

FORESTRY COMMISSION



**ZIMBABWE**

Independence Day

Unity and Development *Towards Vision 2030*



**FORESTER NEWSLETTER**

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46 Years of Planting Trees: Zimbabwe's Enduring Legacy of Environmental Stewardship



African Diplomats Join Hands for a Greener Future



Hass Avocado Production Gains Momentum in Bindura District



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# Editorial

The second quarter of the year has been defined by momentum, innovation, and meaningful engagement across the country. From national platforms to grassroots initiatives, the Forestry Commission has continued to advance its mandate of sustainable forest management while strengthening its connection with communities, stakeholders, and the nation at large.

This period was marked by Zimbabwe's 46th Independence Day commemorations, where tree planting once again took centre stage. More than a ceremonial act, it served as a powerful reminder that the country's future is deeply rooted in how we manage and protect our natural resources today.

At the same time, the Commission is embracing technology in forestry management and data collection. The introduction of drone technology marks a significant shift towards modern, data-driven forest management, enhancing our ability to monitor, protect, and sustainably utilise forest resources with greater precision and efficiency. This is a clear demonstration that forestry in Zimbabwe is evolving, keeping pace with global trends while responding to local realities.

Our participation at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) 2026 further reinforced the role of forestry as a key contributor to

economic growth. By positioning forests as drivers of industry, livelihoods, and investment opportunities, we continue to highlight the sector's relevance in building a competitive and connected economy.

Across provinces, the impact of our work is being felt at community level. through capacity-building programmes, school initiatives, and partnerships that empower citizens to take an active role in conservation. These efforts reflect a simple but powerful truth: sustainable forest management cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires collaboration, shared responsibility, and a collective commitment to change.

As we move forward, we continue to remind our readers that forests are also one of the planet's most powerful tools against climate change. Through photosynthesis, trees remove climate-warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen. By locking carbon pollution in trees, roots and soil, forests reduce the heat-trapping gases and regulate Earth's temperature. Furthermore, Forestry contributes between 3 – 4 % to the ZGDP and employs roughly 16,000 people. Therefore, let us protect our forests.

Happy reading foresters!

***Violet Makoto***

*Information and Communications Manager*



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**46 Years of Planting Trees: Zimbabwe's  
Enduring Legacy of Environmental  
Stewardship**



*The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, His Excellency, Dr. E.D Mnangagwa, alongside Environment Patron and First Lady Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa, led tree planting proceedings at Mahetshe Primary School.*

Since gaining independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has consistently upheld a strong culture of tree planting, embedding environmental stewardship into national identity and annual commemorations. Now, 46 years later, this tradition continues to thrive, symbolizing not only renewal and growth, but also unity, remembrance, and responsibility for future generations.

This year's Independence Day commemorations were marked by a high-profile tree-planting ceremony in Maphisa, where on the 17th of April, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Dr. E.D Mnangagwa, alongside Environment Patron and First Lady Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa, led tree planting proceedings at Mahetshe Primary School. The event formed part of the Children's

Independence Party celebrations and took place at the newly-established Kushanduka Mubengo Tree Park, reinforcing the central role of youth in sustaining Zimbabwe's environmental legacy.

Accompanied by senior government officials, local leaders, and schoolchildren, the President planted a Natal Mahogany tree, an act rich in symbolism. The tree was dedicated to the late former Vice President, Comrade Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo, honouring his enduring contribution to the nation's liberation and unity. Much like the tree itself, his legacy is deeply rooted in Zimbabwe's history and continues to inspire growth and resilience. The Zimbabwe@46 Tree Planting Program reflects a tradition that has been carefully preserved and strengthened over decades. Each year, tree



planting forms an integral part of Independence Day activities, serving both as a practical environmental intervention and a powerful educational tool. It raises awareness about deforestation, climate change, and the importance of sustainable forest management issues

that are increasingly critical in today's world. Pre-planting activities in Maphisa demonstrated the spirit of collective responsibility that defines these commemorations. Communities, schools, and government institutions came together ahead of the main event on April 17, showcasing a unified commitment to environmental protection. Over the past 46 years, Zimbabwe's dedication to tree planting has evolved from ceremonial acts into a nationwide movement. It is a culture that bridges generations, where elders pass on knowledge, and young people actively participate in shaping a greener future.



