GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Hall County

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

The following report is a collaborative effort between 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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PLAN CONTENTS

1) OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Hall County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect this county and its essential infrastructure. Prioritized activities to educate the public are included. 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.**

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.

2) COUNTY BACKGROUND AND EXISTING SITUATION

Hall County

Hall County, in northeast Georgia, was created in 1818 from Indian lands and named for Lyman Hall, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Georgia's governor from 1783 to 1784. Hall was the forty-fifth Georgia county to be created. Its seat of government, Gainesville, was incorporated in 1821.

Early settlers were largely Scots-Irish, English, and German stock from the Carolinas and Virginia, chiefly Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Few African Americans lived in this area of small farms. The discovery of gold north of Hall in 1828 attracted thousands of newcomers to the area. The passing of the gold rush in the 1830s saw the return to the small-farm grain and livestock agricultural economy.

Though


Piedmont Hotel

distant from the combat of the Civil War (1861-65), Hall County inhabitants provided nine companies of men to the Southern cause. Hall's greatest Civil War connection, however, is a postwar resident, General James Longstreet, who moved to Gainesville in 1875 as postmaster and hotel operator, anticipating that the town would become the southeastern railroad hub. Longstreet purchased the forty-room Piedmont Hotel and 115 acres just outside the town, where he raised poultry and planted vineyards.

Railroads


Lake Lanier

came to Hall County in 1871, leading to the creation of a local textile industry by the turn of the century. Three large mills dominated nonagricultural employment in the county between the 1920s and midcentury. After the destructive Gainesville tornado of 1936 and with the advent of World War II (1941-45), Hall County, especially Gainesville, became the location for the rise of the state's poultry industry. The Hall County seed-and-feed store operator Jesse Jewell was the father of large-scale growing and processing and an innovator in the frozen-chicken market. Poultry supplanted textiles as the leading industry in the area, and today Georgia claims the title "Poultry Capital of the World." Several major poultry producers, including Gress Foods, King's Delight, Mar-Jac Poultry, and Pilgrim's Pride are located in the county.

The damming of the Chattahoochee River in the 1950s, flooding 38,000 acres, created Lake Lanier, which brings 10 million visitors each year to the area. Twenty-first-century Hall County is largely the product of Lake Lanier's influence.

According


Hall County Courthouse

to the 2010 U.S. census, the population is 179,684, an increase from the 2000 population of 139,277. In addition to Gainesville, other incorporated towns are Clermont, Flowery Branch, Oakwood, and parts of Braselton, Gillsville, Lula, and Rest Haven.

Booming, service-centered Oakwood, on I-985, is the gateway on the busy pathway to Road Atlanta and Chateau Elan. Just south of Oakwood is Flowery Branch, home to a $20 million corporate and training complex of the professional football team the Atlanta Falcons. Lula, in the more mountainous northeastern part of Hall, is a heritage-minded community whose annual Railroad Days each spring are well attended. Another attraction is the fall festival of Mule Camp, named for Mule Camp Springs, where early travelers and traders gathered at a natural spring just south of Gainesville's city square to water their stock.

Turning and Burning Festival

Gillsville is a pottery center, harking back to the clay artists of the county's earliest days. Settled by the Gills family, Gillsville was first called Stones Throw by railroaders who were describing its short distance from Maysville, a town that today straddles the Banks and Jackson county line. Also to the northeast, Clermont (originally named Dip) was established in 1913 as an early tourist and trade center.

Hall County's Hispanics account for the most dramatic growth segment of the population. Employment, chiefly in poultry processing but also in construction and, more recently, commercial and professional occupations, continues to attract this significant immigrant influx. Spanish-language media and an impressive Hispanic culture infrastructure continue to grow as old-line churches, businesses, and services make progress in the transition to bilingual communications.

Hall County is northeast Georgia's center for banking, industry, health care, and culture. Public education is well served in the Gainesville and Hall County systems, and private education grows apace. Brenau University (including the Women's College), Riverside Military Academy, Gainesville State College, and Lanier Technical College provide excellent preparatory and postsecondary educational options. More than twenty arts-related organizations, most based in Gainesville, provide a wide array of cultural opportunities.

