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Working on Fire



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Minister join Working on Fire in clean-up



During the Port St Johns clean-up, Minister Creecy, MEC Mlungisi Mvoko, firefighters and other stakeholders aimed to inspire locals to take ownership of their community and help keep it clean.

The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy, joined more than 30 firefighters from the Mkhambathi and Nqadu Working on Fire teams for the Good Green Deeds clean-up campaign in Port St Johns, Eastern Cape. MEC Mlungisi Mvoko and Working for Water, Community Work Programme and SANParks staff also participated in the clean-up, which started at the Port St Johns taxi rank and concluded at the Port St Johns beach. Minister Creecy was happy to see the beneficiaries of the Expanded Public Works Programmes coming together for such a good cause and thanked them for their service and ensuring that public spaces were clean.

"We have done clean-up campaigns before, but we are particularly happy to have been part of this clean-up campaign as we got to meet our Minister and also work with participants from other programmes," said a firefighter from Mkhambathi. The Good Green Deeds initiative formed part of the Presidential visit to OR Tambo District.



The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy, along with a number of stakeholders involved in the Good Green Deeds clean-up campaign

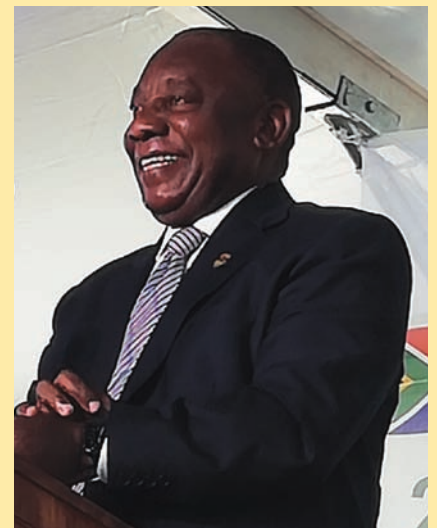
Working on Fire's work recognised at UN Summit

Prolonged drought caused by continued global warming is increasing in Southern Africa, potentially impacting water security and causing heatwaves.

These are some of the findings in President Cyril Ramaphosa's statement on South Africa's position on Climate Change which was handed to the United Nations Secretary General at the Climate Change Conference, Global Climate Action in New York on 23 September 2019.

He said extensive research was being done in South Africa to quantify the likelihood of major climate change impacts occurring in the next few decades. "Using our own domestic resources, we have already implemented measures to help us cope with extreme weather. These include the Working for Water programme, the Working on Fire programme and the restoration of wetlands," he said.

WOF teams in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have been working in the drought relief projects which focus on clearing alien invasive plants which affect our water supply. These provinces were the hardest hit by the current drought.



WOF VAI plays its part in building new facilities for EC learners

On 17 September 2019, the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Barbara Creecy, officially opened new ablution facilities at Mqikela Secondary School in Lusikisiki.



Grabeth Nduna, Construction Manager for VAI, presents the new facilities to the Minister

According to Minister Creecy, the project was initiated after education authorities identified a dire need for the upgrading of ablution facilities at schools. Learners need hygienic facilities to stay healthy and perform



WOF firefighter assists as the Minister and officials from the provincial Department of Education officially open the ablution facilities

at school and too many of these facilities are below standard.

Working on Fire became involved through its Value-Added Industries (VAI) and was tasked with rolling out the Department of Education's project to construct new ablution facilities at identified schools.

The principal of Mqikela Secondary School thanked the Department and expressed her appreciation of the other parties involved in donating and building the toilets. The learners were on hand to add their thanks to those involved with a huge round of applause.

KwaZulu-Natal Working on Fire, the Department of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries, eThekweni Municipality, the Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs, Transnet, the Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Premier, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Source to Sea project joined coastal countries across the world to commemorate International Coastal Clean-up Day (ICCD) by partnering with communities in and around Durban to clean the beaches and areas leading to the ocean.

ICCD brings together communities with the common goals of collecting and documenting marine litter along coastlines. The activities in Durban formed part of the government's Good Green Deeds Programme launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this year. Good Green Deeds seeks to mobilise South Africans to become

International Coastal Clean-Up Day

more environmentally conscious and to promote behavioural change towards ending littering and illegal dumping.

