**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The southernmost country on the African continent, South Africa is bordered by Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe to the north, and Mozambique and Swaziland to the east; landlocked Lesotho lies entirely within its borders.

As with many forest and grassland ecosystems in the United States, fire is a critical component of much of the South African landscape. Approximately 70% of South Africa’s ecosystems are fire-based, meaning that the occurrence of wild fire is a central part of their natural disturbance patterns and a determinant of species composition. The expansion of human settlements has not only disrupted this natural pattern, but it has also led to an increase in the incidence of accidental and uncontrolled fires. This trend poses risks to people, property, and the environment.

In response to these risks, and at the request of South African partners, the U.S. Forest Service has provided fire management and Incident Command System training in South Africa for over a decade. U.S. Forest Service engagement has recently expanded in scale and scope thanks to support from the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. The U.S. Forest Service works closely with South Africa’s National Disaster Management Centre and academia to institutionalize the Incident Command System and implement an “all-hazard” National Incident Management System training in-country through an innovative train-the-trainer approach.

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

U.S. Forest Service-supported courses have trained over 1500 people to date in fire management and Incident Command System (ICS) in South Africa.

U.S. Forest Service training has supported the formation of Regional Incident Management Teams in South Africa, which have deployed to respond to incidents such as wildfire and flooding throughout southern Africa.

The U.S. Forest Service has trained over 250 incident responders in leadership courses.

U.S. Forest Service support has led to the institutionalization of ICS within South Africa.

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