

ALL FIRED UP



LOWVELD ALL FIRED UP FOR DANGEROUS SEASON



The fire season officially started on June 1 and already there has been some activity with current dry conditions experienced in the Lowveld. Below average rainfall contributed to these high risk conditions.

Mr Andre' Scheepers, general manager at the Lowveld and Es-
 "This year our focus is on prevention, protection and reaction. Don't start fires you can not control," Scheepers warned. He continued that there were some serious concerns that Lefpa faced this year. "These include the absence of NDMC/PDMC air support to the EDM area. We are going to face predicted dry, hot and In the process of growing trees and crops land owners add fuel to the forest floor which adds to the intensity of any fires that may occur. The more intense the fire is, the more difficult it is



Mr Andre' Scheepers, general manager at Lefpa.

carpment Fire Protection Association (Lefpa) confirmed that within the first week of June already 14 ground and four air

fires had been reported. "All of Lefpa's resources had been on extreme standby and will be so until the end of October," he said. Scheepers urged plantation and land users to burn responsibly. windy weather conditions for the next few months and need more air support." He added that they are also concerned about the lack of municipal participation or attendance of fire association meetings. "There are also a large amount of membership fees still outstanding."

to contain and the greater the damage to the growing crop. The critical success factor is to create low fuel load zones from which wild fires can be contained. To reduce the build-up of fuels it is important to burn harvesting residue after harvesting, and to keep lands weed free.

Scheepers said that a dry and windy season has been predicted this year and land owners should take extra precautions to prevent out-of-control fires. "Ensure that weather conditions are acceptable for burning firebreaks." He added that you could consider burning fires at night when weather conditions are usually favourable for burning. "Check the Fire Danger Rating and regulations for your region," he cautioned. Scheepers added that it is important to check the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) to ensure that weather conditions are suitable for burning.

"Consider burning at night – weather permitting of course!")



REPORT WILD FIRES
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KNOW YOUR FIRE DANGER RATING INDEX



Fire Alert Stages	Blue	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Fire Danger Index	0 - 20	21 - 45	45 - 60	61 - 75	76 - 100
Fire Behaviour	SAFE	MODERATE	DANGEROUS	VERY DANGEROUS	EXTREMELY DANGEROUS
Flame Lengths (m)	0 - 1	1 - 1.2	1.2 - 1.8	1.8 - 2.4	2.4+
Fire Control Guide	<p>Low fire hazard - Controlled burning operations can normally be executed with a reasonable degree of safety.</p> <p>Fires are not likely to start. If started they spread very slowly or may go out without aid from suppression forces. There is little flaming combustion and intensity is low under all conditions.</p> <p>Control is readily achieved and little or no mopping up is required.</p>	<p>Although controlled burning operations can be done without creating a fire, care must be taken when burning on exposed, dry slopes. Keep a constant watch for unexpected wind speed and direction changes. Ignition may take place near prolonged heat sources (campfires etc) spread is slow in forests, moderate in open areas.</p> <p>These are light surface fires, with low flames.</p> <p>Control is readily achieved by direct manual attack methods and with minimum forces, difficulty may be experienced on exposed, dry slopes and some light mopping up will be necessary.</p>	<p>Controlled burning is not recommended when the FDI exceeds 45. Aircraft should be called in at the early stages of a fire. Extreme caution should be taken when controlled burning is carried out. Aircraft should be called in at the early stages of the fire.</p>	<p>NO CONTROLLED BURNING OF ANY NATURE should take place. Careful note should be taken of any sign of smoke anywhere - especially on the up-wind side of any plantation. Any fire that occurs should be attacked with the maximum force at hand, including all available aircraft at the time. Ignition can occur readily, spread may be fast in the forests though not for sustained periods. Grass fires could outstrip forces with a spread of approx. 7km/hour.</p> <p>Fires may be very hot with local crowning and "short to medium range" spotting.</p> <p>Control will be very difficult requiring indirect attack methods with major assistance necessary.</p> <p>Mopping up may require an extended effort.</p>	<p>ABSOLUTELY NO BURNING - All personnel and equipment should be removed from field. Fire teams, labour and equipment are to be placed on full stand-by. At the first sign of smoke, every possible measure should be taken in order to bring fire under control in the shortest possible time. All available aircraft are to be called without delay. Ignition can occur from sparks. Rate of spread will be extremely fast for extended periods.</p> <p>Fires will be extremely hot with a dangerous heat effect on people within 10m of fire and there may be extensive crowning, fire whirls and "long range" spotting.</p> <p>Control may not be possible by frontal attack during the day and fire fighters should limit their efforts to containing lateral spread - until weather changes.</p> <p>Damage potential total and mopping up operations may be very extensive and difficult. Full assistance necessary throughout.</p>

May 2015	Lowveld FDI Days	Escarpment FDI Days
BLUE	3	3
GREEN	12	16
YELLOW	16	12
ORANGE	0	0
RED	0	0

Permit issued	491
Days not issued	1
Special Permit	2
FIRES	4



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