



Greetings,

Fires in the Barberton area kept LEFPA and WoF resources busy in July but despite their sterling efforts, collectively 800ha was lost between several landowners as a high wind speed and an FDI in the red zone played on the fire's side. We remind members of the Burning Prohibition in place until 31st October and note that when the weather is hot, dry and windy, everyone needs to be ultra-vigilant. Until next time.



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Paying It Forward: 18th July 2019



Responding to a request from Working on Fire, the LEFPA team spent Mandela Day assisting the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment (ICUMA) with a riverside cleanup at Msholozzi Park.

The team executed a drill and gave a fire safety presentation as well, inspiring and motivating residents who had turned out to help. The massive pile of rubbish-filled bags testified to the need for a cleanup and hopefully residents will play their part in keeping the restored area litter-free.



LEFPA Hosts International Delegates

Despite an FDI soaring off the scale on Friday 19th July, busy LEFPA management and personnel found time to host Forestry and Wildlife Commission delegates in town to plan the 6th African Forestry Wildlife week to be held in Mpumalanga in November 2019. The guests included representatives from DEA, DAFF, WoF and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

WoF and LEFPA delivered a presentation on the Fire Protection Associations and how the WoF programme slots into the National Veld and Forest Fire Act. Delegates visited the Mbombela EVS Detection Centre and the LEFPA Ops Centre to experience for themselves a ground team being dispatched to a fire in the Barberton area. Their visit ended on a rousing note after LEFPA Mbombela performed a drill and a sing-song. It was a pleasure for LEFPA to meet and host the group who were most interested in the behind-the-scenes view they were given of our operations.



Baie Dankie, Ngiyabonga, Thank You

It's wonderful when LEFPA's hard work and efforts are recognised by members and the community. Andre Scheepers would like to share some of the emails he's received over the past few months.

The first letter arrived from Robert Mitton, Caretaker Bundu Estate, who wrote:

"The LEFPA Team that arrived punctually at Bundu Estate were most professional in carrying out the veld burn. In addition they were friendly and courteous. Hats off to Queen Khoza and her team. Ivina, a big thanks to you for keeping us informed from our initial request for assistance right up to the change in arrival time due to the wet grass. Please convey our appreciation to all at LEFPA."

Queen also featured in a letter from Wessie v/d Westhuizen, General Manager of Ryton Estate:

"Your fire team from WoF Waterval Boven Base, supervised by Base Manager Queen and Crew Leader Calvin, helped us to prepare our fire breaks. This is to thank them all for their hard work and effort to support us, it was really a pleasure to work with such a group of professional, friendly and respectful people. In the future it will be an honour to use such a team again. Please thank them all for their work."

Following that, Herman Language, General Manager Nelspruit Airport Management, emailed to say: *"On behalf of NAM we want to thank you and LEFPA for your contribution and sponsorship of water for the resurfacing of the runway and taxiway at the airport."*

Take a bow, team! It's terrific to hear that our admin and ground teams work hand in glove to deliver an efficient, friendly and cohesive service. Well done guys and gals!

The People Behind The Names

All Fired Up frequently refers to the 'Board' as a collective and we thought it was time we introduced a few of the people hard at work on the 'Board', guiding and leading LEFPA to be the best it can be. Three of the 'head honchos' are Vaughan Lascelles, Jacques Schoeman and Mark Wagner.

Vaughan Lascelles, Chairman:

Vaughan carries an aura of determined energy about him. He is the Area Manager South for MTO Lowveld and lives outside White River with his wife Joey and their two sons. Besides his family, Vaughan is driven by two companion passions - forestry and firefighting, which led to him standing for Board election. He hit the ground running and wasted no time in expressing his vision for LEFPA in a letter published in the previous issue of *All Fired Up*. Vaughan's mission for the Association is to streamline LEFPA and develop it into a world-class fire association. Cooperation is central to his plans and he is delighted to be supported by a ready and able Board.