As the country celebrated this milestone, Forestry Commission upheld the message that tree planting is not just a tradition, but a sustained national effort toward environmental resilience and sustainable development. Zimbabwe's example stands as a reminder that lasting change is built through consistency, community involvement, and a shared vision for the future.

# African Diplomats Join Hands for a Greener Future



*The Dean of African Ambassadors, His Excellency, Ambassador James Musoni of Rwanda, led in a tree planting exercise in Harare, further strengthening the spirit of unity and shared responsibility among African nations. The tree planted were generously donated by the Ethiopian Ambassador to Zimbabwe His Excellency, Ambassador Rashid Mohammed (centre in the right frame)*

**O**n 2 April 2026, the Forestry Commission Zimbabwe hosted the Diplomatic Green Legacy Tree Planting Programme at Mabelreign ZRP Primary School in Harare. The initiative brought together African ambassadors, Zimbabwe Republic Police officials, teachers, parents, Harare PDC members and pupils in a collective effort to promote afforestation, climate action, and regional cooperation. Led by the Dean of African Ambassadors, His Excellency James Musoni of Rwanda, the delegation symbolized unity in environmental stewardship.

The Diplomatic Green Legacy Tree Planting

Program continues to gain momentum in Zimbabwe, reinforcing regional cooperation in environmental sustainability and climate action. On 2 April, a distinguished group of African ambassadors, led by the Dean of African Ambassadors, His Excellency, Ambassador James Musoni of Rwanda, participated in a tree planting exercise in Harare, further strengthening the spirit of unity and shared responsibility among African nations. The event was hosted by ZRP Mabelreign Primary School, where a variety of tree seedlings, generously donated by the Ethiopian Ambassador were planted within the school grounds.

Launched in 2025 in alignment with Africa Day commemorations, the Diplomatic Green Legacy Program has steadily evolved into a key environmental campaign. It is the brainchild of the Patron of Environment and Tourism, The First Lady, Her Excellency, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa, whose vision is to foster collaboration among African countries in addressing climate change, deforestation, and land degradation. The event saw the planting of 55 trees, 50 ornamentals and 5 fruit species including White Syringa, Jacaranda, Bauhinia racemosa, Filicium decipiens (fern tree) , and Ailanthus altissima (paradise tree). Ambassadors planted more than 35 trees, while pupils and community members completed the exercise, ensuring broad participation. Guided by

Forestry Commission, participants engaged in proper planting practices, reinforcing the importance of sustainable management. This collaborative effort not only enhanced the school environment but also underscored the role of diplomacy in advancing ecological restoration. With representation from 15 countries, the programme highlighted the power of collective responsibility in protecting ecosystems. The Forestry Commission commends this initiative and encourages continued partnerships that strengthen Zimbabwe’s afforestation drive and inspire communities to safeguard their environment.



*Dean of African Ambassadors, His Excellency James Musoni of Rwanda, watering the Jacaranda tree he had just planted*



*The Acting Director of Forestry & Wildlife, Mr Ruzvidzo, representing the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife DR. E. NDLOVU (MP)*



*Engineer Rukuni, representing the Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province, Hon. C. Tavengwa*



*Officer Commanding Harare, Commissioner Chikunguru represented ZRP in the planting line-up*

# Eyes in the Sky: The Future of Forestry is Here!



**A**s technology continues to reshape industries across the globe, the Forestry Commission is proudly stepping forward, embracing innovation and redefining how forests are monitored and managed. The introduction of drone technology marks a bold new chapter, one where precision, speed, and data-driven decision-making take centre stage.

