

Deputy Minister joins WOF in tree planting ceremony



Deputy Minister Sotyu was impressed with the high visibility of female firefighters

Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Maggie Sotyu, together with the Working on Fire Jonkershoek and Limietberg Teams, planted trees during the launch of the newly revamped Freedom Park in Worcester.

The revamp was in line with the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' green open spaces initiative to promote clean, green and healthy environments for communities.

Deputy Minister Sotyu urged residents to take pride in their park and protect it from being vandalised or being used as an illegal dumping site.

"Well maintained open spaces do not only provide recreational opportunities to communities but may also serve as a catalyst for investments in such

President Ramaphosa launches Khawuleza model

Working on Fire Limpopo joined President Cyril Ramaphosa at the Khawuleza District development model launch held at Shongoane Stadium in Limpopo. The event was attended by thousands of people from across the province.

Project Khawuleza is an integrated district-based approach to addressing service delivery challenges, localised procurement and job creation, that promotes and supports local businesses and involves communities.

"This development approach ensures that planning and spending across the three spheres of government are integrated and aligned and that each district or metro plan is developed with the interests and input of communities taken into account upfront," said President



Cyril Ramaphosa during the Khawuleza launch.

During the event, WOF had an exhibition stand at the stadium where staff engaged with residents of various communities about the services that WOF renders and the impact that it



WOF participants engage with different stakeholders and community members at their exhibition stand during the Khawuleza event

makes in communities through job creation.

WOF participants also used the event to learn more about the services that other companies offer youth and communities and the possible opportunities available that would allow them to grow in their careers.

areas as they will serve as a pull factor for business opportunities," she said.

Deputy Minister Sotyu also said she would love to see the community of Zwelethemba get a Working on Fire team whereby young people in the area would get work opportunities, help protect the environment and respond to fires in their own community.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer



The Working on Fire Jonkershoek and Limietberg Teams form a guard of honour for Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu and other dignitaries

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for no violence against Women and Children

Enough is Enough

365 days to end Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF)

25 November – 10 December

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#EndGBV

#EnoughIsEnough



Firefighters physically and mentally ready for the upcoming summer fire season

More than 160 firefighters from nine Working on Fire teams in the western part of the Eastern Cape are now ready for the summer fire season after successfully passing their Yellow Card assessment at Lottering Base at the Lottering plantation from 7 October to 11 October.

This area was one of those affected by huge fires last year. The objective of the Yellow Card training was to issue competency yellow cards to all participants who passed the fitness test and examinations required for them to be qualified veld and forest firefighters.

These young men and women were assessed to determine their mental and physical fitness to face fires during the summer fire season which is expected to start on 1 December.

The Yellow Card training was also a good opportunity for the participants to be refreshed on the firefighting skills ahead of the fire season.

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' Working on Fire programme has about 580 firefighters based at 26 bases in the Eastern Cape, as well as seven fire trucks, two strike units, nine buses, nine bakkies and two Avansas.



Eastern Cape is prepared and ready for the fire season

The province will launch its fire awareness campaign in the western part of the province in getting ready for the summer fire season.

The purpose of the fire awareness campaign is to make a concerted effort

to raise awareness of the risks of wildfires and empower those at risk to take responsibility for their risks.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

EDITORIAL:

Firefighting partnership affirmed in simulation exercise

The Working on Fire Newlands Team participated in an inter-agency firefighting simulation at the Newlands Forest Helipad on 20 November. The exercise formed part of the exchange of resources between the South African firefighting fraternity and the United States Consulate General and saw Working on Fire, the US Embassy, SANParks, Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), Provincial Disaster Management, NCC and Volunteer Wildfire showcase their working partnership.

The exercise simulated how ground crews and aerial crews work together during firefighting operations, wherein the ground crew tackles a fire using equipment such as beaters and hosepipes before a helicopter can drop water.

