



Meeting	Crocodile River Reserve Fire Protection Association (CRRFPA) Annual General Meeting
Date and Time	05-April-2025, 09h30, started 09h50
Venue	Phahama Lodge, R511
Attendees	Birgit Hohl, Althea Fordyce, Wim Schimmel, Dot Henwood, Michael Valenta, Hans von Stockhausen, Danie Very, Marius Liebenberg, Helma Smits, Shaun Steyn, Fanus Buckle, Ansie Buckle, Mpho Sedibe, Bruno Dusman, Jenny Cornish, Zarius, Francioso Vittorio, Lynette de Roos, Tharina Bird, Dot Henwood, Duncan Stork-Frew, Rika Lottering, Sandra Willms, Gary Watkins, Douw Scholtz, Danie Toerien, Dalene vd Merwe
Apologies	Liz Pattison, Niko Knigge, Cathy Sexton, Laurel Hawton, Justin Henry

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

- The Chairperson welcomed all present.

#### 2. Proxies and Quorum

- 14 Proxies received, which together with the 22 attendees confirmed a Quorum

#### 3. FPA registration process

- Second attempt to register with the DFFE as there were delays due to DFFE no longer wanting to register any FPAs
- Had numerous meetings with DFFE and EMS, in one meeting attended by the CRRFPA committee the following was discussed:
  - Inclusion of informal settlements as they are located in areas to be included, but the FPA is not responsible to fight fires within these settlements, but should assist with education and training
  - More areas should be included so that there are no gaps
  - All Nature Reserves must be included in a FPA
- Either compromise and include more areas and get registered, or be placed under another FPA
  - They suggested the CRRFPA be incorporated into the Crocodile River FPA
- Awaiting approval and signatures for Form 1, timeline is 90 days from receipt of the form, hopefully will be completed before burn season starts

#### 4. New areas included

- Hoekplaats, Mooiplaas, Mnandi AH, Blair Atholl and Monaghan Farm Estates
- Possibly also Swartkops
- Densely populated areas are usually not included, as example Copperleaf Estate, awaiting feedback
- In first attempt to register with Form 1 it already had Rickaletta & Vlakplaats listed
- It was asked what the responsibilities are of the FPA with this huge area it covers
  - There are different sections/sectors in the FPA and each has an area representative who work with landowners wrt fire management plan (FMP) for the area
- It was asked whether estates have to be part of an FPA
  - It is not mandatory for anyone to be part of an FPA, estates therefore don't have to be a member either (and they often have their own FMP), but it is strongly recommended all landowners and estates become part of an FPA



- It was commented by the Grassland Stewardship Alliance representative that all these changes are most likely not in line with the CRRFPA constitution
  - Existing members should be given the opportunity to agree to the new areas to be included, and if the areas are classified as rural then shouldn't be an issue
  - The FMP must meet NEM:PAA requirements
  - Structures/processes should be in place to deal with the new members/areas, as the CRR pays levy on behalf of CRR members to the FPA
  - The constitution has to be updated and circulated for consultation
- It was asked how many members the CRRFPA has
  - Approximately 80, but numbers will be confirmed, but seems CRR and non-CRR members are about the same
- It was commented that the City of Tshwane does not supply municipal water to rural areas, and neither they nor the EMS are really interested in helping these areas, and seems therefore handed their responsibilities to the landowners

#### 5. New website and e-mail addresses

- New website address: [crrfpa.co.za](http://crrfpa.co.za)
  - Contains a lot of information, including a weather app
  - Many important documents can be found on the website, including a 3 page summary document of the National Veld Forest Fire Act (NVFFA)
  - Sections for all members to register online