In April, the Forestry Commission deployed its first drone-based monitoring system, a significant milestone that signals a shift toward smarter, more efficient forest management. This is not just an upgrade, it's a transformation. We are revolutionising forestry management! Using advanced remote sensing technologies such as multispectral and LiDAR imaging,

these drones can map forest canopies with remarkable accuracy, estimate biomass, and measure carbon storage. What once took days or even weeks can now be achieved in a fraction of the time, with far greater precision.

Initial operations at Ruzawi Forest, conducted in partnership with Afrostain Farmtech, brought this innovation to life. Equipped with high-resolution cameras and advanced sensors, the drones captured real-time data, offering deeper insights into forest structure. This allows for faster, more informed decision-making, an essential step in sustainable forest management.

Beyond efficiency, the impact is powerful. As we are aware, forests as vital allies against climate change. The technology enables the Forestry Commission to better understand how much carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) forests are absorbing,

while also mapping vegetation density and tree volume across landscapes. These insights are critical in the fight against climate change and in protecting Zimbabwe's natural resources.

Moreover, the Forestry Commission teams have been trained to operate and interpret drone data, ensuring that this innovation is fully embedded into everyday operations.

The message is clear: the Forestry Commission is not catching up with the future, we are helping to shape it.

As drones take to the skies, they bring with them a new era of forestry, one that is smarter, faster, and more sustainable.



# ZITF: Forests Connecting Economies and Building Competitive Industries



The Forestry Commission proudly participated in the 66th edition of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) 2026, held in Bulawayo under the theme “Connected Economies, Competitive Industries.” As part of our ongoing stakeholder engagement efforts, the exhibition provided a valuable platform to amplify our mandate, connect with diverse audiences, and position forestry as a key driver of economic growth. Adapting the national theme to “Forests Connecting Economies and Building Competitive Industries,” the Forestry Commission showcased its services, operations, and a wide range of forest and non-timber products. The stand attracted strong interest from stakeholders, offering opportunities for meaningful engagement and knowledge sharing on sustainable forest management.

Beyond awareness, ZITF 2026 opened doors for collaboration, creating space to engage potential investors, partners, and the public on the importance of forestry in supporting livelihoods, industry, and environmental sustainability. The participation reaffirmed the Forestry Commission’s role at the intersection of conservation and economic development, demonstrating that forests are not only natural assets, but also powerful contributors to a competitive and connected economy.



# Curbing Deforestation: Partnership with Mutare RDC on Community Training



*FEO Mutare Educating The Community On The Importance Of Sustainable Forest Management*

In an effort to address the adverse impacts of deforestation, the Forestry Commission, in partnership with the Mutare Rural District Council (MRDC), implemented a series of capacity-building workshops across deforested areas of Mutare District.

The workshops formed part of a broader initiative aimed at equipping local communities with practical knowledge and skills in sustainable forest management. Deforestation in many of these areas is largely driven by the urgent demand for resources such as fuelwood and charcoal, making it essential to promote alternative and sustainable practices.

Rather than adopting a uniform approach, the Forestry Commission and MRDC identified specific deforestation “hotspot” areas where tree loss has reached alarming levels. These include regions affected by illegal logging, uncontrolled bushfires, and unsustainable agricultural activities, all of which have placed

significant pressure on the environment. The targeted workshops combined discussions with hands-on training, covering key topics such as sustainable harvesting methods that allow for natural forest regeneration, the integration of agriculture and forestry through agroforestry practices, and an overview of forestry regulations, including the consequences of illegal tree felling. This practical approach ensured that community members not only understood the importance of conservation but were also empowered to implement sustainable solutions within their own environments. The initiative highlights the importance of collaboration in addressing environmental challenges. Combating deforestation requires a coordinated, whole-of-government approach, supported by active community participation. Through partnerships such as this, meaningful progress can be made towards restoring degraded landscapes and promoting sustainable resource management for future generations.

# Khame Tree Planting Initiative Promotes Community Participation and Sustainability



A tree planting initiative was held at Khame Primary School on 25 April 2026 in Ward 22, Bulilima District, as part of ongoing efforts to promote environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The programme was initiated by the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Evelyn Ndllovu.

