

Government congratulates Working on Fire



An elated Minister Molewa proudly displaying the plaque received from the Canadian Province of Alberta

In a Cabinet statement following its meeting on Wednesday, 24 May 2017, the South African government congratulated the Working on Fire programme after it received a plaque from the Alberta Government in Canada acknowledging the assistance the programme provided in managing wildfires in the province in 2016.

WOF Managing Director Trevor Abrahams says that the fact that both the Minister and her Deputy acknowledged the programme in the Department of Environmental Affairs Budget Vote speeches the following day was a clear sign that they were both happy with the performance of WOF.

“We must emphasise that Working on Fire is one of the flagship environment programmes which resides under the Department of Environmental Affairs as an Expanded Public Works Programme, which is there on the one hand to create work opportunities for young men and women, but also on the other hand to protect our environment through the implementation of integrated fire management services and products,” says Abrahams.

Written by Editorial Team



WOF Managing Director Trevor Abrahams with participants and management at DEA Budget Vote

Working on Fire praised at Department of Environmental Affairs Budget Vote in Parliament



Deputy Minister Barbara Thomson with participants and management at the WOF exhibition stand at Parliament

Working on Fire received high praise from government during and after the Budget Vote of the Department of Environmental Affairs which was tabled in parliament on Thursday, 25 May 2017.

Participants and management led by Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, attended the Budget Vote as guests of the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Dr Edna Molewa.

In an interview with WOF TV News shortly after her budget speech, Minister Molewa extended her appreciation and thanks to the firefighters in Working on Fire. Minister Molewa said, “I once again want to say thank you to our brave young men and women who are doing a marvelous job in protecting our natural resources and I want them to continue with this good work.” In her budget speech, Deputy Minister Thomson praised the hard work of the

Working on Fire participants and thanked them for their contribution in protecting our environment.

“The past year also saw Working on Fire participants working overtime once again as they battled the very high number of disastrous fires here in the Western Cape and elsewhere. The negative socio-economic consequences that such fires posed were considerable, and we addressed this proactively through the development of sufficient firefighting capacity under this programme. The brave women and men of our Working on Fire programme were able to reduce the social and economic consequences to affected communities in the province. This was money well spent,” Deputy Minister Thomson said.

Written by Editorial Team

New executive leadership ready to take Working on Fire to new heights

Working on Fire has made some changes in the leadership of the programme. In a key move to bolster the management of WOF, Trevor Abrahams was appointed as Managing Director, effective from 9 May 2017.

Abrahams previously served as Executive Chairman and then Managing Director (MD) between 2009 and 2014 and has remained committed to the programme while serving as a Director on the Working on Fire Board.

Following his appointment, Abrahams and the newly constituted Executive Committee reaffirmed Working on Fire’s commitment to the “Back to Basics” campaign which will ensure that the programme once again excels in restoring the dignity of its participants, while also continuing to provide an important service to its stakeholders in saving lives and protecting the environment. Written by Editorial Team



Wof Executive Committee at first meeting in Nelspruit, 12 May. (L-R) Sandiso Ntsomi (Finance), Jacob Singo (OHS), Ancil Lee (IT), Trevor Abrahams (MD), Piet van der Merwe (Operations), Luthfia Cader (Communications), Winston Smit (Deputy MD) & Jacob Mkhonto (HCM)



Editorial

Dear Readers

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

In this month's edition, we welcome back former Managing Director Trevor Abrahams as the newly appointed MD.

Since his appointment, the new MD has reaffirmed Working on Fire's commitment to the "Back to Basics" campaign. He has been engaging FPA's, partners and firefighters on various platforms, encouraging stakeholders to engage with him about taking the programme to new heights.

We report on how WOF management is reviewing WOF disciplinary processes to ensure fairness and accountability in the application of disciplinary and grievance procedures.

One of Working on Fire's highlights for the month of May was attending the DEA's Budget Vote in Parliament as the DEA Minister's guests.

In this issue we report on how WOF joined firefighters worldwide to commemorate International Firefighters' Day (IFFD). We also feature the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) representative who visited WOF Gauteng to advise firefighters on career paths.

Along with all the good changes happening in the programmes, our teams continued to put in place fire prevention measures in fire prone areas and conducted Yellow Card Training Camps to ready participants for the winter fire season.

Happy reading!

MD Message

Trevor Abrahams



It has now been three weeks since I returned to Working on Fire. Our biggest challenge to date has been the urgent need to restore the morale and discipline within the Working on Fire programme.

