GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Early County, Georgia

February 2018

CONTENTS

Attachments:

Early County Southern Wildfire Assessment Risk Summary Report (SWRA)

Early County Community Risk Assessments

Executive Summary

The extreme weather conditions that are conducive to wildfire disasters (usually a combination of extended drought, low humidity and high winds) occur in this area of Georgia every 10-15 years. This is not a regular event, but, the number of homes that have been built in or adjacent to forested or wildland areas, can turn a wildfire under these weather conditions into a major disaster. Wildfires move fast and can quickly overwhelm the resources of even the best equipped fire department. Advance planning can save lives, homes and businesses.

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan includes an evaluation of the wildland fire susceptibility of wildland/urban interface "communities-at-risk", an analysis of fire service resources and training and an Action Plan to address the increasing threat of wildfire. The CWPP does not obligate the county financially in any way, but instead, lays a foundation for improved emergency response if and when grant funding is available to the County.

The plan is provided at no cost to the County and can be very important for County applications for hazard mitigation grants through the National Fire Plan, FEMA mitigation grants, and others. Under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, communities (counties) that seek grants from the federal government for hazardous fuels reduction work are required to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The plan will:

- Enhance public safety
- Improve community sustainability
- Protect ecosystem health
- Raise public awareness of wildfire hazards and wildfire risk
- Educate landowners on how to reduce home ignitability
- Build and improve collaboration at multiple levels

The public does not have to fall victim to this type of disaster. Homes (and communities) can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire engines and firefighters on the scene. It takes planning and commitment at the community level BEFORE the wildfire disaster occurs --- and that is what the Community Wildfire Protection Plan is all about.

SIGNATURE PAGE

_____ _____

June Merritt, Chairperson **Date**
Early County Board of Commissioners

_____ _____

Ray Jarrett, Rural Fire Defense Coordinator **Date**
Early County

_____ _____

Hayden Holt, Chief Ranger **Date**
Early County Unit
Georgia Forestry Commission

I. WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE FIRE DISASTERS

Fire influenced and defined the landscape we call the United States, well before the arrival of the first Europeans. Scientists, in fact, think that fires started by lightning or Native Americans occurred over most of the Southeast every 3 to 7 years. These were typically low intensity fires (because of their frequency) which kept the forests open and "park-like" in appearance and prevented heavy accumulations of dense underbrush. When communities became well established across the South, wildfires began to impact public safety and had to be controlled. State forestry agencies became established between 1915 and 1928 and the landscape was generally segregated into communities (or human habitations) and natural or wildland areas.

In the mid 1980's, following a new wave of development in what was previously forest or wildland areas, agencies across the country became aware of an increasingly common phenomena – wildfires were more and more frequently impacting communities . In 1985, a milestone year, over 1400 homes nationwide were lost to wildfire. The catastrophes became known as wildland/urban interface fires and occur when the fuel feeding the fire changes from natural vegetation (trees, shrubs and herbs) and begins to include manmade structures (homes, outbuildings and vehicles). Wildland/Urban Interface Fires can occur anywhere in the United States and can become major disasters when associated with extremes in weather (extended droughts, high winds, low relative humidity, etc.)

The public does not have to fall victim to this type of disaster. Homes (and communities) can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire engines and firefighters on the scene. It takes planning and commitment at the community level BEFORE the wildfire disaster occurs --- and that is what the Community Wildfire Protection Plan is all about.

CWPP PLAN PARTICIPANTS

The development of this plan was a collaborative effort among various entities in Early County. The individuals listed below made up the "CWPP Core Committee" and are responsible for much of the plan content.

<u>Core Committee</u>
Early County Commissioner Jodi Glass
Early County Commissioner Perry Jarrett
Early County Commissioner Hank Jester
County EMA Director Ray Jarrett
City of Blakeley Fire Chief Ken Jones
Chief Ranger Hayden Holt, Georgia Forestry Commission
Ranger I Anthony Gentry, Georgia Forestry Commission

Georgia Forestry Commission Representatives
Chief Ranger Hayden Holt
Ranger I Anthony Gentry
CWPP Program Specialist Jim Harrell (Initial plan)
Wildfire Prevention Specialist Beryl Budd (Revised plan 2018)

Meeting Dates
Initial Core Committee Meeting: Tuesday, July 28, 2009
Follow-Up Meeting: Wednesday, October 14, 2009
Follow-Up Meeting: Monday, February 22, 2010

The CWPP Core Committee contributed to the CWPP development by working on:

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

Other Interested Parties
It is important that a collaborative approach be taken in the development of a successful Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This means allowing for the involvement of multiple interested parties in the Core CWPP Committee that develops the CWPP and providing the opportunity for other interested stakeholders in the community (county) to review and comment on the CWPP. Collaboration is a requirement of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.
During development of the Early County CWPP, opportunities for collaboration were provided by:
1. Encouraging “key players” to participate in the CWPP Core Committee.
2. Press release in local newspaper (*Early County News*) summarizing the CWPP planning process.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE CWPP

The objective of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is to improve public safety and reduce structural losses from wildfire in wildland/urban interface areas of Early County.

The Wildland/Urban Interface is 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).

There are three generally accepted types of interface areas:

1. "Boundary" wildland/urban interface areas are characterized by development where groups of homes, subdivisions or other structures create a distinct and easily identified border with public or private wildlands, forests or parks.

2. "Intermix" wildland/urban interface areas are places where parcels of improved property and/or structures are scattered and interspersed within wildlands, forests or parks. Frequently, this is a subdivision that is not yet "built-out" with many undeveloped lots interspersed among occupied homes.

3. **"Island" wildland/urban interface** (also called "occluded interface") are typically very small pockets of wildland or natural areas surrounded by development or even situated within an incorporated area. A park or greenspace within a city is an example of an island interface area.

This CWPP will provide the County with an evaluation of the wildland fire susceptibility of wildland/urban interface "communities-at-risk" and can be a valuable guide and action plan to address the increasing threat of wildfire. The plan will:

- Enhance public safety
- Improve community sustainability
- Protect ecosystem health
- Raise public awareness of wildfire hazards and wildfire risk
- Educate landowners on how to reduce home ignitability
- Build and improve collaboration at multiple levels

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan will be very important to County applications for hazard mitigation grants through the National Fire Plan, FEMA mitigation grants, and others. Under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, communities (counties) that seek grants from the federal government for hazardous fuels reduction work are required to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The minimum requirements for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan as described in the HFRA are:

- Collaboration: A Community Wildfire Protection Plan must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.
- Prioritized Fuel Reduction: A Community Wildfire Protection Plan must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
- Treatment of Structural ignitability: A Community Wildfire Protection Plan must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

This plan should be looked at as a working document (i.e.; a guide) for local, state and federal agencies to reach common wildfire protection goals. A CWPP committee should meet on a continuing basis from year to year to review accomplishments, discuss impediments, revise outdated portions of the CWPP and develop new, meaningful wildfire protection goals for Early County.

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

III. HISTORY OF EARLY COUNTY

Originally Early County encompassed all of southwest Georgia, about 3,770 square miles. Gradually, all or part of ten counties (Baker, Calhoun, Clay, Decatur, Dougherty, Grady, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, and Thomas) were carved out of the original boundaries of Early County, reducing its size to its current 511.2 square miles. Today, Early County's boundaries are the Chattahoochee River and Alabama to the west, Clay and Calhoun counties to the north, Baker County to the east, and Miller and Seminole counties to the south.

The Temple Mound

The earliest known inhabitants of the area were the Lower Creek Indians. The first white settlement was a 100-square-foot fort, Fort Gaines (now in Clay County), named after General Edmund Pendleton Gaines. In 1817 General Andrew Jackson pushed the Native American populations out of Georgia along what is now known as the Three Notch Trail. The following year the Lower Creeks ceded southwest Georgia to the Americans in a treaty that became law on December 15, 1818. The general area was named Early County after Peter Early, who was governor of Georgia from 1813 to 1815.

Early County Courthouse

In 1825 Baker County was cut out of Early County. This development forced Early County residents to establish a new county seat, a town that today is known as Blakely. Not incorporated until 1870, Blakely was named after Captain Johnston Blakeley, who disappeared in October 1814 with the crew of the U.S. sloop *Wasp*. During the Civil War (1861-65) the David S. Johnston's Southern Confederate Navy Yard was established at Saffold, on the Chattahoochee River in the southern part of the county. The yard produced one gunboat, the CSS *Chattahoochee,* delivered on December 8, 1862. Two other boats were under construction when the war ended. The county is operated by a commission-administrator system with five elected commissioners. Its economy remains primarily agricultural, with large holdings in peanuts, cotton, beef cows, and timber. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population is 11,008, a decrease from the 2000 population of 12,354.

Kolomoki Artifact

Early County has three public schools and one private school, the Southwest Georgia Academy. Bainbridge State College holds classes at the high school, and Albany Technical College runs a satellite campus.
Foremost among Early County's historical attractions is Kolomoki Mounds Historic State Park. The park contains one of the largest Native American temple mounds east of the Mississippi River. It and six other mounds in the park were constructed by the Swift Creek and Weeden Island Indians.

WILDFIRE HISTORY

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) is the state agency responsible for providing leadership, service, and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources. Commission professionals provide a wide variety of services including fire detection, issuing burn permits, wildfire suppression and prevention services, emergency and incident command system expertise, rural fire department assistance, forest management assistance to landowners and communities, the marketing and utilization of forest resources and nature services, and growing and selling quality tree seedlings for planting.
Forestry is a $28.7 billion a year industry in the State of Georgia creating 128,000 jobs statewide.
Forestry is a valuable commodity to the taxpayer in Early County.

Vision: *Healthy sustainable forests providing clean air, clean water and abundant products for future generations.*

Mission: *To provide leadership, service and education in protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources.*

GFC: Early County Unit
202,100 of the County's 330,291 acres are forested and under the protection of the Georgia Forestry Commission. The Early County Unit is responsible for all forest protection activities involving the suppression of wildfires, pre-suppression firebreaks and other related activities. The Early County office of the Georgia Forestry Commission is located at 17099 Cedar Springs Road, Blakely, GA, 39823.

