



UPDATE: Fire breaks etc...

Focus on Blocks 5 & 6:

The Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) drone flights over these areas showed very little which changes the requirement for the firebreaks to be positioned on the boundaries between Common & Private land. A few deviations & amendments will be made in conjunction with adjoining landowners. Several encroachments (gardens and structures) by residents into the Common property were noted. Boet and I have already taken most of these up with the residents responsible.

Work Program:

Now till 26th Feb 2024 – we will walk the perimeters and mark the envisaged fire break positions with tape flags.

26th Feb the Crags Working on Fire (WoF) team, under guidance of the SCFPA, will begin clearing from the marked positions. They will also reduce some of the more dense or tall growth inside these blocks to bring down the heat of the burn within the blocks all the above in consultation with the EMC. Both 5 & 6 breaks should be done within the week.

Material removed will be laid out to dry in areas where limited burn fuel exists, especially on any grasses which have crept into what should be Fynbos. While not ideal, this is being done with our other objective in mind to restore the natural Fynbos in line with the findings of the Biodiversity Assessment. It is hoped that there is sufficient viable seed left in the ground under the grass which will be stimulated to germinate by the heat of the fire, as Fynbos does. Hold thumbs there is still viable seed under there!

Block burn dates have not been set but will be around May or June 2024. We will work with the EMC on anything which they feel should influence these dates. SCFPA have indicated that they believe both blocks can be burned and made safe within a single day. Will forward date as soon as we can.

Remaining Blocks:

The aim is to have ALL firebreaks in place as soon as possible. The Common land firebreaks are to Brackenridge expense. As SCFPA members, we do get VERY favorable rates for the WoF teams for their work in clearing – this is workable. What is a problem is removing the material taken out in the clearing of the firebreaks. Unlike 5 & 6, this material cannot be left to dry until the adjoining block burn happens - could be years away. It will need to be taken away.

We will address this expense in the next months – perhaps stack burns in the old cut grass areas which were nothing more than a misguided attempt at firebreaks and an environmental hash.

Once this material problem is resolved, the drone will fly over other blocks, mapping done, firebreaks fixed and cleared. Dates will be forwarded once determined. There are currently no plans to burn any other blocks in the 2024 period. This to allow the cleared / regrowth of blocks 5 & 6 to draw some of our natural Fauna to move over from the moribund adjoining blocks. Moribund = At the point of death. Refer recent Enviro reports.

CAUTION PLEASE:

Several residents have begun clearing the Common area Fire breaks. Clearly anybody who wishes to do so is most welcome. However, PLEASE ensure that any work done is “directly on your property boundary” and in line with the dimensions given on the email map sent earlier.

Any deviation from the “on the boundary” requirement is not to be taken lightly as it could land both you and Brackenridge Estate in serious hot water with the Environmental Authorities. Off boundary cutting of Fynbos is very hard to justify and is immediately seen as indiscriminate & unjustified destruction of Fynbos.

Privacy or screening is not seen as a reason for deviation from the “on boundary” requirement. Your privacy screens should be on your property, not on that of your neighbor. Please consult Boet or me regarding any deviation from “directly on your property border” before doing any work.

We realize this is a new concept for most of our residents, hence the many and long info docs sent out. Please ensure you are familiar with these and do not hesitate to contact Boet or myself for further info.

We remain committed to our joint objectives – a safer and healthier Brackenridge.

Best wishes
Steve Ritky - Trustee