

AFRIFIRENET CIRCULAR

23 OCTOBER 2002

Dear colleagues,

Introduction

In Africa it has been reasonably quiet during the September/October part of the fire season, particularly after the serious fires experienced during the early part (July/August 2002). In Southern Africa we even had some very welcome early rains about two weeks ago. However, as I am writing this letter, the northern part of Southern Africa – including Namibia, Botswana and South Africa – are experiencing a heat wave, and I am very wary that the fire season might not be over yet in this part of the world! The affect of El Nino should also be kept in mind, and closely monitored.

Elsewhere in the fire world the surrounds of Sydney are already experiencing extreme wildfire conditions so early during their fire season. As we are planning for the 3rd International Wildland Fire Conference there during October 2003, this again emphasizes the urgency of the Wildland Fire threat on a global scale, there, and elsewhere.

Afrifirenet membership

Since my last communication send out the 13th of September 2002, our membership has been expanded significantly, with Afrifirenet now having 57 members from 14 African countries, and 5 affiliated from countries elsewhere (members who have been resident and/or working in Africa for a long period of time). Since the last ILC meeting in Sydney end July/early Aug.2002, our membership has almost doubled! Thanks to some of our members who made a point of it to assist in expanding Afrifirenet.

A warm welcome to the following new members to our Regional Subsahara African Wildland Fire Network:

Dr. Vesa Kaarakka and his Namibian team, Anneli Shishome, Loice Omoro, Letla Mosenene, Simeon Hengari and Joseph Hailwa. Also to Nsita Steve Amooti from Uganda, Tina Myring from Burkina Faso, Johnny Mantilla from Moçambique, Jan Verbesselt from the University of Leuven, Belgium (involved in early warning projects in South Africa), Claudius van de Vijver from the University of Wageningen, The Netherlands (working for a long time in Tanzania on fire effects on e.g. nutrients) and Chris Austin, and Fire Protection Association specialist from Nelspruit, South Africa. It is great to have you all on board!

We are still exploring further membership countries, particularly in Kenya, Somalia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Zambia. Please you guys and ladies, if you have a contact in any of these countries that might be interested in our Net, let me have the contact detail and I will take it from there. Mike Jurvelius, from the FAO in Rome, has done a great job to assist in this field. Thanks Mike, appreciated!

I am happy that our science subnet membership is pretty strong, but there is still room for improvement. Those that still want to be added to the list, please provide me with the detail (discipline you would like to contribute to). I have also approached some of you individually for contributions, but to all: Please let me have those contributions now! They can be specially drawn up for the Net, or ready published/unpublished material. Now that the GFMC is spreading its global Network further and further, you can be sure of excellent exposure to your work experience.

GFMC/Afrifirenet website: Growing exponentially!

To appreciate what has been going on at the GFMC in Freiburg, Germany, please visit our global website at <http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de> or directly at [http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/Global Networks/globalNet.html](http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/Global%20Networks/globalNet.html). Today we are not the only Regional Network in operation anymore! Along with the Regional Subsahara Africa Wildland Fire Network, you will now also find the Regional Baltic, Mesoamerica, South East Asia and Australasia Networks, with the Mediterranean one under construction. GFMC Director, Johann Goldammer, told me that the Regional Network family will soon be complete – probably before the end of October 2002. Now we can really explore what is going on in the world of fire!

On the GFMC website I would also like to recommend that you browse for the IFFN issues No.25 (Special issue on Africa), No.26 (Asia and Oceania) and No.27 (Americas and Europe).

Again credit to Johann and his team! I can imagine these guys worked right through many nights to get this Network as far as it is. Now members must start contributing please! I would appreciate it if Afrifirenet countries start sending me country reports on any fire events of interest to our members. In this way we will really get communications going. Tell us about your wildfire problems, so that we can discuss them, and maybe seek solutions and assistance where applicable.

Fire in Subsahara Africa handbook: Progress

We are nearly there! This comprehensive book will soon go to the publishers (we are still negotiating with a local, South African printing house), and it should be on the market early next year.

More exiting news is that the negotiations for funding is now in an advanced stage, and it appears that the book will be made available to put it on the market as a “high subsidy” handbook, affordable to all that want to purchase it. GFMC is still negotiating final finance application, but we are also considering a possible French version to be put on the international market as well.

How about the venue and place for an official launch? Jake, put your mind at rest, it will not be launched in Portugal!

Well, that is all from Bredasdorp! I will be traveling internally in SA from 24/11 to 3/11, but please put your contributions in my e-mail inbox. I will also be available on my mobile phone during this period for urgent matters.

Make a point of it to visit the GFMC website, to update yourselves in the world of fire.

Have a nice day. Regards to all,

Neels de Ronde