US Consul-General Virginia Blaser said that the New York National Guard was brought into this part of the programme to build on a programme that started about seven years ago with the US Agency for International Development and the US Forest Service to cooperate and learn from each other



US Consul-General Virginia Blaser was impressed with the firefighters' teamwork during the simulation

because disasters affect everyday life. She said, "It is really amazing when you direct an activity; in this case, we have members of the South African community, that have been trained through some of our programme, going to the United States to help fight our fires and save lives and property. It's actually happening, this exchange where we are saving lives in each other's countries."

She added that she was happy that women from South Africa and the USA formed part of the fire simulation which showed that we were all together in trying to manage these kinds of incidents.

"Today's exercise modelled teamwork, cooperation and collaboration in keeping our communities safe and firefighters keeping each other safe," she said.

TMNP Fire Manager Philip Prins said firefighting is not something that can be done alone; partnerships need to be built.

"With the National Guard, we are definitely going to grow this partnership and look forward to seeing what's going to happen in the coming years," he said.

Working on Fire Mpumalanga wraps up 2019 winter fire season



Working on Fire Mpumalanga participants suppressed 326 fires this fire season

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' Working on Fire programme in Mpumalanga officially wrapped up the winter fire season on 31 October.

Participants from 24 bases across the province ended the season with a total of 326 fires suppressed, with the teams having been dispatched 95 times to assist Fire Protection Associations to battle the blazes.

July was the busiest month of the season and recorded a total of 129 fires. A total of 726 hours were flown by Working on Fire aerial resources.

"On behalf of Working on Fire Operations and the Provincial Management, I would like to express my most

sincere appreciation for the support you provided during the winter fire season," Ground Operations Manager Thabiso Mohale said as she thanked base partners, stakeholders and WOF management.

Even though the winter fire season is over, teams will be on standby to assist in fighting runaway veld fires and do production with their respective partners.

Working on Fire will continue to partner with various provincial government departments, municipalities and private and public landowners to minimise the dire effects of veld and forest fires.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

220 wildfires suppressed

Limpopo Working on Fire participants had a tough and busy 2019 winter fire season.

WOF Limpopo responded to 220 wildfires during the season in which 151 032 hectares of grass and forestry vegetation were destroyed. By contrast, only 82 fires were suppressed in the 2018 fire season.

"We are happy that we have wrapped up the fire season and, even though it was very busy, there were no fatalities experienced," says Tshepo Malatji, the WOF Limpopo General Manager.

The Molemole Team was the busiest in the province and responded to more than 50 fires. This year, more fires were recorded in the northern part of the province than in all the previous fire seasons.

"Our fire awareness department, in conjunction with the firefighters and partners, will have to put more effort into creating awareness in the northern part of the region to reduce the number of fires occurring," says Malatji.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



Limpopo firefighters had a busy fire season as compared to last year

EC launches fire awareness campaign



The Fire Awareness cluster promotes summer fire season readiness on local radio

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' Working on Fire programme in the Eastern Cape hosts an annual fire awareness campaign launch at the Witelsbos Plantation Office on 28 November 2019.

Witelsbos was one of the areas affected by the Tsitsikamma fires in 2018. These fires took days to suppress and community members had to be evacuated to safer places.

This event will raise awareness in the schools and communities about the upcoming summer fire season and prepare them to be extra-vigilant and careful about reducing unwanted veld fires in and around their communities.

The purpose of the fire awareness campaign is also to empower those at risk to take responsibility for their risks. The campaign shares valuable information

with communities to address myths, change negative perceptions and alter behaviour patterns.

For example, over 90% of unwanted fires are caused by human negligence but not all fires are bad. Controlled fires are required to maintain ecosystem function and, under controlled conditions, fire can be used as an efficient land management tool in most of South Africa.

The above event is also an opportunity for the community to learn more about the importance of evacuation during fires.

