

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

*An Action Plan for Wildfire
Mitigation and Conservation of
Natural Resources*

Appling County



JULY 2018

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The following report is a collaborative effort among various entities; the representatives listed below comprise the core decision-making team responsible for this report and mutually agree on the plan's contents:

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PLAN CONTENTS

I. Objectives	4
II. Community Collaboration.....	4
III. Community & Wildfire History.....	5
IV. County Base Maps	14
V. Community Wildfire Risk Assessment.....	17
VI. Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment & Risk Hazard Maps	20
VII. Prioritized Mitigation Recommendations	26
VIII. Action Plan.....	30
IX. Mitigation Assistance & Grant Information.....	33
X. Glossary.....	34
XI. Sources of Information.....	36

Appendix:

Appling County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summery Report (SWRA)

Appling County Wildfire Pre-Suppression plan

I. OBJECTIVES

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Appling 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 March 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:

Appling County Government
County Fire Departments
Emergency Management
Board of County Commissioners

City Of Baxley
City Fire Department

Georgia Forestry Commission

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the individual fire districts within the county. The chiefs of the nine fire departments in the county assessed their districts and reconvened in April 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 History



Appling County, located south of the Altamaha River in southeast Georgia, was created by an act of the state legislature in December 1818. The original boundary extended from the Altamaha River to the St. Marys River. Land for the county came from territory ceded by the Creek Indians to Georgia in the 1814 Treaty of Fort Jackson and the 1818 Treaty of the Creek Agency. Appling was named as a posthumous honor for Colonel Daniel Appling of Columbia County, a well-known hero of the War of 1812 (1812-15). Appling was the parent county of all or part of Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Echols, Jeff Davis, Pierce, Telfair, Ware, and Wayne counties.

In spite of Appling County's isolation from more populated sections of eastern Georgia and its location in the pine barrens region of the state, the 1820 census listed 1,264 residents. The population of Appling increased when the General Assembly included the county in the state land lottery drawings for 1820, 1821, 1827, and 1832. Two dominant seed areas of migration into Appling were South Carolina and Tattnall County, Georgia.

In 1819 the General Assembly gave permission to Appling's inferior court justices to select a site for a county seat. The task rotated to five county commissioners and back to the justices between 1819 and 1828. Disagreements over the location prohibited a final selection until 1828, when the legislature designated Holmesville as the official site.

Appling's early economic activity consisted primarily of small-scale subsistence farming. Sales of livestock, timber, and naval stores to Darien and Savannah supplemented incomes. Cotton production gained importance during the 1860s and lasted until a lull in production between 1972 and the mid-1980s. Current agricultural enterprises include cotton, tobacco, dairy products, and blueberries, as well as slash and loblolly pine.

The Altamaha River provided a popular avenue for early residents to ship products to coastal towns. During the nineteenth century steamboats and pole boats transported cotton, fertilizer, lumber, turpentine, and local produce. For a time Appling County was known as the turpentine capital of the world. Residents also constructed timber rafts from cut trees destined for the Darien sawmills. These rafts reached proportions of 25 feet wide by 175 feet in length. A unique rafting and turpentine culture grew out of Appling County. In 1982 raft enthusiasts and historians developed Project Raft to remember the culture and skills of that former era.



The completion of the Macon and Brunswick Railroad in 1870 linked Appling to populated regions of the state and prompted the creation of three new towns. Stations 6 and 8 on the railroad became known as Surrency and Graham, respectively. Surrency, named for an 1850s immigrant from Tattnall County, Allen Powell Surrency, gained notice during the early 1900s for its extensive production of railroad crossties. Graham was named for landowner and state

representative Middleton Graham. Ongoing complaints that Holmesville lay too far from the center of the county prompted residents in 1874 to move the county seat to the site of a popular store operated by Wilson Baxley near station 7. The new town, named Baxley in honor of the storekeeper, was incorporated by the state legislature in 1875.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of Appling County was 17,419 (76.8 percent white, 19.6 percent black, and 4.5 percent Hispanic), an increase from the 15,744 residents recorded in 1990. Appling offers a variety of natural recreation sites, including Lake Mayer, the A. Randall Tuten Environmental Park, and Moody Swamp. Altamaha Technical College operates a satellite campus in Baxley.

Baxley, the seat of Appling County, is located in the wiregrass region of southeastern Georgia. Most of the town's early economic development stemmed from the timber rafting and naval stores industries that dominated southeast Georgia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Baxley was named for Wilson Baxley, a North Carolinian who arrived in Appling County during the 1820s. He operated a log store and sold cattle and timber to markets in Savannah and Darien. Baxley sold the right of way near his store to the Macon and Brunswick Railroad, completed in 1870, which designated the area Station Number 7. Baxley's proximity to the railway prompted voters to relocate the county seat from Holmesville to Baxley. The Georgia legislature officially granted incorporation in 1875.

The new designation did not automatically induce settlement. The 1900 census recorded only 700 town residents.

Most Georgians considered Baxley part of the less arable pine barrens region. It lay upon a strip of low pond land, and recovery from the Civil War (1861-65) also impeded growth. But residents eagerly sought opportunities to support economic development. Most inhabitants operated small subsistence farms in the surrounding countryside, which produced such staples as corn, wheat, sugar cane, and livestock. Cotton became a major economic factor between 1880 and the 1920s, until the boll weevil, foreign competition, and synthetic production of fabrics hurt cultivation. A revival of the crop took place during the 1980s.

Residents turned the vast number of pine trees to their advantage. They tied cut logs into broad, flat-bottomed rafts 25 feet wide and 175 feet long and poled the crafts down the Altamaha River to sawmills at Darien. Baxley profited from Appling County's role as a center of turpentine and resin production until tobacco farming gained favor during the late 1920s.

Baxley's current economic activity relies more heavily on industry. During the late 1960s the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Power Plant was built on the Altamaha River. In 2000 Appling, Jeff Davis, and Bacon counties opened the Tri-County Industrial Park on the outskirts of Baxley to attract business.

Baxley hosts the annual Tree Fest and Timber Harvesting Exposition, which recalls the heyday of turpentine production and rafting. The Heritage Center preserves the culture of the wiregrass region. An arts council was created in 1999 to promote holiday festivities, the annual Dirtwater Jazz and Blues Festival, art exhibits, and the Appling Community Theatre. A Main Street Renovation program marks the efforts of city officials to revitalize the economy of the town's original business sector and focus attention upon its historic buildings. In January 2000 Baxley received the distinction as a "Better Hometown," an award created by Georgia Power Company and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to emphasize those areas that possess qualities for potential growth in the state.

Wildfire History

While Appling County has a significant agricultural presence, 68% of the county is still forested. Large tracts of timberland are scattered throughout the county with large industrial holdings in the eastern and northeastern parts. Most of the timberlands consist of industrial pine plantations located in flatwoods areas with a heavy understory fuel loading of heaths, gallberry and palmetto. The county is intersected by U.S. Highways 1 & 314 with most of the population residing in Baxley, Surrency and Graham. There are also numerous homes in scattered communities located near the Altamaha River across the northern part of the county. Like most counties in southeast Georgia there are increasing numbers of homes being built out in the country away from traditional population centers.

Appling County is protected by the Appling County Fire Department consisting of 9 rural volunteer fire departments that are well spaced throughout the county. The city of Baxley is protected by the Baxley Fire Department with two fire stations located in Baxley. The Georgia Forestry Commission maintains a county protection unit located three miles south of Baxley to respond to wildland fires within the county. The city of Baxley is serviced with a modern pressurized water system with hydrants throughout the city and in the industrial area just east of the city.

Over the past fifty years, Appling County has averaged around 89 reported wildfires a year with almost 50% of these occurring during January, February, March and April. These fires have burned an average of 457 acres a year over the same period, though generally there has been some decrease since the advent of burning permits the past 20 years. Still in the year 1999 the county lost over 1900 acres to wildfire.

During the last 10 year period, FY 2008 – FY 2017, the County averaged 78 wildfires burning 264 acres annually. The major cause of these wildfires was Debris Burning which accounted for 51% of the fires and 60% of the acreage burned. The 2nd major cause was Children Playing (10%) accounting for 3% of the acreage burned. Machine Use was the 3rd major cause accounting for 9% of the fires and 6% of the acreage burned. Lightning accounted for 7% of the fires and 17% of the acreage burned.

WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN: AN ACTION PLAN FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION

County = Appling	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1	5.21	1.80	3.26
Children	Children	0	0.00	1.40	1.26
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	6	30.12	4.20	18.21
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0	0.00	3.00	5.26
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	6	24.27	8.60	34.69
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	1	1.50	0.20	0.30
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	1	0.20	1.00	0.85
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	12	61.44	7.80	31.43
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	4	11.32	4.60	38.01
Incendiary	Incendiary	0	0.00	0.20	0.02
Lightning	Lightning	1	0.25	2.40	8.29
Machine Use	Machine Use	5	1.08	2.60	4.41
Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	0	0.00	0.20	0.10
Miscellaneous: Fireworks/Explosives	Miscellaneous: Fireworks/Explosives	0	0.00	0.20	0.06
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	1	1.90	1.80	8.13
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	6	6.82	2.00	1.58
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	2	0.50	1.00	1.01
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	0.80	0.32
Smoking	Smoking	0	0.00	0.80	0.72
Undetermined	Undetermined	1	3.30	1.60	11.84
Totals for County: Appling Year: 2018		47	147.91	46.20	169.73

Acreage Burned /Number of Fires For Appling County For FY 2008-2017				
Year	Acreage Burned	Number of Fires	Average Size	Statewide Average Size
2008	128.90	64	2.01	4.56
2009	167.98	85	1.98	3.90
2010	137.41	76	1.81	3.93
2011	957.60	200	4.79	17.56
2012	477.87	126	3.79	5.08
2013	69.12	49	1.41	4.53
2014	168.30	34	4.95	5.02
2015	130.91	32	4.09	4.42
2016	115.00	33	3.48	6.29
2017	286.55	85	3.37	11.60

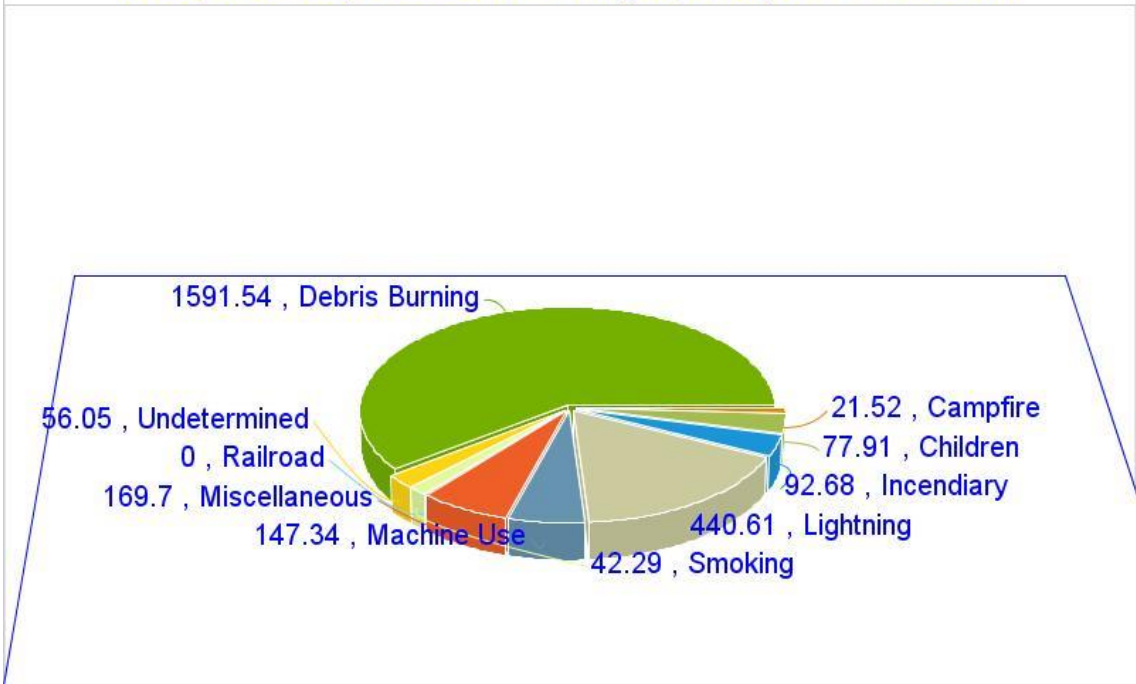
Acreage Burned /Number of Fires by Fire Cause For Appling County For FY 2008-2017		
Fire Cause	Acreage Burned	Number of Fires
Campfire	21.52	25
Children	77.91	75
Debris Burning	1,591.54	397
Incendiary	92.68	39
Lightning	440.61	57
Machine Use	147.34	71
Miscellaneous	169.70	77
Railroad	0.00	0
Smoking	42.29	34
Undetermined	56.05	9
Total	2,639.64	784

Acres Burned /Number of Fires by Debris-Burning Sub-cause For Appling County For FY 2008-2017		
Debris Burning Sub-Cause	Acres Burned	Number of Fires
Non-Categorized	0.00	0
Agriculture	179.32	39
Construction	152.44	51
Escaped Rx Fire	332.66	94
Household Garbage	6.10	4
Others	55.93	24
Residential	316.90	104
Site Prep	548.19	81
Total	1,591.54	397

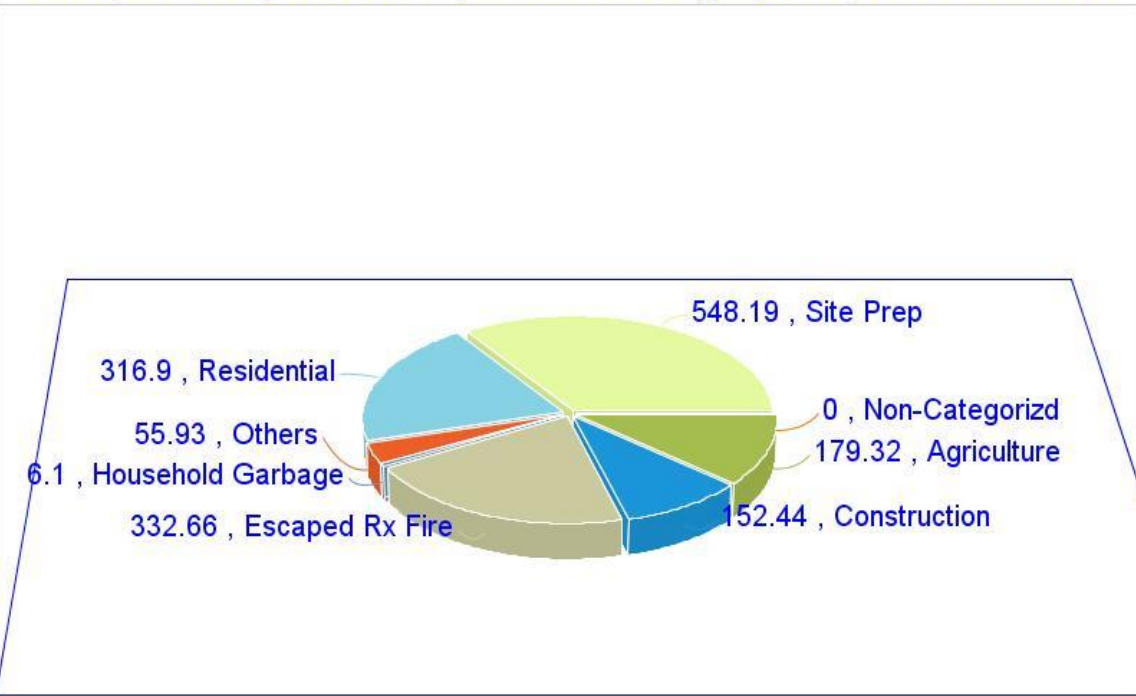
Number of Fires by Cause for Appling County for FY 2008 to 2017

Year	Campfire	Children	Debris Burning	Incendiary	Lightning	Machine Use	Miscellaneous	Railroad	Smoking
2008	1	9	25	8	7	5	8	0	1
2009	2	14	46	8	2	4	5	0	4
2010	2	12	30	4	6	6	11	0	5
2011	7	18	82	14	14	33	15	0	17
2012	5	14	63	4	10	15	13	0	2
2013	0	1	34	0	7	0	6	0	1
2014	1	4	23	0	0	3	3	0	0
2015	2	2	18	1	1	2	6	0	0
2016	1	0	19	0	0	2	10	0	1
2017	4	1	57	0	10	1	9	0	3

