



NEWS LETTER



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I See Fields of Green

With small fires starting as early as January, the 2015 fire season held the promise of sleeplessness, but instead has proven to be exceptionally unpredictable. Sporadic rainfalls and minimal dry days has left the area looking as green as Spring should and farmers are chomping at the bit to get their camps burnt in time.

Although this good weather has slowed the fire season down extensively, it is important that we do not drop our guards completely as it is still not completely over. Fields are greener everyday, but plantation areas are still dry and bound to the fire prohibition period. Thus far 57 fires have been recorded for 2015 which is significantly less than the 217 of 2014 and the 289 of 2013. Of these 57 fires, 95% were fires that started in communal land and were controlled before reaching commercial farmland.

The only circumstances in which communal fires crossed into farmlands were in cases of omitted firebreaks; once again proving the necessity of firebreaks. Even in conditions where firebreaks cannot completely stop a fire, they provide an anchor to start working from.



The First One

The first fire came early this year with the Thomas River substation setting alight 2 hectares of grass on the 26th of January. Though not officially in the fire season it is still noted as the first unplanned fire of 2015.

The Big One

The 2nd of August saw a large fire moving South from the Kei Lands. It was cut off on in valleys between Neil Potter and Rance Rural Development in the South and the Kei River in North. After flying over the area, the burn scar is estimated at 3200 hectares.

The Bad One

Though not the biggest in actual size, the fire with that had the most potential damage started North of Mgwali on the evening of the 8th of August. It burnt a large portion of communal land and with the early morning wind shift, took flight into Warwick Flanagan's farm. With a great effort from the Bolo farming community the fire was extinguished. The estimated size measured 810 hectares.

Meet the Team: CANDICE SMITH



Having a friendly voice greet you on the other end of the phone is one of those under appreciated occurrences that we seldom experience in today's rushed, professional world. But in the case of GSFPA, a friendly "Hello" has been there since its formation.

- **Full Name:** Candice Claire Smith
- **Age:** 31
- **Position:** Administrator
- **Office Loc:** Stutterheim
- **(e):** admin@stutfpa.co.za

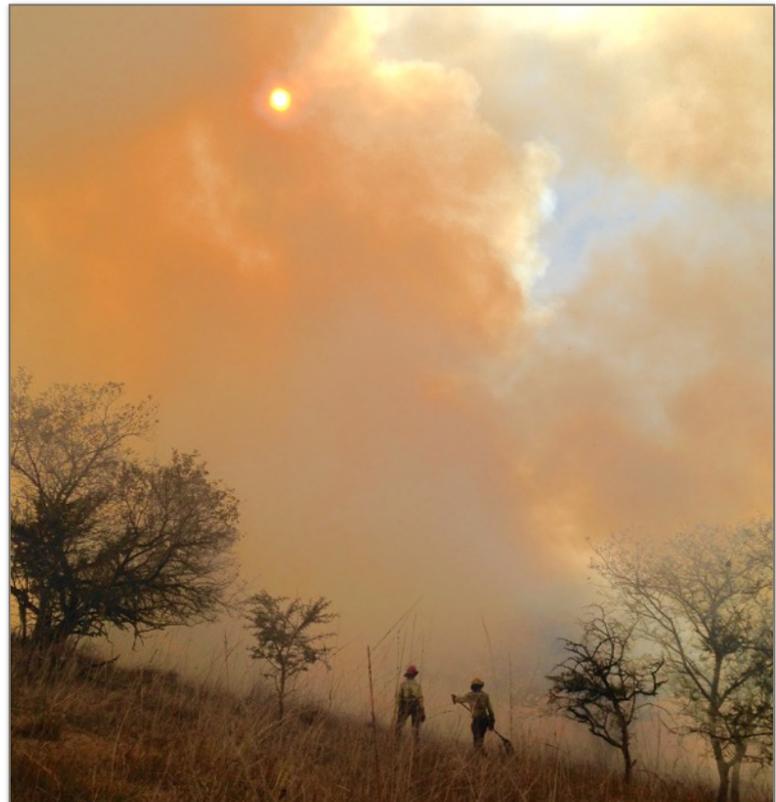
Candice deals with integral administrative tasks on a daily basis including everything from weather forecast distribution, fire statistic procurement and various secretarial functions such as minute taking etc.

As with all organisations; the importance of routine tasks that keep the wheels turning cannot be overstated and in the case of the GSFPA, many of these tasks find their way to Candice's desk. Her role in the journey has undoubtedly played an intricate part.

Every Child's Dream

The Stutterheim and Hogsback WoF teams have each been equipped with a brand new fire truck (Photo Bottom Page 1). Hogsback will be using a "Strike Unit" that is able to carry a crew of 10 and 1500 litres of water.

Stutterheim will be using the "Fire Tender", dubbed "LULU", which is a 4x4 with 3000 litre capacity and can carry a full crew of 25. Our thanks goes out to WoF's GM, Ian Henderson, for entrusting these vehicles to our area. They are the type of fire trucks that every child dreams of having a ride on.



Preparations for the Season

The GSFPA Working on Fire teams were extremely active in the preparations of firebreaks this season. In total well over 100 km's of firebreaks were burnt across the area. A number of Emergent Farmers' requested assistance in their preparations as well.

We would like to thank you, as the landowners, for making use of the WoF Teams as they have proven a valuable resource for the integrated fire management of the area.

Should you need any assistance with regards to burning, fuel reduction or alien invasive clearing, please feel free to contact us. Thank you for your efforts and continual support.