

# WILDFIRE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR VELDFIRE-FIGHTING GROUPS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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No. 3 JUNE 2011

## EDITORIAL

The main objective of this newsletter, namely to connect people from a wide range of wildfire-associated organisations and departments, seems well on its way to being met. I mention this as we received a couple of calls and emails from readers who queried the answer given to last month's question (the capacity of a UH-1 Bambi bucket). It appears that a variety of bucket sizes are now available for this medium-category of aircraft, and in addition, some pilots have the skill to not fill their buckets completely, such as when flying in adverse conditions (strong winds, rugged terrain, etc.). And so we live and learn.

As we head into our wetter winter period here in the Western Cape, it is comforting to see that a number of groups are already preparing for our next fire season. This includes planning awareness campaigns, upgrading equipment, and undertaking fuel reduction programmes.

I have had contact with some of those who were fortunate enough to have attended the International Wildfire Conference at Sun City recently. Congratulations to **Working on Fire** for implementing and managing this successful event. I will be going through material handed to delegates to seek out points of interest with the plan to circulate them in the next newsletter.

Good news is that the *Admission of Guilt Committee* of the Western Cape has now determined fines in terms of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 1998 (Act No 101 of 1998). Thank you to the Southern Cape FPA for providing this info. If anyone wants a copy of this, please let me know.

We wish our fellow wildfire managers outside of the winter rainfall area all the best as they go into their fire season. We once again urge FPAs and farmers' associations to promote the concept that landowners provide basic training and protective clothing for their workers who are expected to assist with runaway fires. While still no gazette has been published that stipulates minimum standards for volunteers and farm staff, **Enviro Wildfire Services** is able to provide suggested minimum training and PPE guidelines as an interim measure for FPA members and anyone else who is interested. Sourcing and providing such equipment for those interested can also be arranged.

In closing, may the winter season be a safe and successful one for everyone involved with the fighting of veldfires, be they managers, pilots, ground teams, or those fulfilling any other number of important roles.

Rob Erasmus

Sub-editor: Olivia Rose-Innes



Photo: John Mossner

## SUPPORTERS OF INTEGRATED WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

**Zartek**  
NEW GENERATION TECHNOLOGY



Enviro Wildfire Services



**TOYOTA**  
Market Toyota

## IN THIS EDITION

- A list of some of the organisations receiving this newsletter
- Contributions
- Projects underway or planned (new section)
- Competition
- Discussion topic
- Classified section
- Photo of the Month (new section)

## A LIST OF SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER

As an indication of how widespread this newsletter has become, below is a list of some of the organisations currently receiving the publication, either in an official capacity, or via individuals who then privately circulate it to others in their groups or departments.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Betty's Bay Community volunteers      | 20. Hexagon Fire Investigation Services | 39. SANBI                               |
| 2. Bot River Fire Station Volunteers     | 21. Independent Newspapers              | 40. SANParks                            |
| 3. British American Tobacco-SA           | 22. Market Toyota                       | 41. SANTAM                              |
| 4. Caledon District Fire Services        | 23. Misty Cliffs Village Association    | 42. Scarborough Misty Cliffs Fire Unit  |
| 5. CP Environmental Services             | 24. MTO                                 | 43. Simon's Town Civic Association      |
| 6. Cape Peninsula FPA                    | 25. Nature Conservation Corporation     | 44. South African Defence Force         |
| 7. Cape Winelands District Fire & Rescue | 26. News24                              | 45. South African Police Services       |
| 8. CapeNature                            | 27. NSRI                                | 46. South Peninsula Disaster Management |
| 9. Chevron                               | 28. Old Mutual                          | 47. State Forestry Dept. Wyoming, USA   |
| 10. City of Cape Town (various Wards)    | 29. Overberg District Fire and Rescue   | 48. Stellenbosch Fire Station           |
| 11. Cape Town Fire & Rescue Service      | 30. Overstrand Municipality             | 49. Toyota SA                           |
| 12. CSIR                                 | 31. Paardeberg FPA                      | 50. UCT Botany Department               |
| 13. Dept of Agri, Forestry & Fisheries   | 32. PETRO SA                            | 51. Volunteer Wildfire Services         |
| 14. Drakenstein Fire Department          | 33. PG Bison – Southern Cape            | 52. West Coast District Fire & Rescue   |
| 15. Eden District Fire & Rescue          | 34. Primedia Broadcasting               | 53. Western Cape Disaster Management    |
| 16. ESKOM                                | 35. Pringle Bay Community volunteers    | 54. Western Cape Emergency Services     |
| 17. Glencairn FireWise community         | 36. Provincial Fire Service             | 55. Working on Fire                     |
| 18. Greater Cederberg FPA                | 37. Reeds Motor Group                   |   |
| 19. Greater Simonsberg Conservancy       | 38. SAB Millers                         |   |

