GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Franklin County, Georgia

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

MAY 2024

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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:

County Commissioners Office, Franklin County

Franklin County Emergency Management/911 Director

Franklin County Fire Association

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PLAN CONTENTS

I. OBJECTIVES

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) provides a community with a road map to reduce its risk from wildfire. A CWPP is designed through collaboration between state and local fire agencies, homeowners and landowners, and other interested parties such as city councils, utilities, homeowners' associations, environmental organizations, and other local stakeholders. The plan identifies strategic sites and methods for risk reduction and structural protection projects across jurisdictional boundaries.

Comprehensive plans provide long-term guidance for growth, reflecting a community's values and future expectations. The plan implements the community's values and serves to protect natural and community resources and public safety. Planning also enables communities to address their development patterns in the Wildland Urban Interface and determine how they can reduce their risk through alternative development patterns. The formal legal standing of the plan and its central role in local government decision making underscores the opportunity to use this planning process as an effective means for reducing wildfire risk.

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

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

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Wildfire risk reduction strategies are most effective when approached collaboratively – involving groups of residents, elected officials, community decision makers, emergency managers, and natural resource managers –and when combined with effective outreach approaches.
Collaborative approaches make sense as the initial focus of any community attempting to work toward wildfire risk reduction. In all Community Wildfire Protection Plan collaborations, the goal is to cooperatively identify problems and reach a consensus for mutual action. In the case of wildfire mitigation, a reduction in the wildfire risk to the community's lives, houses, and property is the desired outcome.

The collaborative core team convened in December of 2011 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local county government, local fire authorities, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Below are the groups included in the task force:

Franklin County Government
County Fire Chiefs
Emergency Management
County Commissioner
Georgia Forestry Commission

It was decided to conduct community assessments based on the high-risk communities and the individual fire districts in the county. The representatives of the local Georgia Forestry Commission office reconvened in late December for the purpose of completing the following:

Risk Assessment	Assessed wildfire hazard risks and prioritized mitigation actions. The wildfire risk assessment will help homeowners, builders, developers, and emergency personnel whether the area needs attention and will help direct wildfire risk reduction practices to the areas at highest risk.
Fuels Reduction	Identified strategies for coordinating fuels treatment projects.
Structure Ignitability	Identified strategies for reducing the ignitability of structures within the Wildland interface.
Emergency Management	Forged relationships among local government and fire districts and developed/refined a pre-suppression plan
Education and Outreach	Developed strategies for increasing citizen awareness and action, and to conduct homeowner and community leader workshops. Outreach and education programs are designed to raise awareness and improve audience knowledge of wildfire risk reduction needs and practices. In the best cases, education and outreach programs will influence attitudes and opinions and result in effective action.

III. COUNTY BACKGROUND AND WILDFIRE HISTORY

Franklin County, in northeast Georgia, was the first county established in the state after the American Revolution (1775-83). William Bartram traveled through part of present-day Franklin County in 1773. At that time members of the Lower Cherokee Indian tribe lived there. The 1783 Treaty of Augusta established the land claim from the native residents. The county was created in 1784 and named in honor of Benjamin Franklin. In 1787 parts of the original lands were ceded to South Carolina.

The exact location of the first courthouse, established in 1793, is unknown. The county seat, Carnesville, was incorporated in 1807, and in 1826 a second, more substantial courthouse was built there. The town is named for Thomas Peter Carnes, a lawyer and congressman of the Revolutionary War era. The current courthouse dates to 1906.

Franklin County Courthouse

Other towns include Canon, established in 1875 as West Bowerville (changed to Canon in 1902); Lavonia, established about 1878; Royston, incorporated in 1879; and Franklin Springs, a pre–Civil War (1861-65) health resort known for its mineral springs. Lavonia is the smallest city in the United States with an original Carnegie Library building. The Franklin Springs property is now owned by the Pentecostal Holiness Church and houses Emmanuel College.

The terrain of the county originally consisted mainly of oak-hickory forests. The early settlers cleared large tracts for agriculture, and for 200 years much of the land was devoted to cotton, corn, sorghum, and more recently, livestock.

Some of it is now reverting to old-field succession, which, if uninterrupted, will culminate in broadleaf deciduous forest. Livestock production constitutes an overwhelming majority of the agricultural output of the county; the Franklin County Livestock Market in Carnesville is the largest in the state. The Cromer's Mill covered bridge was built in 1906 and still stands, though it is no longer used for motor traffic. Lake Hartwell, at the northern end of the county, and two state parks, Victoria Bryant and Tugaloo, provide recreational opportunities.

Annual county events include the Junior-Senior Fishing Rodeo at Victoria Bryant State Park in May, the Lavonia Fall Festival in September, and various festivals at Tugaloo State Park throughout the year. Baseball great Ty Cobb was a native of Royston and donated $100,000 to build a hospital for the town; the Ty Cobb Museum is located in the Joe Adams Building there. Other noted residents include former Georgia governor Ernest Vandiver and D. W. Brooks, the founder and chairman of Gold Kist. Interstate 85 provides transportation links to the county. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population is 22,084, an increase from the 2000 population of 20,285.

Wildfire History

Recent data show that a majority of the fastest growing areas in the U.S. are in wildfire-prone environments. It is not a surprise that some of these fastest growing areas are in Georgia. In last decade of the 20th Century, Georgia's population increased substantially. Homeowners in Georgia must contend with natural hazards including wildfire, tornados, and flooding. This combination of factors – burgeoning population, abundant natural areas, development pressures, and lack of public awareness makes Georgia a perfect state for creating solutions to various hazards. Georgia is looked to throughout the southern region as a leader in comprehensive and hazard mitigation planning.

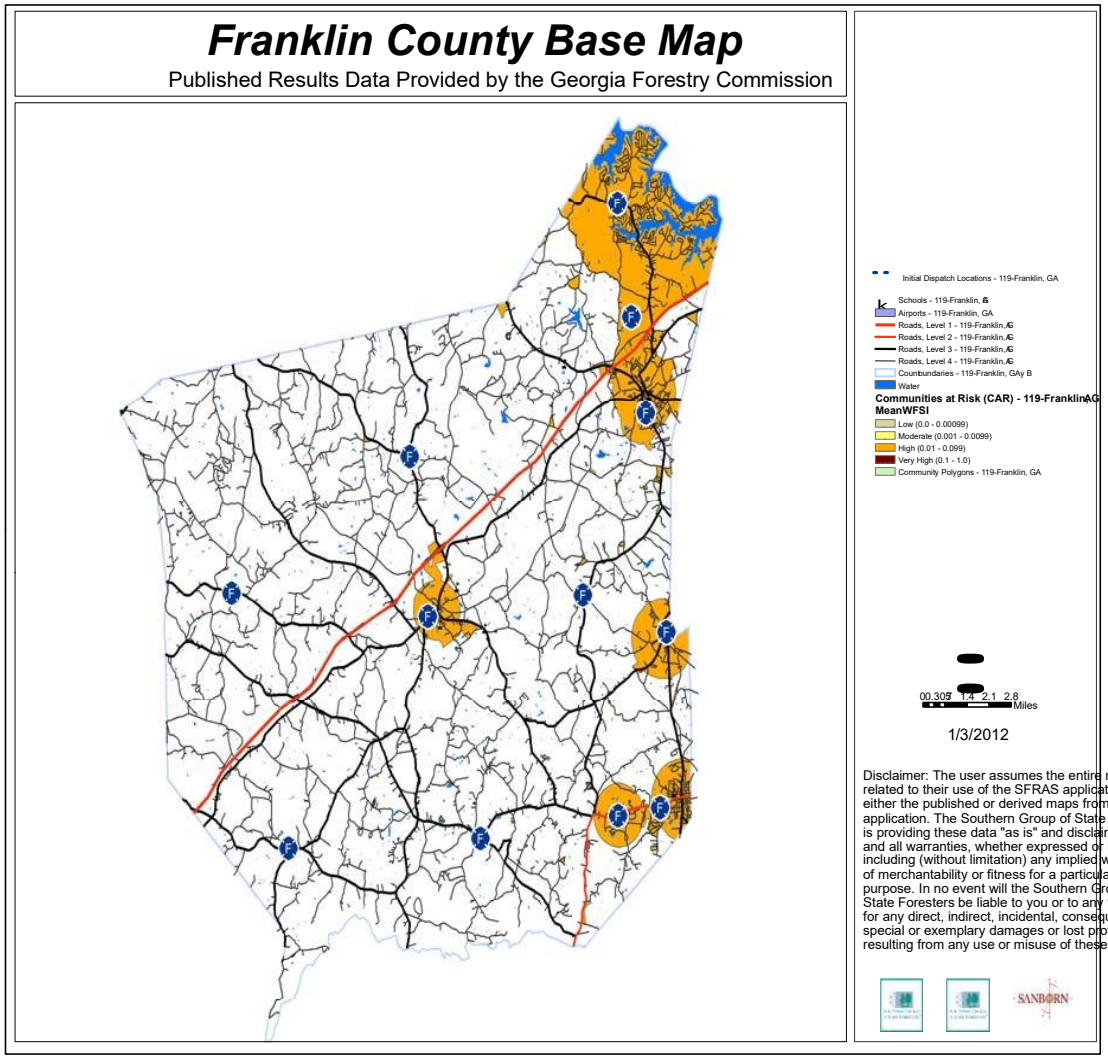
Many of Georgia's existing and new residents living in the urban interface are unaware of the vital role fire plays in our landscape and that their homes are extremely vulnerable to wildfire damage. Balancing development pressures with wildfire risk reduction and education creates a unique challenge for local governments, emergency managers, and wildfire management agencies such as the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Over the past five years, Franklin County has averaged 7.40 reported wildfires per year. The occurrence of these fires is uniform throughout the year with a slight peak in the months of February and March and a slight decrease during the fall months. These fires have burned an average of 6.32 acres annually. While the numbers of fires remain similar every month, there is a marked difference in the monthly acreage lost. The monthly acres lost during the late winter through summer period show a tenfold increase over the acres lost during the fall and early winter. Additionally, while the annual numbers of fires have not increased noticeably during the 5-year period that records are available, the annual acreage lost appears to have decreased in later years. This is perhaps a result of the increase in the practice of prescribed burning. The local Georgia Forestry Commission office needs to be commended for their valiant work increasing their very impressive, prescribed burning regiment. Despite their work, more homes are being built outside of traditional communities into the wildland urban interface. With this migration of people to the wildland urban interface the potential for a wildfire disaster continues to increase for Franklin County.

The leading causes of these fires in Franklin County were careless debris burning and machine related which came to almost 60 percent of all fires reported. Though these causes are a bit disturbing, local efforts of outreach and education can easily curb this problem.

County = Franklin	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1		2.60	0.20	0.52
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.20	1.44
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1		0.61	0.40	0.36
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	2		0.40	1.00	0.17
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	2		0.52	1.40	0.99
Machine Use	Machine Use	3		0.83	1.60	1.15
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0		0.00	0.40	0.33
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1		0.50	1.20	0.58
Smoking	Smoking	0		0.00	0.20	0.46
Undetermined	Undetermined	1		1.10	0.80	0.32
Totals for County: Franklin Year: 2023		11		6.56	7.40	6.32

IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAP



V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Wildland-Urban Interface

The WUI is described as the area where structures and other human improvements meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. Population growth within the WUI substantially increases the risk of wildfire.

For the **Franklin County Georgia** project area, it is estimated that **22,035** people, or **99.6 % percent** of the total project area population (**22,120)** live within the WUI.
Firefighters in the wildland urban interface may encounter hazards other than the fire itself, such as hazardous materials, utility lines and poor access.

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.

Wildland Urban Interface Hazards

- Hazardous Materials

- Common chemicals used around the home may be a direct hazard to firefighters from flammability, explosion potential and/or vapors or off-gassing. Such chemicals include paint, varnish and other flammable liquids; fertilizer; pesticides; cleansers; aerosol cans, fireworks, batteries and ammunition. In addition, some common household products such as plastics may give off very toxic fumes when they burn. Stay OUT of the smoke from burning structures and any unknown sources such as trash piles.

- Illicit Activities

- Marijuana plantations or drug production labs may be found in wildland urban interface areas. Extremely hazardous materials such as propane tanks and flammable/toxic chemicals may be encountered, as well as booby traps.

- Propane tanks

- Both large (household size) and small (gas grill size) liquefied propane gas (LPG) tanks can present hazards to firefighters, including explosion. See the "LPG Tank Hazards" discussion for details.

- Utility lines

- Utility lines may be located above and below ground and may be cut or damaged by tools or equipment. Don't spray water on utility lines or boxes.

- Septic tanks and fields

- Below-ground structures may not be readily apparent and may not support the weight of engines or other apparatus.

- New construction materials

- Many new construction materials have comparatively low melting points and may "offgas" extremely hazardous vapors. Plastic decking materials that resemble wood are becoming more common and may begin softening and losing structural strength at 180° F, though they normally do not sustain combustion once direct flame is removed. However, if they continue to burn they exhibit the characteristics of flammable liquids.

- Pets and livestock

    - Pets and livestock may be left when residents evacuate and will likely be highly stressed, making them more inclined to bite and kick. Firefighters should not put themselves at risk to rescue pets or livestock.

- Evacuation occurring

    - Firefighters may be taking structural protection actions while evacuations of residents are occurring. Be very cautious of people driving erratically. Distraught residents may refuse to leave their property, and firefighters may need to disengage from fighting fire to contact law enforcement officers for assistance. In most jurisdictions firefighters do not have the authority to force evacuations. Firefighters should not put themselves at risk trying to protect someone who will not evacuate!

- Limited access

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

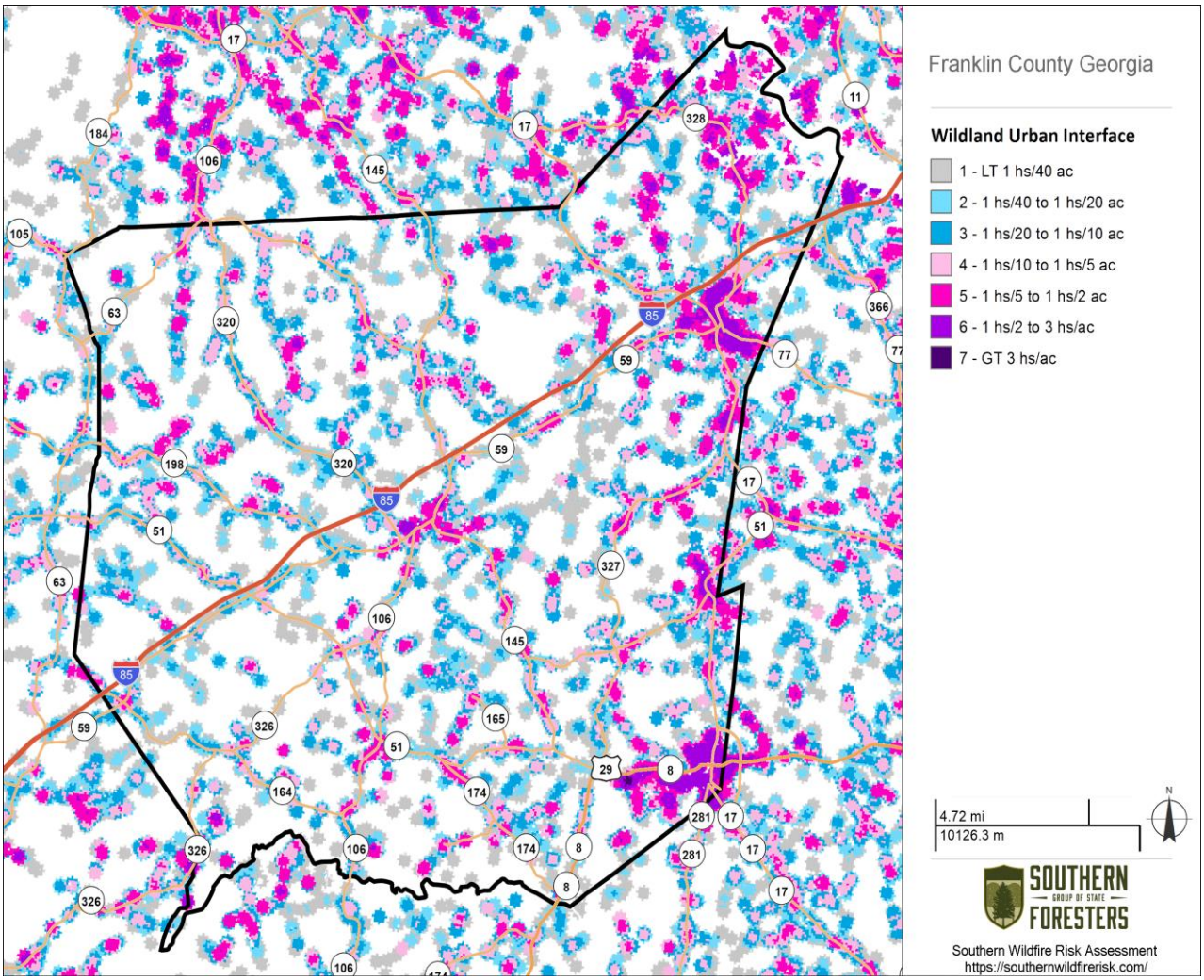
The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in December by the Georgia Forestry Commission returned an average score of 106, placing Franklin in the "moderate risk" hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Franklin County's WUI was the Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Checklist. 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 Bleckley County:

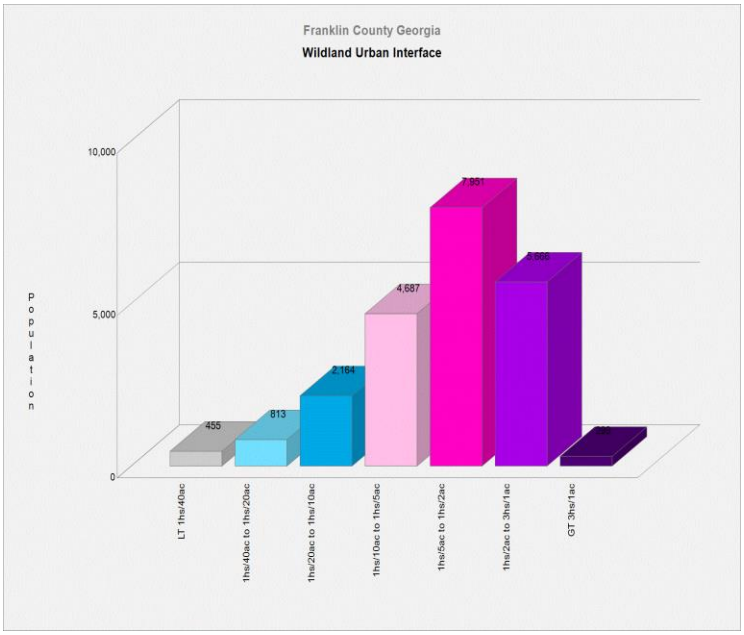
- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Limited street signs and homes not clearly addressed.
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes 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
- Heavy fuel buildups in adjacent wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations
- Distance from fire stations.
- Lack of homeowner or community organizations

The Communities-at-Risk within Franklin County that led to its **Moderate Hazard** risk rating are:

Communities-at-Risk	Score	Hazard Rating
Bent Tree Circle	125	Moderate Hazard
Bund Ave.	91	Moderate Hazard
Brittany Cove	155	Extreme Hazard
Brittany Harbor East	134	High Hazard
Brittany Harbor 1&2	121	Moderate Hazard
Brittany Harbor North	140	Extreme Hazard
Brittany Harbor South	125	Moderate Hazard
Brittany Harbor West	113	Moderate Hazard
Brookwood Drive	82	Moderate Hazard
Capri Point	92	Moderate Hazard

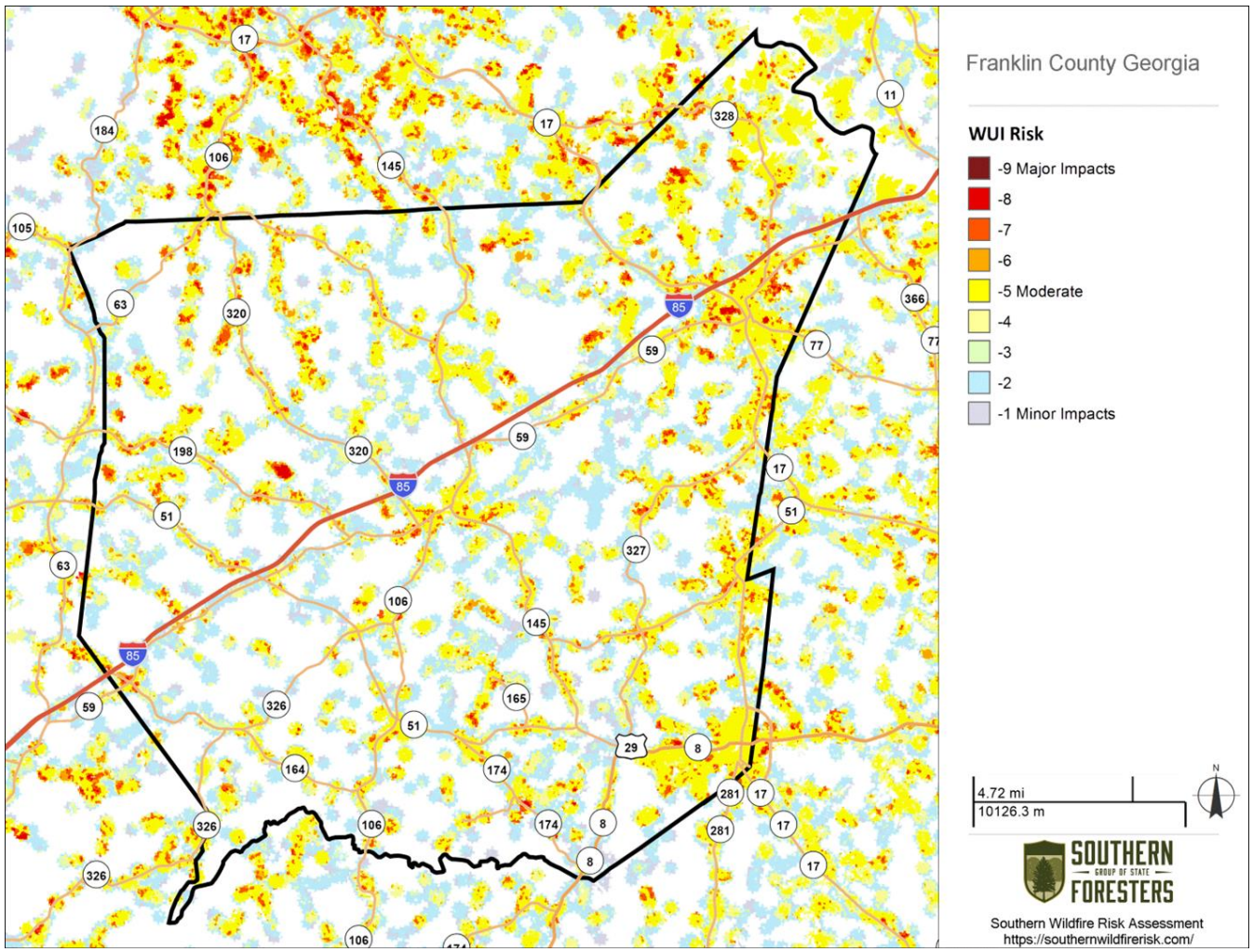
Chiggers Ridge	129	Moderate Hazard
Cobb Walk	49	Low Risk
Coyote Trails	130	High Risk
Fairview Farms	100	Moderate Risk
Fishermans Cove	111	Moderate Risk
Foxy Lane	88	Moderate Risk
Ginn St.	40	Low Risk
Governors Walk	97	Moderate Risk
Green Leaf	116	Moderate Risk
Grogan St. / Bowman St.	67	Low Risk
Hardeman Farm Rd.	125	Moderate Risk
Jim Grizzle / Hudson Terr.	164	Extreme Risk
Katheryn Way	76	Moderate Risk
Kesler Rd.	149	Extreme Risk
Lacefield Ln. / Woodrow	117	Moderate Risk
Medinah Rd.	158	Extreme Risk
Methodist Campground	115	Moderate Risk
Nails Creek Crossing	103	Moderate Risk
Nails Creek Rd.	88	Moderate Risk
Paradise Point	77	Moderate Risk
Pittman Rd.	114	Moderate Risk
Red Dog Run	107	Moderate Risk
Reno Rd. (Dirt)	146	Extreme Risk
River Ridge	86	Moderate Risk
River Bend, Royston	55	Low Risk
River Bend, Gumlog Area	115	Moderate Risk
Shirley/Timber/ Forest Dr.	50	Low Risk
Summit Cove	38	Low Risk
Sweet Gum Rd.	120	Moderate Risk
Tugaloo State Park	120	Moderate Risk
Victoria Bryant State Park	119	Moderate Risk
Average Rating:	**106**	**Moderate Risk**

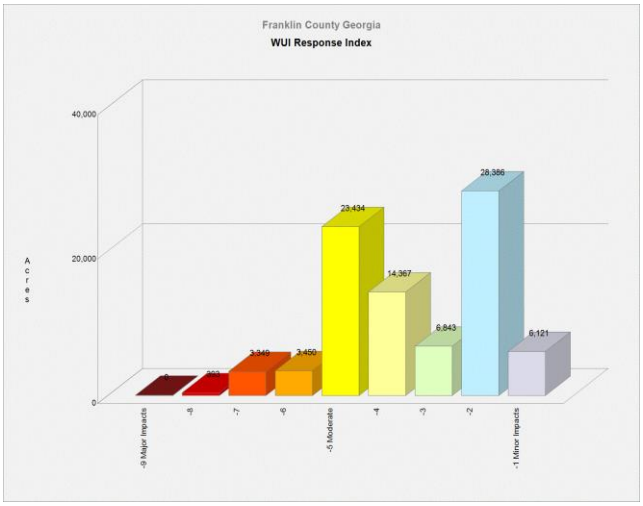




The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk Index layer is a rating of the potential impact of a wildfire on people and their homes. The key input, WUI, reflects housing density (houses per acre) consistent with Federal Register National standards. The location of people living in the Wildland Urban Interface and rural areas is key information for defining potential wildfire impacts to people and homes.

VI. COMMUNITY HAZARDS MAPS





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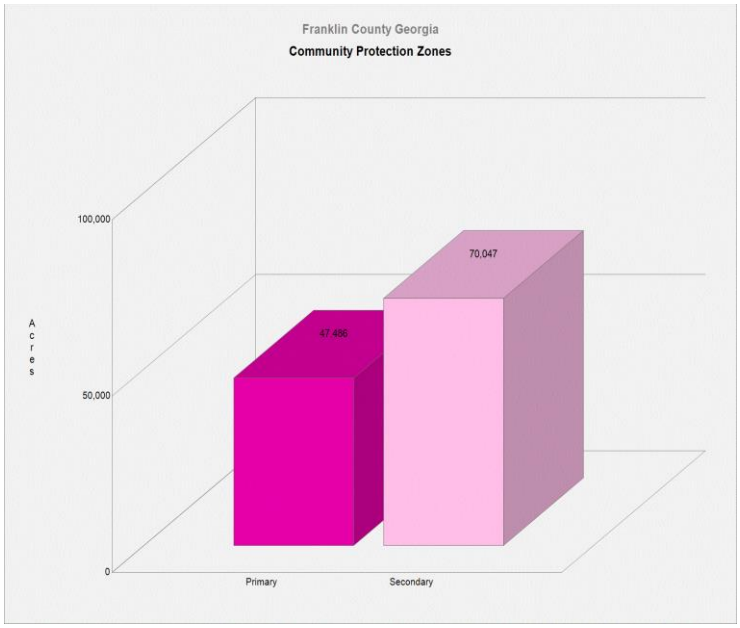
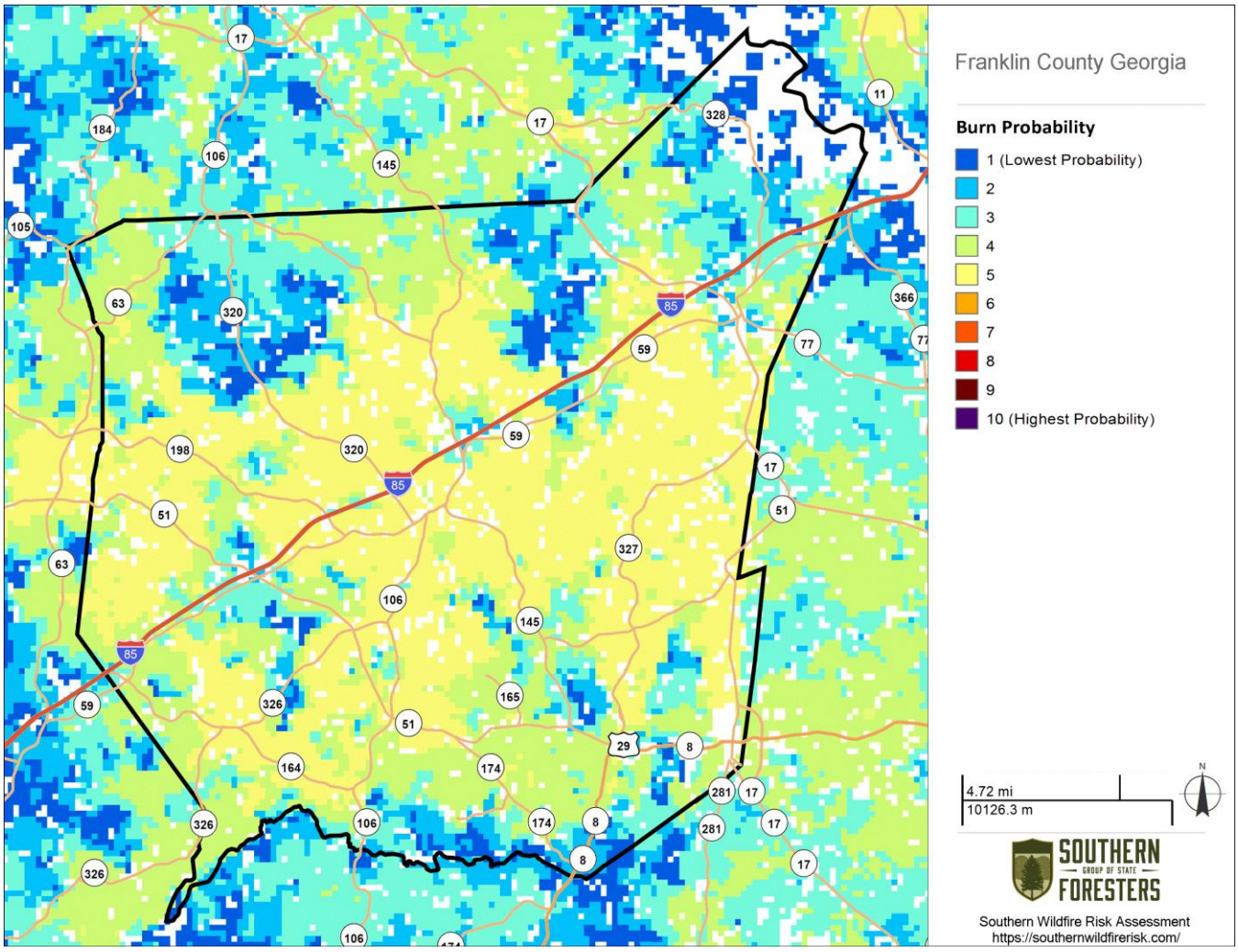
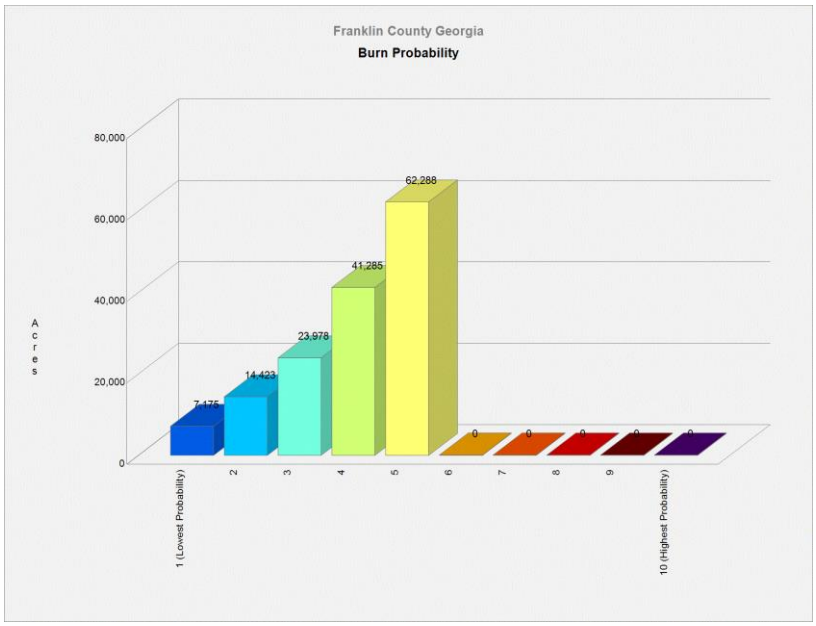
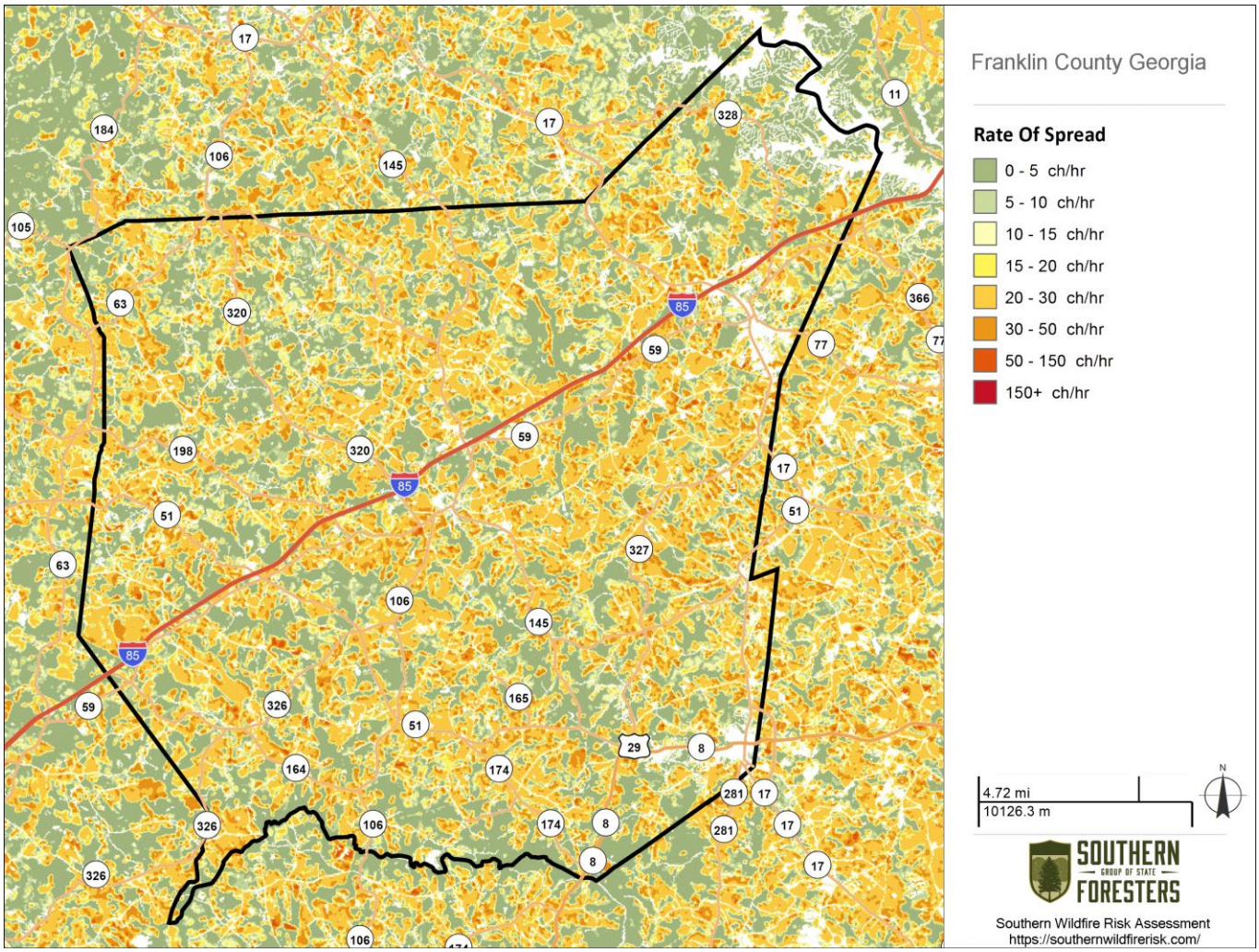


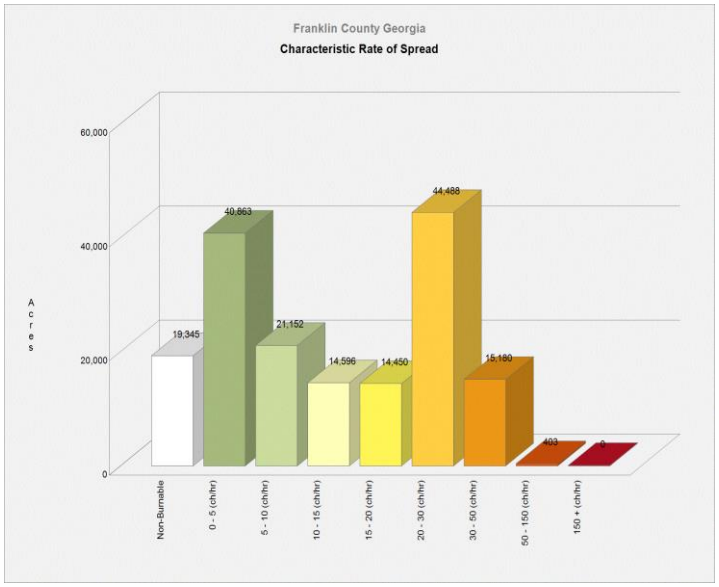
Community Protection Zones (CPZ) represent those areas considered highest priority for mitigation planning activities. CPZs are based on an analysis of the "Where People Live" housing density data and surrounding fire behavior potential. Rate of Spread data is used to determine the areas of concern around populated areas that are within a 2-hour fire spread distance. This is referred to as the Secondary CPZ.



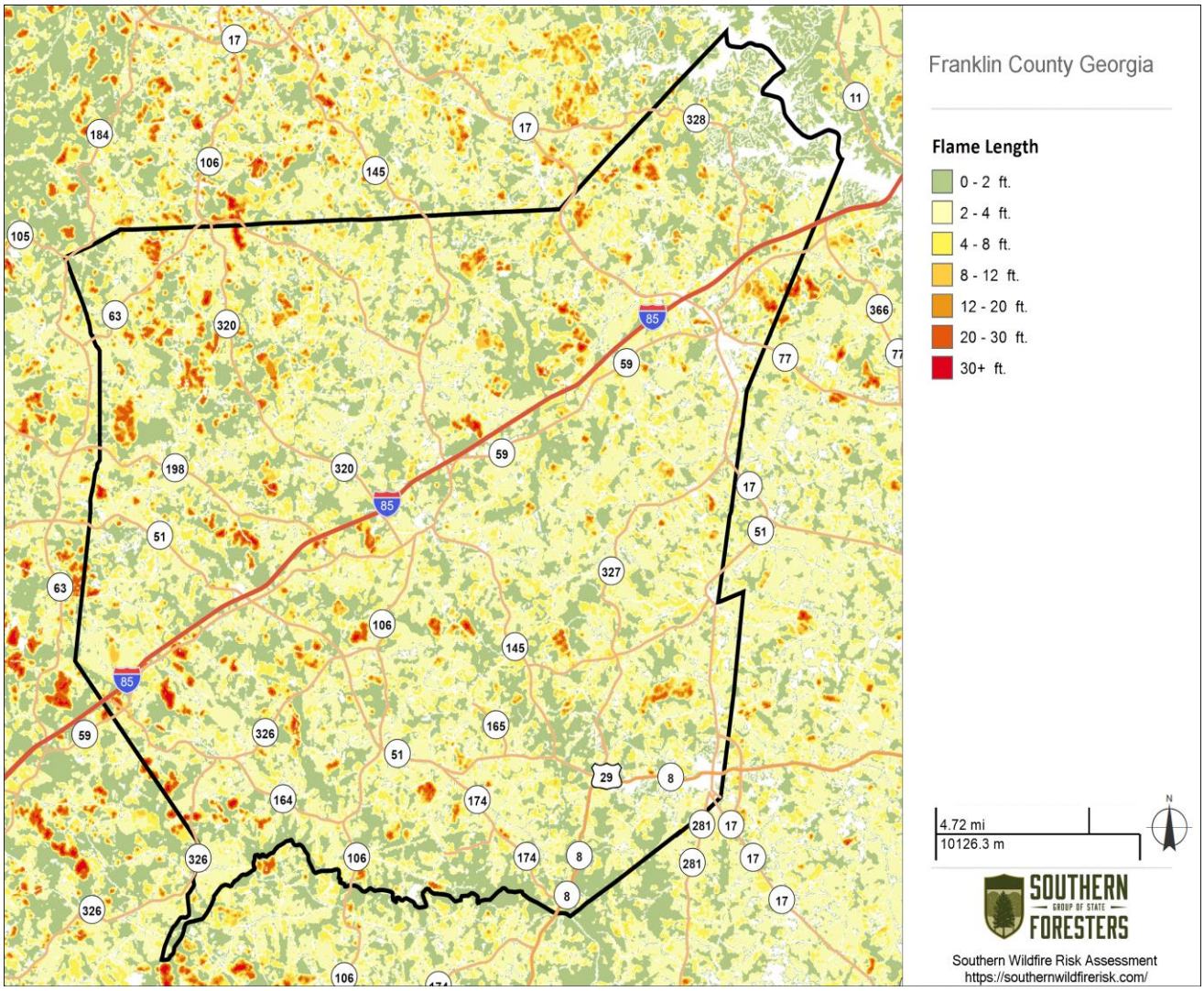


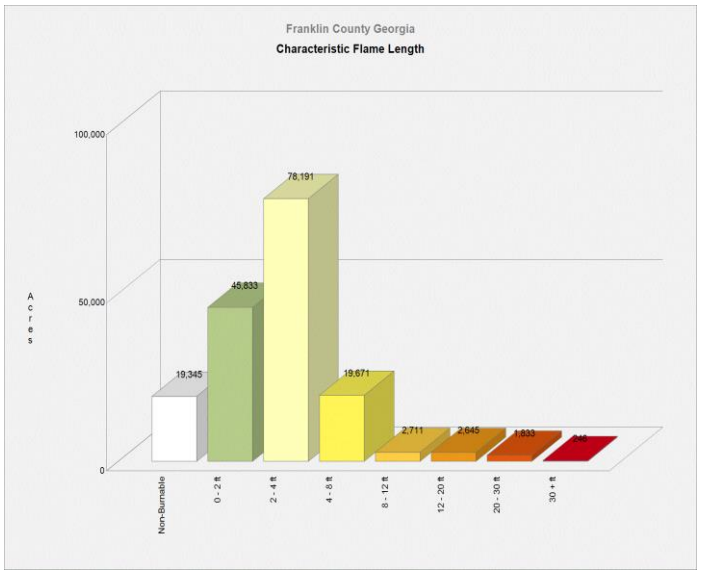
The Burn Probability (BP) layer depicts the probability of an area burning given current landscape conditions, percentile weather, historical ignition patterns and historical fire prevention and suppression efforts.



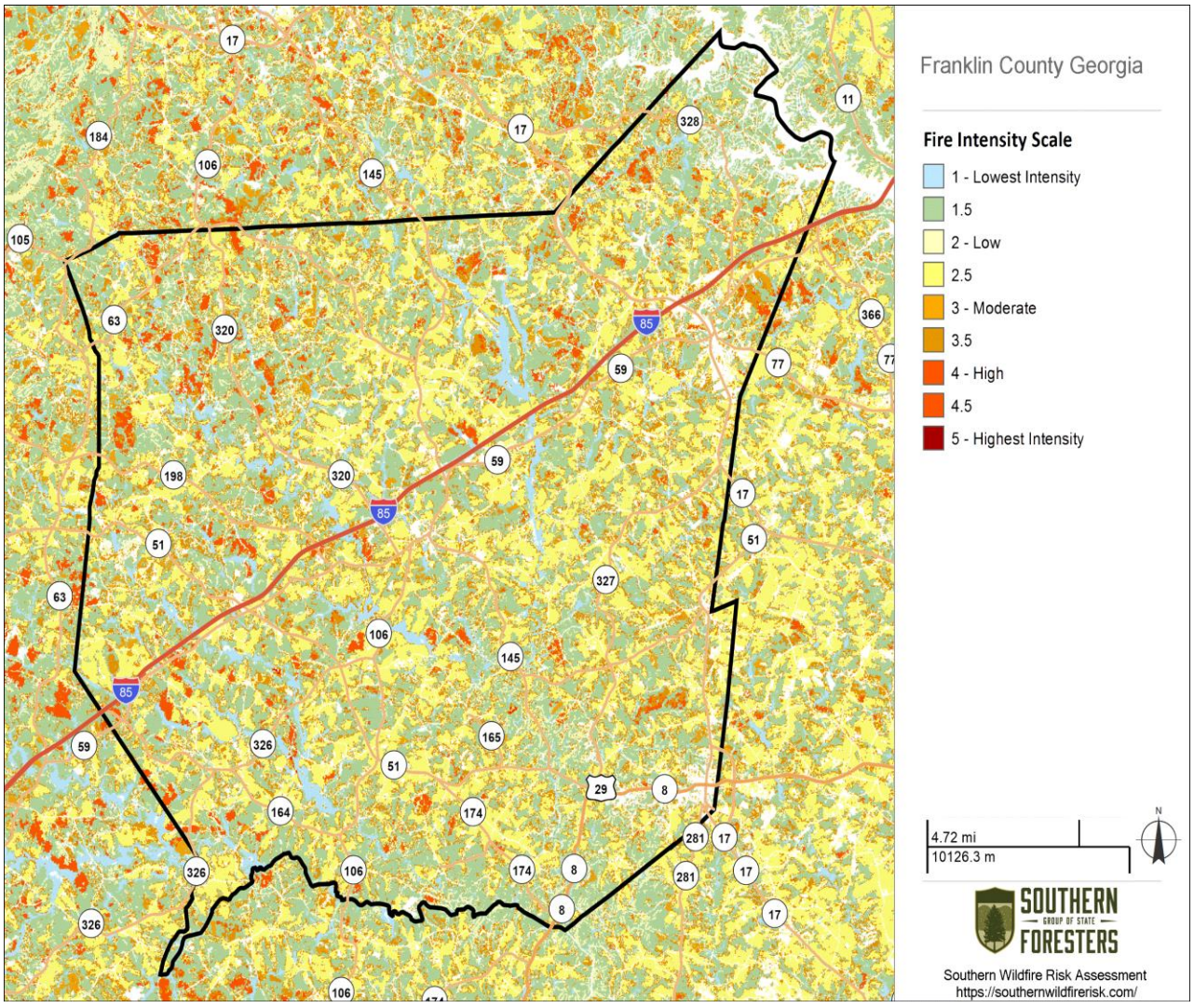


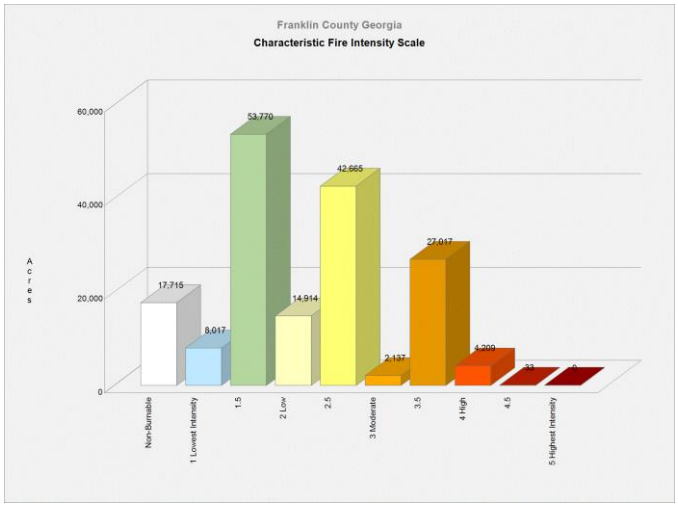
Characteristic Rate of Spread is the typical or representative rate of spread of a potential fire based on a weighted average of four percentile weather categories. Rate of spread is the speed with which a fire moves in a horizontal direction across the landscape, usually expressed in chains per hour (ch/hr) or feet per minute (ft/min). For purposes of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment, this measurement represents the maximum rate of spread of the fire front.





Characteristic Flame Length is the typical or representative flame length of a potential fire based on a weighted average of four percentile weather categories. Flame Length is defined as the distance between the flame tip and the midpoint of the flame depth at the base of the flame, which is generally the ground surface. It is an indicator of fire intensity and is often used to estimate how much heat the fire is generating. Flame length is typically measured in feet (ft). Flame length is the measure of fire intensity used to generate the response index outputs for the SWRA.





Characteristic Fire Intensity Scale (FIS) specifically identifies areas where significant fuel hazards and associated dangerous fire behavior potential exist based on a weighted average of four percentile weather categories. Similar to the Richter scale for earthquakes, FIS provides a standard scale to measure potential wildfire intensity. FIS consist of 5 classes where the order of magnitude between classes is ten-fold. The minimum class, Class 1, represents very low wildfire intensities and the maximum class, Class 5, represents very high wildfire intensities.

Characteristic Fire Intensity Scale

- **Class 1, Very Low:**

Very small, discontinuous flames, usually less than 1 foot in length; very low rate of spread; no spotting. Fires are typically easy to suppress by firefighters with basic training and non-specialized equipment.

- **Class 2, Low:**

Small flames, usually less than two feet long; small amount of very short range spotting possible. Fires are easy to suppress by trained firefighters with protective equipment and specialized tools.

- **Class 3, Moderate:**

Flames up to 8 feet in length; short-range spotting is possible. Trained firefighters will find these fires difficult to suppress without support from aircraft or engines, but dozer and plows are generally effective. Increasing potential for harm or damage to life and property.

- **Class 4, High:**

Large Flames, up to 30 feet in length; short-range spotting common; medium range spotting possible. Direct attack by trained firefighters, engines, and dozers is generally ineffective, indirect attack may be effective. Significant potential for harm or damage to life and property.

- **Class 5, Very High:**

Very large flames up to 150 feet in length; profuse short-range spotting, frequent long-range spotting; strong fire-induced winds. Indirect attack marginally effective at the head of the fire. Great potential for harm or damage to life and property.

For all Southern states, except Texas, this dataset was derived from updated fuels and canopy data as part of the 2010 SWRA Update Project recently completed in May 2014. For Texas, the 2010 Texas risk update data is portrayed.

Fire Type – Extreme

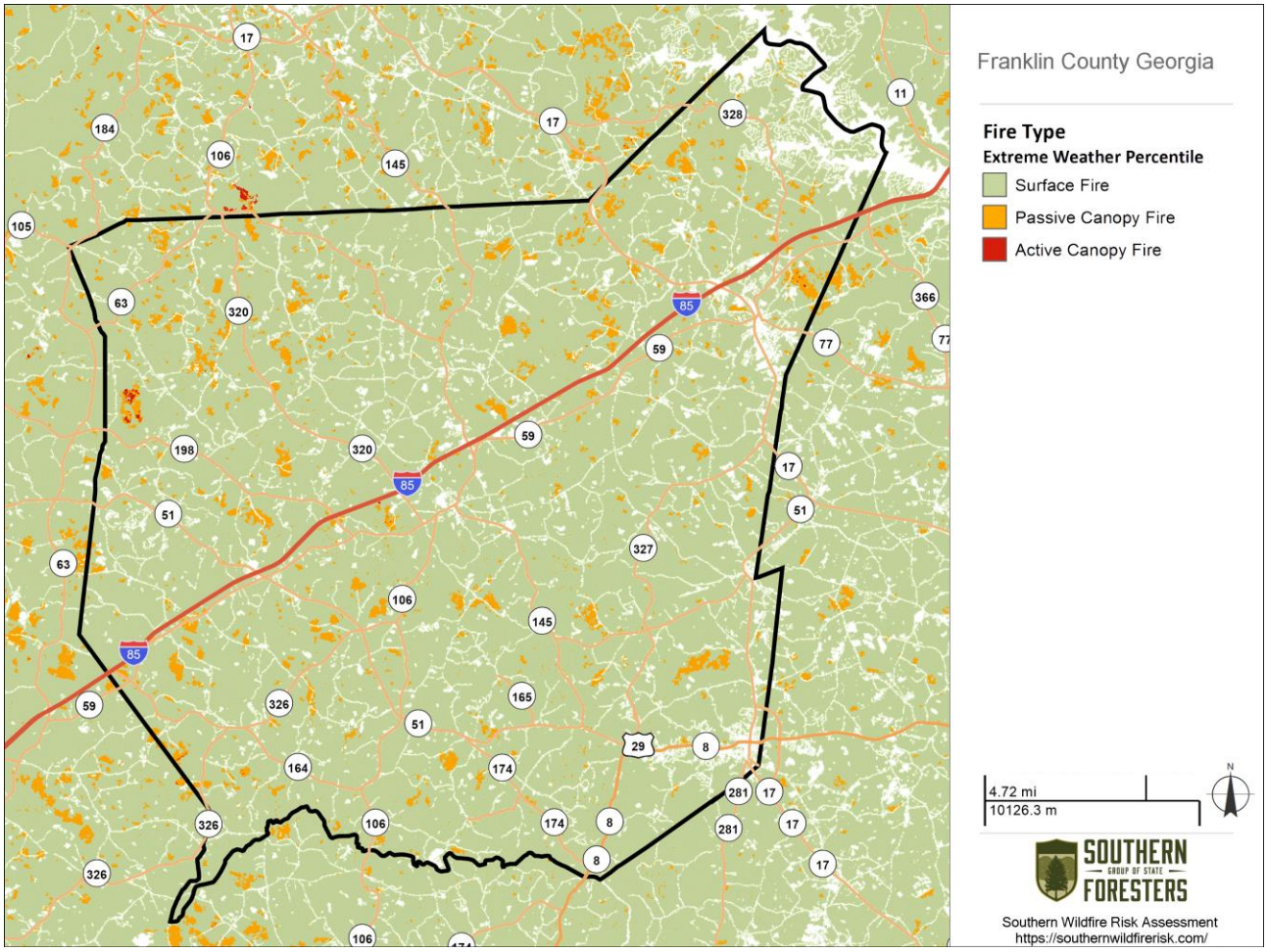
Description

There are two primary fire types – surface fire and canopy fire. Canopy fire can be further subdivided into passive canopy fire and active canopy fire. A short description of each of these is provided below.

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.

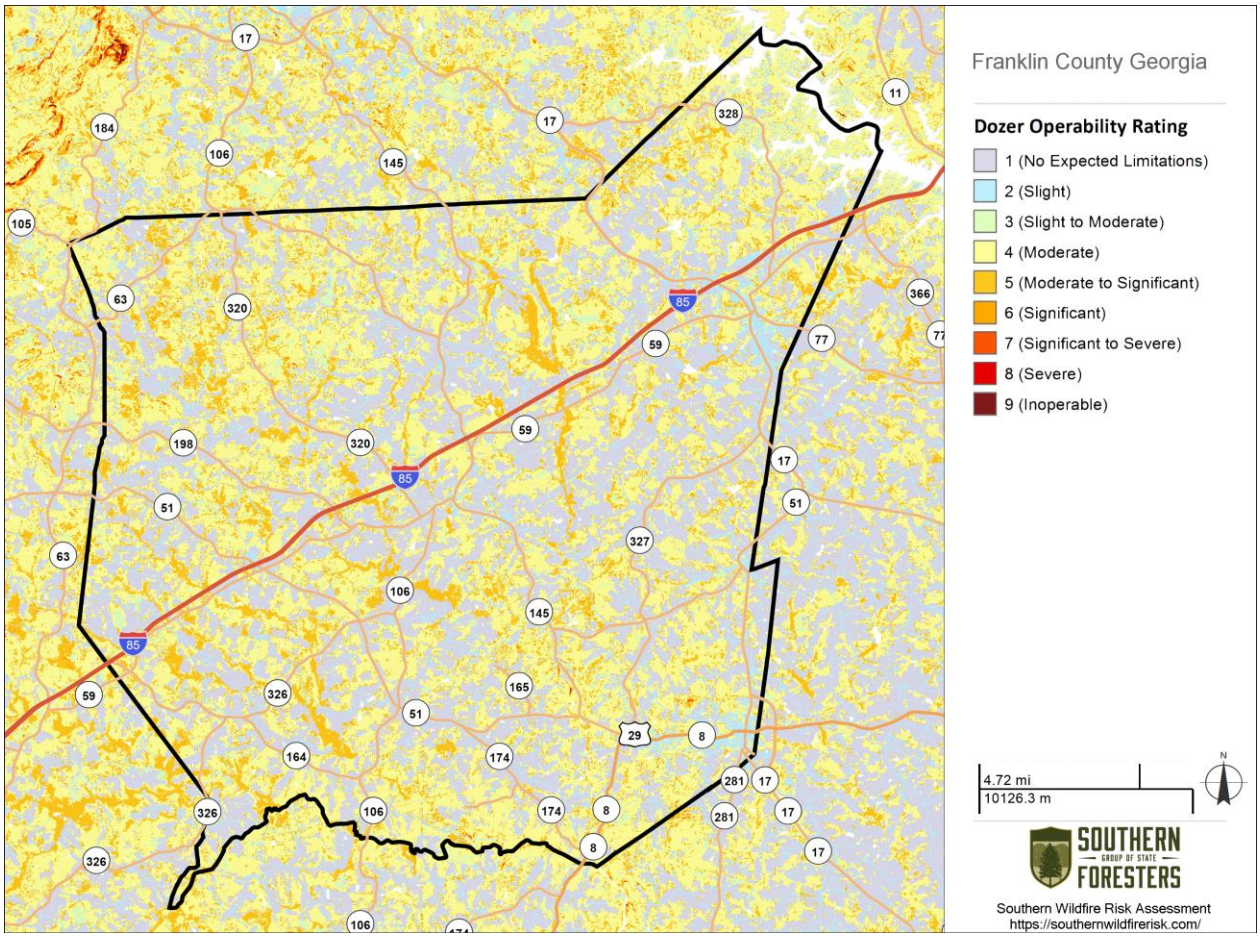

Passive Canopy Fire
A type of crown fire in which the crowns of individual trees or small groups of trees burn, but solid flaming in the canopy cannot be maintained except for short periods (Scott & Reinhardt, 2001).

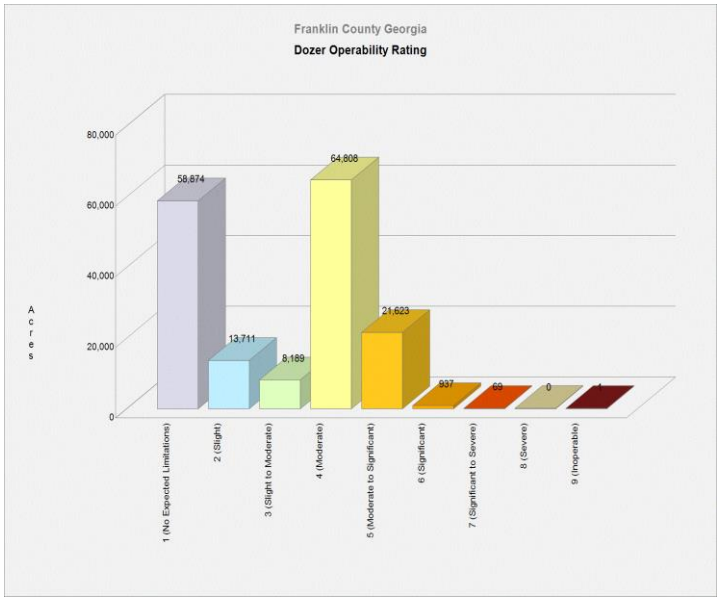

Active Canopy Fire
A crown fire in which the entire fuel complex (canopy) is involved in flame, but the crowning phase remains dependent on heat released from surface fuel for continued spread (Scott & Reinhardt, 2001).

Fire Type	Acres	Percent
Non-Burnable	17,813	10.4 %
Surface Fire	145,894	85.6 %
Passive Canopy	6,704	3.9 %
Active Canopy	64	0.0 %
Total	**170,475**	**100.0 %**

Fire Type – Extreme represents the potential fire type under the extreme percentile weather category. The extreme percentile weather category represents the average weather based on the top three percent fire weather days in the analysis period. It is not intended to represent a worst case scenario weather event. Accordingly, the potential fire type is based on fuel conditions, extreme percentile weather, and topography.





The Dozer Operability Rating (DOR) expresses how difficult it is to operate a dozer in an area based on limitations associated with slope and vegetation/fuel type. Using the fireline production rates published in the NWCG Fireline Handbook 3 (PMS 410-1) as a guide, operability values were assigned to a matrix based on 6 slope classes and 10 vegetation/fuels classes. The possible values range from 1 to 9, with 1 representing no limitations and 9 being inoperable.

VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

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

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

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

The following recommendations were developed by the Franklin 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 30feet of defensible space**	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, and replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Driveway Access	Culvert installation	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed 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.
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 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.

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.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Investigate need for "brush" trucks near communities at risk.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Investigate need for additional drafting pumps.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel to include S130, S190, and S215.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

1. Conduct "How to Have a Firewise Home" Workshop for County Residents
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. Distribute materials promoting Firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.
2. Conduct "Firewise" Workshop for Community Leaders
Arrange for GFC Firewise Coordinator 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. Identified "communities-at-risk" including: Brittany Harbor Community, Jim Grizzle, Medinah, and Reno Rd area should be sought after for inclusion in the National Firewise Communities Program.
3. Spring Clean-up Event
Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Franklin County Fire Departments, and local residence of Franklin County. Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC Firewise coordinator and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. Activities to include the following:

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

4. Informational Packets

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

- Be Firewise Around Your Home
- Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction
- Firewise Communities USA Bookmarks

5. Wildfire Protection Display

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

6. Media

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

IX. 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	
Franklin County WUI Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, County Fire department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Franklin 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	1. Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping 2. Debris Burning Safety 3. Firewise information for homeowners 4. Prescribed burning benefits
Communications objectives	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	1. Homeowners 2. Forest Landowners and users 3. Civic Groups 4. School Groups
Methods	1. News Releases 2. Personal Contacts 3. Key messages and prevention tips 4. Visuals such as signs, brochures and posters

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

Funding Needs

The following funding is needed to implement the action plan:

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

GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

- Community Protection Grant: U.S.F.S. sponsored prescribed fire program. Communities with "at-risk" properties that lie within ten miles of a national forest or Bureau of Land Management tracts may apply with the Georgia Forestry Commission to have their land prescribe burned free-of-charge.

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

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

    - 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.

    - With a complete 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.

- FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

    - Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). The purpose of AFG's is to award oneyear grants directly to fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) organizations of a state to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and related hazards.
    - Fire Prevention and Safety Grants. The purpose of these grants is to assist state, regional, national or local organizations to address fire prevention and safety. Emphasis of the program is on prevention of fire-related injuries to children.
    - Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER). The purpose of SAFER is to award grants directly to volunteer, combination and career fire departments to help the departments increase their cadre of firefighters (enhance their ability for 24-hour response).

- GFC Helping Hands Program. The Georgia Forestry Commission's Helping Hands program assists rural fire departments and industrial forestry cooperators with the purchasing of personal protective equipment for wildland firefighting and related safety items at a reduced price. Applicants serving communities with populations of less than 10,000 may also qualify for "Volunteer Fire Assistance" grants leading to additional cost reductions.

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

- Individual Homeowners:
    - The elimination of hazardous conditions around a structure must ultimately be the responsibility of the community and the homeowner. They will bear the cost and reap the benefit from properly implemented mitigation efforts. 2. GEMA: Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program

Glossary of Terms

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.*

Firewise Communities Program – *A national initiative whose purpose is the reduction of structural losses from wildland fires.*

Firewise Communities/USA – *A national recognition program for communities that take action to protect themselves from wildland fire.*

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.*

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

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

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

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

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/ Brochures/Websites

- FIREWISE Communities materials can be ordered at www.firewise.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
  Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Frankin 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 1month and 6 months following workshop date.
- The Franklin 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 Franklin 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

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