



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Evans County, Georgia

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



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

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Appended Documents:

Evans County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report

Evans County Wildfire Pre-suppression Plan

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

I. OBJECTIVES

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Evans County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect this community and its essential infrastructure. It also includes a plan for wildfire suppression. Specifically, the plan includes community-centered actions that will:

- Educate citizens on wildfire, its risks, and ways to protect lives and properties,
- Support fire rescue and suppression entities,
- Focus on collaborative decision-making and citizen participation,
- Develop and implement effective mitigation strategies, and
- Develop and implement effective community ordinances and codes.

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The core team convened on Aug 10th, 2009 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local government, local fire authorities, and the state agency responsible for forest management. Below are the groups included in the task force:

Evans County Government
Emergency Management
Board of County Commissioners
Evans County Fire Department

City of Claxton
Claxton Fire Department,

Georgia Forestry Commission

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the fire response districts in the county. The fire chiefs in the county assessed the districts and reconvened on Dec 16th, 2009 for the purpose of completing the following:

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

III. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND & WILDFIRE HISTORY



Evans County, in southeast Georgia, is the state's 152nd county. Almost entirely a product of the railroad age, the 185-square-mile county was formed from sections of Bulloch and Tattnall counties in 1914 and named for Clement Evans, a Confederate general.

Claxton, the county seat, was founded when the 400-mile Savannah and Western Railroad came through the area in the 1890s. Store owner Remer Hendricks and his parents, Glenn and Nancy Hendricks, granted the railroad right-of-way across a large tract of their land and induced the company to establish a station there by promising to provide a free well for trains stopping on their property

for water. Nancy Hendricks gave free lots to the first several citizens who promised to build on them, and a new town was born. Nicknamed "the Fruitcake Capital of the World" for its Christmas cake production, Claxton was incorporated in 1911. The original courthouse, built in 1923, still stands.

The other incorporated towns in the county are Bellville, Daisy, and Hagan. Agriculture, the naval stores industry, and timber harvesting drove the economic development of Bellville when the railroad was built in 1890. The town's business district was almost completely destroyed in a 1901 fire. Bellville was not incorporated as a town until 1959, making it one of Georgia's most recently chartered communities. The town restored its old railroad depot and holds annual Railroad Days celebrations there. Townspeople remark that folksinger Tom T. Hall wrote his song "God Came through Bellville, Georgia" while standing on the steps of the depot.

Daisy also benefited from the arrival of the railroad. The town's economic mainstays, cotton ginning and turpentine production, got a major boost from the availability of rail transportation for the finished products. Recently a good deal of attention has been given to restoring some of the attractive original buildings in the town.

Hagan, another railroad town, was centered around a sawmill established by the Perkins family in the 1890s. An early twentieth-century depression resulted in the closing of the mill in 1910, leading to the departure of many employees from the town. Hagan and Claxton have expanded to the point that they adjoin each other, and Hagan, situated along a newly widened stretch of U.S. Highway 280 and on the Claxton–Evans County Industrial Park, finds itself poised for a major transformation. It has built two civic parks, the Bradley Memorial Park and the Maggie Lee Lewis children's park, and has restored the nineteenth-century home of Hagan pioneer G. Wesley DeLoach to use for community and civic functions.

Curtis Gordon Hames, an internationally recognized cardiologist who published one of the first studies on the protective value of HDL cholesterol, was born and practiced medicine in Claxton. Another notable Claxton resident was Albert Parker, a civic leader and philanthropist and the first mass marketer of the Claxton Fruit Cake.

Manufacturing is the largest employment sector, followed by educational, health, and social services, and the retail trade.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of Evans County is 10,495 (61.7 percent white, 33 percent black, and 6 percent Hispanic), a 20.3 percent increase since 1990.

Wildfire History

Evans County, located in the heart of Southeastern Georgia, has a mix of agriculture and forest land. With the exception several large blocks of woodlands in the eastern half of the county, there are homes and communities scattered throughout the county. The risks and hazards from the wildland urban interface are fairly general and substantial throughout the county even on the edges of the population centers of Claxton, Hagan, Bellville and Daisy.

Evans County is protected by organized fire departments within the cities of Claxton and Hagan. The Georgia Forestry Commission maintains a county protection unit located about two miles northwest of Claxton on Hwy 129 to respond to wildfires throughout the county. The cities of Claxton, Hagan, Bellville and Daisy and the adjacent areas along Hwy 280 are serviced by a pressurized water system with well-placed hydrants throughout the area.

Over the past 53 years, Evans County has averaged 38 reported wildland fires per year. The occurrence of these fires shows a pronounced peak in the months from January through March. These fires have burned an average of 124 acres annually. Looking at figures from the past 10 years, fiscal years 2008 through 2017, the average annual number of fires has decreased to 27 per year and the average acres burned is about 70 acres annually. This is a reduction in average size from 3.3 acres per fire to 2.6 acres per fire. This is perhaps the result of better response and equipment from both the Georgia Forestry Commission and the increased presence of rural fire departments. Despite this welcome trend in fire behavior, more homes are being built outside of traditional communities into the wildland urban interface.

The leading causes of these fires over the past 10 years, was debris burning causing 53% of the fires and 57% of the acres burned. The 2nd leading cause of these fires was machine use accounting for 12% of the fires and 7% of the acreage burned. Over the past six years records show that over 43% of the debris fires originated from residential burning.

Georgia Forestry Commission Wildfire Records show that in the past five years, 2014 – 2018, one home was damaged by wildfire in Evans County resulting in estimated losses of \$10,000 along with 6 outbuildings valued at \$35,500. According to reports during this period 50 homes, with a value of \$4 million, have been directly or indirectly threatened by these fires. Additionally one vehicle valued at \$2500 and one other piece of mechanized equipment valued at \$38,500 was lost. This is a substantial loss of non-timber property attributed to wildfires in Evans County.

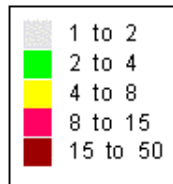
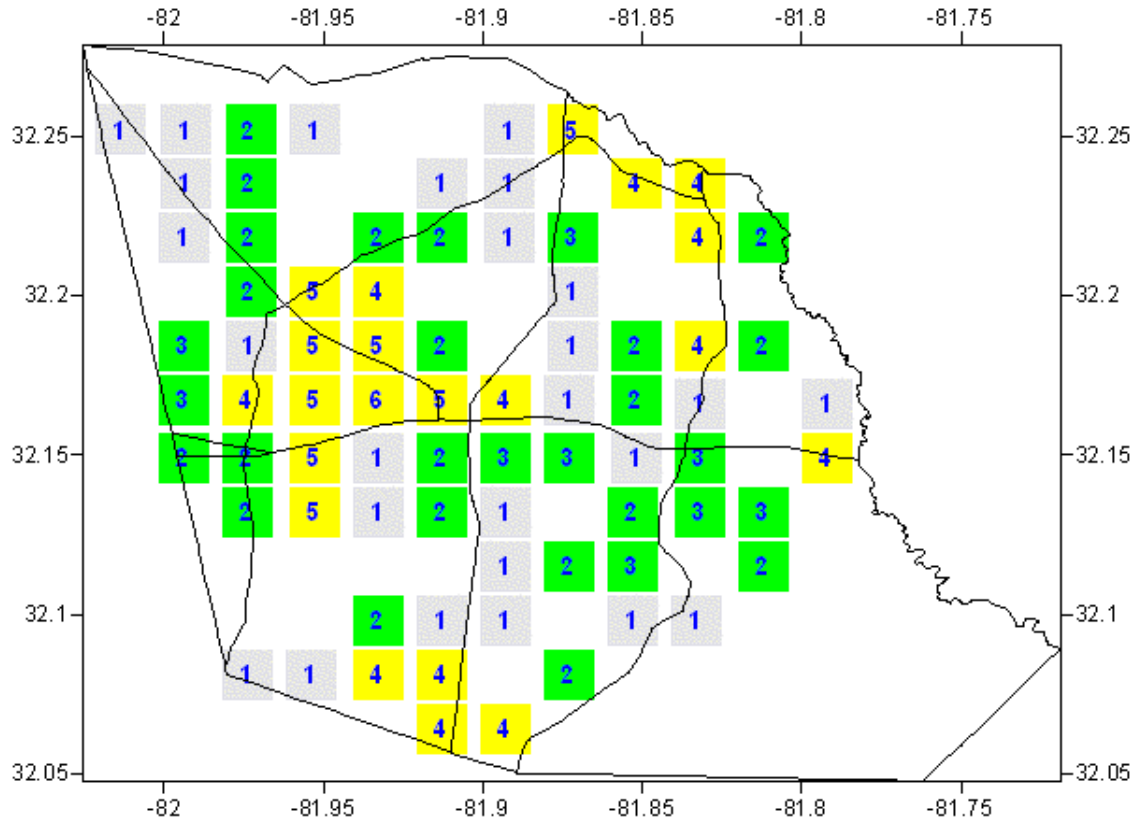
**Wildfire records for Evans County for the last complete fiscal year, July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018.
This data includes the 5 year averages.**

