



WOFIRE NEWS

SAVING LIVES • PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT • RESTORING DIGNITY

Rooiberg Team reduces fuel load ahead of fire season



Rooiberg participants reducing the fuel load by cutting trees in preparation for the fire season


In preparing for the upcoming winter fire season, WOF participants across the province have been working hard to assist landowners.

Rooiberg participants in the Waterberg district have committed themselves to protect the environment against veld and forest fires and preserve nature for the next generation.

“Creating firebreaks is one of the measures that we implement as a barrier for the fires. They assist in stopping the fire from spreading from one property to another,” says Sello Motshegon, the Base Communications Representative at Rooiberg Base.

Dry trees are dangerous as they serve as fuel in veld and forest fires. The WOF participants therefore decided not only to focus on slashing grass, but to also cut the dry trees and move them to a safe area where they will be used for the rehabilitation of the soil.

“Though we are still a newly opened team, we have done so much in a short period of time and it clearly shows that there is a need for our services in this area. Our partners, stakeholders and landowners appreciate the hard work that we are doing,” says Motshegon.

 Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

Getting ready for winter fire season with aim to reduce fire risks

Working on Fire teams throughout the country have been hard at work during the last few months preparing for the 2017 winter fire season.

Some provinces have already completed their annual Yellow Card Training Camps which are aimed at ensuring that all firefighters are fit and ready to be on active duty during the upcoming fire season.

The 2017 Community Fire Awareness Campaigns are also in the process of being launched nationally. These campaigns aim to teach communities to be fire safe and to prevent unwanted veld and forest fires by raising awareness of the risks of fires. The campaigns empower those at risk to take responsibility to reduce the risk and impact of fires in their communities.

We urge all our firefighters to be vigilant on the fire line and we wish them all a safe winter fire season.

Written by: Editorial Team



Firefighters completing the firewall test at recent training camps

Naledi Team continues to bring change to the community

The Naledi Team in Vryburg is making a significant impact on the environment and in the lives of the local community. The team has removed alien trees in the Voortrekker Street area between Vryburg and Huhudi Location.


One of the crew leaders from the Naledi Team, Tebogo Motshwaedi says, “We were there to remove the alien trees as they consume lots of water in our area. As we are approaching fire season removing these alien trees also helps prevent unwanted devastating fires during the fire season.”

This project also focused on fuel load reduction. After communication with the



Naledi Local Municipality in Vryburg the team volunteered to remove the alien trees and clear the area.

The Naledi Base Communications Representative Bakang Gaearewe says, “It is also important to reduce the risks of fire around the community by slashing and removing alien plants as they use much more water than indigenous trees and plants, which prevents rainwater from reaching rivers and deprives people and the ecosystem of much-needed water.”

 Patricia Maanelo, Provincial Communication Officer, North West

1000 firefighters assisted with the Cape Summer Fire Season



Various images of large veld fires in the Western Cape

More than a 1000 firefighters from the Working on Fire (WOF) programme assisted local fire authorities to suppress 194 veld and forest fires in the Western Cape in the 2016/17 summer fire season.


Ground and aerial support were instrumental in the suppression of the fires, limiting the areas burnt to just 253 428 hectares throughout the Western Cape. Aerial support amounting to 1 878 flying hours helped save the lives of citizens and protect the environment.

The largest veld and forest fires recorded were mainly in the Southern Cape: 20 000 hectares burnt in The Craggs, 35 300 ha in Rust en Vrede, 27 000 ha in Engelsmans Kloof, 15 000 ha at Klipopmekaar,

24 000 ha at Misgund and 25 000 ha burnt in the Gamkaberg fire.

Just over 360 firefighters remain on high alert in the Southern Cape as the fire season continues throughout the year.

“Through our partnerships with Provincial Disaster Management Centres, Fire Protection Associations, SANParks, various private and public landowners and local municipalities, we were able to respond quickly in rendering a highly skilled veld fire suppression service which is unparalleled anywhere in the country,” says the Western Cape General Manager, Shane Christian.

 Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape

FIRE PREVENTION TO MITIGATE FIRES IN THE CAPE PENINSULA

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YELLOW CARD TRAINING CAMP PREPARES TEAMS FOR WINTER FIRE SEASON

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FROM FIGHTING FIRES TO FIGHTING CRIME

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Editorial

Dear Readers

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read our April edition.