During the event, 50 pawpaw trees were planted at Khame Primary School, marking a significant step towards enhancing nutrition, environmental sustainability, and community resilience. The Honourable Minister's support underscored the importance of such initiatives in driving national environmental goals.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including the Bulilima Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of ICT, Hon. D. Phuthi, as well

as the Bubi Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Hon. S. Sibanda. Representatives from key institutions such as POTRAZ, MOPSE, MOHCC, the Ministry of Women Affairs, ARDAS, traditional leaders, school authorities, and learners were also present, demonstrating a strong multi-stakeholder commitment to environmental stewardship.

In addition to the planting at Khame Primary School, The Forestry Commission distributed a total of 90 trees to surrounding institutions to further support greening efforts across the district. These included Gonde Primary School (20), Tjemahale Secondary School (20), Muke Primary School (20), Temateme Garden (20), and Temateme Clinic (10).

The Provincial Forestry Extension Manager

(PFEM) for Matabeleland South encouraged the community to adopt and embrace a tree planting culture as a means of promoting sustainable forest management and improving forestry-based livelihoods. He also facilitated the tree planting process alongside the honourable guests.

Hon. D. Phuthi expressed appreciation for the Forestry Commission's consistent tree planting efforts in Bulilima District, highlighting the department's commitment to ensuring that tree planting activities are integrated into community gatherings and development initiatives.

To ensure the sustainability of the programme, the Bulilima Forestry Extension Officer (FEO)

provided practical guidance to school staff and learners on site preparation, proper tree planting techniques, and orchard management. Learners were actively involved in the planting process, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards environmental conservation from a young age.

The Khambe tree planting initiative stands as a testament to the power of collaboration in advancing sustainable development. By empowering communities and institutions with knowledge and resources, such programmes contribute to long-term environmental protection and improved livelihoods.



*FEO Bulilima unpacking tree planting procedures to the learners.*



*PFEM Mat south presenting his pre planting remarks*



# Forestry Commission Empowers Schools in Masvingo to Champion Environmental Sustainability



The Forestry Commission in Masvingo Province, in partnership with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), continues to play a vital role in promoting environmental sustainability through the support of school-based tree planting programmes. Recent initiatives at Hellen McGhie Primary School and Mutendi High School highlighted the importance of engaging young learners in forest conservation and climate change mitigation efforts.

At both schools, the Forestry Commission, in collaboration with EMA, provided a variety of indigenous and exotic tree seedlings, complemented by practical training on proper planting techniques, tree care, and the long-term benefits of afforestation. These

programmes form part of a broader strategy to instill environmental stewardship among students while addressing deforestation and land degradation challenges in the province.

During the visits, forestry officers conducted interactive sessions demonstrating how to handle seedlings, prepare planting holes, and ensure proper spacing for optimal growth. Students actively participated by asking questions and engaging in hands-on activities. This practical approach not only enhances understanding but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility towards environmental conservation.

At Hellen McGhie Primary School, younger learners showed great enthusiasm as they received seedlings and learned about the



importance of trees in providing shade, improving air quality, and conserving biodiversity. The sessions also emphasised the role of trees in combating climate change through carbon sequestration and the regulation of local climates.

At Mutendi High School, students engaged in more advanced discussions on sustainable forest management, agroforestry practices, and the economic benefits of trees. These include timber production, fruit harvesting, and soil conservation. The initiative aligns with the Heritage-Based Curriculum, particularly within Geography, Science, and Agriculture learning areas, making it both educational and practical.

The programmes also strengthen school environmental clubs, which play a key role in nurturing and monitoring the planted trees. These clubs serve as platforms for continuous learning and environmental advocacy within the school community.

The impact of such initiatives extends beyond the school grounds. By equipping students with knowledge and practical skills, the Forestry Commission is nurturing a generation that values and actively participates in environmental conservation. This impact is further amplified as students carry these lessons into their homes and communities, promoting tree planting and sustainable land-use practices.

In conclusion, the collaboration between the Forestry Commission, EMA, and schools such as Hellen McGhie Primary School and Mutendi High School represents a commendable step towards achieving national afforestation goals. Continued support and expansion of these programmes will significantly contribute to environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and community empowerment in Masvingo Province.

