



Greetings,

Another busy fire season enters the home straight but if we have learned anything from the disastrous wildfires worldwide over the past two years, it is that fire seasons have been strongly affected by climate change. Late rains, high winds and hot weather mean that fire will continue to be a threat long after the end of the Lowveld season. At a minimum, members should adhere to the activities of the month on the back page of each issue and wait for good rains before relaxing their fire alertness. Until next time.



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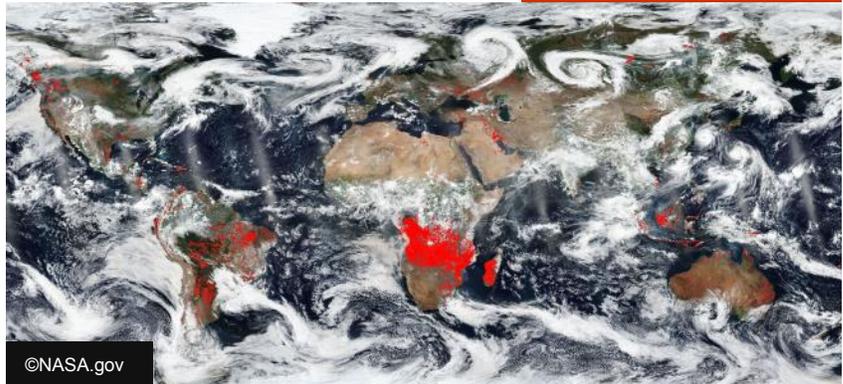
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NASA Space Images Show Our Fiery World

In late August, NASA released a satellite image taken from space showing “the world on fire” and scarily for us, thermal bands blaze brightest in Africa. NASA’s Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS) Worldview application uses images from 700 global, full-resolution satellites, updated within three hours of observations to show the world as it is in real time. NASA believes the reason for the high concentration of fires in Africa is probably due to most of the fires being agricultural ones.

The Agency explains on it’s website: “The location, widespread nature, and number of fires suggest that these fires were deliberately set to manage land. Farmers often use fire to return nutrients to the soil and to clear the ground of unwanted plants. While fire helps enhance crops and grasses for pasture, the fires also produce smoke that degrades air quality.”

Meanwhile, the range of red dots in North and South America indicates that the blazes are mostly wildfires aided by extreme drought conditions in Central Chile and the USA.



While farmers using fire to clear land for raising cattle and other agricultural requirements in Brazil has led to both wild- and man-made fires. As we know, climate change exacerbates the breakout, frequency and magnitude of wildfires and the trouble with man-made fires is that they quickly get out of control because of climate issues. “Hot, dry conditions coupled with wind drive fires far from their original intended burn area,” NASA reports. In Australia, the January to July 2018 period was the hottest since 1910, resulting in larger, more extreme brushfires.

As we are experiencing here in the LEFPA area, the wildfire season is beginning to extend beyond it’s previous confinement to the hottest months. Caution, awareness and housekeeping year-round is the wise landowner’s key defense in protecting his investment and property.

Fascinating NASA Global Wildfire Maps

NASA have a fascinating global wild fire map on the link below, tracking wildfires month by month from March 2000 to August 2018. The fire maps show the locations of actively burning fires based on observations from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA’s Terra satellite. The colours are based on the number of fires within a 1000 kilometre² area, with white at the high end (up to 30 fires per day), orange mid-range (up to 10 fires) and red showing as few as one fire per day.

https://neo.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/view.php?datasetId=MOD14A1_M_FIRE



Bokkie Makes Friends at Flamboyant School

Queen Khoza and the LEFPA Awareness Team took Bokkie along to Flamboyant School in White River to deliver an informative talk to the pupils and staff.

Bokkie, who has a soft spot for youngsters, handed out goodie bags and hugs, much to the children's delight. Trish Galliers sent a photo of Maxie and Franco receiving their gifts from the Awareness Team along with a lovely note of thanks.

Always a pleasure, Trish. Bokkie loves his outings!

Dear André, and the LEFPA Awareness Team

A very big thank you from Flamboyant for the very interesting and informative talk you gave to our Gr. 4 – 9 pupils. Thank you for the little goodie packets you brought for the whole school too.

We really do appreciate your support.