The above material is courtesy of the New Georgia Encyclopedia

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)

Hall County is typical of a county that is undergoing a rapid transition from an isolated rural county to county heavily influenced by multilane transportation corridors connecting it to large metropolitan areas. It is also influenced by its proximity to recreation areas. It contains mixtures of both boundary and intermix interface.

Wildland Urban Interface Hazards

Firefighters in the wildland urban interface may encounter hazards other than the fire itself, such as hazardous materials, utility lines and poor access.

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

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

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

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

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

Today's discussion is from the
Wildland / Urban Interface Category.

Liquefied Propane Gas (LPG) Tank Hazards

Liquefied Propane Gas (LPG) tanks are commonly found in the wildland-urban interface and present hazards to firefighters in that environment. LPG tanks may be found in a number of other environments such as motor homes, travel trailers, grills, camp stoves, lanterns, etc. Directly attacking LPG tank fires is a structural fire task involving hazardous materials and should only be attempted by trained personnel using full structural personal protective equipment and equipped with a volume of water adequate to safely attack the fire.

- Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosions (BLEVE)

  - The most recognized hazard with LPG tanks is BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosions) or sudden complete failure of the tank. Some training courses have directed responders to approach the tank from the sides, believing that the force of the explosion will occur on the ends of the tank. However, this is not a guarantee that you will be safe from projectiles or missiles from the explosion, as they may travel in ALL directions up to 2,500 feet away. Leave the area immediately if you smell propane, hear a rising sound from venting safety devices or see discoloration or deformation of the tank. If you leave the area, get at least 2,500 feet away and do not go down wind or down slope of the leaking propane. BLEVEs are a major hazard to emergency responders!

- Fuel Reduction Around Tanks

  - Wildland firefighters may take action to prevent direct flame impingement on LPG tanks by removing wildland fuels in the area. However, be aware that lines from the tank to structures may be above or below ground, and may be cut by tools or equipment. Propane gas is heavier than air, and may move along the ground at some distance, and may ignited when in reaches open flame or another ignition source. Use extreme caution when doing fuels reduction around tanks, and flag any lines you encounter.

- Other Wildland Fire Considerations

  - Do not position engines or other apparatus near LPG tanks or downwind / down slope from tanks.
  - Do not deploy fire shelters near LPG tanks or downwind / down slope from tanks.

- Cooling Tanks

  - In light fuels such as grasses, where any heat exposure to the tank will be very limited, rapid application of cooling water on the outside of the tank above the liquid level can reduce the likelihood of container failure by lowering the external temperature of the shell of the exposed tank. Water should not be directed at the valve safety devices, due to the potential of "icing" the valve closed.
  - In heavy fuels where long duration heat exposure to the LPG tank is likely, evacuate all personnel and equipment 2,500 feet away and not down slope or down wind. NFPA says that direct flame impingement protection requires water flow of at least 500 gpm from an unmanned monitor nozzle. This is a situation for properly trained, equipped and supported structural firefighters.

References:

Propane Safety Web Site

Natl. Institute for Occupational Safety & Health's Web Site

National Propane Gas Association's Web Site

National Fire Protection Association's Web Site

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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6 Minutes Home

- New construction materials

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

- Pets and livestock

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

- Evacuation occurring

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

- Limited access

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

Fire History and Existing Situation

Wildland Fire has not been a serious problem in Hall County as regards number of occurrences and average size when compared to some counties in the state. This favorable situation can be attributed to rapid initial attack and excellent interagency cooperation. Fire activity for the past 5 complete fiscal years is outlined in the table below. These numbers are based on Georgia Forestry Commission records.

Fiscal Year	Number of Fires	Acres	Average size (acres)	Statewide Average number	Statewide average size (acres)
2012	17	26.88	1.58	34	4.98
2011	45	52.20	1.16	58	16.16
2010	30	58.91	1.96	23	3.56
2009	22	87.22	3.96	34	3.90
2008	68	104.42	1.54	39	4.56