County = Evans	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0		0.00	0.80	1.00
Children	Children	2		0.55	1.60	0.30
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1		0.10	1.40	1.70
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.60	1.28
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	2		2.60	1.80	4.33
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	1		0.50	0.20	0.10
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.20	0.04
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	5		18.46	4.20	10.88
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1		0.40	1.20	0.84
Incendiary	Incendiary	0		0.00	1.60	11.51
Lightning	Lightning	0		0.00	0.60	1.73
Machine Use	Machine Use	1		0.20	2.20	1.45
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	0		0.00	0.40	0.49
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	3		0.39	1.00	0.10
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0		0.00	0.80	1.73
Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	1		0.01	0.20	0.00
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0		0.00	0.20	0.11
Undetermined	Undetermined	1		0.10	0.20	0.02
Totals for County: Evans Year: 2018		18		23.31	19.20	37.62

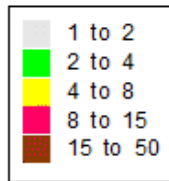
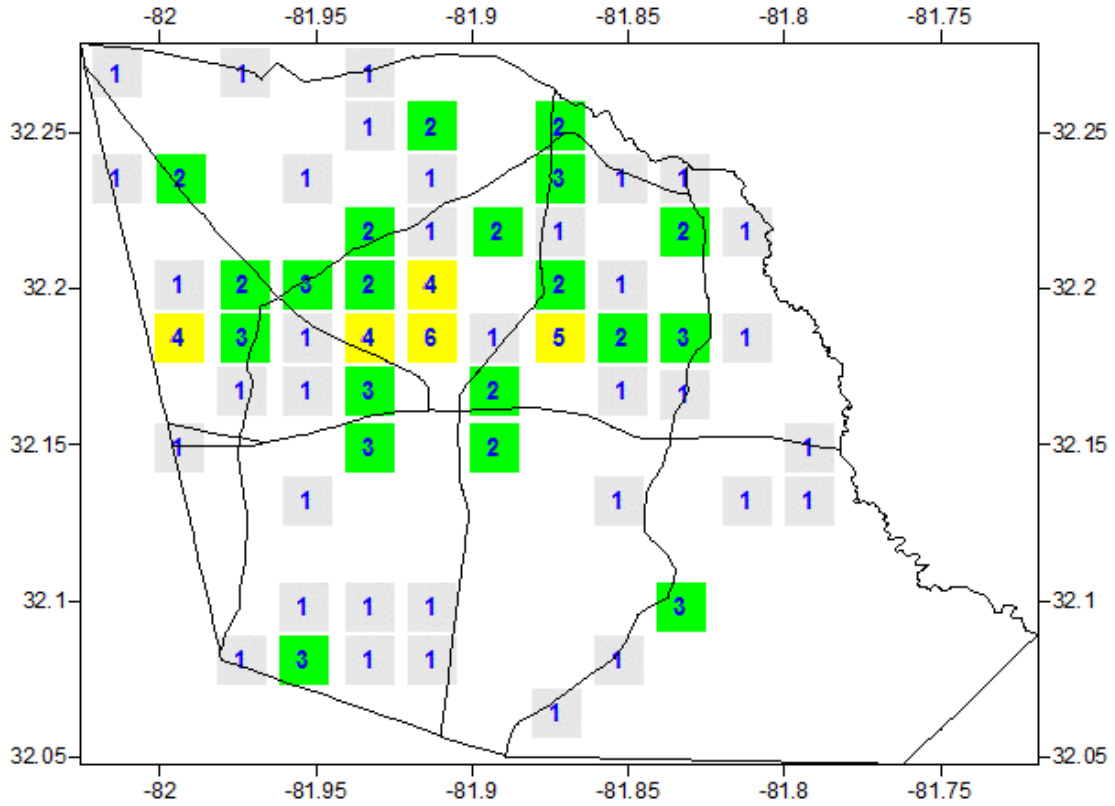
Acres Burned /Number of Fires For Evans County For FY 2008-2017				
Year	Acres Burned	Number of Fires	Average Size	Statewide Average Size
2008	57.34	23	2.49	4.56
2009	136.75	37	3.69	3.90
2010	26.81	19	1.41	3.93
2011	180.18	63	2.86	17.56
2012	75.19	33	2.28	5.08
2013	55.57	21	2.65	4.53
2014	63.54	21	3.03	5.02
2015	47.39	14	3.39	4.42
2016	30.56	19	1.61	6.29
2017	23.29	24	.97	11.60

For Evans County For FY 2008-2017		
Fire Cause	Acres Burned	Number of Fires
Campfire	19.15	13
Children	8.75	16
Debris Burning	399.16	146
Incendiary	82.49	21
Lightning	78.31	13
Machine Use	50.85	32
Miscellaneous	34.53	26
Railroad	0.00	0
Smoking	19.38	5
Undetermined	3.90	1
Total	696.52	273

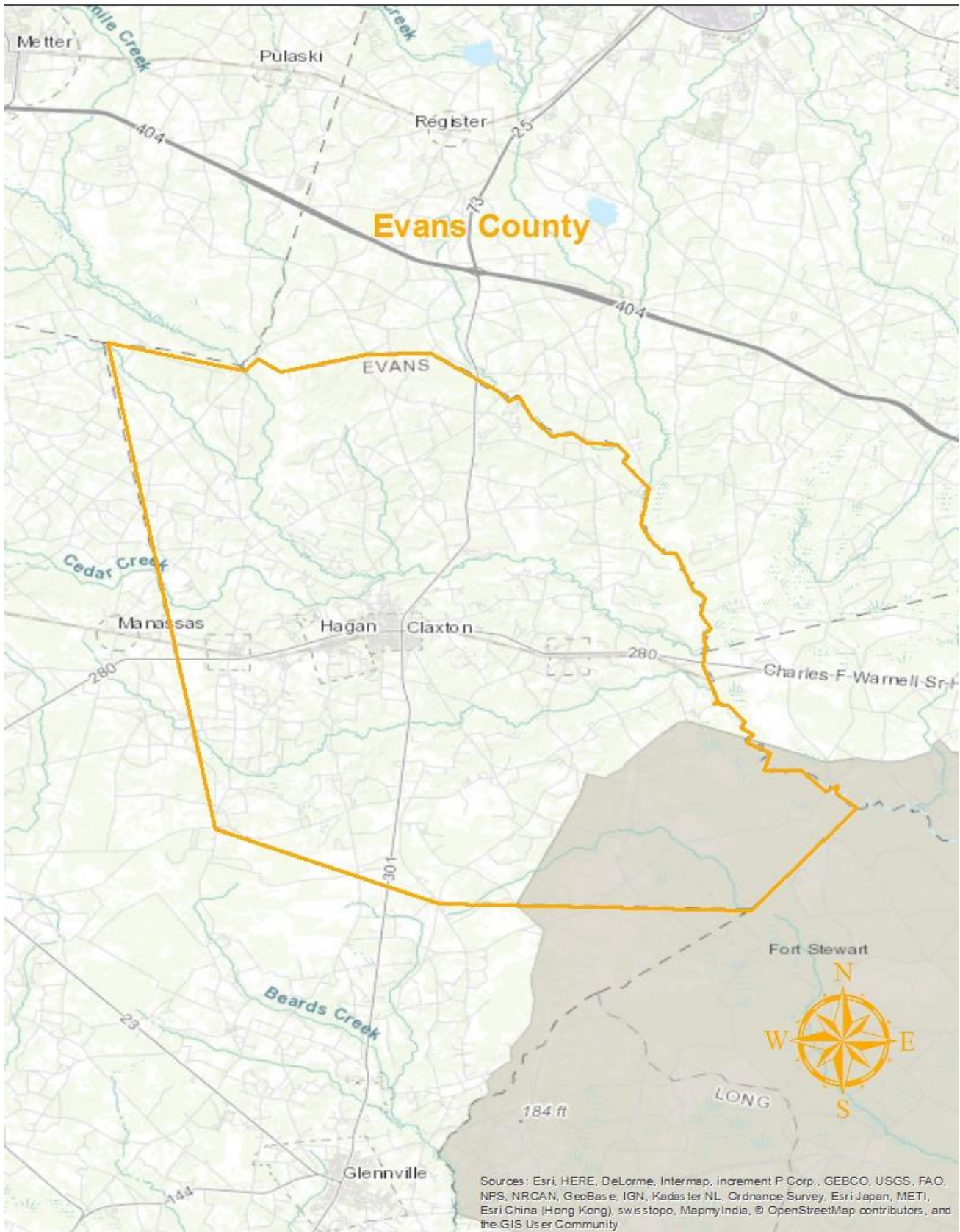
Fire Occurrence Map for Evans County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

