

GEORGIA FORESTRY  
COMMISSION



## Georgia Firewise Success Story Wildcat Community, Dawson County

Wildcat Community, Inc. is a consortium of seven communities spanning Dawson and Pickens County in northern Georgia, roughly 65 miles outside of Atlanta in a heavily forested region of the Appalachian mountain range.

The Wildcat consortium was formed in 2005 to educate property owners in the mountain area in risk mitigation and emergency incident response, provide funds to enhance resources to support emergency management capabilities and interface with all state, local, and federal authorities and agencies associated with emergency management.

The organization began work right away to fire-safe the area. In 2006, a 45,000 gallon water tank was installed to improve fire suppression with Wildcat volunteers assisting in negotiating a land lease for the tank. The same year, Wildcat Community became Firewise-recognized. As part of continuing efforts to spread fire safety awareness in the South region, Wildcat community received a Firewise leadership award in 2008. Over the next year, the consortium raised \$55,000 to help Dawson and Pickens counties establish a fire station with two engines. Wildcat Community was involved in construction supervision of the facility and land leasing.

Following the completion of the station, community wildfire protection plans as well as emergency management plans were developed for the area. These plans are continually developed in conjunction with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, the Georgia Forestry Commission, and FEMA in an effort to make prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction, and recommend prioritized activities to educate the public. In 2011, Wildcat assisted local governments in training first responders and support firefighters. By collecting an additional \$40,000 in donations, the fire station was equipped with an engine capable of handling the area's steep, winding roads.

Currently, the Wildcat Community continues its fire safety mission and efforts to grow Firewise in the South, joining local and state authorities to help spread the word. [Learn more at http://www.wildcatcommunityga.org/Wildcat\\_Community\\_Inc.html](http://www.wildcatcommunityga.org/Wildcat_Community_Inc.html)