

HIKING TRAIL COURSE

A four-day basic course of lectures and field training under the auspices of HOSA (Hiking Organization of South Africa)

SANParks, Tsitsikamma
11 – 14 November 2015

1. Title

Planning and evaluation of hiking trails.

2. Target group

Potential and current trail owners and trail managers (NGO's, Government and Private), hikers and all interested in providing sustainable hiking trails.

3. Course outline

1. The techniques of planning and evaluating hiking trails: theory and practical exercise.
2. Critical assessment of the alignment of an existing trail section.
3. Critical assessment of the building techniques on an existing trail section.

4. Venue

Tsitsikamma (Practical work on the Tsitsikamma hiking trail of Cape Pine).

5. Course contents

DAY 1

Opening session: (09h30 – 10h00)

Welcome by senior dignitary.

Setting of goals and objectives of the course.

Lectures (10h00 – 17h00)

Lecture 1: An holistic view of Trail Development as an ecotourism product. (Understanding ecotourism and the basic principles relevant to successful trail development i.e. environmental, socio-economic, and perceptual).["Plan before you start"]. Trail types.

Lecture 2: Introduction to trail planning. (Discussion of the Comprehensive Trail Development Model).

Lecture 3: Overview of the use of topographic maps, air photo's, orthophoto's, Google maps and field equipment such as GPS, rotameter; calculation of gradients and Difficulty rating, etc.

Lecture 4: Preparation for field work: study of maps and air photos of (area to be used for fieldwork). Identifying and mapping of ecosystems, gradients, surface conditions, etc.

DAY 2

Field work: reconnaissance trip to selected area. (Day 1 of the Tsitsikamma trail).

Lecture 5. Practical exercise on planning or re-aligning of a day trail in the Tsitsikamma. (Students present results in group context). (Course leader's evaluation).

DAY 3

Lecture 6: Theory of trail construction. Illustration of footpath construction by means of Power Point presentation and KZN Manual.

Field work:

- The alignment of the trail in Tsitsikamma. Marking with barrier tape.

DAY 4 (if required a fourth day will be kept open for final field work training)

- Completing the trail alignment
- Assessing the building techniques on an existing trail section.

6. Cost

- R225/day (R950)
- Accommodation own responsibility but SANParks has accommodation available on first come first serve basis.
- Hotel, B&B as well as Backpacker accommodation is available in Storms River village.

7. Outcomes:

- Trail planning: The candidates should be able to identify the goals and objectives of a newly proposed trail and plan such trail in a scientific manner so as to ensure sustainability.
- Trail evaluation. Applying trail planning principles to existing trails will also ensure successful evaluation and realigning of existing trails.
- Trail building: Trainees will be efficient in the basic assessment of marking and building techniques of hiking trails (excluding the issues of structures such as stiles, overnight huts, viewing platforms, bridges and retaining walls). Scientific (sustainable) trail building can save substantial amounts of money because it becomes capital intensive to rectify a trail that has deteriorated due to poor construction.

8. Course presenter

The training, run under the auspices of HOSA, will be presented by Prof. Leon Hugo, (MA (Geography); ML (Landscape Architecture) and D.Phil (Ecotourism); formally professor in Department of Geography at Pretoria University, and internationally experienced authority on hiking trails theory and technology. He has been employed as a consultant abroad by the Australian as well as the Peruvian and Swaziland governments. Developed trails in Mozambique and locally for many large companies and landowners (including SAFCOL (KLF and MTO), SAPPI, SANParks, Cape

Nature, KZN- Ezemvelo). He has developed in excess of 150 trails in South Africa and abroad, and is also experienced in the presentation of trail courses at various levels. He serves on the Board of the Hiking Organization of SA as chairman of their Quality Assurance committee.

9. Responsibilities

- The presenter will be responsible for all study material by way of Power Point presentations. If attendees prefer hard copies, this will be for their account.
- Maps and air photos of the field work area will be provided.
- Attendees to provide own GPS and stationary; field work clothes; lap tops; memory sticks.