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

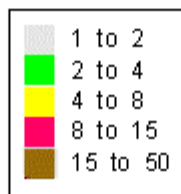
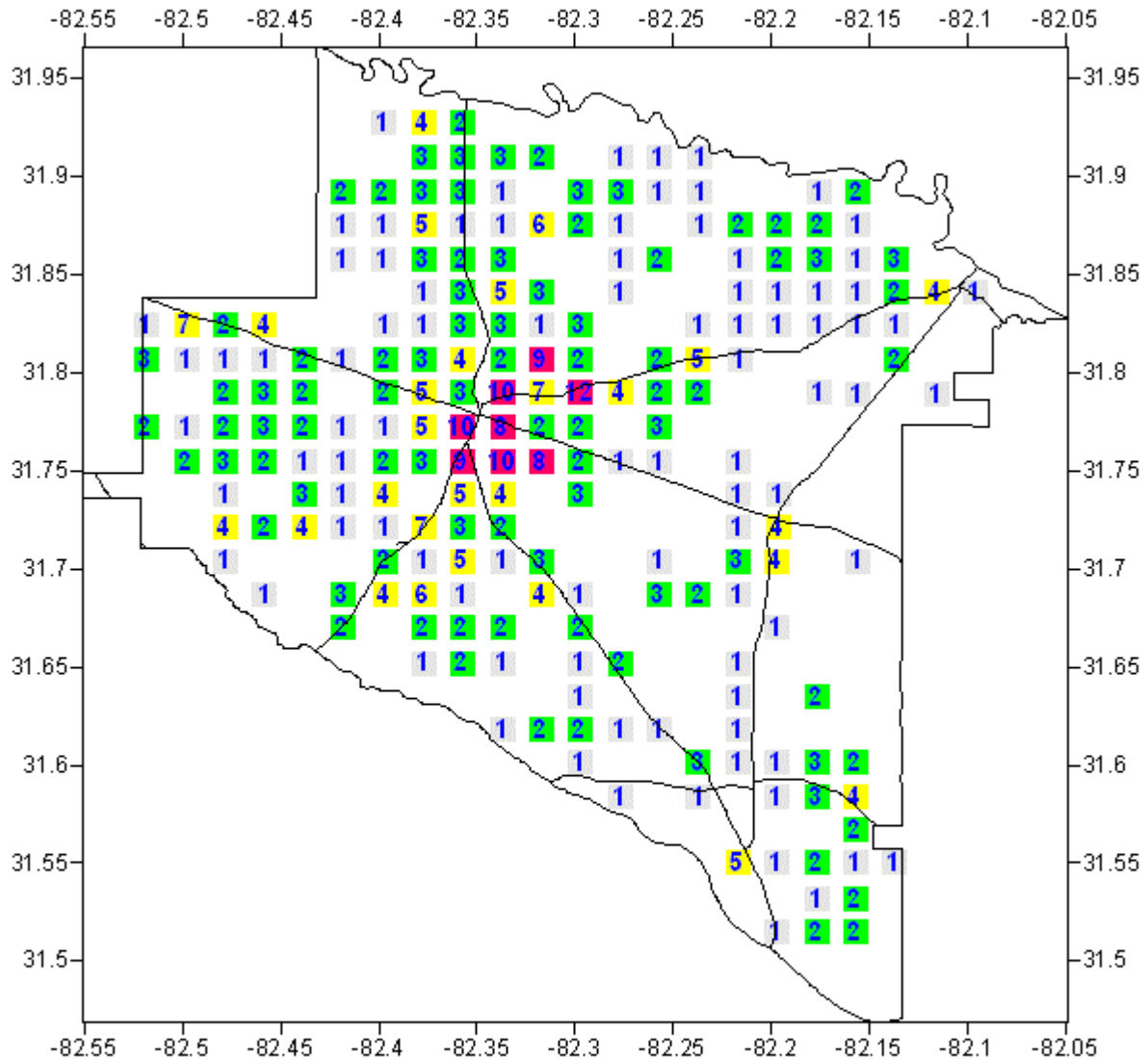


Acreage Burned By Debris Burning Sub Cause For Appling County For FY 2008-2017

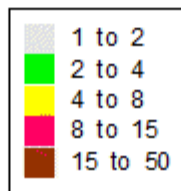
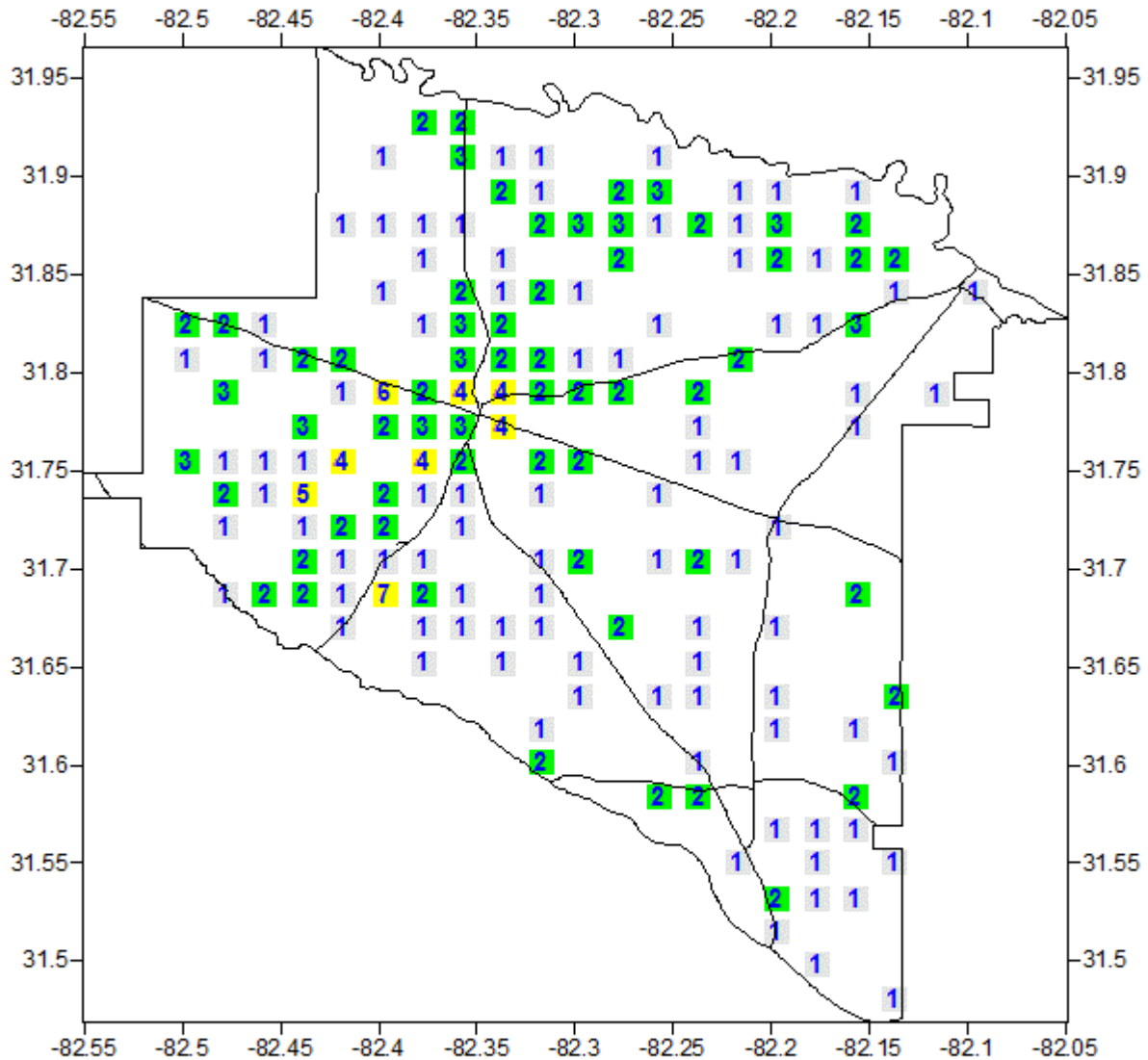