In this month's edition we look at how Working on Fire is preparing firefighters for the upcoming winter fire season through the Yellow Card Training Camps. We also report on how WOF firefighters across the country are preparing communities for the upcoming fire season by raising fire awareness through conducting community FireSafe Workshops in high-risk areas, school fire awareness and putting up fire preventative measures.

We also report on how some provinces celebrated Wellness Day. Of course this issue would not be complete without the stories of how the programme impacts on the lives of its participants and how in turn our teams are giving back to their communities.

While we part with some participants who have been employed in the private and government sector, we wish them all the best and are sure they will carry the WOF message to their new workplaces.

Keep up with Working on Fire and its participants' activities by following us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Happy reading!

MD Message

Llewellyn Pillay



As the Western Cape wraps up its summer fire season, I want to extend, on behalf of the entire management in Working on Fire, our gratitude and thanks to all our participants who worked tirelessly throughout the summer period to ensure that we provide an uninterrupted firefighting resource to our stakeholders in the Western Cape.

The Yellow Card Training Camps that ensure that our firefighters are fit and ready to be on active duty during this upcoming fire season have been completed in most of the provinces. I received positive feedback from all the provinces that have completed their Yellow Card Training Camps.

On 27 April (Freedom Day), the country celebrated 23 years since our first free elections and the birth of democracy in South Africa. South Africans joined in celebrating National Freedom Day across the country and reflecting on the achievements we have made as a nation.

The Working on Fire programme has over the past 14 years also contributed significantly to the attainment of government's commitment to broaden democracy by providing access to work opportunities. This has been achieved through the work opportunities, especially in disadvantaged areas, which have been created through the Working on Fire programme.



Wof Bethlehem soccer tournament

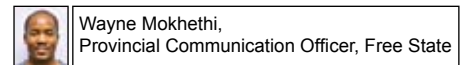
Bethlehem Team donates winnings to disability centre

The Working on Fire Bethlehem Team recently won the Charity Soccer Tournament that was hosted at the Bethlehem Showgrounds in Bethlehem, Free State. Nine teams participated in the tournament, with the winning team getting to donate a prize of R6 300 to the charity of its choice. The Bethlehem Team beat the Dihlabeng Municipality soccer team 2 – 1 in the final to secure the prize money and a trophy and medals for the team.

The team decided to donate the prize to the Lerato Disability Centre in Bethlehem. This organisation cares for people with disabilities

in and around the Bethlehem area. The team bought the Centre a new four plate stove and oven, a set of cooking pots, new mattresses and some groceries.

“We are very happy that we won the tournament but what brings more joy to all of us is the fact that we could assist the Lerato Disability Centre and to make the lives of the people who are cared for there a little better,” says Mosiea Fana Jafta.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

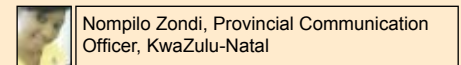
WOF KZN prepares communities for fire season

In preparation for the upcoming winter fire season Working on Fire in KwaZulu-Natal, in partnership with uMgungundlovu Fire Department and Umngeni Fire and Rescue, conducted a door-to-door fire awareness campaign in Howick. This was prompted by the worrying number of fires that take place in informal settlements in winter.

KZN Community Fire Awareness officer, Simphiwe Dlamini, says “The aim of door-to-door fire awareness is to educate community members on how they can protect their homes and personal safety and what emergency numbers they can call in case of a fire.”

Some of the causes of unwanted fires include excessive fuel loads in and around homes, illegal electricity connections and improper disposal of rubbish. Residents were taught how to make a safe candle stand that is filled with water.

“We urge people to value their safety and the safety of their family, because after a fire, beds and stoves can be replaced but lives cannot,” says Dlamini.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal



Participants engaged in various activities

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Working on Fire is an Expanded Public Works Programme which resides within the Department of Environmental Affairs.



Our premium news products, WOFire News and WOF TV, have the single objective of being informative!

They are there to keep our participants informed about what's happening in WOF across the country.

WOF TV News and WoFire News are dedicated to the hard work of our participants and aim to focus on their stories, not only in relation to their work in WOF but also how they have grown and developed in the Programme.

Furthermore we feature many stories of participants who took responsibility for their own lives and also extended their compassion to others.

Readers are welcome to send us their stories in their home language and we will assist with translation and editing.

