

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Bryan County

A Program of the Georgia Forestry Commission
with support from the U.S. Forest Service



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Appended Documents:

Bryan County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Bryan County Wildfire Pre-suppression Plan

NFPA 1141 Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas

I. OBJECTIVES

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Bryan County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect this community and its essential infrastructure. It also includes a plan for wildfire suppression. Specifically, the plan includes community-centered actions that will:

- Educate citizens on wildfire, its risks, and ways to protect lives and properties,
- Support fire rescue and suppression entities,
- Focus on collaborative decision-making and citizen participation,
- Develop and implement effective mitigation strategies, and
- Develop and implement effective community ordinances and codes.

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The core team convened in February of 2009 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local government, local fire authorities, and the state agency responsible for forest management. Below are the groups included in the task force:

Bryan County Government

*Bryan County Fire Department and Emergency Management
Board of County Commissioners*

City of Richmond Hill

Fire Department

Georgia Forestry Commission

US Army Fort Stewart

US Fish and Wildlife Service

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the individual fire districts along with selected communities within the county. The chiefs and captains of the eight fire departments in the county assessed their districts and reconvened in March of 2009 for the purpose of completing the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Risk Assessment | Assessed wildfire hazard risks and prioritized mitigation actions. |
| Fuels Reduction | Identified strategies for coordinating fuels treatment projects. |
| Structure Ignitability | Identified strategies for reducing the ignitability of structures within the Wildland interface. |
| Emergency Management | Forged relationships among local government and fire districts and developed/refined a pre-suppression plan. |
| Education and Outreach | Developed strategies for increasing citizen awareness and action and to conduct homeowner and community leader workshops. |

III. COMMUNITY & WILDFIRE HISTORY



Community Background

Bryan County, on the Georgia coast just south and west of Savannah, was created from Chatham County by an act of the state legislature on December 19, 1793. In 1794 land from Effingham County was also transferred to Bryan. The county was named in honor of Jonathan Bryan, one of the leading colonial settlers in Georgia and a key figure in the colony's movement toward independence and during the Revolutionary War (1775-83).

In 1733 Fort Argyle was built on the Ogeechee River, on land that later became part of Bryan County, by Georgia founder James Oglethorpe. In 1754 the town of Georgetown was laid out on the lower Ogeechee by John Reynolds, the first royal governor of Georgia, but the anticipated deep-water port never came to fruition, because attention was focused on more established commercial markets at Savannah and Sunbury. Georgetown was renamed Hardwicke by Governor Reynolds in 1755.

Bryan County was the scene of large-scale agricultural development during the antebellum period. The Ogeechee River basin in lower Bryan County became one of the most productive rice-growing areas on the south Atlantic coast during the 1830s and 1840s. By 1855, 3 million pounds of rice annually were being shipped from Bryan County plantations. The leading producers of this important staple commodity on the Ogeechee were Richard J. Arnold, George W. McAllister, and Thomas Savage Clay.

The rice industry was enhanced by two important transportation developments affecting Bryan County—the construction of the sixteen-mile-long Savannah-Ogeechee Canal in 1830, which provided the area's rice plantations with a direct market link to Savannah, and the building of the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf Railroad two decades later. The railroad was completed through the lower end of Bryan County in 1856, leading to the founding of Ways Station, later Richmond Hill, near the Ogeechee River crossing.

In 1861, after the start of the Civil War (1861-65), Confederate forces built Fort McAllister at Genesis Point on the Ogeechee to protect from Union forces the local river plantations and the railroad just upstream. This simple earthworks fort repelled seven Union naval attacks by *Monitor*-class warships during 1862 and 1863. The fort and its outnumbered Confederate garrison finally fell during a bloody landward assault in December 1864, at the end of General William T. Sherman's march to the sea from Atlanta to Savannah.

With the development of railroads and a rapidly expanding naval stores (primarily turpentine) industry in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, town development in the upper section of Bryan County began in earnest. Pembroke was founded as a railroad town and turpentine-shipping center in 1890 and within a decade became the county's leading business center. In 1937 the Bryan County seat was moved to Pembroke from the earlier county seat at Clyde, in the middle section of the county. Even earlier seats were Cross Roads and Court House (later Eden).

Automotive pioneer Henry Ford had a greater impact on Bryan County than anyone else in the twentieth century. In 1925 Ford began the purchase of what eventually would total 85,000 acres of land along the Ogeechee River in lower Bryan County. During the 1930s and 1940s he established schools, industries, and medical facilities in the Ways Station area, thus greatly improving social and health conditions in an impoverished section of coastal Georgia. In 1941 the town of Ways Station was renamed Richmond Hill in honor of Ford, whose winter home, Richmond, was located on the former Ogeechee River rice tract of a century before.

With the establishment of the Fort Stewart Military Reservation in 1940, Bryan County lost more than one-third of its acreage to the U.S. government and was split into two sections, upper and lower. The county seat, Pembroke, is in the upper portion of the county, while Richmond Hill, the county's largest city, is in the coastal south. During the 1990s Bryan County, as a part of metropolitan Savannah, was among the fastest-growing counties in the United States; according to the 2000 U.S. census, its population grew by more than 50 percent over a decade, to 23,417 (82.4 percent white, 14.7 percent black, and 2.7 percent Hispanic).



Pembroke, the county seat of Bryan County, was incorporated August 23, 1905. The birth of Pembroke is attributable to the construction of the Seaboard Railroad line in the late 1800's. Pembroke became the county seat in 1937 due to Pembroke's banking, business and transportation prominence. In recent years, Bryan County was deemed most suitable to invest in future industry because of its' location and proximity to major interstates and the port of Savannah. Land is readily available in the area for development. As a result, the Interstate Centre Business and Industrial Park became a vision and materialized as a Class A industrial park.

Richmond Hill, is a thriving community along Georgia's colonial coast, and is among the fastest growing communities in the nation. Due to its proximity to Savannah, Richmond Hill, in South Bryan, has become a sensible location to settle and raise a family. Richmond Hill continues to grow as an alternative to the increasing congestion and taxes in the nearby metropolis of Savannah. (Courtesy *New Georgia Encyclopedia*)

Wildfire History

While Bryan County is rapidly developing community, there are still large tracts of timberland remaining in the county. Bryan County is divided in half by the US Army's Fort Stewart, the largest military reservation in the east.

The southern half of the county has been rapidly spreading out from the city of Richmond Hill with extensive subdivisions. There are still significant large tracts of timber abutting these developments owned by the State of Georgia and Rayonier Inc. There are also privately held large tracts of undeveloped land awaiting eventual development.

The northern half of the county while still essentially rural is also starting to see some development particularly along the eastern edge of the county along I-16 and Hwy 280. There are still largely undeveloped tracts of both industrial and privately owned timberland in this area with many small rural pockets of older residential areas scattered throughout the area.

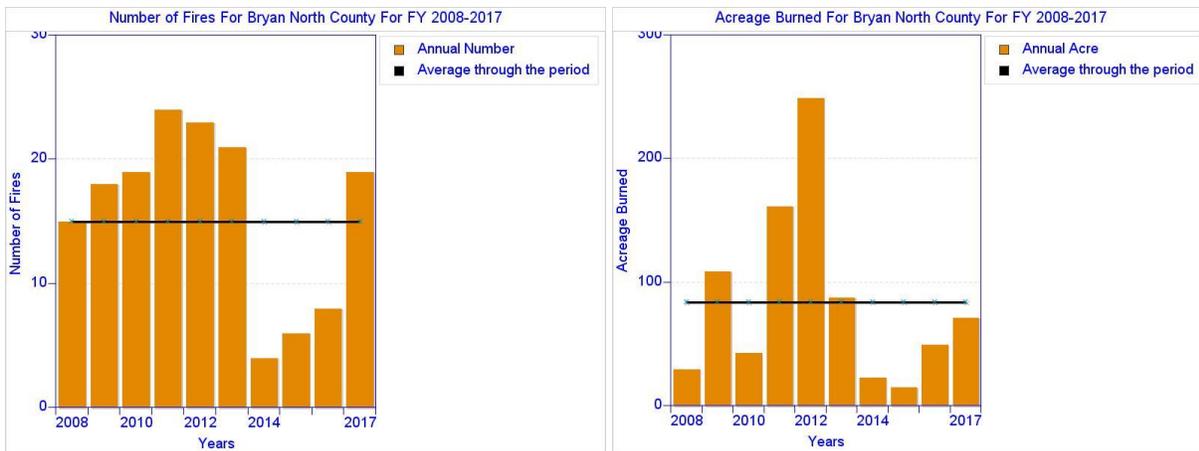
Bryan County is protected by the Bryan County Fire Department with 6 rural fire departments well spaced throughout the county. The cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill are protected by their city fire departments. The Georgia Forestry Commission maintains a county protection unit located in Pembroke to respond to wildland fires within the northern portion of the county. The Georgia Forestry Commission provides wildland fire protection to the southern portion of the county from the Liberty County unit in Midway.

The city of Pembroke is serviced with a modern pressurized water system with hydrants throughout the city and in the industrial area just east of the city. Richmond Hill and many of the surrounding developments in the southern half of the county also are served by pressurized hydrants.

Over the past fifty years, Bryan County has averaged around 79 reported wildfires a year with 57% of these occurring during February, March, and April. These fires have burned an average of 489 acres a year over the same period. Though generally there has been some decrease in the number of fires since the advent of burning permits the past 30 years, the average acres burned has increased with the increasing fuel loads.

The leading cause of fires, during the last 10 years (fy2008 – fy2017) in North Bryan County has been debris burning accounting for 43% of the fires and about 49% of the acres lost. The second leading cause of fires was lightning accounting for 17% of the fires reported and 32% of the acres burned. In South Bryan the leading cause was Debris burning accounting for 24% of the fires and 31% of the acres burned. The second leading cause was incendiary (arson) causing 19% of the fires and 6% of the acreage burned.

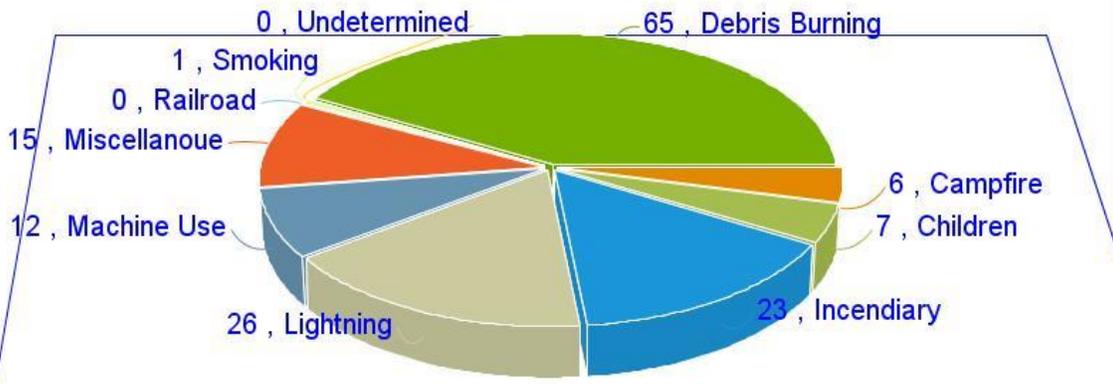
Below are the North Bryan County wildfire numbers for the 10 year period (2008 – 2017). On the following page is data for the most recent fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017 thru June 20, 2018). Pages 10 thru 14 include additional wildfire data for North and South Bryan county.



WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN: AN ACTION PLAN FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION

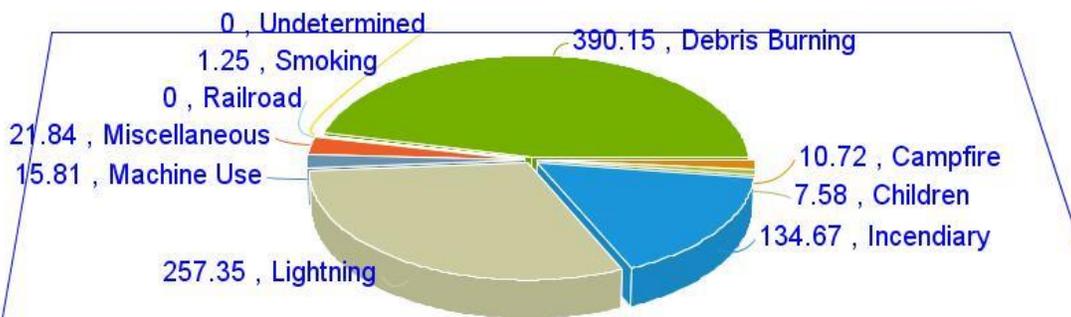
County = Bryan North	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0	0.00	0.40	0.30
Children	Children	0	0.00	0.40	0.92
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1	22.00	0.40	6.20
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1	7.00	0.40	2.40
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	2	0.30	1.00	4.66
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	1	0.25	0.20	0.05
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	1	0.10	0.40	0.82
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	2	11.50	2.00	3.98
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1	0.10	0.60	4.12
Incendiary	Incendiary	5	24.30	2.20	18.96
Lightning	Lightning	0	0.00	0.80	1.06
Machine Use	Machine Use	0	0.00	0.40	0.25
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	1	2.00	0.20	0.40
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	3	4.00	0.60	0.80
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0	0.00	0.60	0.82
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	0	0.00	0.40	0.40
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	1	3.00	0.20	0.60
Totals for County: Bryan North Year: 2018		19	74.55	11.20	46.74

Cause of Fire For Bryan North County For FY 2008-2017

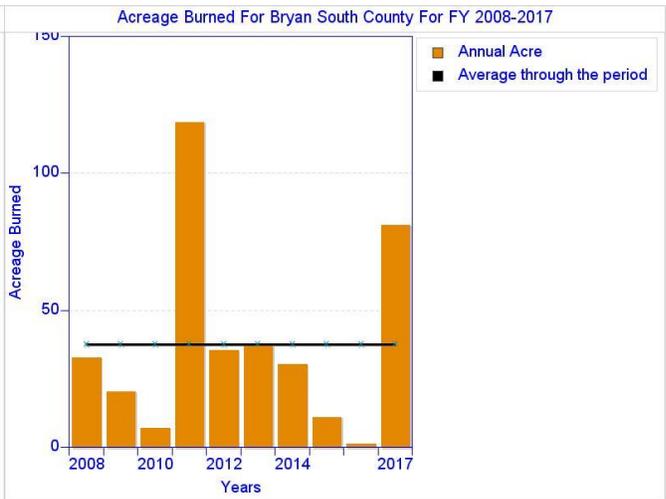
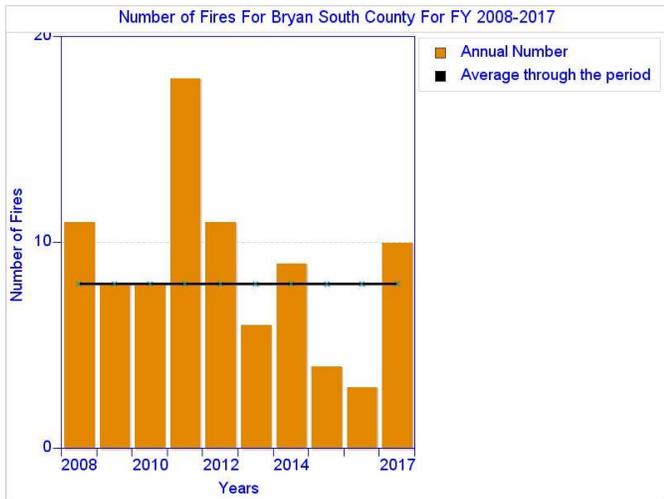


Fire Cause

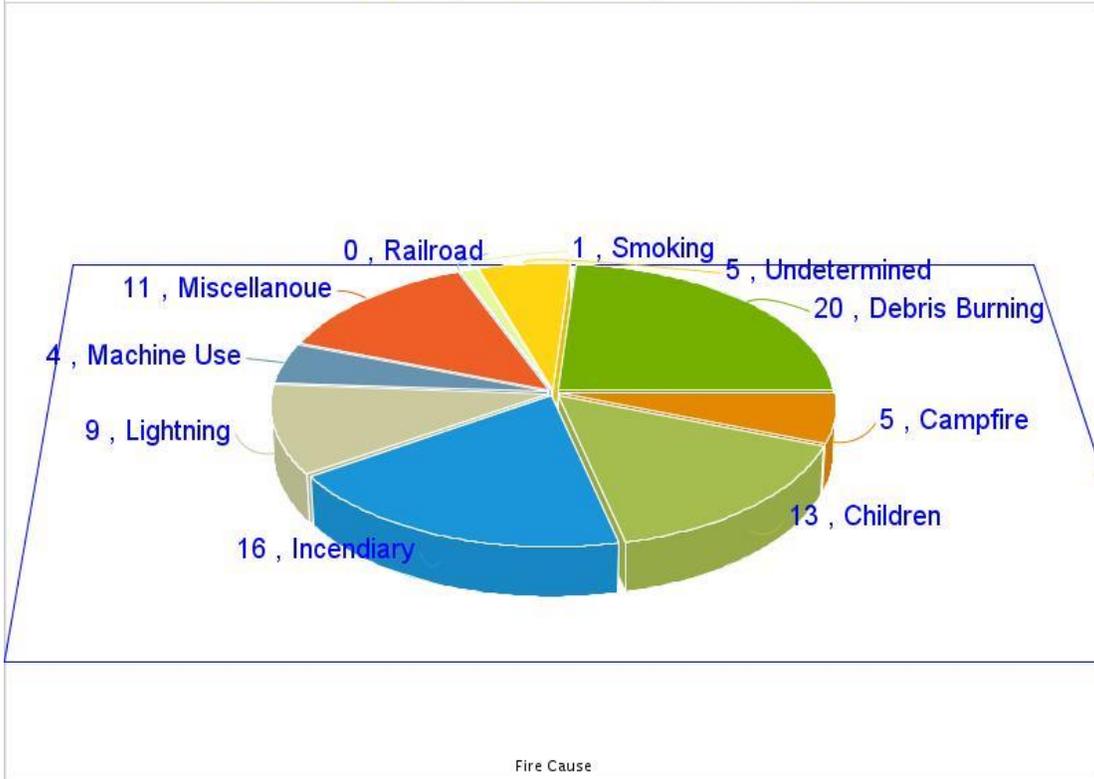
Acreage Burned by Cause of Fire For Bryan North County For FY 2008-2017



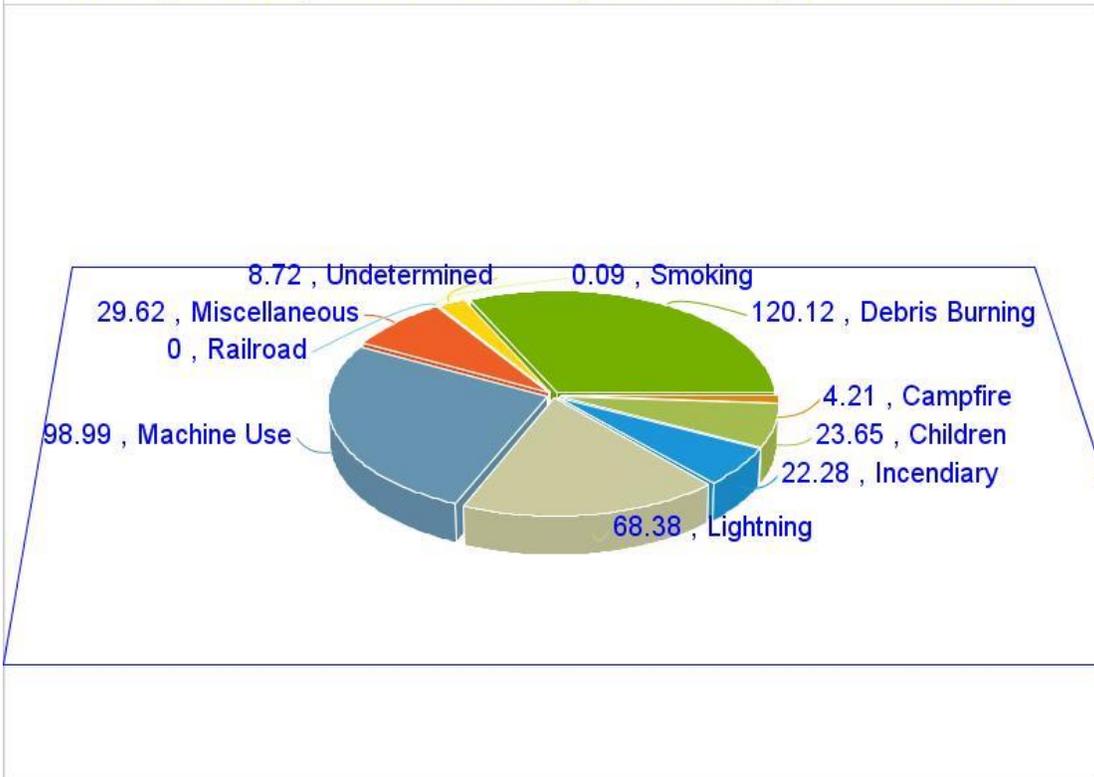
County = Bryan South	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1	0.50	0.20	0.10
Children	Children	2	1.91	1.80	4.01
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0	0.00	0.20	0.10
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1	0.50	0.80	4.00
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1	1.00	0.40	0.24
Incendiary	Incendiary	0	0.00	0.20	0.10
Lightning	Lightning	0	0.00	0.60	10.76
Machine Use	Machine Use	1	0.20	0.40	0.14
Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	0	0.00	0.40	3.65
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	0	0.00	0.40	0.73
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	0.20	0.20
Railroad	Railroad	8	339.80	1.60	67.96
Undetermined	Undetermined	0	0.00	0.80	1.72
Totals for County: Bryan South Year: 2018		14	343.91	8.00	93.72



