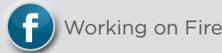




WOFIRE NEWS

Saving Lives • Protecting the Environment • Restoring Dignity

VOLUME 8 | EDITION 11 | FEBRUARY 2020



WOF Forestry Support Team graduates at Kishugu

The recently established Working on Fire Forestry Support Team's first batch of new recruits graduated on 27 February at the Kishugu Training Academy. A total of 124 WOF recruits from the Western and Eastern Cape were celebrated as they received their certificates.

The graduation ceremony kicked off with entertainment from the recruits in the form of poems and traditional songs. After a welcome from Kishugu Training Academy's Christopher Kasayi, the WOF Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, officially began the formal procedures.

Abrahams congratulated the graduates and urged them to go out into the field and live the WOF values of 'Protecting the Environment', 'Saving Lives' and 'Making a Difference'.

Acting DDG: Forestry in the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms SM Leseke, also



Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) Deputy Minister, Makhotso Soty, hands out certificates for outstanding performance during training at the WOF Forestry Support Team graduation

addressed the graduates and the audience, making particular mention of how talented the graduates were and asking them to nurture their talents.

The DEFF Deputy Minister, Makhotso Soty, gave the keynote address and also handed out the

certificates, with several happy recruits being awarded for their outstanding performance during training at Kishugu Training Academy.

The team, comprising 32 females and 92 males, will help rehabilitate forests and plantations that



DEFF Deputy Minister, Makhotso Soty, and WOF MD Trevor Abrahams, pose with graduating WOF Forestry Support Team participants who achieved outstanding performance during training



DEFF Deputy Minister, Makhotso Soty, WOF MD Trevor Abrahams and delegates listen to Kishugu Training Academy instructors as they share their journey at WOF

have been poorly managed in their regions. They will be deployed to various forestry villages to ensure

Continued on page 2

In a bid to build, harness and maintain relations with various stakeholders, the Executive Committee of Working on Fire, led by the Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, attended the 30th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela at the City Hall in Cape Town on 11 February.

Clad in their familiar WOF yellow T-shirts, the delegation also included Chief Operations Officer Shane Christian, Senior Manager Stakeholder Relations Linton Rensburg and Themba Sepotokele, WOF's Communication and Content Executive.

Under the theme 'From Freedom to Liberation', the commemoration brought together the old and new generations who reflected on the role the country's first democratically elected president Nelson Mandela played in unifying the country.

Speaking outside the Cape Town City Hall where Mandela made his first public speech, President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was there 30 years ago said, "We will forever remember those first words, 'I stand before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people'. We can be proud of our achievements in entrenching the democracy that Nelson Mandela led us so ably to install, but yet there is much we can be less proud of."

WOF commemorates the 30th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela



Working on Fire senior management, led by WOF Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, attended the event marking the 30th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Sello Hatang, said it was an honour to host the marking of a memorable occasion which would forever be

entrenched in his mind. WOF MD Trevor Abrahams recalled that, although he was not in the country when Madiba was released, he watched the event on television with comrades and friends. He said Mandela's release changed the country's political landscape and he was honoured to have been part of the event.

The commemoration was marked with a memorial lecture before the President addressed the crowd.

WOF's presence at the event was not only to make our support visible in joining the anniversary celebrations but also to cement relations with the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Plans are afoot to present the foundation with framed pictures of WOF honouring Mandela at the time of his passing and also to partner with it in the annual 67 Minutes for Nelson Mandela Day activities.

Written by Editorial team

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our February edition. We hope you find this issue informative and fun to read. We thank the participants who are giving us feedback about the newsletter and are willing to contribute their stories. See Nomanesi Hoboya's story on your right. We look forward to more participants' contributions in future editions.

In our January issue, we announced some of the new features and changes planned for our newsletter. In this issue, we introduce the new Working on Fire crossword puzzle (on page 7), a word game to exercise your mind.

On page 8, we also begin the WOF comic strip Mollo Ka Hare (The Fire Within), an initiative of the WOF Social Development Department. Mollo Ka Hare aims to address issues by mirroring and reflecting questionable social behaviours that may have become the norm among participants or their families.

