

BEACON HILL

Nature Reserve

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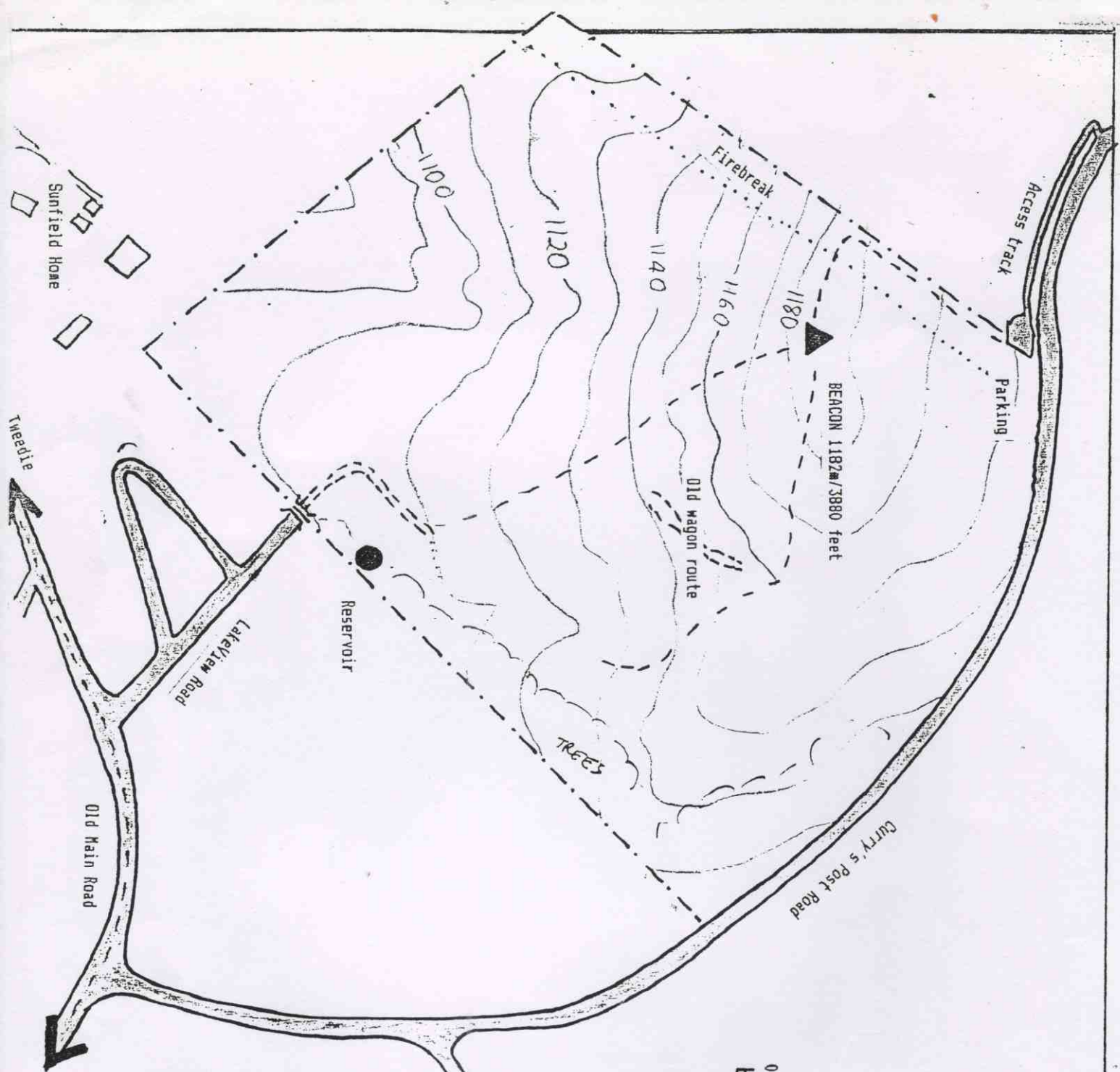


In October 1996, the area known as "Beacon Hill" was declared a conservation area by the Howick TLC.