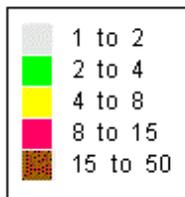
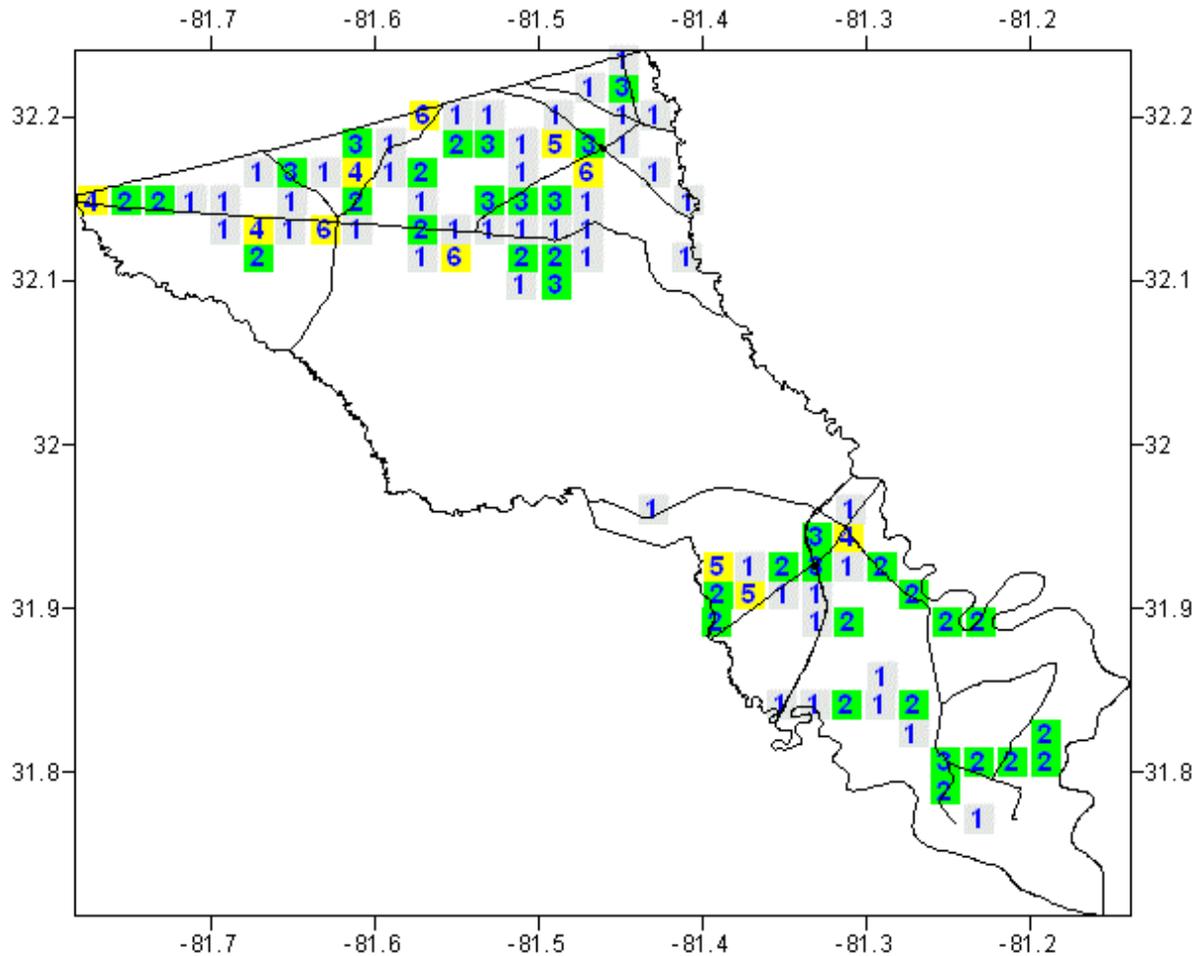
Cause of Fire For Bryan South County For FY 2008-2017



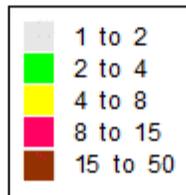
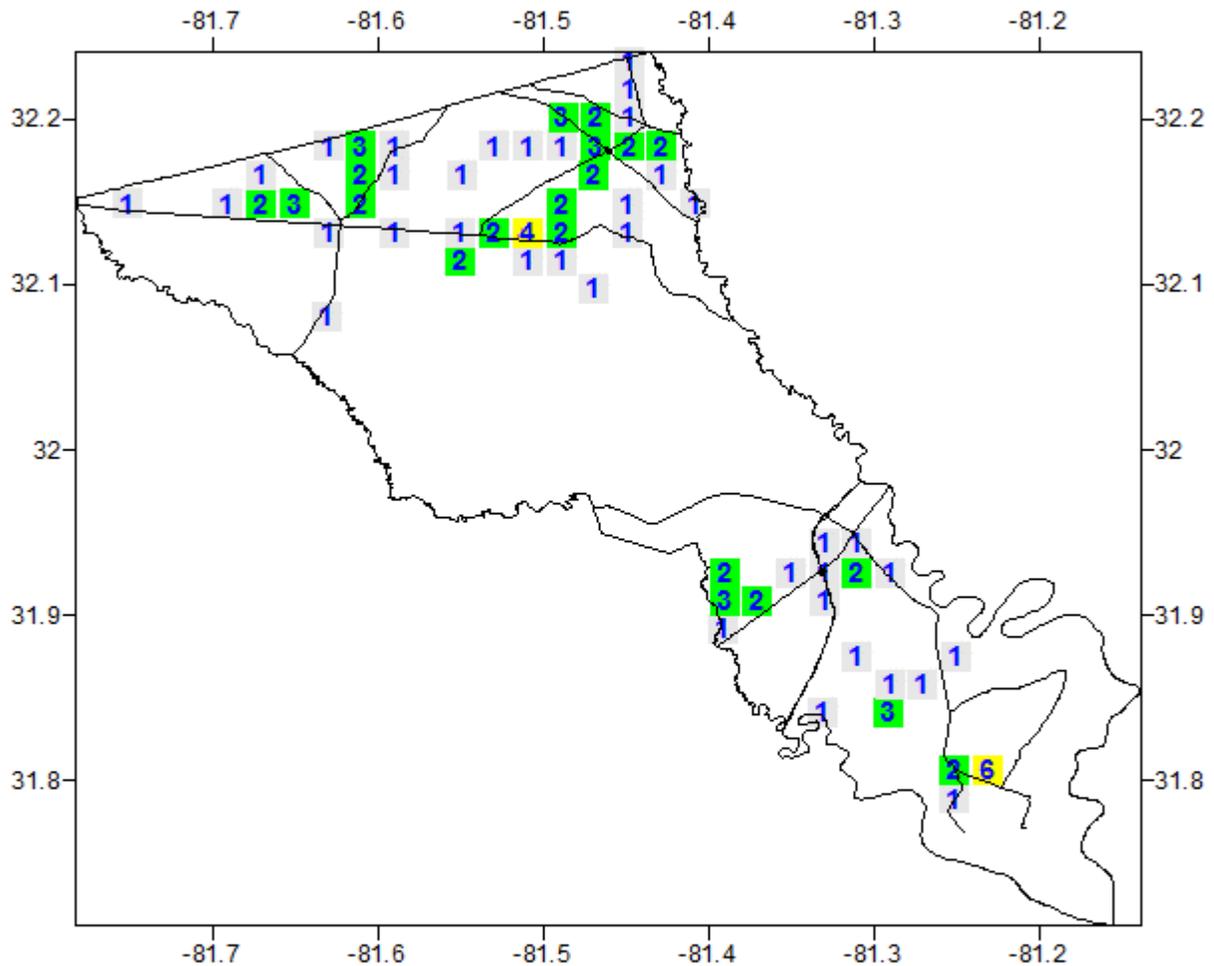
Acreage Burned by Cause of Fire For Bryan South County For FY 2008-2017



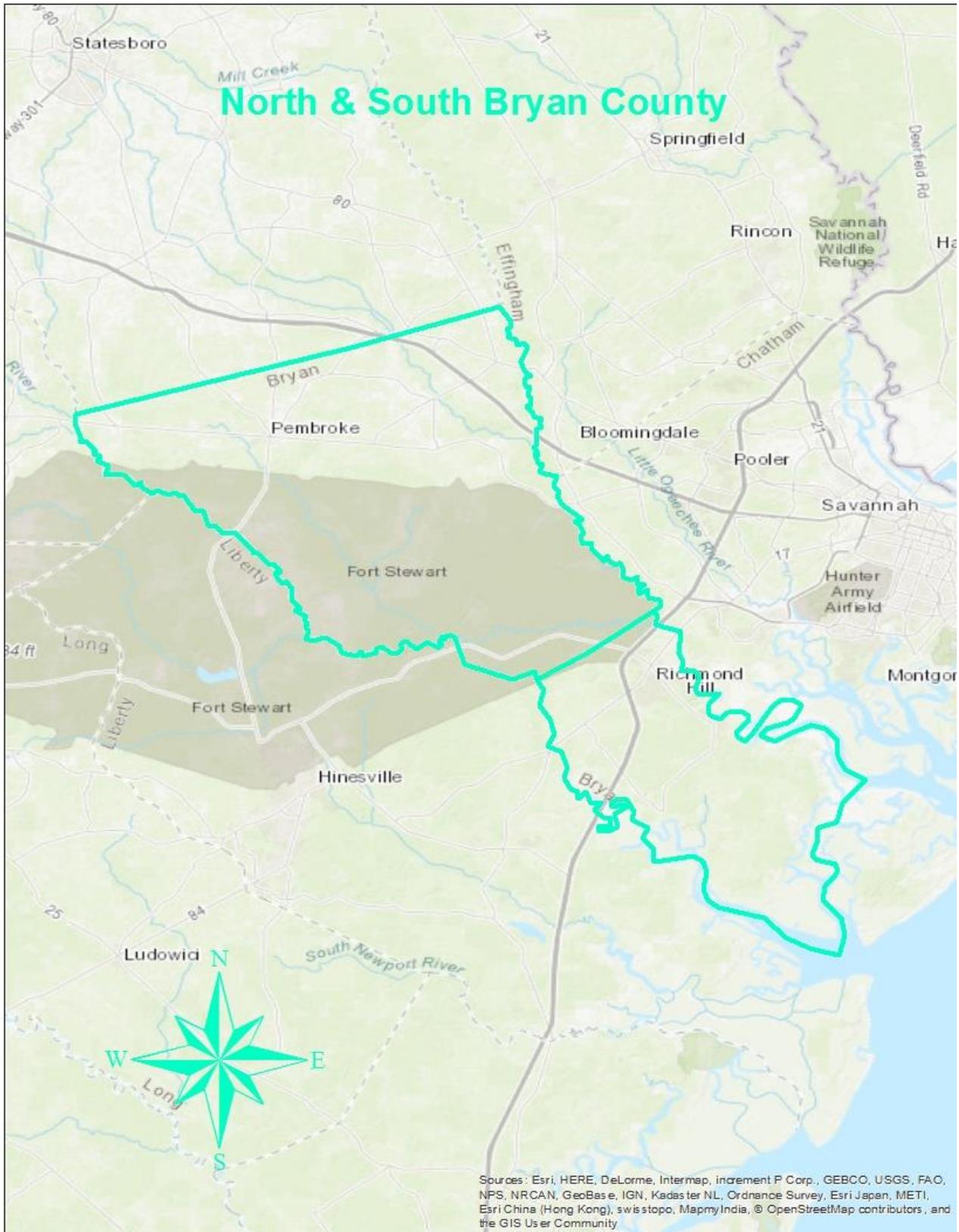
Fire Occurrence Map for Bryan County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