Our Social Development Department is passionate about the empowerment and personal growth of individuals as well as the development of the organisation. The department will continue to facilitate workshops, projects and initiatives that target individual participants and management (e.g. wellness, educational and therapeutic workshops), while there will also be projects benefitting the WOF community at large, such as gender-based violence, alumni engagement, WOF Kids, food security and women empowerment. We will be engaging you on various platforms about all these issues. Watch this space!

Continued from page 1

WOF Forestry Support Team graduates at Kishugu

compliance with the National Veld and Forest Act and other laws. The team will also implement Integrated Fire Management activities, including constructing firebreaks, reducing fuel loads and assisting with fighting veld fires.

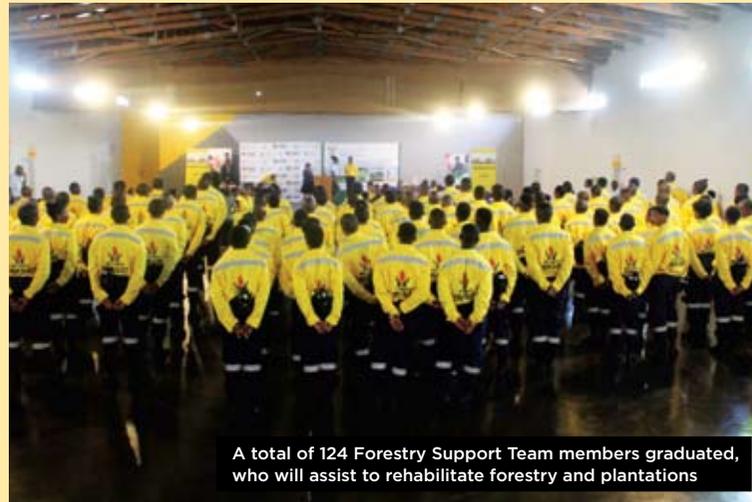
As the Forestry Support Team initiative will provide 320 new job opportunities, it perfectly demonstrates and serves WOF's value of 'Restoring Dignity' to our country's youth and communities.



DEFF Deputy Minister, Makhotso Soty, delivers the keynote address at the WOF Forestry Support Team graduation ceremony



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer



A total of 124 Forestry Support Team members graduated, who will assist to rehabilitate forestry and plantations

From nowhere to somewhere – a journey that I am proud of



My name is Nomanesi Hoboya from Walker Bay Base in the Western Cape. I am a young girl originally from a disadvantaged home in the Eastern Cape. I was raised by a single parent with nothing.

After nine years in the programme I am a big girl, a Type 1 Crew Leader with probation under my belt. I am currently studying a project management national diploma and I have a driver's licence.

Thank you to Working on Fire for giving me the opportunity to be something in life, for making me a daughter that my parent is proud of.

I am a strong, loving mother and I provide for my family. I am now an example to my community and a mentor to the new recruits joining Working On Fire.

Written by Nomanesi Hoboya from Walker Bay Base in the Western Cape

Farmer thanks Dewetsdorp Team with gifts



Johan Fourie issues leather goods to the Working on Fire Dewetsdorp Team

Working on Fire has built strong relationships with its partners since its inception in the Free State and both WOF and its partners are immensely proud of the fruits that the valued partnerships have produced.

Fire suppression and preventative activities such as fuel load reduction done by WOF in partnership with the Mangaung Fire Protection Association have reduced the numbers of and destruction caused by these wildfires in the Mangaung Municipality.

The firefighters from the Dewetsdorp Team were recently rewarded

for the hard work and extra hours they put in. As a sign of appreciation, Chris de Bruyn, a farmer who owns leather goods company Excelsior Leather Works, gifted each team member with a personalised leather belt.

Johan Fourie, the Secretary of Dewetsdorp Agriculture, says that the farmer appreciated the quality work that the team does for farmers in general and he thought it would be fitting to provide each of them with a quality leather belt to show his gratitude.



Wayne Mokhethi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

WOF recognised for excellent service



WOF Limpopo's General Manager Tshepo Malatji receives a recognition award from RSM Edward Maluleke of SAMHS in Lephalale

Working on Fire Limpopo's Lephalale Team was recognised for the good service rendered at the South African Military Health Service premises and surrounding areas within the Lephalale Municipality.

