GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Butts County, Georgia

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

August 2016

Prepared by:
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Beryl Budd, Wildfire Prevention Specialist, Georgia Forestry Commission

The following report is a collaborative effort between 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 Representatives:

G.S. "Gator" Hodges, 1st District, Butts County Commissioner
Signature _____

Robert Henderson Sr., 2nd District, Butts County Commissioner
Signature _____

Joe Brown, 3rd District, Butts County Commissioner
Signature _____

Keith Douglas, Chairman 2016, 4th District, Butts County Commissioner
Signature _____

Roger McDaniel, Vice Chairman 2016, 5th District, Butts County Commissioner
Signature _____

Keith Moffett, County Administrator, Butts County
Signature _____

Local Emergency Service Representatives:

Mike Wilson, Director of Emergency Services, Butts County
Signature _____

Randy Prince, Deputy Emergency Services Director, Butts County
Signature _____

Local Georgia Forestry Commission Representatives:

Robert Hargrove, Chief Ranger, Georgia Forestry Commission
Signature _____

Beryl Budd, Wildfire Prevention Specialist, Georgia Forestry Commission
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Appended Documents:

Butts County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

I. OBJECTIVES AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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 Butts 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.

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 on July 28, 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:

Butts County Government

County Fire Department
County Emergency Services and Management
Board of County Commissioners

Georgia Forestry Commission

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of locating high risk communities within the individual fire districts in the county. Butts County Fire Department, Georgia Forestry Commission, Monroe/Butts County Unit, and the Georgia Forestry Commission Wildfire Protection Specialist reconvened for the purpose of completing the following:

- Risk Assessments: 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.

II. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND & WILDFIRE HISTORY

Butts County, located between Atlanta and Macon, was carved from parts of Henry and Monroe counties in 1825 by the state legislature and presented to Governor George Troup as a gift. The 187-square-mile county was named for Captain Samuel Butts, a Virginian who was killed in the Battle of Calabee in Alabama during the Creek Indian War of 1811-15. Butts County is one of several bedroom communities for the metropolitan Atlanta and Macon areas. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the county population is 23,655, an increase from the 2000 population of 19,522.

Towns and Communities

Butts County Courthouse

The county seat, Jackson, was named after U.S. president Andrew Jackson, who had in 1818 spent a few weeks in the area before continuing on to Florida to fight the Seminoles in the First Seminole War. Much of the town, including an earlier courthouse, was burned by Sherman's troops during the Civil War. The current courthouse was built in 1898 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Other incorporated towns in the county are Flovilla and Jenkinsburg. Flovilla was incorporated in 1885, having changed its name from Indian Springs. One of Butts County's attractions, the Old Flovilla Schoolhouse (used from 1885 to 1932), is located in the town. William Ferguson Smith, newspaper editor, author, and prime mover behind the development of Butts County, came from Flovilla. Jenkinsburg, incorporated in 1889, was named after William Jenkins, whose 1881 grant of land to the Southern Railroad allowed the company to build track through the town. Pepperton started out as an African American village near a well-known field of red peppers and became a mill town. It was incorporated in 1897 but was annexed by Jackson in 1996 and is now referred to as East Jackson.

Indian Springs State Park

Indian Springs State Park

Originally inhabited by mound builders and the Creek Indians, the county celebrates the region's first inhabitants with annual festivals and maintains concrete reminders of them, including Indian Springs State Park. Established in 1927, Indian Springs State Park claims to be the oldest state park in the United States. Used for centuries by Native Americans for healing purposes, the sulfur springs for which the park is named were first discovered by white men in 1792, when a U.S. Indian agent, Douglas Watson, came across them. Although he named the area Gunpowder Springs for the water's taste, the springs' reputed restorative powers attracted nineteen centurytravelers. A resort hotel was built at the springs in 1823 by Chief William

McIntosh, whose Creek Indian mother had married one of the early Scots settlers, Captain William McIntosh, in Georgia. The younger William McIntosh was educated in Savannah, where his father lived, and joined Andrew Jackson's forces during the War of 1812(1812-15), gaining the rank of brigadier general. McIntosh, the Creeks' spokesman during negotiations over land distribution, signed away all Creek lands in Georgia to the U.S. government in 1825, to the distress of the Creek Leaders. The agreement took place in a conference room (later called the Treaty Room) in his own hotel. The Treaty of Indian Springs, as it is now called, led to his murder three months later by angry Creeks who felt betrayed by him.

Chief McIntosh Hotel

Chief McIntosh's hotel and the medicinal springs remained a popular resort until the Great Depression. Their success was fostered by the construction of the Flovilla and Indian Springs Railroad in 1889. The hotel was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Nearby is the Indian Springs Chapel, built in the late 1890s. It functioned as a Baptist Church until 1992, when it was given to the Butts County Historical Society for preservation. Also located within the park are an Indian museum, housed in a building constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and Idlewilde (also known as the Rastello House), another historic building. Idlewilde was built around 1907 on land originally purchased by Robert Grier Bryans, a great-grandson of Robert Grier. Grier, an amateur astronomer, contributed to and likely founded Grier's Almanac. The park's offices are located in a house built by Grier's sisters and later sold to Willis B. Powell, a good friend of U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, who stayed there occasionally. It has been on the National Register of Historic Buildings since 1999.

Economy and Employment

Indian Springs Gristmill

The economy of Butts County started moving from agriculture to industry quite early, with tanneries, hat-making establishments, and candle-making factories among the earliest manufacturing ventures. The transition from agriculture was boosted by the ease of transportation (including a number of early ferries) along the local rivers as well as the harnessing of water power to run processing mills. Waterwheel-powered mills were built on nearly every waterway within reach of county residents. One of the first was a gristmill built by Parker Lindsay in the 1840s at a location known as Seven Islands. The railroads crisscrossing the area beginning in 1882 promoted increased industrialization. An example of this was the Pepperton Cotton Mills, established in 1896.

In 1908 the construction of the Lloyd Shoals Dam on the Ocmulgee River was begun, leading to a steady supply of hydroelectric power in the county by 1910. This local power source resulted in the further industrialization of the county's economy. Among the large businesses brought to the area were several soft drink bottling plants and the Jackson Ice Corporation (1920). Although the area did not escape the economic hardships brought by the Great Depression in the 1930s, the wartime economy of the 1940s helped it to regain its footing, and today it retains a diversified industrial base. As

with many small rural towns, Jackson's downtown has had a hard time competing with the nearby malls and chain stores.

Places and People

Points of interest, in addition to Indian Springs, include the J. R. Carmichael House in Jackson and several recreational facilities: High Falls State Park; Lloyd Shoals Dam Reservoir, also called Jackson Lake; High Falls State Park; and Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, which was established in 1939 and protects 35,000 acres of loblolly pine and hardwood forest habitat for the wildlife living there.

Recurring events sponsored by the Butts County Historical Society as fundraisers for their projects include the Dogwood Festival in April, the Annual Invitational Fine Arts Festival in May, the Freedom Celebration in July, the Native American Festival in September, Civil War Days, the "Home for the Holidays" celebration, and the Scottish Festival.

Notable residents of Butts County include Clarence Lemar Burpee, a railway man born in Jackson in 1894, who became a commanding officer in the 703rd Railway Grand Division of the Allies during World War II (1941-45). As assistant chief of transportation in the Military Railways Division of the European Theater of Operations in 1944-45, he achieved the rank of brigadier general and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and Legion of Merit. John Head, a veteran journalist and newspaper editor, was raised in Jackson. Head serves as chair of the Penn Foundation and has authored two books, *We Were the Land's: The Biography of a Homeplace* (1999) and *Standing in the Shadows: Understanding and Overcoming Depression in Black Men* (2004). His brother Fred was the first African American elected to the Butts County Commission.

Courtesy of the New Georgia Encyclopedia

Wildfire History

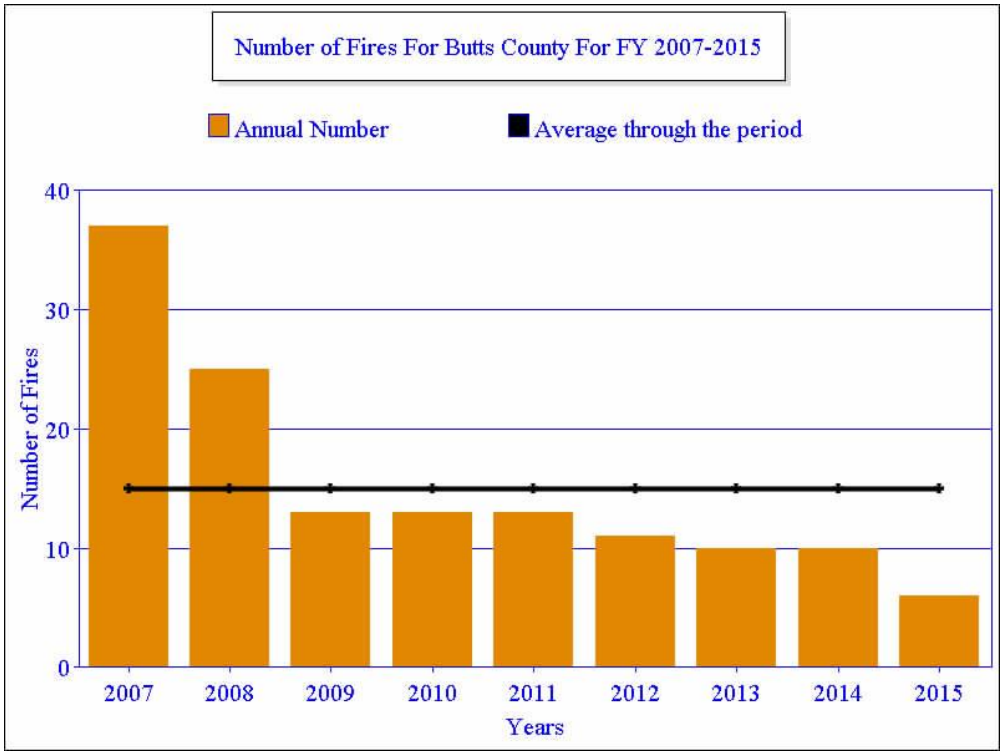
The following table outlines fire activity in Butts County for fiscal years 2006-2015. In FY 2007 and 2011, years of extreme drought, the statewide average was influenced by large wildfires in the Okefenokee and Southeast Georgia. These record breaking large wildfires caused the statewide average size to be greatly increased. During the same 10 year period the State also experienced two record breaking years of low wildfire occurrence, 2010 and 2015, due to above average precipitation throughout Georgia. Butts County average size wildfire was consistently below the statewide average size.

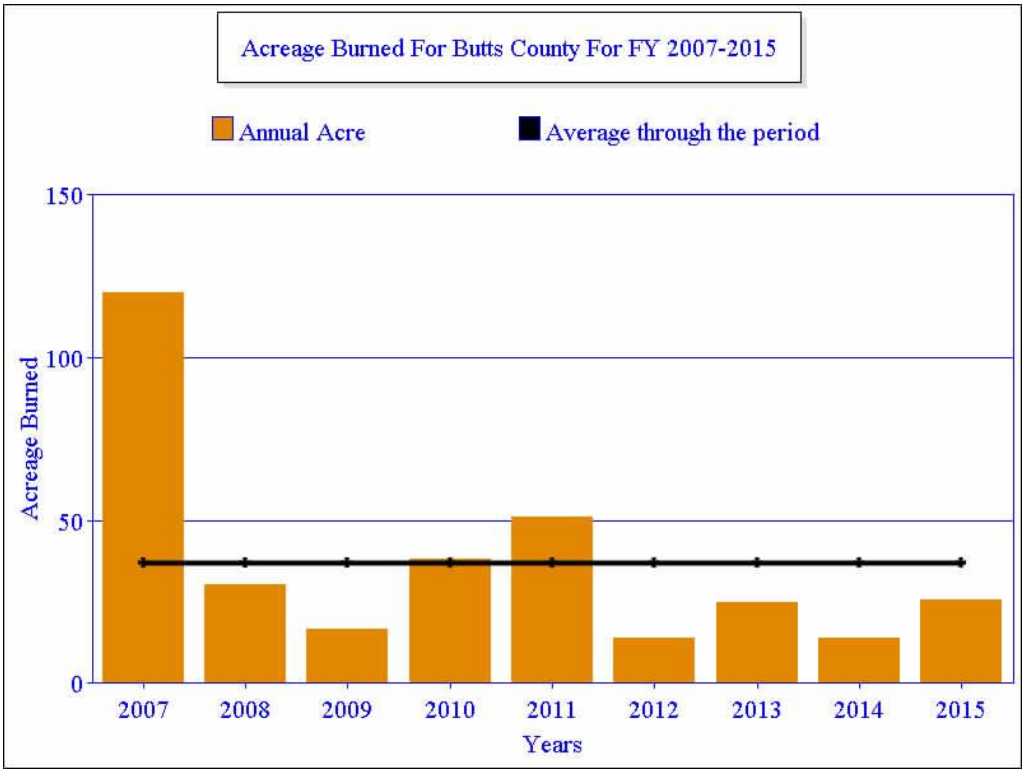
Fiscal Year	Number of Fires	Acres	Average size	Statewide average size
2015	6	25.70	4.28	4.50
2014	10	13.95	1.40	5.02
2013	10	25.05	2.51	4.75
2012	11	13.93	1.27	4.98
2011	13	50.94	3.92	16.16
2010	13	38.29	2.95	3.56
2009	13	16.46	1.26	3.90
2008	25	30.27	1.21	4.56
2007	37	120.20	3.25	18.64
2006	42	102.24	2.43	3.93

Wildland fire traditionally has not been a serious problem in Butts County when compared to some counties in Georgia. The table below reflects the wildfire activity during fiscal year 2016 (July 2015 thru June 2016). FY 2015 and 2016 were record low years for wildfire activity in Butts County and Statewide due to above average precipitation through most of the year. In 2016 there were only eight wildfires burning 8 acres and in 2015 six wildfires burned 25.70 acres.

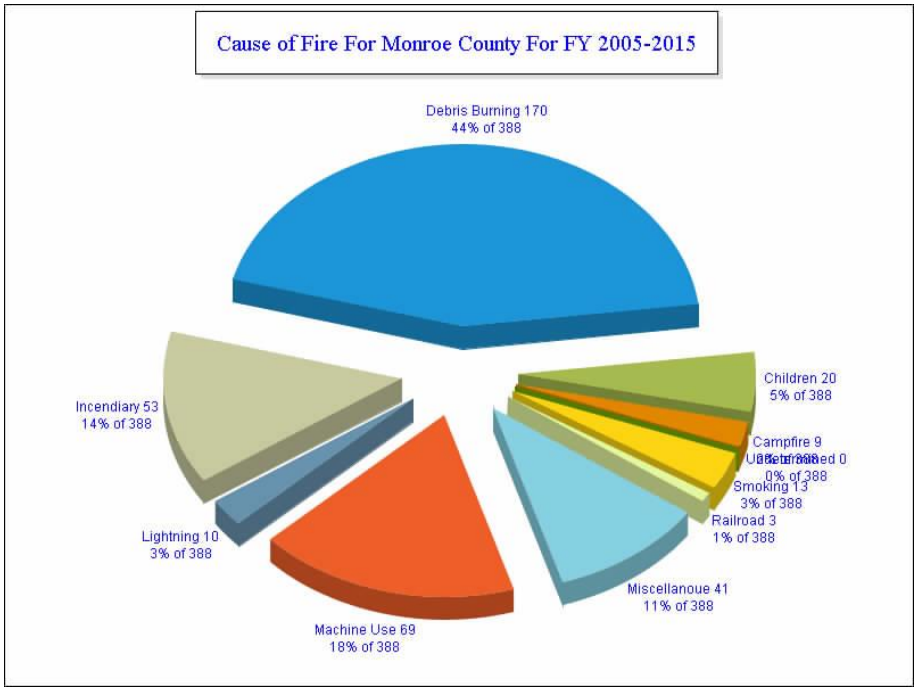
County = Butts	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0		0.00	0.80	2.22
Children	Children	1		4.10	1.00	2.07
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	0		0.00	1.00	2.99
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.20	3.96
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	3		2.10	2.00	1.92
Incendiary	Incendiary	0		0.00	0.40	0.20
Lightning	Lightning	0		0.00	0.20	0.16
Machine Use	Machine Use	0		0.00	1.20	2.05
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	0		0.00	0.20	0.07
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	2		1.40	0.60	0.42
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0		0.00	0.40	1.01
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	2		0.40	0.40	0.08
Railroad	Railroad	0		0.00	0.20	0.01
Smoking	Smoking	0		0.00	0.20	0.05
Undetermined	Undetermined	0		0.00	0.20	0.12
Totals for County: Butts Year: 2016		8		8.00	9.00	17.33

The following graphs indicate the average number of fires and acreage burned during fiscal years 2005 through 2015. During this time Butts County averaged 15 wildfires annually burning an average of 44 total acres.

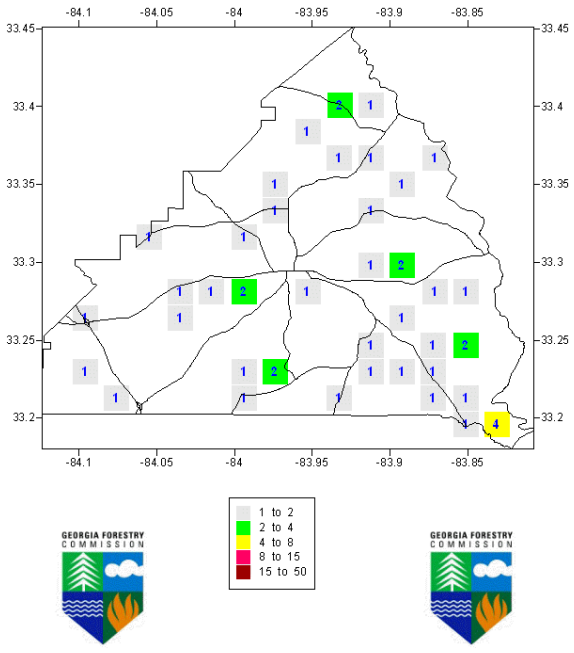




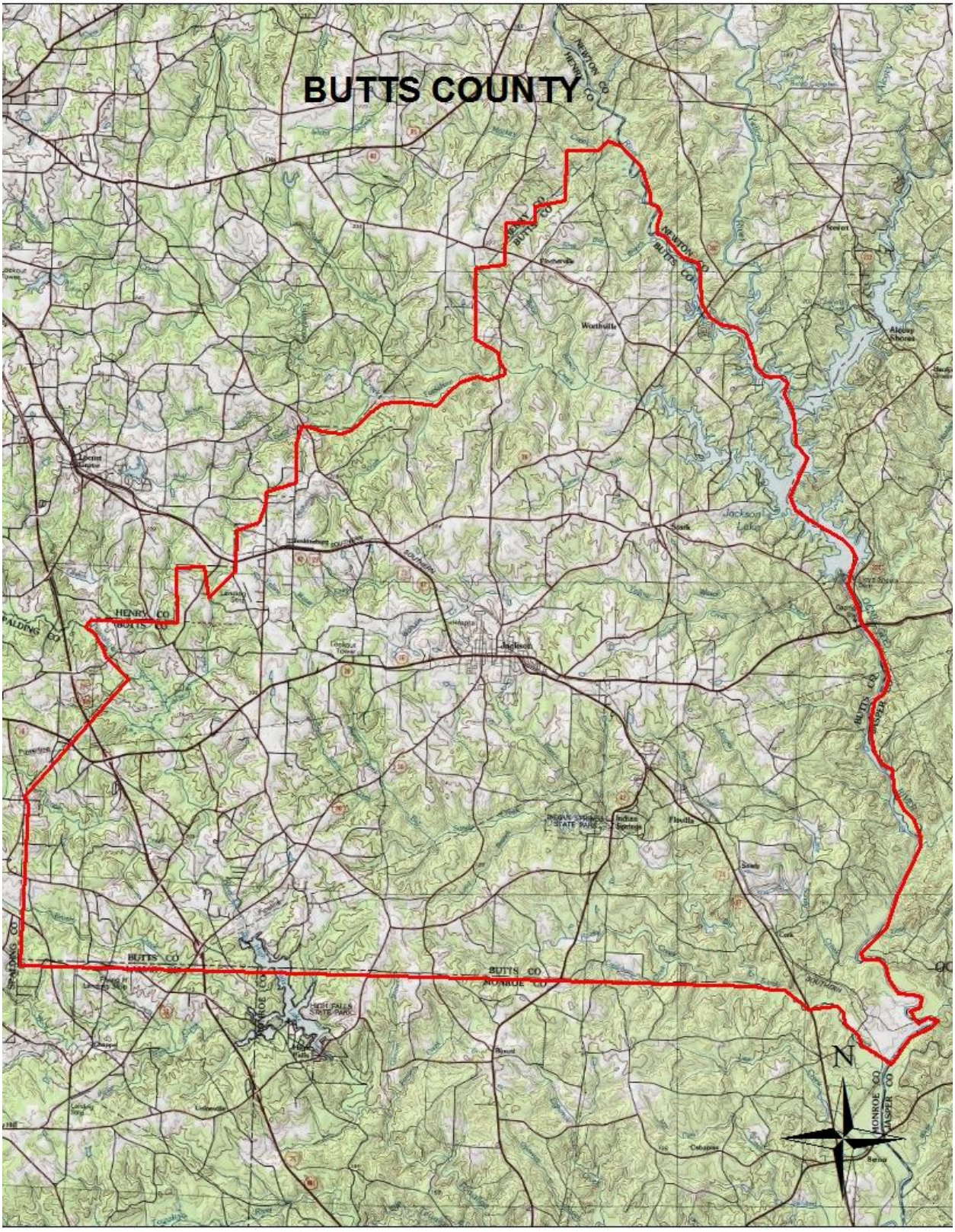
The pie chart below indicates by percentage the causes of wildfires from 2005 through 2015. The primary cause was careless debris burning accounting for 44%. Debris burning typically accounts for about 50% of Georgia's wildfires. The Secondary cause was machine use causing 18% followed by incendiary (arson) accounting for 14%.

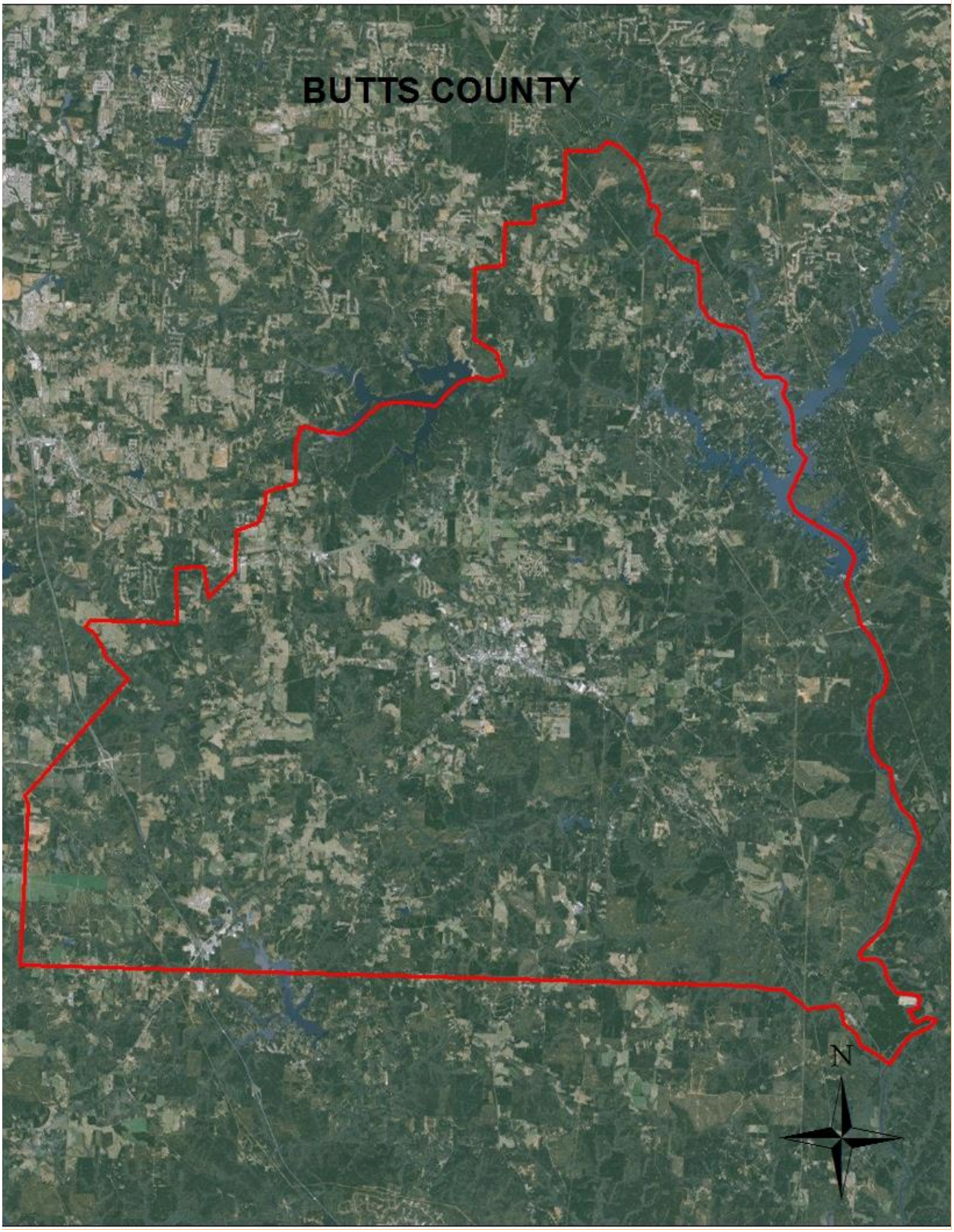


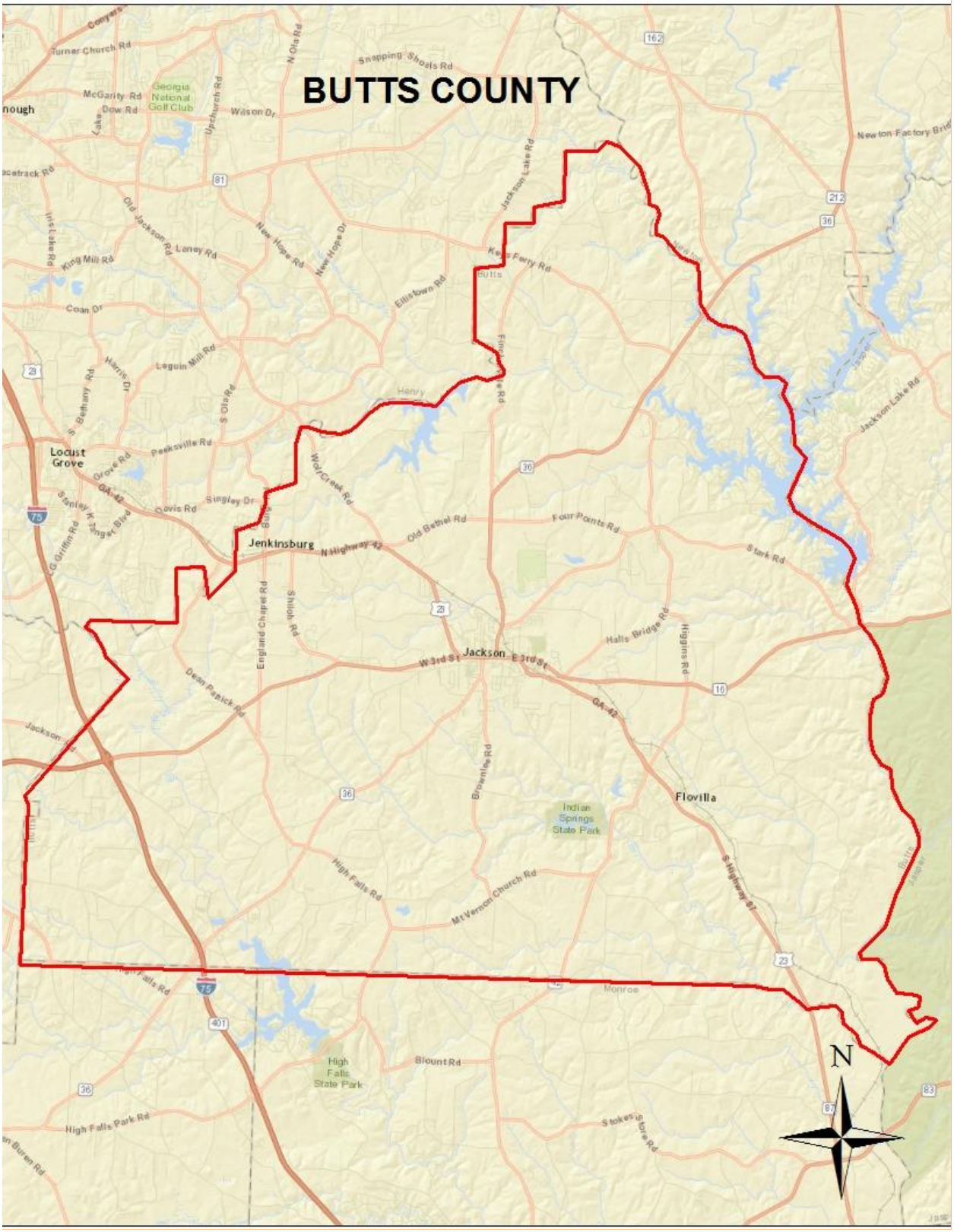
Fire Occurrence Map for
Butts County for Fiscal Year 2011-2015



III. COMMUNITY BASE MAPS




BUTTS COUNTY
N


BUTTS COUNTY
Jenkinsburg
Jackson
Flovilla
Locust Grove
Indian Springs State Park
High Falls State Park
Monroe
N

IV. 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 Urban Interface (WUI) reflects housing density depicting where humans and their structures meet or intermix with wildland fuels. For the **Butts County** project area, it is estimated that **26,617** people or **99 percent** of the total project area population (26,993) live within the WUI.

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.

Risk Assessments:

Following a meeting of Butts County officials and representatives of the Georgia Forestry Commission on July 28, 2009 assessments were made of communities at risk within the county. Areas designated for assessment were selected using the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SouthWRAP) Communities at risk layer and supported by local knowledge. It should be noted that not all communities within the SouthWRAP layer were assessed. The SouthWRAP information was used to assist local fire departments in locating areas that could be assessed. In all 18 areas were assessed using the Georgia Forestry Commission Form 140 for Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. One community was recognized as being at high risk, nine were designated as moderate and eight were classified as being low. Information on these areas is presented in tabular form in a document entitled 'Risk Summary for Areas of Concern Butts County, Georgia. This table is located below and is color coded to coincide with risk hazard rating. These communities represent a portion of communities at risk in Butts County. Other opportunities for Community assessment exist within the county and should be pursued as time and manpower allows.

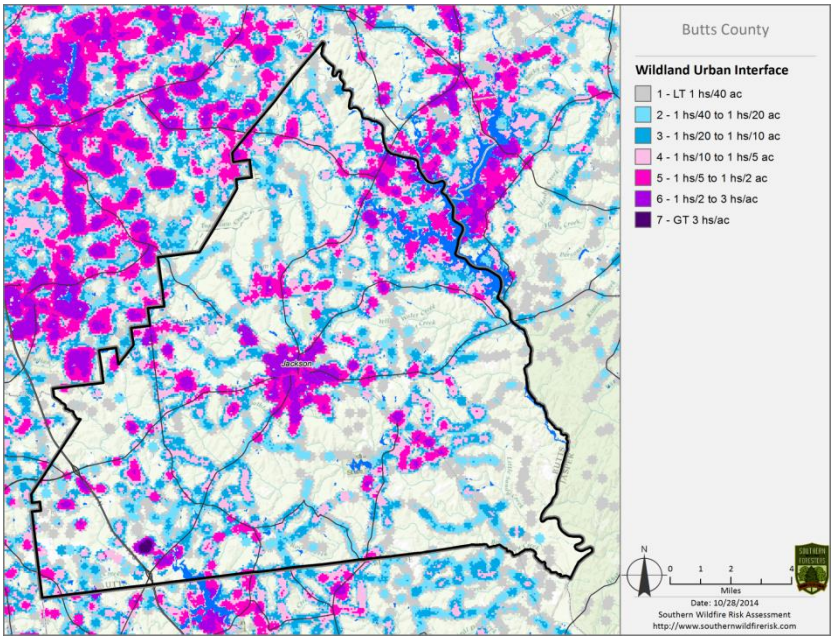
Risk Summary for Areas of Concern Butts County

Community Name or Location	Number of Homes	Hazard Rating	Risk Category	Jurisdiction
Weavers Lake Rd./High Falls Lake	55	131	High	Butts County Station 5
Peppy Lane and Redberry Rd.	19	128	Moderate	Butts County Station 5
Chapel Mill and Fenner Rd.	22	104	Moderate	Butts County Station 5 & 7
Hwy 36 and Fincherville	86	104	Moderate	Butts County E3, JFD E111
Chapel Mill and Panola Rd.	13	101	Moderate	Butts County Station 5
Southern Shores and Old South River Rd.	37	101	Moderate	Butts County Station 3
Goens Rd (Goens Rd. and Colwell)	6	99	Moderate	Butts County Station 7
Hamlin Rd. and Lunsford Rd.	18	95	Moderate	Butts County Station 3
Barnes Rd. (Barnes Rd. and Hwy 16W)	19	84	Moderate	Butts County Station 7
Morningside and Dawn Court	69	80	Moderate	Butts County Station 3
Harbour Shores Rd. (Lee Maddox Rd)	12	74	Low	Butts County Station 5
Hwy 36 E and Newton County Line	150	62	Low	Butts County Station 3
Whitetail Hills Subdivision	147	58	Low	Butts County Station 3
Mabry Rd.	39	58	Low	Butts County E3, JFD E11
Keys Ferry (Keys Ferry & Fincherville)	30	57	Low	Butts County Station 3
Deerfield Subdivision (Deerfield Cir. & 36W)	35	57	Low	Butts County Station 5
Forest Glenn Estates (Glade Rd. and Dr.)	88	42	Low	Butts County Station 7
Butrill (Butrill Rd. and West Ball Rd.)	46	38	Low	JFD E1-E11

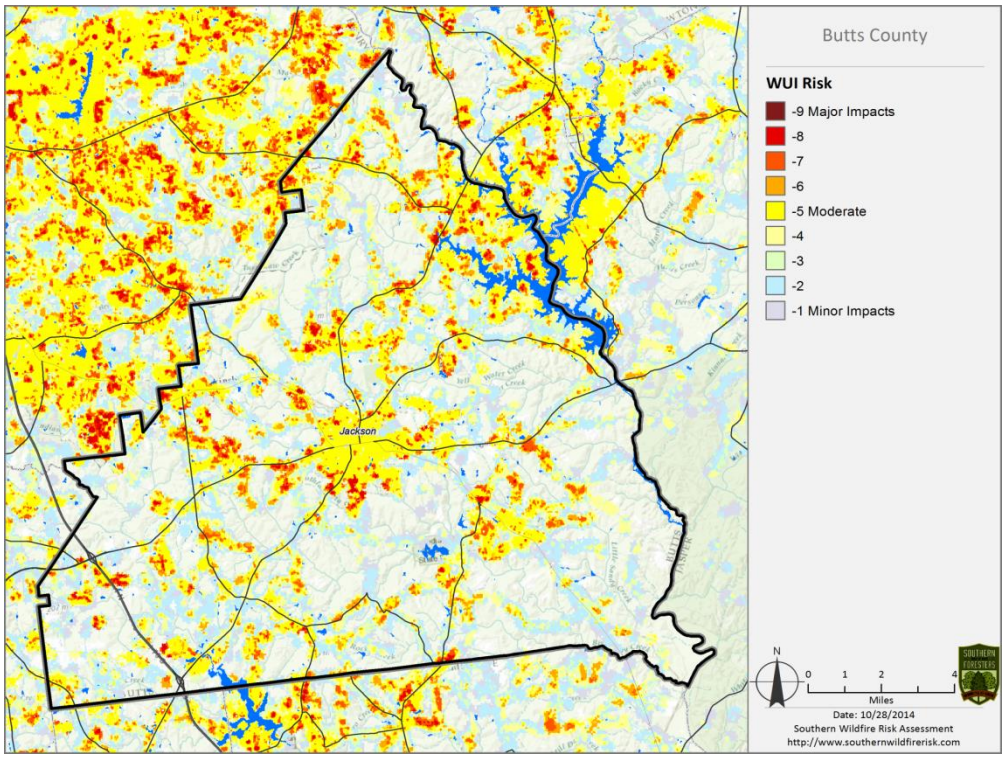
V. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & HAZARD RISK MAPS

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

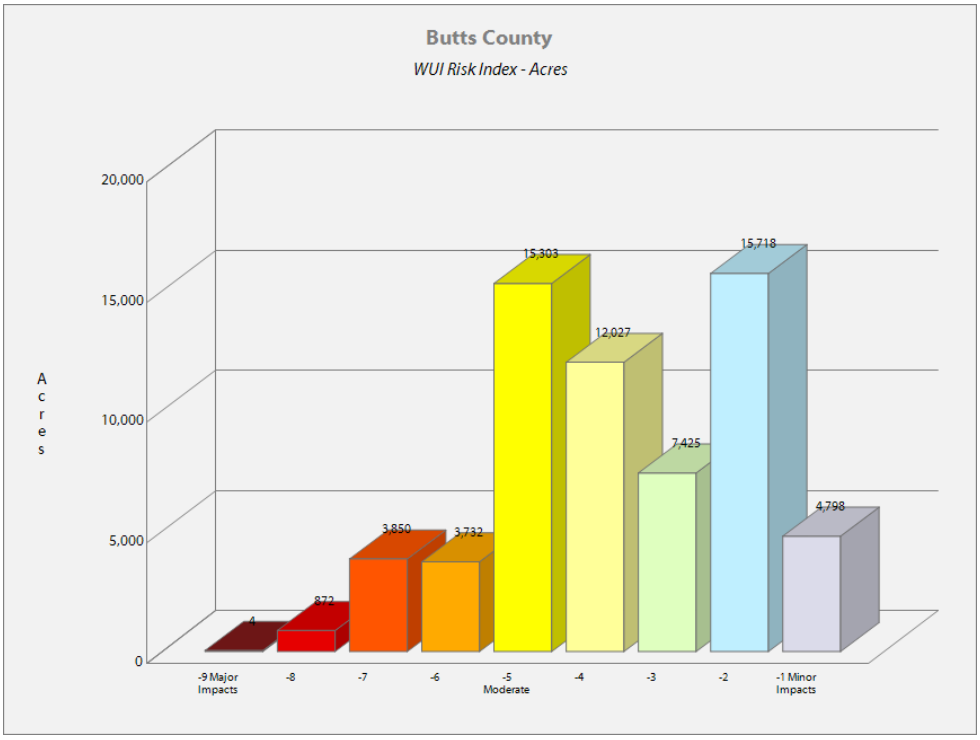
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

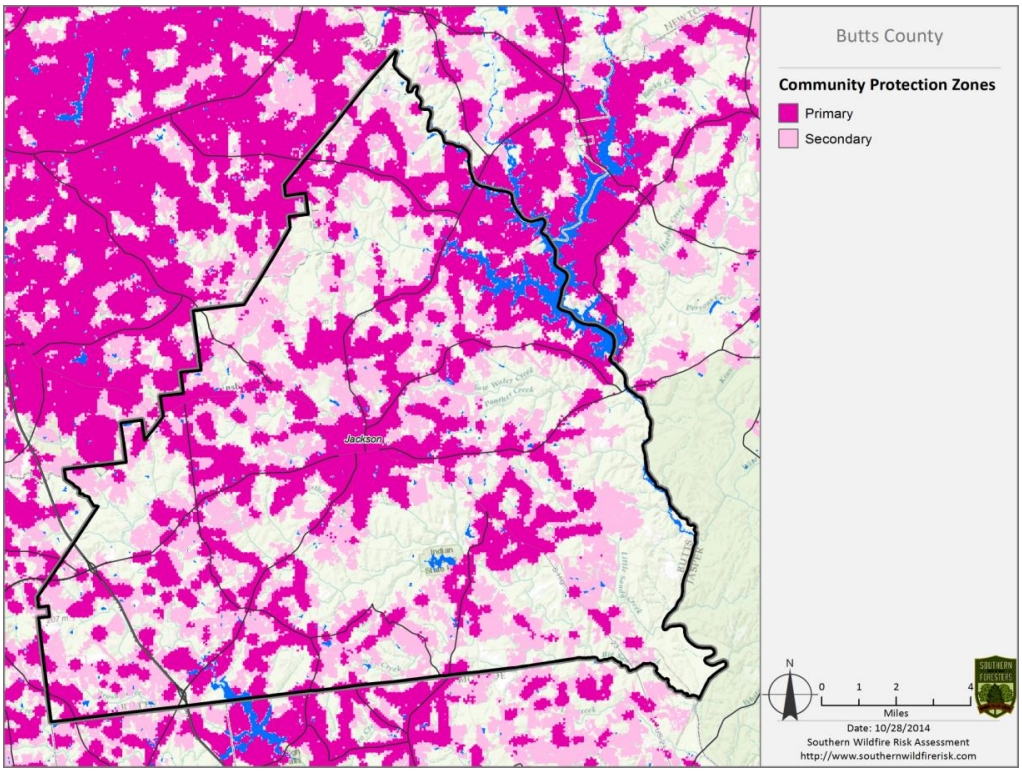


Wildland Urban Interface map from the Butts County SWRA Report

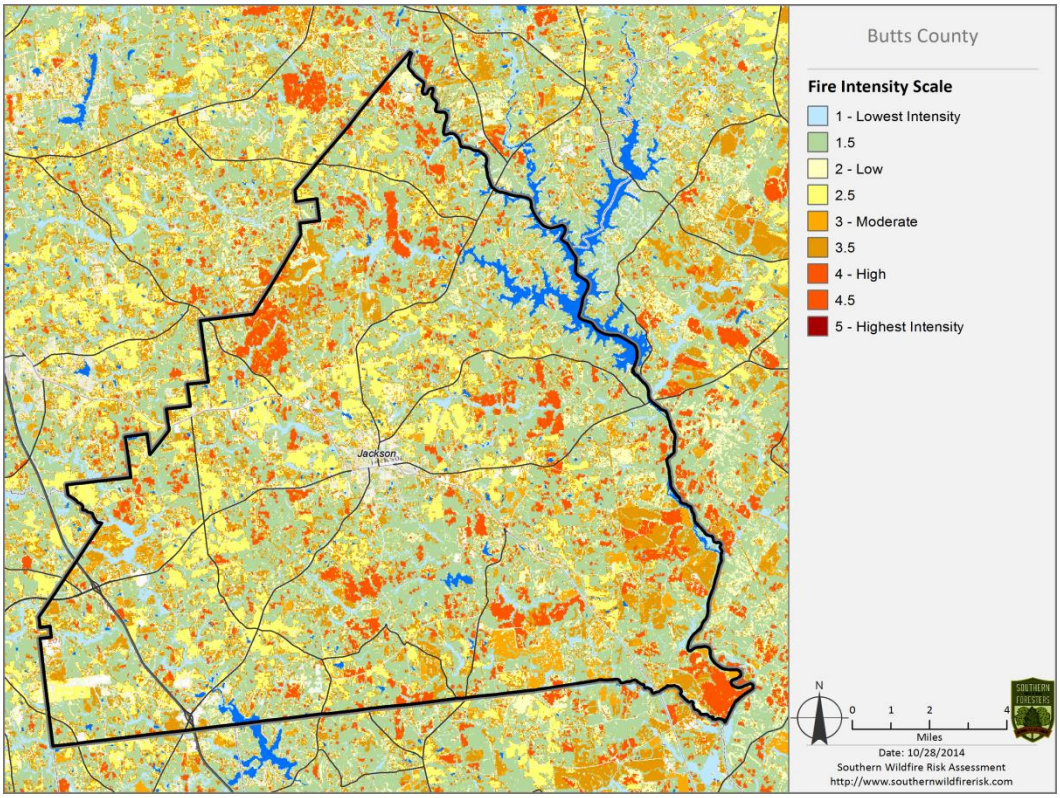


Wildland Interface Risk Map from the Butts County SWRA report and graph below indicates WUI Risk Index acreage.





Community Protection Zone map (above) and Fire Intensity Scale map (below)



VI. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed during follow-up meetings with County and State fire response agencies. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildland fire to communities and infrastructure. The following priorities were considered.

- Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction
- Wildland Fuel reduction or modification
- Improvements to capabilities of Wildland response agencies
- Public Education regarding risk of wildland fire

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Lack of defensible space	Improve defensible space around structures in communities at risk	All departments should examine structures in communities at risk in their response areas. Improvements to defensible space as referenced in Firewise guidelines should be conveyed to residents through media or direct contact.
Access problems for initial attack	Improve access problems	All County response agencies and the Georgia Forestry Commission should closely examine access in all communities identified to be at risk. When problems are identified corrective measures should be made.

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Structural Ignitability	Reduce structural ignitability	Citizens in communities at risk should be educated regarding methods to reduce structural ignitability as referenced in Firewise guidelines. This can be accomplished through media or direct contact.
Local Codes and Ordinances	Improve and amend to codes and ordinances pertaining to infrastructure and community protection from wildland fire.	Examine all existing codes and ordinances for problems regarding direct conflicts to wildland safety or lack of needed codes or enforcement. The International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) was adopted in Georgia in 2014.

Proposed Wildland Fuel Reduction or modification Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Fuel Hazards near Communities at risk	Prescribed Burning	Determine Communities at risk where Prescribed burning would be appropriate to use. Seek cooperation from adjacent landowners. Find funding to cover cost of burning. Prioritize burn compartments and execute.
Fuel continuity near communities at risk	Permanent and semi-permanent Fire breaks	Determine communities at risk where prescribed burning is not appropriate or desired. Install fire breaks and modify fuel continuity near these communities.
Fuel Hazard in public or shared spaces	Fuel Modification or reduction	Determine where hazards exist. Determine appropriate method for modification or reduction. Chipping, raking and piling, County pick-up, Organized Community Clean-up days could be beneficial.

Prescribed burning is a best management practice for the reduction of hazardous fuel accumulation. The Georgia Forestry Commission can provide a prescribed burning plan, installation of fire breaks, and can assist with burning and equipment standby when personnel are available.

Proposed Improvements to capabilities of Wildland Response Agencies Priorities

Problem or need	Improvement or solution	Details
Lack of qualification or training	Provide training opportunities	Examine training records of all wildland responders to insure training and qualifications match expected duties. Insure that all wildland responders have Basic Wildland Certification. Locate and secure funding for enhanced training from state and federal agencies.
Equipment needs	Improve or acquire Wildland fire equipment	Determine specific equipment needs to bring all wildland response equipment to NWCG Standards. Provide appropriate PPE to all County wildland responders. Provide wildland hand tools to County departments. Investigate needs for improvements to all wildland water handing and supply (dry hydrants, brush trucks, hose, etc.)

Proposed Public Education Priorities

Educational Priority	Responsible party	Method
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through direct contact	County, State, and municipal governments	Conduct Firewise meetings by each fire response jurisdiction assisted by Georgia Forestry Commission (state). Encourage communities to seek Firewise Community USA certification. Conduct door to door campaign in hazardous communities.
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through use of media	County, State, and municipal governments	Use PSA's in local newspapers and local radio stations. Utilize Firewise displays in local post offices and banks. Seek use of local EMC newsletter for Firewise message. Create poster sized notices for use in common public places (stores, post offices, etc. adjacent to high hazard areas advising residents about the hazard and how to protect themselves and their property. Distribute public notices concerning Firewise at local sporting events and other public gatherings.
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and Individual responsibility through formal certification	County, State, and municipal governments	The City of Flovilla, one of the first Firewise Communities in Georgia, has been certified since 2008. Indian Springs State Park and High Falls State Park were certified as Firewise Communities in 2014. Continue seeking formal firewise certification for selected communities in the extreme or high risk category as determined in the risk assessments.

In 2014 Indian Springs State Park received National Certification as a Firewise Community. Pictured here is former Chief Ranger Jenny Lynn Bruner completing a Community Risk Assessment of structures in the Group Camping area.

VII. Action Plan

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Lack of Defensible Space	Using the risk summary each department should conduct inspections of communities at risk in their jurisdiction or area of response for lack of defensible space. Findings will be conveyed to residents and treatment methods will be recommended in accordance with Firewise principles.
Access problems	Using the County risk maps the Georgia Forestry Commission and Butts County Fire officials should visit all identified communities at risk for the purpose of locating and resolving access difficulties. This inspection should extend into the wildland adjacent to the communities at risk looking for hindrances to suppression tactics
Structural Ignitability	Butts County Fire officials should examine structures for structural ignitability concerns at the time when the communities at risk are inspected for lack of defensible space. Using Firewise guidelines for reducing structural ignitability, (a checklist from the Firewise web site could be used) structures should be assessed and findings conveyed to residents. This could be through use of media or by direct contact.
Codes and Ordinances	The Georgia Forestry Commission should provide assistance to Butts County and municipal Fire Marshalls regarding County codes and ordinances for gaps and oversights which could cause problems in the wildland fire arena. Examples include proximity of propane tanks to structures, accumulations of debris, road widths in new developments, lack of proper identification pertaining to address or street names etc. Use International Wildland Urban Fire Interface Code, which was adopted in Georgia in 2014.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Hazardous Wildland Fuel Accumulations	The Georgia Forestry Commission will prioritize prescribed burning projects adjacent to Communities at risk where burning is determined to be appropriate. As the Flovilla community is in an area of high fire occurrence in the county it would be appropriate to pursue burning projects in natural and plantation pine stands nearby.
Wildland fuel continuity near communities at risk	The Georgia Forestry Commission supported by Indian Springs State Park personnel should determine locations and install permanent firebreaks to protect communities around Indian Springs Community, as well as State Park facilities.
Hazardous Fuel Accumulations in communities and hindrances to suppression	Using the risk summary, Fire departments could conduct community clean up days in communities at risk in their respective jurisdictions aimed at reducing hazardous fuels and hindrances to suppression in shared community space. Residents would be provided with guidance and access to disposal alternatives for materials removed.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

Improvement needed	Responsible Party and specific action
Improve training and qualification of Butts County Wildland firefighters	Chief Ranger Robert Hargrove, District Ranger Willie Boston of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Butts County Fire Chief should examine all training records for persons identified as wildland firefighters. All personnel should be certified Georgia Basic Wildland Firefighters or higher in qualification. Additional training and qualification should be sought for personnel identified in Butts County who are assigned specific Incident Command System (ICS) functions. Sources for available funds for training should be sought at Local, State, and Federal levels.
Improve or acquire wildland firefighting equipment	All stations for Butts County Fire Departments should inventory their present equipment relating to their wildland capability. Funding sources should be investigated from available grants or other sources. Needs for job specific wildland responses should be examined by Chief Ranger Robert Hargrove and Butts County Fire Chief.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

Opportunity	Responsible Party and Specific Action
Improve Public Education through direct contact	Prior to the onset of fire season(s) Rangers of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Butts County Fire personnel should conduct Firewise meetings in conjunction with normally scheduled fire department meetings. People living in or near extreme and high risk communities should be invited to these meetings by use of door to door campaigns or by mailbox flyers. Notices regarding these meetings could be placed in local post offices or stores near communities at risk. A Firewise display should be acquired and utilized at this meeting. Local news media should be invited to these meetings.
Improve Public Education through use of media	Prior to the onset of fire season(s) or during periods of particularly high fire danger use of the media should be stepped up by personnel of the Georgia Forestry Commission. This should include use of all available media in the County. PSA's should be run weekly during periods of high to extreme fire danger. Signs or poster boards could be developed for display in public spaces near communities at risk advising residents that they live in areas that are susceptible to wildland fire and directing them to sources of information regarding wildland fire safety. Firewise materials should be provided to the local building permit office for distribution to new home builders and developers.
Improve Public Education through Firewise certification	The Georgia Forestry Commission along with Butts County Fire Department continue pursuing Firewise Community USA certification for additional communities. The City of Flovilla, Indian Springs State Park, and High Falls State Park Firewise certification should be maintained.

Timetables for Actions

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

- Steps to examine communities at risk for defensible space and structural ignitability should begin as soon as practical with existing work schedules. This should occur prior to the time when most citizens begin fall or spring cleanup projects in order for recommendations regarding improvements to defensible space and reduction of structural ignitability to coincide with these seasonal actions.
- Pre-planning to examine access and suppression problems should take place as soon as possible by fire department jurisdiction.
- Codes and Ordinances should be examined as soon as possible.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- The prescribed burn project to reduce fuels near the Flovilla Community should take place in late winter to early spring of 2017. Any other priority burn projects or installation of pre suppression fuel breaks should take place during this same window.
- Steps to reduce fuels in communities at risk should coincide with steps to improve defensible space and reduce structural ignitability at the earliest possible opportunity as manpower and schedules permit.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- Cooperation between state and local wildland suppression forces regarding improvements to training and equipment should begin immediately.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct contact with residents in Communities at risk should take place as soon as possible.
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.
- The certification of additional high risk communities should begin as soon as scheduling and manpower permits.
- Continue mitigation efforts with City of Flovilla, Indian Springs State Park, and High Falls State Park to maintain their Firewise Community certification.

Assessment of Actions

Reduction of Community hazard and structural ignitability

- Direct measurement of the number of communities assessed would be the appropriate measure of success
- Any meetings that result in cooperation between wildland departments should be logged along with minutes of those meetings. Goals should be set and reviewed after each meeting.
- Any changes to or additions to codes and ordinances would be an obvious measure of success.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Acres burned would be the appropriate measure for fuel reduction. A direct measure of linear feet of firebreaks would be an appropriate measure for pre suppression breaks.
- Fuel reduction in communities at risk would be measured by the number of communities affected and number of projects completed.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- A direct measure of the number of capabilities or qualifications gained would be the appropriate measure of success.
- Any equipment acquired or any equipment brought up to national standards would be the appropriate measure of success.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct measurement of the number of persons contacted, literature distributed, public notices posted, news articles published, radio programs aired, etc. would be the best measure of success. Additional communities certified as a Firewise USA community would be an obvious measure of success.

VIII. GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

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.

IX. 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 a*ction 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 fire 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 edition)

X. 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.wildfireprepday.org

Appended Documents:

Butts County Southern Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

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

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The Georgia Forestry Commission provides leadership, service, and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources.

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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