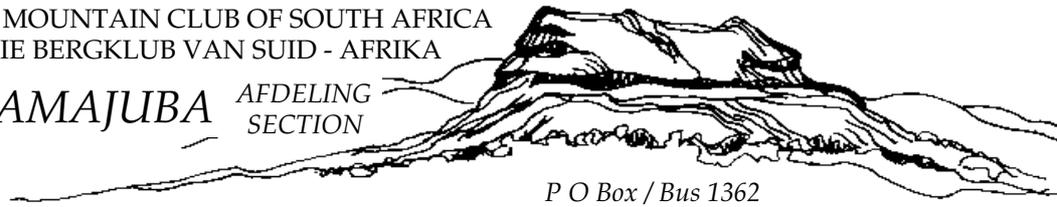


THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA
DIE BERGKLUB VAN SUID - AFRIKA

AMAJUBA AFDELING
SECTION



P O Box / Bus 1362
Newcastle 2940

<http://ama.mcsa.org.za/>

JubaJabber - Monthly
December 2013
News items

Love and Woe.

Have not heard of any illnesses or otherwise, so I am assuming that all is well with our members and their loved ones.



Brief vanaf ons voorsitter

Geagte lede

Ek wil net vir almal baie dankie sê vir julle bydrae in 2013. Ek glo dit was 'n suksesvolle jaar vir die klub. Die jaar as nuwe voorsitter was vir my 'n groot uitdaging, en is nog steeds.

Dankie vir almal wat saam my gaan stap het, ek glo dit het goeie herinneringe op gebou.

Dankie vir die lede wat ook in SA en in die buiteland gaan stap het, en die klub se naam hoog gehou het.

Dankie vir die komitee se bystand die jaar, veral met ons 30 jarige viering in November, dit was inderdaad 'n groot sukses.

Ek wil ook graag dankie sê vir die nuwe lede en die bydrae wat julle gelewer het. Amajuba afdeling is klein, maar ek glo dat in die toekoms gaan ons nog groei. Ek wens almal 'n geseende kersfees en 'n vreedsame 2014 toe.

Berg Groete

Hermann

Committee and Membership matters.

Your committee for the year **2013** is as follows:

Chairperson: Hermann Kuhne - 0845600613.

Vice-Chairman: Johan de Villiers – 072 712 7022.

Treasurer: Len Stoop – 078 598 1643.

Secretary: Christine de Villiers – 072 712 7022.

Social Convener: Thea Groenewegen – 0343123703 / 083 378 7655.

Climbing and Rescue: Ruan Adendorff – 082 577 7555.

Juba Jabber & e-mail: Adriaan Dippenaar – 082 337 2970 / adriandip@telkomsa.net

Publicity:

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2013

Family membership is R260 per year

Single member R170 per year

Family pensioner R190 per year

Single pensioner R140 per year

Members can pay their fees via cheque, cash or electronic transfer. Our banking details are as follows:

Bank:	Nedbank
Account Holder:	MCSA Amajuba Section
Account Number:	1337163309
Branch Code:	133724
Reference:	Your initials and surname and Subs 2013

Recent outings by Amajuba Section Members.

Smugglers- Tlanyaku- Schoongezicht Cave hike. 11-13 Oct 2013

We all arrived at the Didima camp site, Cathedral Peak, Thursday evening. Sabine, Joshua and Benjiman drove from Johannesburg; Gerhard met Desiree at Harrismith and drove from there. I came from Newcastle.

We had a pleasant braai and enjoyed the warm evening under the stars. Next morning after breakfast and shower we repacked our bags. After weighing my pack I decided to shed some weight, 2,5kg lighter! Other guys did the same, so glad we did that.



The guys from Ezemvelo took us up Mikes pass with their vehicle that saved us 7km's.

It was hot already when we started, and along the route there was no water at all. Only at overnight camp site. It was uphill all the way to the old lookout hut; we had a rest there and pushed on. It is extremely dry on the area, rain is needed badly. We hiked along the well eroded path on the Organ Pipes pass route, until we left the path and cut into Thutumi pass. After ascending the pass for a while we turned into Smugglers Pass and eventually on the escarpment. It was so nice to be back on the escarpment, I love the scenery. Rugged mountains, deep valleys and the sense of being there. Away from the stresses of everyday life. The rivers were dry, but fortunately we found a stream where we could camp.





We set camp and relaxed, got ready for cooking and enjoyed the views. Two curious Basotho herders came along and checked us out, I went up to them, gave them a few sweets and had some sort of a conversation.





Lower down in the valley I saw tents and decided to go and visit. It turned out to be a guide I met on Cathedral Peak 3 years ago, Ian Shooter. He had two clients from the US, they hiked from Mnweni and on their way to Grays Pass in the south, they found that there was no water en route. Ian decided to head towards Smugglers pass and descend down to Cathedral Peak. Supper was awesome thanks to Gerhard and Desiree. Freshly cooked mince, rice and pasta sauce.