Fire Cause

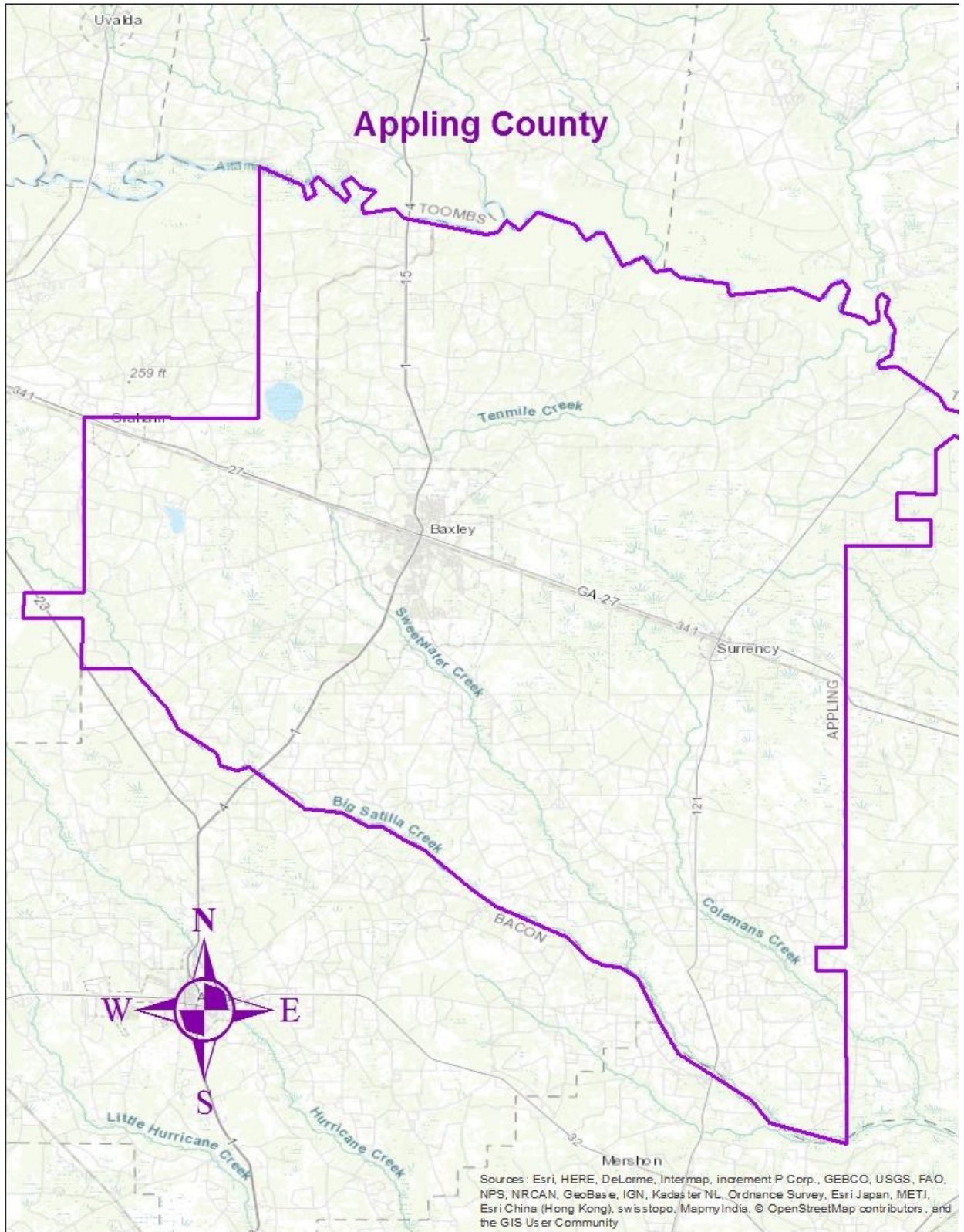
Fire Occurrence Map for Appling County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

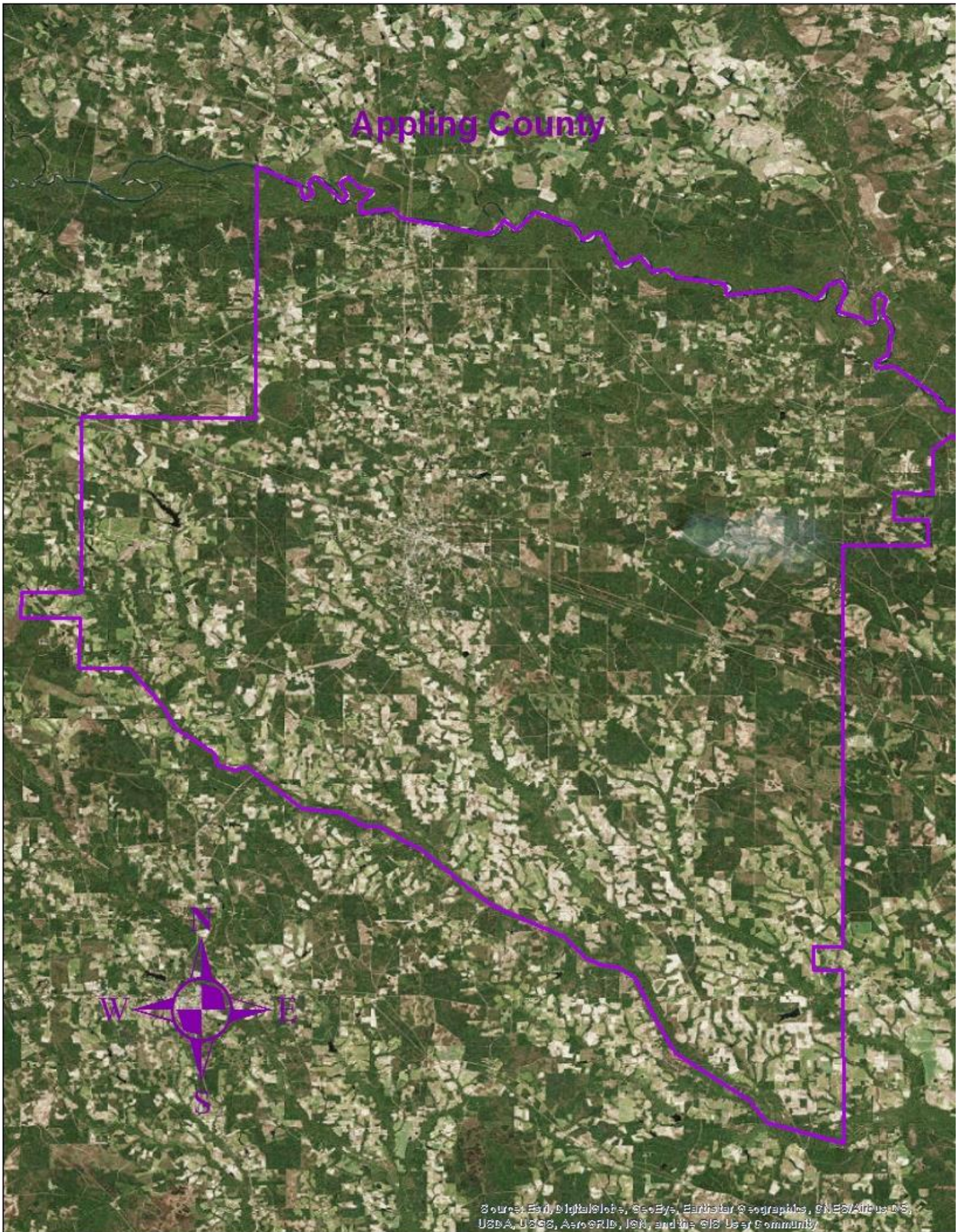


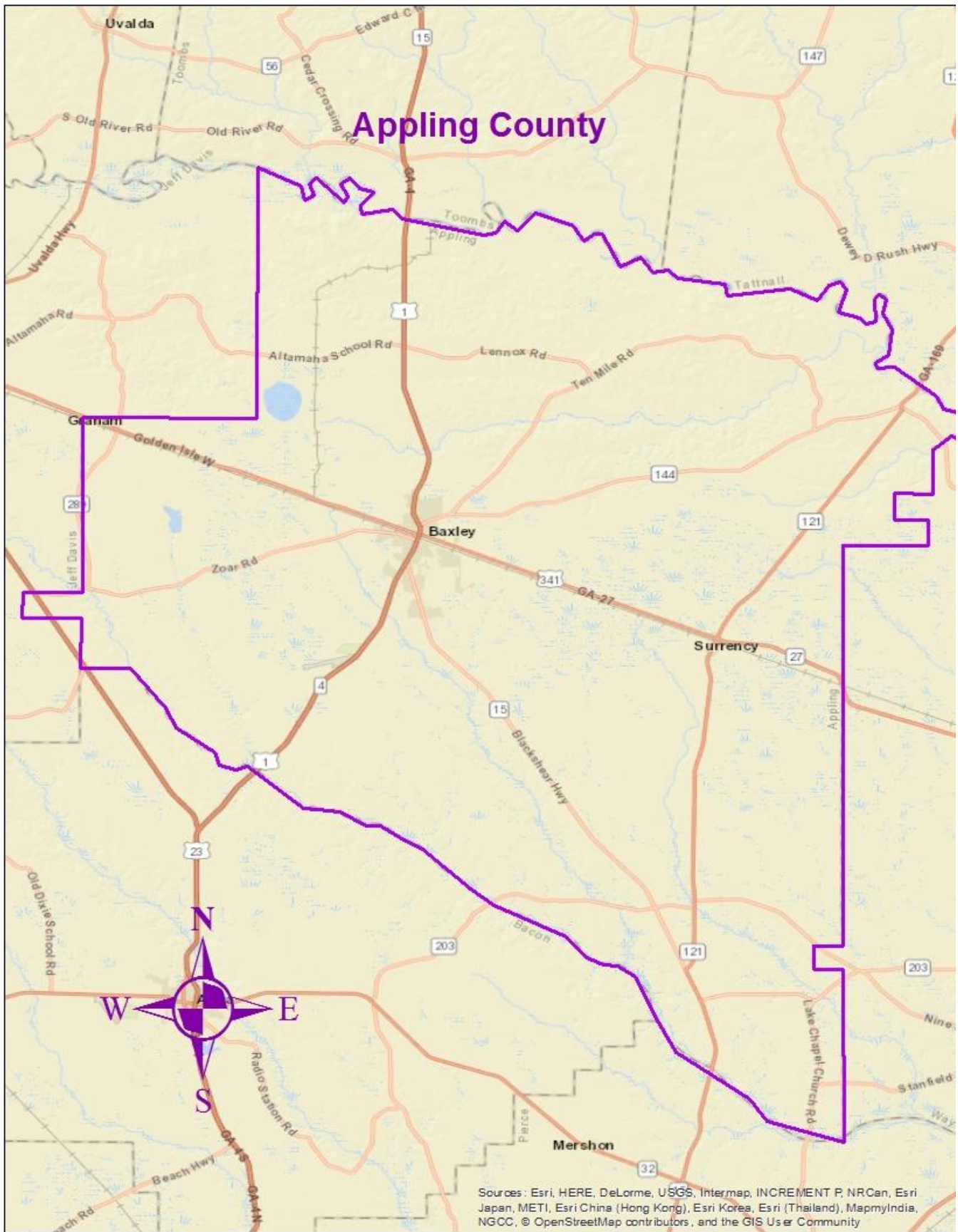
Fire Occurrence Map for Appling County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



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.

