Dear Valued Guest

Update regarding the reopening of the Otter Trail

This correspondence serves to inform you, our valued guest, of the latest developments regarding the reopening of the Otter Trail during level two of the National Lockdown period.

We welcome the President’s announcement made on Saturday, 15 August 2020, on the lifting of restrictions on inter-provincial travel under Lockdown Alert Level 2.

Following the announcement made by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the subsequent gazetting of the amended regulations, management of Tsitsikamma is delighted to confirm that the Otter Trail will reopen on 1 September 2020. Our intention is to open the trail to its full capacity in order to accommodate all existing bookings instead of reducing the number of guests and bookings. The latter would have resulted in many bookings being cancelled or bookings being postponed to future dates as far as one year ahead.

The opening of our treasured trail will thus be subject to certain protocols which have been specifically implemented to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 infections. Such protocols include but are not limited to:

1. The dormitory huts at overnight areas will not be available for use until further notice. Hikers are therefore requested to bring their own one-man tents as an alternative to utilizing the dormitory huts. One-man tents must be erected in the demarcated camping areas.
2. It will be mandatory for all hikers to wear cloth face masks at overnight camps and when in proximity of other hikers.
3. Persons with temperatures above 37.3ºC will be referred to management and may be denied access to the park. As part of standard practice, temperatures will be measured and recorded at the park entrance gate.
4. Hikers must immediately report any COVID-19 related symptoms to park management should they feel such symptoms developing during the hike. Emergency telephone numbers will be provided upon arrival.
5. A social distancing space of not less than 1.5 meters must be maintained amongst hikers throughout the five day hiking period.
6. Toilet, ablution and lapa facilities will be disinfected regularly.
7. 70% Alcohol based hand sanitizer must be used to sanitize hands in areas where support rails and ropes are touched. We therefore encourage hikers to include 70% alcohol based hand sanitizer as a vital item in their backpack.
8. SANParks will provide 70% alcohol based hand sanitizer and disinfectants at all toilet and ablution facilities.
9. Park Rangers and law enforcement officers will conduct patrols frequently so as to ensure compliance to protocols.

The five month national lockdown period had numerous negative impacts on various aspects of our operational maintenance plans. The most prominent impact is the delay we had to place on all planned maintenance projects especially the refurbishment of the overnight huts on the trail. Despite the unforeseen delays, management has taken the decision to continue with the planned refurbishment project of all Otter Trail overnight huts so as to ensure that the overnight hut facilities are restored to its prime. The refurbishment project has already commenced and is planned to be completed by 9 October 2020. The project will be strictly monitored and managed by our project team. Measures have already been put in place to ensure that maintenance disturbances to a kept to a minimum.

We do apologise sincerely for any disturbances which might be caused at the overnight areas as a result of maintenance work.

We appreciate your loyalty and support.

Park Management
Tsitsikamma National Park
Garden Route Region