KZN Fire Awareness Training Officer, Bongumusa Nyathi says, "We had a week-long build-up campaign which included joining various clean-up campaigns at Kwandengezi and at Umgeni River in the Albert Falls area." Nyathi says, "Since launching the WOF Girl and Boy Scouts, it was imperative that they join us in the International Coastal Clean-Up which took place at Isipingo Beach. It was a great opportunity to encourage them to see the importance of the work their parents do and why it is so vital to take care of the environment they live in as it is the only one we have."

The Source to Sea initiative is a new strategy being implemented in KwaZulu-Natal to investigate, combat and ultimately eradicate pollution,



WOF firefighters and scouts cleaning at Isipingo Beach

including plastic pollution, which threatens both freshwater and marine ecosystems.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

WOF Care Package fundraiser

Working on Fire in KwaZulu-Natal hosted a WOF Care Package Fundraiser on 20 September at the Albert Falls Dam Nature Reserve.

"This event was not only a fundraising method for the WOF Care Packages but was a great networking opportunity for internal and external officials and to also officially launch the WOF Boy and Girl Scouts which were implemented earlier this year," says KZN Social Development Practitioner, Hloniphile Ndlovu.

It was a fun-packed day for stakeholders to witness the talent that WOF had on display. The programme took the opportunity to briefly showcase some of WOF's achievements in this financial year and introduce various activities or initiatives to those present.

The day commenced with the uMngeni Team and the scouts welcoming the uMngeni Deputy Mayor, Councillor Buthelezi, with a guard of honour as she entered the venue.



WOF Scouts singing together with the KZN firefighters and management

Ndlovu says, "We also incorporated the growing gender-based violence that the country has witnessed over the past few months. The scouts handed out roses to females in the audience to remind them of their value in the community, and to raise awareness to always protect women and children from abuse."

In the spirit of Heritage Month, the Shongweni Team beautifully demonstrated Zulu culture in music and dance. The WOF Scouts programme was officially launched with the wonderful heritage-themed dancing.

Ndlovu says, "Overall, the day was a success. Deputy Mayor Buthelezi spoke highly of the work the uMngeni and Karkloof Teams were doing in her municipality. "We were extremely happy with the outcome of the day. Stakeholders also willingly pledged towards the care package. We will continue to fundraise for our participants' children, as it is not only the parents' responsibility to groom a child but it is also our responsibility as a community."



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer



The Mayor of uMngeni and senior management walk past the guard of honour

Mpumalanga hosts its annual school debate



Reggie Masuku Secondary School learners and teachers celebrate after winning the school debate in Ermelo

Working on Fire in Mpumalanga held its annual school debating competition at the Netherland Park Secondary School in Ermelo in the Gert Sibande District on Friday, 30 August.

The Fire Awareness team worked with the Department of Education school district to host five local schools, namely Camden Combined School and Netherland Park, Reggie Masuku, Cebisa and

Ithafa Secondary Schools. The schools' best Grade 8 and 9 debaters were pitted against each other on three topics - "How wildfires fuel climate change", "How communities are at risk of wildfire and should take action to alleviate that risk in their homes" and "How the cost of wildfire to the economy and environment can be mitigated through integrated fire management services".

Reggie Masuku Secondary's performance stood head and shoulders above the rest, and they walked away with the number one spot and earned themselves a trophy and certificates. Camden Combined

nabbed second place and Ithafa Secondary rounded off the top three.

Working on Fire annually hosts the school debating competition with the aim of educating the youth about environmental issues and encouraging them to become involved in protecting the environment.

WOF teams across the province continually visit schools and the communities to educate residents about fire risks and prevention.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

School debating competition highlights environmental issues

Working on Fire Free State's Fire Awareness Department recently held a school debating competition in Bethlehem. The event was hosted at Khanyeng Intermediate School, in conjunction with the provincial Department of Education and the Provincial Disaster Management Centre.

Numerous schools participated in the competition and debated topics such as 'Wild fires fuel climate change', 'Should society conserve the natural environment?' and 'Land Management tools to conserve the environment'.

The primary objective of the competition was to create an opportunity for learners to debate environmental issues that have a negative impact on their social livelihood and natural environment and

raise solutions and initiatives that might solve these environmental problems. Prizes were awarded to learners who excelled in specific categories such as best speech and overall best.

