. The leader will then select the best equipment for the trip. These items are not provided by the Camp.
21. **Neither open fires nor candles are allowed anywhere in the Berg.**
22. **Camping stoves may not be used in Base Camp nor any open flames, and that includes candles and candle lanterns, because of the fire hazard.**

FOOD

- Camp fees include a standard selection of food for all meals in Base Camp and on day trips
- **Pre-packed, lightweight food is provided for sub-camping trips**
- If leaders want to plan their catering, a copy of the food list can be sent to them via e-mail

- APPLICATION TO ATTEND JULY CAMP 2017 -

PLEASE:

- **DELETE alternatives that are not applicable**
- **Use BLOCK LETTERS**
- **Use a separate form for EACH person**

Dr/ Mr/ Mrs. /Ms/ Miss/ Phone:.....
 Address..... Cell:.....
Code..... E-mail:.....

In the case of a child, age.....yrs. Countersigned by parent/guardian

I wish to spend only one night in Camp on 2017
I wish to attend Camp	Arrive on 2017	Leave on 2017

I am / am not a member of theSection of MCSA/ Mountain/Hiking Club		
I wish to sub-camp with some nights on the Escarpment	YES	NO
I wish to hike/sub-camp in the Little Berg, with optional one-day trips to the Escarpment	YES	NO
I go on regular sub-camping trips	YES	NO
I wish to go on day trips, returning to Base Camp each night	YES	NO
I go on regular day-hikes	YES	NO
I offer to lead sub-camp party/parties to.....	YES	NO
I offer to lead a day-trip party	YES	NO

CAMP CHARGES

Camping fee for nights @ R320 per adult (over 12yrs), or R220 per juvenile (under 12 yrs), per night. (Please delete what is not applicable)	R
Non-member levy: R 80.00	R
Cash deposit fee, if applicable	R
TOTAL DUE:	R

PAYMENT

I have made a direct deposit/transfer to: Mountain Club of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal Section, MCSA (KZN) Branch, Standard Bank A/c No. 051207141 Branch Code: 042626 References must start with JC (for July Camp), then surname and initials For a cash deposit, I have included R60 to cover bank fees	<u>R</u>
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PROOF of PAYMENT

Proof of payment has been POSTED to Mike Coke at: Unit 423 Amberglen, Pvt Bag X 004, HOWICK 3290	YES	NO
Proof of payment has been E-MAILED to: julycampbooking@gmail.com	YES	NO
SIGNED: DATE:		

PLEASE return booking form & confirmation of payment ON, OR BEFORE, Thursday 22 JUNE 2017 to:
MIKE COKE, Unit 423 Amberglen, Pvt Bag X 004, HOWICK 3290
 Email: julycampbooking@gmail.com Cell: 083 321 8841 Tel: 033 239 4623

GEN. ENQUIRIES: Rikki Abbott Wedderburn Email: ronwedd@netactive.co.za
 Cell: 082 538 5389 Tel: 033 239 2374