



2020 VELD FIRE REPORT




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Muzarabani Vehicle and 3 Tractors for Hurungwe, Mbire and Muzarabani Districts

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2020 Fire Report Foreword

This report gives a synopsis of veld fire management in the country in the year 2020. The fire season which started on 31 July to 31 October 2020 came in the backdrop of the Covid19 pandemic which challenged the Agency and its partners to be innovative in veld fire management. To comply with Covid19 regulations limited meetings were conducted with increased social distancing and reduced travel. The Agency adopted social media as a means of information dissemination on veld fire management as well as working with local leadership.



A total of **1 178** veld fire incidences were recorded between 31 July and 31 October 2020 resulted in **806 457.84** hectares being burnt. This was a positive move compared to **1 508** veld fire incidences that destroyed **1 158 291.57** hectares in 2020 translating to a **30.38%** decrease of total burnt area and **21.38 %** on fire incidence recorded. Just like in 2019, **4** lives were lost to veld fires in 2020. Acknowledgment is given to all stakeholders who played their part in the 2020 fire season and I urge these and more stakeholders to be vigilant in fire management.

As we prepare for the 2021 fire season, we envisage that no life or property should be lost to veld fires. All arms of government and civic society are called upon to join hands to manage the fire scourge. Noteworthy, the government has pioneered the Pfumvudza – Intwasa conservation agriculture programme that has assisted in veld fire management. To achieve a bumper harvest using the Pfumvudza – Intwasa conservation agriculture concept veld fires have to be prevented in order for mulch to be available. Farmers are highly encouraged to collect mulch as well as engaging in hay baling and grass combing programmes.

The 2021 fire season is not going to be an easy one as it is marred by the Covid19 pandemic and high vegetation growth due to heavy rains. The role of traditional leaders and local authorities cannot be emphasized enough. Activation of these structures as well as other partners for veld fire management remains key. The country aims at a 15% reduction in the area burnt by veld fires in 2021. This target can only be achieved by investing in fire fighting management in terms of equipment and knowledge of firefighting. I therefore call upon everyone to play their part in fire management to save our beautiful country and the planet at large.


Aaron Chigona

Director General-Environmental Management Agency

1.0 Introduction

The report gives an overview of veld fire management in the country for the 2020 fire season that starts from 31 July 2020 to 31 October 2020. The fire season recorded a cumulative total of **806 457.84** Hectares by 31 October 2020, from a total of **1 178** incidences as recorded from 31 July 2020. Compared to the same period in 2019, a total of **1 508** veld fire incidences destroying **1 158 291.57** Hectares were recorded. This translates to a decrease of **30.38 %** on total burnt area and **21.38 %** on fire incidences recorded. Cumulatively **4** lives have been lost to veld fires in 2020, as compared to **4** lives that were lost in 2019.

However there are some fires that occurred after the end of the fire season due to late start of the rain season. A cumulative total of **866 201.05** Hectares were burnt by veld fires as at 13 November 2020, from a total of **1 326** incidences that were recorded after the commencement of the statutory fire period on 31 July 2020. Compared to the same period in 2019, a total of **1 594** veld fire incidences destroying **1 228 490.54** Hectares were recorded. This translates to a decrease of **29.49 %** on total burnt area and **16.8 %** on fire incidence recorded.