"Overall, the event was a huge success with learners passionately engaging each other about environment issues, says Gladson Motloung, the Free State Fire Awareness Training Officer. "The audience walked away informed about their responsibility to conserve the environment. We are very pleased with the level of participation and we wish to congratulate all the learners who participated."



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



The fun and informative debate was held at Khanyeng Intermediate School

Grade 8 and 9 learners debate environmental issues



Grade 8 and 9 champions of the 2019 Fire Awareness debate competition celebrate with the judges and the coordinators

For the past few years, Working on Fire has been working with schools in fire-prone areas to mitigate fire hazards through empowering and educating learners with key fire awareness messages.

Working on Fire Limpopo's fire awareness cluster hosted a school debate for Grade 8 learners from Vhembe District Municipality. The annual debate is seen as a means of checking the learners' understanding and retention of fire prevention awareness education received from WOF in the past and to reinforce information on fire prevention that the learners could in turn pass on to their communities.

Twenty-five learners from five local schools around Vhembe participated in the debate which

started well with learners tabling their knowledge on environmental issues, including the impacts of wild-fire in the society and on our environment.

Learners from Mbilwi Secondary School went head to heads with learners from Mphaphulu Secondary School in heated debate, with learners from both groups demonstrated a high level of confidence in their knowledge of environmental issues. At the end of the day, Mbilwi was declared the winning team.

It is hoped that the competition will be expanded next year with schools of various regions debating at the provincial level.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Eastern Cape debating competition held

Eastern Cape Working on Fire hosted its third provincial school debate competition in Stutterheim on Friday, 13 September, for learners from different schools in the area.

Learners from six schools debated topics such as how frequent fires can cause land degradation, how IFMS can be used to mitigate the cost of wildfires to the economy and the environment, fire prevention measures as well as how climate change can lead to fires.

According to the Eastern Cape Fire Awareness Training Officer Zola Hans, learners were assessed on good communications skills, presentation skills and on content.

Hans says the main objective of the debate is to create an opportunity for Grade 8 and 9 learners to debate issues that have a negative impact on their environment.

"It also covered the key fire messages and core focus areas of the WOF Department of Fire Awareness," says Hans.

The programme is part of WOF's strategy to fight veld and forest fires through Integrated Fire Management Services (IFMS).



Working on Fire shares fire messages through school debates

IFMS includes fire detection, prevention and suppression, and fire awareness in schools and in communities. The WOF programme has been working with schools in fire-prone areas to mitigate fire hazards by empowering learners with fire awareness messages.

The debate allows WOF to see if the learners have benefited from the fire awareness activities WOF teams have conducted in schools and retained the knowledge they received in these programmes.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Learners' showcase their understanding of environmental issues

Learners from three local Vaalharts high schools put on their environmental thinking caps as they battled each other during the school debate hosted by Working on Fire North West Community Fire Awareness Officer (CFAO), Sophy Dinko, earlier this month.

Working on Fire annually hosts provincial school debate competitions

to educate youth about environmental issues and to encourage them to become environmentalists.

During the debate, the learners from Landbou Hoërskool and Tlhwahalang Secondary school had to make compelling arguments for why society should look after our natural environment. The school teams each had three minutes to

present their case for why they believed society should look after its natural environment. The competition puts to the test the learners' understanding of the roles the natural environment plays in our daily lives, the economy and the sustainability of all life.

Four trophies were awarded to the best-performing schools. Landbou Hoërskool were declared the overall winners of the debate and they also won the best team on content trophy. Two trophies were awarded to Tlhwahalang Secondary school for having the best presenters.

Written by Editorial team



Landbou Hoërskool and Tlhwahalang Secondary School took the trophies for overall winners, best team on content and best presenters. Photo by Sophy Dinko



Trees were planted by various stakeholders during the Arbor Day celebration hosted by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries in Mogalakwena Local Municipality

Focus on quality air for Mogalakwena community

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, in collaboration with Working on Fire and other stakeholders in the Waterberg-Bojanala Priority Area (WBPA), hosted an Air Quality and Arbor Week event at Bakenberg Stadium in the Mogalakwena Municipality.