WOF Lephalale participants assist landowners and organisations through Integrated Fire Management Services to make their properties fire safe.

"I really appreciate the partnership that we have with WOF and the firefighters at the base. As SAMHS, we saw it beneficial to reward and recognise the team for their hard work during the 2019 year and we really appreciate their services on our

premises," said Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) Edward Maluleke of SAMHS in Lephalale.

Limpopo's Provincial General Manager Tshepo Malatji received the recognition certificates on behalf of the Lephalale firefighters.

"We are honoured to be recognised by SAMHS and this shows that all our hard work and effort are noticed. We will continue to make a difference in our society and ensure that our community is fire safe" said Daphney Laka, Type 2 Crew Leader at Lephalale Base.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Multiple fires extinguished in January in the Western Cape

About 400 firefighters from 19 teams were dispatched to suppress 20 fires in January as the summer fire season continues in the Western Cape. In the same month last year, 40 teams were deployed to attend 23 fires that destroyed more than 36 000 ha of land.

This year, only about 3 000 ha of land was burned with only nine of the 20 fires occurring in the Southern Cape. The Working on Fire Hotshots Type 1 team, whose members are firefighters who have received high-level specialised training,

was the most deployed team (7), while the second most deployed team was the Newlands Team (6).

So far this year, WOF's aerial resources have flown a total of 139 hours, of which 105 hours were flown in the western parts of the province. Last fire season, aerial resources spent close to 700 hours dropping loads of water to douse the flames.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer



A firefighter fighting fire in the Western Cape

WOF attends Provincial Wildfire Advisory Forum



Members of the Free State Provincial Wildfire Advisory Forum

Partnerships are essential to ensuring the safety of people and property in the Free State from wildfires and the destruction they can cause. The Free State Umbrella Fire Protection Association (FSUFPA) recently hosted a provincial wildfire forum where wildfire operational matters were discussed.

Numerous stakeholders from across the province attended the forum, including SANRAL, Eskom, COGTA, Transnet, Working on Fire, RIMS, CAPS, FSUFPA and DEFF. The Provincial Wildfire Advisory Forum is a recognised sub-forum of the Free State Provincial Disaster Management Centre and falls under the Provincial Fire Services Advisory Committee (ProfSAC).

Mangaung Fire Chief Theuns van der Westhuizen says, "Initially, when we heard about Working on Fire we were hesitant as we saw them as competition. However, over the years, Working on Fire has been instrumental in reducing our response times in attending to wildfires in the Mangaung Municipality and we understand the different roles that organisations play in achieving our directives."

The Forum is a good example of the many positive relationships WOF enjoys in the province and demonstrates how these partnerships support all the stakeholders to achieve their goals.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Heidelberg community taught to protect homes from wildfires

Following an intensive fire awareness workshop held by Working On Fire's Community Fire Awareness Officer in the Western Cape, Rayganah Rhoda, with Cape Nature's environmental educators, the environmental educators held a Community FireSafe Day with the EPWP participants in Heidelberg.

The aims of the gathering, which was supported by the Riversdale Team, were to share knowledge and information on reducing veld fires and protect-

ing homes from fire, improve community participation in fire management and assist the community with risk identification and mitigation.

The EPWP participants were chosen because they had demonstrated proactive behaviour in community-related activities. They were equipped with the skills to teach fellow community members fire safety techniques.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Hotshots learn more firefighting techniques



The Newlands Team with the Hotshot crew from Gauteng

The 25-member Hotshots crew deployed from Gauteng to assist with the Western Cape's fire season is doing marvelous work, according to Larry Mathaba, the regional manager for the team.

Mathaba says the team, which is based at Newlands and is made up of firefighters from all the bases in Gauteng, is enabling the province to save more lives and property from fire.

"Our crew members need to be extra careful during fire call-outs and on the fire lines. In Gauteng, they always fight grass fires, not fynbos-based vegetation fires," says Mathaba.