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Appling County Fire Departments and the Baxley Fire Department returned an average score of 130, placing Appling County in the “high” risk range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Appling 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 Appling County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with heavy accumulations of vegetative debris
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available
- Above ground utilities
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations
- Heavy fuel loading in forested areas
- Grid of canals and wetland areas hindering wildland fire suppression



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

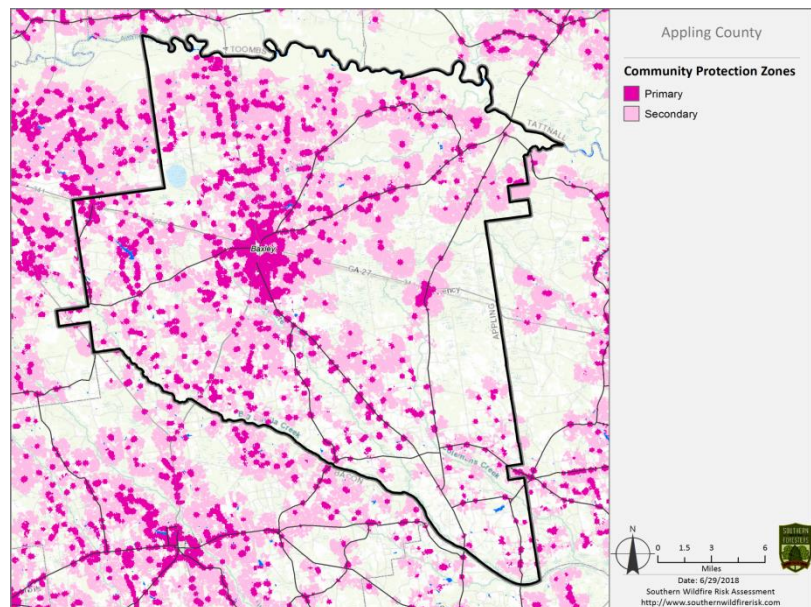
Summary of Appling County Assessment Ratings

Community/VFD District	Access Hazard	Site Hazard	Bldg Hazard	Add Hazard	Total score	Hazard Rating
City of Baxley	6	27	25	32	90	Moderate Risk
Surrency	12	62	20	50	134	High Risk
Graham	16	69	25	47	157	Extreme Risk
Ten Mile	8	37	20	26	91	Moderate Risk
Red Oak	21	60	10	25	116	Moderate Risk
Fourth District	15	56	20	57	148	Extreme Risk
Altamaha	20	70	30	39	159	Extreme Risk
County Line	7	57	20	44	128	Moderate Risk
Hwy 144	13	72	14	50	149	Extreme Risk
Average	13	57	20	41	130	High Risk

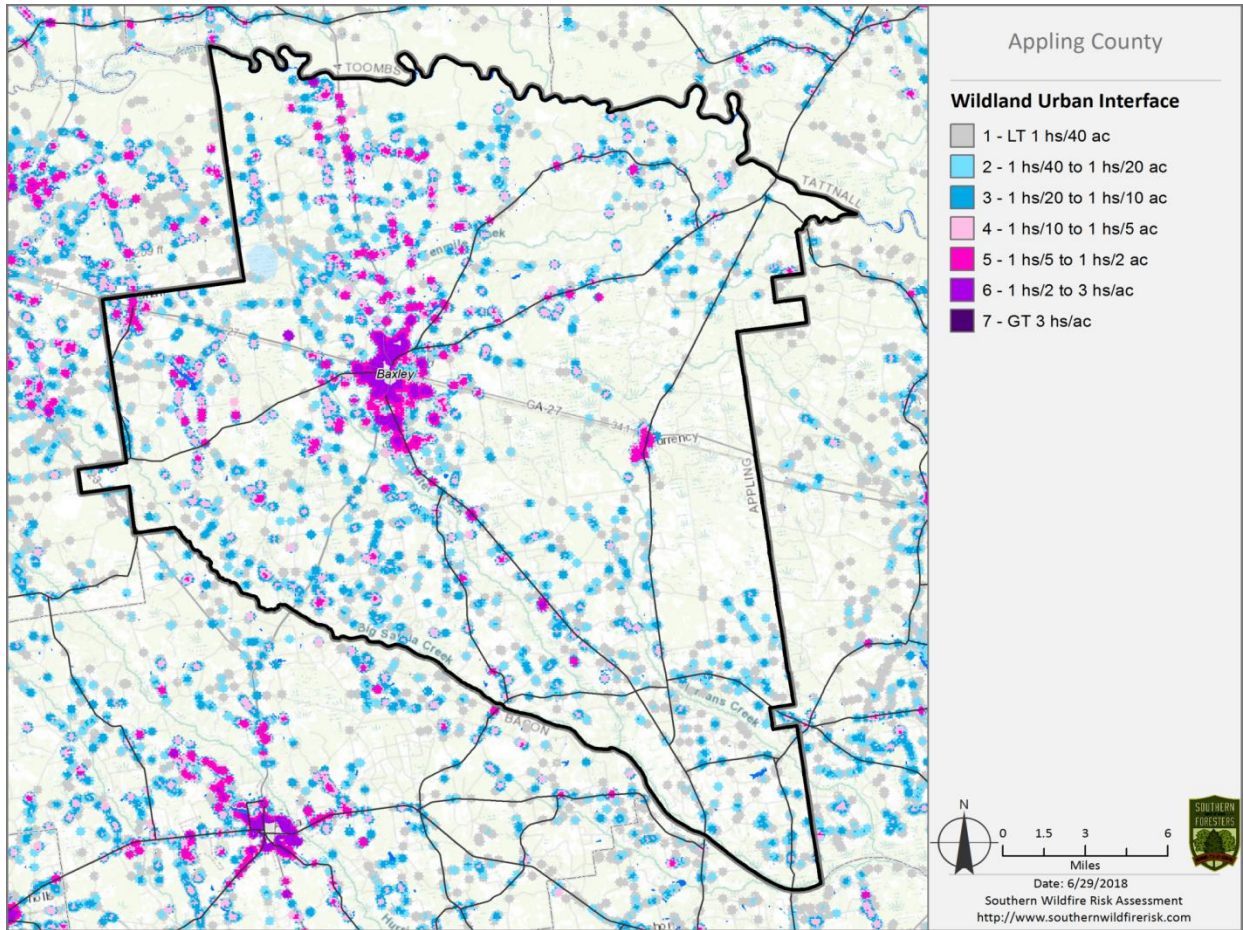
VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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 Appling County. The SouthWRAP (SWRA) products included in this report are designed to provide the information needed to support the following key priorities:

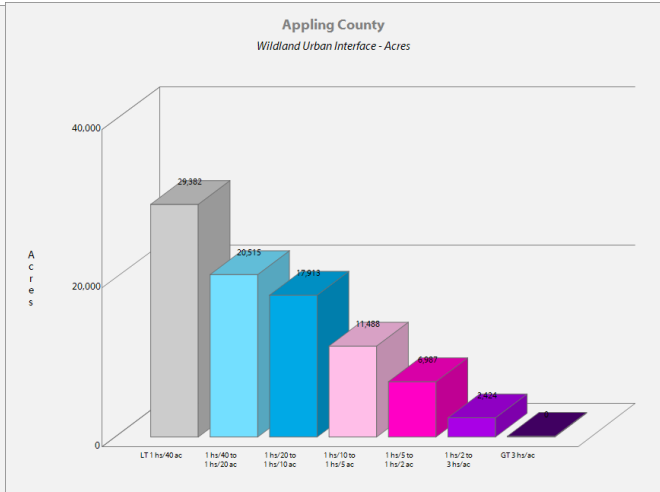
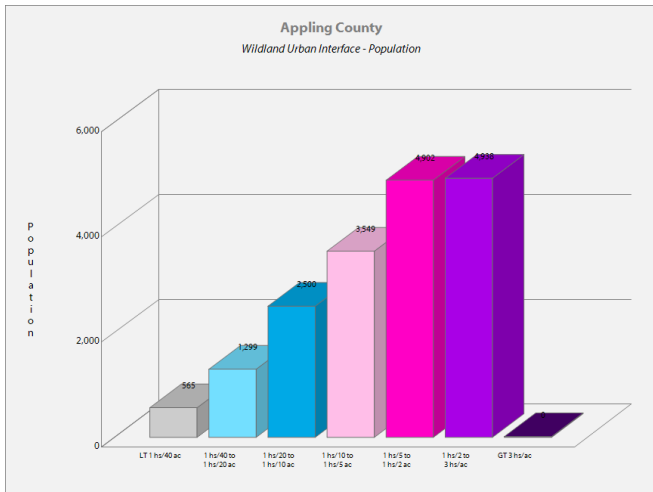
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire.
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning.
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests.
- Allow agencies 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.