We turned in and I couldn't sleep! I was so hot in my winter sleeping bag, eventually I got some sleep in. The night was calm, no winds. The sun came up and it was glorious.

I took a walk to the escarpment's edge, had some quiet time and just took the view and atmosphere in.

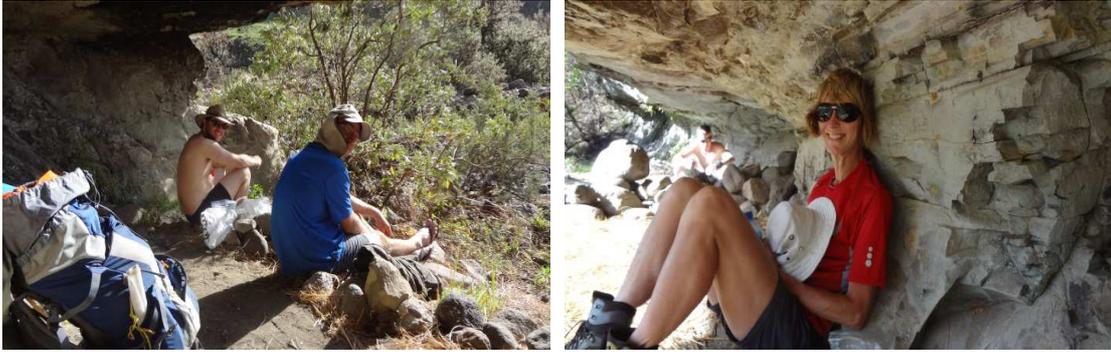
So it was time to pack up and head for Tlanyaku Pass. It was windy, but nothing serious.

We hiked along the escarpment edge towards Tlanyaku stopping for photos and enjoying the views.



The wind came up quite strong and we had a rest at the top of Tlanyaku pass. At the top of the pass the wind was extremely vicious to say the least! We descended the pass slipping and sliding at some stages and sometimes crouched on the ground just not to get blown down the hill. At some stages most of us had that "gatvol" feeling. Once down the pass we stopped at a nice side valley to lick our wounds and have lunch. At a nearby pool Gerhard and I had a quick wash. Felt good after that.

And then we were on the trail again, destination Schoongezicht cave. The views were awesome, to our right is Eastman's Ridge with Eastman's Peak with the Dragons Back. To the escarpment Vultures Retreat and beyond Grays Pass.



Schoongezicht cave



We arrived at the cave, tired and dirty from the dust and the wind. We all lazed around sitting in the river and enjoying it. The wind dropped later and supper was made.... mince again with pasta, so good! After supper we played cards and got to bed early.



We all had a good night's sleep, woke up to an overcast, wet Sunday morning. We left early, because Joshua wanted to be back in Johannesburg early. We hiked down the valley and up Phillips Folley and The Nek. On the jeep track Sabine contacted Ezemvelo office to confirm lift back down from Arendsig. It was zero visibility and it was actually cold. It was so nice to sit in a warm vehicle, taking you back to Didima.





When we arrived there we went to the restaurant for coffee and some chips. There was a cozy fire going in the fire place, now that was great. There we met up with Ian again.

Back at the camp site we went for showers, before the long road ahead. It was an awesome hike with good memories and moments.

Hermann Kühne

OF INTEREST

THE GREAT DEBATE OF CONTROLLED GRASS BURNING

Veld Management

Veld management refers to the utilization and management of forage in veld (grasses and trees) for animal production, through grazing and browsing.

Veld management involves the planned movement of animals and the control of animal numbers to keep the veld in a good condition and to improve veld that is in a poor condition.

The ultimate aim of veld management is to protect and even build up topsoil to ensure current and future food production. Grasses are extremely effective in stabilizing topsoil and should therefore be well managed in order to maintain a good soil cover.

A lack of proper veld management leads to overgrazing. During continuous long-term overgrazing, grasses die off and lose their hold on the ground and soil washes away. Grasses, and especially good grazing grasses, cannot grow in eroded areas.

Controlled Fire

Controlled fire is a major factor in determining the composition of grasslands and a widespread and powerful tool in grassland management. Its effect depends on its intensity, seasonality, frequency and type. The intensity depends on the type, structure and abundance of fuel. Fire is used to remove unpalatable grass and enable re-growth and access to the young herbage by grazing stock. It often stimulates re-growth and supplies a green bite when most needed. Fire is also used to control woody vegetation. Burning of grassland must be carefully controlled and timed, otherwise it can cause serious damage, however, planning burning and controlling fire are the two key factors that always need to be given serious consideration. Since fire has so severe an effect, burning must take the whole ecosystem into account, not only the grass and the grazing livestock.

Ill-timed fire can have a devastating effect on wildlife, including nesting and young birds.