Besides easing the burden on the Newlands firefighters, the crew

was also gaining more experience of working with aerial resources and being exposed to working in a variety of terrains and conditions.

"The Western Cape is known for its fatal and deadly runaway fires. The team spends long periods on the fire lines because the area is mountainous and this makes it difficult to contain fires easily," says Mathaba, who adds that the crew members had undergone rigorous training in Nelspruit for such deployments.

Mathaba says, even though the pace is hectic with almost daily fires, "the team is enjoying the moments."



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer



Community Fire Awareness Officer Rayganah Rhoda and Cape Nature's Thabiso Mokoena during the facilitation of the Community FireSafe Day

Awareness raising of wetlands in the Eastern Cape



Community members and learners learn about the environmental impact of wetlands

Working on Fire Eastern Cape partnered with the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, SAPS, WESSA, the Department of Economic Development, Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), Matatiele Local Municipality, Alfred Nzo District Municipality, COGTA and the Eastern Cape Education Department to celebrate World Wetlands Day (WWD) at Cedarville Community Hall in Cedarville on 7 February 2020.

WWD serves to raise awareness in communities and schools about the importance of looking after the wetlands. Community members and school learners from different schools attended the programme where they were educated about the impacts of wetlands on society.

The DEDEAT Head of Department, Ms M Mama, informed participants that wetlands reduced the severity of droughts and floods by regulating stream flow, acting like giant sponges that can

hold huge amounts of water. In addition, when they are properly looked after, they filter waste and improve the quality of drinking water.

When wetlands were turned into dumping sites, the litter increased the risk of fire. Aside from the danger to people, when wetlands burnt, seeds were lost or germinate at the wrong time, wildlife suffers loss of life and food and the wetland vegetation that helps to hold the water is destroyed. Wetlands should therefore be protected from fires.

Schools were encouraged to do more wetlands education on site as that would open the minds of learners. Learners at the event were encouraged to share the information they had learnt with their parents and friends to widen the communities' knowledge and understanding of the wetland environment.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Vredenburg Team commemorates World Wetlands Day



The Vredenburg Team collecting litter at the Velddrif Harbour

The Vredenburg Team on the West Coast commemorated World Wetlands Day with the West Coast National Park in Velddrif.

The team visited Noordhoek Primary School where they did a wetland-related fire awareness session and taught the learners about the role wetlands play in combatting wildfires. West Coast National Park members taught the learners

about the biodiversity found in wetlands and the need to protect biodiversity and turn the wetland into a healthy habitat for the ecosystem.

The Working on Fire team then conducted a clean-up of litter in the Velddrif Harbour area.



Limakatso Khalianyane, WC Provincial Communication Officer

Aganang marks World Wetlands Day

World Wetlands Day is held on 2 February each year, the same day in 1971 when the Convention on Wetlands was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar by a group of concerned environmentalists. World Wetlands Day was celebrated for the first time in 1997.

Working on Fire Limpopo set out to educate learners and society across the province about the impacts of wetlands on our society. WOF Aganang firefighters conducted an informative awareness activity with Grade 10 learners at Nkgopoleng Secondary School in Chloë Thabangeng at Ga Matlala.

The learners were taught how wetlands were being damaged and the ecological balance and aquatic life sometimes even destroyed through human negligence and ignorance, when wetlands were used as dumping areas or drained for human use. Following the programme, WOF firefighters were joined by the learners in cleaning the wetlands in Chloë.



Aganang participants and Nkgopoleng Secondary School learners clean the wetlands in their area as part of the World Wetlands Day event in Limpopo

The WOF awareness activity is designed to be compliant with the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) system used in South African schools.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Learning to preserve the world's wetlands



The Working on Fire Reitz Team being taught about wetlands with the use of an illustration

Working on Fire actively works to protect wetland habitats by providing its participants with knowledge about the importance of wetlands and how to conserve them. In turn, the participants educate community members and school learners.

