

Final Meet Report

Meet Report: MCSA Agtertafelberg Hack Weekend, 17 – 19 July 2026

By Chris Kruyshaar,

Contributors: Fiona Anderson and Kim Kruyshaar

Area: Adjacent to MCSA Agtertafelberg Hut
hacked ~1.61 hectares; ~135 volunteer hours.

From 17th to 19th July 2026, a group of 15 volunteers worked for over 9 hours pp, with the main objective of pushing back the pine tree invasion on the ridges above the MCSA hut on Cape Nature land. The target area covered medium to steep mountain slopes, a river corridor as well as a gently sloping fynbos ridge and was directly above (in a south west direction) the hack area covered over the weekend 8-9 May 2026.

The area had last burned about 4 to 5 years ago. It was likely that, as a result of this fire, thousands of seeds were released from mature (20 to 30 year old) trees and germinated in the relatively fertile and moist soils on the fynbos slope.

The area is/was infested mainly with pine trees, *Pinus pinaster*, varying in size from new growth to tall trees as per the list below.

V small pines	<1 year	< 200mm tall	hand pull	15%
Baby pines	1 – 2 years	200 – 400mm tall	hand pull	20%
Small pines	2 – 4 years	0,4 – 1.3 m tall	loppers	34%
Medium pines	4 – 8 years	1.3 – 2m tall	hand saws	25%
Big pines	8 – 30 years	2 – 15m tall	chainsaw	5%
Small hakea	1 – 4 years	0.2 – 1.5m tall	loppers	1%

Nine team members met at the Fisanterkraal parking at 16:30 on Friday afternoon and walked to the hut. By 18:30 we were all safely in the hut with a communal supper kindly prepared by Fiona Anderson.

The team departed from the hut at 08:30 on Saturday and hiked to the hack site. Before work started the team leader gave a safety briefing.

At about 10:45 we were joined by the rest of the party at the hack site. This group of 6 could not get away on Friday because of work commitments. On Sunday the whole group went back to the hack site for a 3 hour work session.

In total the group sorted out (cut down, Ringed, or pulled out) about 4600 trees. This achievement was far less than that of the 08 May weekend. This is because we needed to work more carefully to cut the baby pines below the side branches which grow just above the ground. This time we were working on a slightly steeper and much more rocky terrain which contributed to the lower final count.

Three youngsters were taught to use chainsaws safely by Alistair and Jake. A total of 3 chainsaws were used and a good tally of 270 large trees were dealt with (80 were cut down and 190 were “ringed”. “Ringing” involves cutting an annular cut into the trunk at a height of about 1 meter above the ground. See Figure 1 for Ringing process.)



Figure 1: Alistair performing a “Ring Cut” on a +- 20 year old pine tree

The hack site is shown in Figure 2, 3, and 4 below. Figure 5 shows how close our hack site is to the plantations around the Wemmershoek Dam – a mere 5.3 kms. It’s no wonder that the level of infestation is so high in this area.

The centre of the 1.6 ha hack site is in position:

33 deg 47’ 23.42” S and 19 deg 08’ 42.26 “ E

Hack Group

Chris Kruyshaar	CAP 6017	Group leader
Fiona Anderson	CAP 4600	Assistant group leader
Kim Kruyshaar	CAP 4808	
Pat Rebelo	CAP 5293	
Tony Rebelo	CAP ****	
Jake Adams	CAP 7196	
Benedict le Jeune	CAP 10766	
Zoe Nuttall	CAP 10178	
James Nuttall	CAP 10651	
Alistair Clacherty	CAP 6937	
Tim Hack	Guest	
Tam Dekenah	Guest	
Nikki	Guest	
Birget	Guest	
Judith	Guest	