County Unit Personnel			
Name	Title	Phone/Pager	Profile
Brackin, Chad Everett	Ranger	Office: 229-724-2090	Profile
Holt, Hayden (Rock) S.	Chief Ranger	Office: 229-758-3322	Profile
Smith, Brantley R	Ranger-Forester Technician	Office: 229-724-2090	Profile
Standifer, Blake Owen	Ranger	Office: 229-724-2090	Profile
Walker, William Dewey	Ranger	Office: 229-758-3322	Profile

On a year-to-year basis, the leading cause of wildfire in Early County is from escaped prescribed fires and escaped residential debris burning fires. The second leading cause is from equipment/machine use. Other major causes include incendiary (arson), lightning and many other miscellaneous causes. Georgia Forestry Commission wildfire data for the 2017 fiscal year and the preceding 10 year period 2007-2016 is included in the charts and tables on the following pages.

Early County fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017)

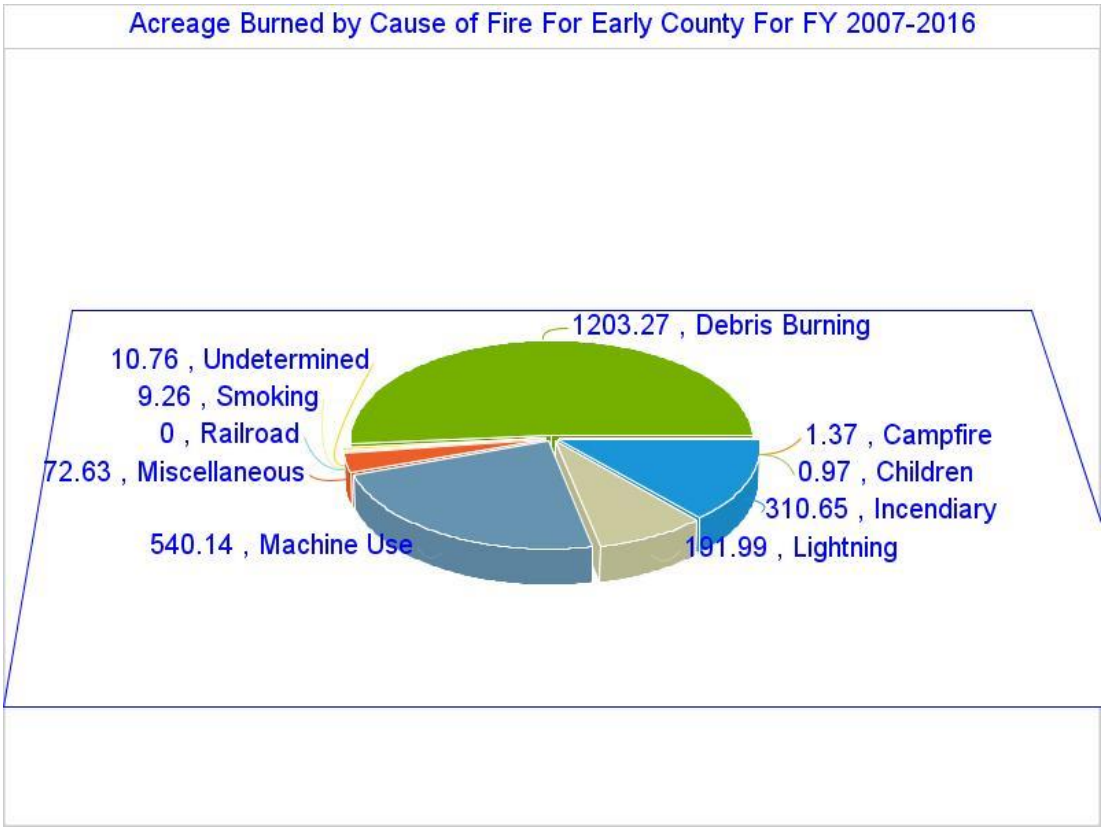
County = Early	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0		0.00	0.20	0.15
Children	Children	1		0.20	0.20	0.04
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.60	1.38
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.20	9.00
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	10		71.60	7.80	71.54
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	2		1.30	0.60	0.36
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.20	0.80
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	10		41.56	3.60	11.60
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0		0.00	0.20	0.31
Incendiary	Incendiary	2		47.50	1.00	11.01
Lightning	Lightning	1		0.40	0.20	0.08
Machine Use	Machine Use	22		67.94	7.00	57.35
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	1		0.61	0.40	0.14
Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	1		3.80	0.40	1.76
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	0		0.00	0.60	4.10
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	4		7.63	1.80	2.57
Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	1		6.52	0.20	1.30
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1		2.23	0.20	0.45
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	1		0.12	0.20	0.02
Railroad	Railroad	0		0.00	0.20	1.20
Undetermined	Undetermined	8		37.11	3.20	9.57
Totals for County: Early Year: 2017		65		288.52	29.00	184.74

Acreage Burned /Number of Fires Early County FY 2007-2016				
Year	**Acreage Burned**	**Number of Fires**	**Average Size**	**Statewide Average Size**
2007	218.01	55	3.96	18.64
2008	396.79	49	8.10	4.56
2009	147.94	45	3.29	3.90
2010	112.13	16	7.01	3.93
2011	568.29	74	7.68	17.56
2012	275.08	50	5.50	5.08
2013	294.86	38	7.76	4.53
2014	138.91	17	8.17	5.02
2015	190.32	19	10.02	4.42
2016	11.08	6	1.85	6.29

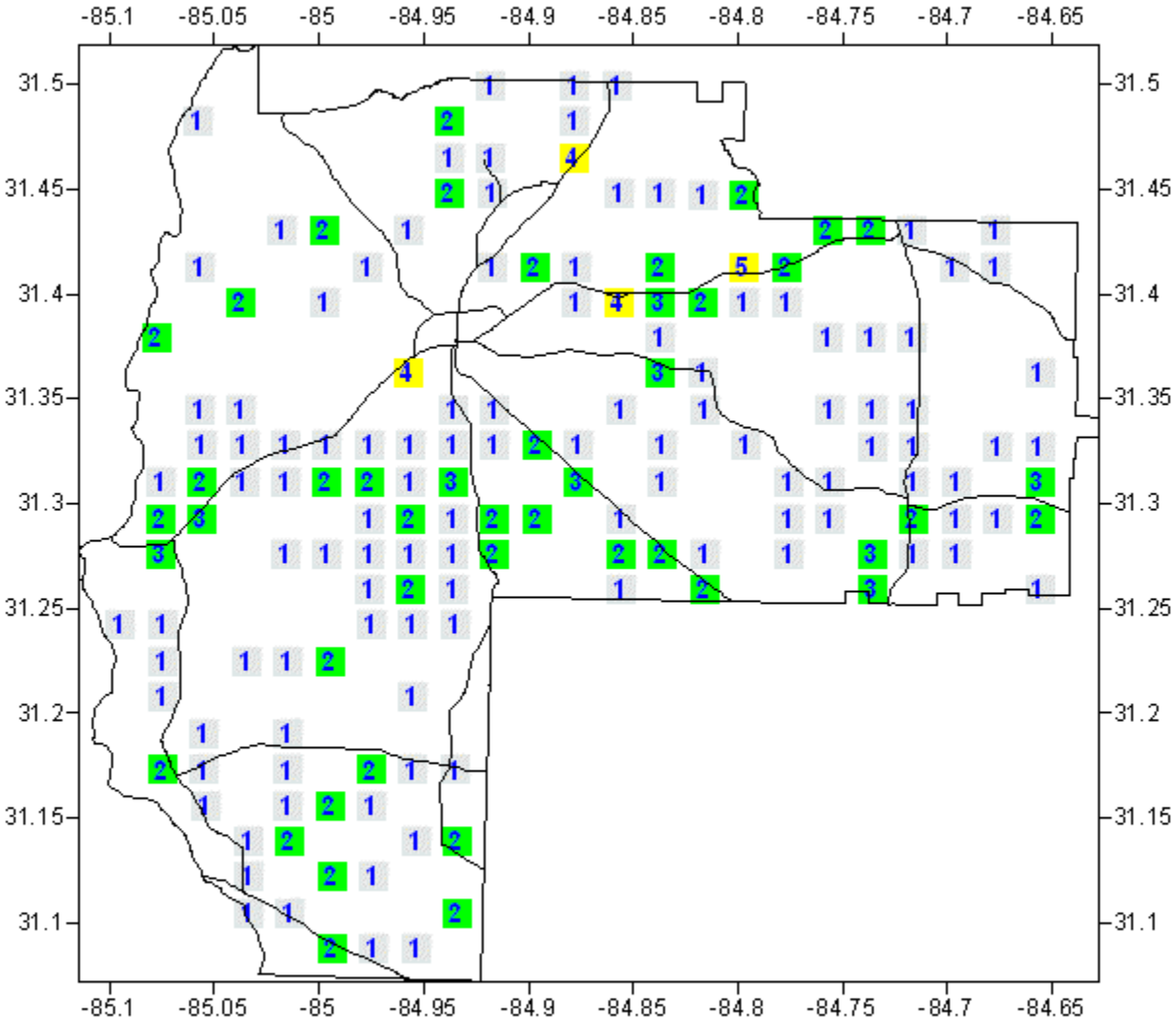
Acreage Burned /Number of Fires by Fire Cause Early County FY 2007-2016		
Fire Cause	**Acreage Burned**	**Number of Fires**
Campfire	1.37	3
Children	0.97	1
Debris Burning	1,203.27	161
Incendiary	310.65	26
Lightning	191.99	17
Machine Use	540.14	107
Miscellaneous	72.63	35
Railroad	0.00	0
Smoking	9.26	5
Undetermined	10.76	8
Total	**2,341.04**	**363**