It became abundantly clear during my engagement with participants and management that the Working on Fire programme has to an extent lost its core value of putting people first. I have observed that we have not been able to provide the kind of working environment for our participants as we had in the past, which put them at the heart of what this programme seeks to achieve.

Working on Fire is about providing life-changing opportunities for the thousands of young men and women who are in the programme and the many thousands who have moved on to the formal job sector. The Working on Fire programme is also about providing an important service to the people of South Africa in saving lives and protecting the environment.

We need to understand these key points about what it is that we do in Working on Fire, but most importantly, what has worked well for us in the past.

On pages four and five of this newsletter we elaborate on how we need to return the programme 'back to its basics'.

The WOF Executive and I will be engaging with participants, management and partners during the next few weeks to ensure that we are all fully committed to implement this "Back to Basics" campaign, which includes a renewed commitment to restore Working on Fire to its former glory.

DEA operations director offers firefighters career advice



At the back row in green golf shirt is Nceba Ngcobo, a director of operations at the department of Environmental Affairs with De Wildt Team

During a roadshow to five teams in Gauteng, Nceba Ngcobo, a director of operations-national programmes at the Department of Environment Affairs, told participants that they needed to upskill themselves so that they can find solid jobs outside the programme.

He said that the ministerial determination remained the main guiding document for all Expanded Public Works Programmes.

Ngcobo also said that labour, government and business determined the increase in the

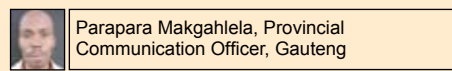
stipends of all the EPWP participants. Ngcobo, who says he was happy that participants were able to frankly engage with him, reminded the participants that work opportunities were aimed at alleviating poverty through skills development but were not meant to create permanent jobs.

"You need to use this work opportunity as a stepping stone towards the right direction," he said.

He challenged the participants to take on initiatives to uplift themselves. As young people,

Ngcobo said it was in their hands to change their lives for the better.

"I am encouraging you to start thinking of exiting the programme by opening small businesses and getting driver's licences, to mention but a few options. The intention is for you to get skills and prepare for the labour market environment," Ngcobo said.



Parapara Makgahlela, Provincial Communication Officer, Gauteng

WOF ethics line


Working on Fire has launched a free and anonymous ethics helpline to enhance accountability and help root out unethical practices.

Concerned participants, management, stakeholders and service providers will now be able to anonymously report any fraudulent, corrupt and unethical practices encountered in the programme to KPMG, our external partner in this venture and an independent third party.

By doing so, we can help to protect the integrity of the organisation.

KPMG's call centres are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Its forensic agents are able to assist whistle-blowers in all 11 official South African languages, as well as an array of international languages.

To use the service, mention Working on Fire's name when you call. (see poster on page 8).



Keep us accountable. Anonymously report any unethical behaviour to our Ethics Line.

0800 21 25 31 | fraud@kpmg.co.za

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Environmental Affairs
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Water and Sanitation

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



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

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.


Winter Fire Season in full swing

With the 2017 Winter Fire Season in full swing, Working on Fire (WOF) teams in Mpumalanga are geared up and ready to fight veld and forest fires. The province has already recorded close to ten fires in this year's fire season.

WOF teams have been dispatched to several private and public properties, to help prevent the financial and environmental harm caused by unwanted fires.

"Our teams are prepared and ready for the fire season, as the Yellow Card Training Camps aimed at assessing the mental and physical fitness of our firefighters were successfully conducted," says Martin Bolton, WOF General Manager in Mpumalanga.

"We have 17 aerial fire resources and 20 ground fire resources. These include choppers, bombers, spotters, striker units and fire trucks," says Bolton.



Lebogang Maseko,
Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga




Utrecht Team battles fire to save farm



The KwaZulu-Natal Utrecht Team recently attended to a fire at Berou Farm that is suspected to have been caused by beehive hunters collecting honey.

Utrecht Type 1 Crew Leader Sibonelo Mkhwanazi says, "Bee hunters start a fire to make bees sleepy in order for them to take the honey. Sometimes these fires are not suppressed properly and spread, causing damage to property."

M k h w a n a z i s a y s unattended fires ruin people's livelihood and damage the environment. "We encourage people who use fires for their livelihood to not start fires on windy days and to attend to fires and ensure they are properly put out," says Mkhwanazi.