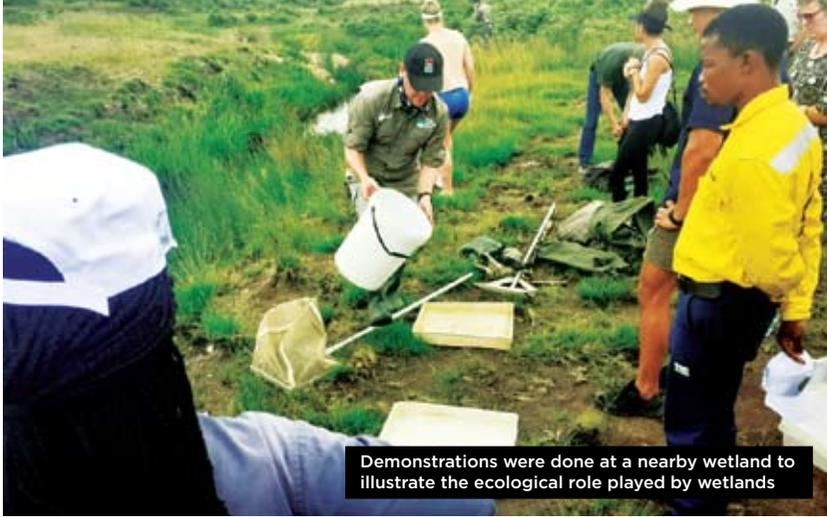
Wetlands play an important role in helping communities by ameliorating natural hazards such as flooding caused by storms, cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis. Under projected climate change scenarios, these extreme climatic events, as well as droughts, are expected to increase in frequency and intensity.

The WOF Free State Fire Awareness Department has taught every team about wetlands and provided the teams with creative illustrations about how wetlands function in the ecosystem. Fire Awareness Training Officer Gladson Motloung says, "We taught the teams the important role wetlands play in the environment and how we can collectively care for these wetlands, as well as how to adequately educate community members about wetlands near their homes."



Wayne Mokhethi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Preserving the country's wetlands



Demonstrations were done at a nearby wetland to illustrate the ecological role played by wetlands

Working on Fire takes its responsibility to protect the environment very seriously and often participates in and supports environmental conservation activities and events. As the world commemorated World Wetlands Day to raise awareness about the vital roles of wetlands in the lives of people and the environment, the WOF Fire Awareness Department and teams across the country embarked on an awareness drive in communities and schools near wetlands.

North West Wetlands Forum and WOF North West, in association with the North West Parks Board, the Magaliesberg Biosphere and the Marico Biosphere,

hosted a Wetland Awareness event at the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve. During the event, the importance of wetlands and the roles they play in promoting biodiversity were illustrated in presentations and demonstrations done at the nearby wetland. The Kgaswane Team did a presentation on WOF's contribution to water conservation, which includes protecting wetlands from fire and pollution.

North West teams held wetlands awareness activities throughout February to encourage communities to take responsibility for their wetlands.

Written by Editorial team

Eastern Cape daycare educators learn fire safety techniques



Flagstaff daycare educators were taught about fire safety during the workshop

Working on Fire Eastern Cape, in partnership with the Shoprite Group, hosted an Early Childhood Development (ECD) educators' workshop at James Cingo Pre-school in Flagstaff.

The workshop was facilitated by the Eastern Cape Fire Awareness Training Officers Zola Hans and Teko Mooki to teach the ECD educators how to be fire safe and to equip them to implement what they had learned by practicing the techniques with the learners at their centres.

WOF has been conducting these workshops for the past three years in different communities around the province, prior to this partnership with

Shoprite. During the workshop, the Fire Awareness Department ensured that the educators practiced the fire drill and that they understood the fire escape plans and could relay the message to their learners effectively. The department conveyed the information to the ECD educators in a simple way that would assist them to pass on the knowledge to their learners.

Now that they have been empowered, the educators will make escape plans for their daycare centres and also assist in identifying the fire risks at their premises.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Graskop Team's efforts bear fruit

The Graskop Team joined the Working on Fire Food Security Programme and their garden has already produced vegetables for the community.

The team set up a vegetable garden at the Graskop South African Police Services (SAPS) site and planted carrots, tomatoes, beans, spinach and potatoes.

They donated the vegetables from their first crop to the Graskop Emmanuel Family Home, a local orphanage.

