Ecosystems protection

This unit oversees ecosystems to ensure that they are healthy; all this is done to promote the Agency’s mandate of enduring sustainable utilisation of the country’s natural resources. The unit oversees various environmental issues which include the following:

- Veldt fires - major threat to biodiversity
- Wetlands and sensitive ecosystems protection
- Invasive alien species
- Land degradation
- Stream bank cultivation
- Sand and Clay extraction
- Sand and clay transportation
- Brick moulding
- Deforestation

How are veld fires a threat to ecosystems?

- Veldt fires are a major threat to our ecosystems and biodiversity;
- Effects of fires are that they destroy plants, animals, property and human lives are lost;
- The Communal Land Forest Produce Act 19.04, Forest Act 19.05 and Statutory Instrument 7 of 2007 are used to regulate the prevention of fires.

Fire pre-suppression measures

- People should desist from starting/lighting fires during the fire season which they will not be able to control.
- Every responsible person should put standard fire guards around their properties which are at least 9m wide on each side of the boundary.
- Every responsible person must have fire fighting equipment and a trained fire fighting team.
- Failure to comply with these requirements can attract a fine of not more than $500.00 The land owner, user/s, farmer, lessee or responsible authority are responsible for extinguishing all fires on their properties regardless of the origin.
- Every person within the vicinity of a fire is expected to put out all fires.
- After a fire out break an investigation and documentation on the causes, extent of damage will be conducted.
- The investigation is conducted by the land owner, user, lessee, farmer or local authority.

Wetlands Conservation

- A wetland ” means any area of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh,
brackish or salt, and includes riparian land adjacent to the wetland;

- Internationally wetlands are protected by the Ramsar Convention of 1971 (world wetlands day 2 February)
- In Zimbabwe section 113 of the EMA Act and section 20 of SI 7 of 2007 protect wetlands
- Projects listed in the first schedule of the Act are exempted from Section 20 of SI 7 of 2007
- Development of any type in a wetland should be done under written authorisation from the Agency
- Draining, reclaiming, drilling, tunnelling, dig up, break up, introducing an exotic plant or animal, cultivating, altering the surface or vegetation on a wetland or land within 30m of the maximum flood level of public streams

Invasive Alien Species

- Invasive alien species means exotic plants which have become naturalised and threaten the existence of indigenous species by penetrating and replacing indigenous vegetation, Water hyacinth, Cherry-pie Lantana camara L., Jointed cactus or jointed prickly pear, Azolla, Water lettuce, Dodder

Control of invasive alien species

- Responsible person must clear or cause to be cleared any invasive alien species growing on their land.
- Responsible person must report the existence of any invasive alien species
- It is any offence to have invasive alien species growing on land on which one is responsible.

Land Degradation

- Human activities that cause land degradation are sand and clay extraction, brick moulding and cultivating on land without mechanical conservation works.
- Sand and clay extraction requires a licence
- An Environmental Management Plan EMP is produced and submitted to the Agency for review.
- The Agency will look at the proposed rehabilitation and mitigation strategies.
- After reviewing the EMP the Agency will issue a license covering a number of points
- A point is an area of 20m x 20m Sand and Clay transportation requires a license
- To get a license for sand/clay transportation the Agency requires:
- Vehicle registration book
• Certificate of fitness/road worthiness
• Photographs-front and back
• Brick moulding for commercial purposes causes serious land degradation
• Commercial brick moulding is controlled through licensing
• An Environmental Management Plan is produced by the proponent and submitted to the Agency for review

Deforestation

• Brick moulding for commercial purposes causes serious land degradation
• Commercial brick moulding is controlled through licensing
• An Environmental Management Plan is produced by the proponent and submitted to the Agency for review