Nompilo Zondi,
Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal

Controlled burn in Vermaaklikheid Nature Reserve


The Working on Fire Western Cape Riversdale Team assisted the Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) to manage a controlled burn at the Vermaakliheid Nature Reserve in Riversdale.

Controlled burns are carried out at local, provincial and national levels to create a sustainable and well balanced environment, reduce unwanted wildfire damage and promote the beneficial use of fire.

Controlled burns are essential for biodiversity and agricultural practices, and are in common use in fire risk reduction, reduction

of dense vegetation, ecological rejuvenation of fynbos, land preparation for agriculture, rejuvenation of grazing fields and the reduction of alien vegetation.

Controlled burns are part of Integrated Fire Management (IFM) which forms the backbone of the Working on Fire teams' duties.



Lauren Howard,
Provincial Communication Officer, Western Cape



Working on Fire to work closer with FPA's

The success of the Working on Fire (WOF) programme is critically linked to the success of Fire Protection Associations (FPA's), which host about forty percent of WOF Teams. WOF will remain committed to working with FPA's and other stakeholders to ensure that they continue to provide a complete integrated fire management service to all communities across South Africa.

This was the message delivered by newly appointed WOF Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, when he addressed FPA's at a meeting on 22 May 2017, at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Gauteng, and will be the basis for future discussions with FPAs going forward.

"In the current economic climate and with a reduced budget for Working on Fire, we need to

relook the current financial model of FPA's and see how new income-generating revenue streams need to be developed for FPA's. There is a need to realise that we are under budgetary constraints and that this puts an onus on FPA's and WOF to work smarter," Abrahams said.

"FPA's remain an important stakeholder for us and government in our commitment to provide integrated fire management solutions to all communities across South Africa and I will be engaging with provincial stakeholders during the next few weeks to ensure that we are all fully committed to implement a back to basics campaign, which includes a renewed commitment to work with FPA's," Abrahams said.

Written by Editorial Team



Workshop clarifies WOF application of disciplinary and grievance procedures



Fair and equitable disciplinary procedures

“The Executive Committee convened this workshop of the management corps to provide clarity and reinforce the company’s commitment to a fair and equitable disciplinary environment, which is applied consistently across WOF. We cannot be managed solely or predominantly based on disciplinary actions. We must revive a common commitment to developing WOF and its employees into the proud organisation it once was,” Abrahams said.

Elaborating, Abrahams said that discipline was an absolute necessity in dangerous environments such as firefighting. They must regain the discipline and respect which they used to find in WOF. The Executive had identified areas in which the disciplinary code and practices had not been applied as envisioned in policy documents and the refresher workshop was thus designed to correct that trend and ensure that WOF moved forward with a disciplinary process that was fair, equitable and consistent.



“We need to ensure that, while our participants are in the programme, we must treat them with dignity and respect and all the Working on Fire disciplinary and grievance procedures must be applied equitably to them as well as those who are managing the programme.”

With these words newly appointed WOF MD, Trevor Abrahams, set the tone for the special workshop to discuss the Working on Fire Disciplinary and Grievance Policies which was held at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Gauteng on 18 and 19 May 2017. The workshop was attended by the Executive Committee, Heads of Departments, Provincial General Managers, and the national and provincial human resources personnel.

“On my return to Working on Fire, the new Executive Committee and I committed the programme to return ‘back to its basics’, which were founded on sound discipline, fairness, respect for each other and an unwavering commitment to change the lives of the young people who are responsible for making WOF an award-winning success,” Abrahams said.

Misapplication of policies and procedures

“During the past two years, we have seen a lot of unhappiness within the programme and this can largely be attributed to a complete misapplication of the Working on Fire disciplinary and grievance procedures. In many instances our participants were at the receiving end of this and we found that our internal procedures were not being applied equitably and with fairness, which created an unhappy environment within our teams.”



The workshop revisited the objectives of the WOF disciplinary and grievance policies with various presentations. There was engagement in role-playing applications of WOF grievance and disciplinary policies which identified weaknesses in the current practices and endorsed the disciplinary process reflected in the flow diagram seen below.