Graskop joins the Dullstroom, Sasol, Warburton and Breyten teams who have already established flourishing vegetable gardens and given back to their communities.

The aim of the WOF Food Security Programme is to aid food security in the communities neighbouring the bases as WOF's way of giving back during difficult economic times.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer



Graskop Base crew leaders show their garden to MPU Social Development Practitioner, Makoloi Tele, and Fire Awareness Training Officer, Estella Cossa

Community workers taught to promote fire safety

Working on Fire is always looking to expand the reach of its fire safety messages and has invested much effort in educating community groups and encouraging them to spread the message of fire safety in their communities.

WOF works closely with the Community Work Programme (CWP) beneficiaries in many communities across the country. This month, the KwaZulu-Natal Thubalethu Hotshot Team facilitated a fire safety awareness programme where they taught the Nkandla Local Municipality CWP beneficiaries

about the impacts of fires. The aim was to raise awareness about the dangers of fires and their risks to communities. Close to 40 beneficiaries from the Sakhile community attended the awareness programme.

The team taught the CWP beneficiaries how to identify fire risks in their communities and how to mitigate them. They then encouraged participants to educate community members and help create fire resilient communities.

CWP workers in the Nkandla Local Municipality assist with a variety



During the awareness the beneficiaries were taught how to identify fire risks and how to mitigate them

of community services, including awareness campaigns, cleaning of public spaces and maintaining com-

munity gardens and parks.

Written by Editorial team

Salique Team receives financial tips from FNB

The Mpumalanga Salique Team were visited by First National Bank Consumer Education Practitioner, Aaron Sigudla, on 5 February. The visit forms part of WOF Social Development's financial management programme, which includes workshops rolled out to bases across the province.

Sigudla co-presented with MPU Social Development Practitioner, Makoloi Tele, as they educated the team on how to budget, save and invest.

"As the year begins, we want the firefighters to be educated on how they can spend their money wisely without going into debt, which can lead to more dire issues in their homes," Tele says.

The firefighters enthusiastically participated in the various workshop activities, which included drawing up a budget for their own households. They also discussed scenarios and the options available to them in the event of an emergency financial situation.



Salique participants listen attentively to FNB Consumer Education Practitioner, Aaron Sigudla

"It was a great workshop and I hope the participants soaked up all the information I had for them," Sigudla says.

Sigudla and Tele are visiting other bases to arm participants with informa-

tion and knowledge that could lead to them achieving financial freedom.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Crew leaders gear up for 2020 fire season with refresher workshop



Crew leaders from all the bases in Mpumalanga listen attentively to various presenters from different departments at the crew leader workshop

Working on Fire in Mpumalanga is already hard at work preparing for the upcoming 2020 winter fire season. As part of the preparations, a crew leader workshop was held at the provincial boardroom on 11 and 12 February. The aim of the workshop was to arm the crew leaders with knowledge and information to take back to base and into the fire season.

Type 1 and Type 2 crew leaders from all the 24 bases within Mpumalanga and their Regional Managers convened at the boardroom where speakers from the different WOF departments presented information.

Ground Operations Managers Thabiso Mohale and Walter Khoza opened proceedings on the first day by welcoming all present.

Practitioners from the Provincial Human Resource Department began the day's programme with a comprehensive presentation on the procedures and policies of the organisation and held a Q and A session where any human resource query could be raised.

They were followed by speakers from other departments, including Communications, Fire Awareness and Social Development, who each presented on how their departments worked.

Day two of the workshop mainly focused on Integrated Fire Management, the operational side of the organisation, and included speakers from OHS, the Dispatch Centre and Ground Operations.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Knysna HAT Team upskilled to conduct awareness in schools

Western Cape's Fire Awareness Training Officer, Thulani Mkhosi, has conducted workshops with the Knysna High Altitude Team to equip them with the skills to conduct fire awareness in their communities and schools.

Mkhosi focused on the topic of wetlands and fire and the role wetlands play in reducing the risks of veld fires. His presentation included a demonstration showing how a conserved wetland can reduce the chance of soil erosion and how it purifies water.