Please e mail your story to **news@wofire.co.za** or submit them via your local Provincial Communication Officers, Regional Managers, Base Managers or Crew Leaders.

WOF Gauteng plans to intensify fire education

Fire education is the first weapon used to combat and mitigate deadly fires.

Explaining the purpose of the pre-winter fire awareness campaign to prepare communities for the winter fire season, Community Fire Awareness Officer Lerato Mokwena says,“We will be arming communities with fire education and fire safety tips as we believe fire awareness is a foundation of integrated fire management.”

The focus of the fire awareness campaign was on the rural areas of the northern region of the province where communities were mostly surrounded by farms and nature reserves with potential fuel.

“Most villages are fire prone because of grass vegetation,” says Mokwena.

She says people burn garbage without attending to the fires and that poses serious risks.

“There is a need to prepare the communities about fighting fires through education. Knowledge is power. We are also appealing to communities to allow us to engage and share knowledge with them concerning fires,” Mokwena says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng



From left Jabulile Shabalala(FATO), Albi Modise DEA's Chief Director of Communications and Lerato Mokwena(CFAO)

FireSafe presentation helps community reduce fire risks

KZN Community Fire Awareness Officer, Simphiwe Dlamini, in partnership with the Umshwathi Disaster Management team, conducted a FireSafe presentation in Ebambanani on the behaviour of veld and forest fires, and methods of protecting homes and property.

The presentation emphasised the importance of identifying fire hazards and how the community could deal with them.

“Through the assistance of the regional manager we were able to arrange a presentation. After the presentation the municipality wanted us to conduct a FireSafe Workshop for the community and help establish a forum to address fire issues in the area,” says Dlamini.



Simphiwe Dlamini presenting to community members

Umshwathi Disaster Management Centre is planning to buy equipment when the forum is up and running, to equip the forum to assist the community to prepare for the winter fire season.

“I had a great reception from community members and they are eager for the workshop. I hope to empower more communities to establish FireSafe Forums to reduce the number of unwanted fires, loss of property and life,”says Dlamini.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal

Mookgophong Team puts up fire prevention measures



Mookgophong participants slashing grass to reduce the fuel load

The WOF participants at Mookgophong Base in Limpopo have implemented integrated fire management at Buffelsdoorn near Mookgophong.

They created a firebreak along the fence where they slashed the grass to reduce the fuel load to prevent fires from spreading. With the heavy rains that were experienced in the area the grass is long and if left unattended might cause huge damage during veld and forest fires.

“The areas that we are targeting are mostly prone to veld and forest fires and we saw it as beneficial to give them more attention by continuously keeping a close eye and reducing and removing any type of fuel that might harm our environment,” says Cyril Selemela, the Mookgophong BCR.

With the fire season around the corner the Mookgophong participants have committed to working very hard to assist landowners in their area and to ensure that they are ready and not caught by surprise when fires break out.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

Educating young minds about fires

During the school holidays, crew leader Andre Afrika and firefighter Stanley Mattys from the Vrolijkheid Team conducted fire awareness training for 12 learners of the Breede Centre Holiday Programme. Topics included ‘The Fire Environment’ and ‘Be FireSafe Outdoors.’

Breede Centre Programme Leader, Ruwayda Matika says, “I am very thankful to the firefighters for taking the time out to teach our children about the importance of being fire safe and the things to look out for in their community. I know they have learnt a lot and once again I would like to thank the Vrolijkheid Team for playing such an important role in our community.”



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



Learners from the Breede Centre Holiday Programme listen closely to the information given by Vrolijkheid Crew Leader Andre Afrika

Fire prevention to mitigate fires in the Cape Peninsula



The Helderberg Team conducted manual fuel load reduction on the Morgenster Estate

The Helderberg Team in the Western Cape assisted the Cape Peninsula FPA by conducting manual fuel load reduction at the Morgenster Estate in Somerset West. Following the devastating fires which broke out in Somerset West in January, the Cape Peninsula teams have

been hard at work ensuring that their communities remain safe in and out of fire season. Fire reduction, as part of Integrated Fire Management, is a set of activities developed to mitigate and manage the start and spread of fires while ensuring compliance with legislation during implementation. Working

on Fire is a pioneer and global leader in providing Integrated Fire Management solutions at local, provincial and national levels.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape

Yellow Card Training Camp prepares teams for winter fire season

More than 250 firefighters from 17 teams in the East District of the Eastern Cape attended the Yellow Card Training Camp (YCTC) at Wriggleswade Dam from 4 April to 13 April.

