

# ALL FIRED UP



## Extra fighters for 2015 season

"When a man becomes a fireman his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What he does after that is all in the line of duty." These famous words rang true during the past few months since the Lowveld 2015 fire danger season started on June 1. Several fires, including seven large ones, had already been extinguished by Working on Fire (WoF) teams in this province. These fires occurred in various sectors including both Lowveld and Highveld areas. The seven large fires needed aerial assistance.

Martin Bolton from WoF confirmed the incidents and said that the teams had definitely been busy up until now. "We have 153 extra firefighters in Mpumalanga at the moment. These teams hail from across the country including Limpopo, North West and the Western Cape".

There was a need for extra firefighters after WoF had their planes grounded the Civil Aviation Authority a few weeks ago.

Bolton added that the extra teams had so far assisted with call-outs to 14 fires in the Highveld area and 17 fires in the Lowveld area.

"WoF have been busy. My suggestion to landowners is to take the current situation into consideration when working on preventing fires. The current situation is that we had late rains in

the season where the grass was still green for a long time. Then the cold fronts came in and temperatures dropped dramatically. Now we have had some early spring sprinkles."

Bolton however emphasized that all fire prevention



preparations were supposed to have been done by now.

At the moment, when there are no fires, the teams continue with their usual fitness regimes. To assist with this fitness the firefighters also do some production work for landowners that includes the removal of alien plants and weeds. "Up to date the teams have done production work totaling 164 ha," Bolton said. He added that the extra firefighters will stay in the province until further notice and that senior associates will decide when they will return to their various provinces.

Andre Scheepers, Manager at Lefpa, said that landowners wanting to make firebreaks needed permits before burning anything. "Currently we are still in the fire season and we advise you to call in for a permit at our Nelspruit office. Basically the permit is there to regulate fires under difficult conditions. We are there to assist with burning advice and assistance during the right weather conditions when landowners undertake any fire operations."



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# No such thing as a boring day at dispatch



Aderi Reyneke.



It is not easy to be available for emergencies around the clock, yet there are two dedicated fire dispatch operators in Nelspruit that go the extra mile to ensure that no fire emergency is unnoticed and no call unanswered.

## Aderi Reyneke and Roger Rodgers

Dispatchers must be available at all times and often work overtime and long shifts. The pressure to respond quickly and calmly in alarming situations can be stressful yet Adri and Roger take it in their stride.

### 1) Tell us a bit about yourself and your background.

**Aderi:** I am 42 years old and started working as a dispatch operator for Working on Fire in 2006. I did this for two seasons and was then upgraded to provincial coordinator for Mpumalanga. I then resigned as dispatcher but eventually just had to come back. I will however be moving to Midrand in Gauteng at the end of this season where I will be provincial coordinator for the Gauteng area.

**Roger:** I am 42 years old and have three sons. They range from 18 months to 14 years. My wife works for an architect company in Nelspruit and I started working as a dispatcher for Working on Fire at the beginning of 2009.

In 2015 I got appointed as Base Manager at the airport for the entire Nelspruit team.

### 2) How did you get involved with Lefpa and the Dispatch department?

**A:** I am actually a qualified hairdresser but after 15 long years the standing up got to me. I went for the interview and during the interview I managed to surprise the interviewer when I could explain the red and green and blue FDI terms. It did help that my dad was a forester.

**R:** My wife was offered a job in Nelspruit and we then moved here where I got involved with WoF.

Beforehand I used to work as a Warehouse Manager in Pretoria at National Brands.

### 3) What does your job entail?

**A and R:** We are a Type 1 Dispatch Centre. This means we dispatch ground and aerial resources to members and companies in need of assistance to fight fire. These fires include everything from veld - and forest fires to run away fires. We also do loads of administrative tasks and that is obviously not as much fun as the dispatch work. We are adrenaline junkies. Our main goal however is to provide dispatch and coordination services to Lefpa.

### 4) What about your job do you like the most?

**A and R:** The adrenaline when you press the siren buttons and everything jumps to life is a highlight. Everything changes in a heartbeat, from calm and serene to a fast action. To some people it might seem chaotic. Sometimes we have to juggle up to three or four fires simultaneously. Then you sit with the phone glued to one ear while also talking over the radio and the other phones are ringing. All of that is normal to us.

**Aderi:** I also love the opportunities provided to us to grow and expand. It enriches our lives with so much knowledge as it makes us better dispatchers and humans.

**Roger:** Working on Fire always ensures that our training is of top quality.

### 5) What obstacles do you face?

**A and R:** There are actually few problems. Every day brings a new challenge and we never know what tomorrow will bring. But we love that. Our job is like a lucky packet of surprises on a daily basis.

### 6) Which incident will you always remember?

**A:** I will never forget the horror of the 2007 fire storms.

**R:** I will always remember the 2011 Wildfire conference at Sun City.





## Burning Permit Etiquette

### Plan your burns:

- Apply for your permit BEFORE ignition. Applications can be made on the day from 06h30 onwards.
- Notify your neighbours
- Be honest with your application information. Incorrect/inaccurate information leads to confusion, wastes the permit office's time and could result in missed or late reports. The permit issuers are there to assist you – get to know them, make them your friend and they will respond accordingly.
- Limit your permit to either a single area burn for the day or linked to a number of adjacent compartments in the case of traces or fire breaks over a linear distance. If you change your burn position, let the look-out/EVS operators know.
- React to reports of smoke in the immediate area of your burn.
- On completion of your burn, communicate with look-out/EVS operators notifying what the situation is, persons on site, mopping-up, etc. Always let the look-out/EVS operators know if you are re-starting a burn, or starting another burn on the plantation either on the same permit or another unscheduled burn.
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!  
Fire is the common ENEMY – Please communicate and cooperate with the permit issuers and fire detection services.

