



# FOREST DEPARTMENT

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, FORESTRY, THE  
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOREST FIRE FIGHTING TEAM RECEIVES NEW SAFETY GEARS & EQUIPMENT

*Belmopan: February 7, 2017*

On Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Forest Department and five of its key partners in Forest Fire Prevention and Management will receive essential fire-fighting safety gears and equipment through the Key Biodiversity Areas Project (*also known as the KBA project*). During the handing-over ceremony tomorrow, Minister Omar Figueroa will distribute the fire-fighting gears among the Forest Department's ranges, Toledo Institute of Development and Education (TIDE), Ya'axche Conservation Trust (YCT), Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (CSFI), the Rancho Dolores Environmental and Development Group limited and Programme for Belize (Pfb).

Over the past years, the Forest Department and its partners have joined efforts in addressing an increasing number of forest fires, often times pooling both logistical and human resources to fight intense wildfires in remote forested areas. Eugene Waight, KBA project Manager, stated: "This timely distribution of the much needed equipment is in preparation of the upcoming forest fire season and will assist the beneficiaries to better combat forest fires and mitigate the damages to our forest systems."

The wildland fire-fighting protective gears and equipment are worth more than BZ\$117,000 and form part of a Fire Incidence Rapid Response Team strategy to better manage forest fires. Some of the items being distributed include helmets, fire-fighting protective clothing, leather gloves, goggles, Kestrel pocket weather station, council combination tool, axes, rakes, swatters, bladder bags, drip torch, fuel containers, chain saws, long handle shovels, global positioning systems, drones, and radios.

The Key Biodiversity Areas Project will continue to provide forest fire trainings and equipment for better forest fire prevention and management through its funding from the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank, PACT and the Government of Belize. For more information regarding the project, please contact 822-2079 or 828-4803.

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*'Overseeing the Sustainable Management of Belize's Forest Resources'*