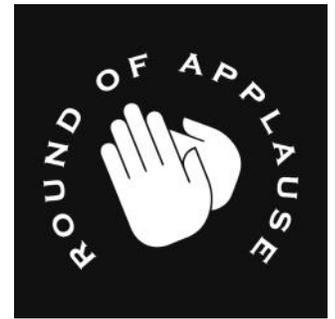
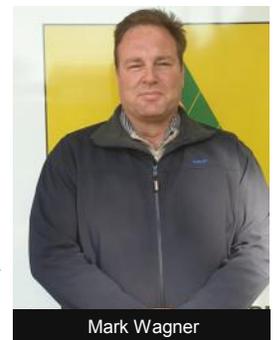


Jacques Schoeman Vice-Chairman:

Jacques is an affable chap who has worked for the SA Canegrowers Association since 2012 and is the Senior Manager for the Irrigated North. Married with one daughter and a son on the way, he can usually be found on the gun range or involved in any shooting-related conversation. His wife encouraged him to take up golf, which he sees as a walking sport rather than 'man and club against the links'. Jacques is a huge Formula 1 motor racing fan, pre the new hybrid era, that is. The growl and scream of racing engines used to get his adrenalin pumping but he describes the sounds today as "like a mouse with slippers!" Jacques says he is on the Board to serve the farming community and to ensure that fire protection and compliance stretches beyond the routine; he views responsibility and safety as being of the utmost importance for LEFPA.

Mark Wagner, Secretary:

Mark holds probably the most thankless portfolio on the Board, it's no fun beating the financial stick. However, he clearly enjoys the challenge because he's returned for more! Mark is the Fire Manager for SAPPI Mpumalanga and lives on the Chariessa Conservancy on the Uitkyk Road, Mbombela. He is married to Chantelle and they've sacrificed hobbies at the moment so they can devote any spare time to building their house. Mark stood for Board election to assist Andre Scheepers in providing the best fire suppression resources to members. He was also nominated by SAPPI Mpumalanga Management to represent the company on the Board. Mark's vision for LEFPA is to ensure that member interests are fairly addressed and that the Association partners with reliable and trustworthy service providers to give members the best services at a fair and economical cost. (It's that accountant brain again!)



Cutting Edge Communication Platforms

To WhatsApp or to Telegram that is our question? Or as Manager Andre Scheepers says, “Ja, Oom, tegnologie moet gebruik word!” Getting to grips with new technology can be a challenge but staying abreast of evermore efficient communication options means up-to-date information, awareness and quick response, all key factors for LEFPA.

LEFPA has been testing Telegram and its advanced features since November 2018 and has used it successfully on the LEFPA info group since the commencement of the 2019 fire season.

The Bot function has been very useful as has the sending of files, pictures and voice notes. There are currently about 60 members on the platform.



	Telegram Up to 1000 members	WhatsApp Up to 100 members
Groups	✓	✓
Location Sending	✓	✓
Image Sending	✓	✓
Video Sending	✓	✓
Files Sending (Any format)	✓	✗
Phone Calls	✗	✓
Passcode Lock	✓	✗
GIFs	✓	✗
Multidevice (Simultaneous Access)	✓	✗
Image Editor	✓	✗
Public Channels	✓	✗
Secret Chats	✓	✗
Bots	✓	✗
Optimized Speed	✓	✗
Memory Manager	✓	✗
Username	✓	✗
Stickers	✓	✗
Internal Player (YouTube, Vimeo)	✓	✗
Open API	✓	✗
Cloud Sync	✓	✗
Status Messages	✗	✓
Desktop Version	✓	✗
Mobile Version	✓	✓
Tablets Version	✓	✗
Web Version	✓	✗

December/2015

Telegram is being used by most of the LEFPA Ward Chairmen and Company Area and Fire Managers while LEFPA Operations and pilots make use of it for daily weather forecasts per region, client morning reports and receiving EVS camera status updates from approximately 30 members.

LEFPA Operations are using the platform for communications and to notify pilots on the bases about fire dispatches and standby requirements. LEFPA is also using Telegram to track and communicate with Ground crews during operations within the LEFPA Operational area.

At the moment, about 80% of the notifications are automated by a push notification from the LEFPA server, which is not possible on WhatsApp.

Future plans for Telegram include electronic burning permits, fire reporting, pilot captains' logs and runway notifications; as we use it, we are discovering how incredibly useful the platform is for many functions relevant to LEFPA.

