

ESCAPE ROUTE
CATHCART, KEI ROAD,
STUTTERHEIM AND
KEISKANNAHOEK

**SPECIAL
POINTS
OF INTER-
EST:**

- 10 July: Join us and help with building the Boardwalk
- 15 July: AGM Forest Way
- 17-18 July: Xmas in July at Hogsback

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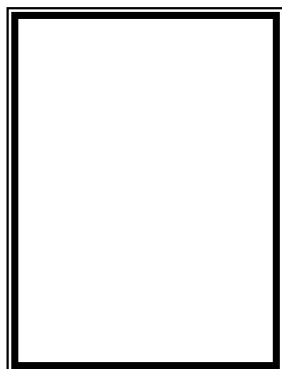
The Khologha Boardwalk-When Dreams Become Reality

In October 2006, Stan Dugmore who runs the Forest Way Outdoor, Outreach programme in Stutterheim was inspired by a small, wheelchair bound school girl.

Little Brodie Moodie was only in Grade 1 at the time and was part of the Clarendon class attending the yearly outing to Forest Way. Unable to take part in the obstacle course and races, Brodie was adamant that she would join her friends on the walk to the waterfall.

Impressed by her enthusiasm and courage, Stan discussed the possibility with the accompanying teachers. It was decided to change from the electric wheelchair to a chair with thicker wheels in order to tackle the Yellow Route as far as the first waterfall. To this day he is still not sure how they managed it, but they did.

It took an exceptionally long time, navigating the bumpy path and now and then, quite nerve racking for Brodie as in places,



Brodie reaches the falls.

the narrow trail crumbled towards the edge and the wheelchair had to be tipped on its side. This courageous little girl was pushed and bumped until finally they reached the waterfall.

Stan recalls how her face lit up, a mixture of wonderment, excitement and pride. She had never sat next to a waterfall or heard the sounds of the forest



Tom Dyantjies and helpers making the frame for the bridge.

before and she was overjoyed. For Stan, this was a watershed moment. Realizing how much we take for granted living in this area, being able to walk the forests whenever we wish, he resolved there and then that somehow the indigenous forest must be made available to all.

With the aid of the Thina Sinako funding, the dream of a boardwalk changed to reality. After a great many months, having applied for permission to build in the forest, the drawing up of plans by local engineer Hamish Scott and the first poles being planted by Tom Dyantjies and his crew,, members of the Stut-



Members of the community working on the boardwalk.

terheim community rallied together at the forest picnic site. With much enthusiasm, on Saturday, 5 June, everyone sorted themselves into groups and in no time at all, planks were being screwed into place, handrails fitted and varnish applied.

This dream may have stemmed from the time Stan spent with Brodie and have grown because of the commitment of the eScape Route members, but it has also become a community project.

Several businesses in the area gave discount on items needed while others donated time and expertise to help with the building. Our thanks especially go to Amabele Poles who donated a large quantity of wood even after they suffered a devastating fire at their factory.

The Khologha Forest is the second largest indigenous forest in South Africa. A wheelchair friendly boardwalk from the picnic site to the first waterfall, a mere distance of 1km for the able, will give everyone regardless of age or ability, the chance to visit and appreciate this tiny segment of remaining natural forest.

Bucksy



Caption describing picture or graphic.

If you are a lover of succulents, then Bucksy is definitely the place to visit.

Situated just off the Friendly N6, opposite the Old Thomas River turn off, follow the road for approx 3km to Buck and Sylvia Steinmetz .

Brimming with more than 50 different local and exotic species, stepping into the hot house is like stepping into a different world.

Part of the hothouse is devoted to the mother plants and Sylvia who definitely has

'green fingers', expertly divides and replants the off shoots for sale when large enough.

While Sylvia's passion is for her plants, Buck makes the most exquisite wooden toys.

Ranging from dolls houses to bird feeders and nesting boxes, each article is made with individual care and attention.

Having lived there for 16 years, Buck is also a fountain of knowledge on all the local flora and fauna. So make sure

to have some spare time when visiting Bucksy as they will be only too pleased to take you down to the Krantz and introduce you to the amazing colony of endangered Cape Vultures.



