

NEWSLETTER

January 2012 (5th edition)



Dear Member,

It is the beginning of a new year. We wish all our members and partner's a prosperous and fire (unwanted) free year! A lot has happened since the past year (2011). Mark van Niekerk resigned and was replaced by Dirk Smit as the new SCFPA Manager. Mark is now working as a consultant for a company which specialise in renewable energy. We wish Mark all the best in his new endeavour. Mark has made a huge effort to establish Fire Management Units within the borders of the SCFPA and the work he has done is of great value.

Charl Wade was also appointed as the new Extension Officer and Base Manager of the newly established Wage incentive team (WIT) at Riversdale. Charl has a very good knowledge of the Riversdale and surrounding area and is very informed regarding veld management and conservation practises.

During the process of appointing new staff, and establishing the new base at Riversdale, some work that needed to be done e.g. the establishing of new Fire Management Units and the implementing of current action plans did lose momentum, but we as the management of the SCFPA are committed to pick up the pace and ensure that deadlines are met and that SCFPA Integrated Fire Management Plan is further implemented and rolled out to areas not covered at this stage. The commitment and co-operation by our members and other role-players are therefore imperative. We also want to thank the representatives of our current Fire Management Units for the work they have done so far and to keep up the good work. You play a very important role within the implementation of the Integrated Fire Management Plan and coordination with members in your Fire Management Unit.

For the uninformed: the Western Cape is divided into FPA's and within the FPA, Fire Management Units are established. These Fire Management Units are then the "first response" on a fire which starts in their area of responsibility. Therefore it is very important to cover the specific areas where there is a high fire risk with Fire Management Units in order to protect the social, economic and ecological assets.

There must also be a good relationship with our bordering FPA's from other Province's where applicable, for instance the Eastern Cape Fire Protection Association. Currently some of the area covered by the SCFPA falls within the Eastern Cape borders and therefore a good partnership and communication is very important with FPA's on the eastern side of the SCFPA. In the New Year we also need to establish working relations with the FPA's on the eastern and northern sides of the SCFPA.

NEWS ON THE WIT TEAMS

GOUDVELD BASE "GOLDEN HOTSHOTS"



Golden Hotshots with their trophy

Working on Fire held their Annual Provincial Training Camp at Swellendam from 22 October 2011 to 28 October 2011. 18 FOW Bases/stations attended and competed against each other at the training camp. Various activities and competitions were held which tested the discipline, knowledge and fitness of the teams. We are very happy to inform you that the Goudveld team took 2nd place, taking in account that they are a wage incentive team and did not have a lot of time to prepare for the competition because they were busy preparing fire breaks in the forerun to the competition. Congratulations, to Japie Hendriks (Base Manager) and the Goudveld fire fighter's. Discipline, dedication and a positive attitude makes good fire fighters.



Team members at the end of year function – Buffelsbaai



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GOUDVELD BASE "GOLDEN HOTSHOTS"

The teams have constructed fire breaks in the Rheenedal area as well as Middel Keurbooms area. We want to make use of this opportunity to thank Hennie Howman of Middel Keurbooms Game Trails and Neval Leger for providing a site where a base could be established and from where the team could work from. This was a project in conjunction with the "Eden to Addo Initiative" to construct strategic brakes for the Middel Keurbooms FMU.

The team was also involved at a wild fire in the Karatara area as well as doing mopping up for Cape Nature at a wild fire which accidently started on the roadside next to the Goukamma Nature Reserve. Thanks must also go out to the WOF Arial Support for their fast and effective action as well as the good co-operation between the local Knysna Fire Department (AP Pretorius - Fire Chief) and Cape Nature (Keith Spencer – Reserve Manager). We also want to mention and thank Nico Heyns (WOF-Aviation) for his excellent way of fighting a fire with the helicopter, Nico is always spot on with the bombing of a fire and the general public seldom realize what important and difficult task the pilot has. If the above mentioned were not in place the fire would have caused much more damage to the veld and could have become a threat to the surrounding community and plantations.