# From Degradation to Restoration: ECOTERRA's sustainable Forest management efforts in Bikita District



The Forestry Commission, as one of the implementing partners in the Empowerment of Communities and Organisation Transformation Economies towards Restoration of Rural Areas (E.C.O.T.E.R.R.A) project, conducted trainings on sustainable forest management in Wards 29 and 6 of Bikita District. This initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to address environmental degradation and promote sustainable land use practices in Zimbabwe's semi-arid communal areas. The project's overarching objective is to restore degraded soils and landscapes through community-driven approaches that integrate environmental conservation with livelihood improvement, thereby enhancing both ecological resilience and rural incomes.

A total of 188 farmers attended the training sessions, with deliberate inclusion of women and youth to ensure broad-based community participation and gender equity. The trainings were designed to be participatory and practical, allowing farmers to engage, ask questions, and actively share their experiences. This approach helped to enhance understanding and encouraged ownership of the restoration initiatives at the community level.

During the sessions, participants were equipped with essential knowledge and practical skills in sustainable forestry management. Key topics covered included tree planting techniques, appropriate species selection based on

site conditions, nursery establishment and management, and proper land preparation methods. Emphasis was placed on matching tree species to specific environmental conditions, particularly in semi-arid areas where water availability is limited. Farmers were also trained on the importance of timing in planting, spacing of trees, and post-planting care such as watering, mulching, and protection from livestock.

The trainings highlighted the critical role of trees in restoring degraded lands. Participants learned how tree planting contributes to improving soil fertility through organic matter addition, reducing soil erosion by stabilizing the soil, and enhancing water infiltration and retention. The environmental benefits were further linked to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as trees play a significant role in carbon sequestration and in creating more resilient ecosystems.

In addition to environmental benefits, the economic and social advantages of sustainable forestry were emphasized. Farmers were introduced to the potential of trees to provide income through products such as fruits, timber, firewood, and non-timber forest products. The integration of trees into farming systems, such as agroforestry practices, was encouraged as a way of diversifying income sources and improving household food security.

Overall, the trainings strengthened community capacity to actively participate in afforestation and land restoration efforts. By equipping farmers with practical knowledge and fostering a sense of ownership, the E.C.O.T.E.R.R.A project is contributing to the rehabilitation of degraded landscapes while simultaneously improving livelihoods and building resilience against climate change in Bikita District.



*Trainings Across Ward 6 and 29 in Bikita District on Sustainable Forests Management.*

# Hass Avocado Production Gains Momentum in Bindura District

Farmers in Bindura District, under the Zimbabwe Export Avocado Growers Association, are making significant progress in establishing Hass avocado orchards for export production. The project, which commenced in 2023, comprises 26 members who have collectively established 18.32 hectares of Hass avocado orchards across the district.

The association has developed its orchards in line with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards, with technical support from the Forestry Commission, ARDAS, and ZimTrade. Farmers are actively adopting standard operating procedures to ensure the production of high-quality export-grade avocados.

Field visits conducted by the Forestry Commission’s Forestry Extension Officer (FEO), in collaboration with ARDAS and

ZimTrade, covered several farms including Maizelands, Dunmaglass, Urunga, Rocky Spruit, Cleverhill, Benridge, Dopper, Butcombe, Craigside, and Pimento. Observations from these visits revealed that most orchards have reached their first harvest phase, marking an important milestone for the project.

During the visits, farmers received guidance on key aspects of orchard management, particularly pruning, which is recommended immediately after harvesting to promote healthy tree structure and improved yields. The joint visits also provided an opportunity for farmers to further align their orchard practices with GAP standards required for export markets.

Despite the progress made, several challenges were identified. Many farmers are facing difficulties with irrigation systems, resulting in inconsistent



An orchard established at Benridge farm in 2023

watering regimes that can lead to moisture stress and increased vulnerability to fungal infections. Farmers were advised to invest in standardised irrigation systems to ensure consistent water supply and improved orchard performance.

