

### How long did the Winter fire season extend for in 2013?

We do not have a winter fire season in the Southern Cape region but a whole year fire season.

### Describe the resources used in the region's suppression activities, ie equipment, ground support and/or aerial support?

Various ground and aerial resources were utilized over the season, namely seven WoF teams (25 firefighters per team) as well as 2 choppers and one spotter.

The 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 3 Huey choppers and 3 spotters planes were made available for our use during the summer. Also placed in the area is an Air-Tractor 802.

### Briefly, describe the regions mitigation strategies?

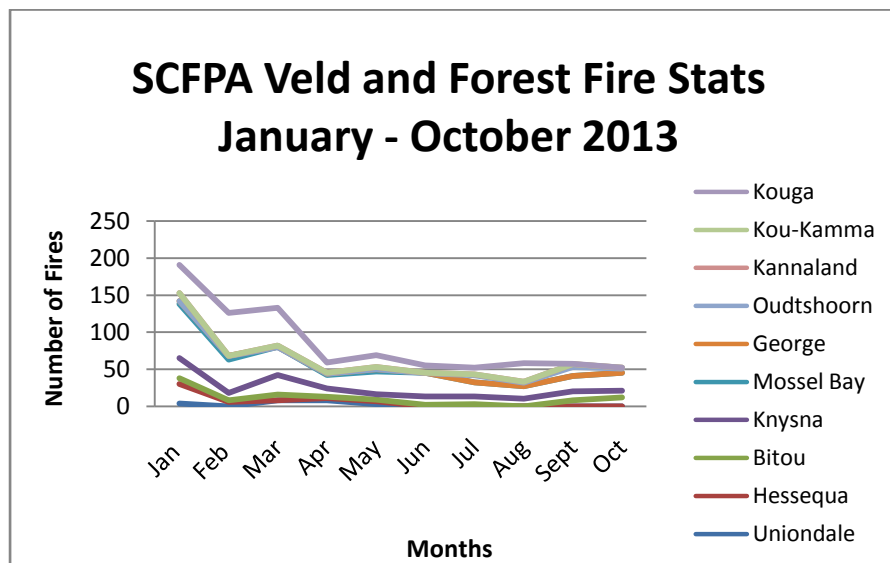
Currently, we are busy launching an awareness campaign in conjunction with Eden District Municipality. We applied for additional WoF teams and aerial resources for the following year and a discussion was held with Provincial Disaster Management Centre to co-fund additional resources during the winter months.

### Describe the most significant or devastating fire that occurred in your region this season?

The most devastating fire occurred July 2013 in the Lottering plantation, Tsitsikamma, where approximately 450 Ha pine trees burned. The fire started early in the morning and swept through the plantation in a couple of hours, crowning in some areas. Two Huey choppers were utilized as air resources and Cape Pine supplied the ground forces to suppress the fire. Due to excellent work done by Cape Pine Forestry, the fire was contained.

### Number of fires?

Jan – Oct 2013: 852 fires



The information above is what we received from some of the fire brigades, the amount of fires are thus more due to incomplete statistics.

**Area burned?**

An estimated 30,000 Ha burned.

**What were your firefighting budget and costs in 2013?**

We cannot speak for the Fire Brigade services and other organisations but the SCFPA budget was about R1.2 million. The actual firefighting costs this year was approximately R2 million, which included flying time.

**What was the cause of the majority of the fires?**

Human negligence and arson.

**Were there any structures/homes threatened and how many were destroyed?**

Many houses were threatened but luckily, no houses/buildings were destroyed. We did lose approximately 600 Ha of pine plantations.

**Were there any new systems and technologies introduced by the FPAs/UFA this year that has proven to be successful and effective in your operations?**

During the winter months, we utilized the free AFIS system via the internet successfully to detect fires in our area. Since that time, the SCFPA received an AFIS field terminal as well as a satellite dish to identify fires almost immediately as well as other functions like burn scar mapping etc. We hope for the system to be functional in the next year.

**How has this year's winter fire season activity differed, in comparison to last season?**

This year there were much more berg winds (dry, northerly wind) than the previous year. Luckily, we had additional resources this year.

**What were the factors that came into play that had a notable impact on the frequency and impact of fires in the region this year – this may pre-existing fuel loads?**

This year there were much more berg winds (dry, northerly wind) than the previous year, which resulted in more fires. From January 2014, we expect a busy fire season, due to good spring rainfall resulting in an increase of fine fuel loads.

**Were there any serious injuries and/or fatalities to civilians and firefighting personnel in your region?**

None