The objective of this event was to raise community awareness regarding air pollution and the related impacts on health and the environment. The awareness campaign was themed 'Air Pollution' to align with the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) 2019 theme.

During the event, communities were informed about the interventions that the government and affected stakeholders have been implementing to address air pollution challenges in the priority areas.

The day's activities ended with various stakeholders planting trees at Bakenberg Stadium. Communities were encouraged to plant trees every year as that would contribute to reducing air pollution. The event was declared a success by all the participating parties.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

North West WOF marks Arbor Day



North West Working on Fire General Manager, Nolvuyo Mashologue, and other dignitaries planted two trees at PA Theron Primary School. Photo by Sophy Dinko.

Working on Fire North West, together with the Mayor of Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, Councillor Barei Elizabeth Mosiane-Segotso, the Mayor of the City of Matlosana, Councillor Maetu Kgaile, and officials of the Department of Environmental Affairs, City of Matlosana Municipality, Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality and the provincial Department of Rural, Environment and Agriculture Development (READ), commemorated Arbor Day by planting two trees at the PA Theron Primary School in Stilfontein.

Before the trees were planted, learners were addressed about the importance of planting trees and educated on the

roles trees play in maintaining our natural environment. Learners were urged to sustain the existing trees and to plant more trees in the future.

Following the address, the WOF team assisted the school with its food garden and gave learners a few tips on how to maintain their garden.

Prior to this programme, the Working on Fire Boskop Team had partnered with the North West Parks Board in the build-up to Arbor Day, organising a debate among learners at Buffelsvlei Intermediate School about Arbor Day and the significance of the day.

Written by Editorial team

Participants' learn agri best practices



Germinah Mashaba at Agri Expo, taking bull by its horns at ARC's Animal Production Centre

Gauteng Rust de Winter Team's Germinah Mashaba and Thabo Kutu learned all about the best agricultural methods to improve the condition of their goats after attending the Agri Expo and Indaba at the Agricultural Research Council's Animal Production Centre in Irene recently.

"We have learned how and where to sell our livestock. The session was insightful and provided guidance for small and emerging farmers like ourselves," says Mashaba.

She says agricultural is the bedrock of the rural economy and she benefitted immensely from this session.

First food security workshop at Shongweni



Teams working in the garden

During the National Arbor Week, the Working on Fire Shongweni Team in KwaZulu-Natal participated in a Food Security Workshop at their base. The main aim of the workshop was to train participants on how to establish an organic garden at the base.

KZN Social Development Practitioner Sabelo Buthelezi says, "The WOF programme developed this workshop to ensure participants have the knowledge and skills required to start a sustainable food production business on their re-entry into the community." This initiative will ensure that participants have a measure of food security in providing for their immediate families and the surrounding communities.

"The Shongweni firefighters will split up and travel to the rest of the bases in the province and teach them

what they learnt during the five-day workshop," says Buthelezi.

Shongweni firefighter Xolani Hlela says, "We learnt how to do compost and earthworm farming using materials found around the base, something that anyone can do at home."

He says that he can't wait to share with his fellow colleagues how to grow nutritious food.

KZN Acting General Manager Bongani Nhlabathi says, "This project is an opportunity for us to make a difference in our society and eventually in our country. As this is a pilot project, we will rely on participants' dedication to seize the possibilities to expand it to other bases, communities and provinces."



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

"One of the key things that I learned was about artificial insemination and I made solid contacts with the seasoned and best breeders in the country," says Mashaba.

Mashaba says the expo did not resemble the normal farmers' days she frequently attends in her area. Commercial farmers and breeders shared sage advice on some of the best practices they could apply to improve and expand their livestock.

"It has been good because I was inspired to see how commercial farmers are willing to assist young emerging

farmers. I have to turn the corner now," says Kutu.

Kutu says that with such knowledge he could start investing more in new methods of farming and work towards becoming a commercial farmer in five years' time.

"We never thought there are people who are truly commercial farmers with goat livestock. I applaud the GM for affording us an opportunity to attend and learn," he says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

WOF men raise awareness of gender-based violence



Thabang Molaba is taking a stand against gender-based violence

"Being a woman is no longer safe in the environment that we live in. Being a woman means you are the easiest target for our male counterparts. We used to be flowers, but now we've turned into punching bags. We used to be loved, but now we are being killed," says Mahlatse Ratlabala.