Orchard protection remains another area of concern, with many farms yet to install standard fencing. Additionally, some orchards exhibited challenges related to weed control and general hygiene, largely due to labour constraints. Farmers were encouraged to prioritise proper housekeeping practices, including regular grass cutting between rows and effective weed management within water basins, to reduce the risk of pest infestations and disease outbreaks.

The Forestry Extension Officer also emphasised the importance of proper chemical application, storage, and handling in line with safety standards. Furthermore, adherence to health and safety guidelines for orchard workers was highlighted as a critical requirement for achieving and maintaining export-quality production under GAP standards. The continued collaboration between farmers, the Forestry Commission, ARDAS, and ZimTrade is expected to strengthen Bindura District's position in the export avocado value chain, while promoting sustainable and high-quality agricultural production.



*Farmers learning on proper pruning and housekeeping.*



*A three-year old Hass Avocado tree ready for this year's harvest*

# Fodder Field Day Boosts Sustainable Goat Production at Ruvimbo Project, Jari in Zvimba District



*FEO handing over trees to Ruvimbo Goat Project chairperson*

Efforts to promote climate-smart livestock production in Zvimba District were strengthened on 8 April 2026 through a fodder field day held at the Ruvimbo Goat Project in Jari, Ward 27. The event brought together goat farmers, technical officers, and community members to share practical ways of improving goat production through the use of fodder trees and better woodland management.

The District Forester for Zvimba, Mr Dube, led a technical session on woodland management and its direct benefits for goat production. Farmers were guided on how well-managed indigenous woodlands and planted fodder trees can provide high-protein browse, shade, windbreaks, and

improved soil health within paddocks. Emphasis was placed on key practices such as rotational browsing, coppicing, and protecting young trees from overgrazing to ensure a sustainable fodder supply throughout the dry season.

To support the integration of fodder trees at the site, the Forestry Commission donated a consignment of multi-purpose tree species suitable for goat production. These included *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Faidherbia albida*, and indigenous *Acacia* species, all of which are known for their high crude protein content, drought tolerance, and ability to regenerate after browsing. The trees will be planted within paddocks to establish fodder banks and live fencing, reducing

reliance on costly commercial feeds while improving kid survival rates and weight gain.

Agritex officers also participated in the field day, complementing the forestry training with practical demonstrations on fodder establishment, supplementary feeding, and parasite control. The interactive nature of the session allowed farmers to openly share the challenges they face, particularly feed shortages during the dry season from June to October.

The Ruvimbo Goat Project was selected as the venue for the field day due to its role as a learning hub within Ward 27. With over 120 breeding goats, the project already serves as a model for small stock production in the area. The integration of fodder trees and improved woodland management practices is expected to enhance carrying capacity, reduce production costs, and strengthen resilience to drought.

Speaking after the training, project members expressed appreciation for the technical support and tree donation. One member noted that the training had shifted their approach to goat rearing, highlighting the value of producing fodder within paddocks while conserving surrounding woodlands. The project comprises 30 members, including men, women, and youth, reflecting strong community participation.

The field day forms part of ongoing efforts by the Forestry Commission and Agritex to promote agroforestry and climate-smart agriculture in Zvimba District. Follow-up visits will be conducted to monitor tree survival rates, assess browsing impacts, and track the adoption of woodland management practices. The long-term goal is to ensure that every goat paddock in Ward 27 incorporates fodder trees, transforming woodlands from degraded areas into productive assets for livestock farmers.



*Ruvimbo Goat Project members and extension officers*

# Roots of Resilience: Forestry Commission Bridges Forest Health and Food Security in Chegutu



The Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (Agritex), in collaboration with the Forestry Commission, hosted a capacity-building session during the Ward 1 Field Day in Chegutu. The event also marked the commemoration of the International Day of Forests (IDF) 2026 and aligned with Agritex’s annual theme, “Food Security Everywhere, Every Day.”

