

SEVENTH E.V. KOMAREK, SR. FIRE ECOLOGY LECTURER: WINSTON S.W. TROLLOPE

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Winston Trollope is a native South African whose ancestors settled in South Africa from England in 1820. He was born in 1940 and grew up on a farm in the Komga district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. After completing his schooling, he enrolled at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg in 1959, where he obtained a BSc. Agric. (1962), MSc. Agric. (1971), and Ph.D. (1984) in rangeland science.

Dr. Trollope's interest in fire ecology was kindled by Professor J.D. Scott at the University of Natal, who was one of the pioneers in fire research in South Africa. Arising from this interest and as part of his responsibilities as Pasture Officer in the Ciskei region of South Africa, he identified the encroachment of undesirable plant species into natural rangeland as one of the main problems facing the livestock industry in this region. This focus formed part of his MSc. project, for which he studied the encroachment and control of macchia vegetation in the mountainous areas of the Eastern Cape Province. He concluded that fire was the most effective, practical, and economic method of controlling macchia vegetation. Subsequently he was able to develop burning programs that continue to be successfully applied throughout the mountain ranges of this region. He was awarded an MSc. (Agric.) in 1971 for this work and received international recognition by being invited to deliver a paper at the Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference on "Fire in Africa" held in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1971. Attending this confer-

ence proved to be a turning point in both his research career and fire ecology in South Africa, as it became apparent to him that those in Africa had completely ignored the effects of type and intensity of fire on the vegetation, having focused only on the effects of season and frequency of burning. This realization led to an investigation, as part of his Ph.D., on the effects of type and intensity of fire on the grass and tree components of the vegetation in African savannas. This research has resulted in a greater understanding of the role of fire in savanna ecosystems and a significant improvement in the use of fire as a range management practice for both domestic livestock systems and wildlife management.

Since the recent political changes in South Africa, Dr. Trollope has been fortunate enough to be able to extend his research interests farther afield in Africa. He has initiated studies on the fire ecology of grassland and savanna ecosystems in the central highlands of Kenya, the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti in Tanzania, the Caprivi region of Namibia, the Gile National Reserve in Mozambique, and the Okavango Delta in Botswana. One of the highlights has been traveling to the Konza Prairie Biological Station in Kansas, USA, in 2003, where with his wife, Lynne, and two students from the University of Fort Hare, he conducted a project comparing the behavior of fires in tallgrass prairies with the fire behavior in African grasslands and savannas.