The WOF Limpopo men took the Managing Director's call for intervention on gender-based violence to the next level. They vowed to assist and support each other through discussions and engagement when they have challenges.

"Men are famous in bottling things inside, all because we were raised to

believe that a real man doesn't cry or become emotional. This is one of the results that leads men to take out their anger on women," says Metse Maitisa, the Limpopo Provincial Coordinator.

WOF Limpopo hosted a gender-based awareness campaign for provincial staff to raise awareness about the abuse and killing of women and children. Safety issues were discussed and it was agreed that the awareness campaign would be rolled out at base level, targeting the male employees.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

WOF participants take on matric challenge



WOF participants were given a second chance to obtain their matric

Many participants never had the opportunity to complete their matric which impacted negatively on their lives and limited their opportunities to be employed.

As Working on Fire is committed to empowering its participants with skills and knowledge, it recently enrolled 20 participants in the ABET programme to assist them to complete their matric.

"For us to enrol these participants in the ABET programme is to make sure that we live our values with integrity and that we empower them with knowledge and education," says Khuthazo Mhlethywa,

the Human Resource Practitioner of WOF Limpopo.

Education is an achievement that no one can take away and assists in unlocking the doors to a successful future. WOF will continue with the project of assisting participants to gain their matric qualification until the end of the year 2020.

"By doing so we are developing a structured exit strategy for our participants into other employment opportunities," says Mhlethywa.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Western Cape WOF says no to gender-based violence

In an effort to highlight the crisis of violence against women and children, Working on Fire Western Cape's Social Development Practitioners (SDPs) have been hosting workshops against gender-based violence (GBV) across the province.

Male representatives from each WOF base participated in a series of dialogues on GBV and the role men can play to change the status quo.

The George and Witfontein High Altitude Teams, together with WOF Southern Cape SDP Lusheen Britz and management, delivered an emotional pledge to protect women.

The Kleinmond Team men held a prayer session, praying for the safety of women and children in the country. They also vowed to raise awareness of what men could do to ensure the safety of women and children in their communities, homes and schools.

SDP Colleen Paulus, who facilitated the Kleinmond Team dialogue,



Social Development Practitioner Colleen Paulus facilitated a dialogue on gender-based violence with firefighters from the Kleinmond Team

says the engagement with men so far has shown the men feel ashamed of what other men have done to women and are genuinely trying to find ways to protect women and children.

Written by Editorial team

Firefighters graduate as Type 1 crew leaders



The Type 1 Crew Leader graduates participate in a passing-out parade at the Kishugu Training Academy

A total of 36 former Type 2 Crew Leaders from the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape graduated as Type 1 Crew Leaders at the Kishugu Training Academy on Friday, 16 August.

The firefighters marked the completion of their Type 1 crew leader training with a passing-out parade at the Academy to celebrate their achievement.

Families and friends graced the occasion and Nerien van Heerden (National Admin and Logistics Manager) gave the keynote address.

"Great leaders don't tell you what to do, they show you how it is done," Van Heerden said.

The proud chief instructor at Kishugu Training Academy, Kabelo Moleleki, congratulated the graduates as he handed over certificates and awards to the crew leaders. Kishugu Training Accounts Manager, Christopher Kasayi, concluded the parade with a vote of thanks and wished the graduates well as they embark on their new leadership journey.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Working on Fire participant steps up

Mzukisi Lufele, a former firefighter from Molteno Base in the Eastern Cape, recently began working as a Human Resource Assistant after being promoted to the position.

Lufele joined the WOF family in 2016. "Prior to joining WOF, I worked at Woolworths after matriculating as I could not go to university due to financial problems," says Lufele.

He says getting a job at WOF was a blessing as he was not qualified for other opportunities. "After being recruited as a firefighter, I worked very

hard and always made sure that I learned fast. The province recognised my hard work and sent me to the crew leader course a year later," says Lufele, who passed the course and became one of the best crew leaders in the province.

"I led by example and my team was always the best as we worked as a team and always had a goal and that assisted us in getting many awards for being the best team," Lufele says.