The Eastern Cape has a winter fire season and a summer fire season and hosts fire awareness campaigns before each fire season.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Creating fire safe communities



Community Fire Awareness Officer, Sello Matlhare, empowers community members during the FireSafe workshop in Thabazimbi

Working on Fire Limpopo, in partnership with the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, embarked on a project to empower the communities to be fire safe.

Sello Matlhare, the Community Fire Awareness Officer in Limpopo, facilitated the community awareness workshop at Regorogile village in Thabazimbi, where he educated the community members about the impacts of fires in their homes and in the environment. "Most of the fires that occur in our homes are caused by human negligence, and 90% of the fires that occur at home could've been prevented if there was knowledge," says Matlhare.

During the workshop, community members were asked to identify the risks that they had in their homes and propose solutions to how those risks could be removed or eliminated. "The objective of these workshops is to equip the communities with fire safety tips and to empower them to ensure that their households and communities are safe from unwanted fires," says Matlhare.

WOF continues to empower the communities with fire safety tips and these workshops are run throughout the year. Communities that are prone to wildfires are prioritised.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

KwaZulu-Natal concludes winter fire season

It was a very busy winter fire season for the KwaZulu-Natal firefighters attending to unwanted fires in communities, plantations and private properties. From 15 May to 14 November, teams were called out to 331 fires in the province that burned an estimated 36 048 hectares. There were 225 fires recorded in 2018.

KZN Assistant General Manager, Bongani Nhlabathi, says, "This year we saw drastic climate change impacting our weather conditions which affected the number of fires we were dispatched to suppress. What affected us the most were the 122 fires in July, the highest number of fires we've had, and fires that lasted more than two days, such as the Msunduzi landfill fire."

WOF implements integrated fire management to ensure a safe fire season. This includes fire awareness activities which the programme implements at schools and communities and with other organisations and expanded public work programmes. Since April, firefighters have conducted 119 school fire awareness activities, 90 community door-to-door campaigns, 44 presentations and 10 FireSafe workshops to ensure communities were aware of the dangers of unwanted fires.



Firefighters suppressing a fire

"We appreciate all the support we have received from all the partners we have worked with throughout the year in having a safe winter fire season. Two of our teams will be on standby this festive season, to assist in the summer fire season in the Western Cape," says Nhlabathi.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

WOF partners with stakeholders to raise fire awareness



The Newlands Team raised awareness on Environmental Awareness Day ahead of the start of the summer fire season

As part of fostering increased safety awareness ahead of the Western Cape summer fire season, the Working on Fire Newlands Team, led by the Fire Awareness Department, attended the Masiphumelele Environmental Awareness Day event.

The aim of the event, which was organised by Table Mountain National Park and the City of Cape Town, was to join forces with other stakeholders, including Fire and Rescue, SANParks and emergency

services, to raise public awareness about the risks of starting fires, illegal dumping as well as other activities that could harm the wetland.

The team shared information about safety with residents who attended the event who also learned what to do to ensure they minimised the risks of starting fires that could get out of control.



Limakatso Khaliyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF assists participants affected by the storm



Albert Falls firefighters putting up a tent

KwaZulu-Natal was recently hit by major storms which included severe thunderstorms, lightning strikes, gale-force winds and heavy downpours that wreaked havoc across the province, destroying many homes and causing fatalities.

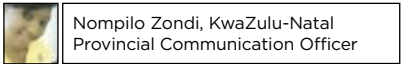
A tornado hit the Mpolweni area at Mvundleweni village just outside Pietermaritzburg. Five Working on Fire Albert Falls Team members suffered heavy damage to their homes.

Albert Falls Base Communications Representative, Sibongiseni Gumede, says, "After hearing about the unfortunate incident, we decided as a team to assist our colleagues, going from house to house and clearing and cleaning with the participants' families." The major damage was mostly to the

roofs of their home. As a temporary measure, the team brought tents from their base for the families to cover their belongings with as more rain had been predicted.

