

Dalene Matthee Memorial Unveiled at Wilderness National Park

On Saturday, 23 February 2008, close family, a few selected SANParks officials and the press witnessed the unveiling of a memorial in honour of the late writer, [Dalene Matthee](#). It was Matthee's fervent wish to have her ashes scattered in the Knysna Forest and her three daughters saw it as a fitting remembrance to their mom, to have a special memorial erected in the place Matthee so loved.



Mvusy Songelwa unveiling the memorial

"After three years this project has fallen into place and the family will be eternally grateful to the [Wilderness National Park](#) staff for making it all happen", says Hillary Matthee, the writer's youngest daughter.

SANParks contribution included the building of a boardwalk around the memorial, the renaming of the big tree to the Dalene Matthee Big Tree and the marking of a circular hiking trail to the "Circles in a Forest" trail. The memorial, tree and trail will now form part of the park's cultural heritage programme.

[Matthee](#) based many of her books, especially *Fie!a's Child*, *Circles in a Forest* and *Moerbeibos* on the life and people of the forest. Her books have been translated into 14 languages.

Dignitaries at the unveiling ceremony included Mvusy Songelwa (Regional Manager of the Garden Route National Parks) who unveiled the memorial, Edgar Nevuvhalani (People and Conservation Cultural Heritage Manager) and Dr. Razeena Omar (Executive Director: People and Conservation), who befittingly mentioned what an honour it is for SANParks to house a memorial for a woman who has done so much to bring nature and the forests to the hearts of all people who read her books.

The memorial, Big Tree and the Circles in a Forest Trail is situated at the Krisjan se Nek picnic site in the Goudveld Forest (close to Knysna), which now forms part of the Wilderness National Park. Jill Gordon, Park Manager, encourages all and especially school groups to come and pay homage to Matthee and explore the beauty of the forests.