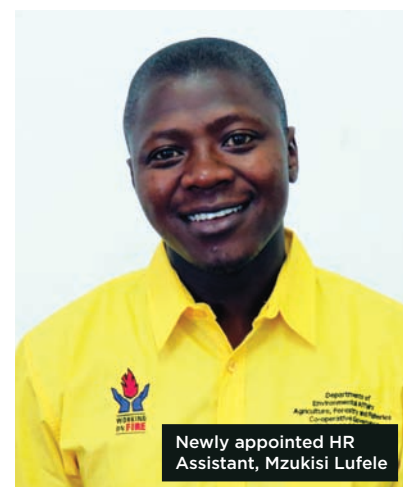
Twenty-eight-year-old Lufele says that WOF gave him many skills that got

him where he is today. "I acquired skills such as communications skills, leadership skills, first aid and many more," says Lufele.

He is grateful to the Working on Fire programme for empowering him and he believes the experience has made him a better person. Lufele advises other firefighters to emulate his example by working hard, being patient and always aiming high.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Newly appointed HR Assistant, Mzukisi Lufele

Firefighter concerned for public safety

Thato Moleka of the Cradle of Human-kind Team intends studying public safety management at Tshwane University of Technology next year.

He says he has a passion for the safety of the public and intends doing a structural firefighting course first. The safety of the public is his number one concern and he is willing to be part of the solution as a young person.

Moleka says that structural firefighting training won't take more than three months to complete.

"By New Year, I will be ready to head to varsity. I have money to study and I have accumulated months of working experience in the programme," he says.

Moleka says that being a veld and forest firefighter has made him see more opportunities he can exploit in the future.

"It is not easy to be a firefighter but the stipend I earn keeps me motivated and encouraged to get up every morning to work," he says, adding that every hard-earned cent counts.



Thato Moleka will pursue a course in public safety management at Rosebank College in the new year



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

WOF Free State Athletics Club impress at Mandela Day Marathon



Members of the WOF Athletics Club in the Free State

Members of the Working on Fire Athletics team in the Free State recently took part in the annual Nelson Mandela Marathon which took place this year in Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. The event consists of the 10 km race, 21 km half marathon and 42.2 km marathon.

Agnes Lekhetho, Nthatheng Tsotetsi, Puleng Buang, Phumzile Zwane, Samuel Mofokeng, Thabang Mphuthi and Azola Bangani participated in the event. The races started at the Manaye Hall in iMbali, where Nelson Mandela made his last speech as a free man in 1962 before he was arrested by the apartheid police. The

capture site in Howick marked the end of the race.

Mofokeng, one of the top-recognised runners and pacesetters in the province, ran an impressive sub-three-hour time of 02:59:29 in the marathon.

"The team ran very well and represented WOF very well. Each person gave their best in this very competitive race and it will serve as a benchmark for the races that will follow," says Bangani, the Athletics Club team leader.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Walter Khoza promoted to GOM

Working on Fire continues to grow its own timber, as the saying goes, by developing the leadership skills of its personnel. Forty percent of the management staff are former firefighters.



Walter Khoza is the new Ground Operations Manager in Mpumalanga

Former firefighter and Regional Manager, Walter Khoza, is another such success story, having recently been promoted to Grounds Operations Manager (GOM) in Mpumalanga.

Khoza joins Thabiso Mohale in the position, with Mpumalanga now armed with two GOMs to ensure the best production in integrated fire management.

His journey up the corporate ladder at WOF began in Graskop, where he was recruited as a firefighter in 2003. Working his way through the ranks, he served Graskop Base as a Type 2 Crew Leader and Type 1 Crew Leader before becoming a driver at Lydenburg. From there, he was seconded to the LEFPA Base in Nelspruit, where he was a shadow Base Manager and Fire Awareness Coordinator.

He became an assistant regional manager in 2010 and also did a stint at Kishugu Academy in that year, as a Project Coordinator in the Structural

Division. In 2011, he was appointed as a Regional Manager in Mpumalanga.

Originally from Bushbuckridge, Khoza is a married father of two daughters who enjoys spending time with family, fishing and watching soccer.

"I am very excited and know that this position comes with a lot of responsibility and accountability. However, I am ready to face this new

challenge and make a difference in the province and in WOF as a whole," he says.

