



Fire Away Newsletter

Winelands Fire Protection Association
www.winlandsfpa.co.za

Foreword from Dale Nortje (Manager)

Summer is here with warming temperatures, variable winds and very abnormal thunderstorms (for this time of the year), causing damage as a result of severe wind and hail in some cases.

A sign of the effects of climate change????

We have already seen a number of veld fires in the Cape Winelands District, as a result of lightning strikes during these severe weather events..... so could this be a sign of things to come? We will have to wait and see but if we look at what is happening in the rest of the world, especially Mediterranean climate zones such as we are part of, the patterns are an ominous warning and we should take notice.

However we, as an FPA, have been busy during the winter months with a number of prevention activities, including some “alien vegetation” clearing, fuel load reduction burns and fire break construction projects.

We also arranged training for 181 members in basic fire-fighting, including refresher training, and a “fire-boss” course for a total of 14 members. We are also planning for a controlled bio-diversity burn in the Franschoek area scheduled for end of March 2023, weather permitting, where together with a number of stakeholders and role-players, we will put our training and experience into practice.

So we are as ready as we can be and appeal to all our members and the public at large, to be vigilant and act responsibly, so that we can all have a wonderful and peaceful summer festive season.

We will be placing important notices and information on our Website (www.winlandsfpa.co.za) and our Facebook Page ([Winelands Fire Protection Association](https://www.facebook.com/WinelandsFireProtectionAssociation)).

Make sure to stay informed!!

Stay safe and may you and all your loved ones have a blessed holiday season!!

Manager and staff WFPA





Dale Nortje

Born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and was educated at Umsali Boys High School. He is a qualified forester by trade having a diploma from Saasveld. In 1984 moved to South Africa and has worked for a number of forestry companies and became well experienced in all disciplines, both silviculture and harvesting, and eventually becoming Forestry Manager for Peak Timbers in Swaziland. He always had a passion for wildland fires and became a self-employed Wildfire Management Specialist being involved in all aspects of Integrated Fire Management including both training and operations. He has served on many committees over the years such as Chairperson of the Umpuluzi Fire Protection Association in Mpumalanga and a National representative of the Swaziland Fire Committee. He is currently serving as Vice-chair of the Western Cape Umbrella FPA and as Chairperson of the National Veld and Forest Fire Protection Advisory Forum. He has over 42 years of fire experience and includes over 5000 hours of aerial fire-fighting. Enjoys watching sport, is a "petrol head" and enjoys riding his motorcycles as well as traveling.

Manager



Tania Cloete

Born and raised in Johannesburg. Graduated at Wits in 1995, where she studied Business Administration. She worked in the corporate environment for many years, before starting a business with a partner in 2005. In 2008 she moved to the Free State, where she raised her two daughters for 12 years, while running the business and overseeing farming activities. She is a keen animal lover and family person, who loves to relax by walking on the beach and reading. Moved to Cape Town in 2021, when her kids "flew the nest", and starting working at the WFFPA.

Administrator



Huimari Franken

Born in Johannesburg and raised in Klapmuts. She went to school in Paarl (primary) school and Worcester (high school). She qualified in 1989 (N6 Computer Practice). Her first job was at Nuy Wine Cellar. She moved to Halfmanshof for a few years, but moved back to Paarl in 1997, where she still lives. Started her own business in 2001, and currently has 14 clients (from Alexanderbaai to Johannesburg). She spends a lot of time with her family and friends, but loves to relax with a good book. She has 2 sons, 1 daughter and 1 grandson.

Finance



Ian Smit

Accountant by qualification. Born and raised in Jhb. Moved to Cape Town 2014. Got involved in fire fighting as a Volunteer with VWS (Volunteer Wildfire Services). Became more involved with Fire Management and joined WFFPA August 2021. Hobbies include Cycling (MTD and Road) as well as photography.

Treasurer



Ashley Bauer

Ashley grew up in what he calls "Get A Gun", more commonly known as Gouang. He is the owner of Hemisphere EPC (fire, life and safety consultancy). Ashley has been volunteering with the WFFPA for the past 7 years, starting as a ward representative in the Franschoek area. He has been involved with emergency service's both full time and as volunteer for over 30 years. He is currently the chair of the WFFPA

Chairperson



Esmé Jordaan

Has been working at the WFFPA for the past 3 years. She prefers spending her free time reading, spending quality time with my family, and hiking.

Projects Assistant



Sebastian Wolfaardt

Chairman the Warm and Kouebokkeveld BBV. Having spent his adolescence playing any sport on offer, his sporting journey ended in Australia where he completed his studies, met his wife and started working. In 2014 Sebastian moved back to South Africa for a position in the family business. He is currently a fourth generation farmer in Prince Alfred Hamlet with two children and many pets. When not farming Sebastian is a keen squash player, parkrunner, and movie fanatic.