According to the Ground Operations Manager of the province, Vuyo Poponi, the YCTC is aimed at issuing competency cards to all participants who meet the requirements.

“We assessed the readiness of the firefighters by testing their mental and physical fitness to face fires during the upcoming winter fire season,” Poponi says.

The physical fitness test that participants had to pass at the YCTC included a 2.4 km run, push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups as well as physically passing through fire. “Firefighters sometimes fight fires in mountainous areas during very hot weather



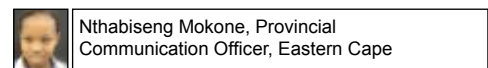
From left Jabulile Shabalala(FATO), Albi Modise DEA's Chief Director of Communications and Lerato Mokwena(CFAO)

so they need to be fit to survive such situations,” says Poponi.

One of the successful firefighters, Yanda Stuurman, says she was happy to have obtained the yellow card as this meant she was ready on all levels to fight fires in the upcoming fire season.

“The tests we went through were tough but through hard work, dedication and teamwork we succeeded,” she says.

Elsewhere in the province the West District teams were busy conducting fire prevention measures as they approached the end of the summer fire season.



WOF Free State switches gear on winter fire season preparations



Working on Fire Free State Yellow Card Training Camp 2017

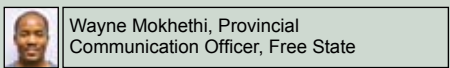
Working on Fire in the Free State held its annual Yellow Card Training Camp (YCTC) at Moolmanshoek, near Clarens in the Free State. The two-week camp took place at two venues, Moolmanshoek and Jimmy Roos School, near Dewetsdorp.

In total, 597 Working on Fire participants from 22 teams in the Free State underwent an intensive YCTC from 3 – 14 April 2017 in preparation for the winter fire season. The province had 64 veld fires between May and November 2016, a drastic drop from previous years.

At the training camps firefighters' personal protective clothing and equipment were checked and they also had to undergo fitness training (2.4 km runs, push-ups, pull-ups and sit-ups) and advanced firefighting training. Upon finishing, the firefighters were issued with yellow cards which indicate that they are ready to fight fires.

“WOF in the Free State is geared up and preparing for the upcoming winter fire season,” says Willem van Aswegen, the WOF General Manager in the Free State. “We assessed the readiness of the firefighters by testing their fitness in order to see if they are mentally and physically fit to face fires during the fire season. We have also been extensively educating communities in the Free State about how to be fire safe by hosting various community fire awareness workshops and other activities.”

“The Yellow Card Training Camp was very challenging yet we enjoyed it at the same time and I'm also proud of the fact that I received my yellow card, meaning I am ready for the fire season,” says Motloung Mduduzi from Vrede Base.



Firefighters’ readiness on display at Yellow Card Training Camp

Working on Fire in Mpumalanga has successfully completed its Yellow Card Training Camp (YCTC), issuing close to 600 firefighters with yellow cards indicating the teams' preparedness ahead of the 2017 winter fire season.

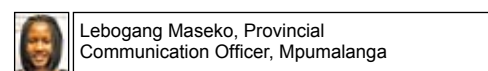
“The Yellow Card Training Camp, which also offers refresher training sessions, is conducted to assess the mental and physical fitness of the teams. These include a 2.4 kilometre run, push-ups, pull-ups and advanced firefighting techniques,” says Gift Magwalivha, Lead Instructor at the Nelspruit Training Academy.

The Emakhazeni Fire & Rescue Department, which attended the YCTC held near the Belfast

Dam from 5 – 7 April, applauded the work done by WOF firefighters.

“We were happy to have been invited to the impressive training provided by WOF and we look forward to working closely with them during the fire season,” says January Mokoneni, Emakhazeni Fire & Rescue Fire Safety Officer.

As part of the training, firefighters demonstrated how to construct firebreaks and do fuel reduction.



WOF firefighters walking through the fire wall to demonstrate their preparedness ahead of the fire season



WOF Eastern Cape to launches Fire Awareness Campaigns

In preparation for the upcoming winter fire season, the Working on Fire programme in the Eastern Cape launched fire awareness campaigns in Molteno on 26 April.