Number of Fires by Cause for Early County for FY 2007 to 2016

Year	Campfire	Children	Debris Burning	Incendiary	Lightning	Machine Use	Misc.	Railroad	Smoking
2007	0	0	25	2	5	15	3	4	1
2008	0	0	19	6	3	18	3	0	0
2009	0	1	13	3	2	21	2	1	2
2010	0	0	11	0	1	4	0	0	0
2011	1	0	28	9	5	18	11	0	2
2012	1	0	21	3	1	18	6	0	0
2013	0	0	17	1	0	11	8	1	0
2014	0	0	11	1	0	1	4	0	0
2015	1	0	11	1	0	1	5	0	0
2016	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0



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



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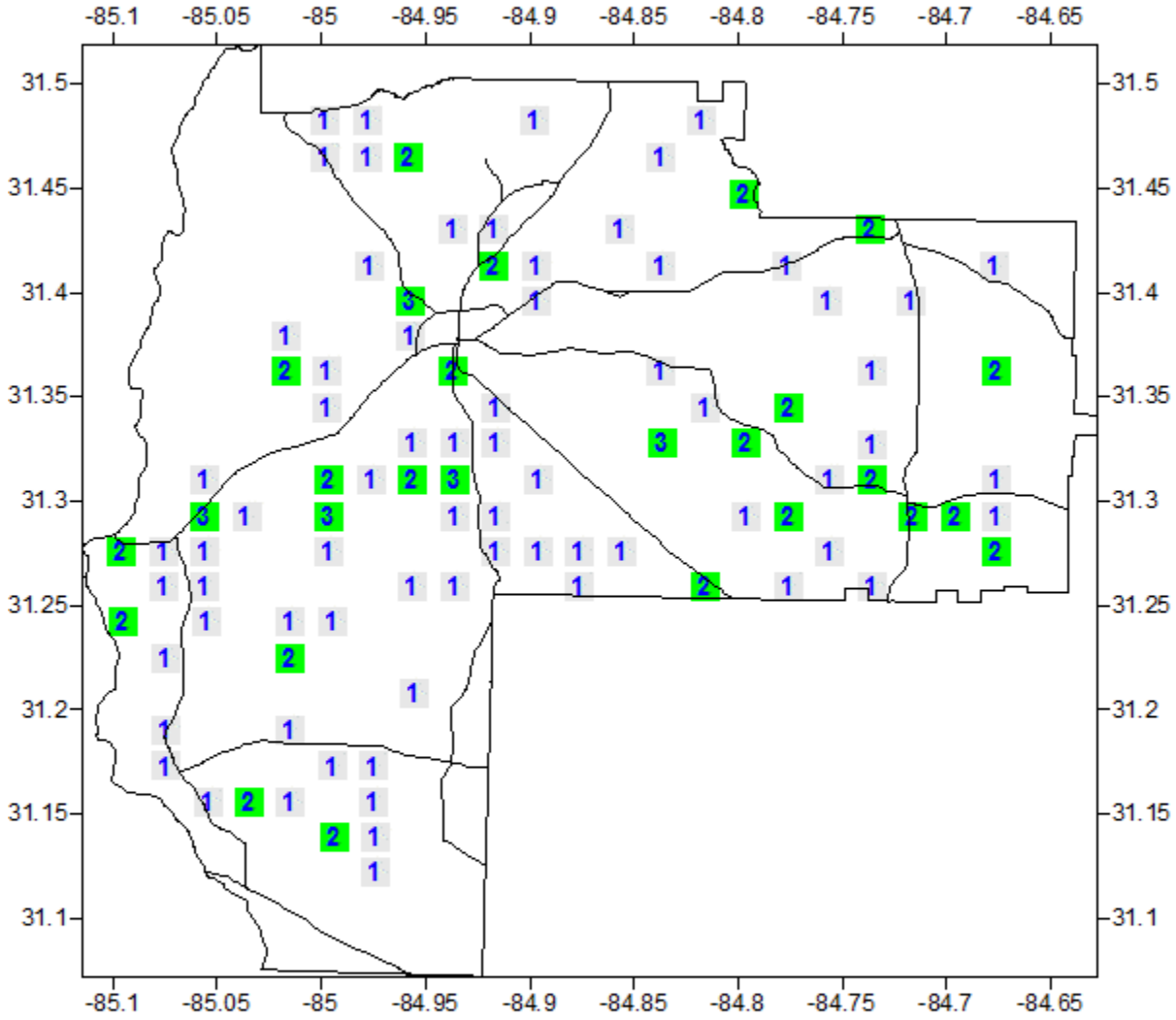
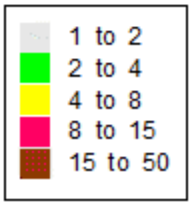
2 to 4
4 to 8
8 to 15
15 to 50

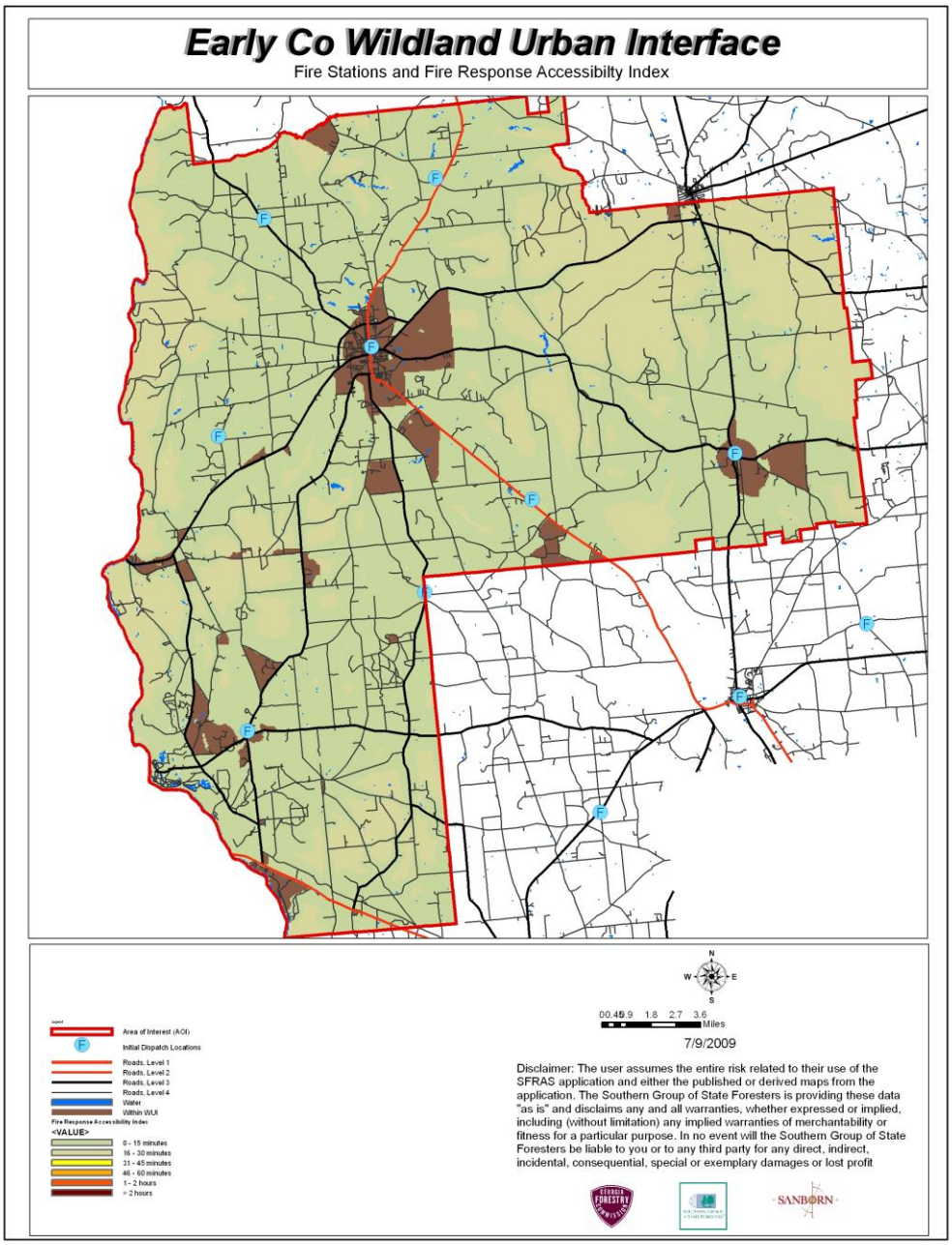
GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

