

Fire Protection Association (FPA) in the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces: Challenges and opportunities

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

FPAs are Voluntary community-based organisations formed under the National Veld and Forest Fire Act (NVFFA), Act 101 of 1998. Are community-based statutory fire management organisations.

FPAs consist of rural communities and landowners who have volunteered and grouped themselves, set minimum standards and share resources to prevent, predict, manage and fight veld fires that threaten lives, property and sources of their livelihood like livestock, grazing land and crops on their farms.

FPAs develop and implement integrated fire management practices in their properties with joint ventures with the neighbouring FPAs, institutions, and organisations to minimise adverse impacts and maximize benefits of fires for effective and efficient fire management

About 217 (225) FPAs nationally, 42 in FS and 25 in NC.

Composition: landowners, tenants, local authorities, and others responsible for land on which fire risk exists

Structure: Typically four (4) executive members- chairperson, secretary, FPO, one (1) additional member, and ordinary members whose number varies from FPA to FPA

Aim: *Predict, prevent, manage and extinguish veldfires, forest and mountain fires*

Role of Fire Protection Associations



REDUCE VELDFIRE
RISKS ACROSS
LARGE RURAL
AREAS



COORDINATE
PREVENTIVE
MEASURES AND
FIREFIGHTING
EFFORTS



PROVIDE
TRAINING AND
INFORMATION
SHARING



SUPPORT LEGAL
COMPLIANCE
UNDER NVFFA



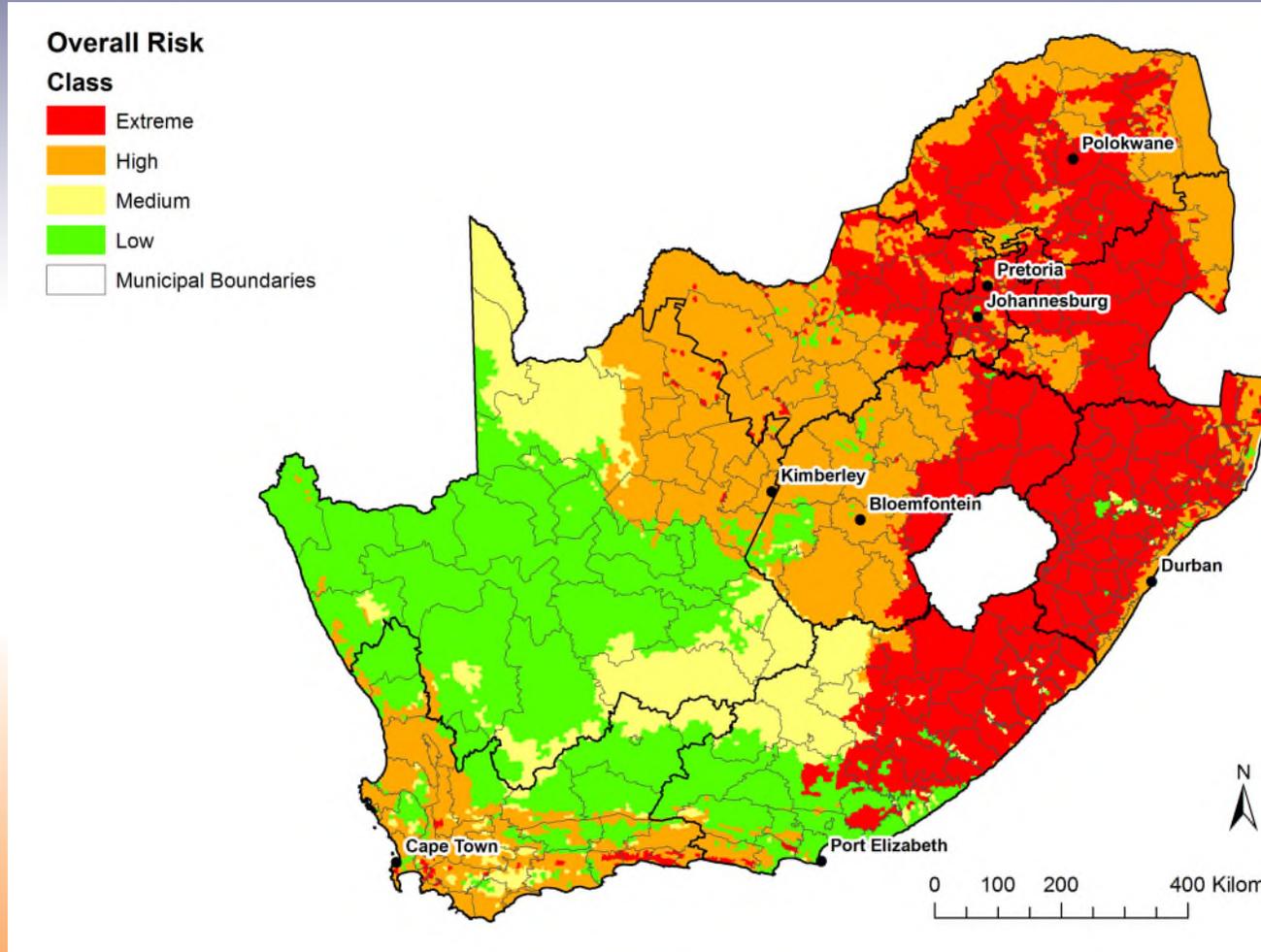
STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE TO
FIRE DISASTERS