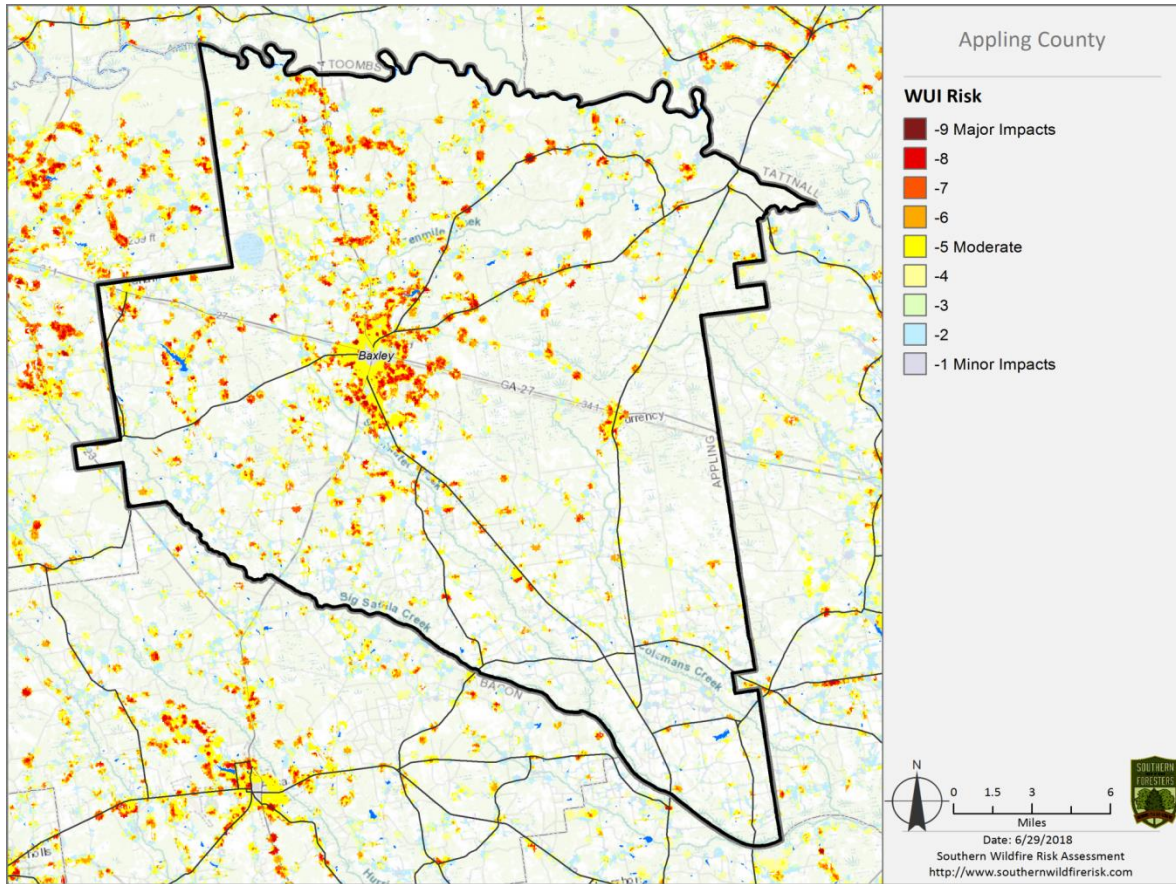


Community Protection Zones map from the Appling County SWRA

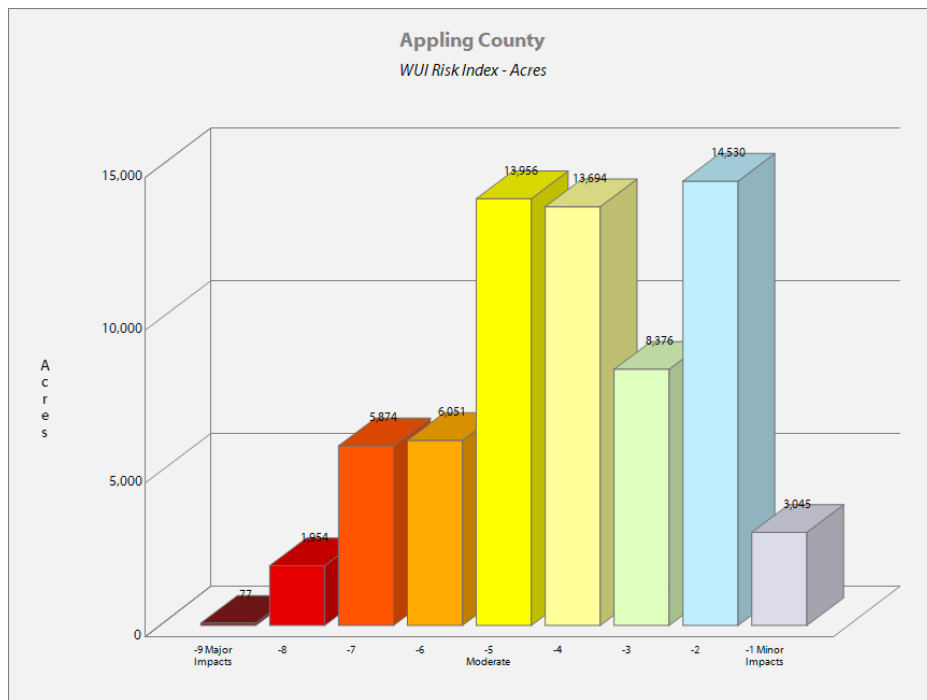


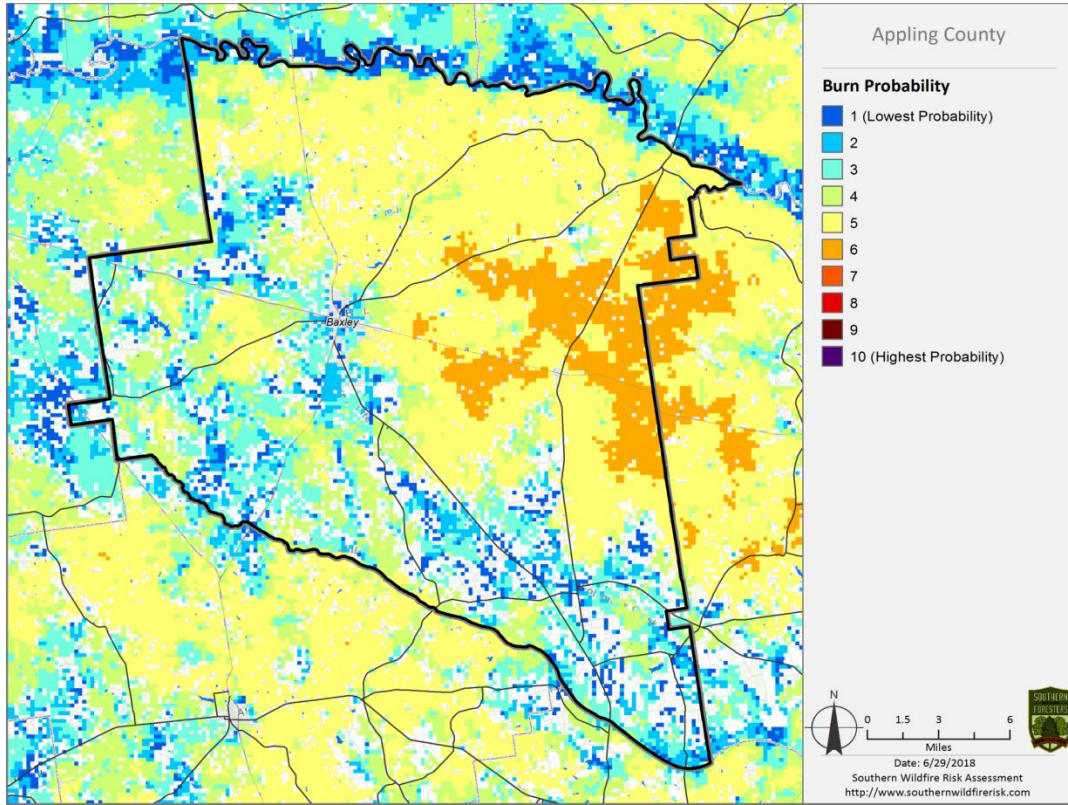
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map Below: WUI Population (left) WUI acres (right)