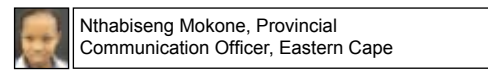
Fire awareness campaigns are conducted every year prior to the winter fire season to prepare communities for the fire season, especially communities with high fire risks.

According to Fire Awareness Training Officer, Zola Hans, the purpose of the campaigns is to make a concerted effort to raise awareness of the risks of wildfires and to empower those at risk to take responsibility. “Different stakeholders will educate community members as well as learners about

the causes of fires, prevention measures and how to be fire safe,” says Hans.

Hans says that the event will be a joint partnership between WOF, Disaster Management and Fire and Rescue personnel from Chris Hani Municipality, the Molteno FPA, learners from different schools, as well as community members.

After the launch WOF teams in the province will embark on door-to-door fire awareness and school fire awareness campaigns.



Working on Fire Heilbron Team honoured by church

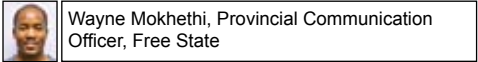
The Heilbron Team and the Working on Fire Free State management were invited to attend an honorary church service for the young men and women who bravely risked their lives for over three months fighting fires in the Western Cape.

The team marched through the streets of Heilbron singing and dancing, accompanied by vehicles from the SAPS and the Traffic Department that escorted them to the church. Elders of the church as well as the WOF management team formed a guard of honour to welcome them.

“The church service that was held for us really encouraged us and motivated us to work even harder because we can see how much our community appreciates us and are thankful that we all came back home safely,” says Tshokolo Moroeng, a firefighter from the Heilbron Team. The emotional service and the appreciation that was shown by

the church members and the community for the many sacrifices they had to make during the time they spent in the Western Cape left many of the firefighters in tears.

“I would like to thank the Department of Environmental Affairs for the Working on Fire programme and the way this programme is uniting the community of Heilbron by providing unemployed young men and women with the opportunity to serve as veld and forest firefighters. The church service was refreshing and another reminder that the hard work that the firefighters do is not in vain,” says Azola Bangani, Eastern Free State WOF Regional Manager.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Heilbron team honorary church service

HAT successfully completes annual target



Crew members on ropes clearing alien pine trees

The Hottentots Holland High Altitude Team (HAT) was out in the Groenlandberg in the Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve, clearing alien invasive species such as pine trees and blackwood plants.

The team successfully cleared 463 hectares and CapeNature Quality Controller Kelly Sokoko was very pleased with the results. “I am very happy with the work the team has done. During the audit I got to see the intense terrain they work in along with the amount of alien species they have cleared. Well done team, you’ve done an amazing job.”

According to HAT Regional Manager, Wesley Leukes, High Altitude Teams have been tasked with clearing invasive alien plant species (IAPS) from mountain ranges and mountainous slopes to protect the water supply in dams and thereby protect the environment.

“IAPS are profound water consumers. The impact of IAPS on water resources has focused predominantly on water quantity. However, IAPS also negatively affect water quality. Invasive alien trees/plants increase evaporation rates and dilution capacity,” says Leukes.



Lauren Howard, Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape


High Altitude Team celebrates Water Week

The KwaZulu-Natal Ethekewini High Altitude Team celebrated National Water Week at Inkolovuzane Primary School at KwaMaphumulo. Water Week was themed ‘Water is Life – 20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development’. The team partnered with iLembe District Municipality, Umngeni Water, the Department of Environmental Affairs and traditional leaders.


The High Altitude Team, which is mandated to protect the environment by removing alien invasive species, spoke about how invasive plants use up much-needed water.

“We had a great reception from the learners and teachers. The children now understand how important saving water is and how to identify alien invasive plants so they can be removed,” says a HAT member.

Water Week serves as a powerful campaign tool to emphasise the value of water, the need for sustainable management of this scarce resource and the role water plays in eradicating poverty and under-development in South Africa.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal



HAT participants educating the schoolchildren of KwaMaphumulo

Balfour Team attends career development workshop

The Balfour Team in Mpumalanga recently attended a career development workshop aimed at providing knowledge and skills to firefighters to help them make informed career decisions and to enhance the participants’ chances of being employed outside the WOF programme.

On the day, the team was asked to work in groups to develop a career plan, with a strong focus on time management and how they would go about developing career goals and improve the way in which they set them.