Vice-Chairperson





ASSESSING YOUR PERSONAL FIRE RISK

PLEASE ASSESS YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY FIRE RISK BY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING YES / NO QUESTIONS:

1. **Is your property situated on a slope or subject to strong South-Easter wind?**
If YES, beware that the fire naturally moves up a slope and is more intense higher up or in the wind.
2. **Is your property close to a large, open and natural area?**
If YES, create a fire break on your property, next to the fire risk area. However, it won't stop the fire but it will provide fire fighters with better access.
3. **Do you regularly remove all alien vegetation, dead wood and combustible material from your property?**
If NO, then regularly remove all alien vegetation, dead wood and organic matter on your property.
4. **Is your LP gas cylinders housed legally?**
If NO, get advice from an LP gas stockist and revise your storage area accordingly.
5. **Is your house wood framed or thatched?**
If YES, keep vegetation less than 20cm high around it.
6. **Is your firewood and compost heap stored far away from your property?**
If NO, create a 3m "clear zone" around your house (see attached picture).
7. **Is your hosepipe accessible and does it reach right around your house?**
If NO, get an extra tap or hosepipe. A rainwater storage tank & pump would be ideal.
8. **Do you have any external electrical wiring hanging above trees / bushes?**
If YES, please remove / cover in metal conduit.
9. **Are Fire hydrants easily accessible for fire fighters?**
If NO, please advise your fire fighters accordingly.

Continue ...

10. **Can a fire engine easily access your property right around?**
If NO, clear and open your driveway for more access.
11. **Do you / your neighbours ever burn garden waste?**
If YES, any burning is illegal (unless with a permit).
12. **Are all wooden decks or fences treated with fire-retardant?**
If NO, visit a hardware store or speak to a paint specialist about fire-retardant treatment.
13. **Are your roof trusses exposed under your eaves?**
If YES, box in exposed roof beams with non-flammable material.
14. **Do you / your neighbours ever braai without a hosepipe at hand and ready for use?**
If NO, always have a hosepipe ready, as fire risk is very high in summer.
15. **If someone is running a fire risk, do you advise them how to be firewise?**
If NO, please notify your Fire Wise Committee (FPA) if they do not comply.

PLEASE REDO THIS ASSESSMENT EVERY YEAR!!



October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire danger moderate to high • Thunderstorms possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire danger high • Hot, dry and windy days • Thunderstorms possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire danger extreme • Hot, dry and windy days • Thunderstorms possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn operations with permit only • Attend FPA FMU or Ward pre-season meetings • Maintenance of fire breaks • Conduct fire preparedness checks and audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No burn operations allowed • Fire awareness, standby and readiness for fire suppression • District Fire Work Group pre-season meeting • Plan ecological block burns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No burn operations allowed • Fire awareness, standby and high state of readiness for fire suppression

January

February

March

- Fire danger extreme
- Hot, dry and windy days
- Thunderstorms possible

- Fire awareness, standby and high state of readiness for fire suppression
- No burn operations allowed
- Stubble fields and ecological block burns with special burn permit only
- Identify possible fire breaks and fuel reduction activities
- Attend post fire debrief sessions

Did You Know?

Continues...

Step 4: STAY OR EVACUATE?

PREPARATION AND PLANS ARE VITAL!

Once you have assessed the fire risk and taken the physical steps to reduce the hazard, you must plan for a fire emergency. It is vital to have a plan of action in place!

Make sure that your possessions/assets are properly insured. However, the best insurer cannot replace computer data files, personal documents, family photo's etc. – keep a back-up at another location/safe.

DO YOU STAY OR EVACUATE??

If you decide to evacuate, do so well before the fire approaches the area. Ensure that you do not hamper the fire fighters or fire engines while making your exit.

However, a home is more likely to be saved if there are able-bodied people to quickly extinguish small fires on or near the house during a veld fire.

But!! You need the proper equipment and you must be mentally and physically prepared to fight the fire.



A HOSE SPRINKLER SYSTEM to keep the area soaked. Take note, to wait until fire is close by, as radiant heat accelerates evaporation.



FILL A BATH AND BUCKETS as water pressure will drop dramatically due to other firefighting efforts.



Keep fire extinguisher/s in the house and bring garden hose into the house as it could be destroyed by the fire. **DO NOT SPRAY WATER ONTO THE WINDOWS AS THEY MAY CRACK OR SHATTER!**



Only leave home once the fire has passed before you deal with spot fires in the yard. Check for trees, electrical poles that may still be burning. **AVOID ANY WATER COMING INTO CONTACT WITH ELECTRICAL WIRING.**



CLOSE ALL EXTERIOR OPENINGS and check interior for stray embers. **REMOVE CURTAINS** from window openings as they will easily catch alight if window glass shatters in the heat.



#WildfireReady

FIRE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY
#WildfireReady

Credit: Tessa Oliver

WILDFIRE READY: EVACUATION PLAN

You should never wait and see what happens during a wildfire. When an evacuation is anticipated, follow this checklist to give you and your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire.

OUTSIDE

- Make sure your car is facing the exit route and your car windows are closed to avoid embers entering.
- Stay updated on fire information so you will know if the fire has come closer to you.
- Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the structure and bring inside or place them in your pool.
- Turn off the gas supply. Designate a safe place to store gas bottles, where they will not be exposed to radiant heat. A pool is a safe place.
- Wet down any area of the home that can ignite easily, e.g. wooden decks, plants, roofing etc.
- If time permits, block the downpipes and fill the gutters with water.
- Leave exterior lights on so your home is visible in the smoke or dark.
- Seal all attic and roof spaces to stop embers gaining access.
- Seal gaps in doors and windows with non-flammable material.