"Our Regional Manager approached the provincial office and more tents were requested for all the households that needed them. Teams members were very grateful for the kind gesture that the programme made to them and their families," says Gumede.

The provincial office would have liked to have done more for the participants but wished them all the best in restoring their homes and accessing assistance from the relevant departments.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

FPAs salute our teams



FPAs in their WRDM salute WOF teams for helping in suppressing fires

Fire Protection Associations in the West Rand District have praised the Working on Fire teams for their sterling work during the fire season.

Johan Swart, the chairperson of the Muldersdrift FPA, says the teams performed extremely well and have helped to save farms and lives.

"As a chairperson, I say well done to the teams and keep up the excellent work. We struggled with fires as farmers and WOF teams were active and responsive. The teams were professional and marvellous to work with. Recent heatwaves also posed challenges to us but the WOF teams were on top

of their game once more," he says. Swart says the WOF teams helped with many fire suppressions that he could not have contained with only his farm workers.

Ryan Marsden, the chairperson of Rietlaagte FPA, says that the WOF teams based in Mogale City were instrumental in preventing and suppressing deadly fires.

"They have been part of the fire season launch to raise fire awareness," says Marsden.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Free State teams shine during Culture Competition

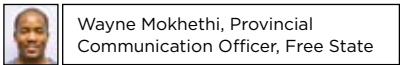
Working on Fire teams in the Free State recently participated in the Culture Competition that was hosted in the province. Teams were encouraged to create their own 'haka' that represented the culture within their respective teams.

All the teams that participated created equally creative and entertaining videos, which included singing and dancing. However, only one team could be selected as the overall winner.

The Provincial Executive Committee (PREXCO) had the tough task of selecting the winner and, after much deliberation and using specific criteria to judge each video, they made their final choice and

the Thaba'Nchu team was selected as the winner. The winning team was awarded a sheep donated by the Free State General Manager.

"I am very thankful and extremely proud of my team for making the haka a success. We did it through discipline and hard work and by working as one. We would like to thank the Free State management for the prize they gave us. It really motivated us to go the extra mile in all our activities and duties," says Type 1 Crew Leader Moleboheng Ratlala.



Wayne Mokhethi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Mpumalanga celebrates Culture Competition win



EXCO member Jacob Singo addressed the Mpumalanga staff at their Culture Competition celebrations

The Mpumalanga provincial staff celebrated their Working on Fire Culture Competition win with a mouth-watering lunch at the Wild Medlar Guest House on 18 November.

The staff were joined by the national HAT staff and the LEFPA and Nelspruit Teams.

The win came after the Mpumalanga team produced a winning Culture Change performance video and garnered the most votes to be crowned Provincial Culture Competition winners.

The Culture Change Initiative is a way for WOF to develop a corporate culture based on the values and vision that will be embedded within the

organisation in a structural way. All provinces had to produce a war cry ('haka') or song that encapsulated the values and vision at their best.

Mpumalanga chose Type 3 Dispatcher, Kagiso Tshehla, as its provincial cultural ambassador, who led the province to glory.

The Mpumalanga war cry will now be used nationally by all teams within the organisation.

The Mpumalanga team were congratulated by a member of the Executive Committee, Jacob Singo, who officially handed over the trophy.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer



The Thaba'Nchu Team was selected as the winner in the Culture Competition in the Free State

WOF Eastern Cape will march against the abuse of women and children

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' Working on Fire (WOF) programme in the Eastern Cape, in collaboration with King Sabatha Dalindyebo Municipality, Mthatha Women Support Centre, the Department of Health, Mthatha Traffic Department, Mthatha FAMS and OR Tambo Disaster Management, will march throughout Mthatha town on 5 December 2019 as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Women and Children Abuse.

About 100 firefighters from WOF and other stakeholders will march from Fire and Rescue offices via Sutherland Street, Stanford, Cape Road and Nelson Mandela to the town hall, holding placards proclaiming "No to Women and Children abuse, Not in my name".