Some succulents bear exquisite flowers.

“Treat every customer as if they sign your paycheck— because they do!”
unknown

The Thomas River area was blanketed in snow.



Service Excellence

On 7 June, the Eastern Cape Tourism and Walt Disney joined forces to give a series of talks on 'Service Excellence in South Africa, the World Cup 2010 and Beyond.'

With their vast experience of customer care, the Disney Institute survey has shown that 70% of their clients are return visitors and that many people, who were taken to one of the Disney Parks as a child, return years later with

their own children.

'Magical Moments' therefore have to be created for each and every guest, giving them special memories which will not only last but will be eagerly recounted to friends and family on their return home.

The average tourist has typical needs; they want the environment to be safe, clean, friendly and provide great experiences during their hard earned annual holiday. They

want to be made to feel special, to be treated as an individual and for their children to be respected.

This may sound obvious, but for any service provider who carries out all of these points, with each and every visitor, no matter how busy or hard the day has been, the result will be outstanding advertising for the product or venue due to the service excellence given.

Waking to a Winter Wonderland

Many residents of Amahlathi awoke to a winter wonderland on the morning of 15 June.

Snowfalls on the top of Mount Kubusie or Mount Thomas have certainly occurred sporadically over the years. However, when living at the edge of the forest in Stutterheim, it was definitely a novelty to wake and find everything completely covered in a

white blanket.

By mid morning, the low cloud which shrouded the hill tops finally started to lift. Only then did the full extent of the nights fall became apparent.

Döhne Peak was white from top to bottom and the distant views of the Hogsback mountains resembled a northern hemisphere landscape. Ailsa Farm Accommodation in the

Thomas River area reported an extremely thick blanketing. Luckily they had plenty of firewood packed for winter!!

With the cold snap firmly in place, white streaks were still evident on the hill tops one week later.

Lets hope this bodes well for a good spring with abundant rains which are so needed in this part of the country.



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Share experiences

Community Project

Join us on Saturday 10 July and help
build the Wheelchair Friendly Board-
walk in the Khologha Indigenous
Forest, Stutterheim.

From 9am-1pm.
Remember, many hands make light
work!

Wriggleswade, a Hidden Gem

One of the Eastern Cape's best hidden treasures, Wriggleswade Dam lies nestled between the rolling grasslands of the Amabele farming area. Stretching across 17km and covering 1000 hectares, this expanse of water has fast become a haven for avid fishermen and those who enjoy water sports.

Wriggleswade Dam lies just off the N6, the main route from Johannesburg to the coast, and is situated about 25km south of Stutterheim and 60km north of East London. With only a short 12km leg of dirt road in good condition, the dam is easily accessible.



Views of Wriggleswade

Due to its perfect location, a steering committee was formed in 1990 to determine how it could be turned into a premier fresh water tourist attraction for the Border area - and so the Stutterheim Aquatic Club was born.

Since its inception, the club which leases private land from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, has built a charming club house, boasts 40 boat houses for members, approximately 60 campsites, 60 caravan sites provided with power and 3 ablution blocks. There is also a lovely single roomed log cabin on the waters edge available for rent.

Nowadays, Wriggleswade is a hive of activity and many consider it to be the best Bass fishing dam in the Eastern Cape. Having previously been farm land, the dam is full of grassy areas, rock piles, old semi submerged tree stumps and plenty of nooks and crannies where fish love to hide. To date, the record bass caught weighed in at 5.01 kg and the record carp at a massive 20 kg.



Crested Cranes are a common sight.

Since 2000, the Amatola Bass Masters has been held at Wriggleswade and has attracted people from as far as Zimbabwe. Monthly local fish offs are held and several yachting competitions during the course of the year. The annual triathlon always draws a crowd and this year, the Merrifield Mile and Gonubie Marathon were moved to Wriggleswade.

With the fantastic campsite, braai areas along the waters edge for the day visitor, some of the best bass fishing in the Eastern Cape and water sports with Aquascape Adventures, Wriggleswade offers a brilliant venue for a family holiday or just a day away from the hustle and bustle of the city.