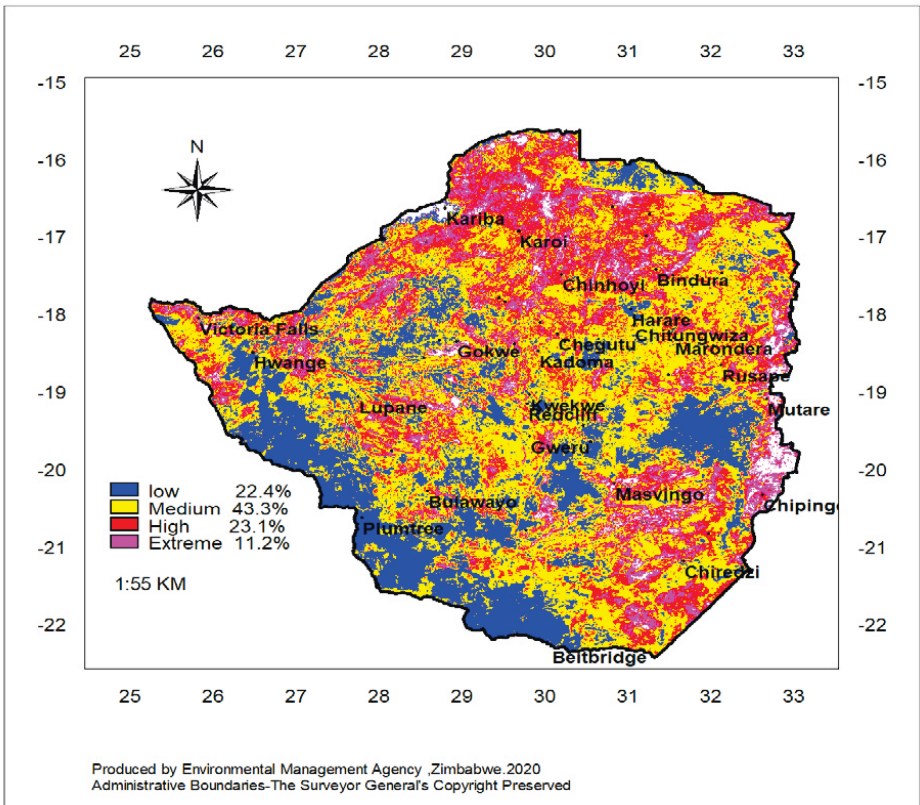
2.0 Fire Management Interventions

Pre-fire suppressions strategies were implemented since March 2020 to ensure that communities are adequately prepared for the fire season. These strategies included fire risk prediction, development of fire action plans, fire awareness meetings, fire management projects, mobile awareness exercises, issuing fire prevention orders and social media campaigns. The 2020 fire season came at the high of the COVID 19 pandemic and forced the Agency to be innovative in its management strategies.

2.1 Fire Risk Modelling

In preparation for 2020 fire season, a Fire Risk prediction was done using vegetation (NDVI) and burnt area for 2019. The prediction model used vegetation as at 1 April 2020 and the previous year veld fire behaviour.

The 2020 fire risk model revealed that the Country is generally in the medium **43.3%** to high risk **23.1%** with **11.2%** of the country as being in extreme risk categories while **22.4%** is in the low category. The provinces highly exposed to the veld fires are Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East as predicted by the model and shown (Map 1) refers.