Objects of Act

The objectives of the Conservation of Agricultural Resource Act are to provide for the conservation of the natural agricultural resources of the Republic by the maintenance of the production potential of land, by the combating and prevention of erosion and weakening or destruction of the water sources, and by the protection of the vegetation and the combating of weeds and invader plants

In order to achieve the objects of this Act the Minister may prescribe control measures which shall be complied with by land users to whom they apply. Such control measures may relate to-

- the utilization and protection of vleis, marshes, water sponges, water courses and water sources;
- the prevention and control of veld fires;
- the utilization and protection of veld which has burned;
- the control of weeds and invader plants;

Important and inter-related legislation

- Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA)
- Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 43 of 1983 (CARA)
- National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1998
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004

CARA – What the law says

<p>Intermediate Moist Grassveld: These are areas of relatively high rainfall (738 mm plus), and temperatures of 15.4° C, on mixed and sourveld. It comprises Bio-resource Groups: Moist and Dry Midlands Mist belt, Northern Mist belt and Moist Lowland Tall Grassveld.</p>	<p>15 July to 30 September</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Veld should be burnt as early as possible within the specific period, but preferably after a rain. <i>(Comment – the LRFPA takes the rain in consideration as this impacts how the fuel load will burn, if there is no rain on the horizon burning will be permitted on cool and calm days when the fire danger is low – and on the other hand if there has been a good rain, burning may still not be permitted due to high fire dangers and fuel load conditions – hence the balance needs to be found)</i> 2. Grazing of burnt veld should only commence once the grass leaves have attained a minimum length of 50 mm.
<p>Cool Moist Grassveld: These areas have mean annual temperatures varying from 7.5° C to 18.9° C and rainfall from 712 mm to 1 390 mm and include the: Moist and Dry Highland Sourveld, Montane Veld, Moist Transitional Tall Grassveld and Moist Tall Grassveld.</p>	<p>1 August to 30 September</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (i) Veld should be burnt as early as possible within the specific period, but preferably after a rain. 2. (ii) Grazing of burnt veld should only commence once the grass leaves have attained a minimum length of 50 mm.

**What the Grass Scientists say – a recent viewpoint on biodiversity of grasslands –
Note: viewpoints are respected**

Burn off grass camps in a mosaic pattern, do it in late autumn, not in mid winter and certainly not in early spring (*Comment – seems to be complete opposite to CARA and burning grass in May!*).

By early spring the grass birds have started nesting, the lizards are out and the entire bio-system is waking up and fire destroys it.

One will also deprive the grazers of essential protein over winter, or at least restricted them to the fire breaks only. Spring is defined as 1st of September but it can be earlier or later depending on the severity of the winter.

The continued cold after a burn favors the desirable grass species like Themeda that can withstand the cold and comes through more slowly but fools the unpalatable species like Ngongoni that comes up within two weeks but then gets either eaten because it is still succulent or frosted off.

One thing is very clear to me and I will re-iterate what I have said in prior correspondence with regard to how the Lions River FPA manages the matters and the two key factors that are always taken into consideration and which need to be carefully balanced at all times;

1. The National Veld & Forest Fire Act: The fire danger – is it going to be a safe and cool burning operation to ensure the potential risks associated with spread of fire is low, and
2. Conservation of Agricultural Resource Act: Is the FPA and its membership going to fall within the CARA guidelines (per the Act) if burning is permitted

I wish I could say and advise otherwise – BUT, without abiding to the principle of law, where would our society be today?

In reality what does happen:

- The landowner knows best – burns when they want to anyway.
- The landowner does not call in to get permission to burn
- The landowner does call in but does not listen to the fire danger advice and burns anyway
- The landowner is busy on days when burning could have taken place and leaves grass burning to the very last day of the season, generally when fuel load conditions are not good, there has been no rain etc and then applies a few of the point above – result runaway fires!

One point is certain – by balancing the two Acts and monitoring / managing what does happen, incidents of uncontrolled fires as a result of block burning activities have reduced dramatically and landowners have become more aware of grass management issues.

On the Lighter Side:



Before and after marriage



This is the dog to have

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Program for 2013

Date	What/Where	Details	Contact number	Contact

* Dates to be finalized. The programme is subject to change.
 * Datums moet nog bepaal word. Die program kan verander.

<p><u>Rating System</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Family weekend.</i> Children, prospective & older members. Easy, short hikes often-good facilities. 2. <i>Easy hike.</i> Footpaths present or otherwise flat open terrain. 3. <i>Average difficulty.</i> Path over varying terrain, often steep. Sometimes paths, route finding necessary. 4. <i>Difficult hike without footpath.</i> Might incl. bundu bashing, serious scrambling, kloofing or exposure. 5. <i>Technical climb.</i> Requires climbing gear (sometimes ice climbing gear).
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General Interest

If anyone has anything of interest they would like to share in the news letter or wants me to put an article about anything in, then please contact me. It has to be relevant to hiking, mountaineering, camping or the outdoors. Ideally the article or request should reach me within the first 15 days of the month.

Trading Post:

Nothing