Formally known as HOWICK Extension 16, Beacon Hill consists of about 40 Ha of largely undisturbed natural grassland or "veld".

In Spring, a large number of beautiful indigenous flowering plant species are evident on its slopes. Also evident are the remains of the historic ox wagon road between Pietermaritzburg and the interior.

The views of the Midlands from the Beacon are spectacular. For the more energetic, take the path leading directly to the Beacon, from the top of Lakeview Road. Alternatively, take the Curry's Post Road from Howick, and then turn left at the first dirt road, immediately left again and park at the end of the track. There is an easy walk up the firebreak, and along a short footpath.



FLOWERS on BEACON HILL

Compiled by Evelyn Hughes

Ref. Wild flowers KwaZulu-Natal by Elsa Pooley

	Page
1. Graderia scabra -	431
2. Nemesia denticulate -	480
3. Gazania krebsiana -	333
4. Albuca setosa -	94
5. Morea brevistyla	109
6. Cyrtanthus tuckii	41
7. Gerbera piloselloides	221
8. Anthericum cooperi	88
9. Helichrysum pilosellum	315
10. Acalypha penducularis	63
11. Eriosema squarrosum	63
12. Trachyandra asperata	88
13. Kohautia amatymbica	203
14. Adenanthellum osmitoides	219
15. Gerbera piloselloides	221
16. Renunculus multifidus	252
17. Eulophia clavicornus	373
18. Cyperus spharocephalus	223
19. Lotonotis foliosa	259
20. Hypericum aethiopicum	291
21. Senecio bupleuroides	322
22. Helichrysum cymosum	313
23. Clerodendrum hirsutum	471
24. Becium oboratum	189
25. Senecio polyodon	445
26. Thunbergia atriplicifolia	307
27. Sisyranthus trichostomus	553
28. Ajuga ophophrydis	471
29. Pentanesia prunelloides	493
30. Scilla Kraussii	451
31. Ledebouria cooperi	345
32. Adhatoda andromeda	203
33. Gerbera piloselloides	221
34. Hypoxis multiceps	235
35. Hypoxis iridifolia	235
36. Hypoxis augustifolia	233
37. Hypoxis argentea	235
38. Crotolaria globifera	263
39. Eriosema kraussianum	275
40. Moraea elliotii	453
41. Dierama trichorhizum	457
42. Desmodium dregeanum	465
43. Veronia hirsuta	498
44. Nemesia denticulata	429
45. Satyrium neglectum	364

46. <i>Pterygodium magnum</i>	575
47. <i>Eulophia odontoglossa</i>	244
48. <i>Eulophia ensata</i>	244
49. <i>Eulophia leontoglossa</i>	244
50. <i>Bulbine abyssinica</i>	225
51. <i>Eriosema cordatum</i>	275
52. <i>Leonotis leonorus</i>	71
53. <i>Crassula vaginata</i>	255
54. <i>Knifhofia laxiflora</i>	29
55. <i>Eriospermum mackenii</i>	227
56. <i>Dierama dracomontanum</i>	355
57. <i>Asclepias gibba</i>	171
58. <i>Asclepias cucullata</i>	417
59. <i>Indigophera tristis</i>	391
60. <i>Pentanesia prunelloides</i>	493
61. <i>Conostomium natalensis</i>	493
62. <i>Pelargonium luridum</i>	401
63. <i>Hypericum aethiopicum</i>	291
64. <i>Hypericum lalandii</i>	291
65. <i>Helichrysum auronitens</i>	311
66. <i>Helichrysum pilosellum</i>	315
67. <i>Helichrysum nanum</i>	315
68. <i>Senecio coronatus</i>	323
69. <i>Abrus laevigatus</i>	465
70. <i>Cycnium tubulosum</i>	433
71. <i>Striga bilabiata</i>	433
72. <i>Berkheya setifera</i>	337
73. <i>Berkheya multijuga</i>	337
74. <i>Euryops tysonii</i>	331
75. <i>Watsonia densiflora</i>	359
76. <i>Brunsvigia radulosa</i>	349
78. <i>Helichrysum adenocarpum</i>	443
79. <i>Plectranthus cylindraceus</i>	185
80. <i>Arthrixia phylicoides</i>	443
81. <i>Teucrium kraussii</i>	181
82. <i>Cyrtanthus breviflorus</i>	232
83. <i>Boophane disticha</i>	346
84. <i>Eriosema distinctum</i>	60
85. <i>Stachys aethiopica</i>	183
86. <i>Vernonia oligocephala</i>	497
87. <i>Chaetacanthus burchellii</i>	199
88. <i>Eulophia foliosa</i>	521
89. <i>Cyphia elata</i>	209
90. <i>Indigofera hilaris</i>	391
100. <i>Alepidea amatymbica</i>	161
101. <i>Scilla nervosa</i>	97
102. <i>Gomphocarpus rivularis</i>	168
103. <i>Aristea woodii</i>	454
104. <i>Wahlenbergia krebsii</i>	495
105. <i>Lobelia</i>	497

