

# Living with **WILDFIRES** as part of the system in Uganda – Bugoma – Masindi Landscape

## WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW?

- Wildfires can be caused by natural phenomena such as lightning strikes or by human activities including campfires
- Wildfires can have devastating impacts on the environment and human communities, destroying infrastructure and businesses
- Wildfires are increasingly more frequent and severe due to climate change resulting in hotter and drier conditions in many areas.
- Beyond the human and societal impacts, wildfires also affect the Earth's climate particularly forests which store large amounts of carbon. When they burn, they immediately release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere
- Wildfires occasion significant economic losses through firefighting costs and lost revenue from related economic activities

*However, wildfires can be tamed through prevention and mitigation of risks.*

## TRADITIONAL AND CURRENT USE OF FIRES IN UGANDA

**Bush burning:** A traditional land management practice used to clear land for cultivation. It coincides with the onset of the first rains of the season

**Fires in traditional rangeland management:** Concentrating in the “cattle corridor”, these fires have traditionally been used to control ticks, clear grazing land of shrubs and to allow sprouting of new grass at the onset of rains.

**Traditional controlled forest fires:** Usually set by hunters to engulf wild animals in pursuit while gatherers use smoking vegetation to disperse bees during honey collection in the wet season.

**Traditional farmland-controlled fires:** Set by farmers to burn fallows and agricultural residues to reduce labour needed to clear farmland before planting.

**Malicious fires:** Commonly in forests and mono-plantations, these fires are set by hostile communities and/or individuals in retaliation for refusal to grant them access rights to grow food crops, graze livestock or collect forest products.

## HOW TO GALVANIZE AND STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDERS TO REDUCE THE WILDFIRE RISK IN OUR LANDSCAPE

- Undertaking detailed analysis across stakeholders including; Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs), district and lower local governments, private companies, civil society and government agencies for balanced participation.
- Supporting stakeholders to implement a landscape approach for fire management understanding the roles of the different groups in wildfire risk prevention and management.
- Emphasizing and encouraging inclusiveness, youth and women participation at all levels of stakeholder engagement.
- Ensuring that civil society has enhanced capacity, knowledge and tools for decision making in implementing a landscape approach for fire management so as to build the capacity of other stakeholders.



For more information;

Plot 23 JOFRA House, Kiswa Bugolobi. P.O. Box 29940 K'la, Uganda, +256 414 666 776

[www.ecotrendsalliance.org](http://www.ecotrendsalliance.org)