After the march, there will be a gathering where stakeholders will share



WOF Eastern Cape and various partners condemned women and children abuse during the march

messages of support for the campaign. According to the Social Development Practitioner of WOF Eastern Cape, Yvonne Nte, this will be done to educate community members to reject the abuse of children and women.

"We want to break the silence and have a community that is free to say no to children and women abuse," says Nte.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Working on Fire has joined the national fight in battling the rise of gender-based violence, by holding numerous workshops where staff and participants are educated on the causes of the problem and ways to mitigate it.

The Working on Fire Mpumalanga provincial staff and national HAT staff attended a gender-based violence workshop at the Mpumalanga Tourism Parks Agency auditorium on 7 November.

The workshop at MTPA was hosted by WOF KwaZulu-Natal Social Development Practitioner, Hloniphile Ndlovu, and social development consultant, Fatima Pandey.

The staff learned how to tackle gender-based violence by educating young boys and girls on what is wrong and right through their actions as parents, brothers and sisters.

"One should take a stance as soon as the children are born and be aware of one's actions and reactions, because children emulate the older generation's actions as they grow up," Pandey said.

The staff also held group discussions, talking about various circumstances in which gender-based violence has and would rear its head.

Mpumalanga provincial staff tackle gender-based violence

The programme against gender-based violence in WOF will continue when the Mpumalanga Social Development Practitioner, Makoloi Tele, holds workshops at all bases within the province with participants. "It is up to us to begin at home, within our organisation, to teach our

men and women about gender-based violence so they can go out in their communities and make the change," Tele says.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer



The provincial staff and HAT staff discuss ways to curb the scourge of gender-based violence within the organisation and society

WOF engages communities on gender-based violence

According to the World Health Organisation, 12,1 women per 100 000 are murdered annually in South Africa,

a murder rate five times higher than the global average. Given this alarming situation, Working on Fire is raising



Metse Maitisa engages the community members of Vingerkraal on gender-based violence

awareness among all the participants and management about gender-based violence (GBV) in society and in the workplace.

"GBV is affecting us all and we as men need to stand up and start coming up with the solutions. Our women and children are dying on a daily basis and it's not surprising when they have resorted to calling us trash, because we are failing to protect them and instead we are killing them," says Metse Maitisa, WOF Limpopo Provincial Coordinator and GBV Ambassador.

WOF launched a GBV awareness drive where the ambassadors are visiting bases, creating awareness among the participants and rendering support services to those who are affected by GBV. Maitisa and the Vingerkraal participants took the GBV awareness campaign to the

Storeperson thankful to WOF for work opportunity



Tsietsi More says his teenage years came with challenges, but WOF gave him an opportunity to prove his capabilities

November is Disability Awareness Month. During this month, the nation celebrates people who are living with disabilities. Working on Fire has established a key initiative to restore the dignity of the disabled and is changing lives across the country through this key initiative.

Tsietsi More joined WOF this year in July as a storekeeper in the Boskop Team. "Growing up, people tended to think that because I am disabled I'm also mentally unfit. My parents knew that I was not mentally unfit. I'm perfectly fine, it's just the visible disability of my legs," says More. "I don't see myself as a person living with disability because I can drive a normal car."

Despite his childhood challenges, after completing matric he attended Boston City Campus and Business College and passed his IT Specialist course.

Since joining the WOF family, More says, "I see more opportunities and am so glad that WOF gave me an opportunity to prove my capabilities and my strength. WOF shows that they believe in me because otherwise, they wouldn't have given me a chance to prove what I can do."

Written by Castello team BCR, Zukile Dhlomo

community of Vontin outside Vingerkraal where they engaged with caregivers and community members. The objective of this community campaign was to find the root causes of the violence on women in rural communities.