Grasses found on Beacon Hill

Ref. – Guide to Grasses of Southern Africa- Fritz van Oudtshoorn

Page no.

1. Digitaria eriantha	226
2. Eragrostis plana	194
3. Sporobolus fimbriatus	144
4. Sporobolus pyramidalus	195
5. Aristida junciformis	110
6. Eragrostis curvula	177
7. Pennisetum clandestinum	259
8. Hyparrhenia filipendula	57
9. Hyparrhenia hirta	56
10. Themeda triandra	50
11. Cymbopogon excavatus	52
12. Panicum maximum	179
13. Cymbopogon validus	54
14. Cynodon dactylon	229
15. Monocymbium cerasiiforme	62
16. Setaria nigrirostris	261
17. Setaria pallide-fusca	92
18. Aristida congesta	97
19. Paspalum dilatatum	246

Trees Found on Beacon Hill

Trees of Natal by Elsa Pooley

Page numbers

- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1. Acacia sieberiana | 138 |
| 2. Cussonia spicata | 378 |
| 3. Halleria lucida | 448 |
| 4. Erythrina latissima | 176 |
| 5. Buddleja savifolia | 426 |
| 6. Rhus dentata | 250 |

Mammals found on Beacon Hill

1. Reedbuck
2. Bushbuck
3. Grey Duiker
4. Porcupine
5. Caracal
6. Vervet Monkey
7. Scrub Hare
8. Large Grey Mongoose
9. Slender Mongoose
10. Canerat

Birds Found on Beacon Hill and Surrounds - compiled by Margie Sleight

1. Barbet, Black-collared
2. BouBou, Southern
3. Bunting, Golden-breasted
4. Buzzard, Jackal
5. " Steppe
6. Canary, Cape
7. " Forest (in the gulley)
8. " Yellow-fronted
9. Crow, Pied
10. Cuckoo, Black
11. " Klaas
12. " Redched
13. Eagle, Long-crested
14. Firefinch, African
15. Flycatcher, Southern Black
16. " African Dusky
17. Francolin, Natal
18. " Red- winged
19. " Red-necked
20. Grassbird, Cape
21. Guineafowl, Helmeted
22. Heron Black-headed
23. Honeyguide, Greater
24. Kingfisher Brown-headed
25. Kite, Black-shouldered
26. Lark, Rufous- napped
27. Manniken, Bronze
28. Neddicky
29. Nightjar, Firery-necked
30. Oriole, Black-headed
31. Owl, Grass
32. Paradise-flycatcher African
33. Pipit, Long-billed – Nest with 3 young Oct 1990
34. Prinia, Drakensberg
35. " Tawny-flanked
36. Puffback, Black-backed
37. Quail, Common
38. Robin-chat Cape
39. Seedeater, Streaky-headed
40. Sparrowhawk Black
41. Stonechat
42. Sunbird, Amethyst
43. Saw-wing Black
44. Swallow Barn
45. Swift Alpine
46. " African Black
47. " White-rumped
48. Tchagra Black-crowned