Kind regards,

Trish Galliers

SECRETARY

FLAMBOYANT SCHOOL



(L - R) Queen Khoza (Base Manager), Bokkie, Maxie Scheepers, Franco Stolz, Tiny Shongwe and Structural Fire Fighter Isaac Moropane



2018 Season Statistics

Andre Scheepers has forwarded the 2018 fire season statistics as at 1st September. The numbers are up from 2017, probably due to the hot, dry weather and breezy days. As Andre comments, it's been a busy season so far and it hasn't ended yet, so don't drop your guard for a minute.

	2017	2018
Nelspruit	30	30
Graskop	3	16
Total fires	33	46
Total hour flown	183.6	203



The huge fire on the Escarpment at God's Window that began September 12th and took two days to contain



Fire Equipment Check List

Andre Scheepers has drawn our attention to a useful article in SA Forestry Online regarding your fire equipment check list. The article provides in-depth information and advice about each piece of equipment and how to ensure it is in premium condition ready for use. In a nutshell, the list of equipment your workers should have at hand and in good working order is:

- Beaters with a sound, strong handle of a good length and flails in good repair securely bolted onto the handle;
- Knapsack with a pistol-grip lance and straps with webbing thick enough not to roll and good shoulder pads. Ensure a snug fit onto the user's back. Knapsack-bearing firefighters are in the frontline getting to spots the hoses can't reach while carrying 16kgs of water; spare a thought for their comfort while working;
- Bakkie Sakkie. Give the engine a full service and don't skip any little detail. This vehicle engine must start first pop, every time. Hoses must be checked for signs of perish or damage, renew 'O' rings and Geka coupling rubbers and ensure all the taps open and close. Ensure you have a minimum of 30m of hose and that it is rubber, not plastic and fit a light on the vehicle's headboard;

Tools and spares in the vehicle should include:

- Wire-cutting pliers;
- Water pump pliers;
- Screw-drivers;
- Hammer;
- Rope;
- Torch;
- Some wire;
- Drinking water;
- First Aid kit;
- Burn blanket;
- Full box of matches
- Geka rubbers;
- 'O' rings for the waterway and knapsacks;
- Hose clamps;
- An assortment of cable ties;
- A roll of duct tape.



Read the full article here: <http://safeforestryonline.co.za/articles/fire-equipment-check-list/>

Mpumalanga
FRAIL CARE CENTRE

*** Thank You ~ Dankie ~ Thank You ***

Thank you, / Baie Dankie,

we appreciate your generosity!!! / dit word opreg waardeer!!!



*** Thank You ~ Dankie ~ Thank You ***

Hand-me-downs Bring a Cup of Cheer to Mpumalanga Frail Care Centre

If you are a regular attendee of LEFPA meetings you may have noticed that the crockery and cutlery have been replaced. Yes, it was time to upgrade but instead of consigning everything to the bin, LEFPA donated the still-serviceable sets to Mpumalanga Frail Care Centre.

The Centre in West Acres caters mainly for Alzheimer and Parkinson's affected elderly men and women and the budget is always stretched.

They say that a change is as good as a holiday and writing on behalf of the Centre, Admin Manager, Golda Deeks says that the residents are enjoying their daily cuppa sipped from a different cup while meals up served on the donated plates seem tastier!

This is a classic example of re-using rather than wasting with the added warmth of cheering up the daily lives of folks who have very little themselves. LEFPA management were touched by the thank-you note signed by the residents that they received.

When next you are appreciating a tea break in the LEFPA Board Room, spare a thought for the elderly Mpumalanga Frail Care residents enjoying theirs.



LEFPA MEMBER REQUESTING ASSISTANCE FOR GROUND & AIR RESOURCES AND BURNING PERMITS



Activities for the Month - October

- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Check airstrips on a weekly basis.
- Distribute your standby rosters to all neighbours.
- Obtain FDI forecast on a daily basis from LEFPA.
- Study weather systems and check forecasts on the internet.
- Perform daily and weekly checks of all equipment, using checklists.
- Perform checks to ensure readiness and quick reaction at all times.



Important Note:

- Basic Firefighting Training is available to LEFPA members. Interested parties should contact the LEFPA office.
- FDI weather emails and SMSs are available to LEFPA members, contact Ivina for more information.
- **SUCCESS** cannot be spelt without **U**. Attend and participate - we need your contribution!