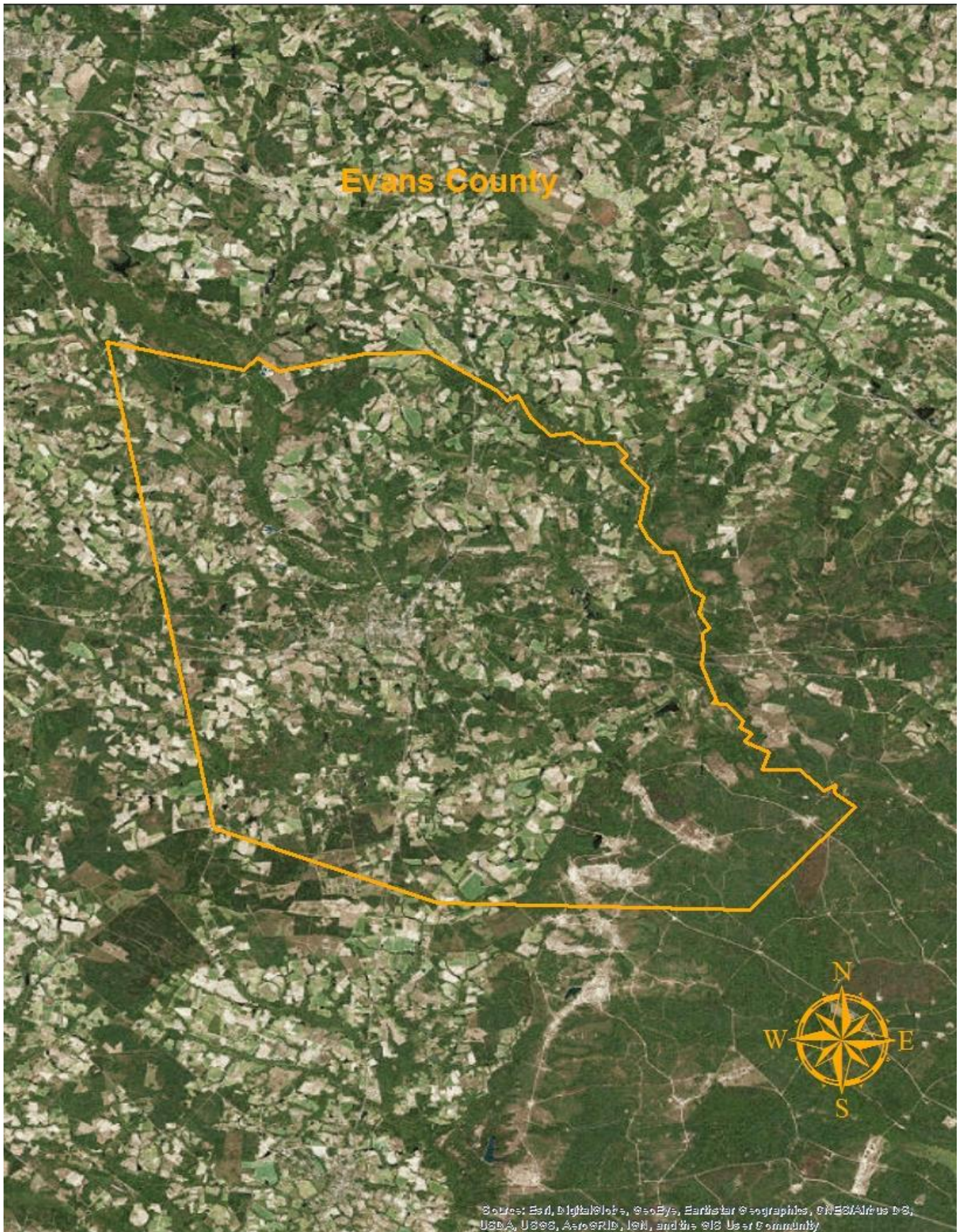


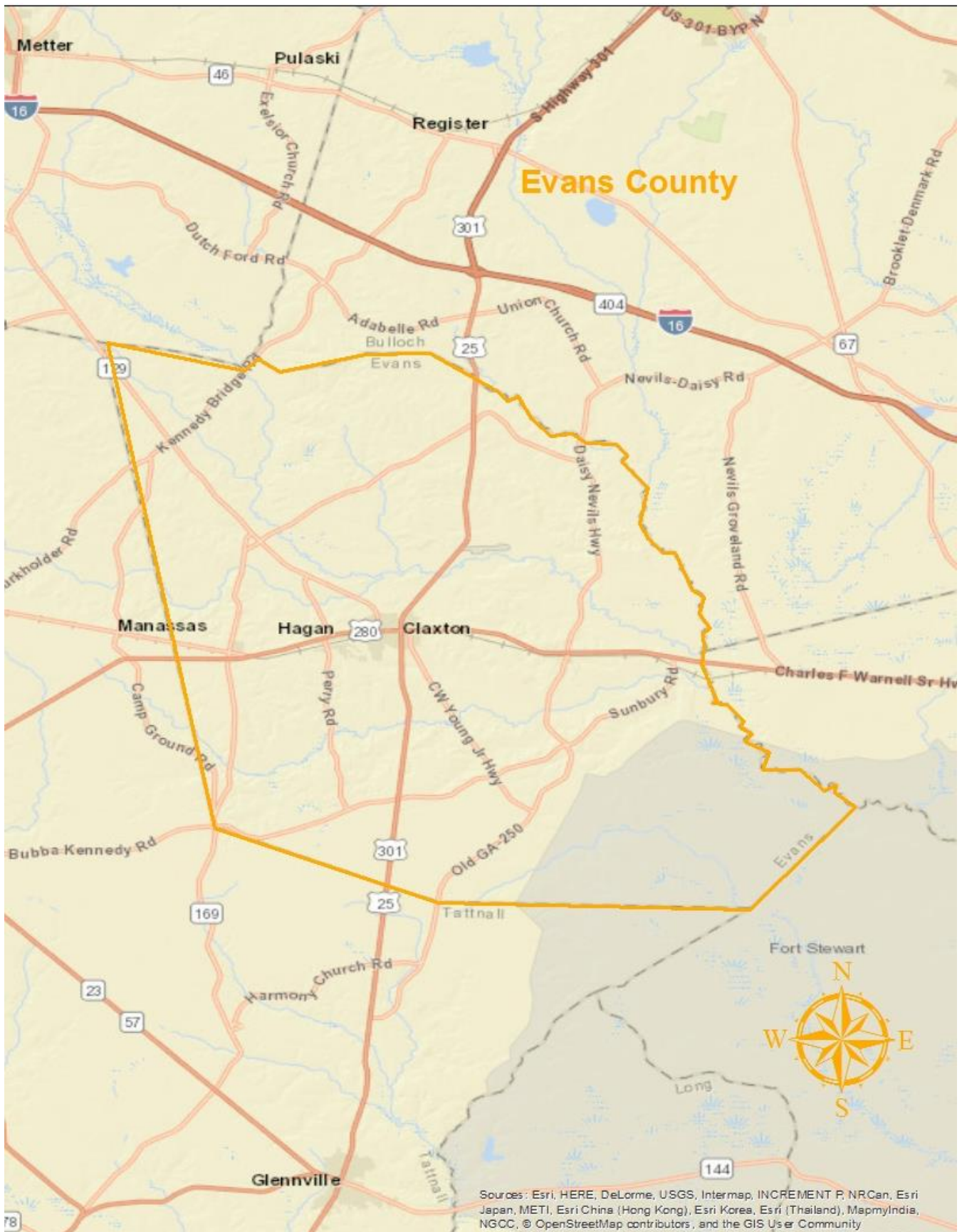
Fire Occurrence Map for Evans County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAP







V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Wildland-Urban Interface

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

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

- 1. “Boundary” wildland-urban interface** is characterized by areas of development where homes, especially new subdivisions, press against public and private wildlands, such as private or commercial forest land or public forests or parks. This is the classic type of wildland-urban interface, with a clearly defined boundary between the suburban fringe and the rural countryside.
- 2. “Intermix” wildland-urban interface** areas are places where improved property and/or structures are scattered and interspersed in wildland areas. These may be isolated rural homes or an area that is just beginning to go through the transition from rural to urban land use.
- 3. “Island” wildland-urban interface**, also called occluded interface, are areas of wildland within predominately urban or suburban areas. As cities or subdivisions grow, islands of undeveloped land may remain, creating remnant forests. Sometimes these remnants exist as parks, or as land that cannot be developed due to site limitations, such as wetlands.
(courtesy *Fire Ecology and Wildfire Mitigation in Florida* 2004)

