



## **Lions River Fire Protection Association**

**By Landowners – For Landowners**

DEFF FPA Reg. No. 838/01

The Lions River Fire Protection Association (LRFPA) was established in 2005, is a voluntary association of landowners, a not-for-profit entity, registered by the Department of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries in terms of the National Veld & Forest Fire Act 101, 1998 and is responsible for the co-ordination and management of rural fire activities undertaken in the region of the uMngeni, Impendle, Umshwathi & Mpofana Municipalities of KwaZulu Natal. The LRFPA was formed to allow its voluntary participants to enhance effective fire prevention, protection, suppression and other fire control measures within the respective areas at risk from uncontrolled fires for the good of the local community in general. The LRFPA is responsible for ensuring facilities and resources are available for the reduction, readiness, response and recovery from any forest or rural veld fire incident.

**VISION:** The Lions River Fire Protection Association will be a leader in support and innovation to our community and will provide the highest standard of excellence in the protection of the broader rural community from veld & forest fires.

**MISSION:** To provide a cohesive, enthusiastic Fire Protection Association, trained and equipped to meet the needs of its membership and the community, in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

### ***Area of operation***

The area of operation is centred on the town of Howick and with the rural areas of Hilton, Birnamwood, Merrivale, Karkloof, Curry's Post, Mount West, Tweedie, Lions River, Dargle, Lidgetton, Balgowan, Nottingham Road, Fort Nottingham, Lower Lotheni, Boston / Impendle area, the north western boundary areas with Msunduzi Municipality and northern boundary with Mpofana Municipality, all forming the area of operation of the LRFPA. The total area of LRFPA area of operations is approximately 250 000 hectares. Howick being the central town for the area of operation is a busy rural town enjoying a strong and varied industry / retail base and primarily incorporates a service-based population. The area of operation is made up of both light & heavy industry, dairy processing, furniture manufacturing, timber related agribusiness, hospitality, commercial agriculture (crop and livestock) as well as large tracts of commercial timber plantations.

The area has had an increase in rural residential subdivision development in the past few years which has resulted in a change of the demographics of the traditional farming base. The rural population is reducing to an extent and an increasing number of people are finding employment off farm. This is making it increasingly difficult for fire services (local government as well as private entities) to respond to incidents within a satisfactory timeframe in order to provide the highest level of protection to the community. Generally, response to fire incidents is made by the commercial timber growers, commercial farmers and landowners in the area, with very little assistance being offered at present from the local municipal (Government) fire service.

The area of operation is predominately undulating agricultural grasslands which are used mainly for grazing with cropping carried out in various parts of the area, as well as large tracts of timber plantation – all high risk with regard to the spread of fire.

## Operations

The LRFPA has appointed a Fire Protection Officer to ensure the Rules & Regulations are binding on all members as well as ensure the veld & forest fire management strategy is developed, continually updated implemented. Other resources are either contracted or supplied via volunteers (local farmers / landowners) to ensure an effective and efficient service is provided across the area of operation. The LRFPA is governed by an Executive Committee which has representatives from various stakeholder groups i.e. Agriculture, Forestry, DAFF and Landowners. The Committee is responsible for the governance of the Association and the service delivery is delegated principally to the Fire Protection Officer.

The LRFPA is legislatively empowered not only to set standards to which landowners within the AREA OF OPERATION must adhere to, but also has a key support and audit role.

## LRFPA OBJECTIVES

The LRFPA is focussed on the achievement of the following objectives:

- To inform and train our community on the risks of fire and to ensure **fire prevention and planning** is used to mitigate fire in our area.
- For the LRFPA area of operation to enjoy the respect and **support of our community**.
- To ensure **planning and resources** are in place to proactively ensure communities within the LRFPA area of operation are appropriately protected in the context of rural fire reduction, readiness, response and recovery.
- To ensure **fire suppression** is coordinated and effective.
- To ensure minimum equipment and personnel standards are met or exceeded while not compromising operational efficiency or effectiveness.
- To ensure landowners are educated and made aware about **forest and rural fire prevention**.
- To facilitate a personnel fire fighter training programme designed for all members to receive the **training** of their choice from a minimum of basic training to crew leader and specialised courses.
- **Radio network coverage** across the Midlands to effectively combat emergencies and for the protection for our volunteers / members and the general community.
- Establish **relationships and management systems with our sister agencies** (such as Provincial government departments, commercial forestry and local government fire services) to provide good working relationships and to ensure appropriate levels of **hazard reduction** are achieved.
- **Manage and co-ordinate veld fire suppression operations**
- To develop joint **Development Control** arrangements with our Municipalities to ensure the LRFPA and our Municipality work together efficiently to plan low risk developments.
- For the LRFPA rural areas to enjoy the respect and support of our **Local Government**.
- Our **Executive Committee** and staff will be working in a team that is a **passionate, progressive and proactive** organisation and has an increasing profile making a significant contribution to the Provincial fire initiative.