The current WhatsApp Ward Groups will continue as a one-on-one platform and the Ward Chairmen will post any relevant information on their respective groups.

WhatsApp lets you turn off read receipts, but **Telegram** does not. ...

On **WhatsApp** you may invite 256 people to a group; **Telegram** allows 10,000. **Telegram** and **WhatsApp** each let you send files to contacts, but **Telegram** is better in this aspect because it hosts files up to 1.5 GB each (**WhatsApp** limits files to 16 MB).

<https://botanalytics.co/blog/2018/08/03/telegram-vs-whatsapp-best/>

Thrusting Through the Skies - the Thrush Aircraft Part 2

Firefighting demands strong, tough aircraft and the Thrush is built tough. Vice-President of Sales at Thrush, Eric Rojek, told Flying magazine about the processes that make the metal components stronger and more corrosion-resistant and highlighted the features which make Thrush a good fit for firefighting.

For instance, power lines and other cables are hazardous at the low-level flying typical of firefighting operations, so the Thrush has a wire-strike protection system with wire cutting blades on the main landing gear legs, wire cutters and deflectors in front of the cockpit and a wire deflector cable from the cockpit to the vertical fin. Because the expensive turbine engine is exposed to dust and smoke, the plane has a filter in the air intake.

Due to the large windows surrounding the cockpit, visibility is spectacular. Manoeuvrability in the air is critical so the aircraft was built to turn. The stick is linked to the ailerons through pushrods, helping to create excellent manoeuvrability. The plane's gatebox can drop its 510-gallon load in two seconds and a trained crew can fuel and fill the plane with the engine running. "Literally they can crank it up and not turn it off until the end of the day," Rojek said.

Thrush has focused design on ease of maintenance, so many inspection panels can be removed quickly and maintenance cycles are good on the Thrush making it more economical to operate. Testifying to the design and manufacturing processes is the lack of Airworthiness Directives against Thrush planes built after 2003. As any plane owner knows, this means less maintenance, less downtime and lower costs.

All of this adds up to a machine crafted for its critical job as an aerial firefighter and LEFPA is proud to have the Thrush on our team.

www.flyingmag.com/we-fly-thrush-510g-switchback/



Blaze on the R38

The first weekend in July was a busy one for LEFPA as weather conditions stayed Orange for most of the area and at about 07h30 on Sunday 7th a fire broke out on the R38 between Barberton and Badplaas. All LEFPA aerial resources and numerous



WoF ground crews worked throughout the day. The aircraft were stood down at times as the wind speed rose to 65km per hour while the FDI at the fire was recorded at 80, in the Red zone.

The wind dropped significantly during the late afternoon and the ground crews worked hard during the night, managing to contain the fire at approximately 02h00 Monday morning. Thanks to their efforts, no LEFPA despatch was required at first light and the briefing at 07h00 on Monday focused on mopping up operations needed to suppress the last fire still burning.

A reconnaissance flight was undertaken to assess the damage, revealing that about 800ha, including agricultural land and commercial forestry, was lost in the fire.

REMEMBER: there is a Fire Prohibition for Ehlanzeni District and burning permits are needed from the 1st of June to end of October. Burning permits are available from LEFPA on 0860 66 3473.

LEFPA Monthly Fire Stats

Monthly fire statistics with 2019 season figures in red, and 2018 in black. They make for a sobering read.

Month	Ground Fires	Air Support	A & G	Monthly Fires	Monthly Hours 2019	Monthly Hours 2018	Seasonal Hours	Seasonal Fires	Total Ha Lost
May 2019	0	2	0	2	8,6		8,6	2	18
June 2019	3	9	2	14	57,4		66	16	1099
June 2018	5	6	1	12		35,8	35,8	12	116
July 2019	30	31	2	64	377,7		443,7	80	4299
July 2018	5	5	1	11		33,3	69,1	23	109,2

Activities for the Month - August

- Attend LEFPA meetings regularly.
- Check airstrips on a weekly basis.
- Distribute your standby rosters to all neighbours.
- Advise all staff of call-out and dispatch protocols.
- 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:

- Please take part in our survey! www.surveymonkey.com/r/GY8GDYZ.
- Basic Firefighting Training is available to LEFPA members. Interested parties can 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!**