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the fire Departments in Evans County returned an average score of 98, placing Evans County in the “high” hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Evans County’s WUI was the Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Scoresheet. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors. The following factors contributed to the wildfire hazard score for Evans County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Inadequate clearance in private drives
- Homes not clearly addressed
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Heavy fuels buildup in adjacent wildlands
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with heavy accumulations of vegetative debris
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available
- Above ground utilities
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations
- Lack of homeowner or community organizations

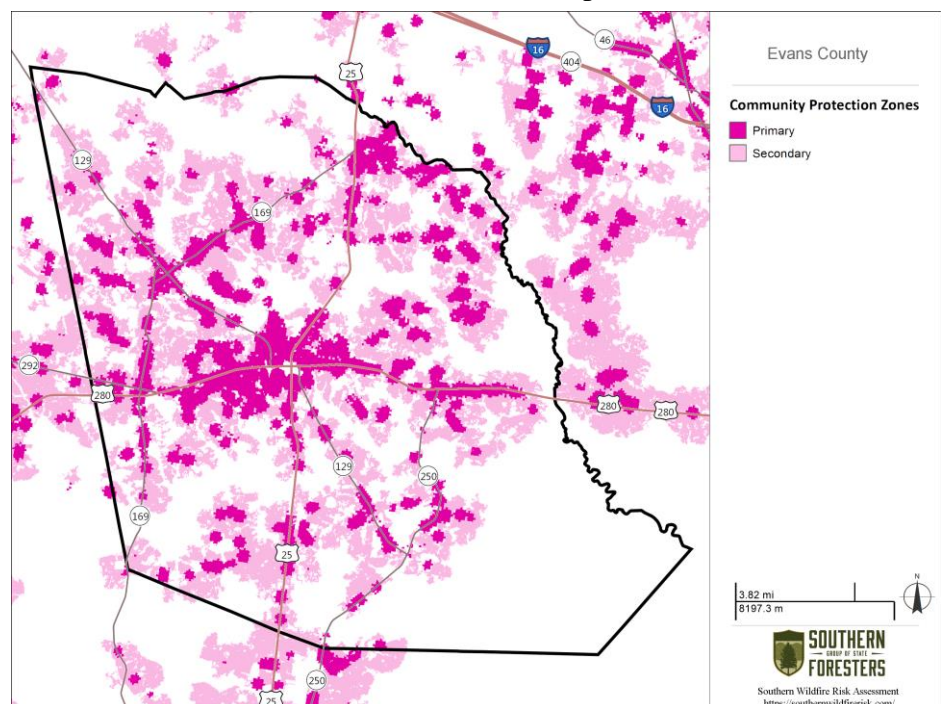
Summary of Evans County Assessment Ratings

Fire District/ Community	Access	Surrounding Vegetation	Bldg Construction	Fire Protection	Utilities	Additional Factors	Score	Hazard Rating
1-A	16	20	20	20	4	24	101	Very High
1-B	10	20	20	20	4	23	102	Very High
2-A	14	20	20	18	4	27	103	Very High
2-B	15	15	20	19	4	20	93	High
3-A	19	15	20	13	4	21	92	High
3-B	17	15	20	22	4	23	101	Very High
Average							98	High

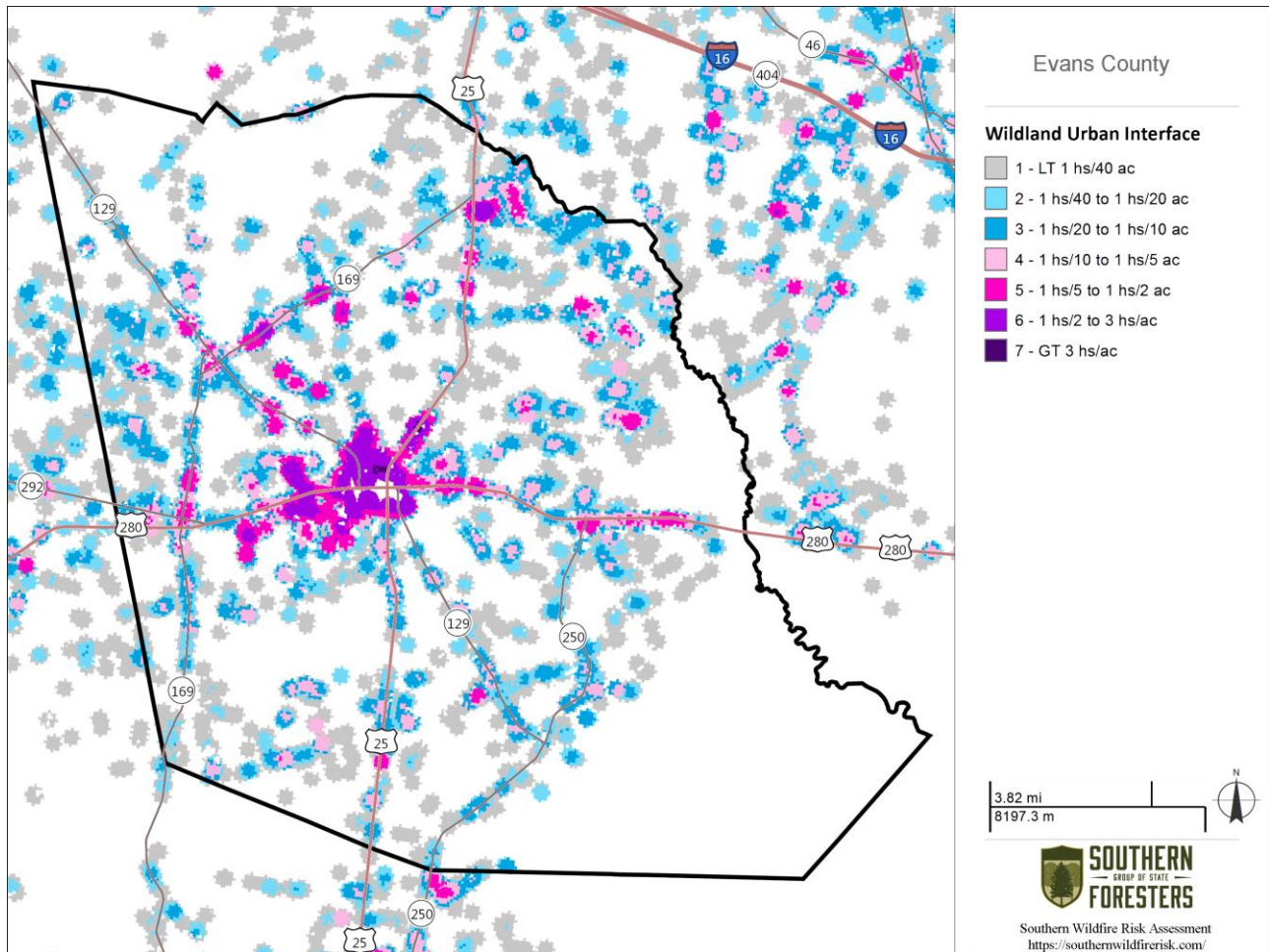
VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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 Evans 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.

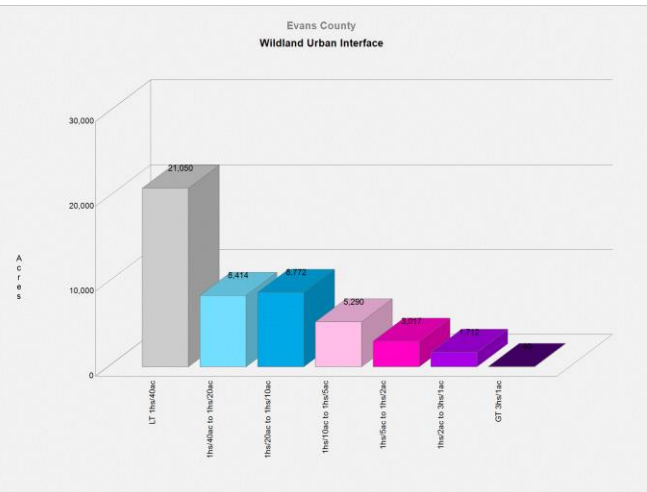
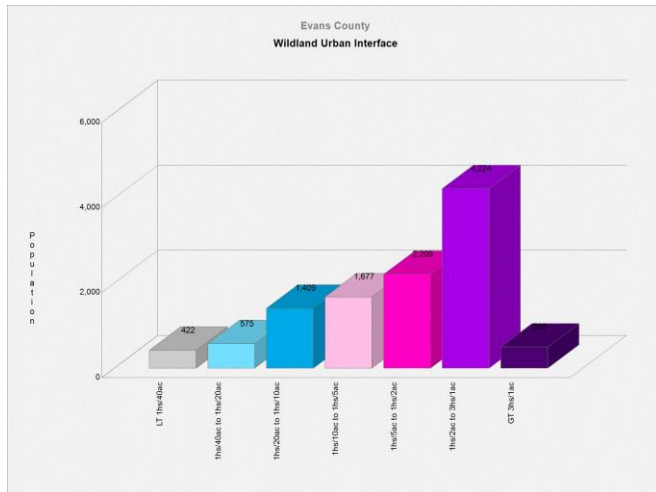