"The reason we took our campaign there is that we realised that some of our participants have encountered acts of violence at their homes, where they are supposed to be loved and cared for," says Maitisa.

WOF will continue running the GBV campaign through the year and into the following year.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Mpumalanga staff raise funds for WOF Kids with Wellness Day

WOF Mpumalanga provincial staff joined staff from the Working on Fire Head Office, national HAT, Kishugu Training Academy, Kishugu Aviation, Kishugu Fleet and the Spy Stars Netball team at the Halls Sports Ground in Nelspruit for a Wellness Day on Friday, 8 November.

The aim of the Wellness Day was to collect funds to distribute 1 000 WOF Kids care packages to the children of WOF participants.

The WOF Kids care package is part of Working on Fire's social responsibility programme and demonstrates the

value of 'Making a Difference'. Each package is a gift of hope containing essential personal care and educational items.

The Wellness Day began with 5 km and 10 km walks through the streets of Matabele. Malebo Modipane from WOF Head Office was the overall winner of the race.

The day continued with netball and soccer matches. Kishugu Training Academy walked away with the soccer trophy and the Spy Stars Netball team were crowned winners of the netball competition.



Mpumalanga General Manager, Ovie Sehlabe, joined the staff in a 10 km walk during the Wellness Day

WOF Mpumalanga has already raised a total of R9 000 for the WOF Kids care package project.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Firefighters donate blood to save lives



Mogalakwena participants donating blood during the SANBS blood drive held at Mokopane

"We started participating in the SANBS blood drive five years ago after we learned that there are a lot of people who die after car accidents due to losing lots of blood," says Lebogang Malete, Type 2 Crew Leader at Mogalakwena Base.

With the support of their base manager, Mark Wreyfort, the WOF firefighters started donating blood to save lives.

"By donating blood, not only are we helping those who need it, but we get encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle. As such, we are saving both our lives and the lives of our society," says Malete.

The Mogalakwena firefighters are donating blood every three months. Currently, half of the team has committed to supporting the Mokopane SANBS blood drive campaign and they would like to encourage others to consider donating blood.

"By donating blood, we are also getting the medical check-ups for free. So we are also benefitting as the blood donors," says Malete.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Local business donates bricks to build WOF helipad in Porterville



Fick Sementwerk donated 4 000 bricks for the construction of the revamped helipad

In preparation for the Western Cape summer fire season, a good Samaritan from Fick Sementwerk in Piketberg donated 4 000 bricks for the construction of a helipad for the aerial support stationed at the Porterville airbase.

The WOF Porterville Team hit the road running in starting with the construction work to ensure that the facility will be ready for use by the time the fire season starts.

The team's base manager, Cyril van Willies, says the helipad will

ensure that aerial support lands and takes off safely during the fire season.

"The helipad will reduce dust and enable the heli-tech team and firefighters working on the ground to work safely together," he says.

Van Willies says his team is ready for the fire season and has been busy with preventative measures such as block burns and fuel reduction activities.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF athletics team participates in Soweto Marathon

About 40 000 athletes took part in the 26th Old Mutual Soweto Marathon, one of the most popular races on the running calendar, which started in 1991. The race organisers, the Soweto Marathon Trust, and sponsors Old Mutual once again delivered on their promise to give all participants a fantastic, fun-filled experience.

Sixteen Working on Fire athletes from across the Free State participated in the 42.2 km, 21.1 km and the 10 km races and achieved varying degrees of success in their events. The event honours Soweto's rich history and runners pass eight significant

heritage sites on the marathon route.

"The Soweto Marathon was very challenging and the weather was not easy as it was hot on that day. We had a great time as we were part of the 40 000 athletes that took part. Even with all those challenges, all of our WOF athletes managed a respectable finishing time. We can only thank Free State management for the support that they continue giving us," says Thuso Mongale, a Clocolan Type 1 Crew Leader.