#### 6. Chairperson's Report

- Towards end of June there was 1 day where 5 fires started on the same day, majority due to runaway firebreaks
- Forecast the conditions will be worse this year due to late rains and regrowth
- Aim to have all firebreaks finished by end June 2025, even though officially it's only last day of July
- The fire in September 2024 on the areas along the R511 – estimated loss of R20million
  - Big uncontrollable fires also leave an emotional impact, not just infrastructure and land
  - The winds were between 70 – 120 Km/hr
  - In DR/ RK cause of fire was sparking Eskom lines
- There will be fire-fighting training this year
- Landowners/tenants who do not do firebreaks can be sued by those affected
- There are now WhatsApp groups, a Community WhatsApp group CRRFPA – Together we are... which has 2 main groups, Announcements & Fires – General, and then each areas own FPA WhatsApp group. Althea busy cleaning up the groups where individuals have been included in areas they should not be a part of
- Area reps admin has to improve, combined effort between chairperson and area reps
- Anyone wanting to burn something will need a burn permit, these will be issued soon by chairperson
- Burning needs preparation, i.e., sufficient staff, sufficient and correct equipment, correct protective clothing, checking on weather conditions, timing etc (if you can't control the burn don't burn)
- Member registration made easier by using the new website

#### 7. Financial Report



- R25,473.39 in Current Account
- R105,711.41 in Savings Account
- R10,000.00 in Equipment
- Total assets therefore R141,184.80
- Currently ringfenced moneys are: DR for R34 500, HR for R27 600, R9 500 for RK
- Received R18 400 in membership fees
- Received R52 294.50 for Fire relief fund
- Received R3 030.82 interest
- For Hennops the money is all ringfenced in one “pot” even though it is received from 3 different areas/sectors within Hennops

#### 8. Question from the floor

Many of these questions were asked and answered during one or other agenda point.

- What is happening on side of DFFE and EMS that changes are expected
  - FPA requirements across the country have changed
  - More government awareness and programs being implemented to review requirements, as climate change plays a huge role
  - Want to implement funding for the FPAs, implement the NVFFA across the board, train peace officers who work for the fire-brigade to enforce compliance
  - regulations allow for bodies to fight fires in rural areas, but City of Tshwane is not allowed
  - FPA will have more power, will have to enforce and manage their areas, and conduct training, the CRRFPA plans to conduct training and grade the fighters for the different roles
  - Fire fighters need to be registered and insured
- What is the situation with money spent towards firefighting and firebreaks
  - Membership fees collected is too little to assist financing firebreaks, R18 000 membership fees vs >R100 000 to do firebreaks
  - Each area, including the new ones, will have to collect donations, many donations are made by landowners who are non-members
  - Some of the money in the account will be used to assist in purchasing equipment for those areas who need it
- After each training – are there individuals who supervise the firebreak teams
  - Dot was the only one who supervised some of the teams
  - It is not possible to supervise all teams all the time, which is why it is important that experienced well trained staff attend firebreaks
- Could a bit more assistance be given in terms who to phone, what to do, what is needed when there is a fire
  - This will be part of the area reps responsibilities, and should be included in each area/sector FMP, they will meet soonest after the AGM
  - Include a map for ease of locating where the fire is
- Could the name of the main community WhatsApp group be updated to make it easier to find
  - Will be updated, and include the word Fires
- According to the constitution minutes should be approved, and increases in fees should be approved by members
  - Agenda for next year will be updated to include these points
  - Minutes of 2024 AGM were read and approved by Althea, seconded by Jenny
  - It was unanimously accepted by the attendees to increase the annual membership fees from R200 to R250
- If members join late, will there be prorata payments
  - No, as it is such a minimal annual fee it is expected to pay the full amount



- If member joined late, e.g., some landowners in Gerhardsville joined in August 2024, do they have to pay again when they get invoiced soon?
  - Yes, same answer as previous point
- Would it be possible to have a list of available equipment
  - Will create a list for FPA owned equipment
  - Will create a list for landowner equipment
- Contact names for government owned properties need to be shared so they too can be advised on what is required and what the fees are
- Would it be possible to get names of suppliers, and potentially buy bulk for those who need in order to get better prices for equipment and protective clothing
  - Will investigate, but also share a list of current suppliers
- It was mentioned that the impact of fire is not only on structures and people, but also on grasslands; this is supposed to be a predominately grassland area and bush encroachment is a problem, so sometimes fires can improve the environmental conditions, the veld will change and there are often plants who take over, but a few years later the veld will have corrected itself again so don't remove anything out of the veld
- The GSA does not allow herbicides to be used in the reserve and buffer zones, however special, inaccessible regions, e.g. mountain tops, could be excluded from this. An application has to be submitted to the GSA who will supply the correct herbicide
  - A resolution by the GSA to be submitted to the FPA chairperson was handed to the secretary

Meeting closed at 12h35