

GEORGIA FORESTRY  
COMMISSION



# Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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

### Barrow County, Georgia

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

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AUGUST 1ST, 2017

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honorable Pat Graham, Chairman  
Barrow County Board of Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jack Skinner, EMA Director  
Barrow County Emergency Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Penny Clack  
Barrow County EMA Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor David Maynard  
City of Winder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Matt Whiting  
Winder Fire Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Payton Turner  
Georgia Forestry Commission, Chief Ranger

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Prepared by:

Peyton Turner, Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Oconee, N. Gwinnett County Chief Ranger  
Mark Wiles, Wildfire Prevention & Education Specialist

Georgia Forestry Commission  
Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Oconee, N. Gwinnett County Unit  
27 Punkin Junction Road  
Winder GA 30680

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:

County Commissioners Office, Barrow County

Barrow County Emergency Services (Emergency Management/Fire Department)

City of Winder Fire Department and GIS

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Historic Sites Division

Peyton Turner  
Chief Ranger, Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Oconee, N. Gwinnett County Unit

Mark Wiles  
Wildfire Prevention & Education Specialist

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Barrow County Wildfire Pre-suppression Plan

Community Wildfire Risk Assessment Template

Community Wildfire Risk Assessments Completed

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

## **I. OBJECTIVES**

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) provides a community with a road map to reduce its risk from wildfire. A CWPP is designed through collaboration between state and local fire agencies, homeowners and landowners, and other interested parties such as city councils, utilities, homeowners associations, environmental organizations, and other local stakeholders. The plan identifies strategic sites and methods for risk reduction and structural protection projects across jurisdictional boundaries.

Comprehensive plans provide long-term guidance for growth, reflecting a community's values and future expectations. The plan implements the community's values and serves to protect natural and community resources and public safety. Planning also enables communities to address their development patterns in the Wildland Urban Interface and determine how they can reduce their risk through alternative development patterns. The formal legal standing of the plan and its central role in local government decision making underscores the opportunity to use this planning process as an effective means for reducing wildfire risk.

The mission of the following plan is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Barrow 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**

Wildfire risk reduction strategies are most effective when approached collaboratively – involving groups of residents, elected officials, community decision makers, emergency managers, and natural resource managers –and when combined with effective outreach approaches. Collaborative approaches make sense as the initial focus of any community attempting to work toward wildfire risk reduction. In all Community Wildfire Protection Plan collaborations, the goal is to cooperatively identify problems and reach a consensus for mutual action. In the case of wildfire mitigation, a reduction in the wildfire risk to the community's lives, houses, and property is the desired outcome.

The collaborative core team convened in October to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from City of Winder Fire Department, Barrow County Emergency Services, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Below are the groups included in the task force:

Barrow County Government

*Emergency Services ( Fire Department/Emergency Management)  
County Commissioner*

City of Winder

*Fire Department  
GIS*

Georgia Forestry Commission

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Historic Sites Division  
*Fort Yargo State Park*

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the high risk communities in the individual fire districts in the county and within City of Winder. The representatives of the local Georgia Forestry Commission office reconvened in May 2012 for the purpose of completing the following:

Risk Assessment	Assessed wildfire hazard risks and prioritized mitigation actions. The wildfire risk assessment will help homeowners, builders, developers, and emergency personnel whether the area needs attention and will help direct wildfire risk reduction practices to the areas at highest risk.
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. Outreach and education programs are designed to raise awareness and improve audience knowledge of wildfire risk reduction needs and practices. In the best cases, education and outreach programs will influence attitudes and opinions and result in effective action.

### III. COUNTY BACKGROUND AND WILDFIRE HISTORY

#### County Background:

##### Barrow County



Barrow County is located in the Piedmont plateau between Atlanta and Athens, and its proximity to major metropolitan areas has caused rapid change in the county's demographics. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population is 69,367, an increase from the 2000 population of 46,144. Such growth has transformed this once rural county to an area dotted by new housing subdivisions. With Highway 316 near its southern border and Interstate 85 on its northern one, Barrow County can expect continued economic and population growth.

Barrow County's original settlers were Creeks and Cherokees, many of whom lived in a settlement known as Snodon. A Native American legend about the area tells of Nodoroc, a small lake of boiling blue mud said to be a place of punishment, execution, and religious significance.

On July 7, 1914, Barrow was formed from Gwinnett, Jackson, and Walton counties. It was named for David C. Barrow Jr., chancellor of the University of Georgia from 1906 to 1925. Proximity to the University of Georgia continues to offer Barrow County residents excellent opportunities for both employment and education.



Barrow County Courthouse

The county's largest city is the county seat of Winder, home of Richard B. Russell Jr., whose nearly forty years in the U.S. Senate brought him widespread recognition through his roles as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and president pro tempore of the Senate. Russell, who died in 1971, was a member of the Warren Commission, which investigated U.S. president John F. Kennedy's assassination. Other incorporated cities in the county include Bethlehem, Carl, Statham, and parts of Auburn and Braselton.



Fort Yargo Cabin

With an area of 162 square miles, Barrow is home to Fort Yargo State Park, one of the most widely visited state parks in Georgia. The park is home to a two-story log structure, built by whites in 1792 for protection against Creek and Cherokee Indians, and hosts living history encampments several times a year. An 1,800-acre nature preserve, Fort Yargo has camping areas, cabins, picnic areas, a fishing lake, and a beach area.

## City of Winder

Snodon, Jug, Jug Tavern, and Brandon are all former names for the city of Winder, the county seat of Barrow County in northeast Georgia.

Encompassing nearly eleven square miles and located forty-two miles northeast of Atlanta, Winder is now considered an Atlanta bedroom community. Originally Winder extended from the railroad crossing of Broad Street (then Jefferson Road) into three counties—Jackson, Walton, and Gwinnett—which came together at the center of town, causing much confusion in matters of governance. The situation was remedied in 1914 when Governor John M. Slaton signed a constitutional amendment creating Barrow County, and Winder became its county seat, thereby avoiding further territorial disputes.



Winder



Winder Depot

Established as a trading center called Snodon by Creek and Cherokee Indians during the colonial period, Winder became an important railroad link between Athens and Atlanta by the turn of the twentieth century. The Creeks and the Cherokees centered their activities around the area now occupied by Athens and Church streets, and white settlers arrived in the late 1700s. The settlement name of Snodon was changed to Jug and then ten years later to Jug Tavern, a name explained by stories ranging from the presence of a jug-shaped field to a popular tavern's location. Incorporated in 1884, the town flirted briefly with a name change to Brandon before returning to Jug Tavern in 1890 and finally becoming Winder in 1893.

The town's current name resulted from the arrival of the railroad. The Gainesville Midland Railroad (then Gainesville, Jefferson, and Southern Railroad) built tracks along Midland Avenue in 1883, connecting Jug Tavern with Gainesville, Social Circle, Bethlehem, and Mulberry. The Georgia, Carolina, and Northern Railway, which later merged with the Seaboard Air Line Railway, first passed through town in 1892.

Enterprising citizens offered the Seaboard Air Line Railway about sixteen acres to bring the tracks, originally slated to pass four miles south of Jug Tavern, through town. Townspeople were so delighted with the railway's decision to relocate the tracks that they changed the town's name to honor John H. Winder, the general manager of Seaboard.



Broad Street

While the railway generated immediate population growth, Winder's small-town feel has endured. Broad Street buildings that once housed hardware and general merchandise stores remain in good condition. The Barrow County Courthouse, the Jackson Street commercial historic district, the North Broad Street residential historic district, and the Richard B. Russell homestead are all on the National Register of Historic Places.



Fort Yargo

Fort Yargo, today a state park, was originally developed in 1792 to protect the area from Creek Indian attacks. The park includes a two-story log blockhouse, eighteen by twenty-two feet and made of hand-hewn logs about ten inches thick, that originally housed a well-armed detachment of settlers. The park also boasts the Will-A-Way recreation area, a group camping site planned to accommodate physically challenged visitors. The camp site includes easy-access picnic and fishing areas and a paved trail.





Russell Appreciation  
Day

Notable residents of Winder include the Russell family. Richard B. Russell Jr., the longtime chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, was born in Winder in 1897. His father, Richard Russell Sr., a state legislator and Georgia supreme court justice, and Ina Dillard Russell, moved from Athens to Winder in 1894. In 1902 Russell Sr. founded a village named Russell along U.S. 29 on the border of Winder, where he lived for the rest of his life. A collection of Russell Sr.'s papers, known as the "Winder Materials," were found in the Record House and in the wagon shed on the Russell homeplace, and in 1981 the collection was given to the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Winder was 14,099, an increase from the 2000 population of 10,201.

### **Wildfire History:**

Recent data show that a majority of the fastest growing areas in the U.S. are in wildfire-prone environments. It is not a surprise that some of these fastest growing areas are in Georgia. In last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Georgia's population increased substantially. Homeowners in Georgia must contend with natural hazards including wildfire, tornados, and flooding. This combination of factors – burgeoning population, abundant natural areas, development pressures, and lack of public awareness makes Georgia a perfect state for creating solutions to various hazards. Georgia is looked to throughout the southern region as a leader in comprehensive and hazard mitigation planning.

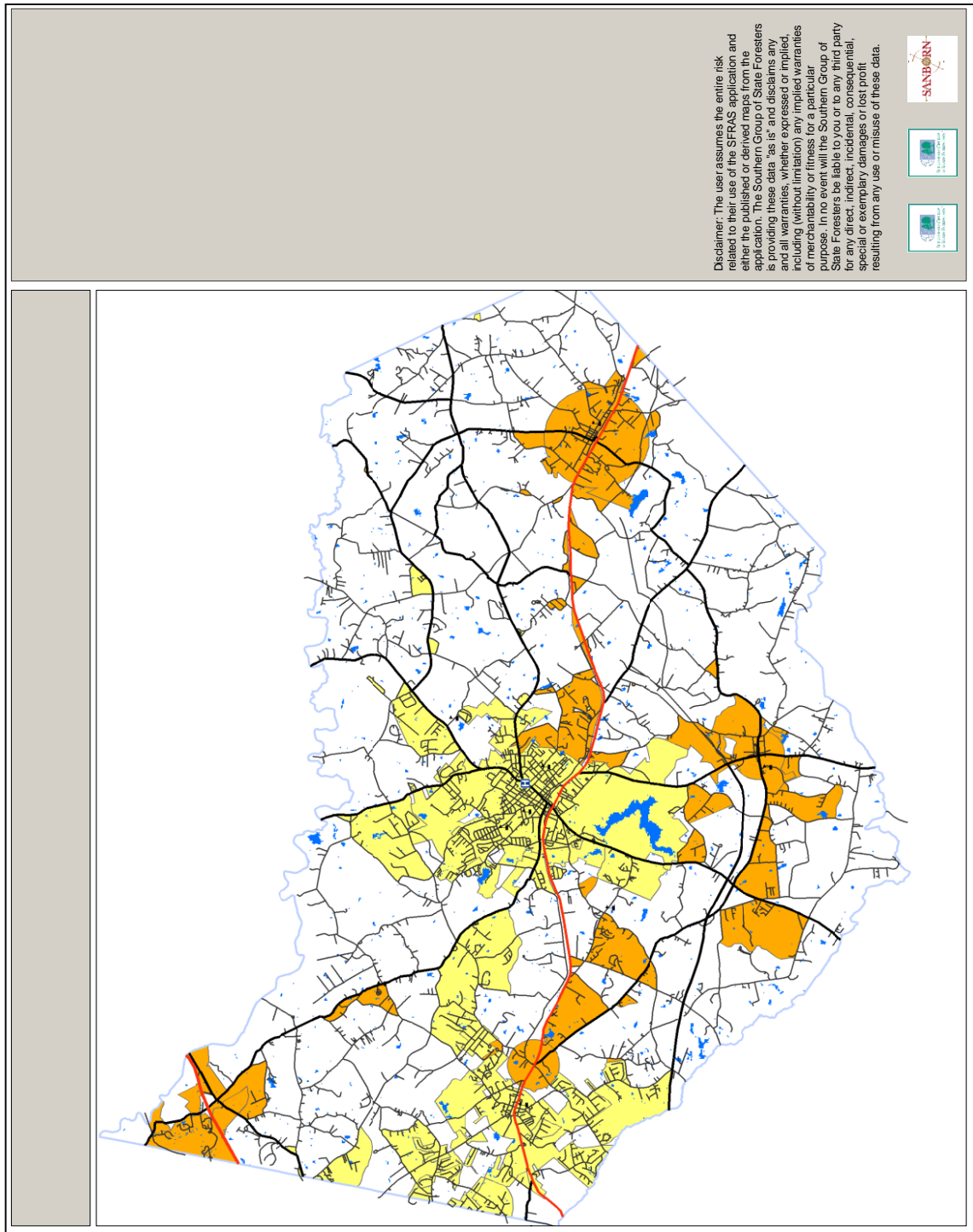
Many of Georgia's existing and new residents living in the urban interface are unaware of the vital role fire plays in our landscape and that their homes are extremely vulnerable to wildfire damage. Balancing development pressures with wildfire risk reduction and education creates a unique challenge for local governments, emergency managers, and wildfire management agencies such as the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Over the past five years, Barrow County has averaged 12.65 reported wildfires per year. The occurrence of these fires is fairly uniform throughout the year with a slight peak in the months of February and March and a slight decrease during the fall months. These fires have burned an average of 18.36 wildfires annually. While the numbers of fires remain fairly similar every month, there is a marked difference in the monthly acreage lost. The monthly acres lost during the late winter through summer period show a tenfold increase over the acres lost during the fall and early winter. Additionally while the annual numbers of fires have not increased noticeably during the 5 year period that records are available, the annual acreage lost appears to have decreased in later years. This perhaps a result of the increase in the practice of prescribed burning. The local Georgia Forestry Commission office needs to be commended for their valiant work increasing their very impressive prescribed burning regiment. Despite their work, more homes are being built outside of traditional communities into the wildland urban interface. With this migration of people to the wildland urban interface the potential for a wildfire disaster continues to increase for Barrow County.

The leading cause of fires over the past 5 years in Barrow County was careless debris fire, which is the leading cause of wildfire in the state of Georgia. Though these causes are a bit disturbing, local efforts of outreach and education can easily curb this problem.

County = Barrow	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
<a href="#">Campfire</a>	Campfire	0		0.00	0.40	0.68
<a href="#">Children</a>	Children	1	↑	0.18	0.80	1.50
<a href="#">Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc</a>	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1	↑	3.52	0.20	0.70
<a href="#">Debris: Construction Land Clearing</a>	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	2	↑	1.80	0.80	0.41
<a href="#">Debris: Household Garbage</a>	Debris: Household Garbage	1	↑	0.97	0.20	0.19
<a href="#">Debris: Other</a>	Debris: Other	2	↑	0.27	0.40	0.05
<a href="#">Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc</a>	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	6	↑	9.41	2.80	4.18
<a href="#">Incendiary</a>	Incendiary	0		0.00	0.20	0.03
<a href="#">Lightning</a>	Lightning	0		0.00	0.40	0.08
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition</a>	Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	0		0.00	0.40	0.25
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences</a>	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	1	↑	0.03	0.20	0.01
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires</a>	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1	↑	3.00	0.40	1.08
<a href="#">Undetermined</a>	Undetermined	3	↑	1.96	2.80	7.73
<b>Totals for County: Barrow Year: 2017</b>		18	↑	21.14	10.00	16.89

## IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAP



## 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.

(courtesy *Fire Ecology and Wildfire Mitigation in Florida* 2004)

## Wildland Urban Interface Hazards

Firefighters in the wildland urban interface may encounter hazards other than the fire itself, such as hazardous materials, utility lines and poor access.

### ● Hazardous Materials

- Common chemicals used around the home may be a direct hazard to firefighters from flammability, explosion potential and/or vapors or off-gassing. Such chemicals include paint, varnish and other flammable liquids; fertilizer; pesticides; cleansers; aerosol cans, fireworks, batteries and ammunition. In addition, some common household products such as plastics may give off very toxic fumes when they burn. Stay OUT of the smoke from burning structures and any unknown sources such as trash piles.

### ● Illicit Activities

- Marijuana plantations or drug production labs may be found in wildland urban interface areas. Extremely hazardous materials such as propane tanks and flammable/toxic chemicals may be encountered, as well as booby traps.

### ● Propane tanks

- Both large (household size) and small (gas grill size) liquefied propane gas (LPG) tanks can present hazards to firefighters, including explosion. See the "LPG Tank Hazards" discussion for details.

### ● Utility lines

- Utility lines may be located above and below ground and may be cut or damaged by tools or equipment. Don't spray water on utility lines or boxes.

### ● Septic tanks and fields

- Below-ground structures may not be readily apparent and may not support the weight of engines or other apparatus.

### ● New construction materials

- Many new construction materials have comparatively low melting points and may "off-gas" extremely hazardous vapors. Plastic decking materials that resemble wood are becoming more common and may begin softening and losing structural strength at 180° F, though they normally do not sustain combustion once direct flame is removed. However, if

they continue to burn they exhibit the characteristics of flammable liquids.

● Pets and livestock

- Pets and livestock may be left when residents evacuate and will likely be highly stressed, making them more inclined to bite and kick. Firefighters should not put themselves at risk to rescue pets or livestock.

● Evacuation occurring

- Firefighters may be taking structural protection actions while evacuations of residents are occurring. Be very cautious of people driving erratically. Distraught residents may refuse to leave their property, and firefighters may need to disengage from fighting fire to contact law enforcement officers for assistance. In most jurisdictions firefighters do not have the authority to force evacuations. Firefighters should not put themselves at risk trying to protect someone who will not evacuate!

● Limited access

- Narrow one-lane roads with no turn-around room, inadequate or poorly maintained bridges and culverts are frequently found in wildland urban interface areas. Access should be sized-up and an evacuation plan for all emergency personnel should be developed.



The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in the Spring of 2012 by the Georgia Forestry Commission and the City of Winder Fire Department and Barrow County Emergency Services returned an average score of 112, placing Barrow County in the “Moderate Risk” hazard range. This document was updated in the summer of 2017. There was very little community development during the past 5 years due to the down turn in the economy. As the economy improves there will be more developments and community creations, which will require prefire planning to insure community readiness in the event of a wildfire. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Barrow County’s WUI was the Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Scoresheet, and should be used once again as communities continue to grow and develop in Barrow County. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), 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 Winder/Barrow County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Limited street signs and homes not clearly addressed
- 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
- Heavy fuel buildups in adjacent wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations
- Distance from fire stations
- Lack of homeowner or community organizations



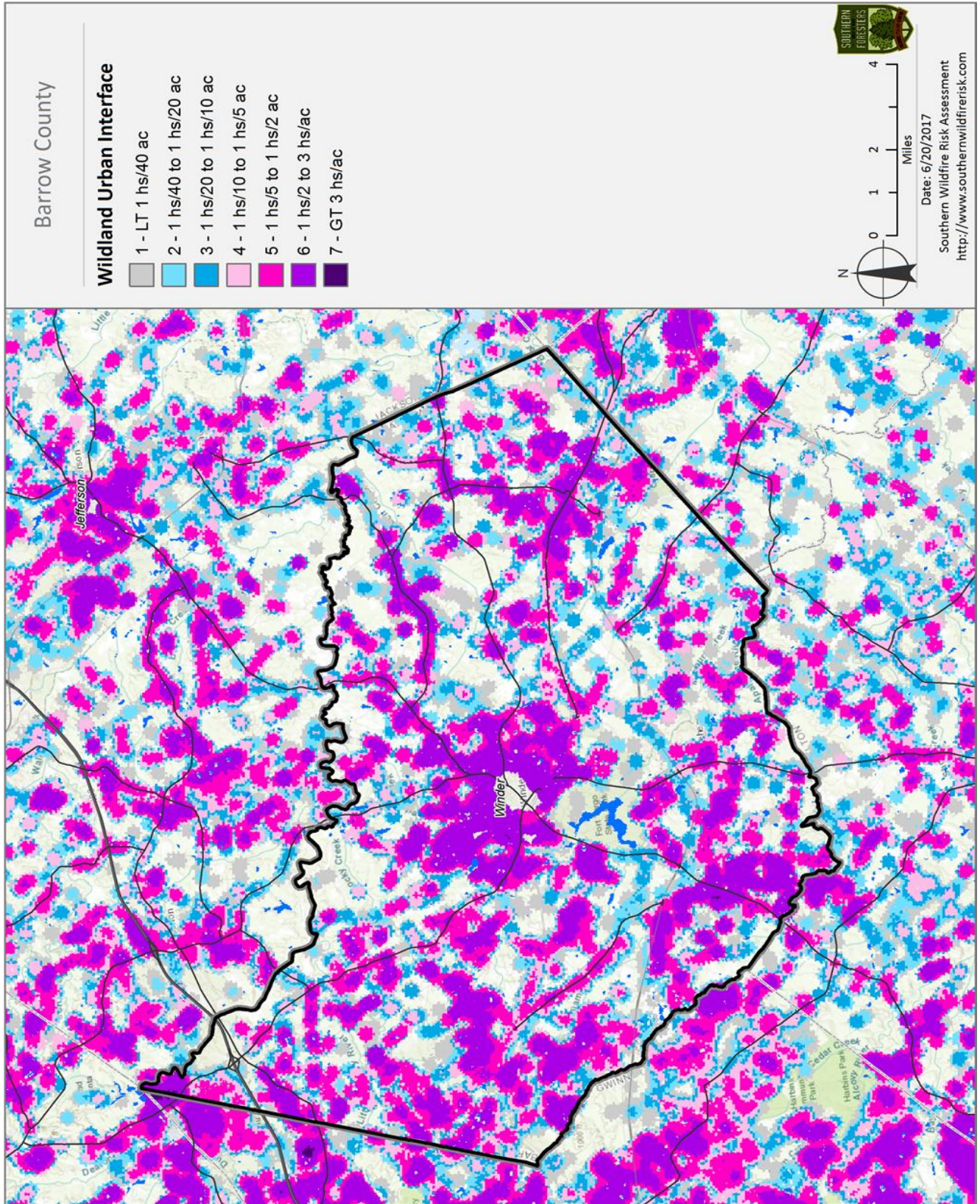
The Communities-at-Risk within Barrow County that led to its **Moderate Hazard Risk** rating are:

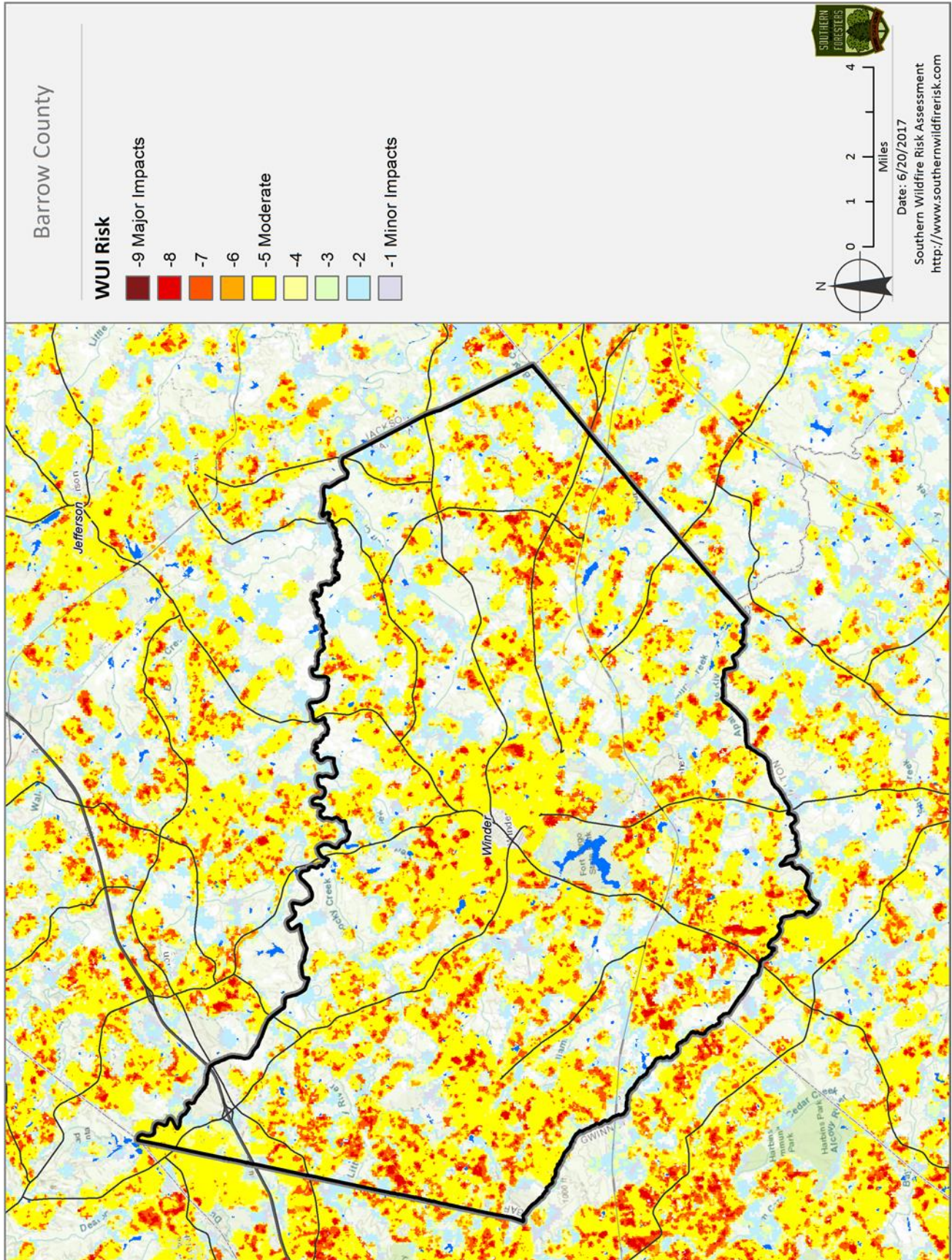
<b>Communities-at-Risk</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Hazard Rating</b>
<i>Lee / 2<sup>nd</sup> Community</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Sewer Treatment Plant</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Lighthouse Estates</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Sutherland Sub.</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Embassy Walk</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Carrington Cove</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Glenwood</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Paris Pointe</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Oak Hill Apts</i>	<i>169</i>	<i>Extreme Hazard</i>
<i>Magnolia Comm.</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Northwoods</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>Extreme Hazard</i>
<i>Bellingrath</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Barrow County Courthouse</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Winder Sewer Plant</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Beaver Dam</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Satilla Drive</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Pinnacle Oaks</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Georgetown Drive</i>	<i>82`</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Dyno Trail</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>

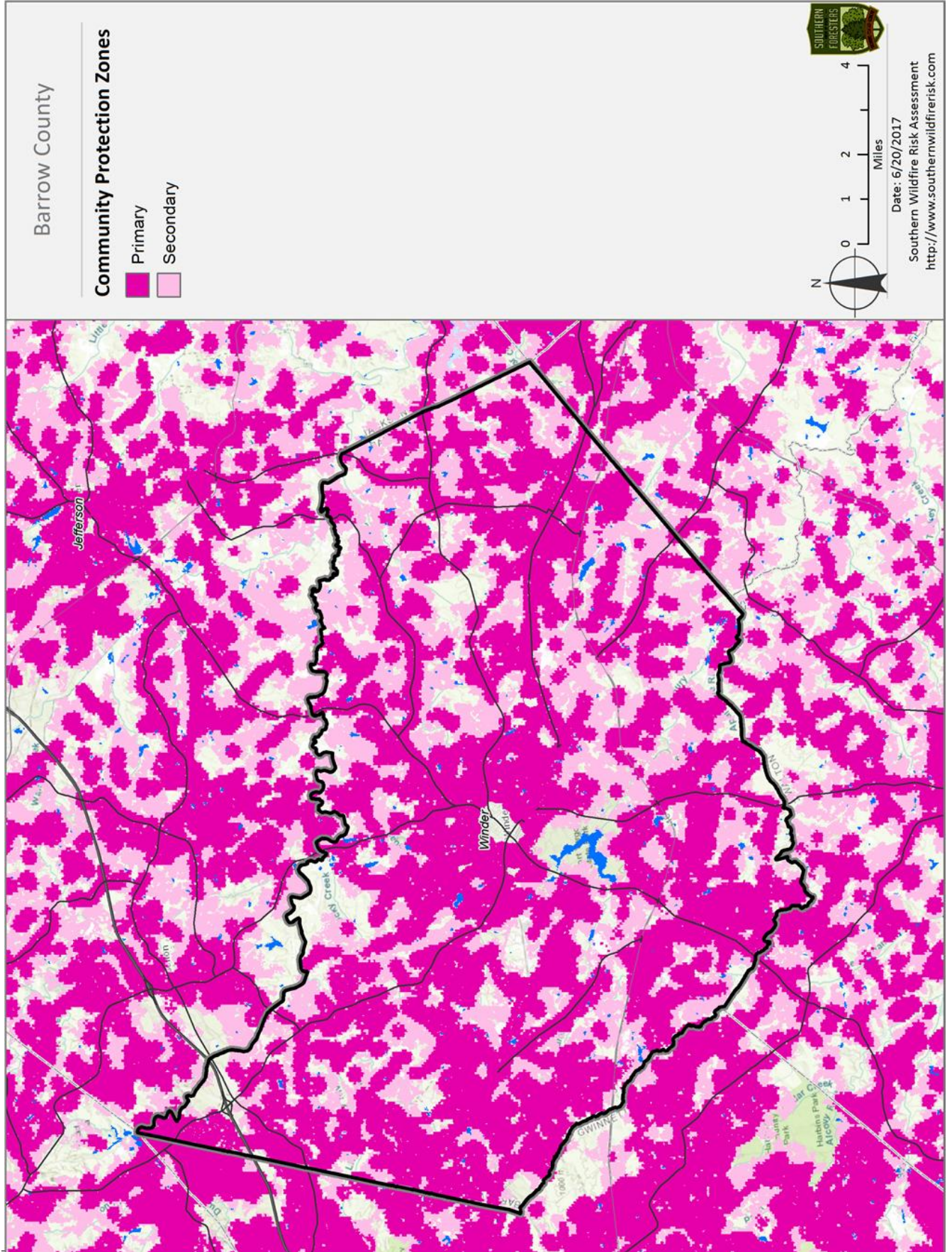


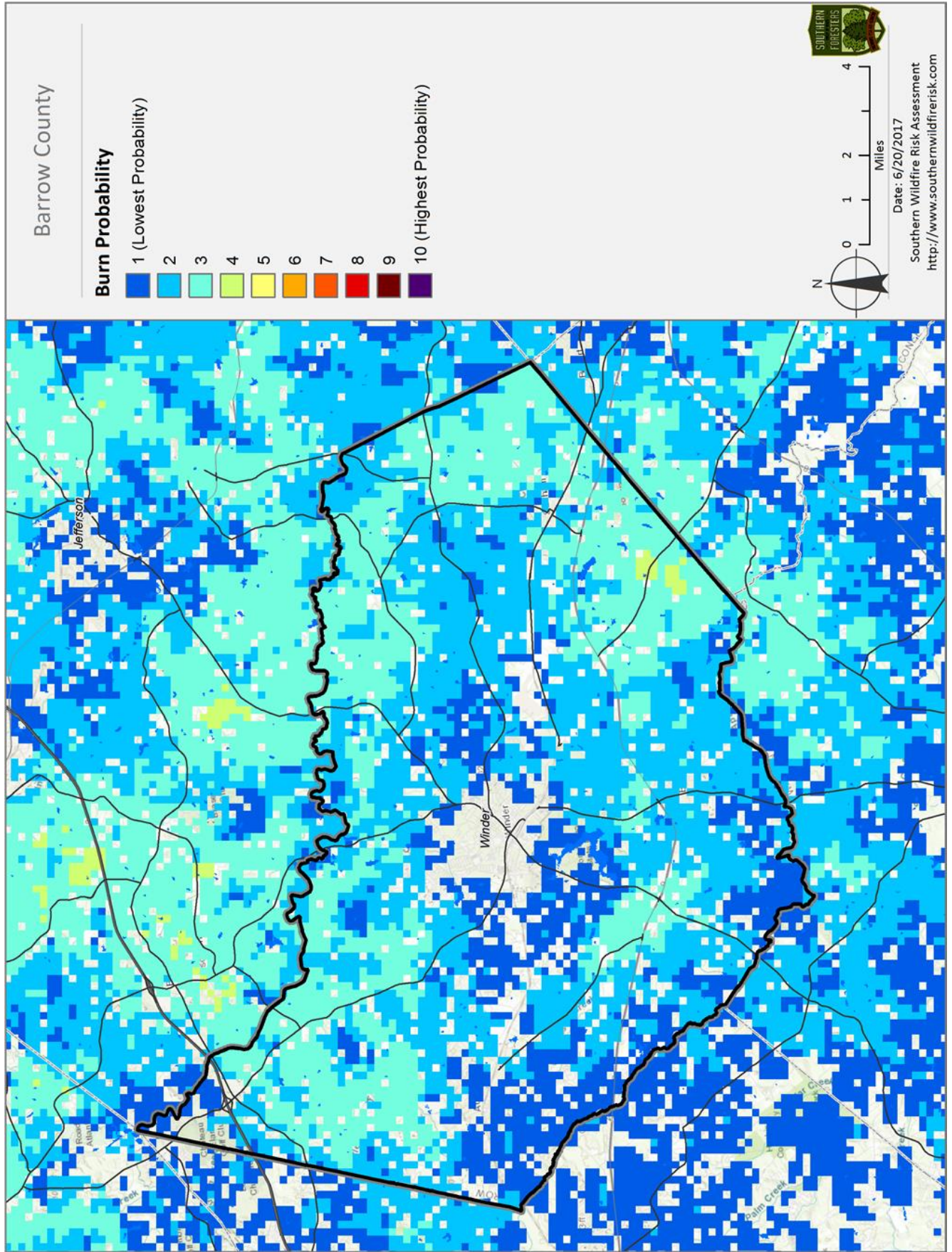
<i>Dooly Town Drive</i>	82	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Rainy Brooke Drive</i>	72	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Seven Oaks</i>	75	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>McCarty Trailer Park</i>	81	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>The Georgia Club</i>	64	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Mill Creek</i>	78	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Noah's Landing</i>	71	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>River Edge</i>	88	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Jackson Park</i>	70	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Pepper Mill Estates</i>	64	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Etheridge Drive</i>	126	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Price Road</i>	143	<i>Extreme Hazard</i>
<i>Apalachee Ridge Rd.</i>	141	<i>Extreme Hazard</i>
<i>County Meadows</i>	104	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>River Bluff</i>	97	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Sweet Apple</i>	101	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Hearth Stone</i>	88	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Beech Creek</i>	99	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Payne Springs</i>	111	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Haymon Estates</i>	66	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Ashbrook</i>	55	<i>Low Hazard</i>
<i>Roxy Wood</i>	98	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<i>Riverwalk</i>	126	<i>High Hazard</i>
<i>Cedarwest</i>	121	<i>Moderate Hazard</i>
<b>Average Risk Rating:</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>Moderate Hazard Risk</b>

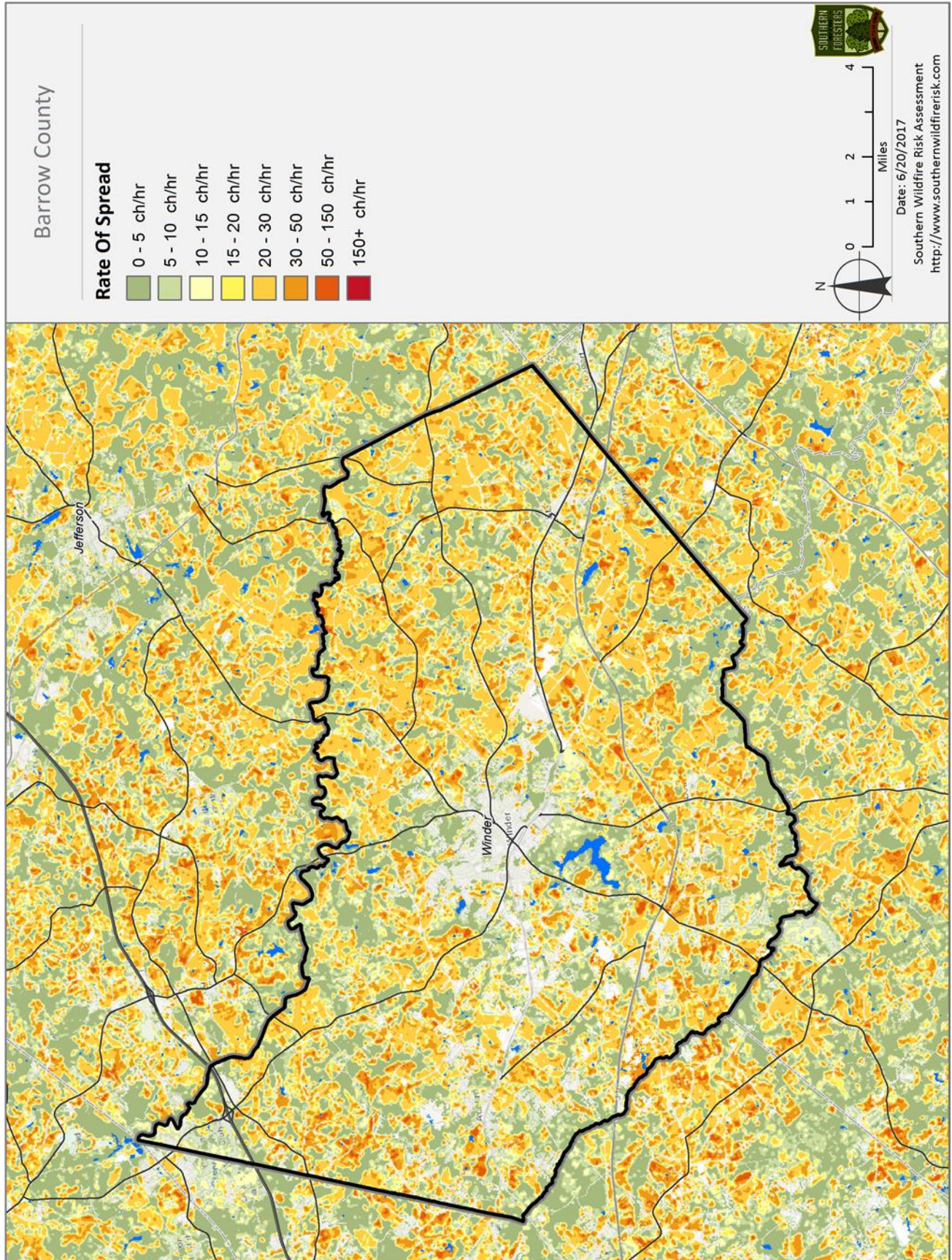
## VI. COMMUNITY HAZARDS MAPS

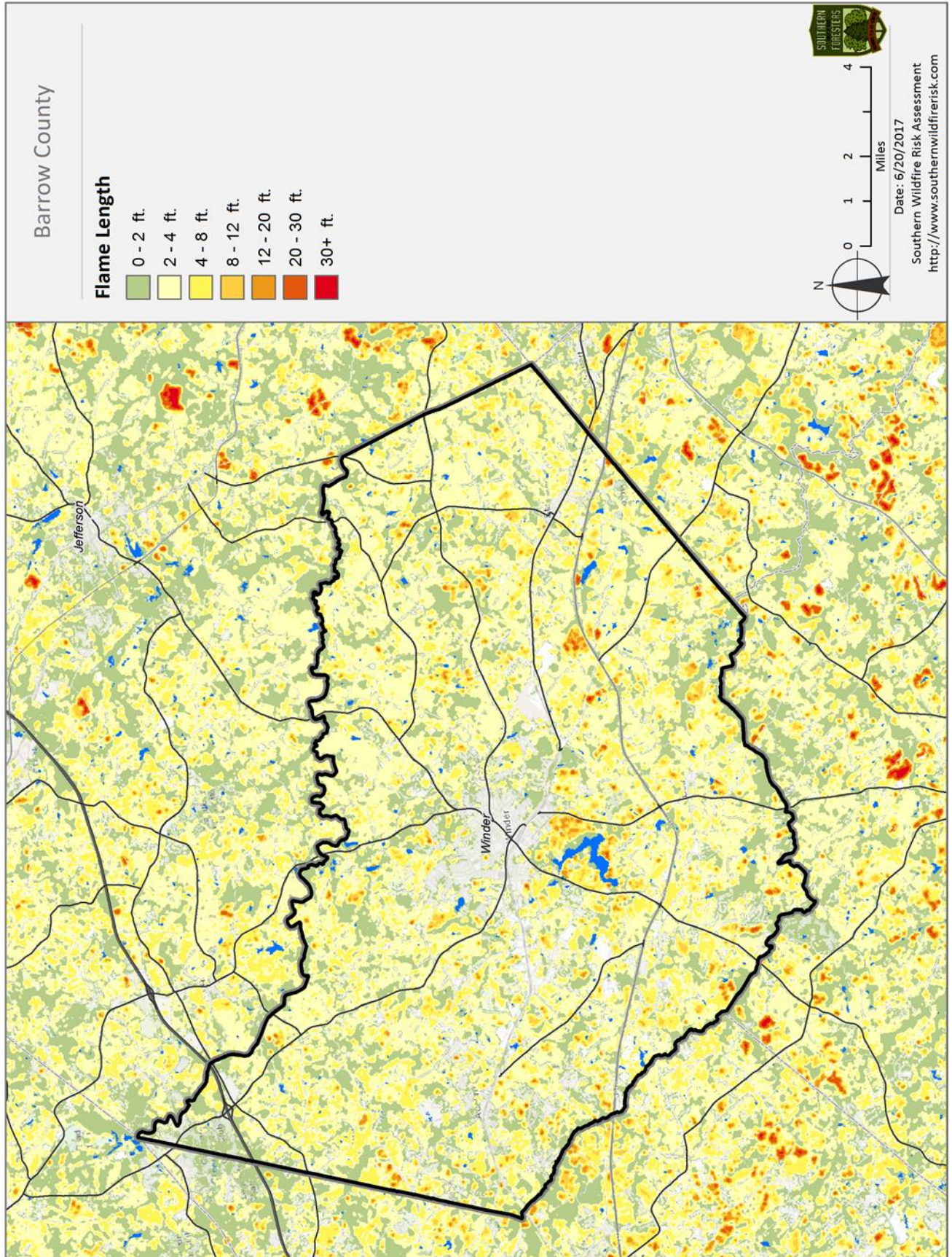


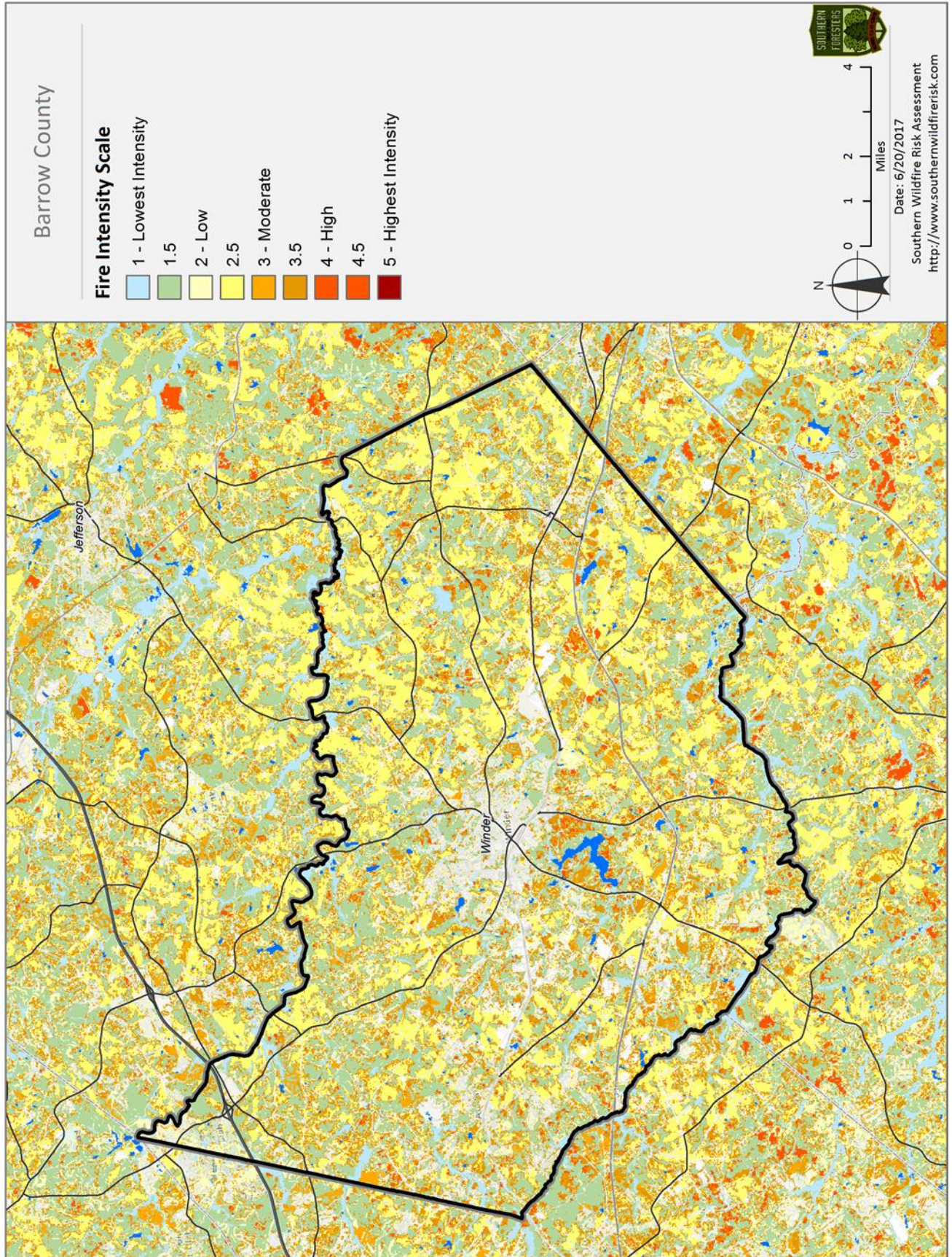




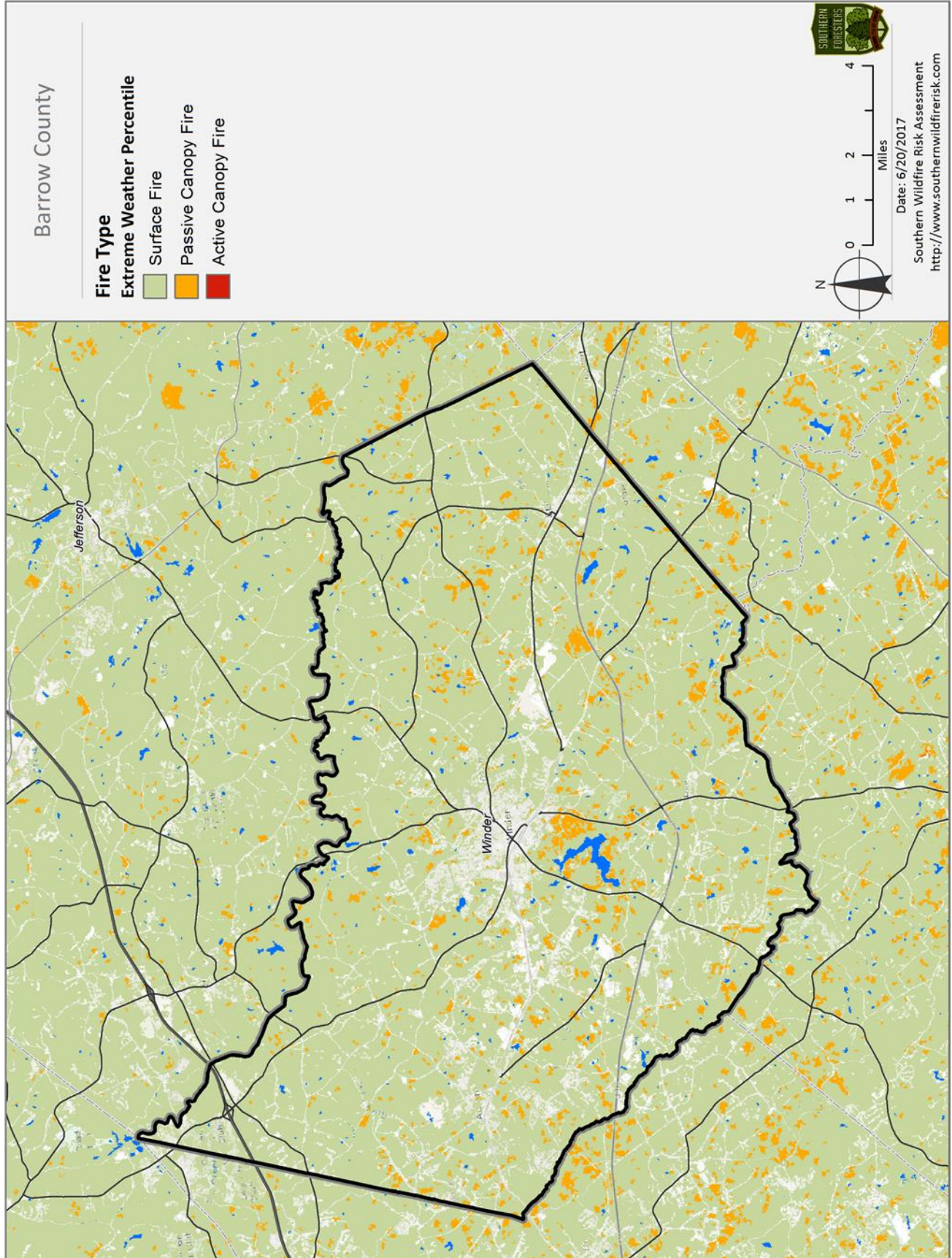












## VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Executive Summary

As North 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. Winder/Barrow 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.

The following recommendations were developed by the Georgia Forestry Commission Chief Ranger and the Community Wildfire Protection Specialist 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, and 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. Driveway Access	Culvert installation	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed to allow emergency vehicle access.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul-de-sacs or turn-around.

**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.  Seek grant for WUI mitigation team.
2. 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.

<b>Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities</b>		
1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Investigate need for “brush” trucks near communities at risk.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Investigate need for additional drafting pumps.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel to include S130, S190, and S215.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

### **Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities**

1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for County Residents
Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that 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.  Distribute materials promoting Firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.
2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders
Arrange for GFC Firewise Coordinator to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and codes as the need arises. Identified “communities-at-risk” are Apalachee Ridge Road, Price Road, and the Oak Hill/Hillcrest Apartments should be sought after for inclusion in the National Firewise Communities Program.
3. Spring Clean-up Event
Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Barrow County Fire Departments, City of Winder Fire Department and local residents of the City of Winder and

Barrow County. 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

#### 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 Bookmarks

#### 5. Wildfire Protection Display

Create and exhibit a display for the general public at the local events. Display can be independent or combined with the Georgia Forestry Commission display.

#### 6. Media

Invite the local and regional news media to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Barrow County.

## 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	
Winder/Barrow County WUI Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, City/County Fire department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Barrow 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"> <li>1 Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping</li> <li>2 Debris Burning Safety</li> <li>3 Firewise information for homeowners</li> <li>4 Prescribed burning benefits</li> </ol>
Communications objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Create public awareness for fire danger and defensible space issues</li> <li>2 Identify most significant human cause fire issues</li> <li>3 Enlist public support to help prevent these causes</li> <li>4 Encourage people to employ fire prevention and defensible spaces in their communities.</li> </ol>
Target Audiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Homeowners</li> <li>2 Forest Landowners and users</li> <li>3 Civic Groups</li> <li>4 School Groups</li> </ol>
Methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 News Releases</li> <li>2 Personal Contacts</li> <li>3 Key messages and prevention tips</li> <li>4 Visuals such as signs, brochures and posters</li> </ol>
Spring Clean-up Day	

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, and Winder/Barrow County Fire Departments and Barrow County EMA. 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 Business Donations.
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$15 / acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

## GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

### POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES:

As funding is questionable in these times of tight government budgets and economic uncertainty, unconventional means should be identified whereby the need for funding can be reduced or eliminated.

### GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

- Georgia Firewise Community Hazard Mitigation Grant: Georgia Forestry Commission grant designed to assist Firewise communities in the mitigation of fire hazards within their community. The grant is designed to provide financial assistance in helping the community to carry out the recommendations of their Firewise Action Plan.

Community Protection Grant: U.S.F.S. 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.

- 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 complete a 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.
- FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program



1. Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). The purpose of AFG's is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) organizations of a state to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and related hazards.

Fire Prevention and Safety Grants. The purpose of these grants is to assist state, regional, national or local organizations to address fire prevention and safety. Emphasis of the program is on prevention of fire-related injuries to children.

2. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER). The purpose of SAFER is to award grants directly to volunteer; combination and career fire departments to help the departments increase their cadre of firefighters (enhance their ability for 24-hour response).
- 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.
  - Individual Homeowners:
    1. The elimination of hazardous conditions around a structure must ultimately be the responsibility of the community and the homeowner. They will bear the cost and reap the benefit from properly implemented mitigation efforts.
    2. GEMA: Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program

## Glossary of Terms

**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.*

**Firewise Communities Program** – *A national initiative whose purpose is the reduction of structural losses from wildland fires.*

**Firewise Communities/USA** – *A national recognition program for communities that take action to protect themselves from wildland fire.*

**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.*

*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 edition).*

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Publications/ Brochures/Websites

- FIREWISE Communities materials can be ordered at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.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](http://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](http://www.interfacesouth.org)
- Information on codes and standards for emergency services including wildfire can be found at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- Information on FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) can be found at [www.firegrantsupport.com](http://www.firegrantsupport.com)
- Information on National Fire Plan grants can be found at <http://www.federalgrantswire.com/national-fire-plan--rural-fire-assistance.html>

## Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Winder/Barrow 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, and 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.
- Winder/Barrow County 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 Barrow County Hazard planning meeting. Needed actions will be discussed and delegated.

This plan should become a working document that is shared by local, state, and federal agencies that will use it to accomplish common goals. An agreed-upon schedule for meeting to review accomplishments, solve problems, and plan for the future should extend beyond the scope of this plan. Without this follow up this plan will have limited value

GEORGIA FORESTRY  
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**P. O. Box 819  
Macon, GA 31202  
1-800-GA-TREESGaTrees.org**

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