Integrity of disciplinary processes key to rebuilding confidence in programme

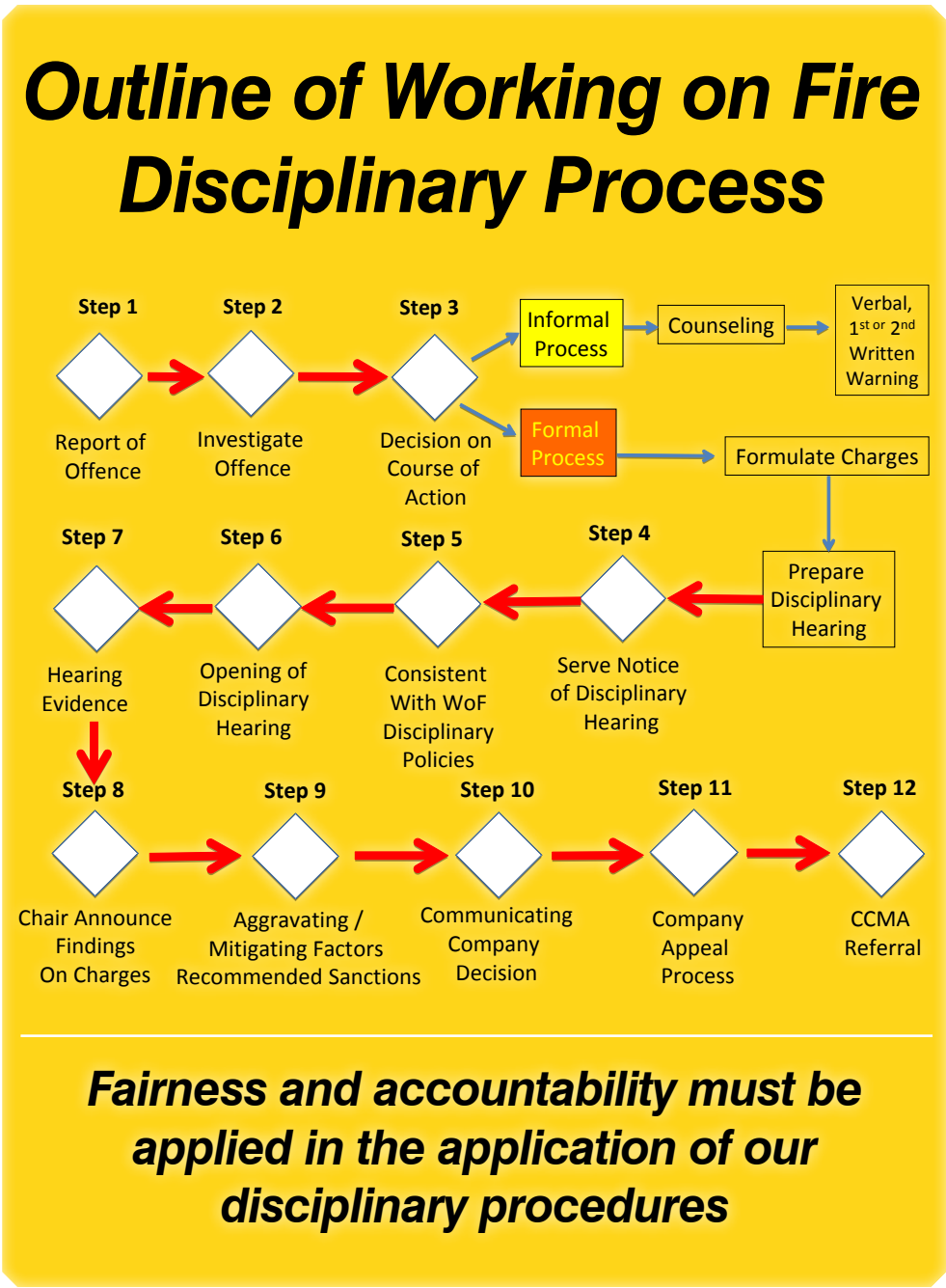
According to Abrahams, the meeting also identified the need to act in cases where the WOF disciplinary processes were misused or wilfully applied incorrectly by management. These processes should not be activated by anyone who knowingly made false allegations.

“The integrity of the WOF disciplinary process is key to building confidence in our disciplinary processes and ensuring fairness for all in WOF,” the MD said.

“I have asked the WOF management to roll out similar workshops in every province, starting with the provincial staff and extending to our firefighters, and by the HOD’s to the staff in their departments. The WOF Executive wishes to stress that going forward we will demand proper discipline from all our employees and will ensure the proper application of WOF disciplinary policies where we encounter misconduct. The

inconsistencies encountered in management’s application of these policies in the past will not serve as an excuse to avoid the fair application of our disciplinary policies.

