In the 1820’s Mzilikazi arrived in this beautiful valley, by which time the baKwenas had already driven the San people out. He stayed at Meintjieskop while his impis built two of his cities in the area. The women used to fetch water from the Apiesriver and called it Enzwabuhlungu. This means “something that hurts” which refers to the sharp dolomite rock that used to hurt their feet. The Sotho name is Entsabohloko and refers to the circumcision rites where the young men of the tribe used to stand in the water during the ceremony.

On 25 February 1895 President Paul Kruger proclaimed the valley on the southern outskirts of Pretoria as a game sanctuary - this was the first game sanctuary on the African continent. Its main purpose was to protect the large herds of animal on the outskirts of town from hunters who were responsible for their demise as well as protection for the shy and timid Oribi which occurred here.

In 1910 portions of the area were rented out for the establishment of commercial wood plantations because of the wood and paper shortages due to the world wars. By the late 1950’s the City Council of Pretoria became the owner of the area. In 1994 the reserve became the responsibility of the Department of Nature Conservation and preparation started for the re-release of game. 1999 was the year wherein impala, kudu, blue wildebeest and ostrich were re-introduced on to the reserve and 2002 saw the release of giraffe and red hartebeest. In 2004 a herd of rare and endangered sable antelope were introduced on to the reserve.

Big clean-up operations has been done to restore this area to its original vegetation of woody veldt.

The reserve is situated where Highveld vegetation develops into bushveld so a mixture of these two veld types occur on the reserve. It also boasts a mature woodland of white stinkwood (Celtis Africana) and common sugar bush (Protea capfrra).

Some of the wildlife that can be seen include: zebra, jackal, duiker, kudu, impala, blue wildebeest, blesbuck, red hartebeest, ostrich, giraffe and sable. The rich bird life will keep bird lovers busy for hours on end.

The Nature Reserve is reached via the entrance to the Fountains Valley Resort from Mondays to Fridays. Follow the R21 to the Fountains Circle; take the Fountains/Centurion turn-off into Christina de Wit Road. Approximately 500m further, turn left at the entrance to the Fountains Valley Resort. Weekends and public holidays use the alternative entrance gate 800m from the Fountains Valley main entrance gate.
Hiking Trails
There are several hiking routes that differ in their degree of difficulty. The 10.5 km yellow trail cuts across a rocky hill and is recommended for those who are walking fit and experienced at hiking. The shorter trails such as the 4 km white trail and the 3.5 km red trail are recommended for the younger and older groups. Maps are available for self-guided hikes, but guided hikes can be provided if booked two weeks in advance.

The four-hour yellow trail is a great scenic route with a magnificent view from the top of the hill towards the Voortrekker Monument, Waterkloof golf course, the Unisa campus, the city’s CBD, and Fort Klapperkop. Game that you can expect to see on this route are giraffe, kudu, impala, zebra and blue wildebeest, and bird lovers can enjoy the rich bird life. The red and white trails will each take you about one and a half to two hours to walk. These trails take you past a cave where the rock hyrax live and the boma where game are kept under observation and the sable antelope’s are fed.

Mountain Bike Trail
The ± 20 km mountain bike trail consist of an adventurous single and jeep track and is a great and safe trail for professionals to do their training and for social mountain bikers just to have a fun day out enjoying nature and viewing game. Mountain bikes and helmets can be hired at the Reserve's office during the week. Over weekends and on public holidays an official is on duty for this purpose opposite the picnic area. Please note that we have a no-helmet, no-ride policy.

4x4 Nature Trail
The Reserve offers a moderate 4x4 trail of about 14 km that consists of obstacles, any of which drivers can bypass if they do not feel up to the challenge. There are enough to get the adrenalin flowing! The trail is also great for game viewing and enjoying a fun and eventful day out. If a vehicle gets stuck on the trail, reserve officials will be able to assist at an additional recovery fee.

Horse Trail
Day and overnight rides are available and take place under guidance of a qualified guide. Riders must be able to ride and have some experience in horse riding. This activity is available for group of 6 - 8 persons. Each rider will be provided with their own horse. No person under the age of 12 or weighing over 120 kg is allowed.

Picnic Area
The Mashupeng and Meriting picnic areas are available for visitors doing the hiking trails, mountain bike trail or 4x4 trail. A good idea is to leave your vehicle at the picnic area before doing your activity and to come back and have a relaxing picnic or braai in the shade of the big pine trees, and experience the serene surroundings in the heart of the city.

Tractor Drive
This activity is for children only. It is a different and fun game drive that gives children the chance to see wild animals from a different perspective and at a closer range. A qualified guide is with the children on the trailer and will point out animals and vegetation to them and give them interesting information about these.

Night Drive
Game is tracked from open cross-country vehicles by spotlights. Groups of 10 - 20 persons are accompanied by a qualified guide. This includes the use of the lapa area for braai afterwards. The gates will be opened for groups from 18:00 until 22:30 and bookings are essential.

Bamber Youth Camp
This is an ideal camp for scouts, cubs, church groups, the Voortrekkers, environmental education groups and other youth groups. The camp has a dormitory with 30 bunker beds, a kitchen with a fridge and a stove, a braai area, ablution facilities with hot water, a small mess hall and a loft with extra mattresses for sleeping. The braai area has a fire-pit for making a bushveld fire. Tents may also be pitched, but the camp can manage a maximum of 50 people only. Booking must be done in advance and for a minimum of 10 people. Children and youth groups enjoy this wonderful experience that gives them the opportunity to learn more about the environment and nature.

Overnight Hut
An overnight hut is available for a maximum of 12 and a minimum of 3 people. The hut has two interlocking rooms, and each has 3 bunk beds. There is a small fridge and a basin in the one room. Overnights can use the lapa which has ablution facilities with warm water. The lapa and the overnight hut have electricity. There are two braai areas in the lapa, and a fire-pit to make a bushveld fire. Do not be surprised if some of our grazers visit the hut during your stay. Sleeping over in our overnight hut is a great nature experience for young and old.

General Information
Gate times:
- Summer (September - April) 05:30 - 19:00
- Winter (May - August) 07:00 - 18:00

Entrance to the nature reserve will only be allowed until 1 hour before closing time.

Guides must be booked two weeks in advance.
Bookings are only necessary for the overnight facilities, tractor and game drives, horse trails and guides.

Please note that our facilities are nature oriented, and no parties and functions are allowed.

Bookings:
- Tel: (012) 440 8316
- Fax: 086 512 9536
- E-mail: groenkloofnaturereserve@tshwane.gov.za

Management:
- Tel: (012) 440 8316
- Fax: 086 516 3449
- E-mail: davidb@tshwane.gov.za

Address:
Groenkloof Nature Reserve
PO Box 1454, Pretoria, 0001