

**MINUTES OF THE IDMC'S VELD AND FOREST FIRES WORKING  
GROUP MEETING  
18 MAY 2005 AT 10H00**

**185 SCHOEMAN STREET, PRETORIA,  
SEDIBENG BLDG, CONFERENCE ROOM, 10<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR**

**ATTENDEES:**

Mr. Joel Matshate	DWAF (chairperson)
Ms. Mmakwena Maleka	DWAF
Mr Johan Breytenbach	Tshwane Emergency Management Services (SAESI Technical Committee)
Mr Robin Pillay	ESKOM
Ms Val Charlton	Working on Fire (WoF)
Ms Nareema Solomons	Provincial Local Government (Gauteng)
Ms Mmakwena Maleka	DWAF: Fire Regulation
Marius Atterbury	SAESI
Mr. Mike Creswell	Eskom
Mr. Simon Thomas	KZN-FPA
Mr. Mnikeli Ndabambi	SA Weather Service
Mr. Hannes Steyn	Mopani District Municipality
Mr Nic Opperman	Agri SA
Mr. Johan Heine	Working on Fire (WoF)
Mr. Reynie Barnard	Spoornet
Mr. K. Rademeyer	DWAF – Protection Services
Mr. Aaron Mafunda	Ekurhuleni Metro

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr. Pogiso Molapo	DWAF
Mr. Peter Davey	FPASA
Mr. Heine Vosloo	ESKOM
Ms. Thembi Mosia	DPLG (Gauteng Province)

**1. Opening & welcome**

The chairperson thanked all members who made time to attend the meeting and declared it open.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 17 November 2004**

The minutes were approved as presented with the following corrections:

- Pg 1 date should read 17 November 2004

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **3.1 Handbook on fires**

The meeting noted there are too many fire handbooks that are circulating around and that Mr. Heine promised to send a list of all handbooks on fires to Ms Maleka via e-mail. It was also agreed that an incident management system must be incorporated in the handbook as soon as it is endorsed.

### **NEW MATTERS**

#### **4. FPA Registration**

The meeting noted that 26 FPAs have been registered. The breakdown is as follows: Mpumalanga (5) and Eastern Cape (8), Northern Cape (4), Free State (1), Western Cape (2), KZN (1), Gauteng (3) and North-West (2)

It was also reported that the target for this financial year is to register 50 FPAs and therefore the sub-directorate has embarked on a mission of visiting areas that are in the high risk area and yet there is no improvement in the formation of FPAs. The first area visited was the Free State and the outcome was 12 FPAs applications that were brought back to National Office for evaluation.

The meeting also noted that the Sub-Directorate was under the impression that Working on Fire has a R1 million in its budget set aside for assisting the formation of FPAs but it was clarified that the money is from the Poverty Relief Fund, hence intended for poverty alleviation.

A map was put on the wall that shows all registered FPAs throughout the country and a suggestion was made that the map should show FPAs coverage in percentages.

The Chairperson asked members for recommendations on how to improve the formation of FPAs and underneath are some of the comments that were raised:

- It was recommended that National Office should write a memo to other government departments and stipulate their responsibilities regarding the formation of FPAs
- These Departments should be asked to disseminate the information to their Provincial Offices
- The National Office should request minutes from different FPAs so as to analyze the situation at first hand and those results should be reported back at this forum (the Fire Working Group)
- Fire Advisors must write monthly reports to the National Office on the progress of FPAs
- Details of all stakeholders should be included in our newsletter that is sent to fire advisors bi-monthly.

## **5. National Fire Danger Rating System**

The meeting noted that everything is in place in terms of the agreements but we still have a problem with batch processing which US technicians are working on in order that the system can be centralised. As is the case, the decision now is to decentralise the system using the regional stations of the SA Weather Service until such time that we could get results from USA.

Members were invited to the launch of the system which will take place on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2005 and details of the venue would still be communicated at a later stage. At this stage Ms. Charlton from WoF volunteered to help in the coordination of the launch.

## **6. Communications**

The meeting noted that there have been some problems with the Directorate: Communications within the department regarding the issuing of the fire bulletin. The bulletin was printed with wrong information and it had to be reprinted. Copies would be sent to stakeholders as soon as the new bulleting is delivered to the sub-directorate.

A proposal was tabled to all members to collaborate and produce a poster on the NFDRS to be in time for the launch. The proposal was accepted but the members wanted an assurance from communication directorate before embarking on the project.

### **Action/ resolved:**

- Joel to check with DWAF's Communications Directorate the requirements/ conditions for this proposal.

## **7. Training**

It was reported that the sub-directorate will be conducting training for fire advisors from the 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2005 which is an annual event.

- A concern was raised that in future when there is training taking place, WoF Managers and other interested stakeholders should be part of it since they are also on the ground assisting in the formation of FPAs

The meeting also noted that it is envisaged that because most registered FPA do not have CFO's as their FPO's, the sub-directorate will host training workshop for FPOs in September. A communiqué will be forwarded to all members regarding this issue.

### **Action/ resolved:**

- DWAF to provide details of the FPOs workshop as and when necessary.

## **8. Policy on the enforcement of NVFFA**

The meeting noted that consultants were appointed to assist DWAF in developing the Policy on enforcing the Fire Act. Consultation with the identified relevant parties took place in the second half of 2004. The consultation was in the form of face-to-face meetings and these were followed by a National workshop held in Pretoria in March 2005.

A draft policy has now been produced and this would be presented to DWAF management for approval and adoption once finalised. It is envisaged that the policy would be finalised by end of July 2005. Parallel to the development of the policy is a process of developing detailed guidelines on how to enforce the Act. These would be finalised simultaneously with the policy.

- A suggestion was made that those civil procedures for land owners should be added to the guidelines as an incentive to land owners.

A question was asked if there was any case won successfully. Ms Charlton (WoF) reported to the members that in the Western Cape: Eden Municipality, there is a pilot project which will be running for the next 18 months dealing with environmental legislation in conjunction with business against crime and the judiciary.

### **The meeting noted that:**

- Mr Simon Thomas will supply the sub-directorate with cases to be incorporated in the guidelines as case studies
- WoF is running an investigation training for the judiciary
- It was reported that Spoornet won a case constituted against them because railway lines are not classified as veld – it was noted that this is an interesting case which might be used for other cases.

## **9. Reports from partners**

The Committee agreed that District Disaster Management Centres, Fire Services and Working on Fire should be given more roles to be able to feed back to the forum, that, they should be able to report on operational issues.

### **9.1 Working on Fire**

- The meeting noted that an annual report is now finalised and it will be mailed to all relevant stakeholders.
- Crew leaders were trained for the past 18 months and 10 of them were promoted to managerial positions.
- During the November – April fire season, 1 200 fires were reported in the Western Cape to which WoF participated at a cost of R 8million and 15 teams were deployed to assist the WC for the period of 12 months.
- There will be a WoF strategic meeting on 13 – 14 June 2005.
- On 23 May 2005 there will be a meeting where education and communications will dominate the discussions.

- WoF has produced education material co-branded with Sappi and the Department of Education to be used at schools in Mpumalanga. Its modules are Fire and Environment which will be taught from basic level to matric using Outcome Based education (O.B.E).
- Communication is highly visible in the Western Cape and now they will be rolling it out to KZN. There are articles in magazines and now they are concentrating in Mpumalanga and Gauteng pro the fire season.
- WoF newsletter is distributed quarterly.

## 9.2 Farmers Union

It was reported that there seems to be lack of interest from farmers regarding the Fire Act and this becomes a problem with the formation of FPAs.

- There was a meeting in Nigel where Mr. Molapo was invited to give a presentation but he could not attend.
- It was suggested that a schedule of visits to FPAs should be made available in advance to all concerned.
- It was also suggested that DWAF's website address should always be displayed at the pack of the quarterly veldfire bulletins.

## 9.3 Fire Services \ Emergency Services

- The meeting noted that since June 2004 all fire reports were sent to Mr. Luke Radebe of DWAF's Gauteng region.
- It was suggested that the Fire Brigades Act, Disaster Management Act and Fire Act should be reviewed and complement each other. Mr Matshate in his capacity as the chairman was tasked to look into this and update members regarding this issue.
- IDP's should be included in the act.

## 10. Adoption of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and the Road Map for the IDMC Fire Working Group

It was agreed that in the past the meeting only concentrated on the Act but now it is time that the meeting should look at operational levels and therefore a suggestion was made that the agenda should be changed accordingly but the TOR were adopted with the following amendments:

- i. The heading should read: ***Terms of Reference (TOR) for the NDMC sub-committee on veldfires***
- ii. Instead of "The purpose of the Forum is twofold" it should say ***threefold***
- iii. Another bullet should be added to read: ***Report to NDMC Advisory Forum as its third ToR***

It was concluded that:

- It is DWAF's responsibility to report back to IDMC and feedback from IDMC should be reported back to the meeting
- The road map was adopted with amendments on page 7, the last bullet to read: ***Working on Fire Programme is a service provider to FPA's, municipalities and owners.***

- Mr. Hannes Steyn and Mr. Johan Heine are to prepare a document regarding municipal boundaries and umbrella's and forward it to DWAF so that it could form part of the document to be sent out with the minutes
- The performance contract of the sub-directorate staff members should be amended from the number of FPA's being formed but to the percentage of FPA's formed in the country.

## **11. Closure**

The chairperson thanked everybody who participated and the meeting was adjourned until the next sitting.

**12. Date of the next meeting:** 17<sup>th</sup> August 2005 @ 10h00. Venue will be communicated at a later stage.