Maps and Images

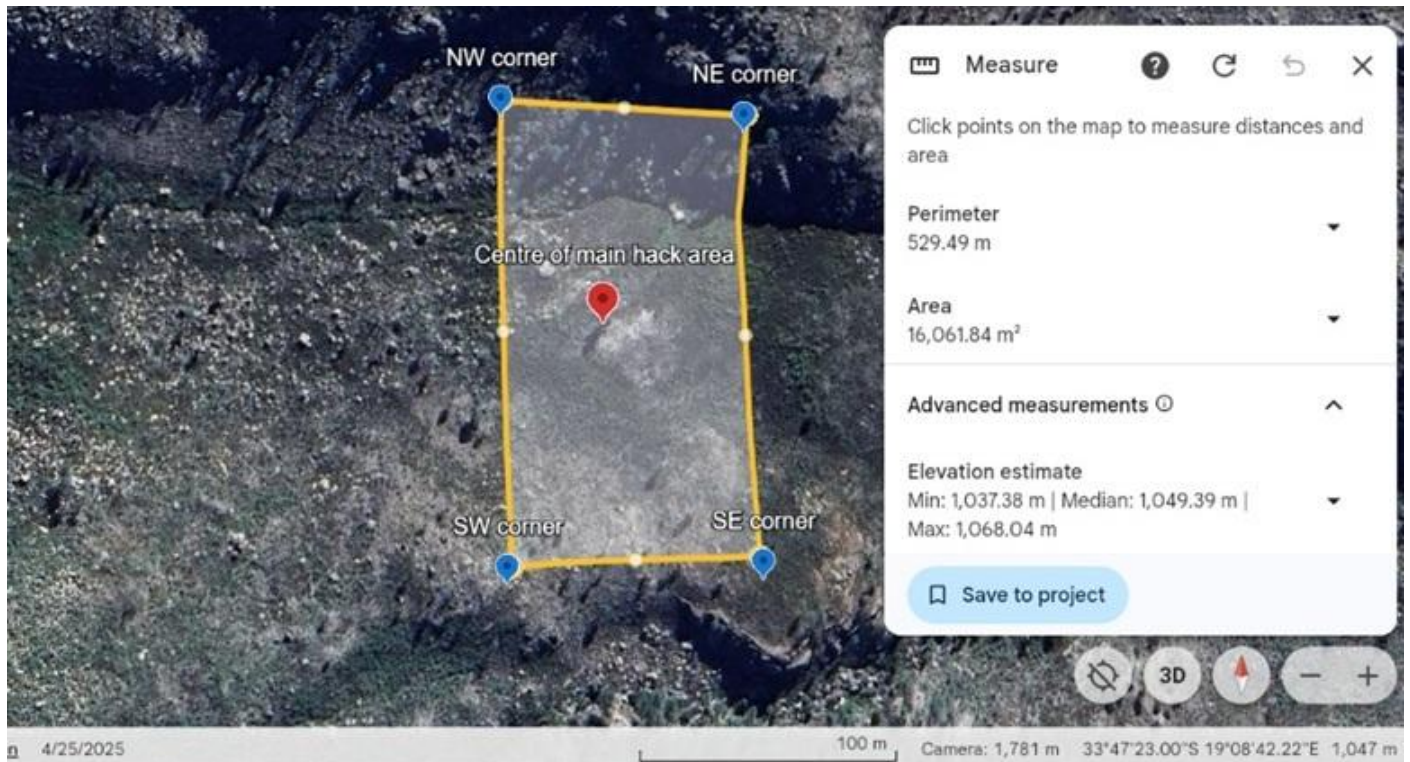


Figure 2: Detail View of Hack site.