"We discussed the importance of wetlands and how to educate the learners about the advantages of wetlands, using demonstrations to get the information across faster and more effectively," says Mkhosi.



Limakatso Khalianyane, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Thulani Mkhosi and the Knysna HAT team during a fire and wetlands workshop

Participants equipped with presentation skills

WOF Limpopo's Fire Awareness Training Officer, Kgawadi Kgamane, has brought new methods of training to the WOF participants in Limpopo, as WOF continues to empower its participants in various skills.

"Our participants are creative and talented, so I saw it as beneficial to improve on the methods that we were using when conducting fire awareness campaigns at schools and communities," says Kgamane.

The participants were previously trained on just the presentations and topic for the month, which are linked to the CAPS system.

Kgamane says it's easier to get the attention of the learners or audience when you use the demonstration or practical method of presentation.



WOF Limpopo's Fire Awareness Training Officer, Kgawadi Kgamane, equips the participants with presentation skills using the demonstration method

"By using the practical method, I enable the participants to unleash their creative skills and that allows them to be able to do more research about the presentations that they will be conduct-

ing at school in relation to the topic of the month," says Kgamane.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



Nneo Ntekwane says the stipend will assist him to complete his course

Stipend helps participant fund engineering studies

Nneo Ntekwane of Maropeng Base is saving money to get his N3 results in electrical engineering released at Lephalale TVET College in Limpopo.

"I had financial hurdles when studying, hence I had to drop out. But a new lease to my career has been found and I am using it effectively," says Ntekwane.

Ntekwane says that his savings will enable him to pay off the outstanding fees and register at Western College in Krugersdorp in June for next semester.

Ntekwane plans to buy equipment so that he can start his own electrical workshop business when he completes the course.

Ntekwane says he is grateful to the programme for the stipend he earns which is helping him to complete his engineering course.

As the breadwinner in his family, he feels that his life is much easier to manage thanks to the WOF financial management course that he attended.

General Manager for WOF Gauteng, Stephen Boyes, says it is encouraging to see young people strive to beat the odds and succeed.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

WOF participants empowered on STI education

Even though condom usage has increased by 50% in the last five years, according to the Department of Health, there's still a great need for STI awareness in our society.

WOF Limpopo's Nebo Team participants attended a one-day STI/Condom Week awareness workshop at St Rita's Hospital, where they were educated about the impact of STIs and how to

access STI screening, prevention and management services as well as additional health advice and education.

"During the workshop we were educated about STIs such as hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhoea and others. As the youth are sexually active and exposed, this is more beneficial to us and it's a wakeup call for us to start taking our health seriously," says Maxwell Fenyane, the Nebo Base Communications Representative.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



Nebo participants attend the STI/Condom Week workshop at St Rita's Hospital in Nebo

Crafting a way forward with woodwork

Koos Sibiyi is an aspirant carpenter who is already producing picture frames and other wooden hand-made items to earn extra income. Sibiyi is based at Rust de Winter Team north of Pretoria.

Sibiyi says he is waiting to be awarded a place in a carpentry training course in Nelspruit.

"I wanted to do carpentry after matriculating but had no funds to pursue studies. With the stipend I earn in the programme I have been able to buy equipment. I want to do wall units and wardrobes in people's houses because I am already doing the tasks in the village where I come from. I want to be an entrepreneur going into the future," says Sibiyi.

He says he's glad that he will be attending the course soon and that studying is true empowerment "because no one will ever take away my skills and knowledge".

Once armed with the right skills and training, Sibiyi is confident of future success. "In the rural towns where I operate, there are few people doing carpentry and there is high demand," he says.



Koos Sibiyi is an aspirant carpenter

Gauteng General Manager Stephen Boyes says he supports Sibiyi's dream of being a carpenter.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CAN YOU FIND ALL THE FIREFIGHTING TERMS LISTED BELOW IN THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE?