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





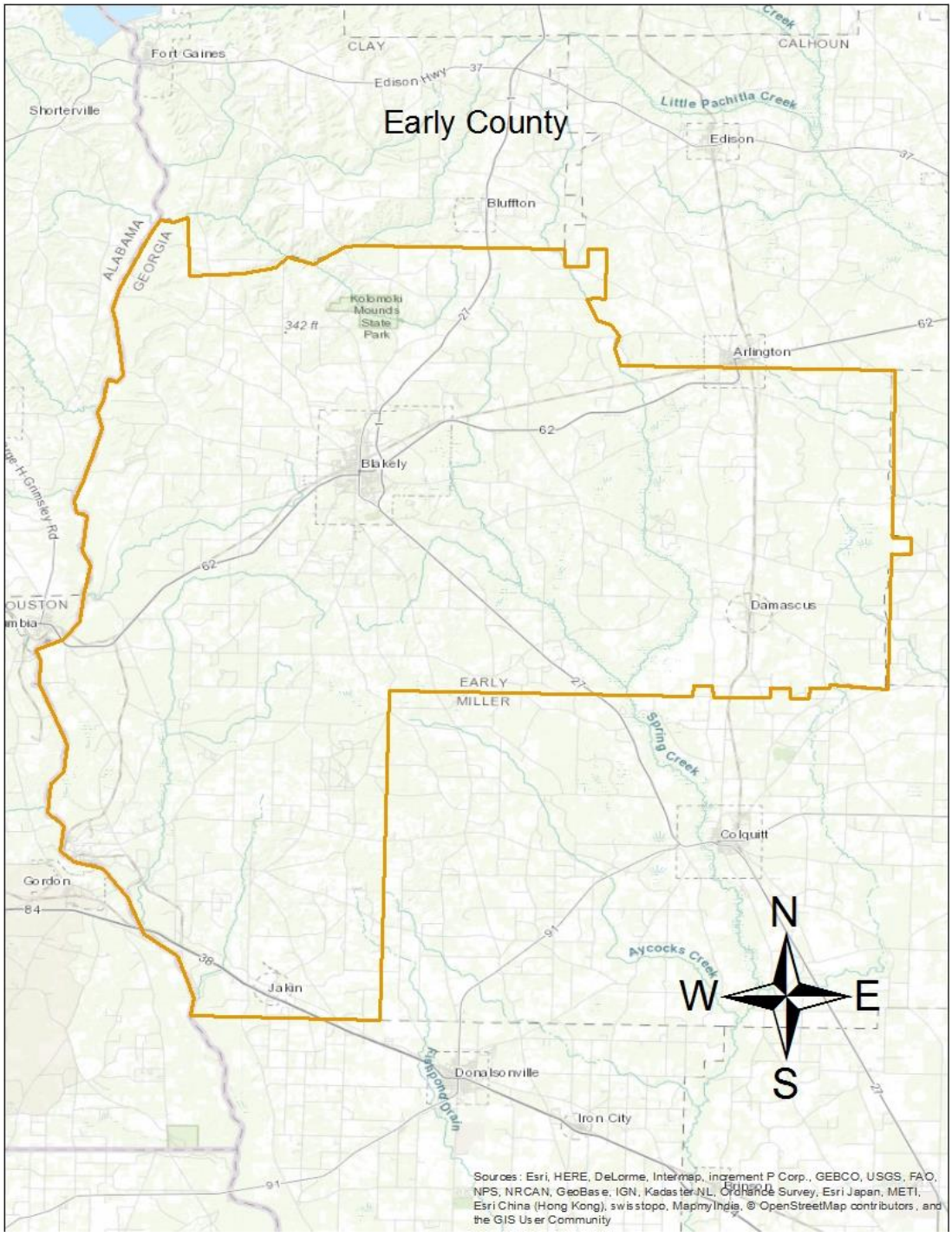
EARLY COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE STATIONS*

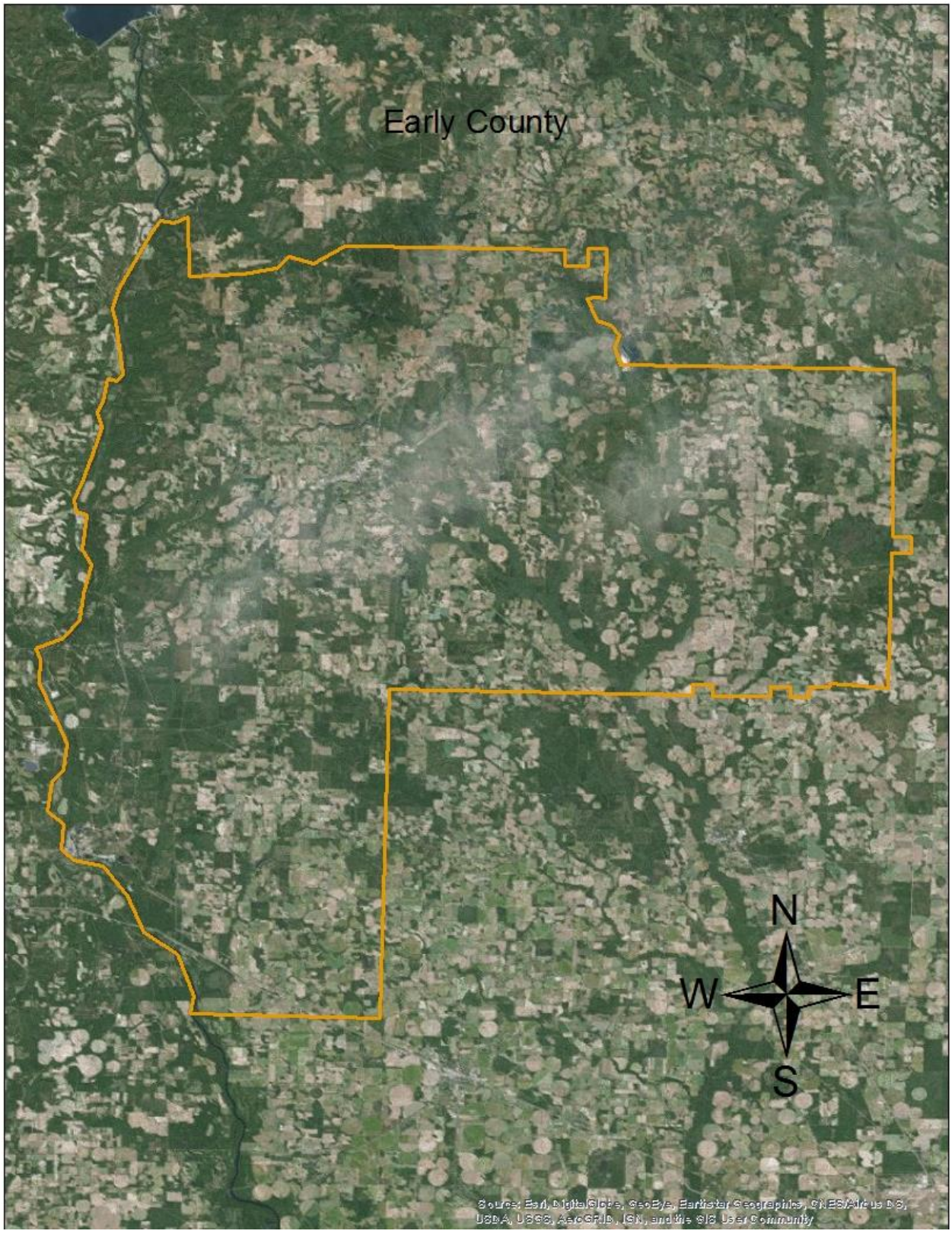


*Each VFD responds within a 5 mile radius of the station

1. Cedar Springs VFD
2. Jakin VFD
3. Arlington VFD
4. Rock Hill VFD
5. Urquhart VFD
6. Kolomoki VFD
7. Lucille VFD
8. Cuba VFD
9. Damascus VFD

IV. COUNTY BASE MAPS




Early County
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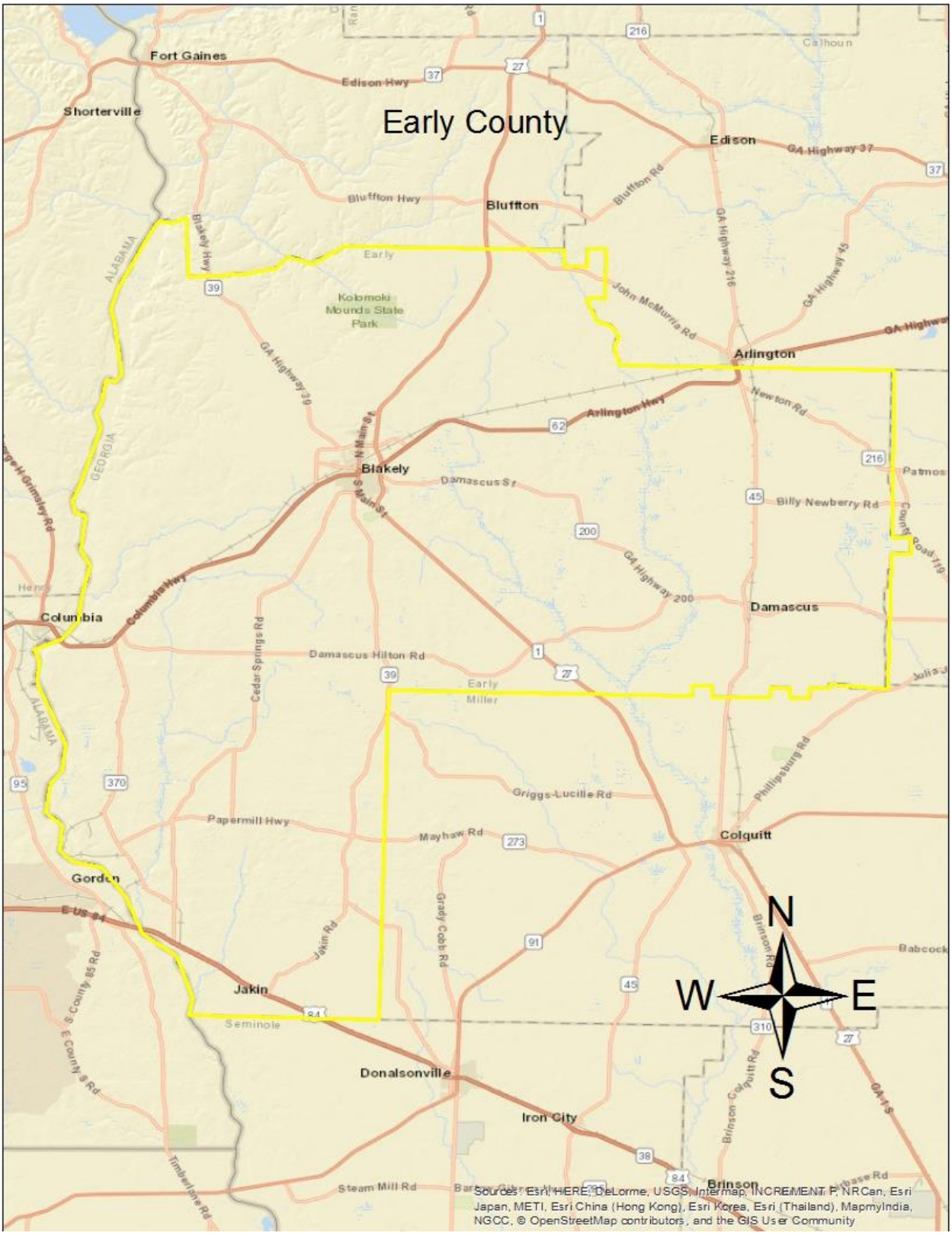
Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community