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State



Athletes from the WOF Free State Athletics Club

Firefighter aspires to more through formal education



Bantie Mphosi, a firefighter from the Working on Fire Kroonstad Team, recently achieved her dream of having a tertiary qualification when she obtained her N6 diploma in Human Resource Management from the Flavius Mareka TVET College in the Free State.

The mother of two joined the Kroonstad Team in 2011. After completing her N4 and N5 certificates, she had to put her studies on hold. In 2018, she was offered a bursary to complete her N6. Mphosi seized the opportunity despite being employed full-time

and caring for her two young children and, through sheer hard work and determination, was able to complete it.

"I would like to encourage those in the programme to pursue education as a means of uplifting yourself. Don't quit even though times get tough, because eventually a door will open for you," says Mphosi, who now serves as the Health and Safety Representative of her team.

Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Participant uses WOF income to further studies

Like many Working On Fire participants, Susan Makhobosi is striving to become the best she can be by working her way up through the WOF ranks and improving her qualifications.

Makhobosi joined WOF in July 2011 as a firefighter. Thanks to her hard work and discipline, she was nominated to attend a Type 2 Crew Leader course in July 2013. In 2015, she was promoted to Type 1 Crew Leader. She was transferred to the Castello Team in 2017 where she works as a crew leader.

Makhobosi has not only managed to get promoted, but is also doing her best to further her studies and seek better opportunities. Makhobosi says that her appointment as a crew leader played a big role in discovering her potential for administrative work.

Makhobosi recently obtained a certificate in Office Administration at IQ Academy, funding her course with part of her WOF income. Encouraged by this success, she is now using a stop order to save some of her earnings to do a diploma in management next year.

She says participants should never give up on their dreams. "Anything is



Type 1 Crew Leader of the Castello Team, Susan Makhobosi, recently obtained a certificate in Office Administration

possible in life. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it. Do not try to cover it up or blame your colleagues. Come up with a solution to how you are going to sort it out," she says.

Written by Castello team BCR, Zukile Dhlomo

Participant is empowering herself through education

With this year's marking of National Disability Rights Awareness Month coming to a close, Working on Fire is proud that it has not only been able to accommodate work opportunities for people living with disabilities in the programme, but has also assisted staff to strive towards better opportunities.

Storeperson Nompumelelo Ngubo in Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal, is a participant in the ABET training taking place in the province.

"I decided to join the ABET training because when I was younger, due to my disability, I was unable to finish my high school studies. When the opportunity arose, I grabbed it with both hands," she says.

In 2004, Ngubo moved from Ixopo to Richmond in hopes of a better life for herself and was employed by WOF in 2010, in what was her first job.

"I am very grateful I moved away from home because I got the opportunity to meet other people living with disabilities," she says. "I love the fact that we motivate each other to do better all the time."

Ngubo says she has completed computer, financial management, poultry farming and sowing certificate courses thanks to her WOF income. She is also able to send money back home to assist her family.



"At 51 years old, I don't worry about my age but look to empower myself with knowledge. I am really enjoying the opportunity to receive the ABET training through WOF and encourage others to never pull themselves down," says Ngubo.

Ngubo hopes to open her own business one day and put all her skills and training to good use, and maybe own her own car.

Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

West Rand firefighters awarded certificates

Twelve firefighters from the Working on Fire teams in Merafong City were awarded certificates in fire search and rescue and seven other structural firefighting courses. The training courses were hosted at the Carletonville fire station.

Andre Marx, the principal of the West Rand District Municipality Training Academy, says that the objective of the mostly practical training courses, which are moderated by the University of Johannesburg, was to empower WOF firefighters with professional and advanced skills in structural firefighting.

"Among other courses, they have done first aid and high-angle rescue which are instrumental in saving lives. These are the future life savers," Marx says.

WOF Gauteng General Manager Stephen Boyes applauded the firefighters for taking initiative. He says the 12 firefighters footed the bill for the courses which shows their determination and dedication to rise above their challenges. Boyes urges other firefighters to consider upskilling themselves when possible.