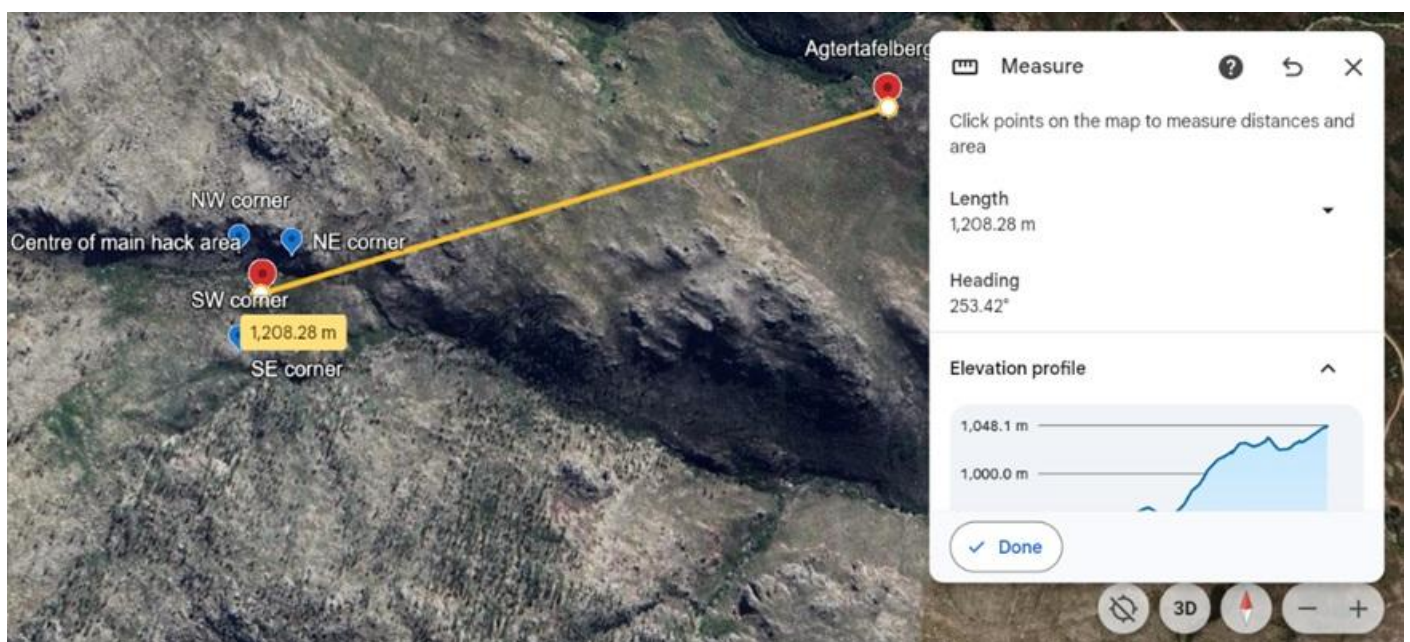


Figure 3 : Hack Site – overview, showing ATB hut



Figure 4: Secondary hack site. Rework from May hack as well as area where large trees were either Ringed or felled.

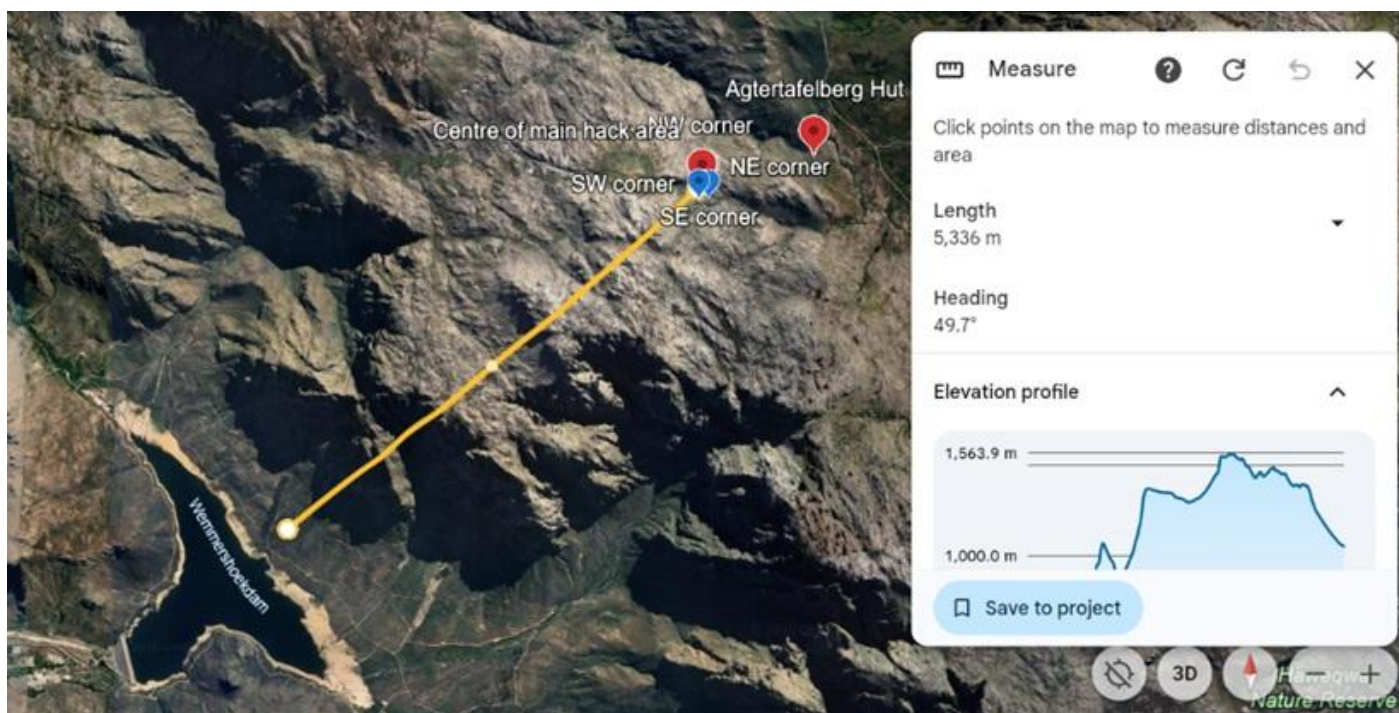


Figure 5: Hack Site in relation to Wemershoek plantation. A mere 5.3 kms away, down wind from the summer winds.

