

Northern Farm Newsletter

From the Northern Farm volunteer team, welcome to our second comprehensive newsletter which we hope you will find informative and add to your support and enjoyment of the 'farm'.

Fees:

Please note that the fee per entry has previously increased from R15 to R30 per person on a single entry ticket (Season tickets from R200 per 20 entries to R300 per 20 entries). The main reason for the increase is due to security issues over the past few months which have necessitated the contracting of security guards and additional marshals.

Security:

Security breaches have unfortunately arisen again in recent weeks, including two bike 'hijackings' and the theft of all the development riders bicycles and related equipment. The theft of the bicycles has posed a major challenge with the deployment of the security marshals and we are currently working on alternative arrangements.

Simon Nash has been busy this week putting together different strategies to deal with the crime problems on the farm. What is obvious is that the incidents all take place in areas where it is easy for the perpetrators to escape. So in response to this we will be closing the area next to the freeway and you will notice when you get to the farm this weekend that the two gates leading from the main road to the freeway area are closed, please obey this closure.

Meetings have also been had with SAPS and eblockwatch which will be followed up. Again, we appeal to you not to ride in no-go / no entry areas as this is where most of the incidents are taking place.

Please be vigilant at all times and avoid the following areas:

- The area below the bottom tunnel leading to the R114
- The Hills and Dales road
- The single track leading from the equestrian park along the freeway to the bottom tunnel

It is recommended that you ride in groups.

Informal groups generally depart at 07h30 on Saturday's and Sunday's from the Bike wash area. Please watch Email invites in this regard.

We have set up a safety support service in conjunction with eblockwatch for cyclists. Please visit www.eblockwatch.co.za for various crime prevention and follow up initiatives and specifically the newest initiative specifically aimed at cyclists.

We also advise that you register your bike on the National Bike Registry, this is another worthwhile project by cyclists for cyclists aimed at making it difficult for the criminal elements to dispose of the bikes they steal. Go to www.nbrz.co.za Finally on security, expect to see an increase in security patrols and guarding from this weekend onwards and please make a point of assisting us to make the farm secure by obeying all signs and instructions from these people.

Environmental, fauna and flora:

Please note that tracks / spoor of two **hippos** (no jokes!) have been sighted on the farm, one also being photographed near the quarry. Although hippos should not pose a problem during the day, preferring to wallow in the after and feed on land at night, do be vigilant on overcast days and in the vicinity of Fish Eagle dam where spoor of the one hippo is often encountered. Do not come between a hippo and the water as they will generally head back to water if they are surprised or feel threatened. Please notify the marshals or volunteer team representatives should you sight either of the hippos.

Volunteers:

Please note once again that the cycling fee is not used for the running of a profitable commercial operation. All proceeds go towards the maintenance of trails, signs, security, building maintenance, development rider initiative etc. No person associated with the 'running' of the cycling venue is rewarded in any way and it is purely looked after by a volunteer team.

Should you wish to help or volunteer in anyway with the 'running' of the cycle venue please email queries@northernfarm.co.za. Should you have any queries, recommendations, complaints etc. please bear in mind you are liaising with a group of volunteers and therefore your service expectations should take this into consideration.

NFRUG, which manages the property from a recreational side, is a S21 company not for gain and is there to look after the recreational interests of the farm.

Email addresses:

Please do send your Email contact address to subscribe@northernfarm.co.za . This will enable you to receive the newsletter and any important Email correspondence specifically with regards to security and any petitions or support which may be needed in the future to facilitate the continued utilisation of the farm for cycling. You may also be asked to complete a form, at the entrance, including your Email address which will help in compiling a database for the newsletter and important security notices, please support this imitative.

Events:

There is a biathlon at the farm this Sunday but the farm will not be closed. Diepsloot Scout pack has adopted the farm as their home base and we can expect to see scouts running around the farm, certainly another plus in our efforts to protect the farm.

Newsletter contributions:

Please Email any relevant newsletter contributions and / or photos or should you wish to volunteer to help with the newsletter to newsletter@northernfarm.co.za .

Opening and closing times:

The cycling venue is open between:

- 06h00 and 18h00 (1 September to 30 April)
- 06h30 and 18h00 (1 May to 31 August)

However please note that the security is only on site between 06h30 and 16h00.

Training:

We are still looking for a volunteer involved with training, to help train the marshals, security guards and skills clinics instructors. Please contact Simon Nash in this regard at queries@northernfarm.co.za

Contact Volunteers:

queries@northernfarm.co.za (for any Mountain biking query at Northern Farm i.e. facilities, races, bike wash, complaints, compliments etc)
security@northernfarm.co.za (for security issues at Northern Farm)
club100@northernfarm.co.za (for Club 100 rides at Northern Farm)
newsletter@northernfarm.co.za (to submit info or comment on our newsletter)
subscribe@northernfarm.co.za (to subscribe/ unsubscribe or update your details on the database)

Guidelines and regulations:

Please make yourself familiar with the rules of the farm at <http://www.northernfarm.co.za>

Please adhere to the no entry signs and no go areas at the farm. These signs are not there to spoil your fun but for your own safety, security (note again most security breaches happen in the no entry zones) and to ensure minimal interference with the commercial operation of the farm i.e. cattle, water works etc. whom allow us access and without whose co-operation the cycle venue would not be allowed. No entry signs on the single tracks must please be strictly adhered to for safety reasons.

Trail news:

The signs which were stolen have now been replaced and we have appointed someone to do weekly maintenance and checks on these signs.

Bicycle shop:

We are still looking for someone to fill this role. Please notify us at queries@northernfarm.co.za if you know of anyone who may be interested in running a small cycle shop on Saturdays and Sundays at the bike wash. There is a qualified and paid for mechanic on site and therefore the shop would just need to stock a limited amount of spares and cycle gear but take full responsibility for their stock at the shop with its own staff.

Website:

Please visit the website <http://www.northernfarm.co.za> for any further information you may require. Should the information you are looking for not be available on the website contact queries@northernfarm.co.za

Update:

There has been much speculation about the future of Northern Farm of late.

As the Northern Farm Recreational User Group, we are obviously concerned about the situation but would like to put issues in perspective.

Firstly, contrary to the e mails doing the rounds at present, it is only the southern side of the nature reserve for which deproclamation has been applied, not the whole nature reserve as reported.

Whilst we have an environmentalist conducting an investigation into the existence of any environmentally sensitive areas within the intended area for deproclamation, we point out

that this area, south of the freeway and predominantly south of the R114, has in any event been occupied by the sewerage works and overflow of residents from Diepsloot and is not used by the recreational or environmental groups in any form or fashion.

NFRUG has registered as an interested party and lodged a document recording our activities and use of the club house area south of the freeway but north of the R114. We shall continue to participate in the process of deproclamation in order to protect the interests of the user group.

On the question of Johannesburg Water stopping farming activity we are again concerned about the impact that this will have on the farm and of course its recreational use. We have engaged with Johannesburg Water, and are engaging with Johannesburg Property Company to establish their intentions and ensure that the user groups interests are protected. This will be a long process and we see no merit in signing petitions or protesting until such time as we have established that there is in fact a need to protest.

We shall keep the user group posted on developments and request that all interested parties register for the newsletter on the Northern Farm website in order to facilitate ease of communication.

Best Regards
Northern Farm volunteer team.