Team members constructing a fire brake at Middel Keurbooms



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RIVERSDALE BASE "RIVERSDALE HOTSHOTS"



Charl Wade – Base Manager/Extension Officer Riversdale

As mentioned Charl Wade has been appointed as the Base Manager and Extension Officer at Riversdale. At first, the base was situated at the Riverdale Fire Brigade but has been reallocated to the local Rugby Club. The team was recruited on the 29th of July 2011. Members were recruited from the local town and this is part of the job creation initiative implemented by the government and executed by WOF. Since then the members received fire fighting training, and they have already participated in fire fighting operations within their area of responsibility. The team currently consists of 52 fire fighters and are managed by SCFPA.



"Riversdale Hotshots" - marching



"Riversdale Hotshots" - PT



NEWS ON THE FIRE MANAGEMENT UNITS: FMU'S AND MEMBERSHIP

Currently there are 45 FMU's in different stages of their compilation and implementation of their fire action plans. Membership is up to 943 members. The need to appoint an extra manager/extension officer became apparent. The workload and area to be covered was just too big for one person to effectively manage. Membership grew and therefore it was decided to appoint another team member. Charl Wade now manages the area within the borders of the Mosselbay and Hassequa Municipality up north to the Karoo. Dirk Smit manages the area from George onwards to the Tsitsikamma area including the Baviaanskloof and up north to the Karoo. This was done to better serve our members and to effectively implement the Integrated Fire Management Plan.

As mentioned the establishment of the new base at Riversdale, the resignation of Mark and the appointment of a new manager in Mark's place, we did lose some momentum with the establishing of new units and the implementation of the Action Plans of established FMU's. Full attention will be given to the last mentioned in the coming year.

An effort will be made to meet with all the representatives of the FMU's as soon as possible in order to assist with the implementation of the action plans and discuss all relevant issues.

We want to establish an internal fire report channel by which the FMU's must report all fires that started within their area of responsibility (especially those "small" fires that normally do not get reported). The effectiveness of the FMU's can only be determined by collecting and processing this data. When this information together with all the other fire reports are combined and processed only then we will have a very good indication of the success of the Integrated Fire Management Plan (The report template is available on the Website as well as from our office). Even if your gardener or general worker by accident started a fire and it was extinguished by you or your personnel/workers, it would be nice to get this information. This is actually the work that has been done (training and awareness) that came into action and had a positive effect. Many such fires do not get reported and this does not then reflect the efforts (training and awareness campaigns ext.) that have been done by all the role-players.



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AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS BY THE SCFPA

During the last few months various awareness campaigns were conducted by the SCFPA.

Firescaping pamphlets were handed to landowners where it was apparent that the eradication of alien vegetation is going to take very long, is a very costly operation and the fuel load (alien vegetation and or indigenous plants, trees and shrubs) pose an immediate threat to a home owner and the structures on the property. This is a very informative and helpful pamphlet especially for people living close to nature and the natural vegetation. Firescaping specifically refers to landscaping in ways that will reduce the probability of fire catching and spreading through the firescaped area (e.g.a. a garden). Feel free to contact as if you want to acquire this pamphlet. Contact numbers will follow.

Awareness posters were also made available and distributed to some of the FMU's.

An awareness ad was placed in one of the local advertisement papers "Action Ads" which are distributed in the Garden Route. Many thanks, to Julie Gosling for placing this ad, free of charge. We do appreciate it very much.

Soon we are going to distribute notice boards to some of our FMU's. These notice boards were designed to promote the SCFPA as well as the specific Fire Management Unit and also create fire awareness. These notice boards were sponsored by DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry).



