

MEDIA RELEASE

ISSUED BY:

NAME: KATHRYN FOURIE

EMAIL: kath@nsconsulting.co.za



For immediate release: 15 July 2016, 12:00pm

BRAAMFONTEIN SPRUIT ADVENTURE TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

In May 2016, Next Step Consulting (NSC) was appointed by Johannesburg City Park and Zoo (JCPZ) to develop the Braamfontein Spruit Adventure Trail Management Plan.

The need for a management plan to facilitate recreational use of the Braamfontein Spruit area (the land running alongside the banks of the Braamfontein Spruit) has been increasingly highlighted over the past few years. The 'Spruit', as locals commonly refer it to, is a much-loved resource that provides over 30km of trails for various user groups.

Non-recreational users include commuters who travel by foot and by bicycle, and groups of people who have taken up residence in open areas along the waterway. Mostly the settlements are temporary, and the transient communities shift periodically under pressure from authorities, as it is illegal to settle on public land.

Recreational users include walkers, dog walkers, runners, mountain bikers and horse riders. Family groups use the areas to spend time together walking, picnicking, playing with various toys and enjoying specific playgrounds set up for children. Additionally, the Braamfontein Spruit has religious significance and certain sites along the water way are used for church services and baptisms.

With many different types of recreational and non-recreational users accessing what is essentially a +- 30km green belt, unsurprisingly, conflict occurs between users. Various socio-economic and environmental impacts on the Braamfontein Spruit area also occur and in some cases become visible. These issues are often highlighted to JCPZ by interest groups such as residents associations and environmental interest groups.

The purpose of the development of the Braamfontein Spruit Adventure Trail Management Plan is essentially to reduce conflict, reduce risk and put in a place a management system that allows the best experience possible for all law abiding user groups of the Spruit. The aim is to encourage use of the Braamfontein Spruit trail system, not to reduce access to it or diminish from the current experiences that people cherish.

Developing a comprehensive trail management plan includes: environmental scoping (on impacts of existing recreational use and trails); recommendations towards best physical and management practices; liability and legality considerations; and operational business planning (which includes funding models, marketing and branding recommendations).

The trail management plan will be used a guideline for management along the Braamfontein Spruit in terms on trail use, as well as any further trail related developments along the Spruit. The trail management plan will highlight areas of management concern (such as extensive litter issues related to unregulated and informal recycling businesses, and the issue of transient/displaced communities living on the Spruit). However it must be clearly noted that providing solutions to these systemic socio-economic problems is beyond the scope of the Braamfontein Spruit Adventure Trail Management Plan project.



About Next Step Consulting: Next Step Consulting (NSC) was established in July 2011 and is based in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. NSC offers consulting services, working primarily with tourism and adventure tourism businesses strategy development, as well as strategy implementation. Key clients include Sappi Southern Africa and the N3 Gateway Tourism Association.

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The Braamfontein Spruit Adventure Trail Management Plan project is being managed through participatory methods, which involves the formulation of a Project Steering Committee (PSC) with representatives of all trail user groups, interest groups, residents associations, as well as government department representatives. An inception meeting was held on the 31st of May in Johannesburg, and the first PSC meeting will take place on the 21st of July, 2016.

For further information or any queries, please contact Kathryn Fourie on kath@nsconsulting.co.za

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