Map 1: Fire Risk

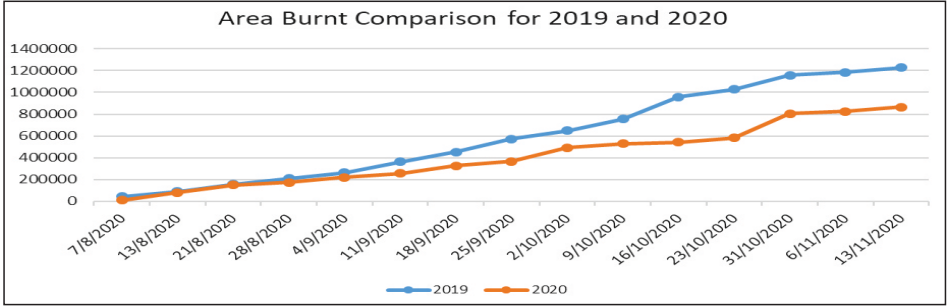
2.2 Interventions to Reduce Veld Fires

A total of **1 095 332.7 Ha** were protected by **6 061.25 km** fireguards constructed by farmers and institutions across the country. Fireguards play a pivotal role in controlling the spread of fires. Fireguards also provide an area to fight fires during fire out breaks. Communities were empowered by engaging in alternative sources of income such as thatch grass harvesting and hay baling. A total of **289 649** bundles of thatch grass and **158 978** hay bales have been harvested protecting a total of **3 730.1 Ha** and **16 959.3 ha** respectively. Communities were supported with **1 349** bee hives for beekeeping projects as a way of encouraging communities to protect forests from veld fires, at the same time providing a livelihood. A total of **436** awareness meetings were conducted reaching out to **12 443** people. A total of **12** radio and television programmes, and **25** print articles on veld fire management were flighted, reaching out to an estimated 7 million people, according to the Zimbabwe All Media Product Survey. Awareness messages on veld fire management were also posted on digital platforms such as Facebook, Whatsap and Twitter to reach out to the public. Property and agricultural equipment worth **US\$20950** was aslo gutted down by veld fires.

3.0 Impacts of veld fires

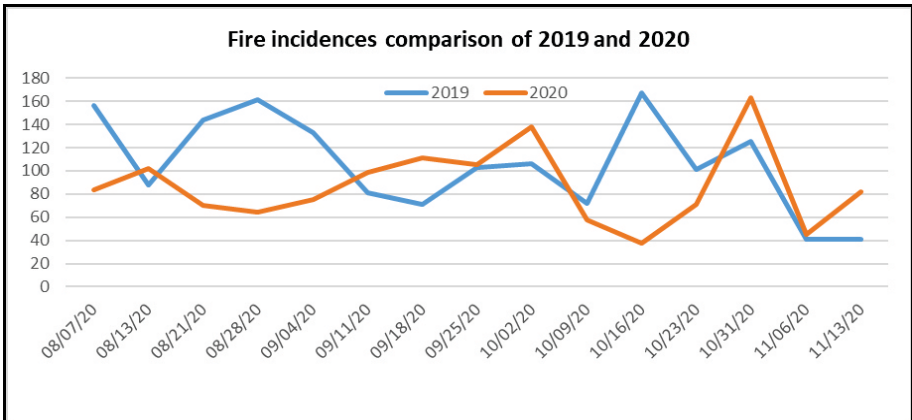
For the 2020 fire season a cumulative total of **806 457.84** Hectares were burnt by veld fires as at 31 October 2020, from a total of **1 178** incidences that were recorded after the commencement of the statutory fire period on 31 July 2020. Compared to the same period in 2019, a total of **1 508** veld fire incidences destroying **1 158 291.57** Hectares were recorded. This translates to a decrease of **30.38 %** on total burnt area and **21.38 %** on fire incidence recorded. Cumulatively **4** lives have been lost to veld fires in 2020, as compared to **4** lives that were lost in 2019.