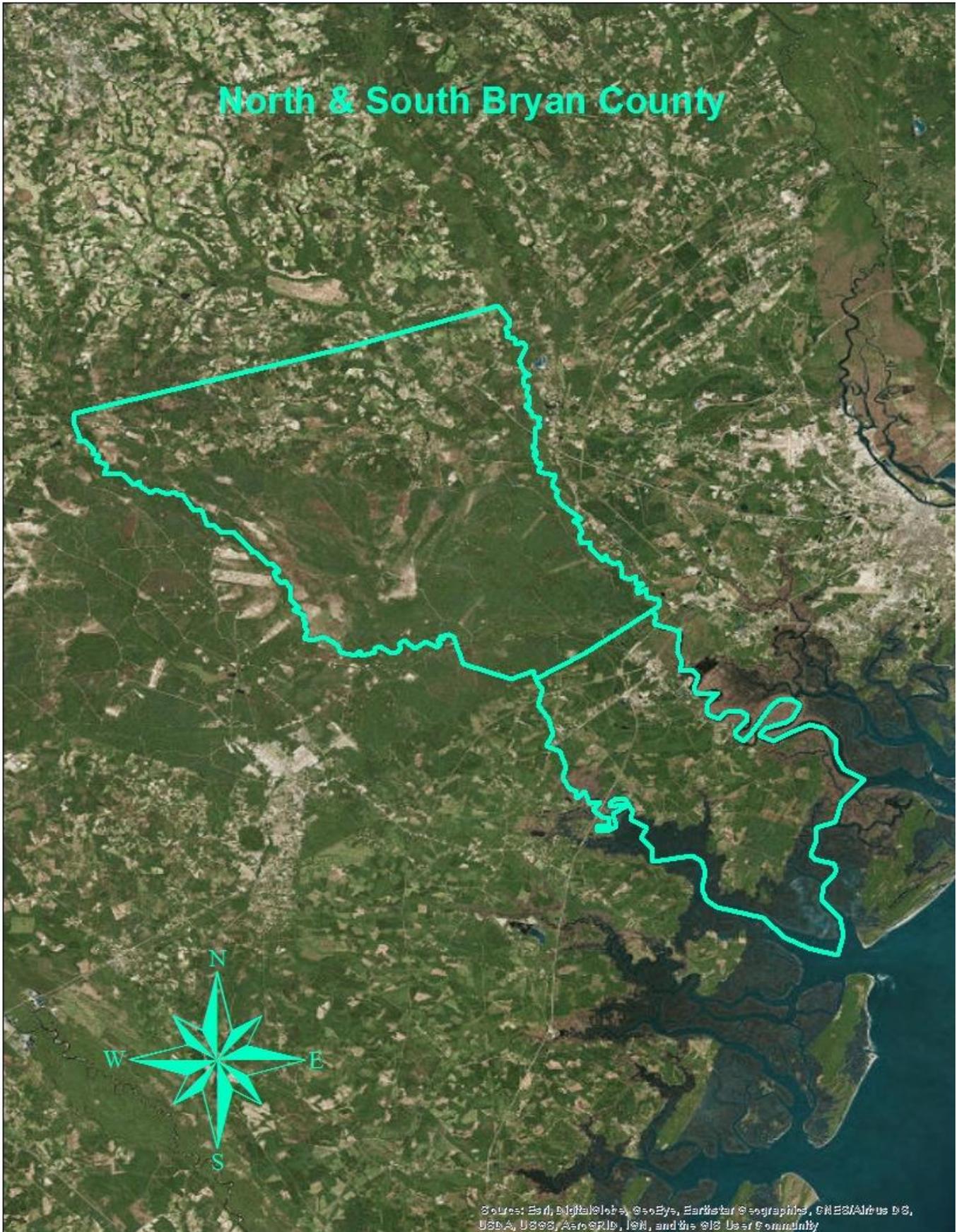


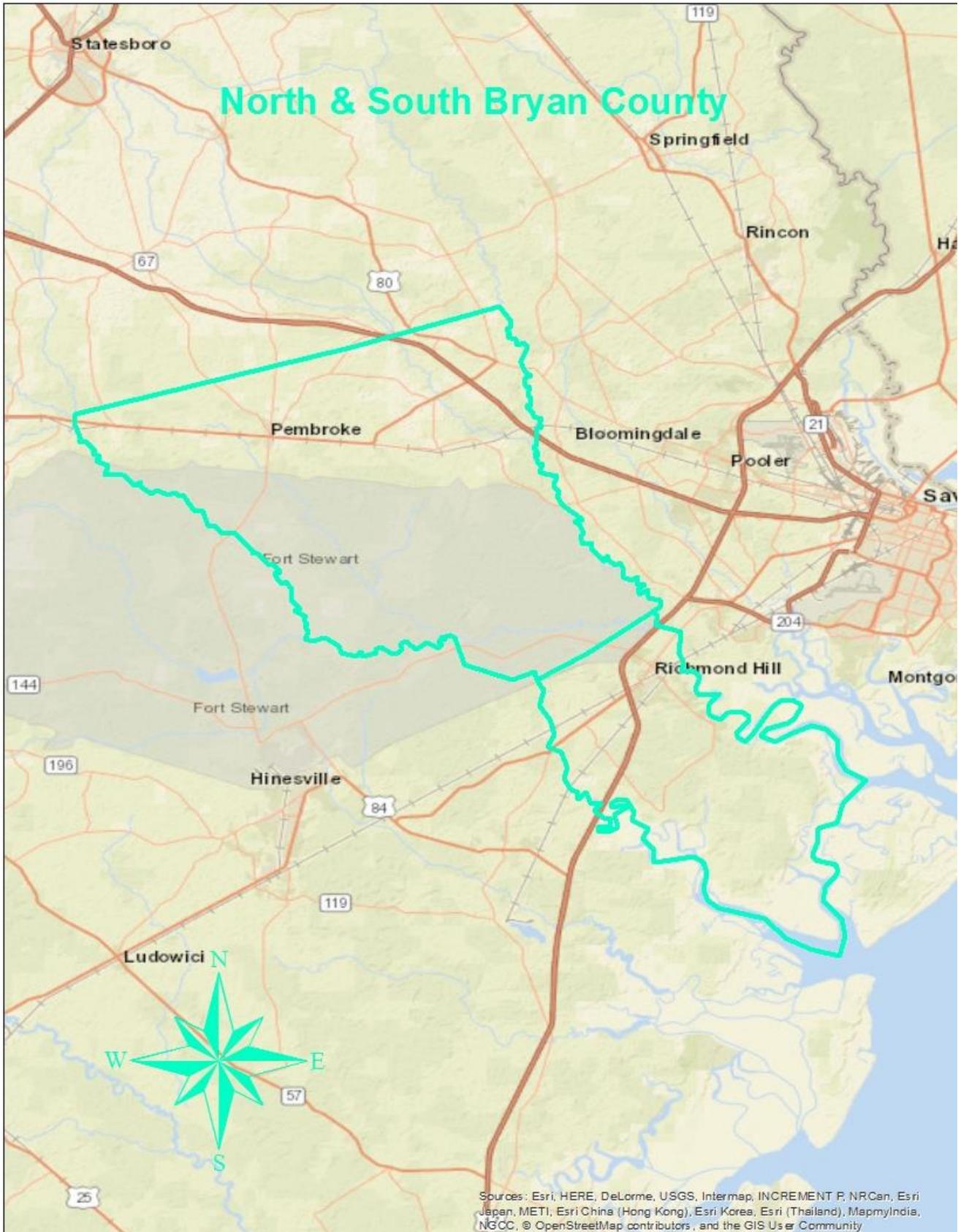
Fire Occurrence Map for Bryan County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



IV. COUNTY BASE MAPS







V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Wildland-Urban Interface

There are many definitions of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), however from a fire management perspective it is commonly defined as an area where structures and other human development meet or intermingles with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. As fire is dependent on a certain set of conditions, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group has defined the wildland-urban interface as a set of conditions that exists in or near areas of wildland fuels, regardless of ownership. This set of conditions includes type of vegetation, building construction, accessibility, lot size, topography and other factors such as weather and humidity. When these conditions are present in certain combinations, they make some communities more vulnerable to wildfire damage than others. This “set of conditions” method is perhaps the best way to define wildland-urban interface areas when planning for wildfire prevention, mitigation, and protection activities.

There are three major categories of wildland-urban interface. Depending on the set of conditions present, any of these areas may be at risk from wildfire. A wildfire risk assessment can determine the level of risk.

1. **“Boundary” wildland-urban interface** is characterized by areas of development where homes, especially new subdivisions, press against public and private wildlands, such as private or commercial forest land or public forests or parks. This is the classic type of wildland-urban interface, with a clearly defined boundary between the suburban fringe and the rural countryside.
2. **“Intermix” wildland-urban interface** areas are places where improved property and/or structures are scattered and interspersed in wildland areas. These may be isolated rural homes or an area that is just beginning to go through the transition from rural to urban land use.
3. **“Island” wildland-urban interface**, also called occluded interface, are areas of wildland within predominately urban or suburban areas. As cities or subdivisions grow, islands of undeveloped land may remain, creating remnant forests. Sometimes these remnants exist as parks, or as land that cannot be developed due to site limitations, such as wetlands.



Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is described as the area where structures and other human improvements meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Bryan County Fire Departments returned an average score of 133, placing Bryan County in the high risk range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Bryan County’s WUI was the Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Risk Assessment Checklist. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), topography, roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors. The following factors contributed to the wildfire hazard score for Bryan County:

- One entrance/exit on many subdivisions and homes
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders, with dead ends and very small cul-de-sacs
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Homes not clearly marked
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation on three sides of Homes/subdivisions
- Minimal defensible space around rural structures
- Homes with combustible siding and roofs with heavy accumulations of vegetative debris
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available in areas
- Above ground utilities and poorly maintained corridors
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising 1/3 to 1/2 the total lots in rural subdivisions
- High occurrence of large wildfires in the various locations
- Heavy fuel loading in forested areas

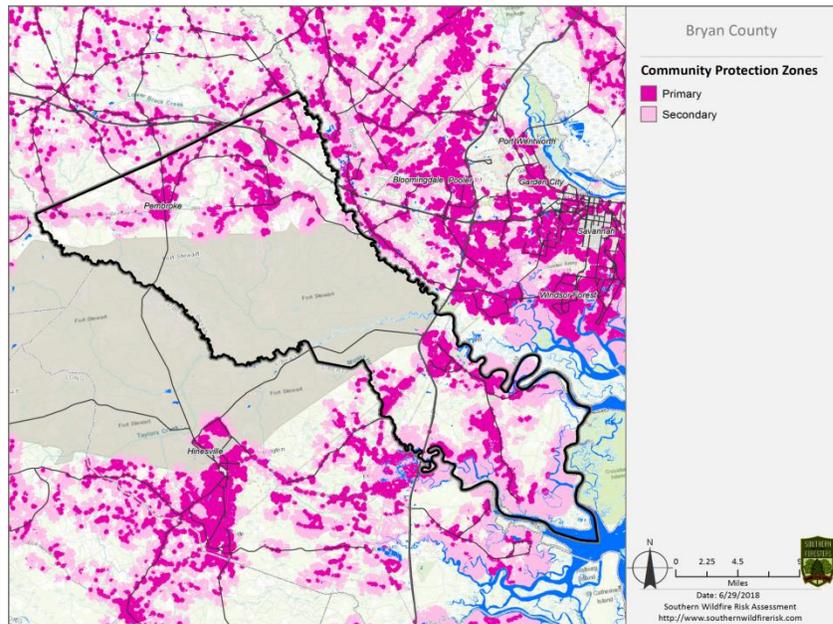
Summary of Bryan County Assessment Ratings