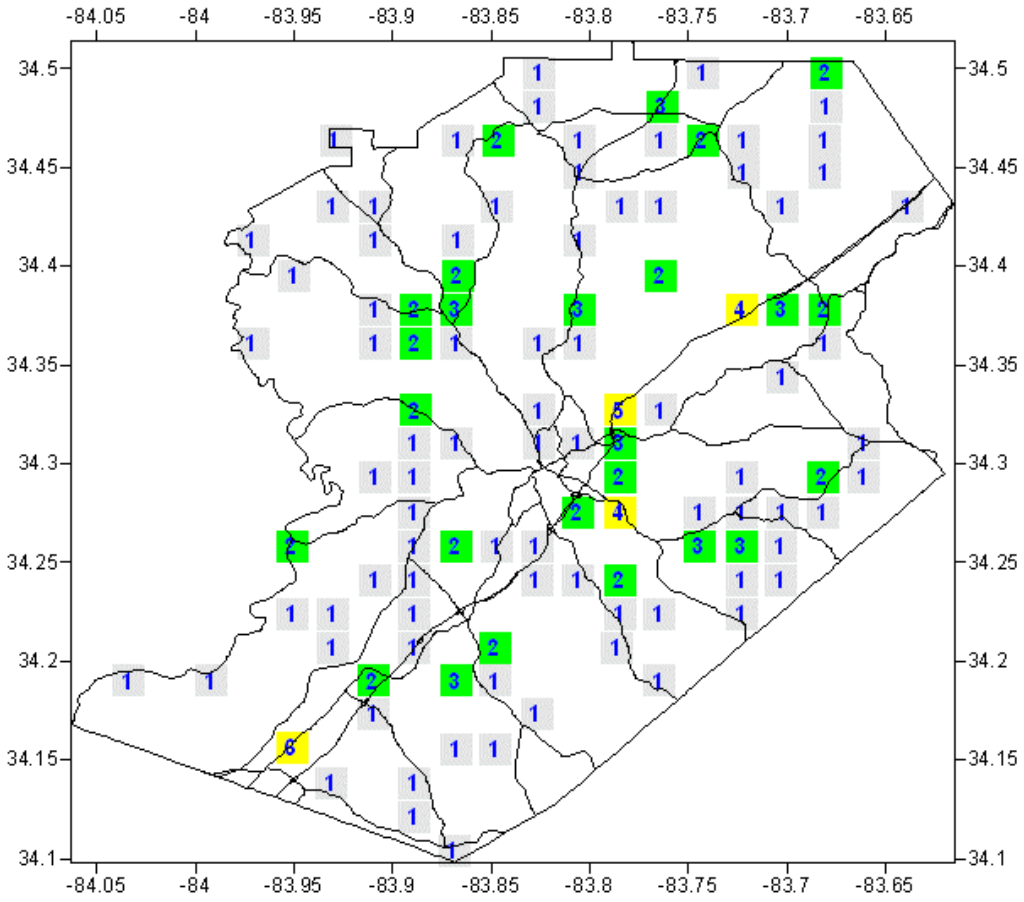
Causes of wildland fire in Hall County covers most all recognized cause categories. Examination of Georgia Forestry Commission records reveals that machine use, incendiarism, and escapes from debris burning are the leading causes in most years. The fact that machine use is one of the leading causes falls in line with the continued development of the county. Incendiary fires are the leading cause in some years (2008 and 2009). In fiscal year 2013 which began on July 1, 2012 there have been 25 fires. The table on the next page outlines cause categories for these responses.

The following table outlines fire numbers and cause categories for the most complete fiscal year (2013) on record.

County = Hall	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	2	↑	0.47	1.40	5.22
Children	Children	3	↑	2.65	2.00	1.65
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1	↑	3.11	0.60	8.07
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.20	0.56
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	1		1.07	1.00	1.20
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.20	0.04
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	9	↑	5.51	8.00	8.00
Incendiary	Incendiary	6		14.45	6.40	14.07
Machine Use	Machine Use	1		0.03	5.20	9.28
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	0		0.00	2.00	1.91
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	1	↑	2.12	0.20	0.42
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1	↑	0.68	0.20	0.14
Railroad	Railroad	0		0.00	0.40	0.50
Totals for County: Hall Year: 2013		25		30.09	27.80	51.06

The following map is from Georgia Forestry Commission records and shows the number of fires and where they occurred during the period fiscal 2008 through 2012. There is also a fire occurrence map in the appendix that shows occurrence areas based on Georgia Forestry Commission responses during the period covered by fiscal years 1997 through 2002.