Fig 1: Comparison of area burnt between 2019 and 2020

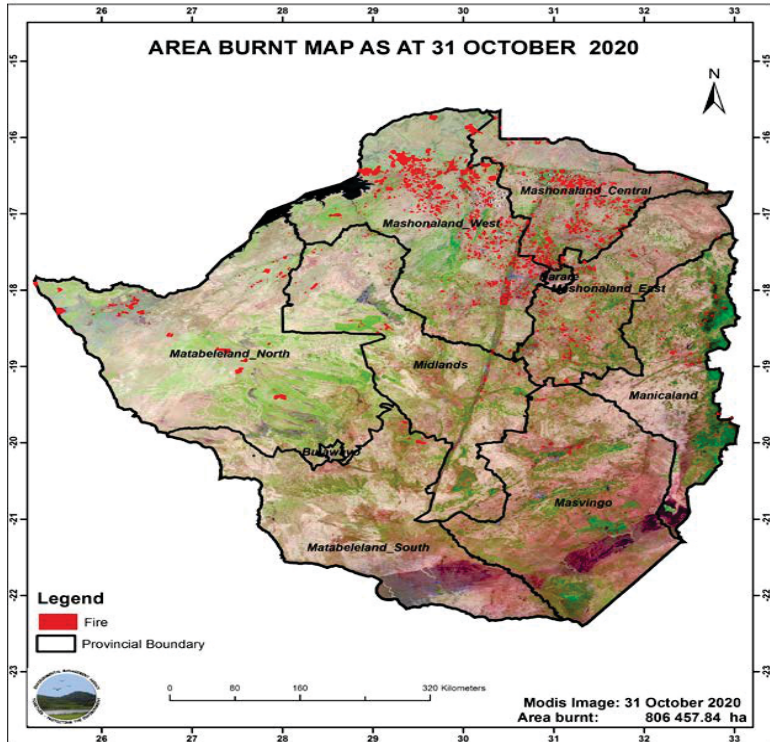


The recorded decrease in both burnt area and fire incidences is attributed to increased efforts on veld management by regulatory authorities, the promotion of the Pfumvunza/Intwasa farming concept which discourages burning of biomass during land preparation, as well as scattered rains that were received in the country in October. The Agency has since forged strategic partnerships to play a pivotal role in the Pfumvudza/Intwasa 2021/2022 farming season as a fire management strategy.

Fig 2: Comparison of fire incidences between 2019 and 2020



A trend analysis of fire incidences reveals that the 2020 total incidences were lower than the 2019 fire incidences even though there are weeks in 2020 that had spikes. The increase of fire incidences compared with reduced burnt area, is associated with a conscious population which quickly responds by putting out veld fires when they occur.



Map 1: Cumulative Area Burnt

4.0 Fire Education and Awareness

Due to the covid 19 pandemic a few meetings were held which brings to a cumulative total of **436** meetings that were held countrywide targeting the community leadership. The meetings had an attendance of **12 443** strategic leadership countrywide. A total of **457** roadshows were also held nationwide in the 40 fire hotspots districts with attendance in **61 125** people. As a mitigation strategy road shows and social media presence was up scaled.

Table 1: Meetings and awareness raising

Province	Number of meetings	Attendance
Midlands	180	5975
Manicaland	21	1016
Mash East	13	291
Mash West	121	1458
Mash Central	20	585
Matabeleland North	39	895
Mat South	4	410
Masvingo	38	1228
Total	436	12443

5.0 Fire management projects

5.1 Hay Baling

A total of **158 978** hay bales were produced throughout the country protecting an area of **16 959.3** hectares as the Agency had employed several interventions aimed at reducing the impacts of fires such as hay baling, grass combing, road servitude clearing and apiculture projects. Hay baling reduces fuel load and empowers communities with alternative sources of income. A total of **255.5** km road servitude were cleared has also been cleared. This reduces incidences of roadside fires. A further **289 649** thatch grass bundles were harvested from all the rural provinces.

Table 2: Hay Bales production

Province	District	Project area	Total number of bales	Total area cleared	
Midlands	Gweru	CJR, Gabbles farm, S/D 2 of Figtree, Thornhill Airbase	61400	8500	
Mashonaland East	Chikomba – Small scale commercial	Ward 8 (Roads) – Redman Farm, Mupfudze, Magumise, Zigomo, Mapako, Katsidzira, Dauramanzi, Welkom	2230	187	
		Hwedza – Resettlement	Ward 1, Fair Adventure farm	2000	200
			Ward 1, Bow farm	8000	600
			Ward 1, Nyatanga farm	1600	450
			Taderea, Kureya,	3000	12
			Ward 1, Matewa farm	12000	680
Mash east	Murehwa	Belleview, Bluegums	483	44	
	Marondera	Windrush	7800	550	
	Goromonzi	Harare- Mutare Highway, Ivordale, Baines Hope farm	17100	615	
Matabeleland South	Bulilima	Ward 3,7,9,A1 resettlement	2670	1200	
		Ward 19: Manda, Manora, Fairview, Watershed, Mqabuko, Kuthula farm			
		Ward 3 Natani	50	75	
		Jutshuma, Makhwa, Makhulela, Solusi farms	1300	580	
	Matobo	A2 Criterion Nyandeni, Maleme, White waters	28935	1200	
Insiza	Shangani	3500	55		
Matabeleland North	Hwange	Ward 1	200	20	
	Bubi	22,13, Maryelen, Robins, Allendale C	680	75	
	Nkayi	20	38	0.8	
Masvingo	Masvingo	Makoholi Farm, Maxwell, Nyororo, Born Accord, Aksden, Chigudu, Mbungo, Donfontein, Standard farms	1858	155.5	
Mash west	Zvimba	Little England	4500	2000	
Mash Central	Muzarabani	Gatu, Mbada			
	Mazowe	Rivers farm, Gomo farm			
			18844	1805	
Total			158 978	16 959.3	