INSIDE

- Make sure you have your ID books, passports, birth certificates and any other important documents packed safely ready to go with you.
- Pack a WildfireReady Emergency Kit to take with you.
- Shut all windows and doors. Take down window shades or curtains as these can ignite from radiant heat.
- Move flammable furniture to the centre of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Shut off any gas to appliances.
- Turn off any air conditioning.

ANIMALS

- Locate your pets and any carry boxes, keep them nearby and ready to go.
- Prepare farm animals for transport and think about moving them to a safe location early.



Credit: Tessa Oliver

Prepare and Evacuate Early.



Wildfire is Coming
Are you #WildfireReady?

EMERGENCY

How to report a fire?

1.
Phone the CWDM Fire Services Control Room on
021 887 4446.

2.
Put the information
(location) together with a
photo (if possible) on
your ward or FMU
WhatsApp group.

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT THIS PROCESS IS
FOLLOWED EVERY TIME A FIRE IS DETECTED**



DISTRICT EMERGENCY NUMBERS FOR REPORTING FIRES

ALL EMERGENCIES: 112 from a cell phone

City of Cape Town: 107 or 021 480 7700 from a cellphone

Overberg District Municipality: 028 425 1690

West Coast District Municipality: 022 433 8700

Eden District Municipality: 044 805 5071

Central Karoo District Municipality: 023 414 2603

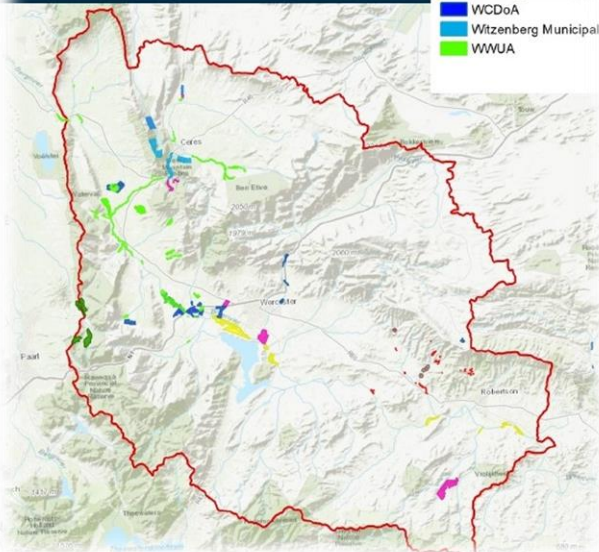
Cape Winelands District Municipality: 021 887 4446

Community NEWS

UBCEG Newsletter

Official Newsletter of the
Upper Breede Collaborative Extension Group
Issue 2: June 2022

Map of alien invasive clearing efforts in the Upper Breede Catchment for the 2021/2022 financial year



Meet our members



Greater Simonsberg Conservancy Celebrates 21 Years!

The Greater Simonsberg Conservancy is commemorating their 21st year this March – along with many achievements certainly worth celebrating and supporting! Having grown from just 5 members to 28, this community of pioneers in the wine industry - and in the conservation sector - have achieved remarkable success: an inspiring success story you can also be part of!



Caption: From Left to right: Tinie van der Westhuizen, Victor Sporing, Francis Steyn, Haylee Starke, Billy Marklew, Rudy Buys, Dirk Cortzen, Wolmarl Pranken, Adrie Touss, Wiro Thiel.

Annual report on alien clearing in the Upper Breede

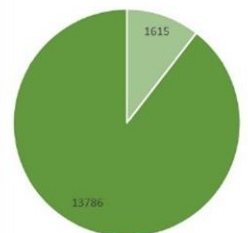
BY PIENAAR DU PLESSIS

During the 2021/2022 financial year a total of 15401 ha were cleared of alien vegetation. About 90% of that area consisted of follow up clearing to ensure that areas remain free of invasives. This shows that the majority of the gains made in the past are being maintained. One of the key challenges of alien clearing is the need to follow up for multiple years to ensure that cleared land remains free of infestation.

The following organisations contributed to this clearing effort, along with co-funding from the BGCMA, the NRM programme, and many private landowners:

1. Cape Winelands District Municipality
2. CapeNature
3. Central Breede Water Users Association
4. Rooiberg Breederiver Conservancy
5. Western Cape Department of Agriculture: LandCare
6. Witzenberg Municipality
7. Wolseley Water Users Association

Aliens Cleared (Ha)



Employment

Days of employment created: 32 723 days

Equivalent full time employment: 130 full time jobs



May your days be
merry & bright. And
may your spirit
always be light.
Enjoy the wonder
that surrounds you
this time of year.

Happy Holidays

**From all of us at the
WFPA**

To all the Fire, EMS, Police & First Responders on duty we thank you and your families. Wishing all a safe happy & hopefully peaceful holiday.



The End