"Example of the notice boards made for the FMU's"



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MEETINGS ATTENDED BY THE SCFPA

Garden Route Initiative (GRI)

Garden Route Stewardship Initiative Meeting

Knysna Environmental Forum (KEF)

Gouna Conservancy Meeting

Knoetzie Conservancy Meeting

MEETINGS BY THE SCFPA

The SCFPA Annual General Meeting was held at George on 30 November 2011 at the George Municipality Hall Banquet Room. Attendance was good and the topic's that was presented by the quest speakers was very informative. The minutes of the AGM will shortly be posted on the SCFPA website.

NEWS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UMBRELLA FPA

The Southern Cape FPA is now part of the recently established Umbrella FPA for the Western Cape. Quarterly meetings will be attended by the SCFPA Chairman and Manager's where possible.

The Act provides for umbrella FPAs for a number of FPAs (section 4(9)). The intention is that an umbrella would provide a variety of defined services to the FPAs that fall within its area.

Umbrellas, obviously, are required only where more than one FPA exists and require supporting services in common with other FPAs served by the umbrella. Umbrella FPAs should therefore be formed when several FPAs would benefit from shared services from such an organisation. FPAs served by a single umbrella need not be contiguous or neighbouring each other.

Umbrellas should ideally be formed to coincide with either (a) districts or metropolises, or (b) provinces, to co-ordinate with disaster management centres, but need not confine their scope in this way if circumstances require jurisdictions that cut across such boundaries.



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Formation of an umbrella association may be initiated by any FPA, the disaster management centre or any group of people or organisations who wish to organise for the purposes of the Act. Any umbrella must include within its scope at least two FPAs or proposed FPAs. An umbrella should not include more than a manageable number of FPAs within its scope.

The Act does not require an umbrella to be registered but, in order for it to carry powers under the Act, the Minister will need to recognise the umbrella. If satisfied as to the need and desirability of the proposed umbrella, the Minister will recognise the umbrella in writing and give the required written delegations.

The kinds of services that may be performed by an umbrella FPA include:

- strategic policy and planning for the common area administered by several FPAs, for example, for prescribed burning, common standards, common rules, joint fire preparedness and response plans, and the protection of common assets
- appointment of a common FPO who would delegate certain powers and duties to the member FPAs
- liaison and co-ordination with the provincial and local disaster management centres
- communicating fire danger ratings to FPAs and others
- weather data collection for improvements to the predictions from the National Fire Danger Rating System, and collection and dissemination of other relevant data and information
- providing input data for fire danger ratings on behalf of its FPAs, such as veld curing information
- training, in cases where training is not provided by the training industry
- communication to landowners and the public regarding veldfire management in the area



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- supply of fire incident command specialists or support and co-ordination between FPAs and other fire fighting agencies in escalating fire conditions
- assistance to members of FPAs where court cases arise, such as providing expert witness, and statistical and weather information
- facilitating mutual aid agreements (between parties within the umbrella association)
- management and maintenance of aerial support services
- co-ordination functions, such co-ordination of equipment and other resources between individual FPAs, through such measures as mutual assistance agreements and the standard operating procedures they contain
- overall strategic direction and planning, including the contributions to local disaster management plans
- providing equipment, personnel and training standards, where the fires services have not provided these
- helping new FPAs to establish in the area covered by the umbrella organisation, in cases where FPAs are still needed
- source funding for member FPA's from public and private sector



LAST MINUTE NEWS ON THE FIRE AT UNIONDALE



WOF firefighters and SCFPA Goudveld team lending a much needed hand on 20/01/2012

The fire at Uniondale is under control. We want to thank our SCFPA FMU representatives (Bermon Verster and Dave Hodgenson) that gave so much of their time to assist in fighting the fire at Uniondale. Thanks must also go out to Eden Disaster Management and all the fire fighters (local municipality and WoF teams) for their effort.

Please visit us at:

website: www.scfpa.co.za

facebook page: "Southern Cape Fire Protection Association"

For any further information please feel free to contact:

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OR

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Kind Regards

Southern Cape Fire Protection Association