5.2 Fire guard construction

Fireguards measuring **6 061.25 km** were constructed nationwide protecting **1 095 332.7 hectares** as fireguard demonstrations projects were being done by various stakeholders across the country.

Table 3: Fireguard demonstration sites

District	Community / ward	Length of fireguard (km)	Area protected (hectares)
Muzarabani	GEF 6 Project Area and other wards 9,14,15,26,11,21,13,28	88.5	1526
Mbire	Chivaraidze Game Range	21	120
	Mupedzapasi Camp	16	110
Mazowe	Mazowe Citrus	1,5	1500
	Eskbank	5	450
	Glenara Estates	7	800
	Smithfield Farm	5	500
	Chikumbiri, Goodhope, Blackfordby	12	600
Guruve	Chikonyora farm, Plot 4 marirambada, Gomo farm	3.8	135
Mt Darwin	Chibuli, Marodza, farm 63, 61	8.25	815
Nyanga	Wattle Company Estate	178.5	60000
Mutasa	Ward 21,23 Africa University Institution	10	5
Chimanimani	Ward 10,12,13,16	95	72
Chikomba - small scale commercial	Farms around Wards 2,7,8, 13,	88.4	5620
	Ward 13, Hampshire Farm no. 1060	1.2	75
Goromonzi	Ward 6	3	150
	Ward 9	150	1600
Hwedza – resettlement	Ward 2, Scorrer Farm	9	800
	Ward 1, Fair Adventure farm	4	600
	Ward 1, Gerry farm	0.2	420
	Ward 1, Chad farm	0.3	861
	Ward 1, Tengwe farm	0.6	705
Hwedza – Conservancy	Ward 2 Imire	13	4000