Early County
Fort Gaines
Shorterville
Edison Hwy
Bluffton Hwy
Bluffton
Edison
GA Highway 37
Bluffton Rd
GA Highway 216
GA Highway 45
Blakely Hwy
ALABAMA
Early
Kolomoki Mounds State Park
John McMurria Rd
Arlington
GA Highway 39
Arlington Hwy
Newton Rd
GEORGIA
Blakely
N Main St
S Main St
Damascus St
Billy Newberry Rd
Patmos
County Road 119
GA Highway 200
Damascus
Columbia
Columbia Hwy
Cedar Springs Rd
Damascus Hilton Rd
Early
Miller
Phillipsburg Rd
Griggs-Lucille Rd
Papermill Hwy
Mayhaw Rd
Colquitt
Gordon
E US 84
Jakin Rd
Grady Cobb Rd
Brinson Rd
Babcock
S County 85 Rd
Jakin
Seminole
E County 8 Rd
Donalsonville
Iron City
Brinson Colquitt Rd
GA-1-S
Timberlane Rd
Steam Mill Rd
Brinson
N
W
E
S
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

V. COMMUNITIES AT RISK

1-Pullen Road/Damascus
2-Bull Street/Damascus
3-Pizzpore Community
4-Old Columbia Road
5-Cedar Springs
6-Odom Subdivision
7-Kolomoki State Park
8-Beverly Hills Lane
9-Sunnyside
10-Crystal Springs Loop
11-Cuba Community

WILDFIRE HAZARD RATING OF
WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE COMMUNITIES AT RISK

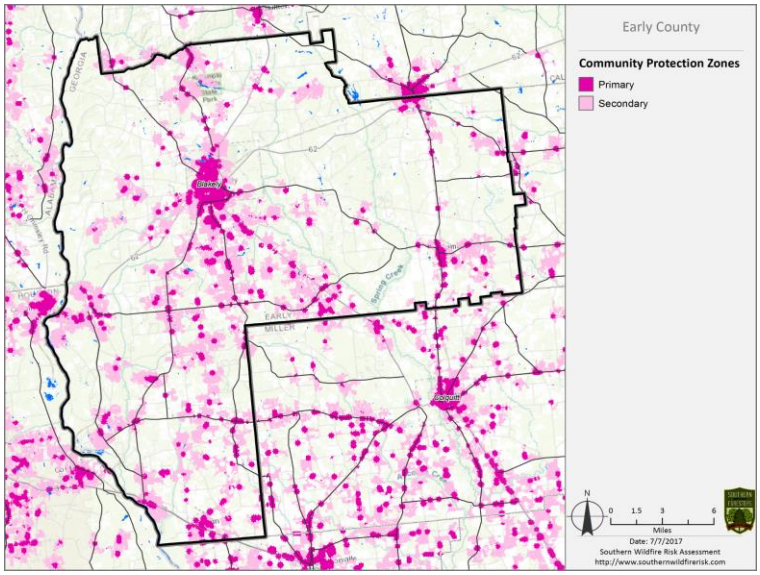
Community	Score	Hazard Rating
Pullen Rd., Damascus	**130**	**Extreme**
Bull St., Damascus	**113**	**Very High**
Pizzpore Community	**77**	**High**
Old Columbia Road	**77**	**High**
Cedar Springs	**76**	**High**
Odom Subdivision	**93**	**High**
Kolomoki State Park	**62**	**Moderate**
Beverly Hills Lane	**60**	**Moderate**
Sunnyside	**60**	**Moderate**
Crystal Springs Loop	**52**	**Moderate**
Cuba Community	**51**	**Moderate**

These hazard ratings were completed by John Godwin, Chief Ranger for Early County, during the month of September, 2009. The Georgia Forestry Commission Community Wildfire Assessment form was used. This document evaluates communities (groups of homes) based upon six criteria: community access, surrounding vegetation, building construction, fire protection, utilities and additional rating factors. The cumulative wildfire hazard rating scores range from a low rating of 0 to 50 points to an extreme rating with over 120 points.

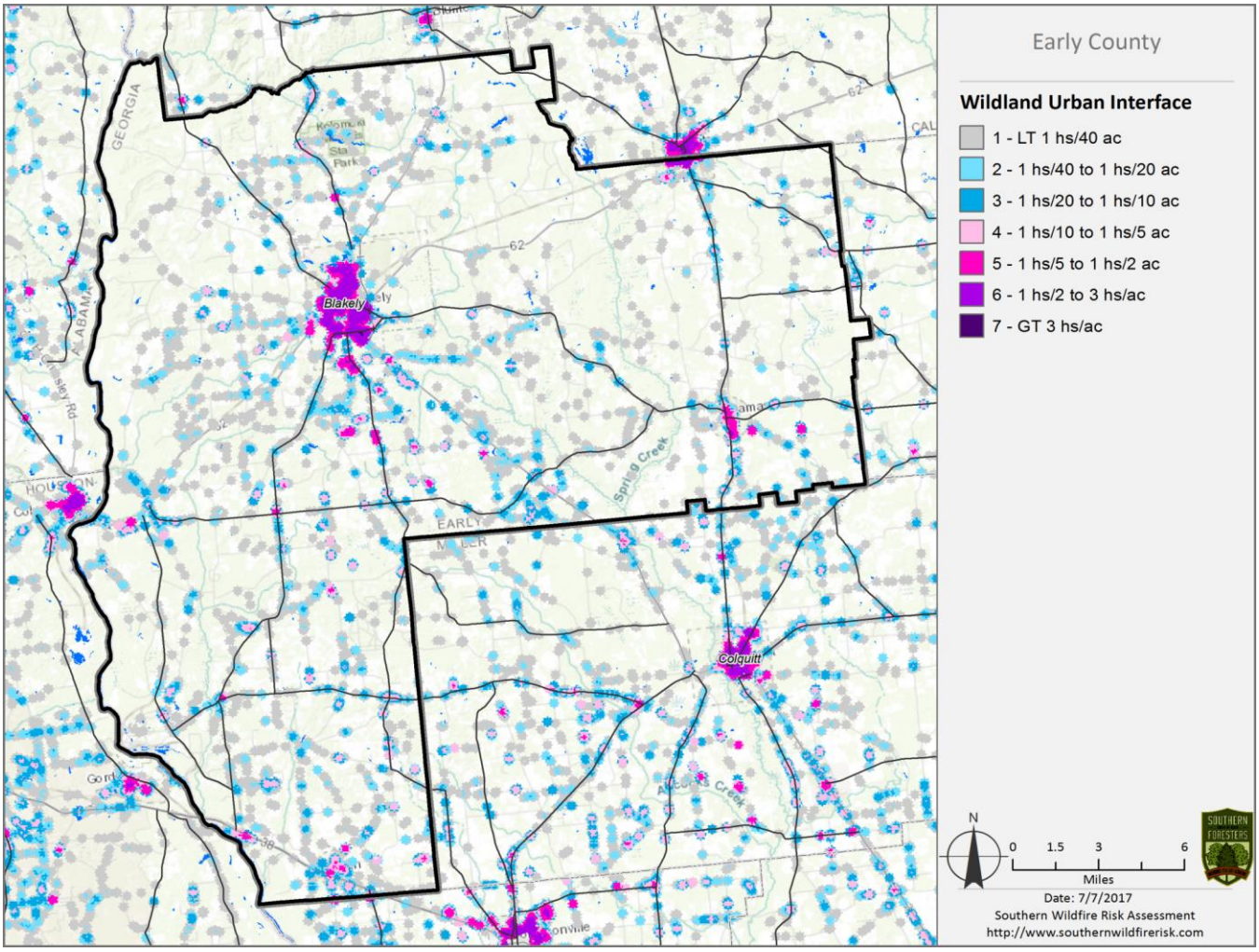
VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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

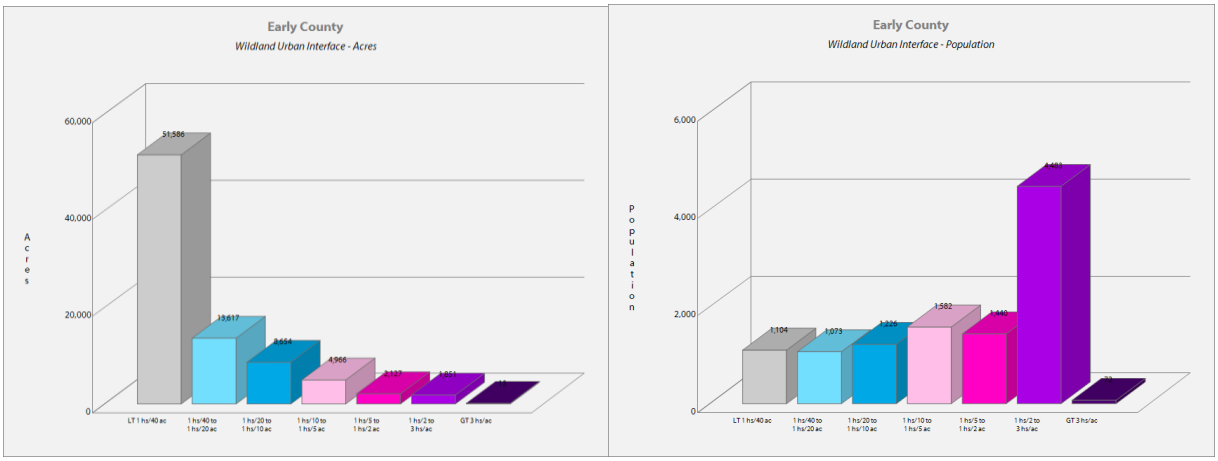
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