The Chegutu event brought the 2026 IDF theme, “Forests and Sustainable Agriculture,” into practical focus, reinforcing the role of forests as the foundation of agricultural productivity. While forests are often described as the “lungs of the earth,” the Forestry Commission emphasised that they are also critical infrastructure for farming systems. Healthy woodlands support pollinators, sustain water tables, and maintain fertile topsoil— all essential components of food security.

The capacity-building session moved beyond theory into practical demonstrations, highlighting the direct link between forest conservation and community livelihoods. Farmers were encouraged to view the International Day of Forests not merely as a symbolic occasion, but as a call to action. For Ward 1, forests were positioned as a critical buffer against drought and food insecurity, reinforcing their role in building resilient farming systems.

As part of efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods while protecting forests, participants engaged in a beekeeping demonstration. The session highlighted how proper woodland management particularly the preservation of flowering trees and water sources can significantly increase honey production. This approach promotes income generation while discouraging destructive practices such as charcoal production.



With the fire season approaching, the Forestry Commission introduced the Fire Triangle Model, adapted to Chegutu's local ecological conditions. Farmers received training on establishing fireguards, including recommended widths of up to three metres in high-risk areas, as well as early burning techniques to create fuel breaks during cooler months. The session also emphasised the legal requirement to notify neighbouring communities before conducting any controlled burning.

The discussion further addressed post-fire management, with particular attention given to the damaging effects of late-season fires. Farmers were guided on soil rehabilitation techniques, including the controlled use of ash as a temporary pest repellent. They were also advised to allow coppicing trees to regenerate for at least two seasons before harvesting, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Recognising that emergency services cannot respond to all fire incidents, the session formalised the establishment of Village Fire Units under

Natural Resources Management Committees (NRMCs). A clear coordination structure was outlined, with village-level teams serving as first responders and early warning systems, while ward-level structures provide logistical support and liaise with relevant authorities such as the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Forestry Commission.

The field day also highlighted the importance of woodlot establishment and management. Farmers were encouraged to maintain existing woodlots through proper practices such as pruning, selective harvesting, and the sustainable use of non-timber forest products.

The partnership between Agritex and the Forestry Commission demonstrated that sustainable agriculture and forest conservation are deeply interconnected. In Ward 1, Chegutu, efforts are not only focused on crop production, but on cultivating a resilient landscape where *"Food Security Everywhere, Every Day"* is rooted in the protection and sustainable management of forests.

# Forestry Commission Champions Workplace Health and Fitness Through Community Engagement



*ZimParks Wildlife Conservation Half Marathon Participants*



*Participants in the Joshua Nkomo Peace Marathon on April 26 in Bulawayo.*

The Forestry Commission continues to set a strong example of how workplace wellness and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand. Throughout April, staff demonstrated that promoting health and fitness is not just an internal priority but it's a public commitment woven into the organization's broader mission. On April 12, a dedicated team represented the Commission at the Zim Parks Wildlife Conservation Half Marathon. The event served as a platform to reinforce the importance of sustainable forestry and environmental protection and symbolized a shared responsibility to safeguard forests and wildlife for generations to come. Participation highlighted how physical activity can align with purpose, supporting both personal wellbeing and conservation goals. Momentum continued later in the month, as the Commission took part in the Joshua Nkomo Peace Marathon on April 26 in Bulawayo. Joining hundreds of runners, the Forestry Commission team embodied unity, peace, and community spirit. Their presence wasn't just about crossing the finish line but it

was about promoting active living, inclusivity, and the value of staying healthy together.

Forestry Commission continues to demonstrate how workplace culture can extend beyond office walls and by encouraging staff to engage in fitness activities and community events, they are actively fostering a healthier, more connected workforce. These initiatives reflect a deeper understanding that a thriving organization depends on the wellbeing of its people. By prioritizing fitness and participation, the Forestry Commission is not only investing in its employees but also strengthening its role within the community. Participating in events like these reinforces that building a stronger, more resilient nation goes beyond daily operations. It's about showing up, staying active, and contributing to causes that unite people and protect the environment. Together, these efforts show that when health, community, and conservation intersect, the impact can be lasting and meaningful.

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