



13 June 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir \ Madam

REPORT ON VELDFIRES – EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE – JUNE 2017

The Eastern Cape Province is currently experiencing several severe veldfires, which are affecting numerous commercial plantation areas, farming areas, as well as various communities bordering on the wildland \ urban interface.

These fires are running over the following local municipalities in the province:

1. Sarah Baartman District Municipality

- Kou-Kamma Local Municipality
- Kouga Local Municipality
- Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

2. OR Tambo District Municipality

- Mhlontlo Local Municipality

1. Sarah Baartman District Municipality

A fire started on 7 June 2017 in the Longmore Forestry Area (Kouga Local Municipality). This fire was exacerbated by strong winds, together with extreme drought conditions and exceptional “fire” weather and spread into the Thornhill \ Van Stadens area on Saturday 10 June 2017, as well as burning into the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro.

Some of the damage statistics that have been suffered so far, are as follows:

- Longmore Area – approximately 10 000 Ha has been burnt, of which 6 000 Ha is Commercial Forestry Plantations, including a sawmill.
The “bosdorp” was under severe threat and had to be evacuated, but combined efforts managed to save the community.
- In the Thornhill \ Van Stadens area – approximately 3 000 Ha were burnt, including 25 plus farms, Woodridge School which was severely damaged and two human fatalities. In addition to this, numerous livestock have been burnt and \ or lost.

Five informal communities were also under severe threat, but once again combined efforts managed to save these informal communities.

There were also some formal communities that suffered, namely Florence, Woodridge and Cross-ways.

- In the Tsitsikamma area (Kou-Kamma Local Municipality), numerous fires started on 10 June 2017. These fires have also affected commercial farming and commercial plantation areas.

In the Blue Lillies Bush \ Witelsbos area, approximately 4 500 Ha has been burnt, of which approximately 1 800 Ha is commercial forestry plantations.

These fires haven't been contained as yet and threaten numerous communities still, namely:

- Kwaaiibrand
- Woodlands
- Die Kruis

The Koomansbos Community has already suffered severely, because of these fires.

Some of the resources that have been involved in trying to contain these fires are:

- Approximately 15 Working on Fire teams (± 250 Firefighters)
- 1 x Working on Fire Helicopter
- 1 x Working on Fire Spotter Plane
- 4 x Private Helicopters
- Forestry Personnel
- Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Fire Department
- Kouga Local Municipality Fire Department
- Sarah Baartman District Municipality Disaster Management
- Numerous Private Landowners and their personnel

2. OR Tambo District Municipality

There are currently numerous fires burning in the Langeni Forest Plantation area (Mhlontlo Local Municipality).

Currently, approximately 500 Ha of commercial forestry plantation has been burnt. In addition to this, there are strong North Westerly Berg Winds predicted in the coming days and this has an extremely large potential to threaten the Peka Community.

As there are numerous fires burning, there is a major need for ground resources, in addition to aerial firefighting resources to assist with suppression and containment efforts.

If these fires are not sufficiently mopped-up and contained, they have the potential to flare-up again and cause catastrophic damage, especially in conditions of High Wind, coupled with Extreme Fire Behaviour and drought conditions.

We trust that you will find this report satisfactory.

Yours Faithfully.

Mr M.C. Botha
ECUFPA Manager