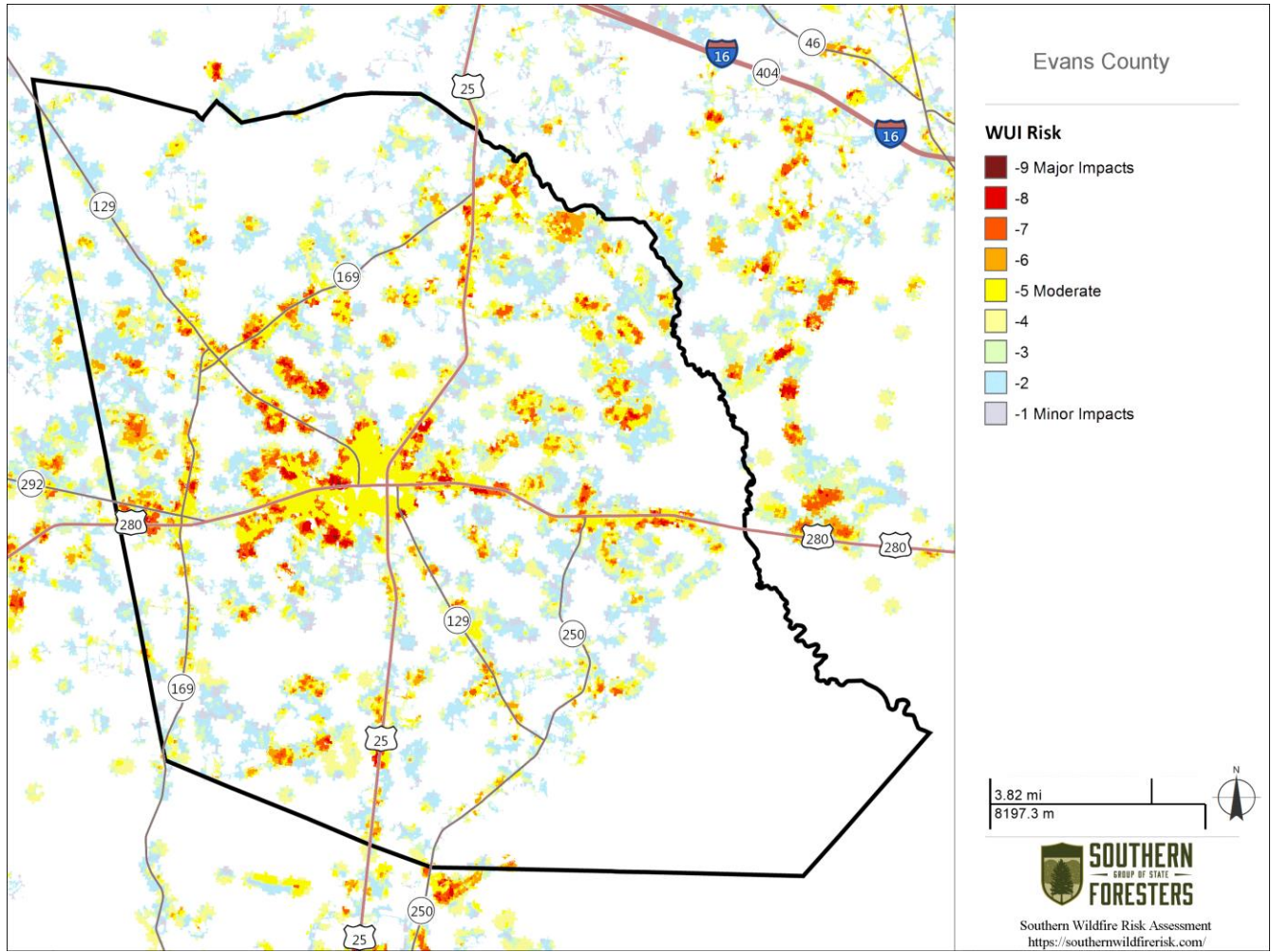
Community Protection Zones map from the Evans County SWRA



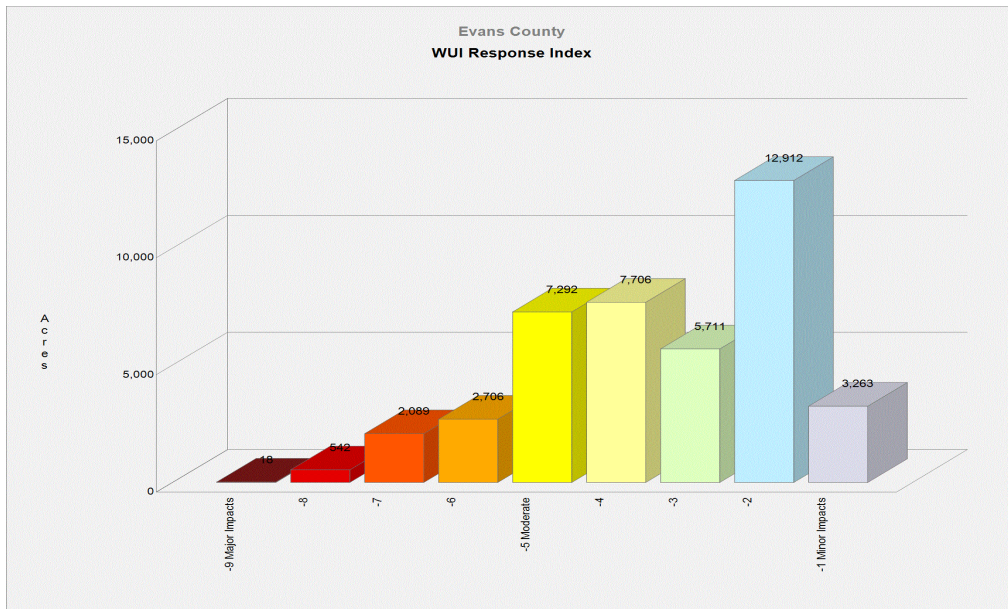
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map

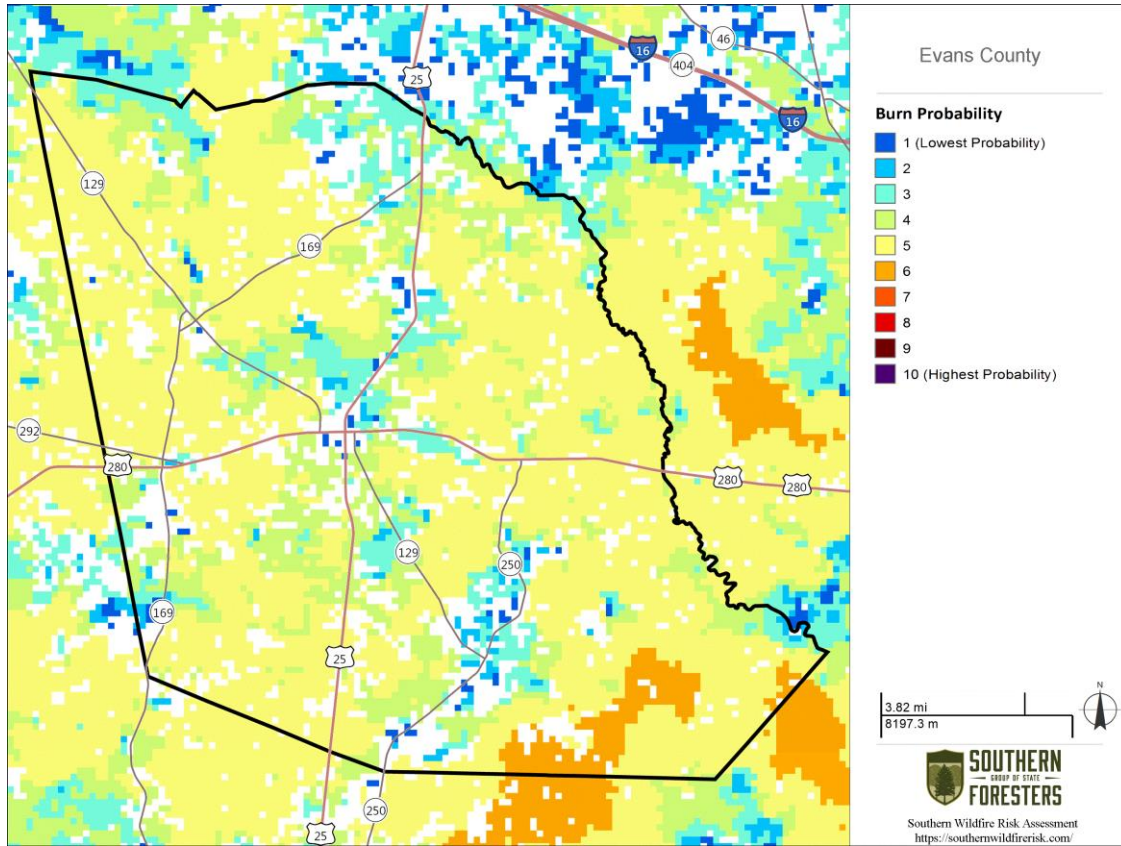
Below: (left) WUI Population (right) WUI acres



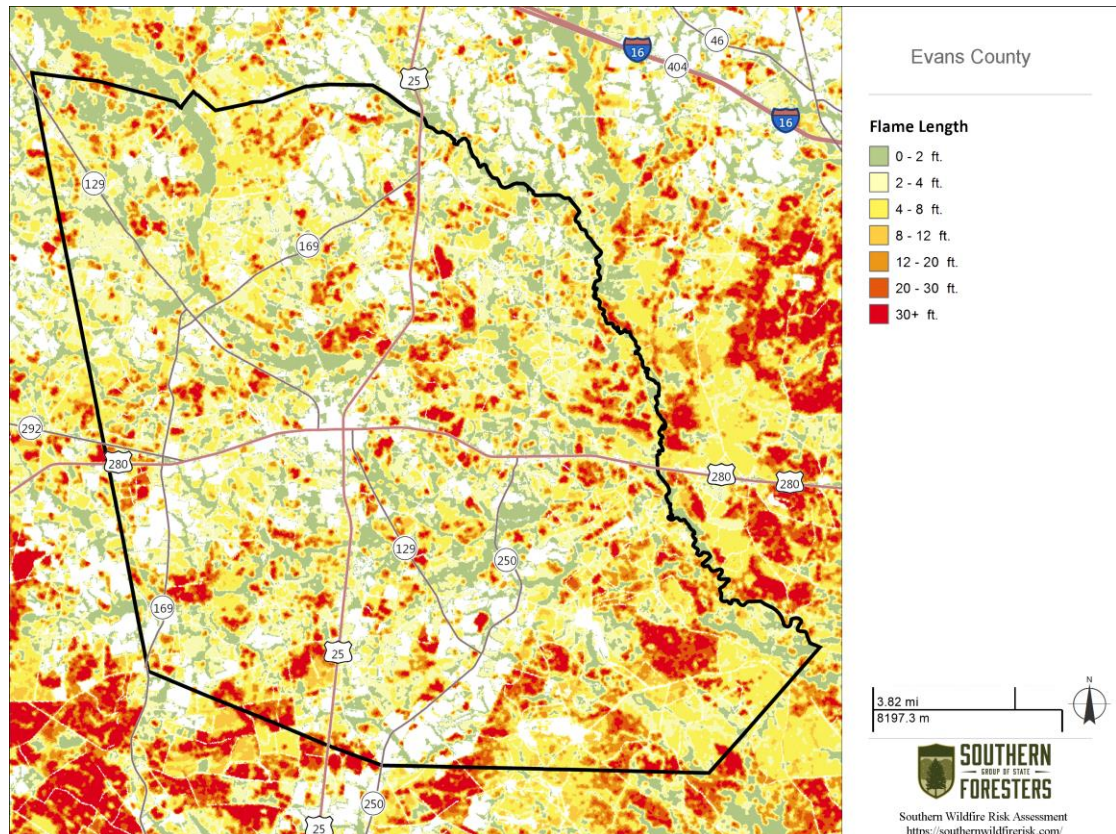


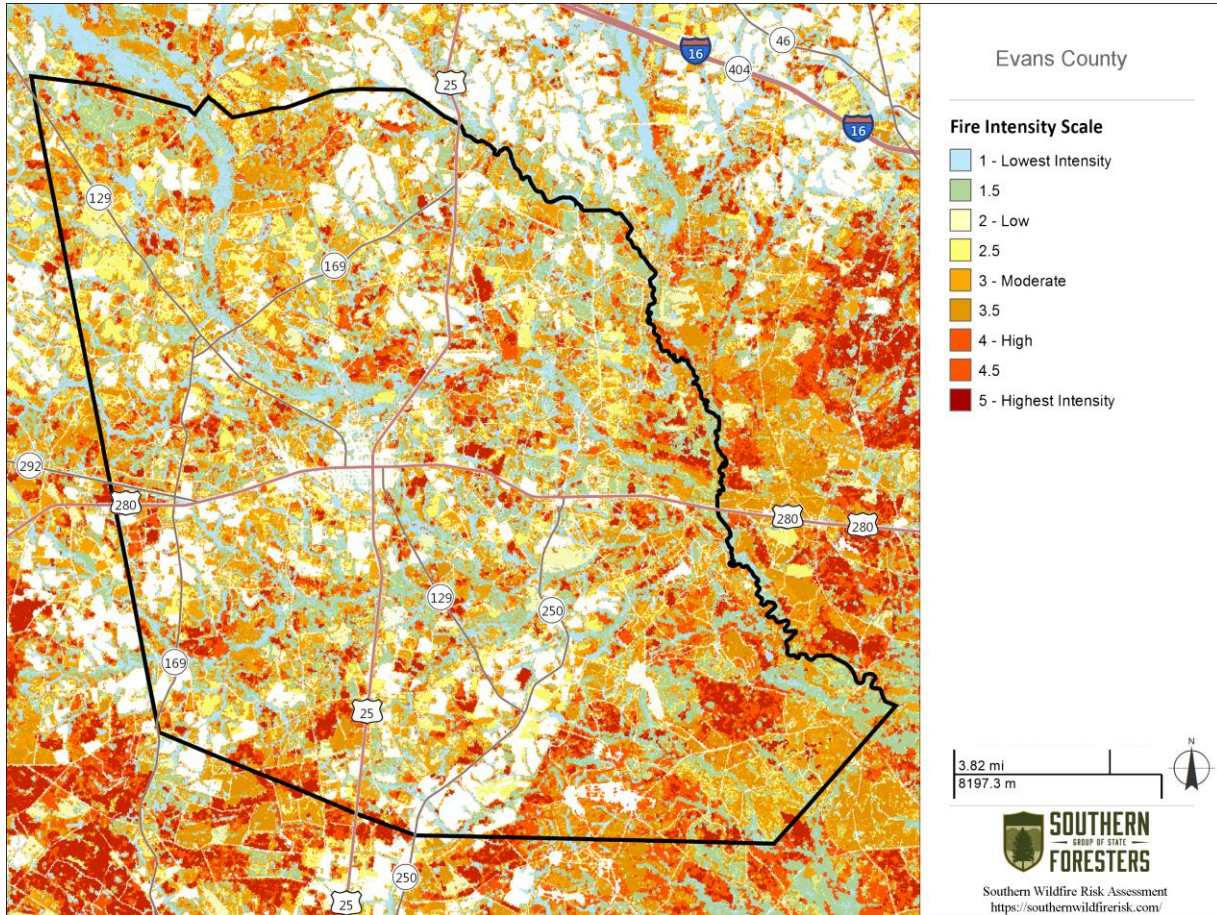
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map Below: WUI Risk Acres Index



