

Meet Report: MCSA Springstygbeugel Chainsaw Hack 14-16 Nov 2025

By Jess Verheul,

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Adjacent MCSA Springstygbeugel
hacked ~3 hectares total; ~60 volunteer hours.

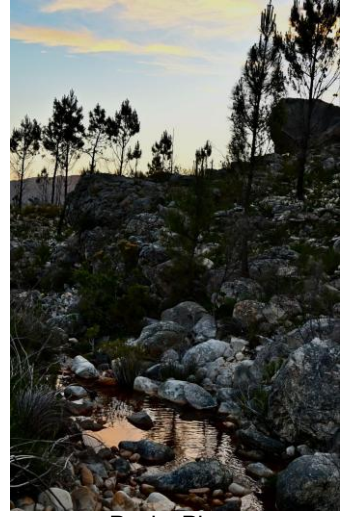
From 14–16 November 2025, an enthusiastic and highly effective group of volunteers gathered for a specialised chainsaw hack by MCSA-CT's Springstygbeugel property high above Du Toitskloof pass. The meet focused on removing invasive alien pine trees and upskilling members in safe, effective chainsaw use in the mountains. But it was not just good sweat and saw dust. We also savoured rock pools, sunset conversations and the magic of the fynbos.



Some of the floral delights of the trip and heavy packs filled with cola and 1L YogiSip for hacking recovery.
Photos: Jess Verheul



Gorgeous views



Pesky Pines



Burnt Proteas



Settling into the 5 million star hotel



The Crew



Ready to go



What we're Protecting ;)



THE "AFTER": SATISFACTION!



Love outside



Omnomnom



More omnomnom



ahhhhhh



THE CREW at the end of the weekend

Led by **Ron Clark**, a professional tree feller, the weekend was as much about learning as it was about clearing pines. Ron generously shared learnings from his decades of experience - from chainsaw cleaning and maintenance to safe felling techniques and efficient working methods in the field. As the property convenor for Springstygbeugel, Ron has led numerous meets in the area over the years and it is heartening to see the result of many pine-free areas.

Saturday morning kicked off with a comprehensive safety briefing and hands-on instruction on a bunch of ill-fated pines next to our overnight spot by a stream. Ron and Steven Webber emphasised correct and safe tool handling, situational awareness, teamwork, risk management and working with rather than against the terrain. Thereafter we hiked a couple of hours to our main target for the weekend - a dense stand of pines high on the back of the Witteberg.

Over the course of the weekend, **10 participants** contributed approximately **6 hours each cutting pines (not including travel, hiking in, etc)**, resulting in around **60+ volunteer hours** and the successful clearing of **approximately 3 hectares** of land over two days. The energetic crew completely cleared the main target area on Saturday. This included tracking down some isolated pines, which are particularly important to catch as they spread seeds in otherwise uninvaded areas. As we hiked out on Sunday we cut large trees across half a hectare in a rugged spot above the Cascades.