Nico Kahts, the fire chief for Carletonville and Fochville, says that if op-



portunities arose he would not hesitate to recommend the trainees for positions.

One of the participants, Tebogwa Ledwaba, says she is now considering

doing advanced life support training.

Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Former WOF participants become structural firefighters

Four former WOF firefighters from the Western Cape have been recruited by the Witzenberg Municipality as structural firefighting officers.

Jaden Jordin, Collin Bless, Heinrich Johann and Elroy Esau successfully completed a structural firefighting training course recently and participated in the passing-out parade at the Bella Vista Sports Ground to mark their graduation.

Provincial Assistant General Manager Ray-yaan Majiet was present as an official guest.

Majiet says he felt a huge sense of pride when he received an invitation to the parade, knowing that former WOF participants would be part of it.

After watching a structural fire-fighting passing-out parade for the first time, he says, "It was an honour to see the looks on our colleagues who have grown from the Working on Fire programme. They stood proudly and rightly so, as they deserved it."



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Western Cape Assistant General Manager, Ray-yaan Majiet, congratulates the four former participants who have exited the programme

Former firefighter takes opportunity at nature reserve

Unemployment is so high these days that getting a permanent job is not easy if you are not qualified.

These are the words of Amanda Ncumeza, the Working on Fire firefighter who recently started working as a guard at the ECPTA in Dwesa Nature Reserve.

Ncumeza well remembers joining the WOF family as a firefighter at the Dwesa Base in 2011.

"I was so excited as I knew that I would have something that would help me put food on the table for my family," she says, noting that WOF offered her a job even though she was not qualified.

"I then told myself that I would work hard and always do my job with passion and love, knowing that hard work pays," she says.

She says that she always makes sure that she goes the extra mile in every task given to her.

"Working for WOF gave me so many skills as well as experience that opened the door to green pastures," she says.

Ncumeza was sent on the Type 2 Crew Leader training course in 2012, which she passed very well.

"I then became one of the best female crew leaders. After working hard for seven years in the programme I was then blessed with a new job at



Amanda Ncumeza thanks the WOF programme for paving her way to greener pastures

Dwesa Nature Reserve," she says with a satisfied smile.

Ncumeza thanks WOF for making her a better person by developing her skills and showing her the right direction at all times.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF driver secures permanent employment



Tsupane Jacob Radebe

Tsupane Jacob Radebe joined Working on Fire in 2006 as a veld and forest firefighter. Before joining the programme, Radebe had lost his job as an petrol attendant and was unemployed.

After joining the Bethlehem Team, he received training to become a SHE Rep at his base and went on to become a driver in the programme in 2009.

Radebe knew that he had to equip himself to find permanent employment outside of WOF so he obtained his code 14 driver's licence in 2017, which qualified him to drive large freight trucks. Radebe applied for a position as a driver at one of

the largest logistics companies in the country and was recently selected as the successful candidate.

"Through WOF, I was able to care for my children and renovate and furnish my home. Having spent 13 years in the programme, discipline and hard work are instilled in me. This assists me in my current position where I go to bed at 11pm and have to back on the road at 4am. My message for my colleagues is that the time is now to look for and apply for jobs. Never give up," says Radebe.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer



Mfundo Malope

On the move

Mfundo Malope, a former firefighter at the Heidelberg Team, has exited the programme after getting a job as a waiter in a leading hotel at OR Tambo International Airport.

"The programme gave me an economic refuge when life was tough. The stipend helped me in many different ways to advance my needs of education and seeking formal jobs," says Malope, who registered to do his law degree at the University

of South Africa before he exited the programme.

He says he will always remember his team helping him to prepare for a job interview at Transnet Freight Rail earlier this year.

"Although I didn't get the job, it was a remarkable experience. The support was overwhelming," says Malope.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer