



1) What is the SCFPA and what is the area of jurisdiction?

The Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) established in 2006, is a section 21 Non-Profit Company (NPC), which operates in an area of 4 Million Ha covering the whole off Eden District Municipality including the Tsitsikamma, Langkloof and Baviaanskloof in the Eastern Cape.

The SCFPA is managed by an executive committee which is represented by role-players from various forms of land use practice within the Southern Cape namely: farming, organised forestry, conservation, together with various local government departments and parastals. Funds which are generated by the SCFPA through the collection of membership fees and fund raising are used specifically within the SCFPA domain. The SCFPA is not mandated to contribute any funds towards state institutions. Funds are audited annually by an independent auditor, statements of which are made available to the members.

**The SCFPA does / is not:**

- A fire fighting service although assistance at larger fires can be provided
- Fulfilling the role of fire brigade services
- Receiving any income from the collection of rates levies by municipalities neither does it pay over any funds towards municipalities
- Involved in structural fire fighting or related issues
- Enforce membership to the organisation. Membership is voluntary other than for state organisations which own land or manage land for which membership is compulsory

2) What are the SCFPA"s primary objectives?

The organisations primary objectives are to (a) empower local communities to become more aware of the risks of fire, (b) capacitate them to act proactively to reduce the hazards and vulnerability of assets, (c) allow them to act as a first response to fire emergencies, (d) initiate integrated fire management in the most cost effective way possible, and (e) ensure that members comply to legislation.

In so doing, communities become safer and are more prepared in the event of a fire emergency. Through the creation of an enabling framework and greater awareness, fewer ignitions will result in less spread and easier suppression of veld fires.

### 3) What is the SCFPA's primary goal in the landscape?

The SCFPA's primary goal is to establish Fire Management Units (FMU's) in priority areas as identified by an Integrated Fire Management Plan. The SCFPA seeks to facilitate the establishment of FMU's, in areas which have been identified according to their fire risk, which are bordered by fire breaks, either natural or man-made, and manage fire in an ecologically sound manner.

### 4) What are some of the details involved in setting up a FMU?

- The setting up of FMU institutional arrangements;
- A risk assessment of hazards, assets and resource levels;
- The development of fire management plans. Assimilation of the spatial data in terms of Fire-breaks and fuel hazard reduction measures which are to be supplied to Eden Risk Department to capture into a central database;
- Fire fighting team recruitment, training and equipping;
- Awareness and training of residents in terms of fuel reduction (including Invasive Alien Plant control) ; "fire-scaping", fire boss, etc
- Identification of access and escape routes;

### **Direct (tangible) benefits of SCFPA membership:**

- Shared resources between members with regards to fire fighting equipment which results in Fire Management Unit's being better equipped and resulting in a cost saving for individual members.
- Firebreaks are not needed on the cadastral boundaries. Realignment can be negotiated between landowners and exemptions can be applied for by members of the FMU's resulting in a more practical and usable firebreak system. This will result in a cost saving for members by not having to prepare firebreaks on all the cadastral boundaries.
- Increase in the conservation benefit within the landscape due to the minimization of the number of firebreaks. This will reduce potential accelerated erosion and disturbance to natural veld and forest.
- Access to the Fire Danger Index on a daily basis
- Increased awareness and management of Social, Environmental and Economic risks
- Increased coordination in the event of a fire
- Reduction of fire related risk by various means e.g. fuel load management
- Fire management plans compiled for Fire Management Units (FMU's)
- Members are automatically affiliated to the Western Cape Umbrella FPA which liaise with National, Local Government and parastatal structures
- Assistance in the event of extreme fire conditions through the provision of Trained Fire Fighting teams and Management
- Training for new members in Basic Veld Fire Fighting

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- Additional training can be arranged by the SCFPA at a considerably reduced cost
- Awareness campaigns are initiated, which include the establishment of a website
- Provision of a platform with which to raise issues with local and provincial government structures
- Provision of administrative support to FMU"s thereby reducing costs for units
- The SCFPA is the mechanism to gain support from Working on Fire and other government initiatives
- Access to international funding if available e.g. GEF and the World Bank
- Reduced incidence of fires
- Enforcement where necessary in incidences where members and non-members do not comply with legislation
- Members adhering to the rules of the SCFPA will automatically comply with legislation
- The "presumption of negligence" clause in the National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 101 of 1998

34. (1) If a person who brings civil proceedings proves that he or she suffered loss from a veldfire which—  
 the defendant caused; or  
 started on or spread from land owned by the defendant,  
 the defendant is presumed to have been negligent in relation to the veldfire until the contrary is proved,  
 unless the defendant is a member of a fire protection association in the area where the fire occurred.

**Indirect (intangible) benefits of SCFPA membership:**

- The interaction and extension services with different landowners will result in an increase in awareness with regards to the risk of fire and the consequences of uncontrolled fire to both property and infrastructure.
- Reduced fire risk due to planning and better response times.
- Biodiversity benefits by instituting better fire management practices.
- Provision of inputs into government policy and decision making will be achieved through involvement of the executive committee.

*For any further information please feel free to contact:*

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