



MANAGEMENT IN THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH AFRICA

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Fire is an important driver and management tool for the maintenance and conservation of African savanna ecosystems, through its influence and role in the coexistence of grass and trees in savanna biomes. Despite a growing understanding of the importance of fire, the ways in which it should be managed remain the subject of vigorous debate. Approaches to fire management in the 2 - million ha Kruger National Park, South Africa, have changed several times over the past six decades. These approaches have included regular and flexible prescribed burning on fixed areas, a policy that sought to establish a lightning dominated fire regime to the current integrated fire management policy. Management has been informed and adapted by the findings of ongoing research and policies and practices have changed as new evidence on the role of fire in KNP has emerged.

In this presentation, I would like to go through the fire history, the key fire research that have influenced our management strategy and the current fire policy implemented in Kruger in order for us as managers to achieve pyro - diversities that will maintain and/or improve the biodiversity of savanna ecosystems that we are mandated to protect.