### Permit Requests

Office: 013 752 6419  
Cell : 082 388 2874  
0860 66 34 73  
permit1@lefpa.co.za  
permit2@lefpa.co.za

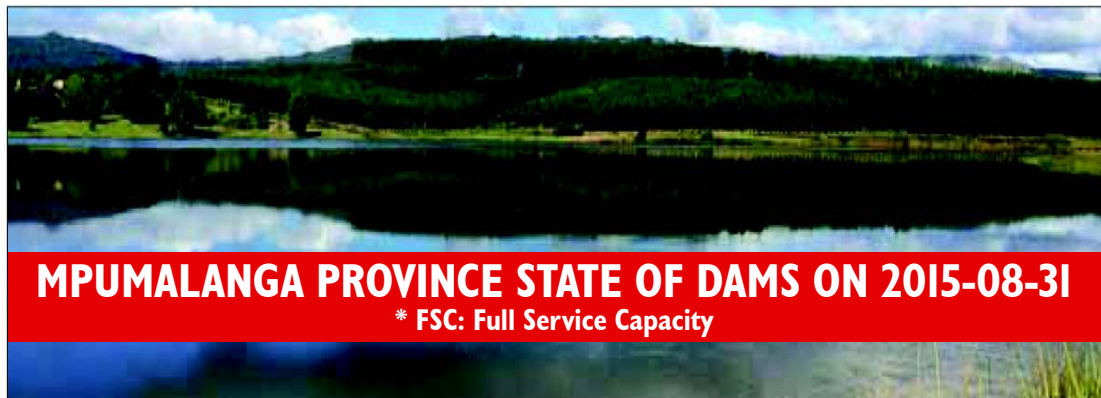
### AUGUST 2015

Permits issued	155
Days not issued	3
Special Permit	13
<b>FIRES</b>	<b>10</b>

### PERMITS 2013 TO 2015

MONTH	2013	2014	2015
January	97	111	119
February	163	129	126
March	203	93	228
April	432	315	254
May	753	609	491
June	942	1041	1125
July	1421	1185	1229
August	204	90	155
September	92	34	
October	179	148	
November	152	146	
December	18	95	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4656</b>	<b>3996</b>	<b>3727</b>

August 2015	Lowveld FDI Days	Escarpment FDI Days
BLUE	1	1
GREEN	14	13
YELLOW	15	16
ORANGE	1	1
RED	0	0



## MPUMALANGA PROVINCE STATE OF DAMS ON 2015-08-31

\* FSC: Full Service Capacity

DAM	RIVER	FSC	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	LAST YEAR
Da Gama Dam	White Waters River	13.6	73.5	76.6	94.2
Driekoppies Dam	Lomati River	251.0	79.8	79.9	96.9
Inyaka Dam	Marite River	123.7	88.7	89.5	99.7
Kwena Dam	Krokodil River	158.9	86.9	88.3	98.4
Ohrigstad Dam	Ohrigstad River	13.5	35.6	36.8	80.5
Vygeboom Dam	Komati River	77.9	85.7	86.3	99.1
Witklip Dam	Sand River	12.6	65.4	66.7	98.4



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## Benefits of joining the Lowveld and Escarpment Fire Protection Association

Membership provides access to:

1. Landowner fire protection rules and regulations
2. List of minimum equipment requirements
3. Burning permits
4. Affordable basic fire fighting training
5. Awareness, public relations, articles and media coverage
6. Presumption of innocence in a legal case
7. Legal advice regarding fires
8. Working on Fire ground fire fighting teams assistance (caller to pay the variable cost)
9. Ground resource dispatch assistance
10. Lefpa ward maps
11. Fire danger weather forecasts
12. Morning e-mail with a daily forecast and a 7 day advance forecast

### AUGUST AIRCRAFT HOURS FLOWN

NELSPRUIT	Spotter Hours	Bomber Hours	Chopper Hours	Aircraft Hours
May	2.28	1.92	2.37	2
June	14.01	30.21	13.62	9
July	7.69	54.69	7.22	11
August	10.00	20.86	16.75	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33.98</b>	<b>107.68</b>	<b>39.96</b>	<b>30</b>

### AUGUST AIRCRAFT HOURS FLOWN

GRASKOP	Spotter Hours	Bomber Hours	Chopper Hours	Aircraft Hours
May	1.68	0	3.13	2
June	8.82	8.33	10.75	6
July	3.04	9.03	2.89	3
August	2.02	0	4.20	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15.56</b>	<b>17.36</b>	<b>20.97</b>	<b>12</b>

### CALENDAR AND DATES

8th Oct 09:00	LEFPA General Meeting	LEFPA General Meeting
8th Oct 11:00	Mlilo Meeting	LEFPA General Meeting
22nd Oct	EXCO Meeting	LEFPA General Meeting
12th Nov 07:30	EVS Operational Nelspruit Meeting	LEFPA General Meeting
12th Nov 09:00	LEFPA General Meeting	LEFPA General Meeting

## GENERAL INFO:

Basic firefighting training is available to LEFPA members. Interested parties can contact the LEFPA office.

All membership fees have been invoiced. If you did not receive it contact Corné at the LEFPA office.

FDI weather emails available to LEFPA members. Contact Corné.



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