“We see this as part of our “Back to Basics” programme and consider such training as being pivotal in rebuilding the confidence of all the staff in the management and reinstilling a high sense of discipline among all Working on Fire personnel,” Abrahams concluded.



Back to Basics key to taking Working on Fire to new heights

Newly appointed Working on Fire Managing Director Trevor Abrahams is living up to the promise he made upon his appointment to engage all stakeholders and partners to ensure that everybody was on board the “Back to Basics” campaign.

In the past few weeks Abrahams has met with participants, management, unions and Fire Protection Associations from across the country. He has also afforded participants and employees of WOF opportunities to engage him about some of the changes that will be brought about in the “Back to Basics” campaign.

From the Desk of the MD

Hi, Working on Fire employees and our firefighters. I am glad to say I’m back in the saddle, as the Managing Director of Working on Fire. And I am sure if we work together, we will in fact take this programme to new heights. One of the issues that I want to put on the table is that we are going ‘back to our basics’.



WOF MD Trevor Abrahams with President Zuma, Minister of Environmental Affairs and cabinet ministers at the EPWP Phase 3 launch in October 2014

Firstly, we need to understand that the Working on Fire programme is part of government’s EPWP programme. It is thus a poverty relief programme that is there to create work opportunities for young men and women. As an EPWP programme the remuneration it pays out to participants is governed by the minimum wage which is set in the Ministerial Determination by the Minister of Labour.

Working on Fire thus does not have the authority to change this remuneration dispensation for participants and this has been confirmed previously by Mr Nceba Ngcobo, Director of Environmental Programmes in the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Working hours during fire season

One of the big changes that we will be reverting to as done in the past is that our firefighters will work seven days a week during the five months of the fire season.

After the fire season, our firefighters will work five days a week for the next seven months. We are going to revert to this model which we have used successfully in the past. And during those days, our firefighters will get paid at the normal daily rate. That is how we have always done it, and we will be reverting to it.



Ensuring that our firefighters will be ready to work for 7 days a week during fire season

Scholarship programme

In the past, we had ideas of establishing a scholarship programme. We were able in fact to provide the kind of assistance that many of our firefighters would like to see. Those are some of the initiatives that



Ensuring that our participants get opportunities to excel and grow in the programme

I am going to try and revive and raise funds for, to ensure that our participants get an opportunity to further their studies.

Health and Safety

As part of our ‘back to basics’ approach, it will be essential that we not only maintain but even improve our safety record. So, safety is a non-negotiable aspect of the Working on Fire programme. It’s going to be put fairly on the radar. Right now, we’ve recognised Bases that have had three years of no lost time due to injury, those that have had two years of no lost time and we are issuing certificates to certain Bases which have had one year of no lost time.



Health and safety on and off the fire line will be central to our back to basics campaign

Career pathing

One of the areas that we are going to be looking at is career pathing. We cannot have our firefighters simply remaining firefighters. We will look at what kinds of opportunities there are within the programme for firefighters to become part of management. I think 193 of our current 385 managers are former firefighters and a lot of our firefighters have gone on to gain formal employment.



Former firefighters now working at Ezemvelo Wildlife with our Lead Video Journalist, Christalene De Kella, also a former firefighter who grew through the ranks of the programme

Partners and stakeholders

Our partners are an essential part of this programme so I will be speaking to them, I will be listening to them, and I am sure as we have in the past, we will map up a way in which we have something we all could work on to take this programme to new heights.



Our partnerships are an important part of ensuring future sustainability of the programme

KwaZulu-Natal hosts a successful Integrated Fire Awareness Campaign launch



Activities done during the 2017 Fire Awareness Campaign Launch

Working on Fire (WOF), in partnership with uBuhlebezwe Fire and Rescue, Eskom, the Department of Community Safety, the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the IEC, traditional leaders and SAPS, hosted the 2017 Integrated Fire Awareness Campaign launch at the Emahehle Community Hall in Ixopo.