***If you would like to add the name of your organisation or company to this list, please let us know. Please also consider forwarding or circulating this newsletter to others involved or affected by veldfires.***

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### • ENVIRO WILDFIRE SERVICES

*Enviro Wildfire Services* recently completed the drafting of their *2011 – 2013 Fire Awareness Campaign for the Western Cape* document, and is in the process of securing funding for the numerous projects that make up the 2-year campaign. The projects range from awareness programmes for children and training for landowners and their staff, to registering of FireWise communities, and assisting volunteer groups.

They have also recently completed compiling a *Veldfires Information Booklet* that addresses 28 aspects on the subject. For free copies to email / hand out to farmers or FPA members in your area, please drop us an email.

For more information visit [www.ENVIROwildfire.co.za](http://www.ENVIROwildfire.co.za) or contact Rob Erasmus at [enviro@absamail.co.za](mailto:enviro@absamail.co.za)

- **SCARBOROUGH MISTY CLIFFS FIRE UNIT**

This volunteer group will be taking a 2-month break from training, and will resume again in July when new members and equipment will mark the start of their next cycle. Winter projects include investigating a MoU with the City of Cape Town to maintain fire hydrants in their area, a MoU with the neighbouring Misty Cliffs Village, a House Fire Safety Campaign, and registering as a FireWise community.

**For more information about this group, please contact Kevin O'Brien at kob@bluekey.co.za**

- **ROCKLANDS CENTRE**

Rocklands Centre is a Christian campsite in Simon's Town at the base of the mountain. They believe that it is important to have fire-trained staff, not only for work, but for home as well. The majority of the staff live in local informal settlements in the area. As an ex-fireman, the Manager handles the onsite training, and has seen the benefit of fire-awareness for all the members of the team. Rocklands is a part of the Cape Peninsula FPA.

**For more information, contact Shaun Easom at 021 786 2501**

## **PROJECTS UNDERWAY OR PLANNED**

This is a new section that will be included in future editions providing information about fire-related projects. **Enviro Wildfire Services** currently has over 25 projects planned for the next 2-year period, and is working closely with Working on Fire, City Fire & Rescue, the TMNP, and Cape Peninsula FPA. A meeting is also taking place with Cape Winelands shortly. Projects include initiating and registering FireWise communities, assisting landowners with training and PPE, assisting in fuel reduction programmes, increasing awareness in informal settlements, initiating projects to get fire extinguishers into homes, and awareness campaigns for the youth.

If any groups are involved or have projects planned, please let us know so that others in your area will know what is taking place.

## **COMPETITION**

**Last Month: COMPETITION: What does DCP stand for on a Class A/B/C type Fire extinguisher?**

**Answer: Dry Chemical Powder**

Congratulations to **Richard Gebhardt** for being the first correct entry drawn. He will be receiving a 0.6kg DCP fire extinguisher shortly.

Many thanks to Frederik Munnik of **Western Province Emergency Services** for sending us a comprehensive answer to the question: "It is an abbreviation for Dry Chemical Powder. At times used loosely, however incorrectly as dry powder, last mentioned being an extinguishing agent for Class D (alkaline metal fire) and include trade names such as Met-L-X and Purple K. DPC is probably the most common fire extinguishing agent found in handheld fire extinguishers and available in ratings for class B:C fires or the multipurpose version for class A:B:C. The most commonly used powders include Sodium Bicarbonate, Potassium Chloride and Potassium Bicarbonate."