District	Community / ward	Length of fireguard (km)	Area protected (hectares)
Marondera/ A2 farm	Wards, 3,4,5,6,9,23)(Akasabha, Waitiri, Ruzawi, Windrush, Norfolk,	26.7	7615
Murehwa	Hukuimwe, Mauye, Durlstone, Waterloo, Bluegum, wheatlands, Chitongo, Twist	149.7	1526
Seke	Redane, Irvines, Bharabhara	140	557
Builima	Ward 19: Manda, Manora, Fairview, Watershed, Mgabuko, Kuthula farm	70	5000
	Ward 10 Bambadzi	5	600
	Ward 1 Tjankwa	13	800
	Ward 3 Natani	5	600
	Ward 11	91	167
	Ward 17	482	6833
Gwanda	Ward 21 – Blanket mine	10	10
Matobo	Ward 24, 25 Criterion, Chesa, Whitewaters	95	1120
Insiza	Ward 13,17,18, 19, 22 and 23	866	115 596
	Lucydale, Two tree kop, Umhlonyane, Westacre Creek	19	20
Mangwe	Webster, Zareba, Huntington, Wisfred hope, Syringvale, Manama Boolie, Haygrange, Leihgwoods	91	167 052
Bikita	Save valley ward 27	50	50
Chiredzi	Malilangwe ward 22	32	40 000
	Hammond Ranch 24	18	15 600
	Senuko Ranch 24	15	16 840
	Humani, Chegwite, Gonarezhou,	165.5	371400
Masvingo	Barnnockburn Farm, Pumhust,Lemonfontein, Bom accord, Chipare, Mbungo Estate, Madzivire, Clunny, Heathcote,Yottam,Beza,Chigundu,Nyuni, Donfontein, Rushwaya, Cheek, Shyllock, Ngovera, Njovo, Nemamwa Farms.	32.6	3408.7
Mwenezi	Farms 23, 59 BJB	53.2	1260
Gutu	Chinyaure villages, Markdale, Denholm	19	4570
Zvimba	Gwebi, Little England	152.3	7207
Hurungwe	Nyamakate, Ward 7	25	2500
	Kudyakwenzara village ward 7,	3.5	7
Gweru	Bushman farm, ward 15	12	1540
Shurugwi	MSU, ward 18	20	
Gokwe North	Copper Queen, ward 24, farms 223,332,243,278,362	58	
Bubi	Maryelen, Robins, Lynes, Inuwa	90	1300
Hwange	Katuna, breakfast, Kalala, Sikabela,Woodlands, Matetsi,Bingwa,Stanly, Matetsi Unit1-5, Kazuma National Parks, Sikumi forest	2489	237100
Lupane	Chimwara	23	3540
Umguza	16 Wollendale, 10 Mindora	20	50
Total		6 061.25	1 095 332.7

5.3 Thatch grass combing

A cumulative total of **289 649** thatch grass bundles have been produced throughout the country protecting an area of **3 730.1** hectares. Thatch grass reduces fuel load and empowers communities with alternative sources of income.

Table 4: Thatch grass combing sites.

<i>District and land use</i>	<i>Ward/Village</i>	<i>Size of bundle and Number</i>	<i>Est. area protected (ha)</i>
Murehwa – small scale commercial	Ward 7, Chitowa farm	1650	4.5
Chikomba District – Chivhu urban	Ward 9 – Chivhu urban	1000	1
	Ward 9 – Northwood.	2000	5
	Ward 9, Rooiport farm	1200	4
	Ward 10, Rooiport farm	800	3
Chikomba - small scale commercial	Ward 2, Munyama farm	1500	5
	Ward 2: Mupfudze, Mapako & Zvidza farms	10000	80
Goromonzi – A1 resettlement area	Ward 9	4000	10
	Ward 14	6000	16
	Ward 17	3000	8
	Ward 22	6000	16
Makoni	Ward 6	100 000	-
Nyanga	Ward 24	900	-
Chimanimani	Ward 16	300	-
Chipinge	Ward 21	600	-
Hurungwe/Zvimba		92050	3000
Muzarabani/Guruve		3200	-
Masvingo	Cooden, Munhundowarwa village, Riverden, Keppur, Farm 21, 23, Richmond, Rippling, Farm 218,219,215,216,210	1800	65
Nkayi	Jingeni village ward 20,	123	1.6
Bubi	Ward 13, Allendale C, Wessels A and Ext	230	30

Lupane	Ward 24/25, Chamankano, Gwayi, Mbembesi, Along Banda Vlei	18500	19
Bulilima	9,11,17,19 (Manda, Solusi, Norwood, Bambadzi, Lagisa, J Mqabuko	13580	272
Insiza	17,18,22(Lochard, Ensangu, Greenlands, Annadale, Cala estate, Inyozane, Wessels block.	16000	58
Mangwe	Wilsfred hope, Syringavale, Freds hope	5216	132
Total		289 649	3 730.1

5.4 Road servitude maintenance

Research conducted by EMA in previous years has revealed that there are significant fires that start from the road servitudes. To ensure reduced fires the Agency encourages the responsible authorities to timely clear road servitudes before the fire season. Motorists should make use of their ash trays and commuting public should always put off fires they start to warm themselves when travelling early. A total of **820.65 km** stretch was cleared along various roads.

