

## Visiting Peaks National Park, St Helena

By Dani Baigorri

First published 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018



A Best 2.0 funded project entitled: 'Trails and interpretation improvements in the Peaks National Park, St Helena' kicked off on April 2016, implemented by the Environmental Management Department (EMD). It aimed to improve the trail facilities in the Peaks National Park by installing boardwalk, stairs, handrails and a hiking shelter, clearing vegetation away from 8,000 metres of overgrown trails. During the implementation my role as Best 2.0 Project Officer for SAERI requires me to know the island and the team behind the project. Although the project was completed on July 2017, when I had the opportunity of visiting the beautiful island of Saint Helena, in January 2018, I contacted the project manager Lourens Malan who kindly gave me a tour of the park and I was able to see with my own eyes what incredible work he and the crew had done.



Before my walk through the park, Mike Jervois, former project manager, gave me a summary of how it had been for the past twelve months working on the Peaks and we discussed the challenges of the project implementation.



# SAERI NEWS

The Peaks National Park consists in three peaks Mount Actaeon, Diana's Peak and Cuckold's Point. On a clear day the Peaks offers stunning views right across the Island. Views from the Peaks are spectacular down towards Sandy Bay, and as the route follows a ridge there are views either side (obviously!). Since recently having wooden stairs fitted near to the peaks as part of the St Helena Government – EMD project under the umbrella of the BEST 2.0 programme and with the financial support of the European Union, the increased accessibility of the paths is now a great way for more people from the island and visitors to take in the sights of the island, as long as you pick the right weather! But if you didn't, just be patient! Even if it is cold and cloudy when you get to the top, wait a bit! It might clear up!



The walk started from EMD's Peaks nursery through a clearly marked and steep track, the first peak reached is Mount Actaeon, and has a large pine on the summit. Continuing on, the path drops slightly and then climbs back up to reach Diana's Peak itself. This is part of the cloud forest of the Island and has many endemic insects and endemic plants, including massive tree ferns thriving in the moist environment (expect it to be wet....and possibly cloudy). From Diana's Peak the walk continues to the third peak along the ridge which is Cuckold's Point.

It was so beautiful to walk on the grassy path surrounded by fern, trees and flowers! Amazing!

# SAERI NEWS