Pictures from hack weekend



Figure 6: "Group photo at the Saturday lunch break.



Figure 7: Group at the ATB hut enjoying Sunday lunch before hiking out.



Figure 8: Main hack area infested with small pines



Figure 9: Baby pines being cut by group. Fiona, Judith, Kim, Pat, Tam, Nikki, and Tony hard at work

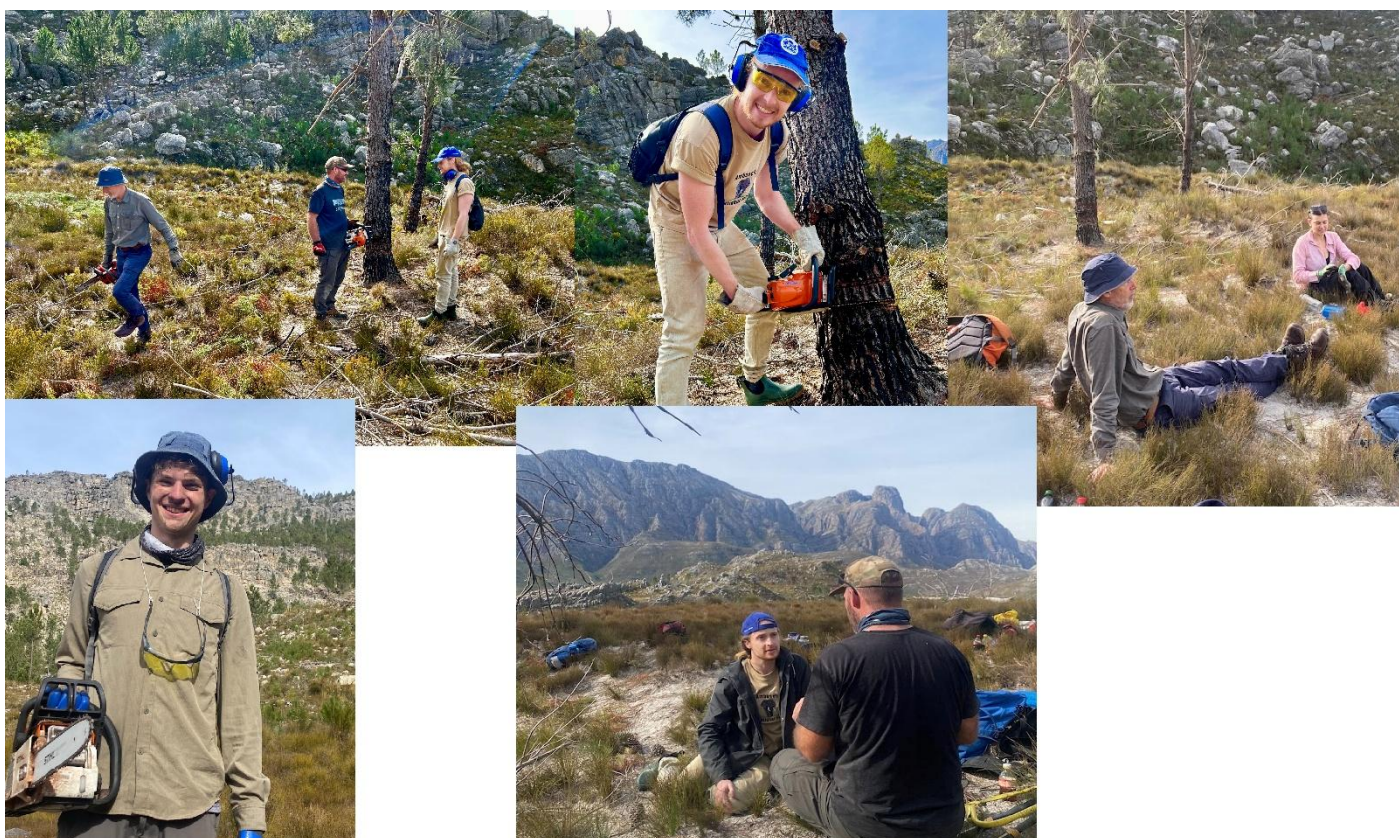


Figure 10: Chainsaw training. Benedict, Tim and Zoe being instructed by Jake and Alistair