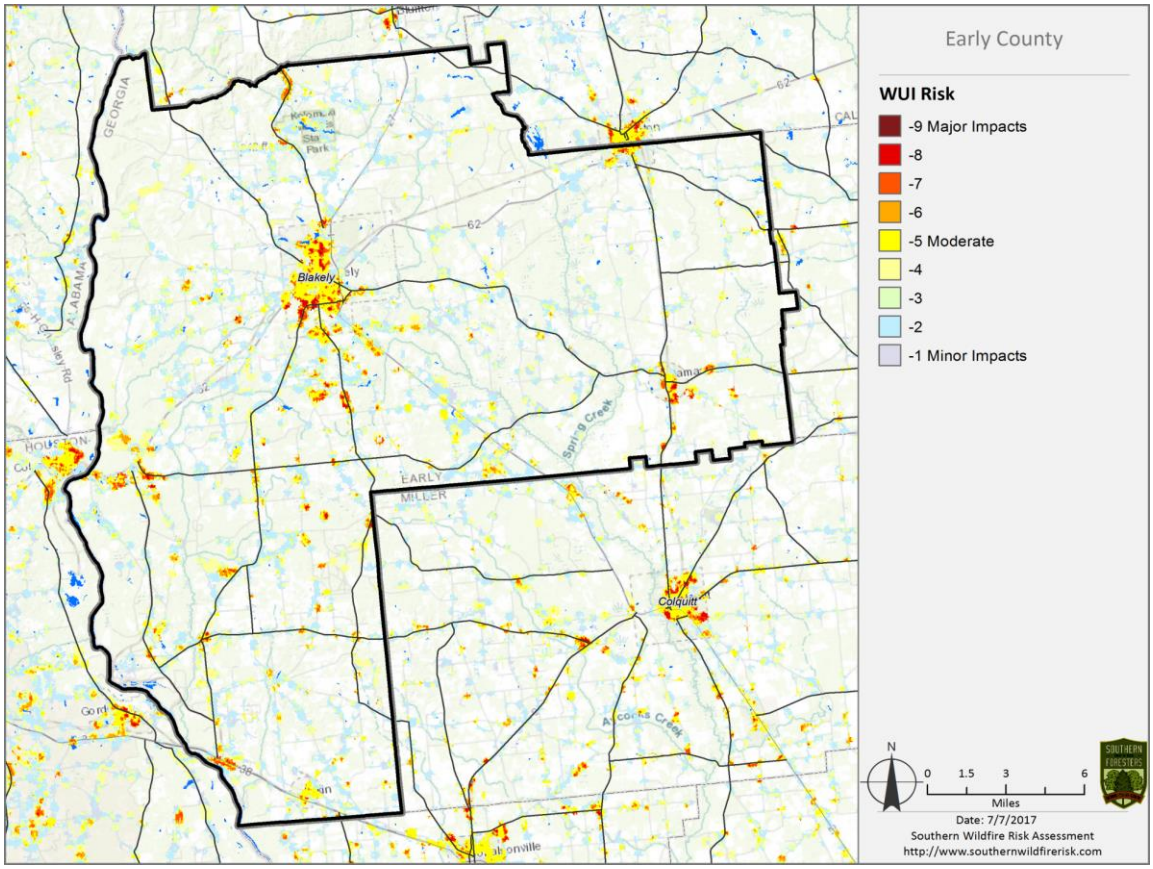


Community Protection Zones map from the Early County SWRA

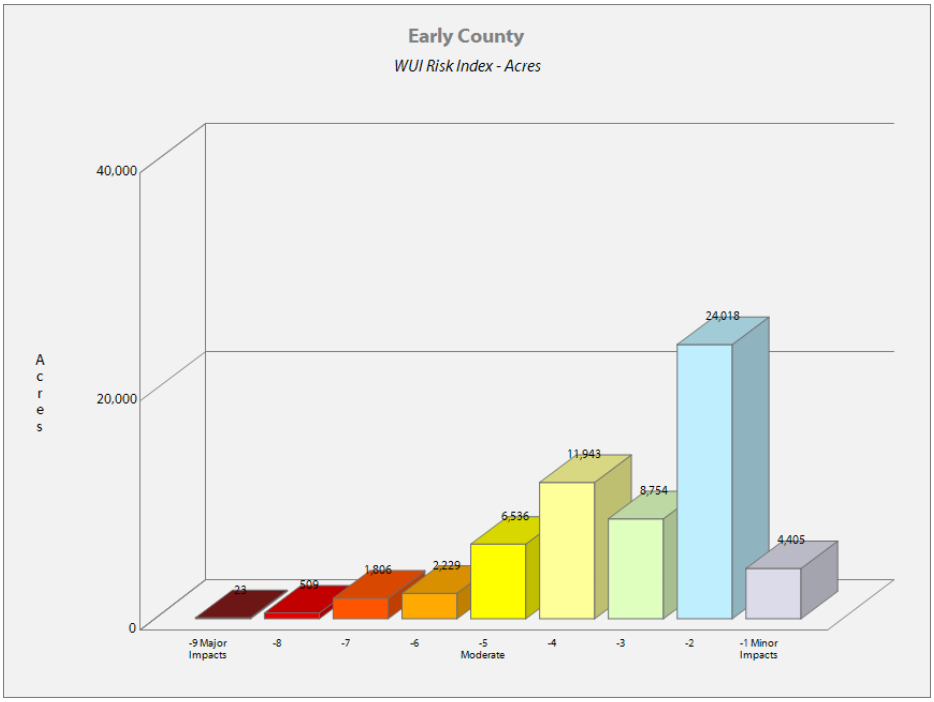


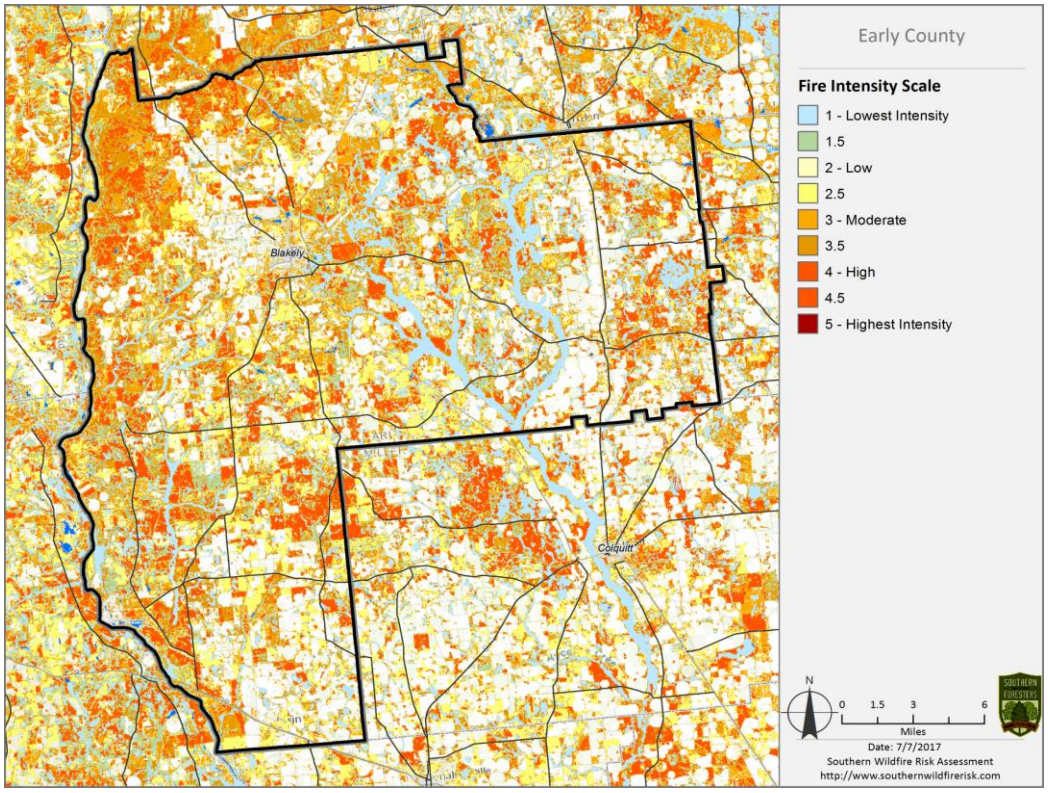
Above: Wildland urban Interface (WUI) map **Below: WUI acres (left) WUI Population (right)**