**JUNE 2011 COMPETITION: What are the four factors required to calculate the Fire Danger Index (FDI)?**

**Answers are to be received no later than 27 June 2011. The prize for is a Cape Union Mart gift voucher valued at R 250.00**

## **DISCUSSION TOPIC**

**LAST MONTH'S TOPIC: "Should companies in the private sector be expected to contribute to wildfire management (education, awareness, etc.) when it should be the responsibility of Provincial and Local governments to undertake such activities?"**

Thank you to **Sarie van den Doorn** for her email (copy below). She will be receiving a Home Fire Safety Kit shortly.

**START** "Wildfire Management is a very broad field and it cannot be expected of the authorities to cover all aspects. The private sector has an important role to play, especially in the areas as mentioned in your last newsletter such as education, awareness, training and other prevention campaigns. They should be encouraged to do so, under the guidance of the formal fire fighting departments and organisations that have the necessary knowledge and experience. One needs to however ensure that those obtaining funding for implementing projects are legitimate and are recognized by the authorities. Maybe an organisation such as yours could liaise with the District Municipalities and keep a list of all projects as well as approved groups applying for fire project funding to avoid duplication." **END**

**NOTE:** We also felt it was worthy to include a comment provided from our good friend **Piet van Zyl** who is now in the full time employ of **PG Bison** Forestry Company in the Southern Cape:

*“My motto with regards to wildfire preparedness is simple: If you are a landowner who could suffer losses from wildfire you must be fully prepared and equipped to help yourself. Help from the authorities is a bonus!”*

**THE TOPIC FOR NEXT MONTH: Should farming staff with no training or PPE be allowed to assist with veldfire fighting activities, knowing that even low-key tasks can suddenly change into a life-threatening situation?**

*When submitting your emails, please provide the name of the group you are with and limit your comments to a maximum of 120 words.*

***The prize for the best email received next month is a Cape Union Mart gift voucher valued at R 250.00***

## **CLASSIFIED SECTION**

Terms & Conditions:

1. Any member or group can submit items they wish to sell or buy, as long these are veldfire related
2. Adverts will be listed under FOR SALE and WANTED categories
3. The editor reserves the right to determine if an advert will be published
4. The editor accepts no responsibility for events transpiring from transactions

### **FOR SALE**

- **ZA-705 ZARTEK UHF 2-WAY RADIOS:** Brand new stock. R 899.00 each. [enviro@absamail.co.za](mailto:enviro@absamail.co.za)
- **HOME FIRE KITS:** (0.6kg Fire Extinguisher, Fire blanket, Smoke alarm). R 350.00. [enviro@absamail.co.za](mailto:enviro@absamail.co.za)
- **BATTLE JACKET:** Suitable for ground crews, R 250.00. Only one left in stock. [enviro@absamail.co.za](mailto:enviro@absamail.co.za)

### **WANTED**

**ROCKLANDS CENTRE** is looking for any old fire fighting equipment for their facility, such as protective clothing, bush beaters, 45mm or 65mm hoses with 65mm instantaneous couplings, dividing breech, AWB Branch or similar, drip torch, and some form of a siren or alarm to staff in an emergency. If you can assist, please contact Shaun on 021 786 2501

## **PHOTO OF THE MONTH**

This is a new section and readers are invited to submit a fire-related photo for possible inclusion in the newsletter. When submitting your picture, please give a caption and a few words about where and when it was taken. Our thanks to John Mossner for getting the ball rolling with this wonderful photo taken of a UH-1 helicopter collecting water and another three aircraft inbound on short-finals.

### **PHOTO OF THE MONTH – June 2011**



**Franschhoek fire: December 2009**

***Photo: John Mossner***

**For more general information about wildfires, visit [www.ENVIROWildfire.co.za](http://www.ENVIROWildfire.co.za)**