The aim was teach communities how to be fire safe and to prevent unwanted veld and forest fires. WOF KZN General Manager Winnie Ndlovu says, “We want to raise awareness of the risk of veld and forest fires and empower those at risk to take responsibility to reduce the risk and impact of fires in their communities.”

uBuhlebezwe Disaster Manager, Mr MW Dlamini, says, “We have been working very closely with Working on Fire for a while, doing presentations and FireSafe workshops in communities. I am happy that the Emahehle community came out in numbers. The most important thing is that they received all the vital information to put measures in place to protect themselves and their families against any human-induced disasters.” WOF firefighters demonstrated how they suppress fires



KZN Integrated Fire Awareness Campaign launch a success

by constructing a fire wall while the uBuhlebezwe Fire and Rescue team also demonstrated their fire suppression abilities by extinguishing a stack of burning tyres.

WOF will continue to partner with various stakeholders to achieve the objective of creating resilient and fire safe communities.



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal

WOF takes its fire expertise to Fire Imbizo

In its ongoing efforts to foster meaningful partnerships with its stakeholders, Working on Fire in the Free State recently participated in the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Programme’s Fire Imbizo.

The event took place in Qwa Qwa in the Eastern Free State, at the Mabilela District Traditional Council Hall. Various stakeholders such as SANParks, Free State Provincial Disaster Management, Maluti-A-Phofung Municipality, Qwa Qwa Fire and Emergency Services and the Mabilela Traditional Council were in attendance. The Fire Imbizo targeted community members and community groups with an interest in environmental issues. It aims to be a platform for dialogue among stakeholders

on fire management issues and was a great opportunity for cross-pollination of information within a multi-stakeholder group. The event also served as a platform to increase collaboration between fire management stakeholders in the province.

“The Fire Imbizo was very fruitful. Meaningful dialogue took place and we look forward to working hand in hand with the various stakeholders that were there to improve the services we provide within the province,” says Johnson Mafisa, the Free State Regional Manager.



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Rooiberg Team reduces fire risks

Firefighters at Rooiberg Base are working hard preparing various stakeholders for the upcoming winter fire season.

“As this will be our first fire season we are working very hard to prepare ourselves and also to help the landowners in eliminating fire risks in their properties. Since the opening of our team we have managed to reach a high number of landowners around Rooiberg,” says Sello Motshegon, the Base Communications Representative at Rooiberg.

The Rooiberg Team has started with the implementation of integrated fire management wherein they conduct block burns, create firebreaks and do slashing, fuel load reduction and community fire awareness programmes.

“We are working very closely with the fire protection associations, landowners, schools and communities to protect our environment. The support that we are receiving from our



Rooiberg participants conducting manual fuel load reduction at the Old Rooiberg Hospital

base partner is very good and it shows that they appreciate the hard work that we are putting in,” says Motshegon.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo

WOF KZN firefighters ready for winter fire season

Over 800 Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal participants successfully completed the 2017 Yellow Card Training Camp (YCTC). One training camp was held from 3 to 11 April at Umlalazi Nature Reserve while another YCTC was held from 27 April to 5 May at Albert Falls Dam, in preparation for the winter fire season.

According to KZN Training Officer, Sifundo Sithole, the YCTC is a refresher course that aims to ensure that all firefighters are mentally and physically fit and ready for active duty during the upcoming fire season.

“Teams go through a three-day intensive training camp – the fitness test includes push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups and a 2.4km run. We also do various refresher training on health and safety, the use of firefighting equipment and fire suppression techniques,” says Sithole.

The YCTC ensures the safety of firefighters, the safety of community members and the landowners they are trying to protect. The province saw a decrease in fires in the previous fire season.

“I was very happy with the dedication and discipline participants displayed during the training



camp. Even the instructors were impressed,” says Sithole. “I wish them a safe winter fire season and that they continue to save lives and protect the environment.”



Nompilo Zondi, Provincial Communication Officer, KwaZulu-Natal



Participants during the Yellow Card Training Camp



INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' DAY

Working on Fire commemorates International Firefighters' Day

The Working on Fire programme in the Eastern Cape collaborated with the Walter Sisulu Local Municipality, SAPS, the Department of Environmental Affairs, Provincial Disaster Management, Fire and Rescue, Road Safety and the community to celebrate International Firefighters' Day (IFFD) in Aliwal North on 4 May.

This annual event honours firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty and is commemorated to thank firefighters for protecting the environment and saving lives.

All the departments expressed their thanks and appreciation to the firefighters for the wonderful job done in fighting and preventing fires.

Patrick Moko, the head of the Disaster Management Centre in Joe Gqabi Municipality, says that firefighters play a major role in saving lives and properties in the province.