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 49. Warbler | Broad tailed |
| 50. " | Dark-capped |
| 51. Waxbill | Common |
| 52. Whydah | Pin-tailed |
| 53. Widowbird | Fantailed |
| 54. " | Redcollared |
| 55. Wood-Hoopoe | Greenbacked |
| 56. Wryneck | |
| 57. Coucal | Burchell's (found in the gullies) |
| 58. Cuckoo | Diederick's |
| 59. Weaver | Village |
| 60. " | Cape |
| 61. Bulbul | Sombre |
| 62. Flufftail | Striped (new sighting of a rare bird 12\2009) |

Howick's Beacon Hill a "site of conservation significance"

Howick's ecologically-sensitive Beacon Hill has recently been registered as a "site of conservation significance" by the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, now KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife.

This will mean that it will give the area a greater assurance of being conserved after previously being earmarked for residential development, Howick councillor John Tidbury said last week.

In October 1996, the forty-hectare area was declared a nature reserve by the Howick TLC following representations by Cirs Tidbury and Bruce Clemence on the basis of its tremendous potential as a nature reserve/heritage site and because it is extremely rich in vegetation and flora.

Since then a management committee of volunteers has worked consistently to remove exotic trees and weeds and restore it to its original natural grassland state.

"There was a strip of thick exotic vegetation on the lower section adjacent to Sunfield Home," Cirs Tidbury explained, "as well as along the small stream which rises on the southern slope of the hill."

"To eradicate this, in the last few years we've been chopping down exotics such as gum and wattle and bugweed which sprang up in this area after the lower slope was disturbed by cultivation about twenty years ago, which allowed other vegetation to creep in later."

Other aspects of the committee's programme

has included controlled burning, the removal of snares and the prevention of access by vehicles.

Beacon Hill's significance as an example of a typical KwaZulu-Natal mistbelt type of grassland is that very small percentages of this type of grassland remain in evidence in the Midlands, although it is endemic to the area.

Treasure this piece of wilderness

Now, of its new status as a site of conservation significance, Cirs Tidbury said: "This is a considerable achievement which has been attained by the management committee on behalf of the Howick community and it is hoped that the community will treasure this little piece of wilderness on its doorstep and that the conservation significance of the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve will be accorded the respect it deserves both in terms of its local interest as a place to walk but also in terms of its provincial and its national heritage."

It is for this reason that only walking is permitted on the hill and vehicles and motor bikes are banned.

Beacon Hill sports at least 50 beautiful indigenous flowering plant species, such as such as *brunsvigia natalensis* and *gladiolus woodii* which grace the area during the spring months and numerous species of grass such as *spanicum maximum*, *themeda triandra* and various types of *eragrostis*.

When more progress has been made in removing alien vegetation, the committee will



Balanced precariously? Many hours of selfless work by John Tidbury, who lives just below the Beacon Hill reserve in Howick — and the recent declaration of the 40ha area as a site of conservation significance — make it a legacy for the future. Mr Tidbury is seated on a gum tree which once grew in a flourishing strip of dense alien vegetation. The top of Beacon Hill lies in the distance. Gums and wattles in the middle distance are still to be telled and other exotics cleared.

start planting indigenous trees such as the wild fuschia, the bush willow, yellowwoods, white stinkwood and the waterberry.

As manager of Sunfield Home, Cirs Tidbury has also seen to it that the same ecological care has been applied to the flow of the stream through its property, removing

ing several huge gums and a few wattle trees (fully-grown gums drink up to 100 litres of water a day).

A function will be held shortly at the KZN NCS' Queen Elizabeth Park headquarters in Pietermaritzburg at which the certificate will be presented to the committee.