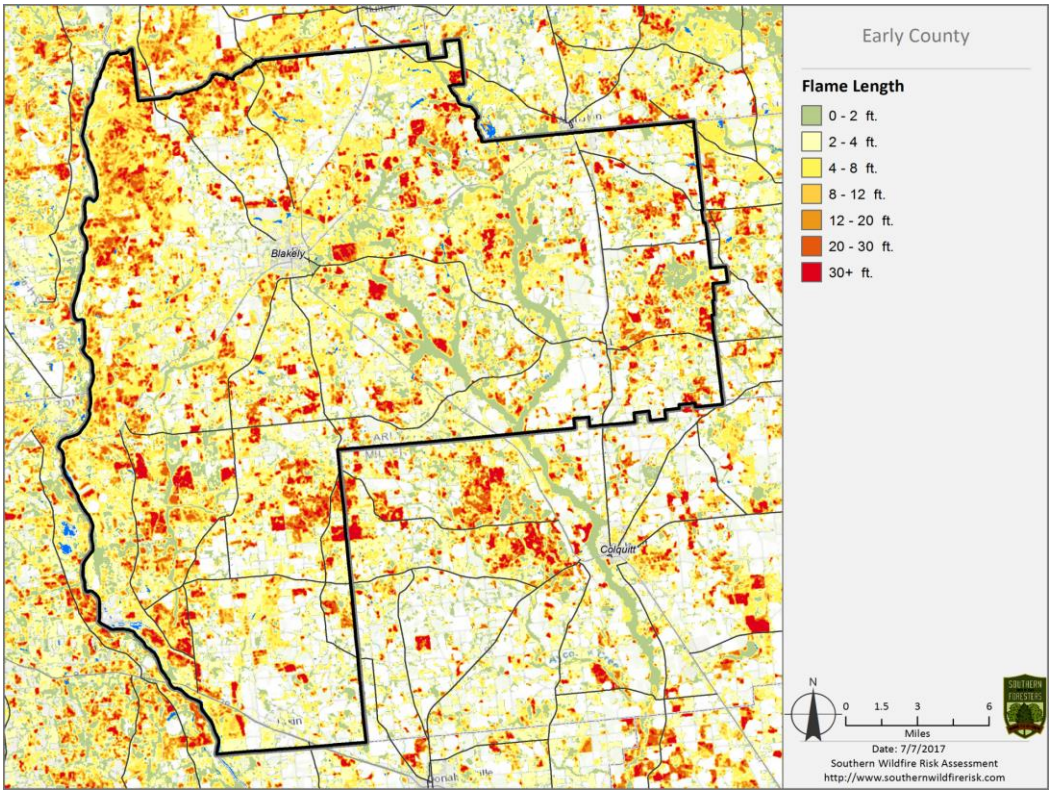


Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map Below: WUI Risk Index Acres





Above: Fire Intensity Scale map **Below: Flame length map**



VII. MITIGATION & ACTION PLAN

FIRE SERVICES CAPABILITY

Rural fire protection in Early County is provided by volunteer firefighters that respond from nine stations each responding within a five mile radius service area. The County's Rural Fire Defense Coordinator is Ray Jarrett who also serves as the EMA Director. Sixty VFD personnel are dispatched from an Enhanced 911 Center via a paging system. Early County has one 2,000 gallon water tender which is stationed at the County EMA complex.

Early County has an agreement with the City of Blakely that funds four fulltime firefighters who work in rotating shifts and are able to respond to wildfires in rural areas of the county. The equipment supplied by the County for these firefighters includes: one quick response truck (Type VI engine) and one Type 1 engine.

A major interest of the County is the improvement the ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating for the rural areas of the county. A PPC can be improved by changes in:

1. How well the fire department receives fire alarms and dispatches its firefighting resources.
2. The number of engine companies available to fight a fire and training and testing of equipment.
3. Whether the county has sufficient water supply for fire suppression beyond daily maximum consumption.

<u>Volunteer Fire Stations</u>

Cedar Springs, Jakin, Arlington, Rock Hill, Urquhart, Kolomoki, Lucille, Cuba, Damacus

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase the amount of water available to fight fires in unincorporated Early County by the acquisition of three (3) 3,000 gallon water tenders. Locate one each in the north, central and south part of the county (Arlington, Blakely and Jakin)
- Construct a county firehouse staffed for 24-hour response
- Acquire 3 additional Type VI engines for improved response in unincorporated areas.
- NIIMS training and Wildland fire training for county volunteers
- Ready Set Go Training
- Firewise assessment training
- Wildland fire personal protective equipment with fire shelters for 30 volunteer firefighters
- Hold a combined meeting (City/County/GFC) for improved emergency response and to stress wildland fire safety and familiarize firefighters with personalities and suppression strategies.

Existing Dry Hydrants [*All hydrants are marked with a numbered sign that corresponds with listing information (below). Also, each is marked with a blue reflector on the sign post and blue reflectors on the paved roads. The signs are posted at the nearest driveway entrance***]**

Number 1. Judson Swann – County Road 45; Three Notch Road; Centerville Road approximately 1 mile south from intersection of GA 39 and CR 45 on right side of road.

Number 2. Kate (Renfro) Carter – GA 39 south; approximately ¼ mile north of Springfield Church on right of GA 39 going back to Miss Kate's house.

Number 3. Felix Davis – GA 62 west of Blakely approximately 3 miles on right side of GA 62 going west back of Felix's house.

Number 4. Ralph (Buddy) Jenkins – County Road 139 and intersection GA 39 North. Go north on CR 139 approximately ¼ mile. Dry hydrant on left back of house trailer.

Number 5. Budd Herring – County Road 18 near Log Cabin Restaurant. Pond on left side of CR 18, last driveway on left before Log Cabin Restaurant.

Number 6. Hansford Cleveland – GA 200 and intersection of County Road 176. Go south approximately ½ mile, back of house trailer and house on right side of road.

Number 7. T.C. Hunt – GA 200 east of Blakely intersection of GA 200 and County Road 279, go north approximately 2 miles, pond on right south of T.C. Hunt's house.

Number 8. Lynn Pullen – East of Damascus. Go east on GA 200 to intersection County Road 227 take right approximately 3 miles to intersection County Road 36. Turn north or left, go approximately ¼ mile, field road on right at planted pines, turn right, approximately 100 yards off road.

Number 9. Doc Craft – East of Arlington off GA 216. At intersection of GA 216 and County Road 111 at Nicholasville, turn right or south approximately ½ mile on right of CR 111 at southeast corner of pond below Doc's house.

Number 10. Billy Newberry - South and east of Arlington. Take GA 45 south of Arlington to intersection of County Road 109, take left on CR 109 approximately 2-1/4 miles, Shady grove Church on right and hydrant on left at southeast corner of pond.

Number 11. Thomas Daniels – West and south of Arlington. Take GA 62 west from Arlington to intersection of County Road 230, turn left on CR 230 at Amy Industries, go approximately 2-1/2 miles to intersection of County Road 169, turn left, go approximately ¼ mile, hydrant on right side of road next to Thomas' house.

Number 12. Grady Revels – South of Lucile, north of Jakin off GA 39 and GA 273 turn west toward cedar Springs, go approximately 1-1/4 miles (300 yards past Bethel Church) on right side of GA 273 at Grady's west most driveway.

Number 13. Buck Grist – Chancy Mill Pond – West of Blakely. From GA 62 west take County Road 4 (Chancy Mill Road) west past Hattaway Ford, cross GA 62 bypass and go approximately 2-1/2 miles, take paved drive to right, go approximately ¼ mile cross bridge and take a right on County Road 3 approximately 200 feet, turn right on Woods Road approximately 100 feet to hydrant at pond dam.

Number 14. Kolomoki State Park – On the Park Road that crosses the dam, between Superintendent's house and the tall mounds about halfway across the dam.

Number 15. Dan Rode – In New Hope Community near Miller County line. From Blakely, go south on U.S. 27 to New hope Church, take a right on paved County Road 205 go approximately ½ mile, take left on paved County Road 207 for approximately ½ mile to intersection of County Road 208, take right, go approximately ¼ mile, first house/trailer on left, pond and hydrant to south of this house, go through yard to hydrant.

Number 16. Kolomoki State Park – North of Blakely, first lake, cross bridge, on right or north side next to boat ramp.

Number 17. Phillip Moore – South of Blakely on U.S. 27 south, cross Blue Creek and approximately 2 miles on right side is pond. Go to south end and turn right into field driveway approximately 50 feet.

Number 18. Billy Joe Chapman – North of Lucile on Hwy 39 approximately ¼ mile on left of road traveling north between two ponds.

Number 19. Wayne Balkcom – North of Blakely off U.S. Hwy 27 approximately 6 miles. Go north past Kolomoki Court house/fire station approximately ¾ mile to next intersection, which will be County Road 120. Turn right, go approximately 1-1/2 miles at top of hill crest, turn right into field road, go approximately 200 yards to dry hydrant.

Number 20. Norman Nobles – West of Jakin on west and south side of U.S. 84, just past the County Road 92 intersection. Go to next turn around on U.S. 84 and head west toward Jakin. Just before County Road 92 intersection look to your right and dry hydrant on right approximately 100 yards before intersection of CR 92.

Number 21. Mike Still – South of Blakely on GA 363 near Wiley Town. From Sowatchee cross road (Hilton-Damascus Road, County Road 279) go north on GA 363 approximately ¾ mile just past intersection of County Road 14. Mike's house on right and hydrant on right approximately 100 yards north of house at fence next to road.

Number 22. Danny King – Northwest of Blakely off GA 39. Take GA 39 north approximately 2-1/4 miles from GA 62 Bypass to intersection of County Road 140, turn left on CR 140 for approximately 2-3/4 miles, Bobby King's house on left of road and dry hydrant across road in front of house. Take field road to get to dry hydrant.

Number 23. Chattahoochee Industrial R/R – South of Cedar Springs off GA 363 in railroad office complex yard pond. Hydrant in front of R/R yard office building.

Number 24. Henry Herndon/Confederate Naval Yard – From U.S. 84 go into subdivision on dirt street. Turn left at dead end and go to end of street where driveway goes through fence and gate, go approximately 200 feet and look to left and will see dry hydrant.

Number 25. Creel Bros. – South of Blakely off U.S. 27, go south to Cuba, at store turn right on County Road 45, go approximately 2 miles, 2 ponds on left of road and dry hydrant out next to road.

Number 26. David Jones – West of Blakely off GA 62 bypass. Take County Road 285 west off the 62 Bypass approximately 4-1/2 miles. David's house on right and hydrant across the road in front of house. Go to the first drive on the left past David's house and turn in at pond on left.

Number 27. Robert Odom/Howard's Mill – Turn north off County Road 50 at Creek Bridge, go toward Old Mill parking area. Look to right along creek bank approximately 50 feet from bridge and will see dry hydrant.

Number 28. Dr. Dwight Mercer/W. A. Mercer – Going south on GA 363 until you get to County road 26, turn right and go approximately 1 mile. Pond on right side of road and dry hydrant on right side of road outside fence and in road bank next to ditch.