WORDS CAN GO IN ANY DIRECTION

F	W	A	T	E	R	S	P	S	T	O	O	B	E
I	I	S	N	A	G	E	M	A	Y	P	P	C	S
R	F	R	M	D	T	L	A	D	T	P	P	T	O
E	O	G	E	E	R	G	L	D	E	C	E	R	H
C	A	M	L	F	H	G	D	L	F	M	H	E	T
H	D	G	O	M	I	O	A	E	A	M	S	E	E
I	A	V	E	O	L	G	E	E	S	O	V	S	K
E	T	B	L	A	O	C	H	O	P	P	E	R	C
F	E	A	F	U	E	L	X	T	A	U	H	P	A
S	K	N	S	O	P	Y	P	P	E	P	E	I	J
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I	A	A	M	E	M	R	N	B	A	S	E	O	I
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AIR • PILOT • BANDANA • PPC • BASE • PPE • BOOTS • PAPER • CREW LEADER
 RAKE HOE • CHOPPER • SHIRT • FIRE CHIEF • SAFETY • FIRE FIGHTER • SNAGFUEL • TREES
 GOGGLES • GOM • HEAD LAMP • JACKET • MOP UP • OXYGEN

Mpumalanga tops up teams with recruitment drive



Working on Fire continues to live by its objectives of restoring dignity by providing work opportunities for the disadvantaged youth of South Africa.

This was evident when Mpumalanga WOF held recruitment drives at three bases to top up teams ahead of the upcoming 2020 winter fire season. Hundreds of hopefuls turned up at the recruitment drives, hoping to secure places in the programme.

According to MPU Human Resource Practitioner Adelaide Mculu, more than 500 young men and women turned up at the Graskop and Wilgeboom Base recruitment drive, while more than 150 pitched at the Badplaas recruitment

drive. All candidates attempted the gruelling fitness test and those who met the tough standards will proceed to the interview stage in the recruitment process, followed by specialised fire-fighting training for the lucky ones recruited.

These recruitment drives are not only a way for WOF to fill vacancies in teams with the best candidates, but make a difference in disadvantaged communities by offering their unemployed youth an equal opportunity to acquire skills and work experience that could transform their lives.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

WOF alumnus secures formal employment

Working on Fire is a skills development programme that continues to empower and uplift the youth of South Africa and prepare them for the job market.

Xolane Mtotso is a former WOF firefighter who was recruited on 26 January 2015 at Marakele Base in Limpopo.

In May 2016, Xolane was deployed to Canada to assist with the fire suppression together with the other firefighters from across the country. "It was an honour for me to represent WOF and South Africa in firefighting on an international level. The exposure and experience that I got was great," says Mtotso.

In 2017, Mtotso was trained as a herbicide applicator and in 2019 as a chainsaw operator before exiting the WOF programme in January 2020.

"I'm grateful to WOF for contributing towards the growth of my career and for all the opportunities that they presented me with since I joined the programme," says Mtotso. "WOF has given me an opportunity to develop myself. Since joining the WOF programme, my life changed from where it was and I could see the light and the vision of my future."



Xolane Mtotso sings WOF's praises for empowering him with skills that opened the doors to formal employment

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Mtotso is currently employed at Thabazimbi Iron Ore as a Police Access Controller.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Former participant secures a job in animal care

Potlako Ntatamala, a former firefighter at De Wildt Base, has formally exited the programme to become a driver at Mooikloof Companion Animal Centre at Grasfontein in Pretoria.

Among his new job responsibilities is transporting clients' animals to and from the Centre, which offers boarding, grooming, daycare and pet relocation services. The Centre uses specially fitted, air-conditioned vehicles to transport the animals.

Ntatamala has nothing but praise for the WOF programme. "This job opportunity was my formal job and with it I was able to open a bank account and be a breadwinner at home," he says. "I learned my work ethic in the programme and trust that it will aid me in my new work environment."

Ntatamala says, "It was painful to leave my crew members because it felt like home to be with them all the time."



Potlako Ntatamala exits the programme to become a driver

He hopes his exit will motivate other firefighters to seek better opportunities and that they too will get their chance to learn challenging new things while making a decent living.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Working on Fire's Social Development department is proud to introduce the WOF Comic "Mollo Ka Hare - The Fire Within"



Designed to tackle every day life challenges, reflect on people's behavior and tell people's stories through edutainment. The full comic will be launched at the end of February 2020. #ingaphakathilento!