Table 5: Road servitude clearing

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of road</i>	<i>Road Authority</i>	<i>Est. Length Cleared (km)</i>
Marondera	Loop road linking Mutare & Chitungwiza Road	Min. of Transport	5.0
	Harare – Mutare Highway	Min. of Transport	4.5
Chiredzi	Chiredzi – Triangle	Tongatt Hulleets	25
	Buffalo range to Mutirikwi river along Tanganda road	Tongaat Hulleets Zimbabwe	12
Masvingo	Mashava-Nyajena Zesa Line	ZESA	78
Bulilima	Plumtree – Mutare highway	Infralink	665
Sanyati	Munyati –Mavedzenge stretch	Ministry of roads	21
Hurungwe	Magunje turn off – Comer Store	HRDC	10
Total			820.5km

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Chiredzi	Chiredzi – Triangle	Tongaat Hullets	25
	Buffalo range to Mutirikwi river along Tanganda road	Tongaat Hullets Zimbabwe	12
Masvingo	Mashava-Nyajena Zesa Line	ZESA	78
Bulilima	Plumtree – Mutare highway	Infralink	665
Sanyati	Munyati –Mavedzenge stretch	Ministry of roads	21
Hurungwe	Magunje turn off – Corner Store	HRDC	10
Total			820.5km

5.5 Apiculture projects

Twenty four (24) apiculture projects have been implemented across the country. Apiculture is a strategic livelihood option that helps to protect the environment. The veld is protected as the people protect their bee hives resulting in reduced veld fire incidences. A total of **1 438** beehives were given to communities to start income generating projects.

Table 6: Apiculture sites

<i>District and land use</i>	<i>Ward/Village/Project</i>	<i>Number of beehives</i>
Chikomba District – A1 resettlement area.	Ward 7, Uitykirk farm	18
	Ward 1 (Featherstone) – Ngezi –Mtegesa	130
Chikomba District - small scale commercial	Ward 7, Chawagona	42
	Ward 2, Gandami	250
Goromonzi – A1 resettlement area	Ward 17	38
	Ward 21	28
Hwange	Ward 1 (Woodlands, Railway farm 55, ward 2(Chidobe) ward 15 (Dete and Silewu) ward 17 (Mabale) Ward 16 (Songwa)	324

Table 6: Apiculture sites

Umguzza	Ward 10 Mindora	5
Mangwe	Ward 11,webster farm	5
	5,Romney Grazing scheme	2
Matobo	Ward 16,Pioneer's rest	2
	A group drawn from all the villages to ward 16	20
Bullilima	Webster farm	5
Masvingo	Ward 8 (Born air, Mutendi) ward	171
	22 (Gunikuni village 6) ward 17 (Chebvute), ward 35 (Kushinga	
Gwanda	WARD 8 Wabayayi	20
	6 sibona	20
	6 siboza	20
Nyanga		130
Gutu	Lot 1 A of Shasha Fountains, Chinyaure village 1,	269
Chimanimani		69
Total		1 438

5.6 Fire Orders Issued

A cumulative of **53** tickets worth **ZWL\$273 100.00** were issued in all the rural provinces for offences on starting fires and not having a fireguard during the statutory fire season. A total of **656** fire prevention orders for the construction of fire guards were issued before the beginning of the fire season. Fire orders were issued to farmers, land users, owners, occupiers, lessees, and designated Authorities to put in place standard fire management measures. A follow up of the orders was done to ensure compliance before the end of July.