Number 29. Charles Frith – South of Lucile on GA 39 and north of Jakin. Go south from Lucile past Springfield Church to Kilarny, turn left on GA 39 approximately ¼ mile on left at airstrip dry hydrant.

Number 30. George Pyle – Going south on GA 363 until you get to County Road 48 (Spooner Quarter Road) turn left and go approximately 1-1/2 miles. Irrigation pond on right of road and dry hydrant on right just outside fence. New driveway across from Ray Smith's house.

Dry Hydrant

PROTECTION OF HOMES AND OTHER STRUCTURES

Critical Facilities

Critical facilities are unique structures which require special consideration in the event of an emergency such as a wildland/urban interface fire. Every county will have some critical facilities and some more urbanized counties will have many. Critical facilities include: a nursing home that may need special consideration because the smoke accompanying a wildfire may be hazardous to the health of elderly residents, a law enforcement dispatch center is a critical facility that will need special consideration to insure there is no disruption of emergency communications in the event of a disastrous wildfire. Other examples of critical facilities are ethanol plants, auto junkyards and facilities that produce chemicals that could be hazardous to the local population if released into the atmosphere.

Owner/operators of critical facilities need to be aware of the hazards that an approaching wildfire could present. There may be immediate action that could be taken by owner/operators to lessen the impact of a wildfire in the immediate area (such as the elimination of encroaching wildland vegetation in and around the critical facility.

List of Critical Facilities:
Auto Junkyards
Metal Tubing (conduit) Plant, Cedar Springs
Georgia-Pacific Cedar Springs Plant

RECOMMENDATION:

- Review Critical Facilities to evaluate any wildfire hazard and suggest to owner/operators in person or by letter what action(s) might be taken to mitigate any observed hazards and improve wildfire protection.

Public Education Needs

"Firewise" structures are homes and other buildings in the wildland/urban interface that have been built, designed or maintained to survive a wildfire event even in the absence of firefighters on the scene. Over the past fifty years, many Georgia residents have left the city or the suburbs to build homes in or adjacent to forested areas with a desire to be "close to nature". Unfortunately, this has resulted in neighborhoods or single-family dwellings with one way in and out, with long narrow driveways, no pressurized hydrants or draft source for water and so close to wildland fuel that even the best equipped fire department could not be successful in a severe wildfire event. Most of these homeowners don't understand the risk associated with living in the wildland/urban interface and expect to be rescued by the fire department in the event of a wildfire emergency.

The key to the reduction of structural losses in the wildland/urban interface cannot rest solely with improved response by the local fire services. There will never be enough fire trucks and firefighters to adequately protect homes in the wildland/urban interface. A major part of the solution to this problem lies with the homeowner – homeowners in the wildland/urban interface must become "partners" with the fire services and assume some responsibility for maintaining their home (structure) and landscape (yard) so that ignitions in and around the home are less likely should a wildfire occur in the immediate area. This means a home with no debris on the roof and in the gutters, wood decks that are skirted underneath, chunky bark or lava rock mulch near the house instead of pine straw or cypress mulch and a "lean, clean and green" landscape of less-flammable plants within 30 feet of the structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Initiate a Wildland Fire Protection public education campaign for Early County residents using as a reference: NFPA 1144 *Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire,* 2008 Edition.

- Host a Firewise Workshop at a centrally-located facility with a meal and refreshments for those who attend.
- Make Firewise Communities brochures available to the public at central locations such as: Farm Services Agency, Chamber of Commerce and the County Courthouse.
- Encourage neighborhoods/communities that qualify to apply for recognition as a Firewise Community/ USA.

<u>Reduction of Hazardous Fuels</u>

Because approximately 60 percent of Early County is forested, the accumulation of brush and other (mostly ground) vegetation can create conditions over extensive areas that could fuel a disastrous wildfire. Treatment of forested areas with prescribed fire can significantly reduce this hazard while improving pulpwood and sawtimber production and enhancing wildlife habitat. Prescribed burning, however, must be conducted by experienced personnel when weather conditions are conducive to a safe burn and when an authorization has been obtained from the local office of the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Other ways to reduce wildland fuel (vegetation) include: Mechanical treatment; Chemical treatment (herbicides); and Livestock grazing. These alternatives to prescribed burning are more intensive and hence, more costly and generally suitable only for smaller acreages.

Pictured above is a Georgia Forestry Commission masticator mowing understory vegetation in a Loblolly Pine stand to reduce fuels in an area where prescribed burning was not possible. GFC, as well as private contractors can provide this service.

The goal for structural protection in these locations should be a “Firewise” landscape. A Firewise landscape is characterized by trees, shrubs and grasses that are carefully managed within 100 feet of structures - an area called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). Most critical is the space within 30 feet of a structure which is usually referred to as the area of Defensible Space. The Defensible Space should include a landscape of less flammable plants, coarse bark or lava rock as mulch adjacent the structure, tree limbs trimmed away from the structure and any decks skirted so leaves and other debris cannot accumulate underneath. The idea is to create a landscape that will prevent flames or fire brands (aerial borne embers) from igniting the structure.

Smoke on highway (from prescribed burning or wildfires) can lead to poor visibility on public roadways. This can become a public safety issue in areas where regular prescribed burning occurs. In addition, lingering smoke can become a nuisance to neighboring homeowners, however, a little inconvenience is better than wildland fuels that accumulate and eventually fuel a disastrous wildfire.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Promote prescribed burning in Early County.

- Help county landowners understand how to prescribe burn legally and safely.
- Educate the general public on the benefits of prescribed burning.
- Work with the Georgia State Patrol and local law enforcement to ensure motorists are alerted to smoke hazards on county roads.

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

ACTION PLAN

Community/ Area at Risk	Project	Agency	Funding Needs	Priority	Community Recommendation
Pullen Rd./Damascus	Mitigation	GFC/County	$10,000	**(H)**	Implement fuel reduction project
Bull St./Damascus	Mitigation	GFC/County	$10,000	**(H)**	Implement fuel reduction project
Pizzpore Community	Mitigation	GFC/County	$10,000	**(H)**	Implement fuel reduction project
Old Columbia Rd.	Mitigation	GFC/County	$10,000	**(H)**	Implement fuel reduction project
Cedar Springs	Mitigation	GFC/County	$10,000	**(H)**	Implement fuel reduction project
Odom Subdivision	Mitigation	GFC/County	$10,000	**(H)**	Implement fuel reduction project
Kolomoki State Park	Mitigation	GFC/County	$2,500	**(M)**	Organize homeowner fuel reduction project
Beverly Hills Lane	Mitigation	GFC/County	$2,500	**(M)**	Organize homeowner fuel reduction project
Sunnyside	Mitigation	GFC/County	$2,500	**(M)**	Organize homeowner fuel reduction project
Crystal Springs Loop	Mitigation	GFC/County	$2,500	**(M)**	Organize homeowner fuel reduction project
Cuba Community	Mitigation	GFC/County	$2,500	**(M)**	Organize homeowner fuel reduction project
Countywide	Mitigation	GFC/County	$2,500	**(M)**	"loaner" leaf blowers and hand tools for residential mitigation
Countywide	Firefighter Training (30)	County VFD /GFC	$15,000	**(H)**	NIIMS, Standards for Survival & Wildland Fire Behavior Training
Countywide	Coordinate Emergency Response	City/County/GFC	**-0-**	**(M)**	Hold combined city/county/GFC fire training & safety Mtg
Countywide	Firefighter PPE & Tools	County VFD	$20,000 PPE $5,000 Tools	**(H)**	Personal protective equipment & fire shelters (30 sets)
Countywide	(3) 3,000 Gallon Water Tenders	County VFD	$750,000	**(H)**	Mobile water supply for W/UI areas
Countywide	(3) Type VI Engines (Brush Truck)	County VFD	$540,000	**(H)**	Improve County's off-road firefighting capability
Countywide	Repair & Maintenance of Dry Hydrants	County VFD	$25,000	**(M)**	Inspect & repair existing dry hydrants in County

The above table summarizes a recommended course of action for implementation of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Although limited projects could be implemented at little or no added cost, the assigned agency will be able to implement most projects only if grant funding is available.

ASSESSMENT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness of the action plan, the Early County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Council will implement the following:

- An annual wildfire risk assessment will be conducted to re-assess wildfire hazards and prioritize needed actions.
- Mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning, clearing of defensible space) will be incorporated into an annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Mitigation efforts that could not be funded in the requested year will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Continuing education and outreach programs will be conducted and assessed for effectiveness. Workshops will be evaluated based upon attendance and post surveys that are distributed by mail one month and six months following the workshops.
- The CWPP Core Committee will continue a year-to-year focus on the wildland/urban interface fire challenges in the County. The Committee will annually update this CWPP, summarizing mitigation projects initiated and completed, progress for ongoing actions, funds received, funds expended and in-kind services utilized. Recommendations will be incorporated into the CWPP Action Plan.

VIII. MITIGATION ASSISTANCE & GRANT FUNDING

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

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

1. To provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to assist in the implementation of long term, cost effective hazard mitigation accomplishments.

2. This policy addresses wildfire mitigation for the purpose of reducing the threat to all-risk structures through creating defensible space, structural protection through the application of ignition resistant construction and limited hazardous fuel reduction to protect life and property.

3. With a completed registered plan (addendum to the State Plan) counties can apply for pre-mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP funding if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.

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

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

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

X. GLOSSARY

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

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

CWPP – *The Community Wildfire Protection Plan.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Home Ignition Zone (Structure Ignition Zone) - *Treatment area for wildfire protection. The "zone" includes the structure(s) and their immediate surroundings from 0-200 ft.*
Mitigation – An 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 approaching wildfire season. It is held annually on the first Saturday in May.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

XI. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites:

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

Appended Documents:

Early County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Early County Wildfire assessment scoresheets

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

Georgia Forestry Commission
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1-800-GA-TREES
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