FD District	Access	Site Hazard	Bldg Hazard	Add. Hazard	Total Hazard	Relative Risk
Station #1	13	62	5	49	129	Moderate Risk
Station #2	14	63	20	59	160	Extreme Risk
Station #3	16	63	5	46	130	High Risk
Station #4	16	43	35	43	137	High Risk
Station #5	15	61	25	59	160	Extreme Risk
Station #6	16	63	20	53	152	Extreme Risk
Richmond Hill	7	38	20	26	91	Moderate Risk
Pembroke	9	46	30	26	109	Moderate Risk
Average					133	High Risk

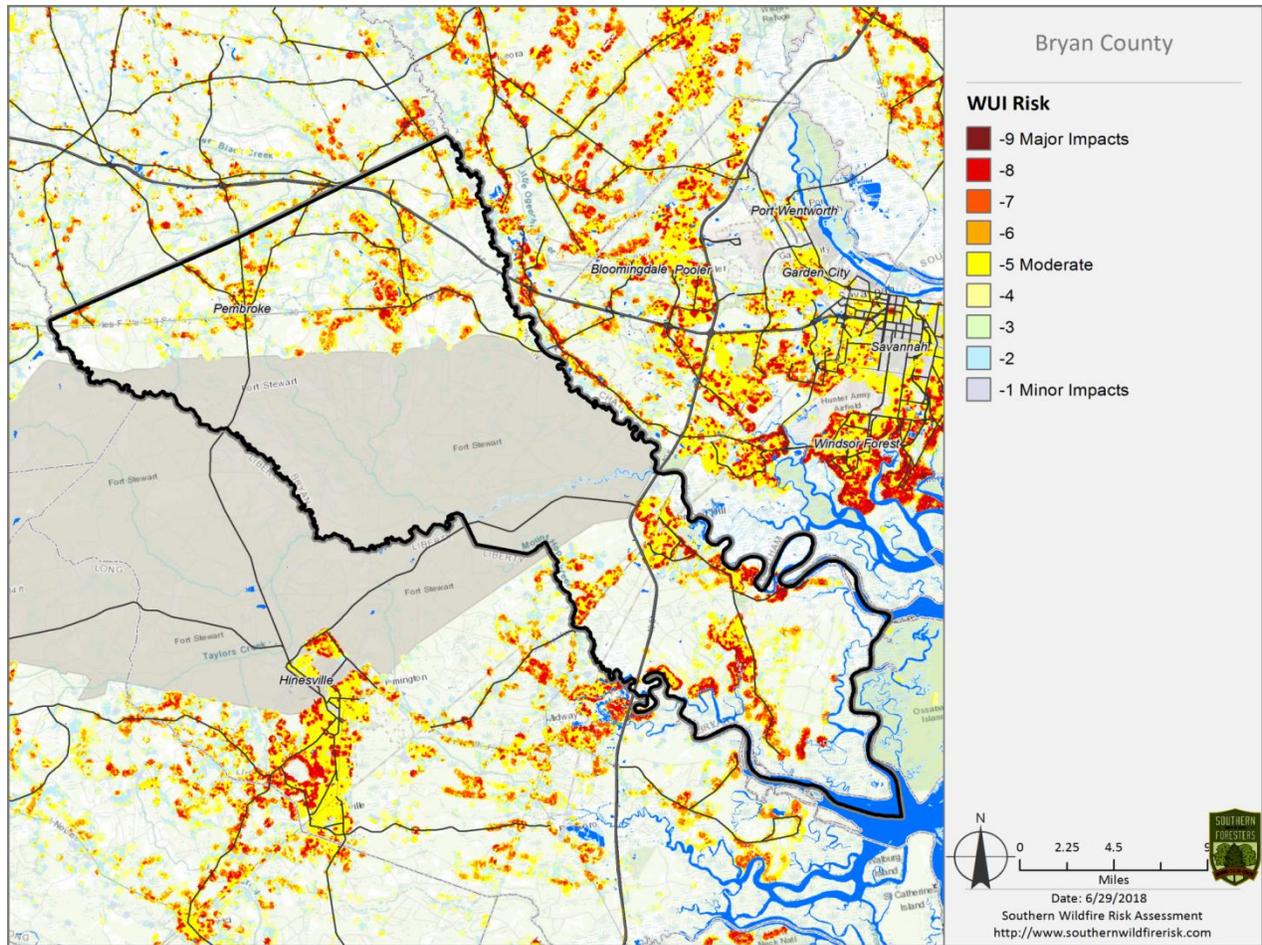
VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

The Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment tool, developed by the Southern Group of State Foresters, was released to the public in July 2014. This tool allows users of the Professional Viewer application of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) web Portal (SouthWRAP) to define a specific project area and summarize wildfire related information for this area. A detailed risk summary report is generated using a set of predefined map products developed by the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment project which have been summarized explicitly for the user defined project area. A risk assessment summary was generated for Bryan County. The SouthWRAP (SWRA) products included in this report are designed to provide the information needed to support the following key priorities:

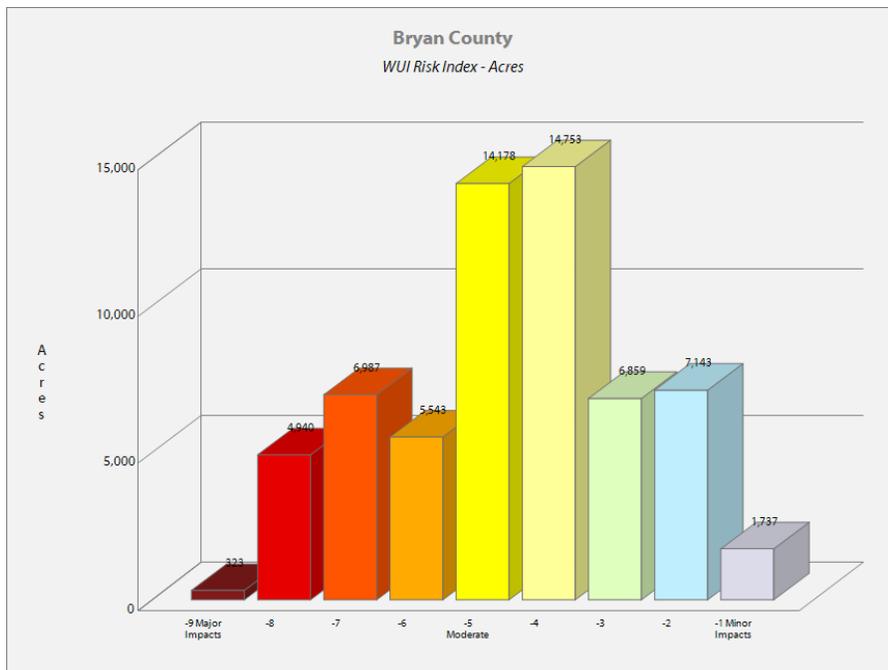
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire.
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning.
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests.
- Allow agencies to work together to better define priorities and improve emergency response, particularly across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Define wildland communities and identify the risk to those communities.
- Increase communication and outreach with local residents and the public to create awareness and address community priorities and needs.
- Plan for response and suppression resource needs.
- Plan and prioritize hazardous fuel treatment programs.