Fire Risk/Vulnerability in the FS and NC Provinces

- Both provinces have Extreme, High and to a small extent medium fire risk in a sort of NE to SE alignment
- Both provinces have extensive grasslands with high wildfire risk
- Annual veldfire incidents cause significant environmental and economic damage
- Vast land surfaces with dispersed informal settlements
- Poor road infrastructure for easy response
- Climate change with rising temperature, rising FDI days
- High fuel loads
- Human and natural ignitions
- Seasonal changing patterns with unpredictability
- High risk of rural-urban interface (Los Angeles 2025; Chile 2026 and 2024)



National Veld fire risk classification; Source: Forsyth, Kruger, Le Maitre, 2010



Benefits of FPAs to Local Communities

- ❖ Improve wildfire preparedness
- ❖ Lower insurance risk for members
- ❖ Training in fire prediction, prevention and control
- ❖ Enhanced coordination during fire season
- ❖ Stronger institutional capacity for fire disaster management



Key challenges facing Fire Protection Associations in the FS and NC Provinces



Limited resources and capacity within FPAs.



Government funding instability and equipment shortfalls.



Coordination problems among stakeholders.



Underperforming municipal fire services.



Environmental drivers and Climate Change increasing fire risk.



Challenges securing landowner participation and compliance.



Insufficient institutional capacity, manpower, and capability to operate effectively



Insufficient community awareness and preparedness

Some key Recommendations to enhance FPAs Resilience



Consolidate and strengthen FPAs, promote fire advisory forums.

Enhance training, education and professional capacity development (Train landowners, rural communities, FPAs members).

Improve funding through diverse streams and cost sharing, share resources and promote government, private and NGOs partnership

Strengthen governance, legislative enforcement, enhance compliance, and interagency coordination

Adopt Risk informed fire planning, integrate climate projections into fire management strategies

Improve teamwork and conduct awareness campaigns in their areas.

Development & review fire prevention, suppression and management plans for continual improvement for the FPAs.

Development of a database for sharing of veld fire statistics in the province.

5 Facts about Fire (UNU, 2026)

1. Fire is an essential, natural part of many ecosystems
2. Climate change does not cause wildfires, but increases fire risks
3. Human activities are contributing to worsening wildfires and destruction
4. Fire science and fire ecology are key to understanding fire risks
5. We can manage fire with fire

Thank you for Listening!

- Bai Dankie!
- Kea le boha!
- Merci!