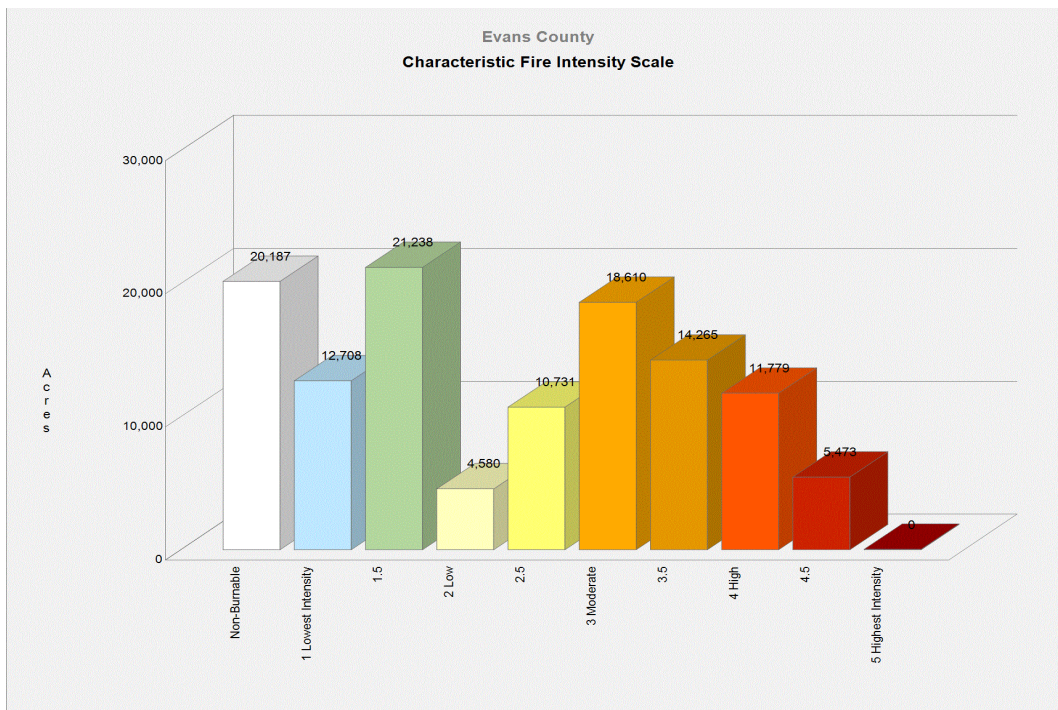


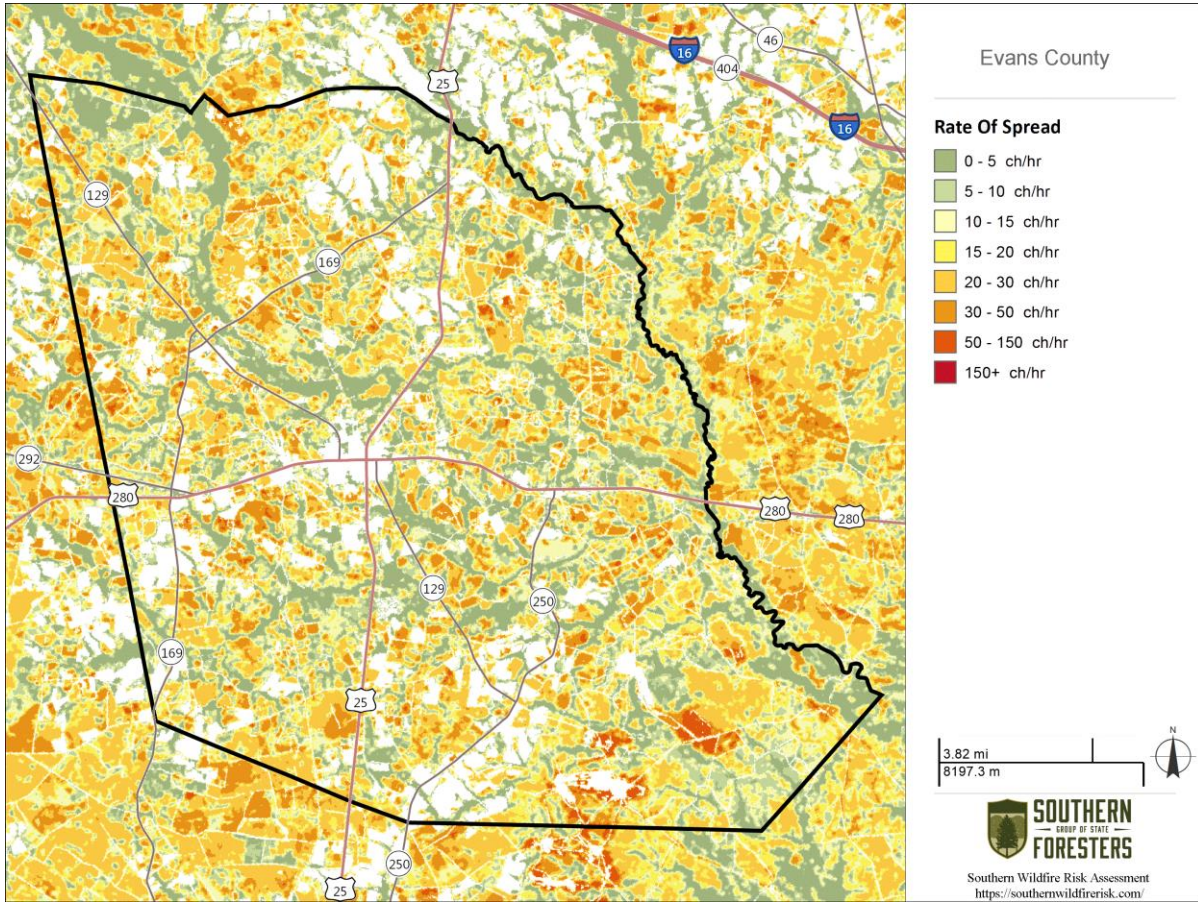
Above: Burn Probability map Below: Flame Length map