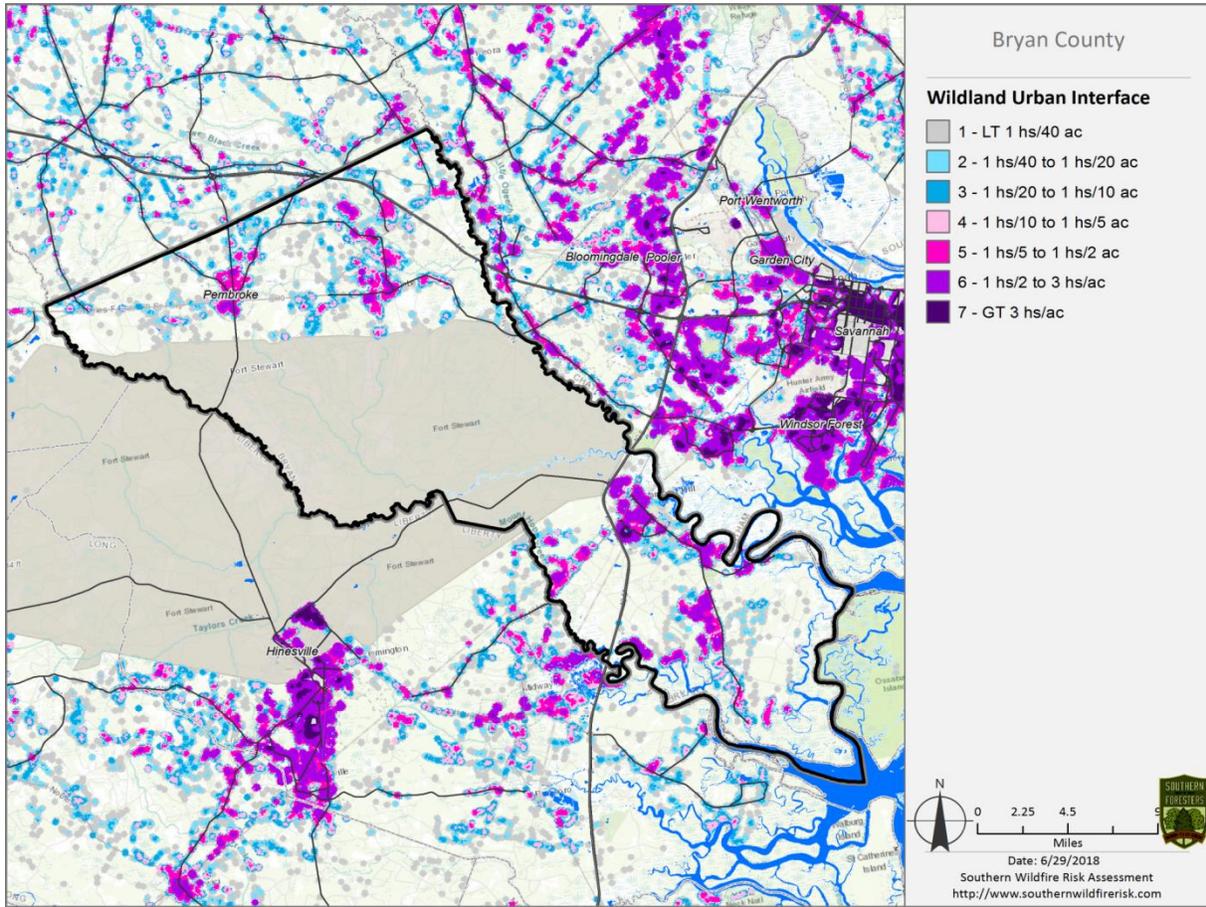


Community Protection Zones map from the Bryan County SWRA

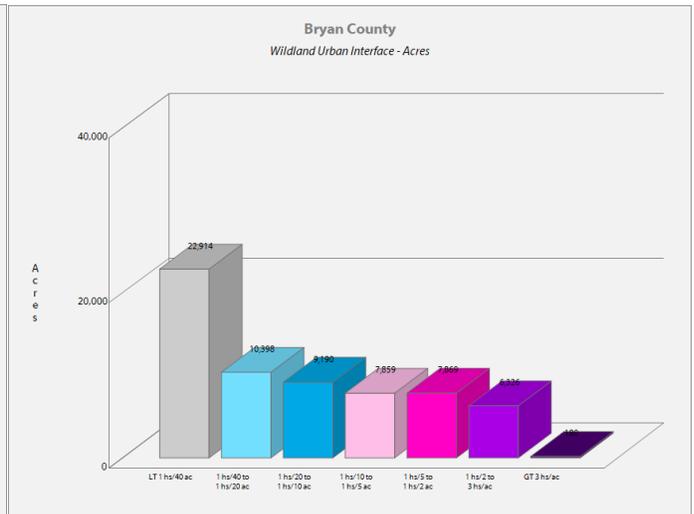
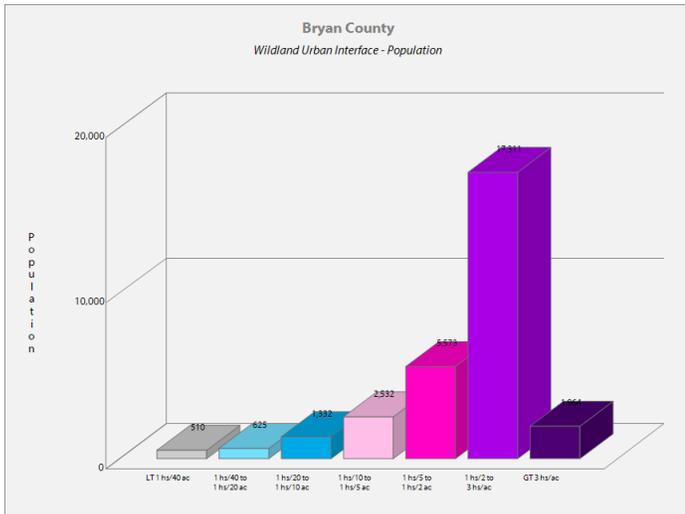


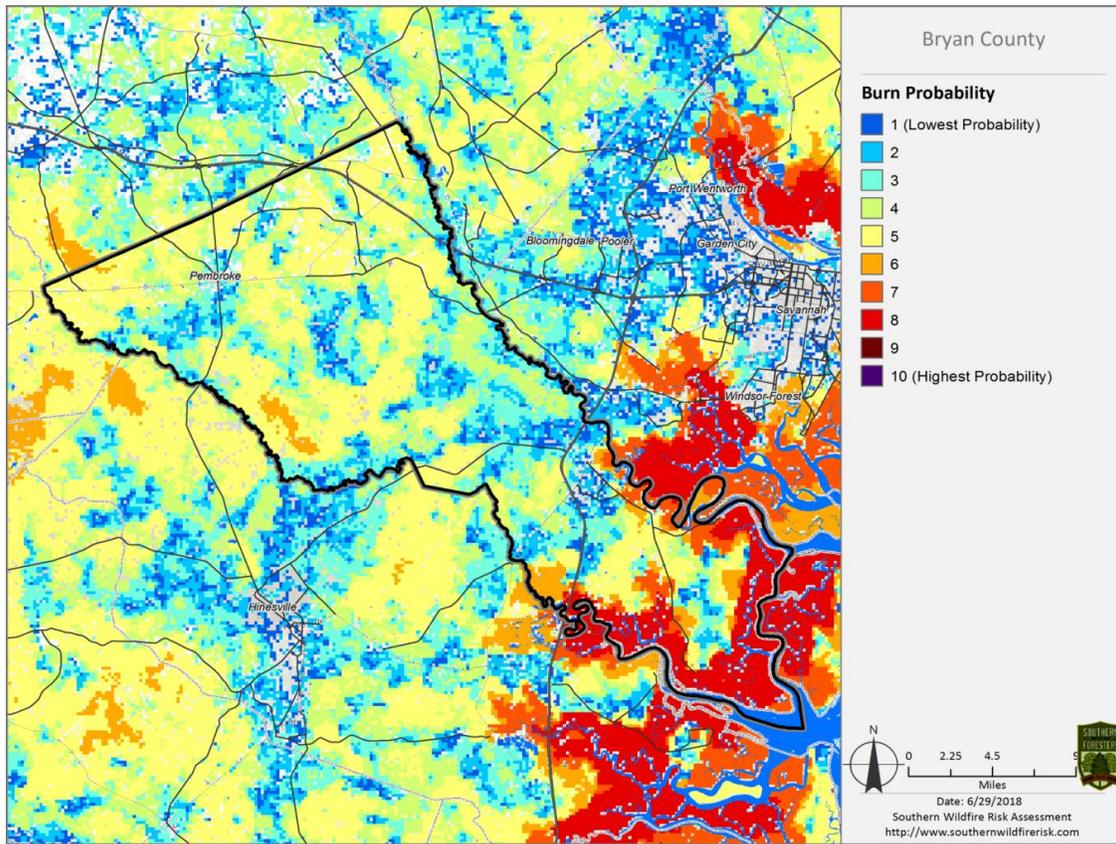
Above: Wildland urban interface (WUI) Risk map Below: WUI Risk Index Acres



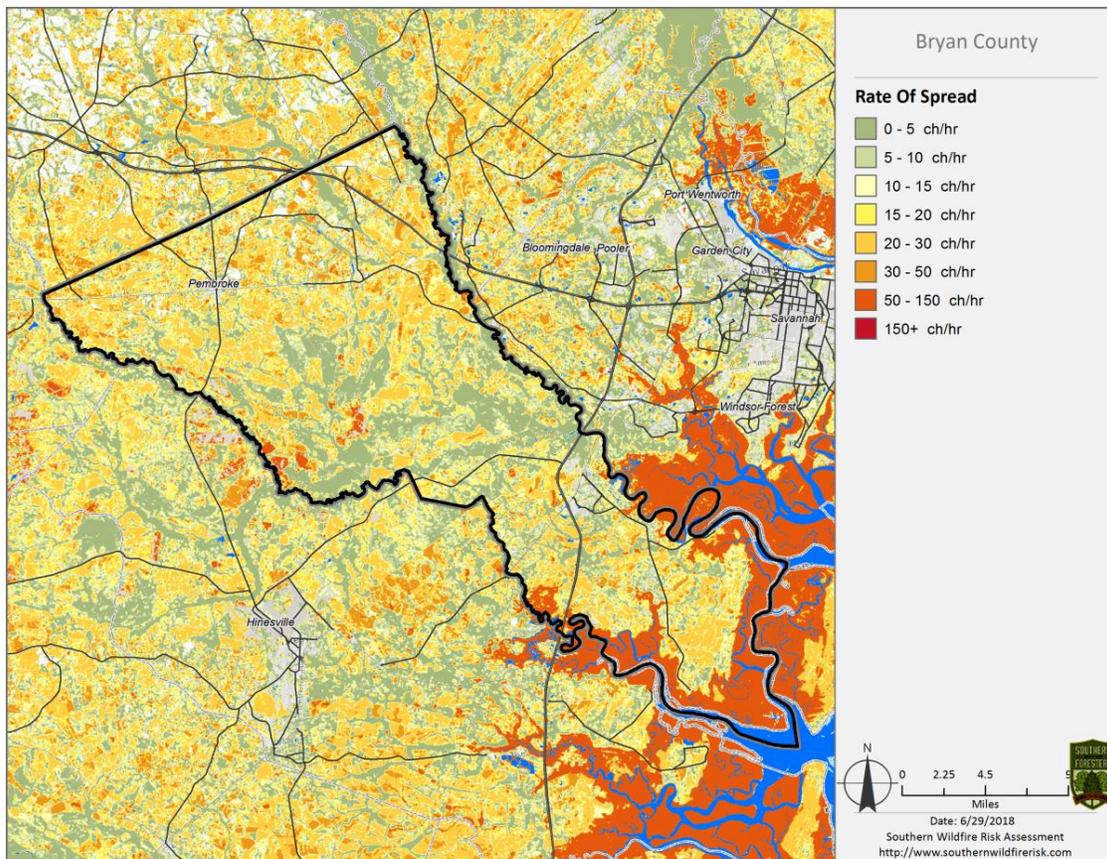


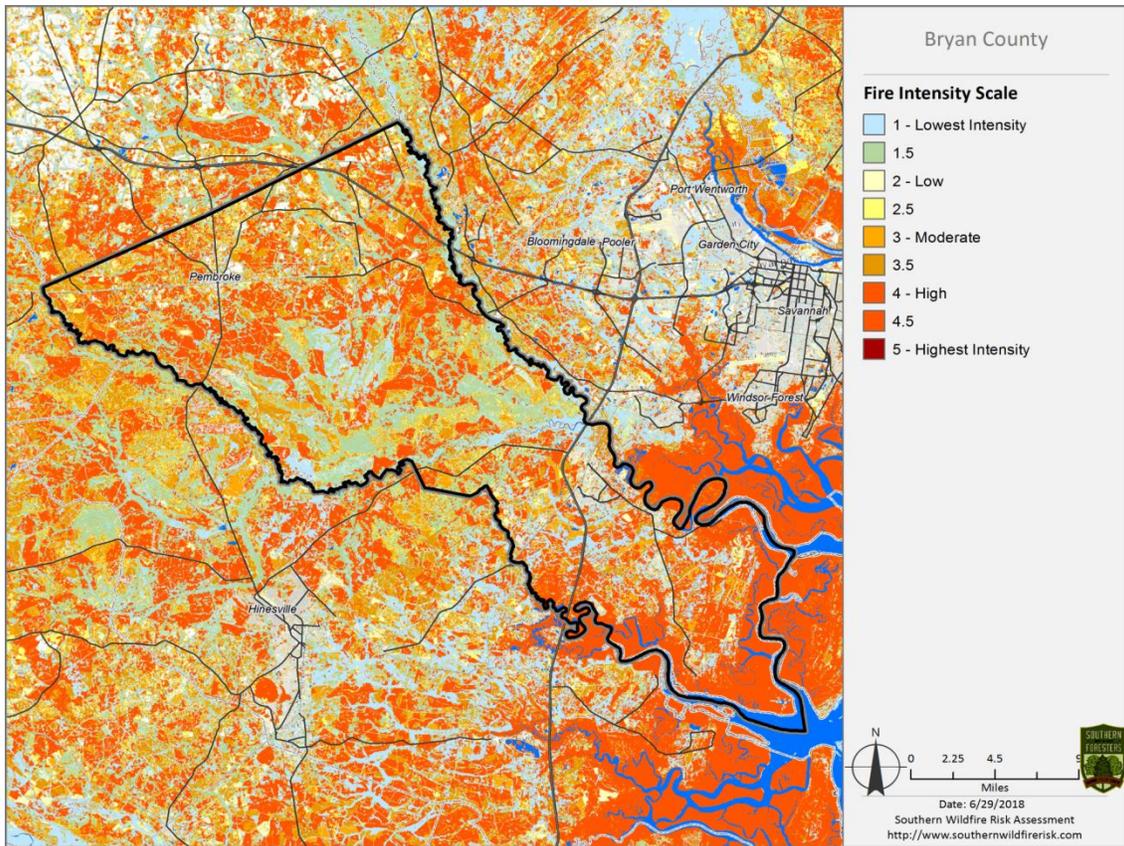
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map Below: WUI Population (left) WUI Acres (right)