Social Development Practitioner Condrick Mukhudwani advised participants to take charge of their lives, dream big and take opportunities that presented themselves within and outside the Working on Fire programme with a positive attitude. WOF participant Hans Langa says, “I am happy this workshop was conducted. It will help a lot as I am planning to register to do a short course in photography.”

WOF promotes capacity building among participants and runs various social development programmes which help to develop the social cohesion of our participants.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga



Balfour Base Team firefighters actively participating during the career development workshop

Team encourages regular chronic illness testing

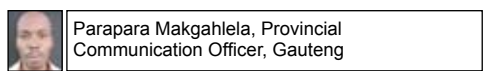
Dr JS Moroka Team members have taken the initiative to ensure their sound health and wellness by taking quarterly tests at their local clinic.

“Doing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and diabetes tests in the past were the most scary things for me to do but things have changed. We are testing often now,” says firefighter Given Kobo.

He said they would like to be tested on a monthly basis and to encourage other teams to follow suit to look after their health and wellness.

“It is our responsibility as firefighters to check our health status regularly. We need to know our health status so that we do not suffer from diseases that can be treated and cured,” Kobo says.

Kobo says that while he does tests thrice a year, it would be much easier for crew members to test regularly if health practitioners came to the base more often. He believes that regular testing for diseases would help to save lives.



Heilbron team honorary church service

Tebogo’s dreams comes true



Tebogo Mothupi flexing his muscles

Tebogo Mothupi from Wolmaransstad Base dreamt of having his own fitness club ever since he joined WOF in 2014, and now he has finally reached his goal.

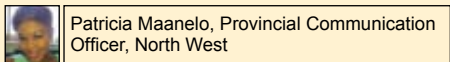
Mothupi has always been passionate about fitness training and started bodybuilding in 2007 while he was still in high school.

At WOF he always enjoyed the fitness training which encouraged him to have his own gym to provide youth with something constructive to do and keep off the streets.

“I realised youth can enjoy themselves in many ways and also enjoy the health benefits of gym,” he says. When asked how he managed to open and run the gym Mothupi says, “I spoke

to the municipality officials and gave them my vision. That’s when they offered me the venue and I then fixed the hall using the stipend I get from the programme. Sometimes I buy the equipment while I am still waiting for possible sponsors.”

Mothupi thanks the Working on Fire programme for the motivation and fitness they provided which helped him reach his dream and the leadership skills that he learned at WOF that helped him shape his gym’s team.

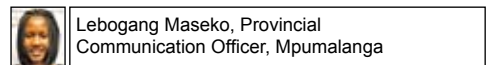


Waterval Boven Team gives back to the community

The Waterval Boven Team in Mpumalanga has heeded the call to give back to the disadvantaged people in their communities. This is in line with Working on Fire’s principle of restoring the dignity of marginalised people, with a strong focus on people living with disabilities, children and women.

“We are growing a vegetable garden at our base and are planning to donate the vegetables to a nearby non-governmental organisation or a school, just as a way of reaching out to those who are from disadvantaged families,” says Base Communications Representative (BCR), Nompumelelo Mahlangu.

The team has previously donated fresh vegetables to a pre-school that was in need. Type 1 crew leader Siphon Makeke says, “It feels really good knowing we are able to make a contribution in society, whichever way we can.”



Waterval Boven team members grow vegetables to give back to the community

WOF Limpopo talks wellness and all things healthy

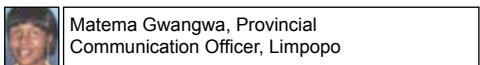
Working on Fire Limpopo’s provincial management team attended a healthy living and eating presentation organised by the Social Development Practitioner at the provincial office where they were guided on how to improve their lifestyle.

The presentation included how to enjoy healthy food, and how to prepare healthy meals without using harmful oils, thus preventing cholesterol, heart attacks, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

“We really appreciate the efforts by our Social Development Practitioner and this presentation

was an eye-opener to us, especially us men as we love fatty foods,” says Shadrack Mafokwane, the provincial Transport Officer.

Apart from the presentation, the management personnel were treated to tasting a selection of healthy meals and also given tips on how to live healthy lifestyles together with their families. A healthy employee is a productive employee. WOF indeed cares for its employees’ well-being.



Limpopo provincial management attending the healthy living and eating presentation

Working on Fire empowered firefighter to better his life

“Education is the key to success and without education life is never easy,” says Mlungisi Ndamase, a former firefighter from Port St. Johns (PSJ) in the Eastern Cape.

