



PUTTING THE GUST IN AUGUST

OUR FIRE MANAGER WRITES:

The 2025 fire season has kicked off with a bang, and that I mean literally, with gas bottle explosion fires in Magoebaskloof to the runaway veld and forest fires that we had where we activated the aircraft to assist member landowners combat these fires.

June and July started relatively calm with a great Haenertsburg winter festival but soon got a bit crazy with controlled fires that flared up and spread to neighbouring plantations to the normal bee hunter trying to get honey and started an uncontrolled fire.

This just proves that we are never 100% ready for uncontrolled fires, and although August to October is the main fire risk periods, things change, and that fire preparedness and readiness must start much earlier!

Please note that as per the National Veld and Forest Fire Act in conjunction with the LFPA rules, **all firebreaks MUST be in place by 1 August**, or as per arrangements made by the LFPA.

We still have 3 months left and due to some late, unexpected rain in July, the LFPA extended the burning period with another week, stretching to Thursday, 7th of August 2025. This should give everyone enough time to conduct their controlled burns.

I also had the privilege to help members burn some firebreaks alongside the newly Letaba FPA fire crew and skid unit.

We also assisted Friends of the Haenertsburg Grassland (FRoHG) that on behalf of Limpopo Economic Development and Tourism (LEDET) burned 150ha of grassland behind Haenertsburg Village.

We had some generous donations towards the LFPA to assist us in combating veldfires and assisting members, and for this we are extremely grateful.

With a strong team, willing volunteer firefighters and dedicated member landowners, we are ready whatever the Fire Prohibition Period (August – October) will throw at us. We urge everyone to become a member of the Letaba FPA and assist us in making our area of operation a fire safe area. Please go and like our social media pages and check our new website.

Please note that the 2025 Admission of guilt fines were signed and finalized with the Limpopo Chief Magistrate, which will assist the LFPA to enforce the National Veld and Forest Fire Act. Please contact the Letaba FPA for more information regarding this.

YOURS SINCERELY

ROUAN SNYMAN

MEET THE VOLUNTEERS!



The new Skid unit of the LFPA has assisted in 12 controlled burns, since the beginning of fire season, and 9 uncontrolled burns.

We are proud of our two teams! The Skid unit was brought to life to assist members with the making of firebreaks, and to respond to small uncontrolled fires, putting it out before they could escalate into major fires.



LFPA Gound Crew : Siebert, Godfrey, Winter and Pieter in Magoebaskloof



FROM GAME RANGER..... TO GAME CHANGER!



A question while we were scanning the air for an inbound Cessna on a winter's morning, unfolded to be quite an intriguing story. What made you become a pilot? I asked command and control pilot Jos Ackerman, and he takes it back to 1999. Back then he was the Logistics Officer at Hluhluwe Game Reserve, and the task at hand was : go to Pilanesberg and fly back with six lions on board. The aeroplane was a Cessna Caravan with all the passenger seats removed. Their cargo: three males and three female lions. The pilot, the veterinarian, Jos and a cameraman from BBC, accompanied the lions, which was by now all sedated and sleeping like sardines. Take-off from Pilanesberg happened to be at 14H00. Flying time to Hluhluwe should be two hours.

All went well, and they were inbound of Hluhluwe within the next twenty five minutes, when the pilot saw the leg and enormous claw of a male lion stretching out towards him. The vet's face went a pale as a blanket. The lions were waking up! A female also gestured she was getting out of her nap. Jos and the vet frantically administered top-up dosages, as more started to wake up, they realized – here is not enough drugs onboard to keep all the lions down until landing! Soon the last vile was used.

Jos radioed their predicament that a vet must please meet them on the runway to immediately administer more drugs when they touchdown. They were still at 4000 feet in the air. The pilot went full throttle to get them on the ground as quick as possible, when a loud bang added to the excitement! Due to the quicker decent, the backdoor popped open! Eight minutes later they were on the ground.

“That experience flying in that Cessna Caravan was the catalyst for me to go and get my wings” – Jos Ackerman



THE CESSNA CARAVAN



THE TALLEST TREE

DID YOU KNOW?



The tallest tree in the world is Hyperion, a coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) located in Redwood National Park in California. It measures 116.07 meters (380.8 feet) tall. This magnificent tree was discovered in 2006 by naturalists Chris Atkins and Michael Taylor.

The world's tallest tree compared to a skyscraper of 116m

THE WORLD'S OLDEST LIVING TREE



4853 YEARS

5000 YEARS

Pinus longaeva grow at the uppermost edge of the timberline, among the windswept peaks of California, Nevada and Utah. The trees' ability to thrive in this unforgiving landscape of freezing temperatures, arid soils and relentless winds is the key to their remarkable longevity. They draw sustenance from the most brittle layers of limestone and carbonate rock — what passes for fertile soil at high elevations. And their gnarled, twisted branches, which are shaped by fast-moving currents of mountain air, provide stability and reduce the risk of breakage during storms. Uniquely, the trees' roots provide nourishment only to the specific section of branches directly above it. This ensures that if a root dies off due to exposure, only the corresponding segment of the tree is affected, allowing the rest to continue growing.