

Visit national parks for free this September

THE South African National Parks (SANParks) once again open its doors to South Africans for free at all its parks during SANParks Week.

The week-long annual campaign - now in its 14th year - will run from Sunday, September 8 to Sunday, September 15.

The campaign, held in conjunction with Total South Africa and FNB, will allow locals with valid identity documents an opportunity to spend a day at one of the 21 national parks free of charge. Young persons under

the age of 16 will be allowed free access without proof of identity.

Each year, SANParks aim to increase the number of citizens granted free access to national parks during this time.

Since the start of the programme in 2006, a total of 438 361 South Africans have been afforded the opportunity to enter national parks and SANParks want to see these numbers grow.

“It’s important for South Africans to visit and know the importance of national parks,” says SANParks

Chief Executive Officer, Fundisile Mketeni.

“They act as spaces to practice sustainable conservation, and as spaces that preserve and celebrate our culture and heritage. We now see national parks playing the critical role of empowering communities living adjacent to parks through job creation and we continue to explore ways of creating business opportunities particularly for small business owners.”

Mketeni highlights the growing need for national parks to be rele-

vant, particularly to young people and communities living next to parks. “Through our Socio-Economic Transformation programmes and our Expanded Public Works Programme, we work closely with these communities with the aim of strengthening our relationships with them. We want to be more inclusive so we can tackle issues of wildlife crime with their help, afford them more access to parks for cultural use, inform young people about the different career options that parks have to offer and create job opportu-

nities.

“SANParks hope to strengthen and enable those communities to reap the benefits of the national parks.”

Frontier Region of SANParks

- Garden Route National Park
- Addo Elephant National Park
- Camdeboo National Park
- Karoo National Park
- Mountain Zebra National Park

For more information, visit

www.sanparks.org/about/events/parks_week.