The WOF Mpumalanga staff wish him all the best in his new role. Khoza began his duties on 1 August.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Participant lands a job in tourism

“Know your goals in life and work hard to achieve them,” says Nolindelo Manyaba, a former firefighter at the Port St Johns Team in the Eastern Cape. This zealous woman was recently appointed as a tourism monitor at Addo Elephant National Park.

Thirty-one-year-old Manyaba says that the Working on Fire programme paved the way to getting a better job.

After joining the programme as a firefighter in 2012 in the Mkhambathi Team, Manyaba later transferred to the Port St Johns Team as she wanted to further her studies and needed access to better facilities.

“I decided to use the stipend to further my studies at a college and studied through distance learning,” she says. She also learned many skills in the programme in leadership, first aid and firefighting that could prove useful in her new position. “I would like to thank the programme for being my stepping stone, for opening opportunities for me and also for supporting me during my studies,” says Manyaba. “To all firefighters in the programme, know what you want, work hard, be passionate and improve your studies.”

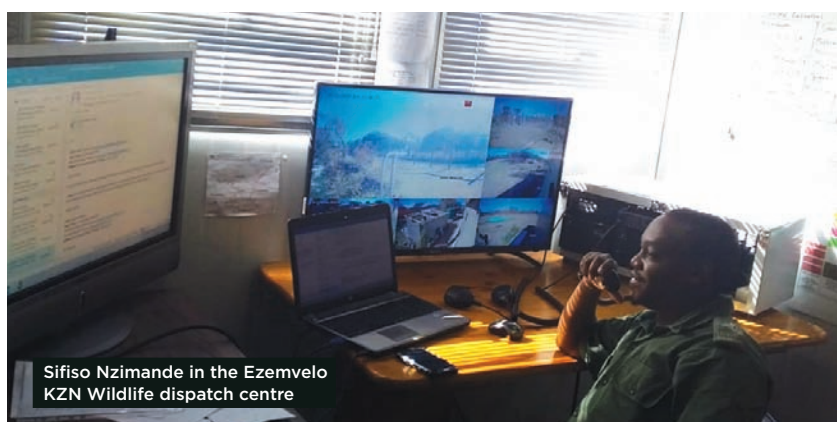


Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Nolindelo Manyaba recently got a job at Addo Elephant National Park

WOF opened up new set of skills for ex-participant



Sifiso Nzimande in the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife dispatch centre

Former Working on Fire firefighter, Sifiso Nzimande, who now works for Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, says he is very appreciative of the opportunity he received at WOF.

Recruited in March 2009 after being unemployed for some time, Nzimande says, “I learnt a lot from working in the programme such as discipline, how to work as a team and individually. I also learn how to handle or deal with different kinds of people and their personalities, to be a problem solver and how to avoid conflict.”

Nzimande says WOF improved his life financially and also gave him skills training in First Aid level 1 and 2, fundamentals of carpentry, helitack training, advanced veld and forest firefighting and basic

dispatch and coordination. In September 2013, Nzimande was promoted to Type 3 Dispatcher and served in that capacity until he relocated earlier this year to Hluhluwe to work as a dispatcher in the Peace Park of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

“I am really enjoying my new job. I love to work with aviation and ground crews. The job is challenging because I am working with different kinds of people and facing different situations from those I did at WOF.”

Nzimande says he sees himself as a Nerve Centre Manager in five years. He is grateful for the chances he was given by the WOF programme. He never imagined himself a dispatcher but WOF made this skill available to him and he enjoys it.

High Altitude Team provides job opportunities for youth



Unemployed youth undergoing the fitness test at the recruitment

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' Working on Fire High Altitude programme continues to combat unemployment by providing youth with an opportunity to become rope access technicians.

Recently, the High Altitude programme recruited six rope access technicians for Lusikisiki Base. According to the BCR of the team, Phumzile Mcelwa, all the young people who attended the recruitment exercise had to undergo pass the standard WOF fitness test of a timed 2.4 km run, push-ups, sit-ups and pull-ups

to be considered for selection. “Two females and four males were recruited and will soon be sent to attend the training,” says Mcelwa.