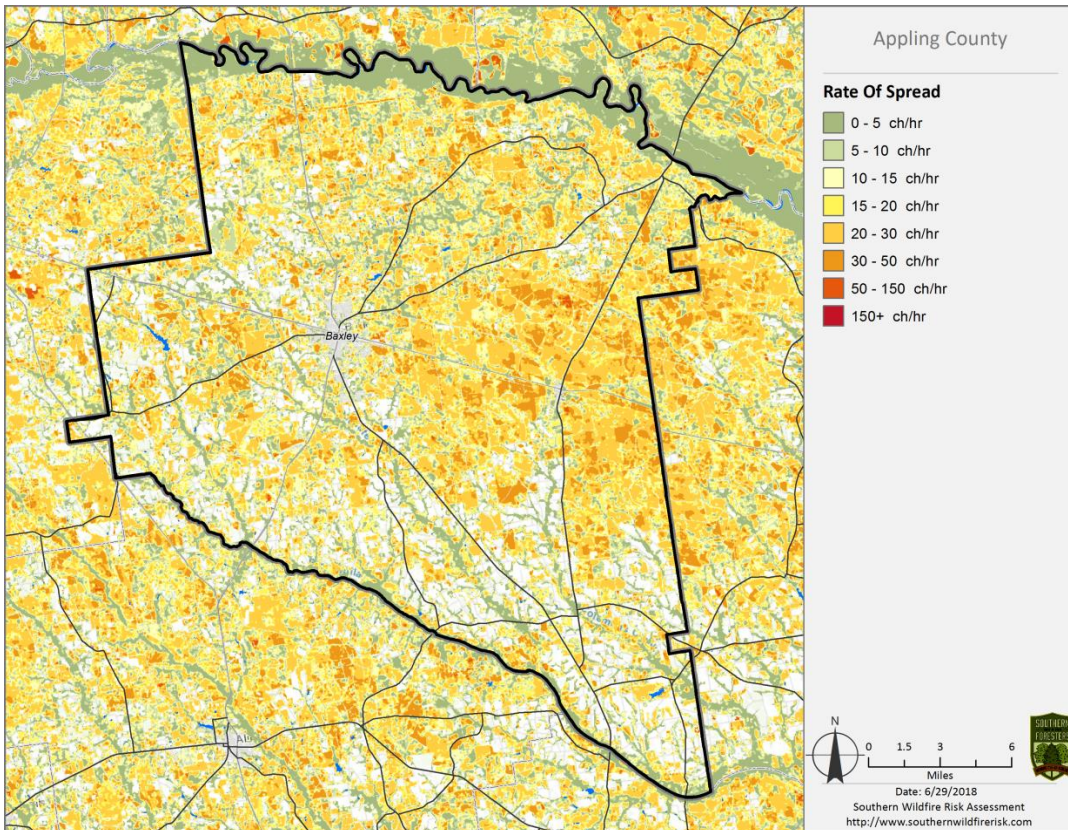


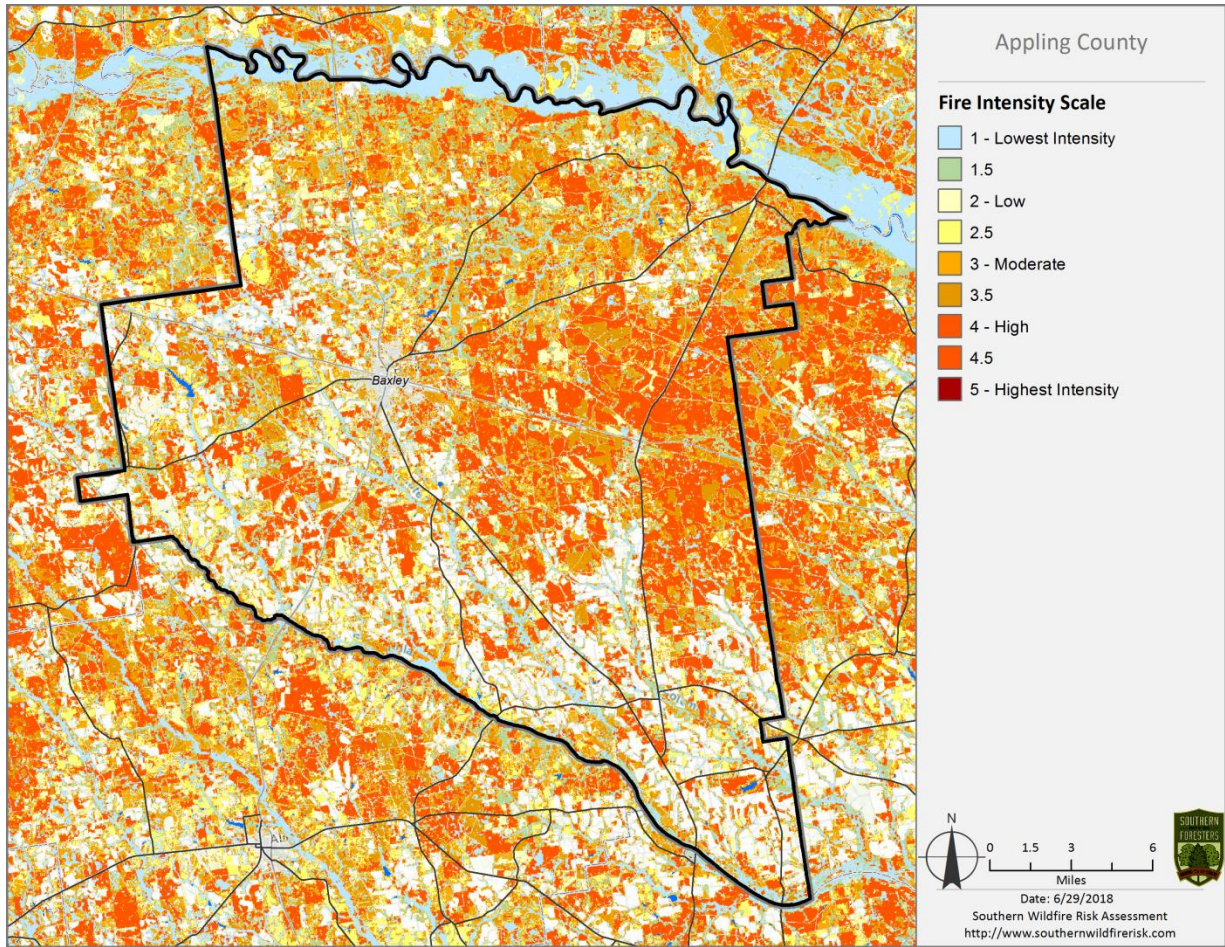
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map Below: WUI Risk Index - Acres



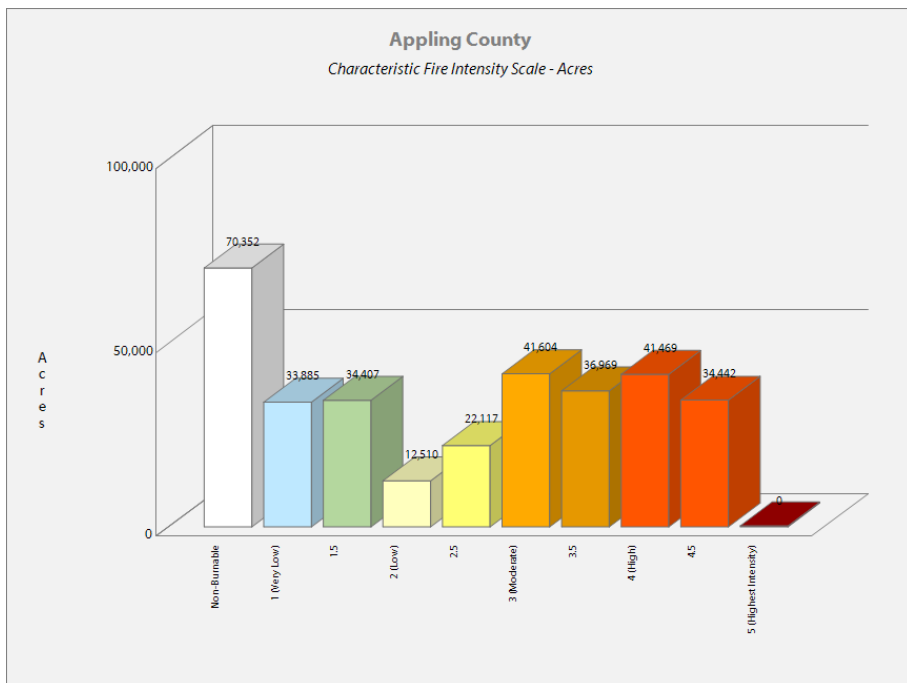


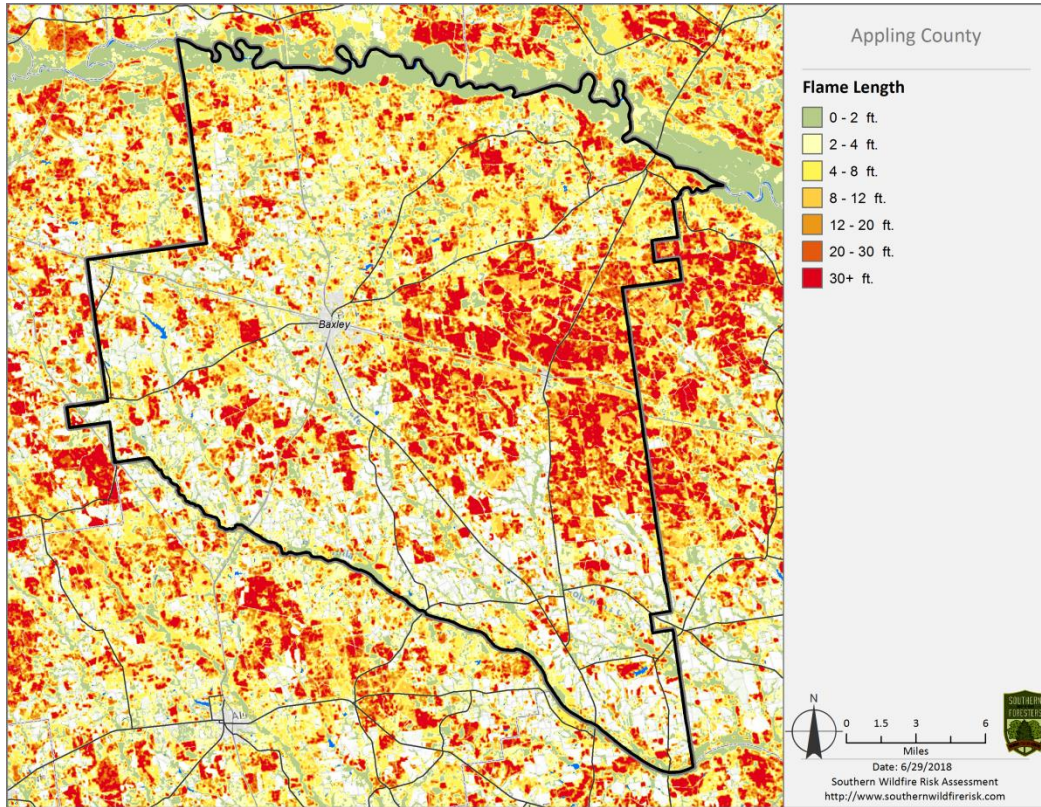
Above: Burn Probability map Below: Rate of Spread map



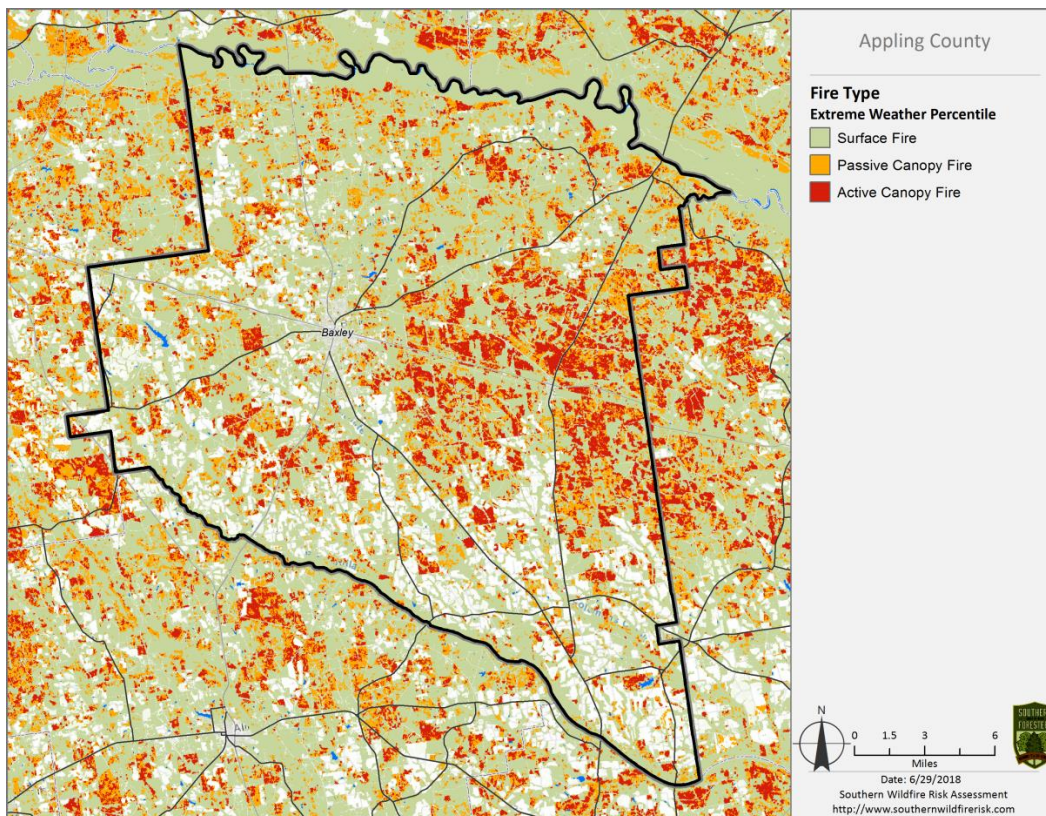


Above: Fire Intensity Scale map Below: Fire Intensity Scale - Acres





Above: Flame Length map Below: Fire Type map



VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

The following recommendations were developed by the Appling 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 National Wildfire Preparedness Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Road Signage and House Numbering	At replacement	New road signage with minimum 4 inch reflective lettering on non-flammable poles. Dead end (no outlet or turn-around) should be prominently tagged. Consider ordinance requiring uniform standards for address numbers.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul de sacs. Replace wooden bridge on Bowen Rd.
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. Standard emergency gate access.

<p>7. Codes and Ordinances</p>	<p>Examine existing codes and ordinances.</p> <p>Utilize the International Wildland Urban Interface Code. (IWUIC)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>At such time as the development of zoning, planning and subdivision ordinances become practical include fire department and emergency services input in the design of these.</p>
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Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities

Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
<p>1. Adjacent WUI Lands</p>	<p>Reduce hazardous fuels</p>	<p>Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas</p>
<p>2. Adjacent WMA Lands</p>	<p>Reduce hazardous fuels</p>	<p>Work with DNR land management to incorporate regular prescribed burning on State DNR WMA managed lands adjacent to identified WUI areas.</p>
<p>3. Railroad Corridors</p>	<p>Reduce hazardous fuels</p>	<p>Encourage railroads to better maintain their ROW eliminating brush and grass through herbicide and mowing. Maintain firebreaks along ROW adjacent to residential areas.</p>
<p>5. Existing Fire Lines</p>	<p>Reduce hazardous fuels</p>	<p>Encourage private landowners to clean and re-harrow existing fire lines. Encourage landowners to utilize forestry mowing and mastication to reduce understory fuel loads near homes and subdivisions.</p>

Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants. Develop map with GIS locations of water sources.
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. Water at Fire Stations	Overhead drop tanks	Investigate need for tanker refill capacity at rural stations.
5. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel. Ready Set Go training.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Appling County Residents
<p>Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teaches the principles of making homes and properties safer and lowering risk 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>
2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders
<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 in the county as the need arises. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible Firewise Community USA recognition.</p>

3. Spring Clean-up Event (National Wildfire Preparedness Day – 1st Saturday in May annually)

Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Appling County Fire Department and Baxley Fire Department 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:

- 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

Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Appling County Fire Department and Baxley Fire Department discussing and commending the work accomplished.

4. Informational Packets

Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following:

- Be Firewise Around Your Home
- Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction
- Firewise Communities 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 Baxley News Media and area TV and Radio to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage. Submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Appling County. Utilize radio and social media to reach new audiences.

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	
Appling County WUI Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Appling County and Baxley fire officials, a representative from the city and county governments and the EMA Director for Appling 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, Appling County Fire Department, Baxley Fire Department, and Appling 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. Utilize IWUIC for building and zoning codes.
4. Spring Cleanup Day Wildfire Preparedness Day (1 st Saturday in May)	varies	Community Donations. State Farm grants
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$15 / acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Appling 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 Appling 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 Appling 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.

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.wildfireprepdays.org

Appended Documents:

Appling County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Appling County Wildfire assessment scoresheets

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



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