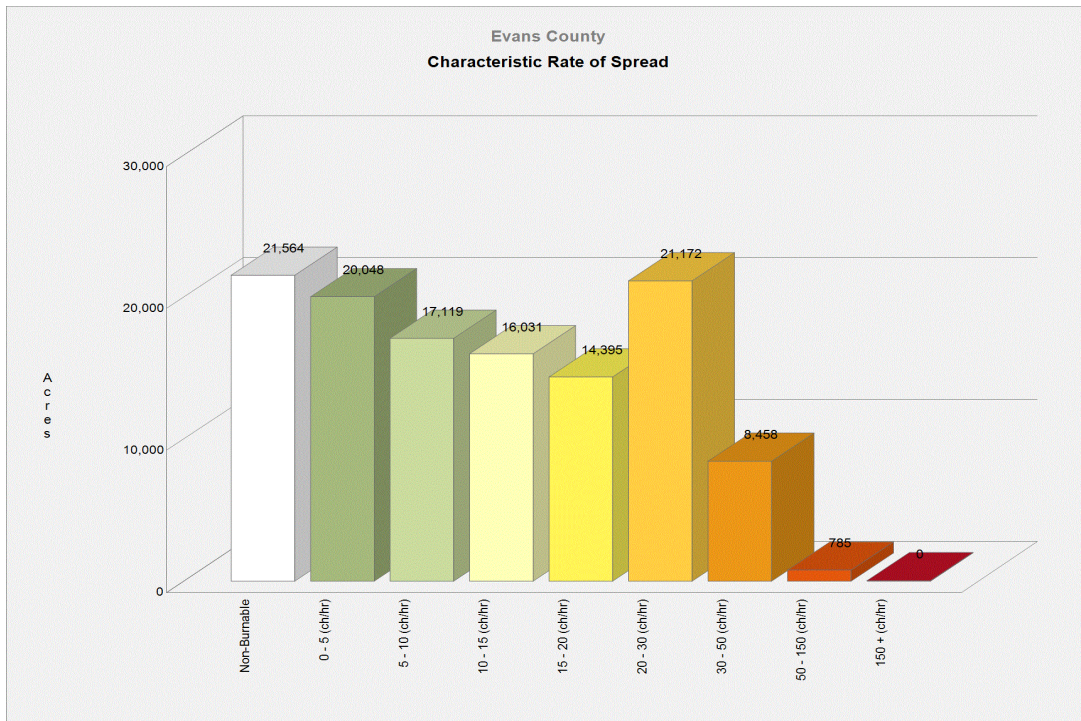


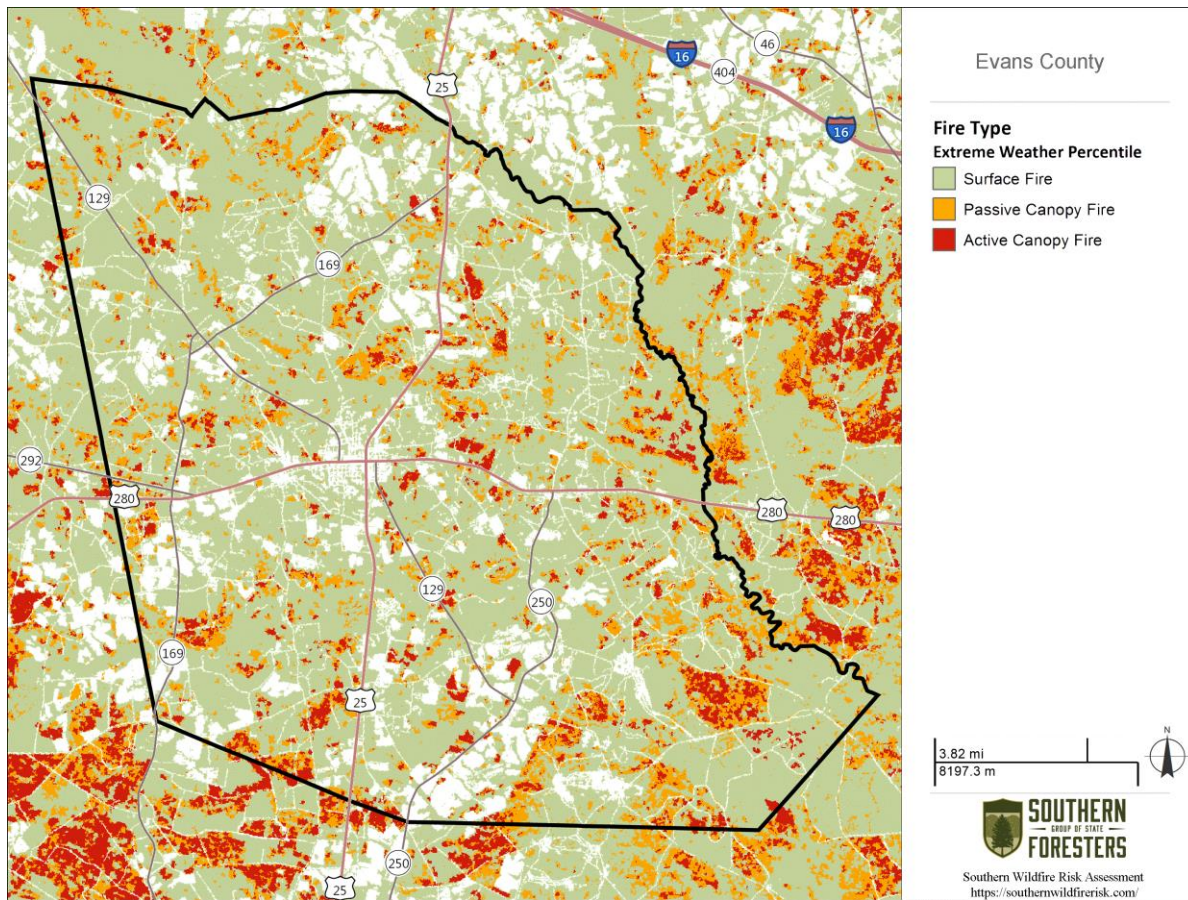
Above: Fire Intensity Scale map Below: Fire Intensity Scale Acres





Above: Rate of Spread map Below: Rate of Spread Acres





Surface Fire

A fire that spreads through surface fuel without consuming any overlying canopy fuel. Surface fuels include grass, timber litter, shrub/brush, slash and other dead or live vegetation within about 6 feet of the ground.



Passive Canopy Fire

A type of crown fire in which the crowns of individual trees or small groups of trees burn, but solid flaming in the canopy cannot be maintained except for short periods (Scott & Reinhardt, 2001).



Active Canopy Fire

A crown fire in which the entire fuel complex (canopy) is involved in flame, but the crowning phase remains dependent on heat released from surface fuel for continued spread (Scott & Reinhardt, 2001).



VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

As Southeast 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. Evans 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.

In 2012 the International Code Council developed the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). This code was adopted by the Georgia Legislature in 2014 for Counties to use when developing building and zoning codes in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to help reduce risk and minimize structure loss.

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

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-foot of defensible space**	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, and replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day National Wildfire Preparedness Day 1 st Saturday in May	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Driveway Access	Culvert installation and emergency vehicle clearance**	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed and minimum width and overhead clearance to allow emergency vehicle access.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul de sacs or turn arounds.
6. Codes and Ordinances	Examine existing codes and ordinances. 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 Review Subdivision and development ordinances for public safety concerns. Enforce uniform addressing ordinance.
7. Burn Permits	Education and Enforcement	Greater Burn Permit enforcement and education from the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas. Seek grant for prescribed burning in WUI areas. Seek grant for WUI mitigation team.
2. Railroad Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads to better maintain their ROW eliminating brush and grass through herbicide and mowing. Maintain firebreaks along ROW adjacent to residential areas.
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. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed. Locate and pre-clear helicopter dip sites.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Investigate need for “brush” trucks.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Investigate need for floating drafting pumps.
4. Road Names	Road Signage	Improved Road Signage at Crossroads. “Dead End” or “No Outlet” Tags on Road Signs.
5. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel. Ready Set Go training.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

<p>1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Evans County Residents</p>
<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>
<p>2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders</p>
<p>Arrange for GFC Firewise program to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and codes as the county as the need arises. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible firewise community recognition.</p>
<p>3. Spring Clean-up Event (National Wildfire Preparedness Day – 1st Saturday in May annually)</p>
<p>Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Claxton and Hagan Fire Departments and community residents. Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC Firewise coordinator and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. Activities to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Claxton and Hagan Fire Departments discussing and commending the work accomplished.</p>
<p>4. Informational Packets</p>
<p>Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Firewise Around Your Home • Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction • Firewise Communities USA brochures • Ready Set Go materials • Fire Adapted Communities information

5. Wildfire Protection Display

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

Hold Open House at individual Fire Stations to promote Community Firewise Safety and develop community support and understanding of local fire departments and current issues.

6. Media

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

Utilize TV, Radio, Cable, and Social media to reach the public.



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. Private forestry contractors can also provide this service.



Forestry mowers and brush cutters, such as pictured here, can be very effective in reducing understory fuels in areas where prescribed fire is not practical. Private contractors can provide this service.

VIII. ACTION PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities have been developed to implement the action plan:

Role	Responsibility
Hazardous Fuels and Structural Ignitability Reduction	
Evans County WUI Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Claxton and Hagan Fire department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Evans 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 & HOA 2 Forest Landowners and users 3 Civic Groups 4 School Groups
Methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 News Releases 2 Radio and TV PSAs 3 Personal Contacts & Social Media 4 Key messages and prevention tips 5 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, Claxton and Hagan Fire Departments, and Evans County EMA. Procure needed equipment and supplies. In cooperation with local city and county officials, develop safety protocol. Supervise work and monitor activities for safety the day of the event.

Funding Needs

The following funding is needed to implement the action plan:

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Create a minimum of 30 feet of defensible space around structures	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
2. Reduce structural ignitability by cleaning flammable vegetation from roofs and gutters; appropriately storing firewood, installing skirting around raised structures, storing water hoses for ready access, replacing pine needles and mulch around plantings with less flammable material.	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
3. Amend codes and ordinances to provide better driveway access, increased visibility of house numbers, properly stored firewood, minimum defensible space brush clearance, required Class A roofing materials and skirting around raised structures, planned maintenance of community lots.	No Cost	To be adopted by city and county government.
4. Spring Cleanup Day	Varies	Community Business Donations.
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$35 / acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Evans County WUI Fire Council will implement the following:

- Annual wildfire risk assessment will be conducted to re-assess wildfire hazards and prioritize needed actions.
- Mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning, and clearing of defensible space) will be incorporated into an annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Mitigation efforts that could not be funded in the requested year will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Continuing educational and outreach programs will be conducted and assessed for effectiveness. Workshops will be evaluated based on attendance and post surveys that are distributed by mail 1 month and 6 months following workshop date.
- The Evans County WUI Council will publish an annual report detailing mitigation projects initiated and completed, progress for ongoing actions, funds received, funds spent, and in-kind services utilized. The report will include a “state of the community” section that critically evaluates mitigation progress and identifies areas for improvement. Recommendations will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the action plan.
- An annual survey will be distributed to residents soliciting information on individual mitigation efforts on their own property (e.g., defensible space). Responses will be tallied and reviewed at the next Evans County WUI Council meeting. Needed actions will be discussed and delegated.

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

IX. MITIGATION ASSISTANCE & GRANT FUNDING

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

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

1. To provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to assist in the implementation of long term, cost effective hazard mitigation accomplishments.
2. This policy addresses wildfire mitigation for the purpose of reducing the threat to all-risk structures through creating defensible space, structural protection through the application of ignition resistant construction and limited hazardous fuel reduction to protect life and property.
3. With a completed registered plan (addendum to the State Plan) counties can apply for pre-mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP funding if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.

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

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

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

X. GLOSSARY

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

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

CWPP – The Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Home Ignition Zone (Structure Ignition Zone) - *Treatment area for wildfire protection. The “zone” includes the structure(s) and their immediate surroundings from 0-200 ft.*

Mitigation – *An action that moderates the severity of a fire hazard or risk.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XI. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites:

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

Appended Documents:

Evans County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Evans County Wildfire assessment scoresheets

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



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