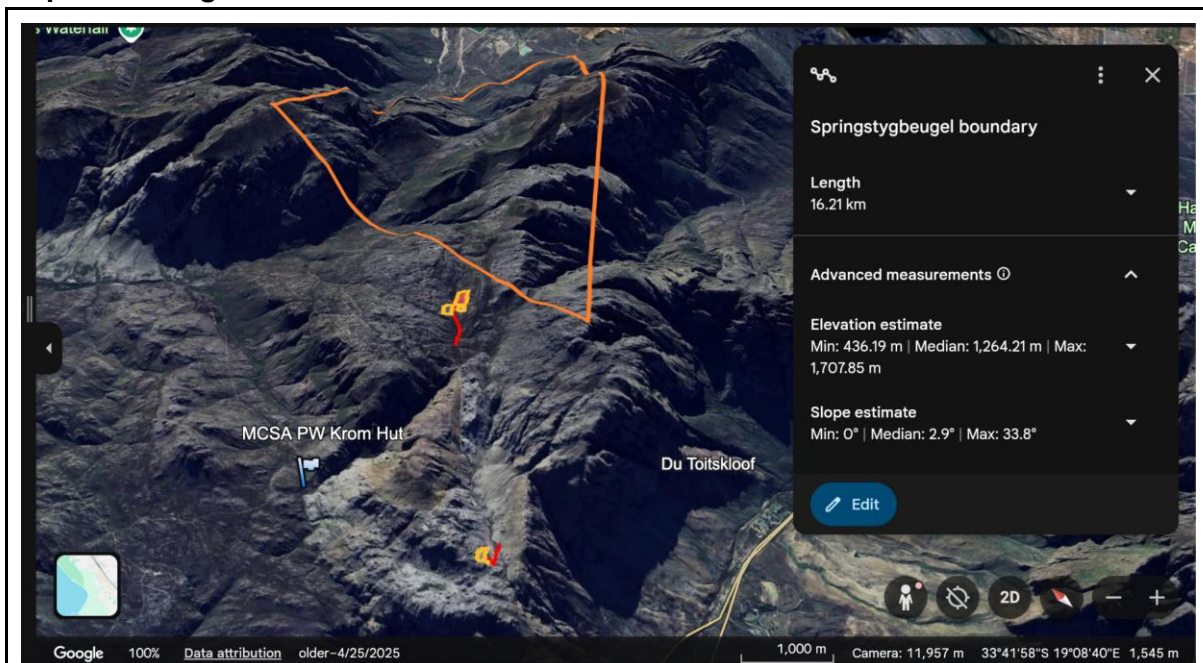
What benefits do all of these efforts bring? Hacks like these mean more water, fires that don't burn too fiercely and space for fynbos to flourish. Pine trees consume much more water than fynbos, they create high fuel loads that make fires burn too intensely, and they form dense, barren stands that crowd out the indigenous fynbos.

The group included **members from both the Cape Town and Paarl-Wellington Sections**, as well as guests/friends of the club. Thank you to everyone who gave their time, energy, and attention to this important work. Chainsaw hacks require skill, discipline, and trust — and this group delivered on all fronts. This meet stood out not only for the amount of work achieved, but for the quality of in-field learning. Participants gained confidence and practical skills that will carry over into future conservation work.

A heartfelt thank you to **Ron Clark** for his leadership and generosity. His calm patient and gentle approach makes him an outstanding teacher and a wonderful companion in the mountains. A big thank you also to Steven Webber, who also ably helped to teach the ins and outs of tree cutting and took drone photos.. We hope Ron and Steve can continue supporting MCSA conservation efforts by helping to train and mentor members in the field.

As with any good mountain meet, the weekend also delivered its fair share of humour and memorable moments. There was lots of good-natured banter and the universal agreement that cutting down large trees on cliffs is somehow easier than uploading photos to Google Drive. The laughs, stories and shared problem-solving reminded us that conservation work is not only challenging and meaningful — it's also deeply human.


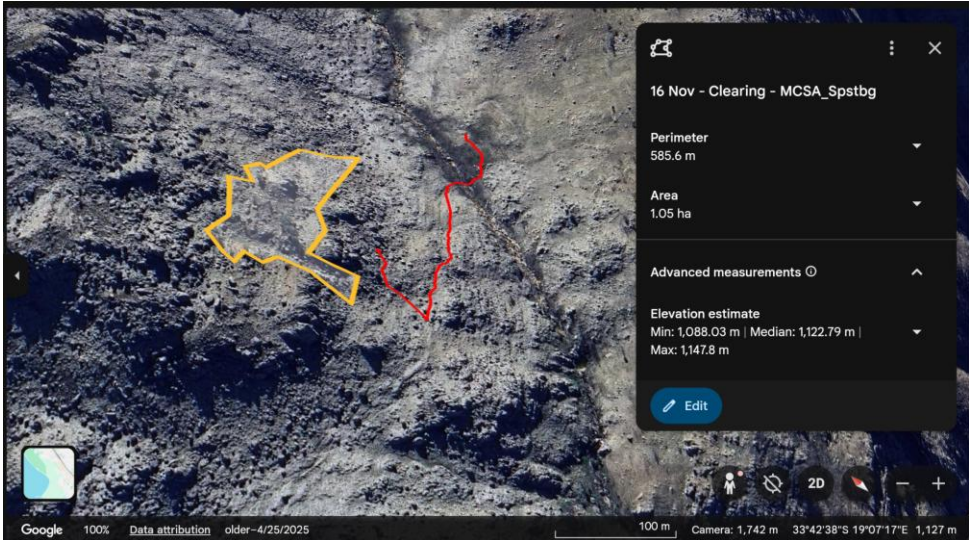
Maps and Images



Yellow shapes show cleared areas, next to Springstygbeugel.
Pines cleared: ~5 hectares total; ~60 volunteer hours cutting only (not incl hike, training, maintenance).