Ndamase grew up in the rural area of Port St. Johns and has always been eager to better his life.

“I matriculated in 2003 at Port St. Johns Secondary School and enrolled at the Eastern Cape Technikon in Mthatha a year after,” he says.

He said that he had to drop out of technikon due to financial problems but he never gave up on his dreams.

“Coming from a poor family, I had to look for a job to support my family and I managed to get short-term jobs which lasted for about three months sometimes,” Ndamase says.

In 2008 he heard that WOF was recruiting in PSJ and he attended the recruitment where he was one of the successful candidates.

“I worked as a firefighter and before the end of the year I was taken for the Type 2 crew leader course which I passed very well,” he says.

His passion for his work created an opportunity to take the Type 1 crew leader course in 2010 which he also passed, after which he enjoyed several other opportunities for advancement within the programme.

“Using the skills I acquired in the programme, I have risen up the ranks from firefighter to crew leader, training instructor and now Regional Manager,” Ndamase says with a smile.

With his income from the programme, Ndamase has fixed his home and is supporting his three children. He is in his second year at Lyceum College doing his Bachelor of Arts in Disaster and Safety Management.

“Working on Fire has empowered me so much with skills and has opened great opportunities for me and other young people. Before I joined WOF I knew nothing about an aeroplane, but because of WOF I have travelled in one,” he says.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape



Mlungisi Ndamase

Participants expand their skills sets



Waterval Boven Team members grows vegetable garden give back to the disadvantaged

Two firefighters of the Carletonville team are preparing for their smooth exit from the programme after completing a course in basic ambulance assistance.

Tebogo Ledwaba, a driver, and Pearl Machate, a Type 2 Crew Leader, attended a paramedic training institution in Pretoria recently to complete their studies.

Armed with a qualification, Ledwaba says it will help her secure better job opportunities in the near future.

Machate says she was inspired by a former crew member who studied different courses and is now permanently employed.

“I realised that life without challenging yourself harder was tedious. I had to challenge myself,” she says.

Ledwaba says it is only through education that she could salvage the last years of her youth in a more beneficial way. While she sees doing the course as a way of her preparing her exit from the programme, Machate is adamant she will continue to help save lives in a different role in the future.

“Saving some of my stipend to fund the course was difficult but we had to do it. We will get rewards at some point in life,” she says.

Regional Manager Sipho Dhladhla said the two serve as a source of inspiration to others.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

SANDF awards WOF participant

“I never dreamt that one day I would be awarded for doing something I love. My whole life revolves around playing sports and coordinating games for my team and the youth in my community,” says Alpheus Ndou, a Type 1 crew leader at the Mapungubwe Base.

Alpheus grew up passionate about playing soccer. He later developed a love for coordinating and coaching various sporting activities in his community.

Apart from coordinating the sports games at his base, Alpheus also volunteered to assist the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) team in getting their team into shape and to play for them. He enhanced the strong relationship between his WOF team and the SANDF team.

On 24 March 2017 Alpheus was awarded with an Umhlobo Wenene certificate by the SANDF for being a true friend to their organisation in Mapungubwe.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo



Alpheus Ndou with the award he received from the SANDF for contributing to the success of their sports club

Toughest firefighter at Yellow Card Training Camp in Mpumalanga

Joshua Morole, a 29-year-old firefighter from the Wilgeboom Team in Mpumalanga, was declared the toughest firefighter after winning a push-up competition at the Yellow Card Training Camp (YCTC) held to prepare firefighters ahead of the upcoming winter season.

Morole did 125 push-ups in a push-up competition with three other participants from the Injaka Salique and Graskop Teams in the Escarpment region during the YCTC.

“It wasn’t an easy win. I was competing with very strong fellow firefighters, but I am glad I was the last man standing in the end,” says Morole.

Morole joined WOF in 2012 and has received training as a brushcutter operator. He plans to use his stipend to get a driver’s licence in the near future.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga



Joshua Morole, the best firefighter in the push-up competition at the Yellow Card Training Camp hosted in the Escarpment region

Former firefighter swaps beater for lens



Cindy Magagula a former firefighter at Maropeng base is now a photographer for the national museum

A former firefighter at Maropeng Base, Cindy Magagula, has joined Maropeng Museum in the West Rand as a photographer. She exited after spending two years in the programme.

