



## 1) What is the SCFPA and what is the area of jurisdiction?

The Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) established in 2006, is a Non-Profit Company (NPC), which operates in an area of ± 8 Million hectares covering the whole off the Garden Route and Central Karoo District Municipality, as well as a section of the Sarah Baartman District Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

The SCFPA is managed by an executive committee which is represented by role-players from various forms of land use practice namely: farming, organised forestry, conservation, together with various local government departments and parastals.

Funds which are generated by the SCFPA, through the collection of membership fees and fund raising, are used specifically within the SCFPA domain. The SCFPA is not mandated to contribute any funds towards state institutions. Funds are audited annually by an independent auditor, statements of which are made available to the members on request.

### ***The SCFPA does/is not:***

- A firefighting service although assistance at larger fires can be provided at a cost
- Fulfilling the role of the municipal fire department, but we can provide services to landowners that require assistance during wildfires
- Funded by local and provincial government
- Involved in structural firefighting or any other fire brigade services except for integrated fire management activities
- Enforce membership to the organisation. Membership is voluntary, other than for state organisations, which own and/or manage land, for which membership is compulsory

## 2) What are the SCFPA's primary objectives?

The organisations primary objectives are to:

- (a) empower SCFPA members within communities to become more aware of the risks of fire,
- (b) capacitate them to act proactively to reduce the hazards and vulnerability of assets,
- (c) allow them to act as a first response to fire emergencies and integrated fire management services, (d) initiate integrated fire management in the most cost-effective way possible, and
- (e) advise and assist members and authorities with regards to legal requirements.

In so doing, communities become safer and are more prepared in the event of a fire emergency. Through the creation of an enabling framework and greater awareness, fewer ignitions will result in less spread and more efficient suppression of veld fires

### **3) What is the SCFPA's primary goal?**

The SCFPA's primary goal is to establish Fire Management Units (FMUs) in priority areas as identified by an Integrated Fire Management Plan. The SCFPA assist and advise on the establishment of FMUs in areas which have been identified according to their fire risk. Support integrated fire management principles including ecological considerations e.g. ecological burns, alien invasive plant management, accelerated erosion due to fires, etc.

### **4) FMU principles**

As far as practically possible, a FMU will:

- Consist of a group of landowners, in close proximity, that generally share the same fire risk (spatially clustered)
- Develop a fire management plan that include the following (not limited to):
  - Strategic intervention measures to mitigate identified wildfire risks, i.e. fire belts, fire breaks, resources, etc.
  - First response plan to wildfires (immediate action drills)
  - Protocol to initiate extended attack (upscaling of operations)
  - Contact details of all FPA members
- Undertake regular risk assessment and amend management plan accordingly
- Act as a first response to wildfires
- Nominate and select a FMU representative who will act as a link between the SCFPA personnel, FPA members and attend meetings
- Recruit a firefighting team that is trained and equipped
- Do awareness and train residence as stipulated in the fire management plan.

### ***Benefits of SCFPA membership:***

- Shared resources between members with regards to firefighting equipment, which results in a cost saving for individual members
- Realignment of firebreaks can be negotiated by means of firebreak agreements
- Firebreak exemptions can be applied for by members of the FMU, which should be facilitated by the SCFPA. Exemption applications by non SCFPA members will not be considered by the SCFPA
- Increase in the conservation benefit within the landscape due to the minimization of the number of firebreaks. This will reduce potential accelerated erosion and disturbance to natural veld and forest.
- Increased awareness and management of Social, Environmental and Economic risks
- Increased coordination in the event of a fire
- Reduction of fire related risk by various means e.g. fuel load management, prescribed burns, alien invasive plant control, fire breaks, etc. This can be done at a subsidized rate to SCFPA members

- Fire management plans compiled for Fire Management Units (FMUs) in conjunction with the FMU members
- Members are automatically affiliated to the Western Cape Umbrella FPA which liaise with National, Local Government and parastatal structures
- Assistance in the event of extreme fire conditions through the provision of Trained Fire Fighting teams and Management at a subsidized rate to SCFPA members
- Training can be provided for new members in Basic Veld Fire Fighting at a subsidized rate
- Additional training can be arranged by the SCFPA at a considerably reduced cost
- Fire Awareness campaigns are initiated to make members and the public more aware of the risks of uncontrolled wildfires
- Provision of a platform with which to raise issues with local and provincial government structures e.g. Western Cape Umbrella FPA, National Umbrella FPA, SCFPA Executive Committee, Western Cape Aerial Firefighting Workgroup and Western Cape Veldfire Workgroup meetings
- The SCFPA negotiate support from Working on Fire and other government initiatives
- Possible access to external funding via the SCFPA due to its NPC status
- Reduced incidence of fires due to raised awareness
- Non-compliance will be registered and reported to the local authorities e.g. SAPS, local and district fire services and disaster management
- Members adhering to the rules of the SCFPA will automatically comply with legislation
- The “presumption of negligence” clause in the National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 101 of 1998
  - This entails that a FPA member will be presumed by law not to be negligent and the onus and cost to prove negligence will be the responsibility of the non-FPA member.
  - The cost of non-members proving that a member was negligent will be considerable and may include attorney cost, specialized investigation costs, etc.
- The interaction and extension services with different landowners will result in an increase in awareness with regards to the risk of fire and the consequences of uncontrolled fire to both property and infrastructure.
- Reduced fire risk due to planning and better response times
- Improved ecological integrity through implementing fire as a biodiversity improvement tool
- Provide inputs into government policy and decision making will be achieved through involvement of the executive committee

***For any further information, please contact:***

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