The High Altitude programme is aimed at reducing invasive species to sustain the water supply. It has more than 80 participants based at seven bases throughout the Eastern Cape, who work very hard to remove alien vegetation and trees in water catchment areas that consume a lot of water.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

“My former colleagues must continue to work hard and be patient. Their time will come too. They must apply for opportunities in the Working on Fire programme and must always give 100% effort. With these

skills, it will be easy to find better jobs in other organisations,” says Nzimande.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Celebrating heritage in style

Motseki Monyamathi of the Heidelberg Team is a self-made entrepreneur who has been using his artistic skill to generate money in Heritage Month by painting trainers (takkies) in traditional Zulu colours.

“I bought paints to spray on the takkies. People love it since we are in Heritage Month. They are responding very well by bringing their takkies to be painted in cultural colours,” says Monyamathi.

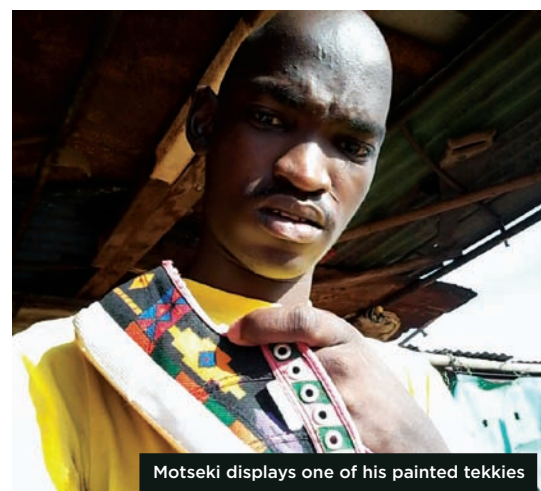
Monyamathi says he does his painting work after hours and his cousin does the marketing during the day. He wants to see people proudly celebrating Heritage Month in style. “Our cultures are an important part of our identity,” he says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Monyamathi is registering his own company because he does many things beyond painting takkies. One of his ventures is making chairs from used tyres which he hires out to events. He collects old tyres from local tyre stores for free.

“My business idea is environmentally friendly in the sense that I am re-purposing tyres instead of the community burning them and polluting the air we breathe,” he says.



Motseki displays one of his painted takkies

WOF celebrates Heritage Day

WOF proudly embraces its rich diversity on Heritage Day. Working on Fire's offices and bases are spread across South Africa and our staff include people from a variety of cultures, creeds and languages – a rich and beautiful representation of our Rainbow Nation. During the week leading up to Heritage

Day on 24 September, WOF staff members dressed up in cultural wear, feasted on traditional dishes, danced, sang and played traditional games. These activities encourage and honour our diversity of beliefs and traditions and give us the opportunity to learn and grow with one another.



North West provincial staff wore their traditional wear and enjoyed African foods to celebrate their heritage.



Tsonga and Venda ladies from Soekmekaar enjoy umqombothi as part of their Heritage Day celebrations.



The MPU Wakkerstroom Team joined Uthaka Secondary School to celebrate Heritage Month on Tuesday, 17 September. They wore traditional outfits and enjoyed Zulu food and cultural dancing.



Eastern Cape provincial staff celebrated Heritage Day by dressing up in a variety of cultural outfits and cooking a traditional feast.



The KZN Eshowe Team looked colourful and proud in their respective traditional wear while celebrating Heritage Day. They also shared a traditional meal.



The Theunissen in Free State dressed in traditional clothing and celebrated South Africa's rich heritage by enjoying a variety of traditional foods such as mofoto, ledombo and mala mokgodu.



The Heilbron Team in Free State also dressed up in traditional wear and celebrated the cultural diversity in the team.



The Abe Bailey Team in Gauteng celebrated their cultural diversity by cooking traditional food (ting, mala mogodu, stampa, morogo and umqombothi), displaying their traditional wear and playing traditional games.



Men from the Sarah Baartman Team proudly wore traditional clothing. The team enjoyed its Heritage Day Celebrations which included singing and dancing.



The Naledi participants took off time to celebrate Heritage Day at Swartfontein Resort in Vryburg (North West) where they shared with each other what they enjoy most about their heritage.



The MPU Sasol Team donned their cultural wear for Heritage Day and enacted a Heritage Month sketch to show the diversity at their base.