Magagula feels it has been a good experience to be part of the Working on Fire programme and commends the programme for being her stepping stone to a greater opportunity. She says that it is a pleasure and honour to be working at the national heritage site.

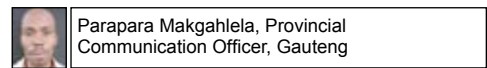
When asked about her photographic skills, she says her brother used to teach her techniques to use on a variety of cameras. “I am attending courses on Photoshop and graphic design on a

part-time basis. I need to learn and gain more skills in photography. This is why I am investing in my skills,” she says.

Her job is to promote and market Maropeng Museum through photographs. Magagula says that passion is her main driver to do her work.

“The salary is good. I learnt to be financially disciplined and responsible as a firefighter,” she says.

Regional Manager Stephens Uwane said Cindy’s exit should serve to inspire other firefighters.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

Former firefighter thanks WOF for preparing him for SAPS

Former WOF firefighter Mboneni Ndlovu from Maguzi is currently training with the South African Police Services (SAPS) in Pretoria. Ndlovu believes WOF prepared him for his current job.

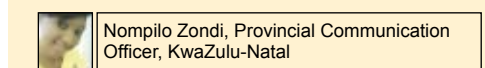
“Being part of WOF had a great input in getting me into the SAPS. Through the physical fitness tests done every week while at WOF I was fit and met the requirements for SAPS,” says Ndlovu.

Ndlovu had dreams of becoming a police officer before he joined WOF. “I started applying to SAPS from 2014 but unfortunately didn’t make it. I then joined WOF. In 2016 I applied again and was thankfully taken. I honestly believe the endurance principle I learnt at WOF helped me,” says Ndlovu.

He urged his former colleagues to take their jobs very seriously as that would prepare them for their next jobs.

“Training is currently going well, even though there are challenges. Since discipline is required to complete most of the training phases I’m very lucky, because WOF instilled that in me through the years.”

Ndlovu sees himself moving up the ranks in the SAPS in five years, hopefully to become a Warrant Officer in a task force.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal



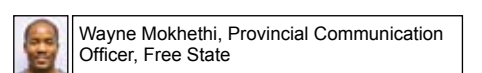
Mboneni Ndlovu

Harrismith participants exit WOF Programme

Two former participants from the Harrismith Team recently exited the programme to join the full-time staff at Loutrans, a dedicated long-haul road freight operation based in Trompsburg and Harrismith that has built its reputation on the power and reliability of Freightliner trucks. It has been in operation since 1998 and employs 125 people.

Sebafu Mpoka and Patrick Masoeu, who were both stationed at the Working on Fire Harrismith Base, applied for vacancies that were advertised for drivers and they were both offered jobs after being interviewed.

“I’m currently a bakkie driver and I know I got the job because of the experience I acquired from the WOF programme of driving various types of vehicles. I can’t say thank you enough to the Department of Environmental Affairs for the Working on Fire programme. Because of this programme I am doing a job that I enjoy and with my earnings I can take better care of my family,” says Mpoka.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Harrismith participants gloriously exit WoF programme

Skill learned at WOF opens doors for former firefighter

Former firefighter Sivuyile Dayimani from the Port St. Johns Team is using the skills he learned while he was in the programme at his new job.

This young man recently joined the Port St. Johns Local Municipality as a Fire and Rescue intern firefighter.

“I left school in grade 11 and didn’t finish my matric due to financial problems and I thought that I would never make it in life,” says Dayimani.

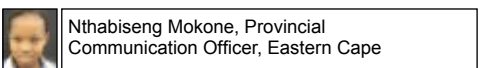
After he dropped out of school he did a lifesaving course and then started looking for a job.

“It was not easy but hope kept me going. In 2014 I got a job at Working on Fire as a firefighter and that was the start of good things,” he says.

As a firefighter he was taught advanced firefighting, life skills, being part of a team and other skills that are helping him a lot in his new job.

“I would like to thank Working on Fire for all the skills and experience that I got while still working for the programme,” says Dayimani, who joined the municipality earlier this month after going through the interview process.

Regional Manager Mlungisi Ndamase says that Dayimani was one of the firefighters who were passionate about their job. “We wish him all the best in his new position,” says Ndamase.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape



Mboneni Ndlovu