## LRFPA DUTIES

In terms of the National Veld and Forest Fire Act our duties are as follows;

- Develop and apply a veldfire management strategy for its area;
- Provide in the strategy for agreed mechanisms for the co-ordination of actions with adjoining fire protection associations in the event of a fire crossing boundaries;
- Make rules which bind its members;
- Identify the ecological conditions that affect the fire danger;
- Regularly communicate the fire danger rating referred to in sections 9 and 10 to its members;
- Organise and train its members in fire fighting, management and prevention;
- Inform its members of equipment and technology available for preventing and fighting veldfires;
- Provide management services, training and support for communities in their efforts to manage and control veldfires;
- Furnish any information requested by the Minister in order to prepare or maintain the fire danger rating system;
- Exercise the powers and perform the duties delegated to it by the Minister.

The rules contemplated above must provide for;

- Any matter which may or must be dealt with in terms of this Act;
- The minimum standards to be maintained by members in relation to all aspects of veldfire prevention and readiness for fire fighting;
- Controlled burning to conserve ecosystems and reduce the fire danger; and
- Any other matter which is necessary for the fire protection association to achieve its objectives.

## Activity

- Annually review and update the Fire Strategy and the Associations equipment levels
- Manage fire control measures appropriate to the areas of fire risk and monitor fire danger across the area on a daily basis during the fire season and as situations change during the remainder of the year.
- Continue to actively promote forest and rural fire prevention to the public through media and other marketing channels.

## Performance Targets

- Compliance with National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1998 and the Fire Plan complies with national standards and meets Authority requirements.

- Personnel used for fire fighting are trained to the level of operations they will perform at fires.
- The number of rural fire incidents (vegetation fires) reduces over a five-year rolling average.
- Debriefs of incidents confirm operations are coordinated and effective.

### LRFPA MEMBER BENEFITS (Overview)

- ✓ A service orientated FPA formed by landowners for landowners
- ✓ Weekly (and daily if required) communications in and out of fire season – keeping members informed at all times
- ✓ Assistance and advice in respect of fire prevention and control
- ✓ Assistance and advice in respect of training and equipment
- ✓ Communicating fire danger indices (FDI), weather warnings and general weather information to members -weekly emails, daily and other regular WhatsApp Broadcasts
- ✓ Fire coordination centre & FPO - assist with fire suppression through comprehensive member database and co-ordination of members to address fire suppression collectively
- ✓ Access to Working on Fire crews, via the Working on Fire Dispatch Centre in Howick
- ✓ Guidance and advice in terms of overall fire management planning within area of operation
- ✓ Ensuring and facilitating compliance between neighbouring landowners
- ✓ Assistance from Firehawk 24/7/365 iro fire detection – often fire is detected before landowner – conditions apply as this is not a contracted service via ordinary LRFPA membership
- ✓ Access to the following equipment for hire:
  - 2 x equipment trailers - access to, with a nominal fee, for fire breaks, extended fire assistance etc
  - 1 x 1000L water tanker - access to, with a nominal fee, for fire breaks, extended fire assistance etc
  - 1 x 600L bakkie sakkie - - access to, with a nominal fee, for fire breaks, extended fire assistance etc
- ✓ Farm radio network & 24/7 control room for fire emergency – members can link to this network
- ✓ Dedicated, hands on FPO, available 24/7 (within reason)
- ✓ Discounts up to 25% for members from suppliers of fire equipment
- ✓ FPA membership – presumption of negligence – in terms of the law members are deemed innocent should civil actions be brought against a member relating to spread of fire and damages caused, until the contrary can be proven - non members are deemed negligent in such instances – huge legal cost implications for non-members
- ✓ No aerial support – must be a member of KZNFPFA and caller pays principle