Table 7: showing orders issued

Province	Number of orders served
1. Midlands	58
2. Mashonaland Central	7
3. Manicaland	38
4. Mashonaland East	206
5. Mashonaland west	110
6. Matabeleland North	30
7. Matabeleland south	78
8. Masvingo	129
Total	656

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1. Midlands	58
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8. Masvingo	129
Total	656

5.7 Fire related material donated

Mashonaland West received from GEF a total of 200 fire beaters, 80 bibs for Environmental Sub Committees members, 300 sickles and 50 fire cans handed over to the Councillors for ward 7, 8 and 9 in Hurungwe for fire management. The bibs are for identity of ESC members, the sickles will be used for grass cutting projects and the fire cans will be used for fire-fighting in the event of a fire outbreak. Mashonaland Central province also received fire beaters (600), sickles (600), knap sack sprays (100) and reflective bibs (159) and these were distributed in Muzarabani and Mbire GEF projects wards. Midlands distributed 250 fire beaters to farmers in ward 15 and 17 of Vungu RDC sourced from Sino Cement Company.

6.0 Conclusion

The Nation managed to reduce total burnt area by 30.38% against the set target of (25%) as compared to 2019. The country however continues to lose more lives to veld fires. No life and property has to be lost to veld fires. All arms of government and civic society have to join hands to manage the fire scourge. The traditional leaders and local authorities have a huge task at hand through their structures in fire management. To achieve a bumper harvest using the conservation agriculture/ Pfumvudza concept the mulch has to be protected by avoiding starting fires.

Annex 1: District area burnt (Ha)

DISTRICT	AREA BURNT 2020
BIKITA	608.94
CHIREDDZI	101.00
MASVINGO	6141.21
ZAKA	90.00
CHIVI	55.00
GUTU	3277.97
MWENEZI	585.11
CHIRUMHANZU	5399.69
GOKWE NORTH	5429.52
GOKWE SOUTH	11015.92
KWEKWE	1316.61
MBERENGWA	211.43
GWERU	488.07
SHURUGWI	373.70
ZVISHAVANE	90.00
BULILIMA	130.00
GWANDA	110.00
INSIZA	6280.32
UMZINGWANE	322.89
MATOBO	214.65
MANGWE	97.00
BEITBRIDGE	55.00
SHAMVA	26517.20
RUSHINGA	4461.24
MUZARABANI	34192.94
SEKE	11119.24
HARARE	827.39
BULAWAYO	60.00
BINGA	12453.55
BUBI	4674.59
HWANGE	36684.67

DISTRICT	AREA BURNT 2020
MT DARWIN	37082.34
BINDURA	27083.46
GURUVE	7947.60
MAZOWE	41454.99
MBIRE	15714.39
CHEGUTU	33972.86
HURUNGWE	179414.38
KARIBA	37932.54
MAKONDE	79170.62
MHONDORO	4344.33
SANYATI	3344.33
ZVIMBA	60956.31
BUHERA	67.00
CHIMANIMANI	3364.22
MUTASA	2576.74
NYANGA	9166.90
CHIPINGE	395.88
MAKONI	4451.08
MUTARE	3087.06
CHIKOMBA	22571.84
GOROMONZI	15710.91
HWEDZA	5027.62
MARONDERA	9596.91
MUDZI	1070.32
MUTOKO	2453.70
MUREHWA	5780.22
UMP	89.00
LUPANE	19063.46
NKAYI	95.00
UMGUZA	1125.97
TSHOLOTSHO	87.00
Total	806457.84

Annex 2 : Fire pictures



Fig.1: A standard fireguard at Little England Estate, ward 26, Zvimba District.



Fig 2: Engagement of Village Head Nicholas Moyo at his homestead in Banda Village: Ward 14 Lupane District



Fig 3: Grass meads thatch grass harvesting in ward 15, Gweru district.26/08/2020



Fig 4: Demonstration of fire fighting at Mawari ward 13, Muzarabani



Fig 5: Displayed thatch grass prepared by the Mutize family of Ward 7, Murehwa.



Fig 6: A site for preparing the harvested thatch grass at Gororo homestead in Ward 7 Murehwa