"Eastern Cape is one of the provinces that are often affected by fires and firefighters are always

available to assist in such situations. They should be respected and supported for doing such a good job," Moko says, adding that firefighters also address prevention by educating communities to be fire safe and fire wise.

Mzukisi Lufele, from the Molteno Team, says the IFFD means a lot to him as a firefighter as the world takes time to appreciate the hard work they do and to remember the firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty.

The Working on Fire teams as well as Fire and Rescue firefighters showcased their firefighting skills for the community members who attended the event.

Other teams in the province observed a minute of silence in remembrance of the heroes who fell in the line of duty.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Provincial Communication Officer, Eastern Cape



WOF Free State teams celebrate International Firefighters' Day

International Firefighters' Day (IFFD) offers the world's communities a chance to recognise and honour the firefighters who risk their lives to ensure the safety of others. It is also a day on which current and past firefighters can acknowledge one another's contributions.

The Working on Fire Bloemfontein and Dewetsdorp Teams each commemorated this special day by performing drills and observing a moment of silence. A short speech was delivered by Lefisa Mokhele, a Bloemfontein Base Type 1 Crew Leader, about his journey in becoming a firefighter.

"It's tough being a firefighter but it is even tougher being a female firefighter because you need to work twice as hard as your male counterparts," says Bongiwé Mthembu. "I became a firefighter because of the destruction I saw fires cause to nature and properties. That's why I received training in both veld and forest firefighting



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

and structural firefighting." International Firefighters' Day was marked in 1999 for the first time after five firefighters died in a wildfire at Linton in Victoria, Australia in December 1998. After

hearing of the tragedy, Lieutenant JJ Edmondson, a female volunteer firefighter from a different brigade in Victoria, sent emails to firefighters all over the world asking them to help organise

support for an international day to commemorate firefighters.

"The role of a firefighter in today's society – be it urban, rural, natural environment, volunteer, career, industrial, defence force, aviation, motor sport or other, is one of dedication, commitment and sacrifice – no matter what country we reside and work in. In the fire service we fight together against one common enemy – fire – no matter what country we come from, what uniform we wear or what language we speak," said Lt Edmondson at the time.

There was overwhelming support for the idea and for choosing 4 May as the date, as it is the feast day of St Florian, regarded as the patron saint of firefighters. Florian was a Roman army officer and one of the first to organise brigades of firefighters. After confessing that he was a Christian, he was executed by being burnt and then thrown into a river to drown.

HAT remembers heroes of fire

High Altitude Teams (HAT) in Limpopo took a moment on International Firefighters' Day on 4 May to commemorate their fellow brothers and sisters who fell in the line of duty. Firefighters were also celebrated for their bravery in protecting our environment and saving lives.

"Firefighting is a very tough job and requires someone who is very committed and disciplined to carry it out. Though I'm not physically fighting fire I understand the level of commitment one has to put in to fight fires," says Elleck Mkansi, the

Base Communications Representative for HAT in Limpopo.

Every day the firefighters respond to the call for help. They tackle obstacles such as tough terrains, wild animals and gigantic fires. But still they remain committed to saving and protecting lives. "Firefighting is a selfless task that needs one to be brave," says Mkansi.



Matema Gwangwa, Provincial Communication Officer, Limpopo



HAT teams in Limpopo observe a moment of silent to honour firefighters who died in the line of duty

Teams pay tribute to fallen firefighters



The Nelspruit Team pays tribute to firefighters who lost their lives on duty

Working on Fire (WOF) teams in Mpumalanga paid tribute to firefighters who lost their lives while in the line of duty. This was part of the global commemoration of International Firefighters' Day (IFFD).

Ground Operation Managers Bongani Nhlabathi and Thabiso Mohale joined the Nelspruit Team to commemorate the day.

"We felt it was important to commemorate this day, not only to honour those who lost their lives, but to celebrate those who are still alive," says Mohale.

IFFD is commemorated worldwide in recognition of the sacrifices, hard work and commitment that firefighters show to ensure that communities and the environment are protected from unwanted fires.

The day was observed through the lighting of candles and observing a moment of silence, as a sign of respect to the firefighting heroes who gave their lives.



Lebogang Maseko, Provincial Communication Officer, Mpumalanga

Spill the beans without getting into a sticky situation.

Report any incidents of fraud, corruption or unethical behaviour to the WOF Ethics Line.

0800 21 25 31
fraud@kpmg.co.za



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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME