

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Dodge County, Georgia



SEPTEMBER, 2016

Prepared by:
Mike Bloodworth, Chief Ranger, Dodge County
Will Fell CWPP Specialist
Beryl Budd, Wildfire Prevention Specialist (2016 revision)
Georgia Forestry Commission
126 Jim Harp Rd
Eastman, GA 31023

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

Bobby Peacock
Dodge County Manager
478-374-4361

Stanley Stevens
Dodge County, EMA Director/Mitchell VFD Chief
478- 374-8136
Dodge.county@gema.ga.gov.

Mike Bloodworth
Chief Ranger, Dodge County Unit
Georgia Forestry Commission
478-374-6981
mbloodworth@gfc.state.ga.us.

Lane Defee
District Manager
Ogeechee District
Georgia Forestry Commission
ldefee@gfc.state.ga.us

Carl Johnson
Eastman Fire Chief
478-374-3431
Efd-cjohnson1@mchsi.com.

Alex Cannon
Rhine VFD Chief
478-697-0334

James Atkins
Chauncey VFD Chief
229-315-9086

Todd Hightower
Mitchell VFD Chief
478-697-3336

Rueben Tripp
Cross Roads VFD Chief
478-231-9006

James Huff
Roddy VFD Chief
478-230-8767

Bob Braswell
Gresston VFD Chief
478-285-2663

Ronnie Rogers
Chester VFD Chief
478-358-4568

Joey Coleman
Plainfield VFD Chief
478-285-1924

Lee Kirkland
Milan VFD Chief
478-609-1215

PLAN CONTENTS

PAGE #

I. Objectives 1

II. Community Collaboration 1

III. Community Background and Wildfire History 3

IV. Community Base Maps 8

V. Community Wildfire Risk Assessment 11

 Wildland Urban Interface and Hazards

 Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment & Hazard Maps

 Community Assessments

VI. Prioritized Mitigation Recommendations 20

VII. Action Plan 24

VIII. Grant Funding & Mitigation 26

IX. Glossary 27

X. Sources of Information 29

Appended \Documents.....

 Dodge County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

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 Dodge 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, homes, property, and infrastructure is the desired outcome.

An initial meeting was held on November 14th 2008 at the Eastman Fire Department attended by the following core planning team;

Will Fell	CWPP Specialist, Georgia Forestry Commission
Mike Bloodworth	Chief Ranger, Dodge County Unit, Georgia Forestry Commission
Carl Johnson	Chief, City of Eastman Fire Department
Stanley Stephens	Dodge County, EMA Director and Chief Mitchell VFD
Alex Cannon	Chief, Rhine VFD
James Atkins	Chief, Chauncey VFD
Chuck Fore	Management Forester, Dodge County, Georgia Forestry Commission

After an initial discussion of the processes and goals we hope to accomplish with this report, it was decided that we would identify and evaluate selected high risk communities and areas within the wildland urban interface. At the completion of this we would reconvene and discuss and evaluate the completed community wildfire risk assessments. It was further decided that we would provide for mitigation recommendations for each of the ten fire districts. The chiefs of the ten fire departments in the county assessed their districts and reconvened in February 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. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND WILDFIRE HISTORY

In the heart of central Georgia's wiregrass region, Dodge County stretches 500 square miles from the Oconee River to the Ocmulgee River. The state legislature established Dodge County in 1870, forming it from parts of Montgomery, Pulaski, and Telfair counties. In 1872 and 1875, parts of Dodge County were shifted back into Telfair County. Dodge County was named for William Earle Dodge of New York, cofounder of one of the world's largest mining and metals companies, and owner of significant timberlands in central Georgia.

The original inhabitants of the area were Creek Indians, who ceded their lands in the treaties of Fort Wilkinson (1802) and Washington (1805). White settlers began arriving in the 1840s.

In 1869 the president of the Macon and Brunswick Railroad named a station stop in the area for William Pitt Eastman, a northeastern industrialist with extensive Georgia land holdings. Upon visiting the newly named stop, Eastman purchased property on both sides of the rail line and laid out a town. At Eastman's invitation, William Dodge, president of the Georgia Land and Lumber Company, funded the building of a courthouse in exchange for the new county's receiving his name. The county seat, named for Eastman, was incorporated as a town in 1871 and as a city in 1905. The current courthouse was built in 1908, replacing a courthouse built soon after the county's creation. In addition to Eastman there are three incorporated towns: Chauncey, Chester, and Rhine.

During the 1870s the Georgia Land and Lumber Company, which bought more than 300,000 acres of land rich in longleaf pine for less than ten cents an acre in 1868, began to harvest timber in the county, displacing local farmers who in many cases were evicted by the company. A series of court cases, imprisonments, and assassinations arranged by the company in collusion with the federal government followed, and although in 1923 many of the original landowners finally regained their land, it was by then nearly barren. With the help of chemical fertilizers, landowners shifted from forestry to cotton farming, but six years later, with the onset of the Great Depression, many lost the little they had acquired. The county's failing economy was further set back by boll weevil damage to cotton during the same era. This infestation led farmers to diversify their crops to include watermelon, peanuts, pecans, and livestock. There were also a few small sawmills in operation, and turpentine production provided some income.

Williamson Stuckey, a pecan farmer in Eastman, began selling his wife's pecan candies in the mid-1930s, building a large and well-known national business by the 1960s. Stuckey's business represented the beginning of the county's economic shift away from farming.

Places of interest include Eastman House, built by William Pitt Eastman in 1872; Jay Bird Springs Resort, which boasts a large swimming pool of spring water; Orphans Cemetery/Williamson Mausoleum, founded by Dodge County entrepreneur Albert G. Williamson and named in honor of the six orphaned Williamson brothers who moved to Dodge County from North Carolina; and Stuckey Candy Company's Original Home, currently the Standard Candy Company.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population was 19,171 (69 percent white, 29.4 percent black, and 1.3 percent Hispanic). (Courtesy *New Georgia Encyclopedia*)

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 20th Century, Georgia’s population increased substantially. Homeowners in Georgia must contend with natural hazards including wildfire, tornados, and flooding. 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.

While Dodge County is largely an agricultural area, about 64% of the land area is still in woodland. With the exception of a few large blocks of woodland in the southeastern portion of the county, there are homes scattered throughout the county. Along with several subdivisions and small communities, the risk from wildland urban interface is fairly substantial and general throughout the county.

Over the past fifty years, Dodge County has averaged almost 95 reported wildland fires per year. These wildfires have burned an average of 353 acres annually. The leading causes of these fires, was debris burning causing 47% and Incendiary or arson (21%) was the next leading cause.

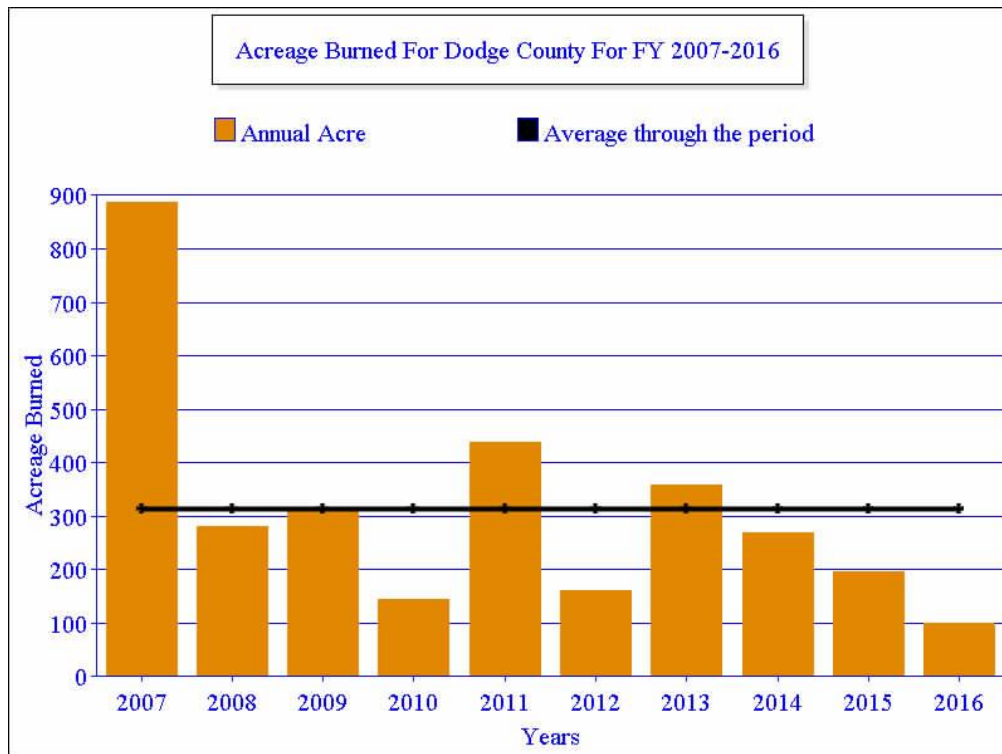
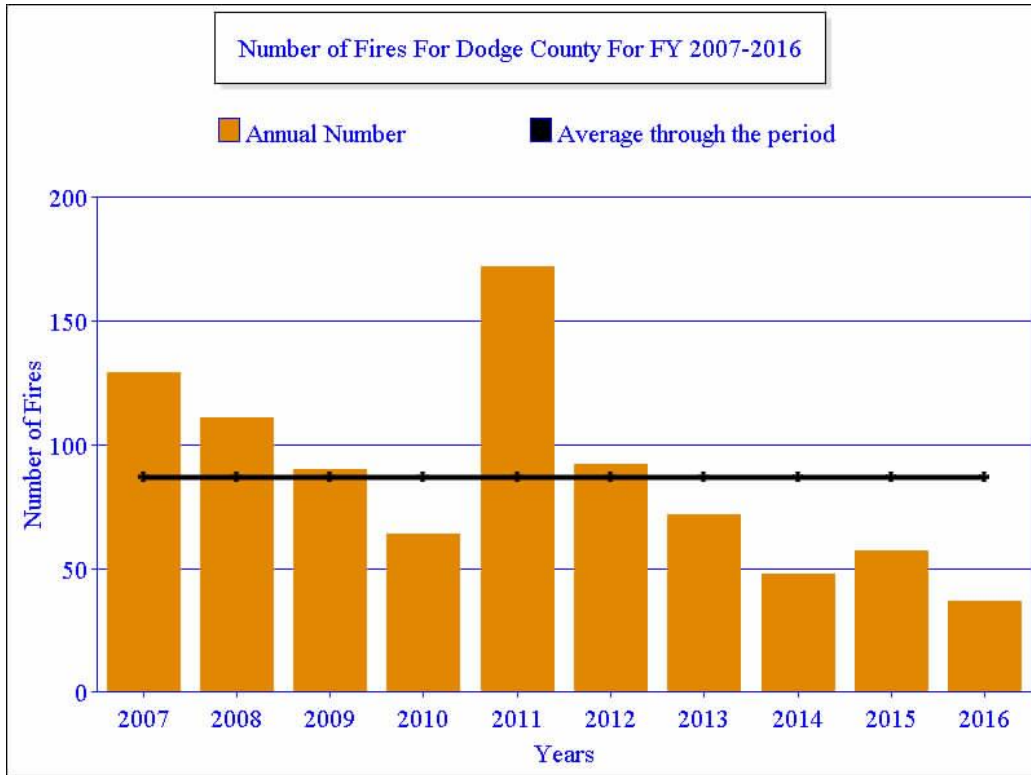
The table below indicates the number of wildfires and acreage burned in Dodge County over the last 10 years from 2007-2016. The chart also indicates the average annual size compared to the Statewide average. During these years the State experienced two (2) record breaking years for wildfire activity, 2007 and 2011, with large wildfires in SE Georgia and the Okeefenokee Wildlife Refuge. During this period the State also experienced two (2) of the lowest years for wildfire activity in 2010 and 2015, due to above average precipitation throughout the State.

Year	Number of Fires	Acreage Burned	Dodge County Average Size	Statewide Average size
2007	129	888.11	6.88	18.64
2008	111	280.12	2.52	4.56
2009	90	310.27	3.45	3.90
2010	64	143.71	2.25	1.86
2011	172	437.78	2.55	22.90
2012	92	162.02	1.76	3.98
2013	72	357.99	4.97	3.28
2014	48	268.48	5.59	3.07
2015	57	195.38	3.43	1.95
2016	37	99.60	2.69	4.13
Average	87	314.35	3.61	6.83

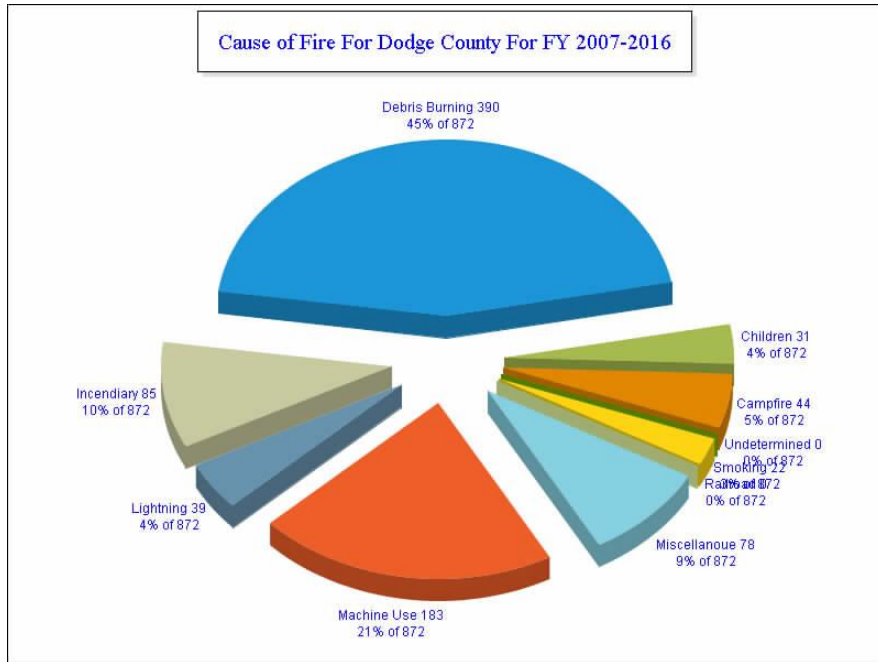
The chart below indicates Dodge County wildfire activity by cause during the 2016 fiscal year (July 2015-June 2016). In comparison to the 5 year average all categories are much lower, which is due to the above average precipitation levels during the year.

County = Dodge	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1	2.12	3.40	10.14
Children	Children	0	0.00	2.80	4.37
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1	3.69	4.00	20.59
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0	0.00	0.60	0.74
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	5	40.81	5.20	31.62
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	0	0.00	2.40	6.73
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0	0.00	0.20	0.05
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	5	13.63	11.40	29.92
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	6	12.93	3.00	21.09
Incendiary	Incendiary	10	10.60	5.80	18.07
Lightning	Lightning	1	0.25	2.00	12.52
Machine Use	Machine Use	3	3.54	11.00	19.48
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	0	0.00	0.80	1.28
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	0	0.00	0.20	0.03
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	0	0.00	0.20	0.21
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	4	2.14	5.40	33.07
Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	0	0.00	0.40	2.96
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1	9.89	0.80	2.36
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	0.60	0.22
Smoking	Smoking	0	0.00	1.00	1.26
Totals for County: Dodge Year: 2016		37	99.60	61.20	216.69

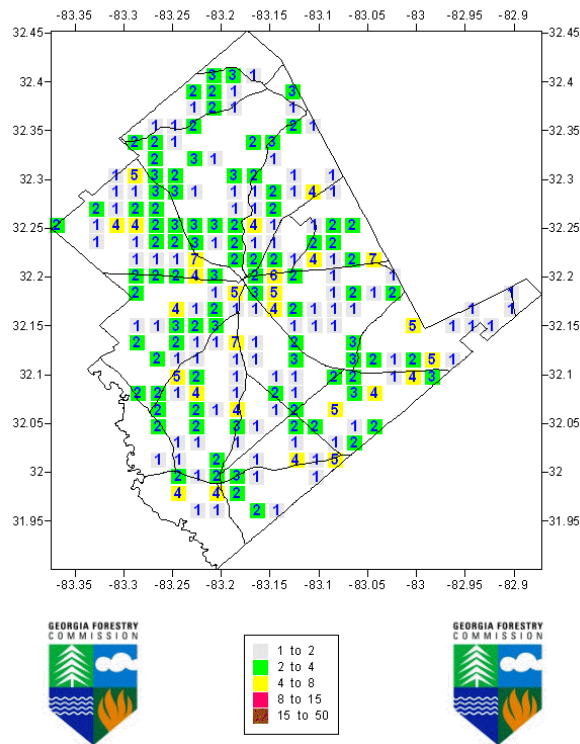
The graphs below indicate the number of wildfires annually and the acreage burned during FY 2007-2016



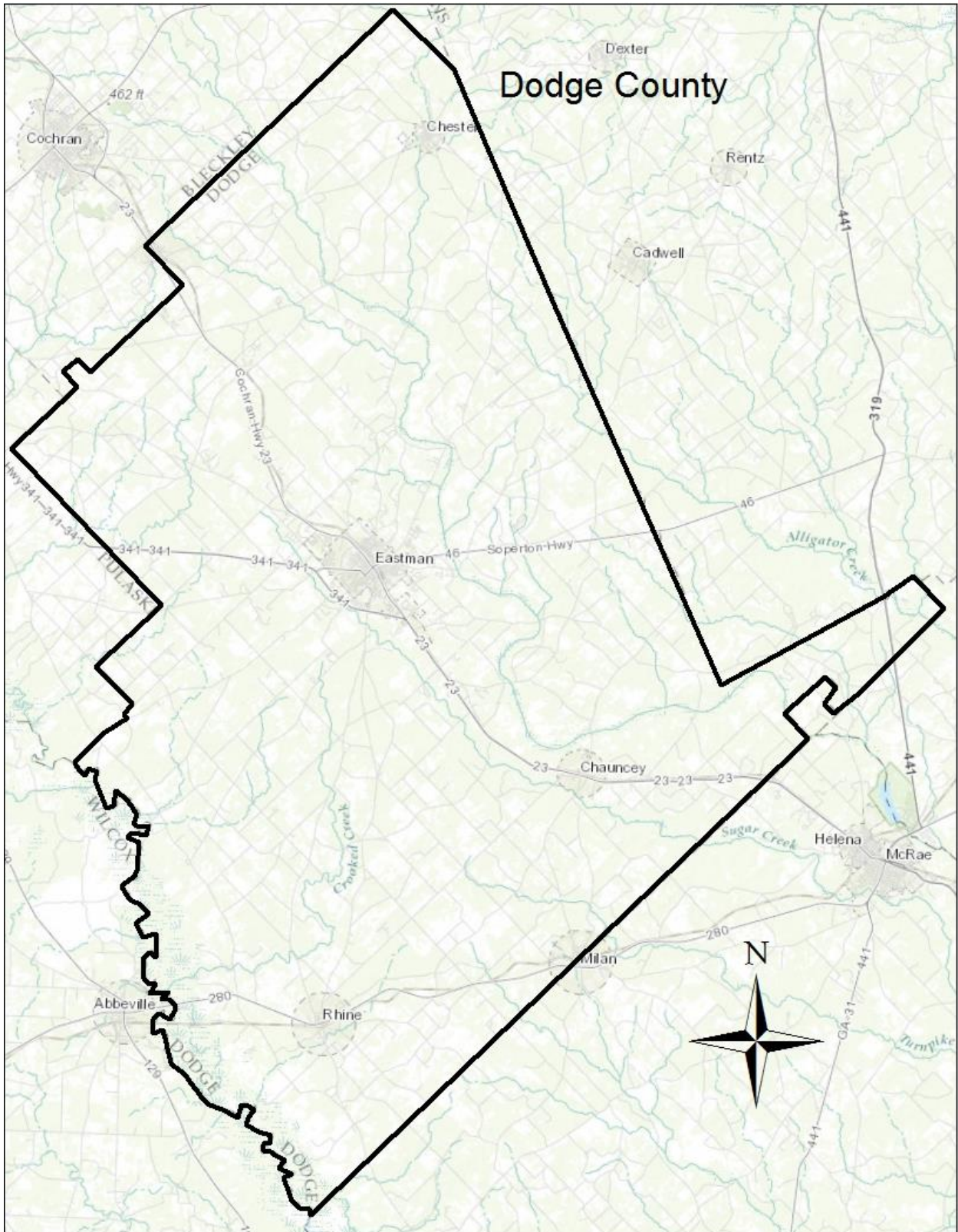
The pie chart below indicates the causes of wildfires during FY 2007-2016. Debris Burning (45%), Machine Use (21%) and Incendiary (10%) caused wildfires account for over 75% of total activity. The map at bottom of the page indicates location of wildfires in the County during FY 2011-2015.

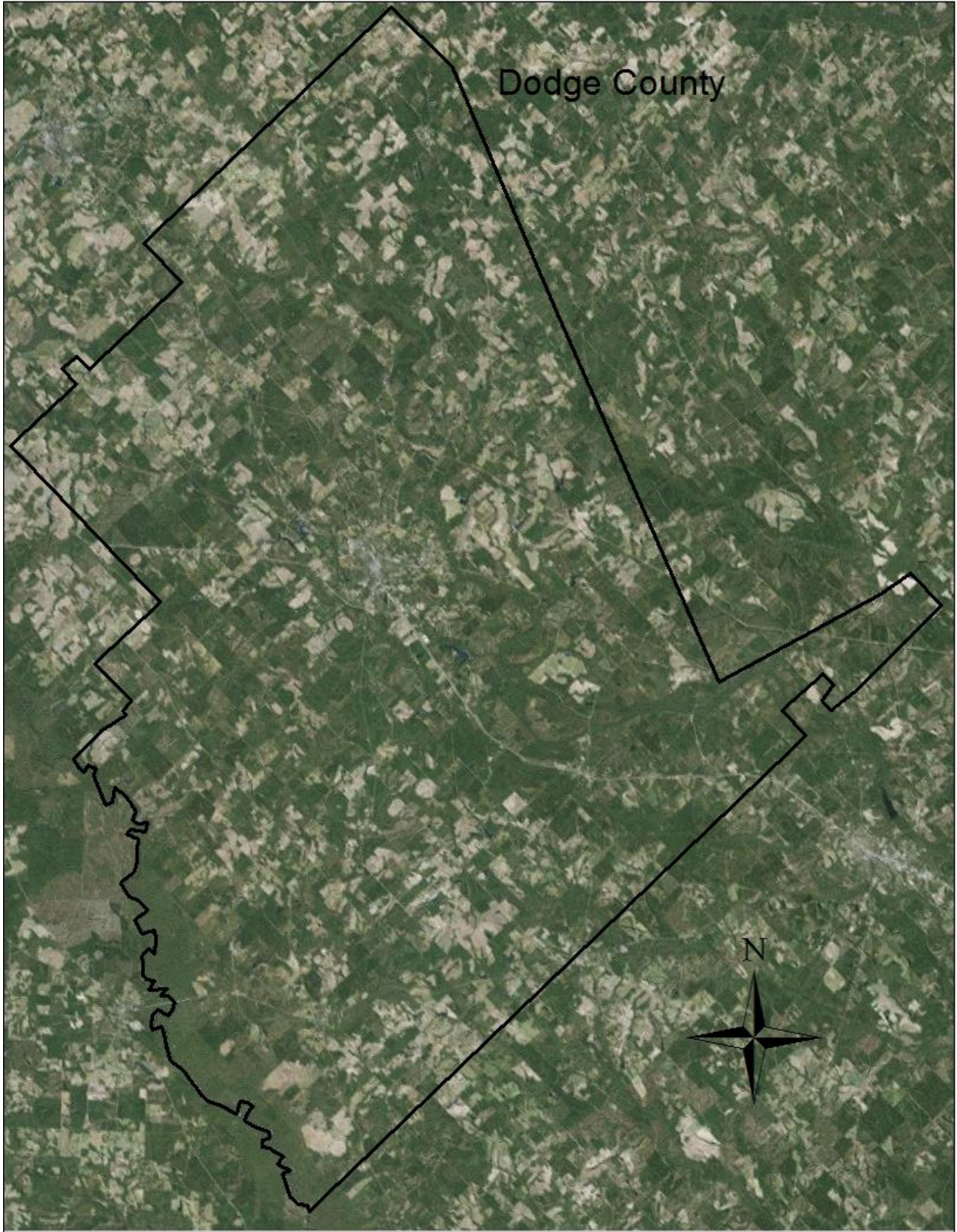


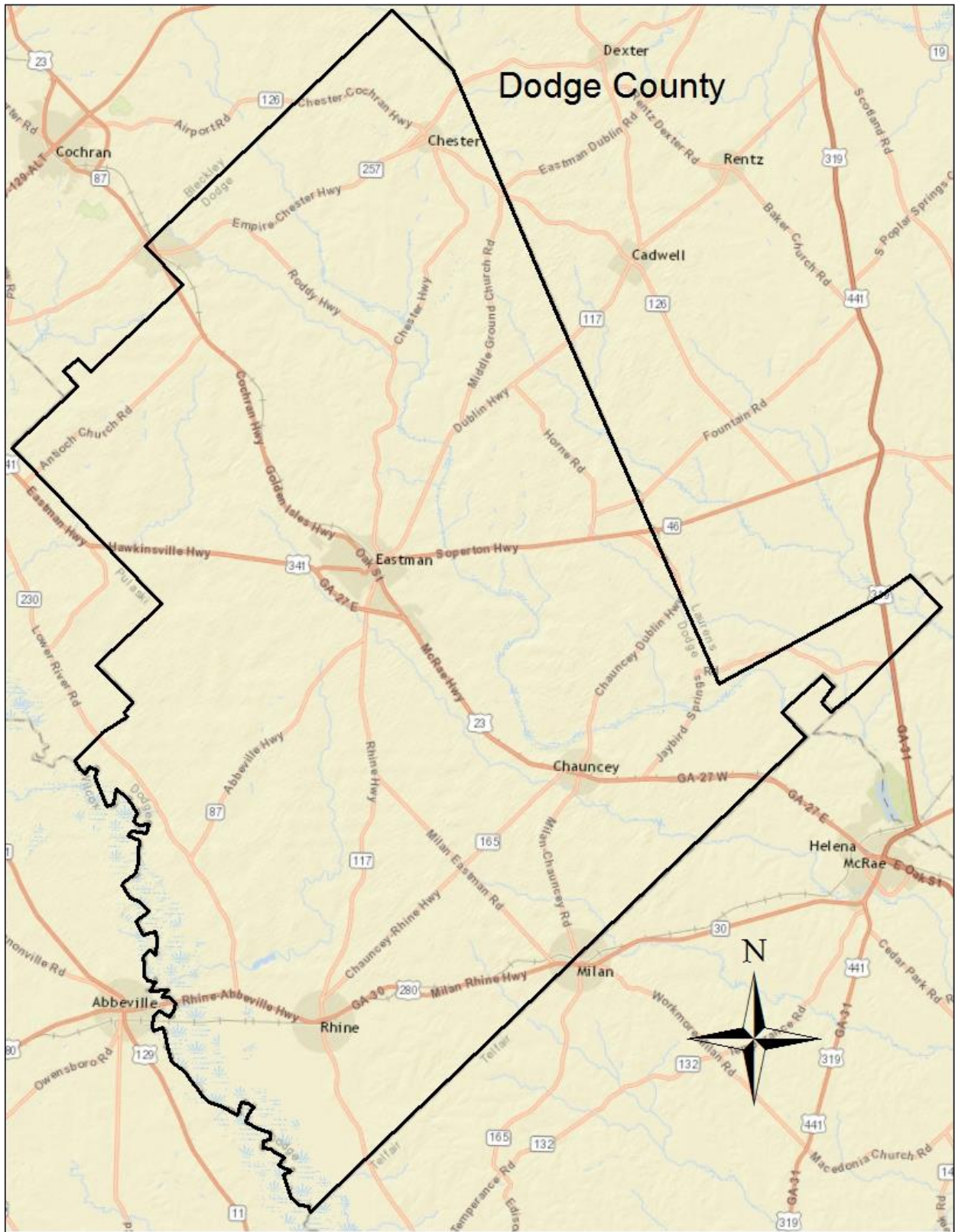
Fire Occurrence Map for Dodge County for Fiscal Year 2011-2015



IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAPS







V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Wildland-Urban Interface

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

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

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

(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

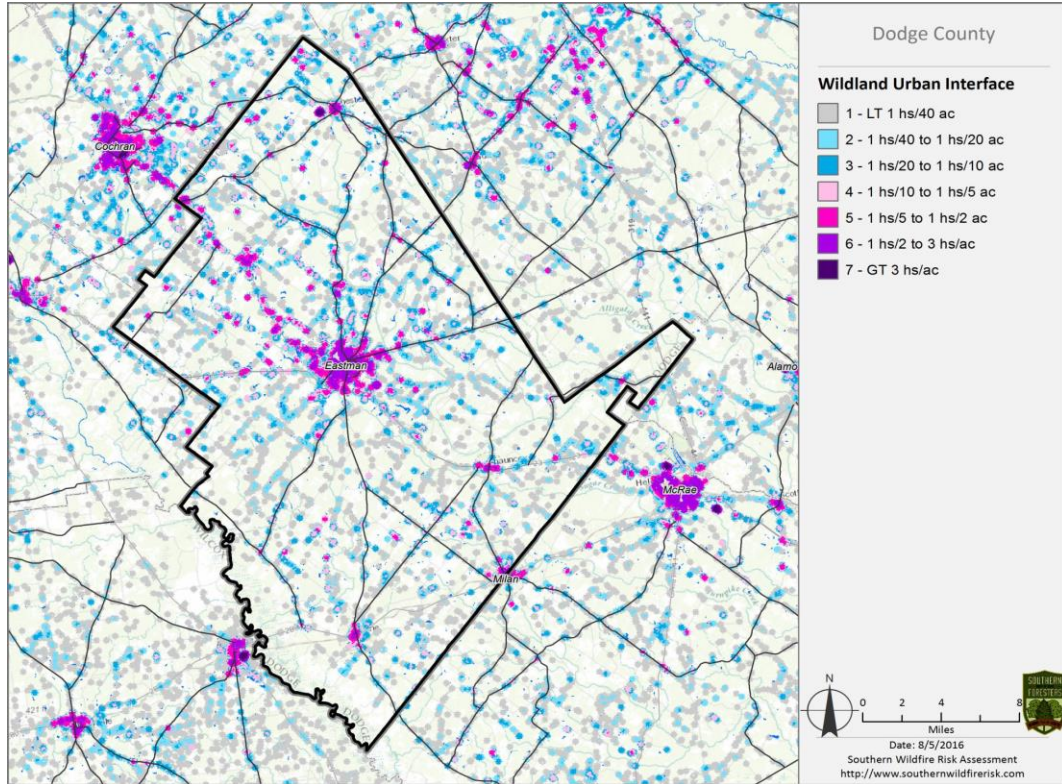
- Narrow one-lane roads with no turn-around room, inadequate or poorly maintained bridges and culverts are frequently found in wildland urban interface areas. Access should be sized-up and an evacuation plan for all emergency personnel should be developed.

Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary & Hazard Maps SouthWRAP

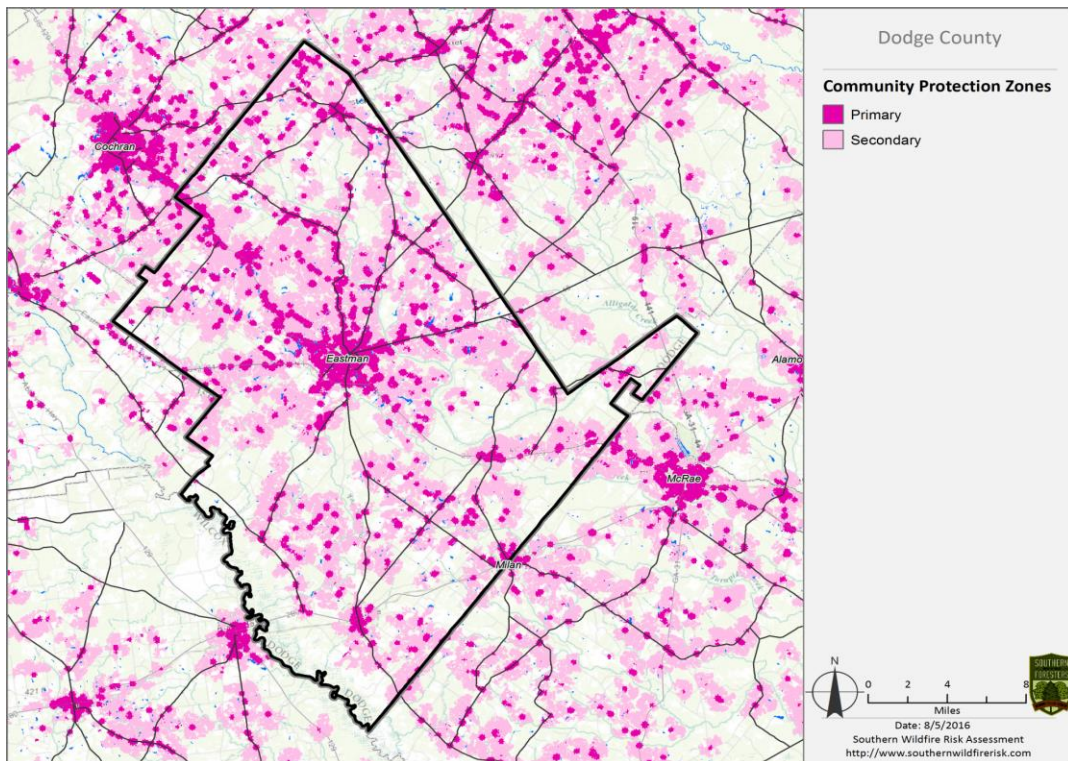
The Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment tool, developed by the Southern Group of State Foresters, was released to the public in July 2014. This tool allows users of the Professional Viewer application of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) web Portal (SouthWRAP) to define a specific project area 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 Dodge County. The SouthWRAP (SWRA) products included in this report are designed to provide the information needed to support the following key priorities:

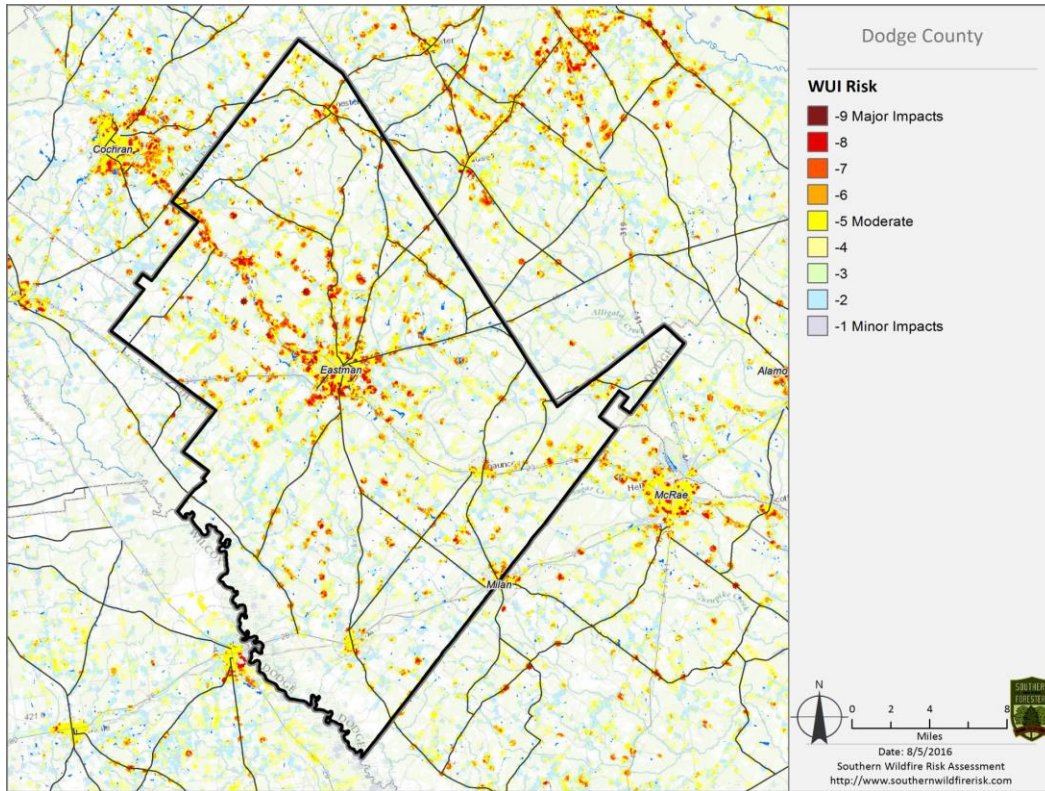
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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



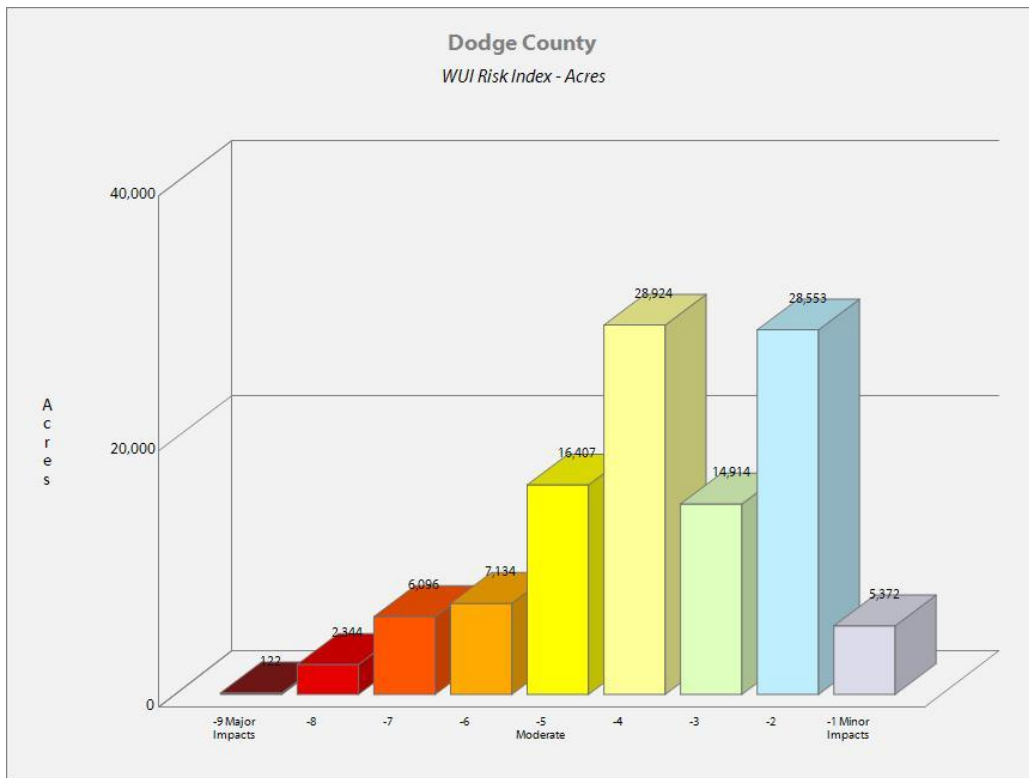
Wildland Urban Interface map



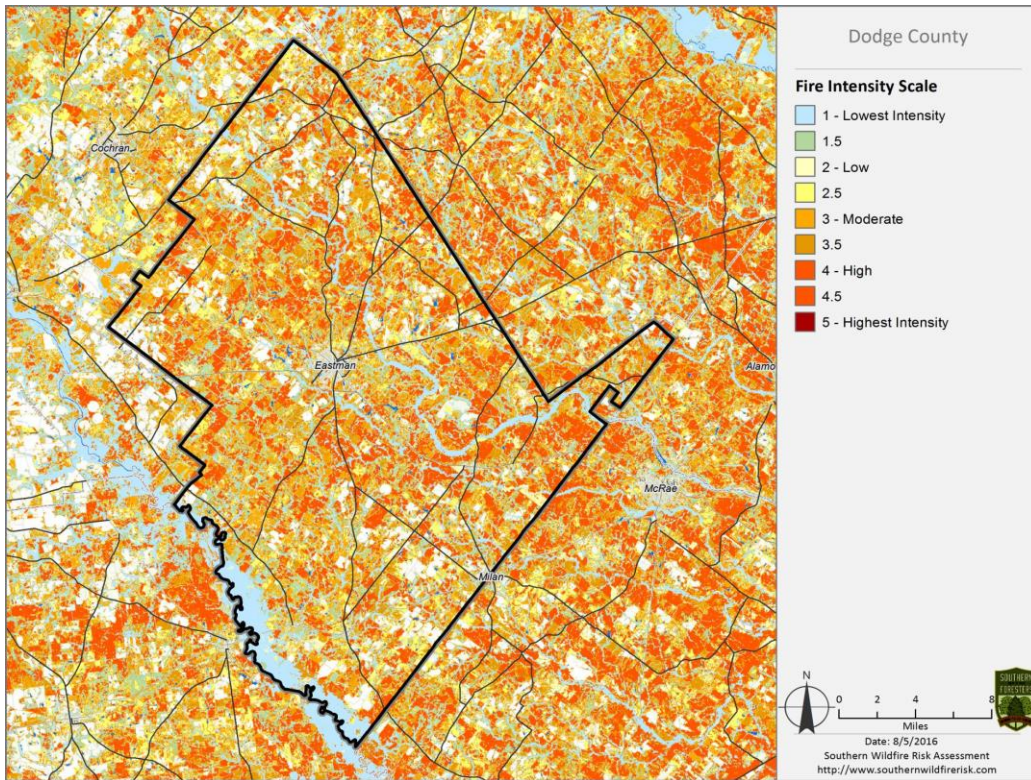
Community Protection Zone map



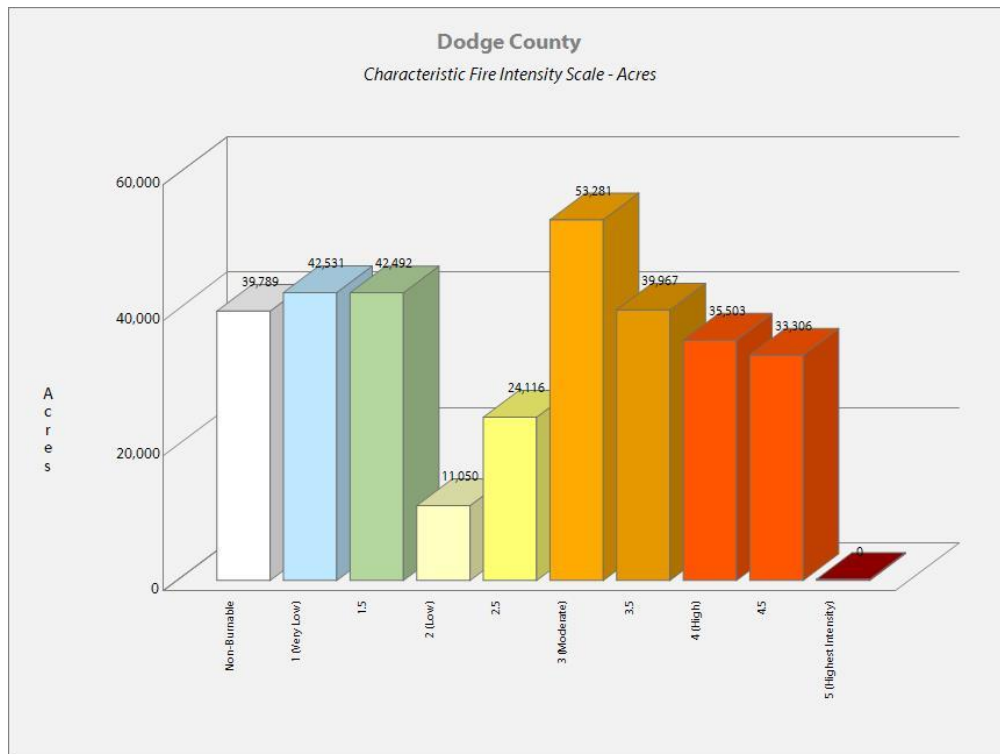
Wildland Urban Interface risk map



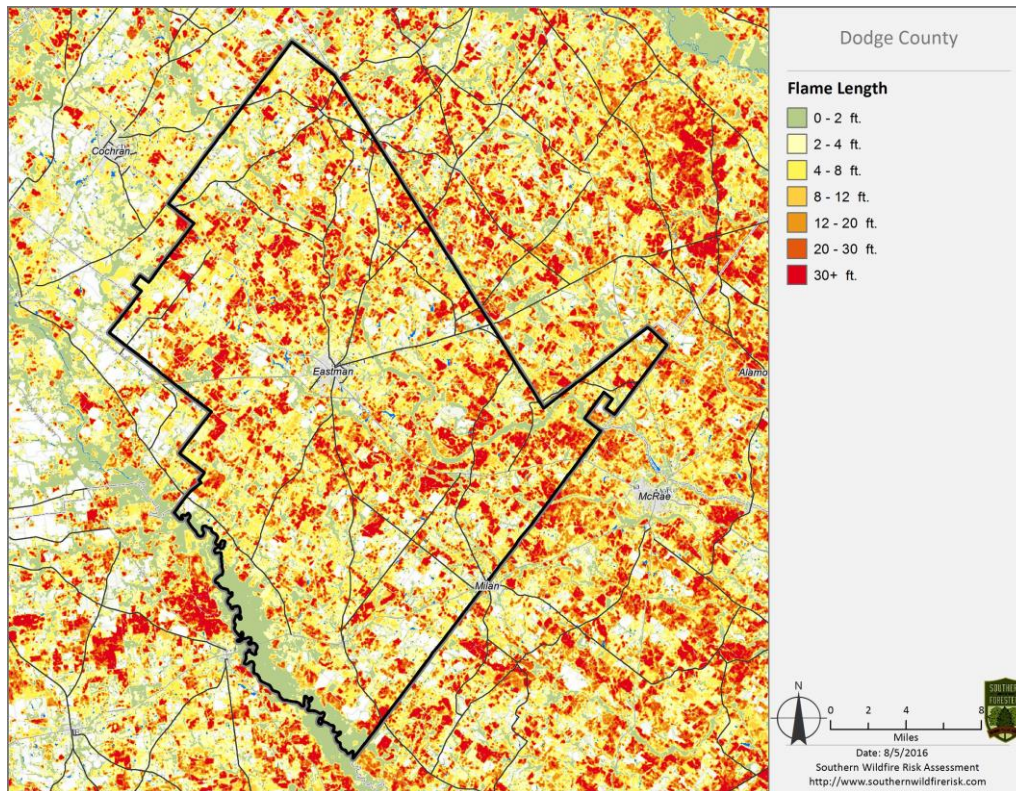
WUI Risk acreage graph



Fire Intensity Scale Map



Fire Intensity Scale acreage graph



Flame Length map

Community Assessments:

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Dodge County Fire Departments returned an average score of 108, placing Dodge County in the “moderate” hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Dodge County’s WUI was the Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Risk Assessment Checklist. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), topography, roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors. The following factors contributed to the wildfire hazard risk score for Dodge County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Roads and entrances to communities too narrow for equipment
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Limited street signs and homes not clearly marked
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with heavy accumulations of vegetative debris.
- Lack of skirting around mobile homes.
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available

- Dry hydrants and drafting sources unusable.
- Above ground utilities
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations

Summary of Dodge County Assessment Ratings

Community	Fire District	Access	Site Hazard	Structure Hazard	Add. Hazards	Hazard Risk Score	Hazard Rating
James Troup Rd	Chauncey	20	58	30	50	158	Extreme Risk
Ag Best Rd	Eastman	22	49	20	44	133	High Risk
Ellis Lane	Milan	15	52	30	30	127	Moderate Risk
Habitat	Eastman	10	62	10	22	104	Moderate Risk
Highland Lakes	Eastman	18	52	5	47	123	Moderate Risk
Pine Acres	Milan	20	32	15	30	97	Moderate Risk
Ran Stewart Rd	Mitchell	15	27	5	54	101	Moderate Risk
Parker Lane	Milan	15	32	10	25	82	Moderate Risk
Wards MHP	Crossroads	20	42	30	32	124	Moderate Risk
No Return Rd	Mitchell	15	40	10	54	119	Moderate Risk
River End Rd	Mitchell	15	57	5	52	129	Moderate Risk
Sparrow Lane	Eastman	18	47	10	50	125	Moderate Risk
Eagle Ridge	Eastman	15	20	0	28	63	Low Risk
Morgan Creek	Eastman	10	22	10	27	69	Low Risk
Wood Valley	Eastman	9	31	3	23	66	Low Risk
Average		16	42	13	38	108	Moderate Risk

IV. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

Prescribed burning (pictured at right) of woodlands is the best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel buildup. The Georgia Forestry Commission can assist with developing a prescribed burning plan, installation of firebreaks, and can provide equipment standby and burning assistance when personnel are available.



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. Road Signage	At Replacement	New road signage with minimum 4 inch reflective lettering on non-flammable poles. Dead end (no outlet or turn-around) should be prominently tagged.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul-de-sacs.
6. Subdivision Access	Alternate exits	Work with developers to identify and create alternate access and exits routes to subdivisions and communities with only one way in and out.
7. Codes and Ordinances	Examine existing codes and ordinances. In 2014 Georgia adopted the International Wildland Urban Interface Code. (IWUIC)	Amend and enforce existing building codes as they relate to skirting, propane tank locations, public nuisances (trash/debris on property), Property address marking standards and other relevant concerns At such time as the development of zoning, planning and subdivision ordinances become practical include fire department and emergency services input in the design of these.

Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas
2. 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.
3. Existing Fire Lines	Reduce hazardous fuels	Clean and re-harrow existing lines.
Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants
2. Fire Stations	Water Tanks	Install elevated “drop tanks” with automatic cut-off valves for quick refilling of trucks
3. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Larger capacity hose. Investigate need for “brush” trucks.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Dodge County Residents
<p>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.</p> <p>Distribute materials promoting firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>

2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders

Arrange for GFC Firewise program to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and codes as the county as the need arises. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible firewise community recognition.

3. Spring Clean-up Event

Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Eastman and Dodge County Fire Departments and community residents. The 1st Saturday of May is National Wildfire Preparedness Day. This event was started by the National Fire Protection Association in 2014 Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC Firewise coordinator and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. Activities to include the following:

- Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters
- Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet away from structures
- Trim overhanging limbs
- Clean hazardous or flammable debris from adjacent properties

Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Eastman and Dodge County Fire Departments discussing and commending the work accomplished.

4. Informational Packets

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

- Be Firewise Around Your Home
- Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction
- Firewise Communities USA Bookmarks
- Ready Set Go materials

5. Wildfire Protection Display

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

6. Press

Invite the Dodge County News and the Dublin Courier Herald to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Dodge County.

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

Spring Clean-up Day (National Wildfire Preparedness Day)	
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, Eastman and Dodge County Fire Departments, and Emergency Management Agency. Procure needed equipment and supplies. In cooperation with local city and county officials, develop safety protocol. Supervise work and monitor activities for safety the day of the event.

Funding Needs

The following funding is needed to implement the action plan:

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Create a minimum of 30 feet of defensible space around structures	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
2. Reduce structural ignitability by cleaning flammable vegetation from roofs and gutters; appropriately storing firewood, installing skirting around raised structures, storing water hoses for ready access, replacing pine needles and mulch around plantings with less flammable material.	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
3. Amend codes and ordinances to provide better driveway access, increased visibility of house numbers, properly stored firewood, minimum defensible space brush clearance, required Class A roofing materials and skirting around raised structures, planned maintenance of community lots.	No Cost	To be adopted by city and county government. International Wildland Urban Interface Codes (IWUIC) was adopted in Georgia in 2014.
4. Spring Cleanup Day	Varies	Community Business Donations.
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$15 / Acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

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.

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 GFC 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 action that moderates the severity of a fire hazard or risk.*

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

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

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

Prescribed Burning (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 . These materials can be ordered at no cost.
- 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 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code 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 Community program www.fireadapted.org
- Ready Set Go program www.wildlandfirersg.org

Appended Documents:

Dodge County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SouthWRAP) Summary Report



**P. O. Box 819
Macon, GA 31202
1-800-GA-TREES
GaTrees.org**

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

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider

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