Close ups of area's cleared below.

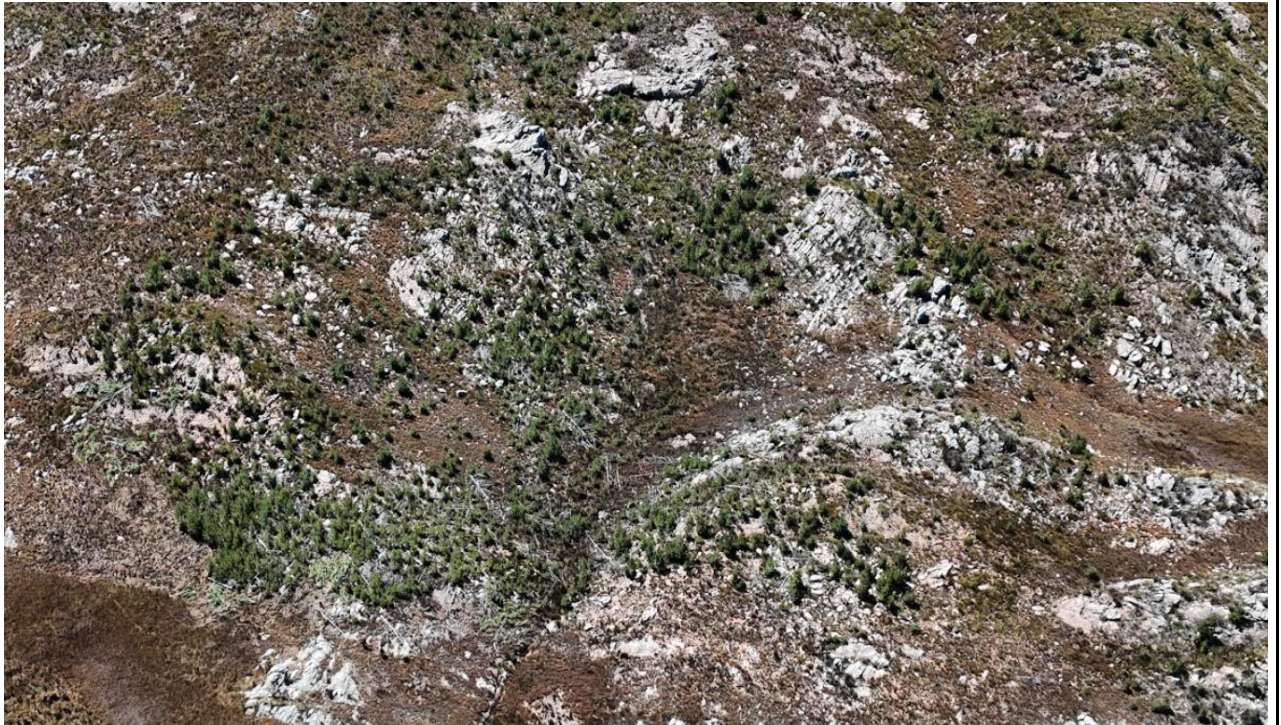
Close ups of area's cleared

 <p>15 Nov - Clearing - MCSA_Spstbg</p> <p>Perimeter 822.12 m</p> <p>Area 2.55 ha</p> <p>Advanced measurements</p> <p>Elevation estimate Min: 1,306.88 m Median: 1,319.28 m Max: 1,342.57 m</p> <p>Edit</p>	<p>Area's cleared on Sat 15 Nov; ~4 Hectares.</p>
 <p>16 Nov - Clearing - MCSA_Spstbg</p> <p>Perimeter 585.6 m</p> <p>Area 1.05 ha</p> <p>Advanced measurements</p> <p>Elevation estimate Min: 1,088.03 m Median: 1,122.79 m Max: 1,147.8 m</p> <p>Edit</p>	<p>Cleared on Sun 16 Nov; ~1 Hectare.</p>

Before and After below.

Before and After Aerial Images showing pines before and after being felled.

Before
(15 Nov
2025)



After
(15 Nov
2025)



End.