PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON WILDLIFE RISKS IN FAST TRACK RESETTLEMENT AREAS: A CASE OF BUBI DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

Wildfire risk is increasing as more people are resettled in woodland areas of Bubi district due to increased demand for land and agricultural expansion. However, little is known about local residents' perceptions on wildfire risk or their reaction to wildfire management efforts such as public education and outreach programmes and construction of fireguards. This study in Bubi district, ward 22 looked into public perceptions and attitudes on wildfire hazards and management strategies. The results from questionnaires administered to 140 residents of ward 22 revealed that wildfires occur every year and the leading cause being land clearing. While the study found a strong level of trust in local fire officials to manage wildfires, local residents wanted more public involvement and participation in fire hazard reduction planning. The study points to the need to engage local residents in wildfire planning and to increase outreach about wildfire risk and management options.