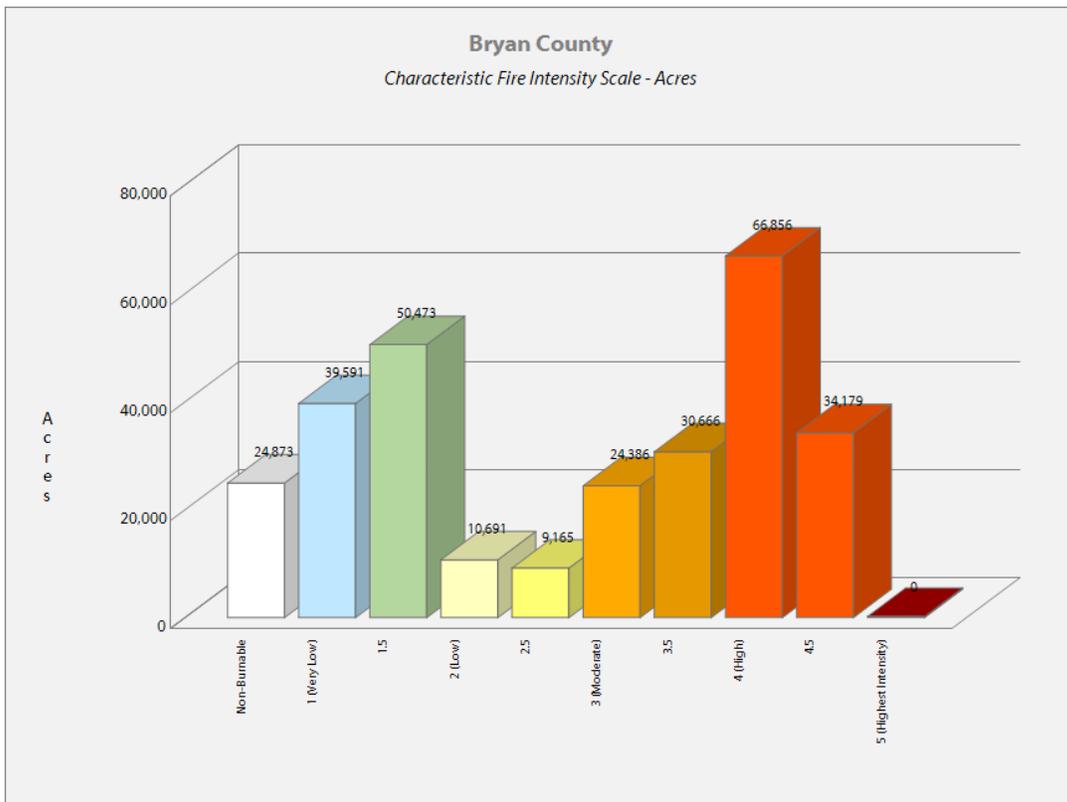


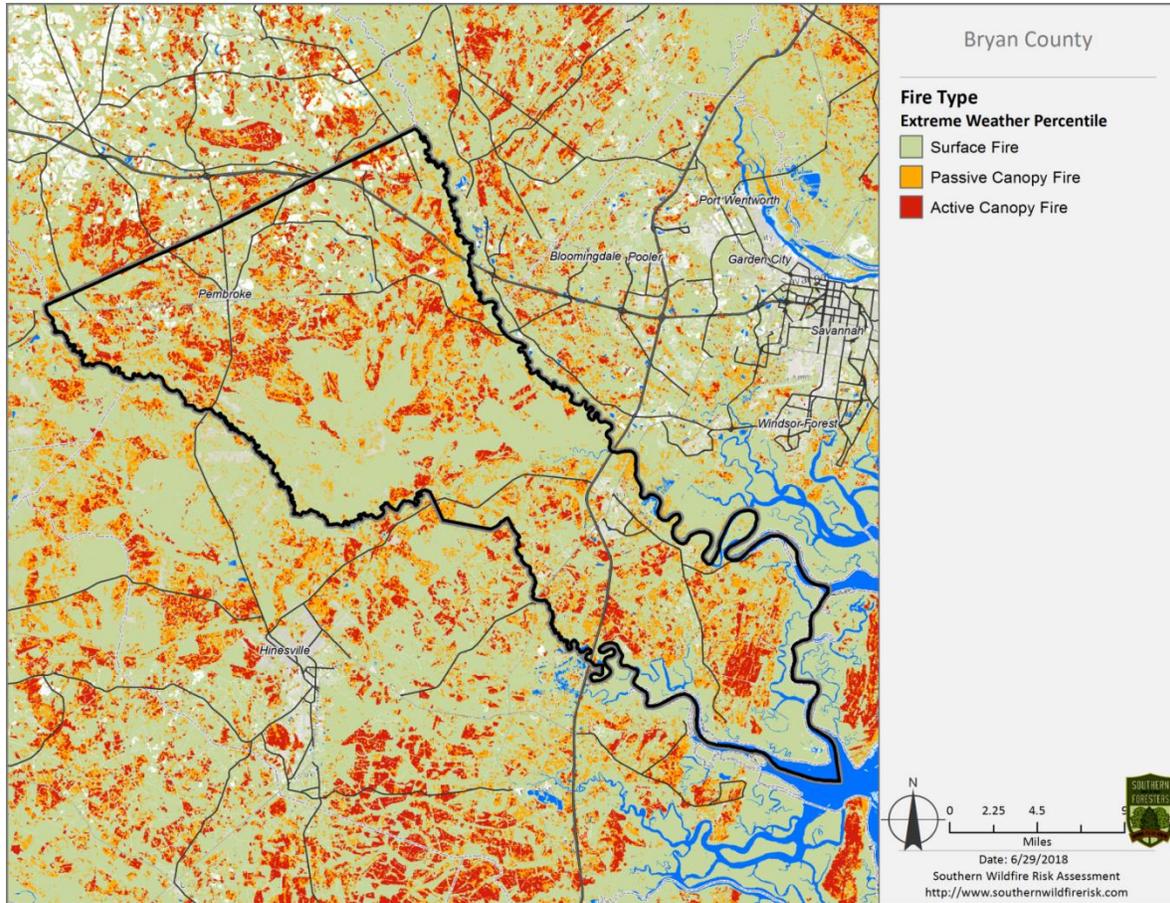
Above: Burn Probability map Below: Rate of Spread map



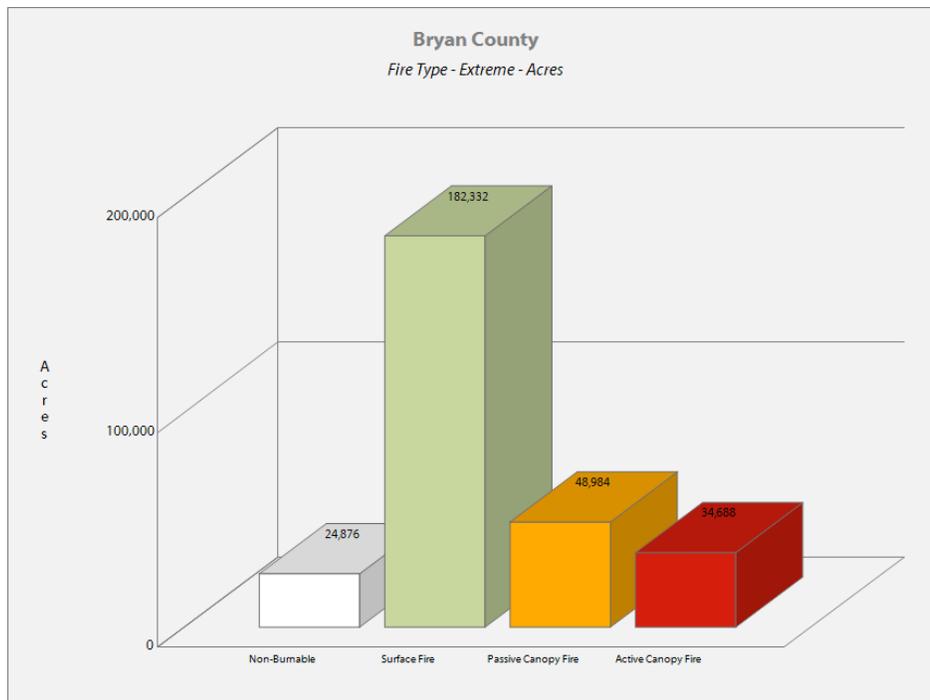


Above: Fire Intensity Scale map Below: Fire Intensity Scale Acres





Above: Fire Type map Below: Fire Type Extreme Acres



VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

As Southeast Georgia continues to see increased growth from other areas seeking less crowded and warmer climates, new development will occur more frequently on forest and wildland areas. The County will have an opportunity to significantly influence the wildland fire safety of new developments. It is important that new development be planned and constructed to provide for public safety in the event of a wildland fire emergency.

Over the past 20 years, much has been learned about how and why homes burn during wildland fire emergencies. Perhaps most importantly, case histories and research have shown that even in the most severe circumstances, wildland fire disasters can be avoided. Homes can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire services on the scene. The national Firewise Communities program is a national awareness initiative to help people understand that they don't have to be victims in a wildfire emergency. The National Fire Protection Association has produced two standards for reference: NFPA 1144 Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire. 2008 Edition and NFPA 1141 Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas.

When new developments are built in the Wildland/Urban Interface, a number of public safety challenges may be created for the local fire services: (1) the water supply in the immediate areas may be inadequate for fire suppression; (2) if the Development is in an outlying area, there may be a longer response time for emergency services; (3) in a wildfire emergency, the access road(s) may need to simultaneously support evacuation of residents and the arrival of emergency vehicles; and (4) when wildland fire disasters strike, many structures may be involved simultaneously, quickly exceeding the capability of even the best equipped fire departments.

In 2012 the International Code Council developed the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). The code is endorsed by NFPA and the Georgia Legislature adopted the code in 2014 for use by Georgia Counties to help reduce risk in the WUI. Counties can utilize this code as a model to develop their own county building and zoning regulations.

The following recommendations were developed by the Bryan County CWPP Core team as a result of surveying and assessing fuels and structures and by conducting meetings and interviews with county and city officials. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildfire in the assessment area.

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-foot of defensible space**	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Codes and Covenants	Amend neighborhood covenants**	Amend covenants and restrictions for Bryan County to provide better protection: improve driveway access and widen gates, improve the visibility of house numbers, store firewood appropriately, create defensible space and clear brush, require Class A roofing materials, provide for maintenance of community lots, and restrict debris burning.
5. Subdivision Perimeters	Reduce hazardous fuels	Mow common property around perimeter of large subdivisions.
6. Subdivision Access	Alternate exits	Work with developers to identify and create alternate access and exits routes to subdivisions and communities with only one way in and out.
7. Codes and Ordinances	Examine existing codes and ordinances. Utilize International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC)	Amend and enforce existing building codes as they relate to skirting, propane tank locations, public nuisances (trash/debris on property), Property address marking standards and other relevant concerns.

Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas
2. Adjacent WMA Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Work with DNR land management to incorporate regular prescribed burning on Georgia DNR managed lands adjacent to identified WUI areas.
3. Railroad Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads to better maintain their ROW eliminating brush and grass through herbicide and mowing. Maintain firebreaks along ROW adjacent to residential areas.
4. Existing Fire Lines	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage private landowners to clean and re-harrow existing fire lines.
Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants and add new dry hydrants as needed. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants.
2. Fire Stations	Brush Trucks	Investigate need for Brush Trucks at selected stations.
3. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel.
6. Personnel	Training	Obtain Firewise briefing or training for Fire Personnel. Ready Set Go training.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

<p>1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Bryan County Residents</p>
<p>Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that will teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include defensible space, landscaping, building construction, etc. Workshop will be scheduled for evenings or weekends when most homeowners are available and advertised through local media outlets.</p> <p>Distribute materials promoting firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>
<p>2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders</p>
<p>Arrange for GFC Firewise program to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and codes as the county as the need arises. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible firewise community recognition.</p>
<p>3. Spring Clean-up Event (National Wildfire Preparedness Day – 1st Saturday in May annually)</p>
<p>Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Bryan County Fire Departments and community residents. Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC Firewise coordinator and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. Activities to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters • Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet away from structures • Trim overhanging limbs • Clean hazardous or flammable debris from adjacent properties <p>Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Bryan County Fire Departments discussing and commending the work accomplished.</p>
<p>4. Informational Packets</p>
<p>Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Firewise Around Your Home • Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction • Firewise Community USA materials • Ready Set Go materials • Fire Adapted Community information

5. Wildfire Protection Display

Create and exhibit a display for the general public during the several festivals in the county. The display can be independent or combined with the Georgia Forestry Commission display.

6. Media

Invite the Savannah and local News Media and area TV and Radio to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Bryan County. Utilize radio and social media to reach new and diverse audiences.



Prescribed burning is a best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel buildup. The Georgia Forestry Commission can assist by developing a prescribed burning plan, installation of firebreaks, and can provide equipment standby and burning assistance when personnel are available. Forestry consultants and contractors can also provide this service.

This type of mowing or mastication, pictured to the right, can be very effective in reducing wildfire risk by removing or reducing forest understory fuels. This type of management is most practical in developed areas where prescribed fire is not an option as a management practice. The Georgia Forestry Commission or private contractors can provide this service.



VIII. ACTION PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities have been developed to implement the action plan:

Role	Responsibility
Hazardous Fuels and Structural Ignitability Reduction	
Bryan County WUI Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Bryan County fire officials, a representative from the city and county governments and the EMA Director for Bryan county. Meet periodically to review progress towards mitigation goals, appoint and delegate special activities, work with federal, state, and local officials to assess progress and develop future goals and action plans. Work with residents to implement projects and firewise activities.
Key Messages to focus on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping 2 Debris Burning Safety 3 Firewise information for homeowners 4 Prescribed burning benefits
Communications objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Create public awareness for fire danger and defensible space issues 2 Identify most significant human cause fire issues 3 Enlist public support to help prevent these causes 4 Encourage people to employ fire prevention and defensible spaces in their communities.
Target Audiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Homeowners 2 Forest Landowners and users 3 Civic Groups 4 School Groups
Methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 News Releases 2 Personal Contacts 3 Key messages and prevention tips 4 Visuals such as signs, brochures and posters

Spring Clean-up Day (National Wildfire Preparedness Day – 1 st Saturday in May annually)	
Event Coordinator	Coordinate day’s events and schedule, catering for cookout, guest attendance, and moderate activities the day of the day of the event.
Event Treasurer	Collect funds from residents to cover food, equipment rentals, and supplies.
Publicity Coordinator	Advertise event through neighborhood newsletter, letters to officials, and public service announcements (PSAs) for local media outlets. Publicize post-event through local paper and radio PSAs.
Work Supervisor	Develop volunteer labor force of community residents; develop labor/advisory force from Georgia Forestry Commission, Bryan County Fire Departments, and the county Emergency Management Agency. Procure needed equipment and supplies. In cooperation with local city and county officials, develop safety protocol. Supervise work and monitor activities for safety the day of the event.

Funding Needs

The following funding is needed to implement the action plan:

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Create a minimum of 30 feet of defensible space around structures	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
2. Reduce structural ignitability by cleaning flammable vegetation from roofs and gutters, appropriately storing firewood, installing skirting around raised structures, storing water hoses for ready access, replacing pine needles and mulch around plantings with less flammable material.	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
3. Amend codes and ordinances to provide better driveway access, increased visibility of house numbers, properly stored firewood, minimum defensible space brush clearance, required Class A roofing materials and skirting around raised structures, planned maintenance of community lots.	No Cost	To be adopted by city and county government.
4. Spring Cleanup Day	Varies	Community Donations.
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$15 / acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Bryan County WUI Fire Council will implement the following:

- Annual wildfire risk assessment will be conducted to re-assess wildfire hazards and prioritize needed actions.
- Mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning, clearing of defensible space) will be incorporated into an annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Mitigation efforts that could not be funded in the requested year will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Continuing educational and outreach programs will be conducted and assessed for effectiveness. Workshops will be evaluated based on attendance and post surveys that are distributed by mail 1 month and 6 months following workshop date.
- The Bryan County WUIFC will publish an annual report detailing mitigation projects initiated and completed, progress for ongoing actions, funds received, funds spent, and in-kind services utilized. The report will include a “state of the community” section that critically evaluates mitigation progress and identifies areas for improvement. Recommendations will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the action plan.
- An annual survey will be distributed to residents soliciting information on individual mitigation efforts on their own property (e.g., defensible space). Responses will be tallied and reviewed at the next Bryan County WUIFC meeting. Needed actions will be discussed and delegated.

IX. MITIGATION ASSISTANCE & GRANT FUNDING

Community Protection Grant: US Forest Service sponsored prescribed fire program. Communities with “at-risk” properties that lie within ten miles of a National Forest, National Park Service or Bureau of Land Management tracts may apply with the Georgia Forestry Commission to have their land prescribe burned free-of-charge. Forest mastication, where it is practical with Georgia Forestry Commission equipment, is also available under this grant program.

FEMA Mitigation Policy MRR-2-08-01: through GEMA – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM).

1. To provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to assist in the implementation of long term, cost effective hazard mitigation accomplishments.
2. This policy addresses wildfire mitigation for the purpose of reducing the threat to all-risk structures through creating defensible space, structural protection through the application of ignition resistant construction and limited hazardous fuel reduction to protect life and property.
3. With a completed registered plan (addendum to the State Plan) counties can apply for pre-mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP funding if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.

Georgia Forestry Commission: Plowing and prescribed burning assistance, as well as forest mastication, can be obtained from the GFC as a low-cost option for mitigation efforts. Private contractors can also provide these services.

The Georgia Forestry Commission Firewise Community Mitigation Assistance Grants – Nationally recognized Firewise Communities can receive up to \$5000 grants to help address potential wildfire risk reduction projects. Grant submission can be made through local Georgia Forestry Commission offices or your Regional Wildfire Prevention Specialist.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and American International Group, Inc. (AIG) offer grants to assist local fire departments in establishing or enhancing their community fuels mitigation programs while educating members of the community about community wildfire readiness and encouraging personal action.

X. GLOSSARY

Community-At-Risk – A group of two or more structures whose proximity to forested or wildland areas places homes and residents at some degree of risk.

Critical Facilities – Buildings, structures or other parts of the community infrastructure that require special protection from an approaching wildfire.

CWPP – The Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Defensible Space – The immediate landscaped area around a structure (usually a minimum of 30 ft.) kept “lean, clean and green” to prevent an approaching wildfire from igniting the structure.

Dry Hydrant - A non-pressurized pipe system permanently installed in existing lakes, ponds and streams that provides a suction supply of water to a fire department tank truck.

FEMA – The Federal Emergency Management Agency whose mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Fire Adapted Community – A community fully prepared for its wildfire risk by taking actions to address safety, homes, neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure, forest, parks, open spaces, and other community assets.

Firewise Program – A national initiative with a purpose to reduce structural losses from wildland fires.

Firewise Community/USA – A national recognition program for communities that take action to protect themselves from wildland fire. To qualify a community must have a wildfire risk assessment by the Georgia Forestry Commission, develop a mitigation action plan, have an annual firewise mitigation/education event, have dedicated firewise leadership, and complete the certification application.

Fuels – All combustible materials within the wildland/urban interface or intermix including, but not limited to, vegetation and structures.

Fuel Modification – Any manipulation or removal of fuels to reduce the likelihood of ignition or the resistance to fire control.

Hazard & Wildfire Risk Assessment – An evaluation to determine an area’s (community’s) potential to be impacted by an approaching wildland fire.

Healthy Forests Initiative - *Launched in August 2002 by President Bush (following passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act by Congress) with the intent to reduce the risks severe wildfires pose to people, communities, and the environment.*

Home Ignition Zone (Structure Ignition Zone) - *Treatment area for wildfire protection. The “zone” includes the structure(s) and their immediate surroundings from 0-200 ft.*

Mitigation – *An action that moderates the severity of a fire hazard or risk.*

National Fire Plan – *National initiative, passed by Congress in the year 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season, with the intent of actively responding to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future.*

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) - *An international nonprofit organization established in 1896, whose mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.*

National Wildfire Preparedness Day – *Started in 2014 by the National Fire Protection Association as a day for communities to work together to prepare for the approaching wildfire season. It is held annually on the first Saturday in May.*

Prescribed Burning (prescribed fire) –*The use of planned fire that is deliberately set under specific fuel and weather condition to accomplish a variety of management objectives and is under control until it burns out or is extinguished.*

Ready, Set, Go - *A program fire services use to help homeowners understand wildfire preparedness, awareness, and planning procedures for evacuation.*

Southern Group of State Foresters – *Organization whose members are the agency heads of the forestry agencies of the 13 southern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.*

Stakeholders– *Individuals, groups, organizations, businesses or others who have an interest in wildland fire protection and may wish to review and/or contribute to the CWPP content.*

Wildfire or Wildland Fire – *An unplanned and uncontrolled fire spreading through vegetative fuels.*

Wildland/Urban Interface - *The presence of structures in locations in which the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) determines that topographical features, vegetation, fuel types, local weather conditions and prevailing winds result in the potential for ignition of the structures within the area from flames and firebrands from a wildland fire (NFPA 1144, 2008).*

XI. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites:

- FIREWISE materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org
- Georgia Forestry Commission www.georgiafirewise.org
- Examples of successful wildfire mitigation programs can be viewed at the website for National Database of State and Local wildfire Hazard Mitigation Programs sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters www.wildfireprograms.com
- Information about a variety of interface issues (including wildfire) can be found at the USFS website for Interface South: www.interfacesouth.org
- Information on codes and standards for emergency services including wildfire can be found at www.nfpa.org
- Information on FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) can be found at www.firegrantsupport.com
- Information on National Fire Plan grants can be found at <http://www.federalgrantswire.com/national-fire-plan--rural-fire-assistance.html>
- Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment website SouthWRAP_ www.SouthernWildfireRisk.com
- Fire Adapted Communities www.fireadapted.org
- Ready, Set, Go www.wildlandfirersg.org
- National Wildfire Preparedness Day www.wildfireprepdlay.org

Appended Documents:

Bryan County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)
Bryan County Wildfire assessment scoresheets

All files that make up this plan are available in an electronic format from the Georgia Forestry Commission.

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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