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**Winelands Fire Protection Association**

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Cape Winelands District Fire

021 887 4446

### FPA activities:

Winelands Fire Protection Association and the Franschoek Neighbourhood Watch collaborate

Over the fire season the fire suppression operations in mountain fires above Le Roux have required the deployment of aerial fire-fighting resources, Helicopters and associated support vehicles. These Resources are very expensive to operate and are irreplaceable. It has been noted with growing concern the amount of community members, adults and children alike, descend on the area when helicopters are landing and taking off.

The management of the landing zone falls under the responsibility of the operations AIR BOSS and so a, first in the district, solution was initiated together with SAPS, CPF and WFPA.

The motto FIRE IS EVERYONES FIGHT rings true when the entire community can play a positive role in the management of wild fires.

On the 4th of Feb the Winelands Fire Protection Association facilitated a Landing Zone awareness presentation with the Franschoek Neighborhood watch. In attendance were the chairpersons and members of the various neighborhood watch teams, The Winelands Fire Protection Association (WFPA) manager and district Air Boss, Franschoek WPFA incident response coordinators Joseph Boonzaaier and Ashley Bauer.

The group was given a presentation on how to ensure the safety of the landing Zone prior to the aircraft arrival and area safety during takeoff, landing and re-fueling operations.

We look forward to a safe operation going forward in the Franschoek area.

### **Important dates:**

26 May 2012: Exco & AGM meeting

Applications for burn (general) on 1 May 2021

### **Number of fires in 2021:**

Jan: 274

Feb: 214



**WFPA manager Mr. D. Nortje**



## In the Koue Bokkvelde we don't like playing with fire.

The Koue Bokkeveld area are wide spread with farms stretching kilometres. We are surrounded by the most beautiful Skurweberg en Cedarberg Mountains. As most of the area are surrounded by these mountains, fire tend to surprise the area from various sides. Mountains with thick vegetation and fynbos are known to have a huge fuel load and are extremely hard to contain.

Our FMU decided to make our strategic firebreaks against the mountain to prevent the spread of huge veld fires impacting and destroying our agricultural units and farms.

We divided our area in 6 smaller, more active sections for better control. Each section was appointed a fire representative (wyksverteenwoordiger) to ensure a quicker response in the case of a fire and to manage the section more efficiently.

A training facility in the Koue Bokkeveld, Koue Bokkeveld Opleidingsentrum, is of great help to our area. Courses on fire training, house fires, bush and veld fires and the necessary fire equipment are hosted by them yearly. We motivate our members in the 6 sections to send their workers on these courses for training. Correct training leads to efficient fire control.



We use WhatsApp groups in our smaller areas to alert our members of fires. This is very efficient; these 6 sections can be alerted quickly and respond immediately to contain a fire. Groups can also alert neighbouring sections for fire preparation, water cars, fire teams and help.

Each section is responsible for his own inspection. These sections use their neighbours as a third party so inspect their fire break. Fire equipment, water cars and firebreaks are inspected by the third party. Open communication is encouraged between members and section for fire suggestions and improvements.

It is better to be equipped for the golden hour to control and extinguish a fire. Better safe than sorry.

*Written by Bed du Toit (FMU leader)*

## Paradigm change might be the way forward:

The impact of climate change is having on the environment is seen world-wide with the major wildfires of the past few years. It is expected to only get worse in Mediterranean regions (California, USA, Australia, Portugal, Chili, Greece and South Africa) seeing that our winter rainfall increase and the temperature in summer increase. Our cold and wet winters lead to an increased fuel load, which then causes a higher fire danger, during our hot and dry summer season. Up to now we've been using fire suppression as our strategy to fight and prevent uncontrollable fires, but we need to change the way we think if we want to succeed in managing wildfire in the future, seeing that our weather conditions are continuously changing.

Drivers	Med basin	North America	Chile	South Africa	Australia
Agricultural land abandonment	H	L	L	L	L
Expansion of mismanaged tree plantations	H	L	H	M	L
Expansion of the wildland-urban interface	M	H	M	H	H
Invasive species	L	L	H	H	L
Hindered use of fire	M	H	L	H	H*
Lack of adequate post-fire management	M	M	M	L	M

**Examples of plants that's fire resistant:**



Lampranthus aureus

It is suggested that a balance should be found between suppression and mitigating the negative impact of wildfire. Our success in fighting and managing wildfire should not only be measured by the area burned, but rather consider to allow fire to benefit our ecosystem and bio-diversity, when it is possible to do so. In other words, sometimes, fires must be allowed to burn. There is evidence that fire suppression can limit the size of the fire; but it stands a very small chance under extreme weather conditions (strong winds, high temperatures and low humidity) and high fuel loads, which can then lead to a firefighting trap. We can only minimize the negative impact wildfire has on our society, ecosystem and lives to the best of our ability, by working together as a team, with all the role players involved.

Protea cynaroides



You as a landowners can make this mind shift by making simple changes such as managing the fuel load, preparing and planning your prevention plan for managing wildfire on your property. It cannot be stressed enough that this is everyone's fight and a considerable breakthrough will be made if more effort is put into the location of homes and fire risk evaluation is applied when it comes to building in the urban interface. Land use planning and management also plays a big role in preventing wildfires.



Mimetes cucullatus



Drosanthemum speciosum

Fire suppression will always play a big role in protection of human life and assets, but with the projected climate change, ecological socio economic challenges and land use demand, the frequency of wildfire will only increase. We encourage you as a landowner to recommit yourselves to prevention of fires and actively prepare for fire seasons, in order to minimize the risk and negative impact fire may have on your property.

**For more info:**

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