Fire Occurrence Map for Hall County for Fiscal Year 2008-2012



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

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3) Risk Summary

Following an initial meeting on 10/13/2011 between the Georgia Forestry Commission and officials of the Hall County Fire Department, assessments were made of areas of concern in Hall County. These assessments were made by personnel of the Hall County Fire Services. Assessments were made using the Georgia Forestry Commission Form 140 for Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. Areas selected for assessment were based on the communities at risk GIS layer from the Southern Fire Risk Assessment supplemented by local knowledge of potentially hazardous areas. Information from the assessment process is displayed in tabular form in the appendix. This table, which is organized by fire department jurisdiction, lists the community name, Map #, Lat / Long, number of homes, hazard rating, risk category, fire department jurisdiction, and the presence or absence of the area in the Southern Fire Risk Assessment. The original assessment documents contain detailed specific information relating to the particular hazards affecting the community and are retained by the Banks Hall office of the Georgia Forestry Commission. These documents would be valuable in mitigating specific hazards should they be able to be changed. These assessment areas are also represented on the Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index map. The colors for the symbols correspond to the colors on the risk summary table. High risk communities are colored orange, moderate risk is purple, and low risk is green.

Twenty Three areas were assessed. One (1) area was recognized at as high risk, thirteen (13) as moderate, and nine (9) were classified as at low risk. It should be recognized that additional opportunities for assessment exist in all response jurisdictions. Principal hazards affecting communities classified as high or moderate were related to extreme slope of properties and driveways, poor access related to one way access, narrow roads, unpaved roads on steep slopes, lack of defensible space, high structural ignitability factors, and dead end roads. Varying degrees of suppression difficulty exist due to heavy fuel loading and steep slopes. All jurisdictions experience these hazards to some degree. Numerous educational opportunities exist.

4) Prioritized Mitigation Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed during follow-up meetings with County and State fire response agencies. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildland fire to communities and infrastructure. The following priorities were considered.

- Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction
- Wildland Fuel reduction or modification
- Improvements to capabilities of Wildland response agencies
- Public Education regarding risk of wildland fire

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Lack of defensible space	Improve defensible space around structures in communities at risk	All departments should examine structures in communities at risk in their response areas. Improvements to defensible space as referenced in firewise guidelines should be conveyed to residents through media or direct contact.
Access problems for initial attack	Improve access problems	All County response agencies and the Georgia Forestry Commission should closely examine access in all communities identified to be at risk. When problems are identified corrective measures should be made.

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Structural Ignitability	Reduce structural ignitability	Citizens in communities at risk should be educated regarding methods to reduce structural ignitability as referenced in firewise guidelines. This can be accomplished through media or direct contact.
Local Codes and Ordinances	Improve and amend to codes and ordinances pertaining to infrastructure and community protection from wildland fire.	Examine all existing codes and ordinances for problems regarding direct conflicts to wildland safety or lack of needed codes or enforcement.

Proposed Wildland Fuel Reduction or modification Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Fuel Hazards near Communities at risk	Prescribed Burning	Determine Communities at risk where Prescribed burning would be appropriate to use. Seek cooperation from adjacent landowners. Find funding to cover cost of burning. Prioritize burn compartments and execute.
Fuel Hazard in public or shared spaces	Fuel Modification or reduction	Determine where hazards exist. Determine appropriate method for modification or reduction. Chipping, raking and piling, County pick-up, Organized Community Clean-up days could be beneficial. Organized burning could be conducted on these days supported by local fire department personnel.

Proposed Improvements to capabilities of Wildland Response Agencies Priorities

Problem or need	Improvement or solution	Details
Lack of qualification or training	Provide training opportunities	Examine training records of all wildland responders to insure training and qualifications match expected duties. Insure that all wildland responders have Basic Wildland Certification. Locate and secure funding for enhanced training from state and federal agencies.
Equipment needs	Improve or acquire Wildland fire equipment	Determine specific equipment needs to bring all wildland response equipment to NWCG Standards. Provide appropriate PPE to all County wildland responders. Provide wildland hand tools to County departments. Investigate needs for improvements to all wildland water handing and supply (dry hydrants, brush trucks, hose, etc.)

Proposed Public Education Priorities

Educational Priority	Responsible party	Method
Increase public awareness concerning firewise principles and fire prevention through direct contact	Federal, State, County,and municipal governments	Conduct firewise meetings by each fire response jurisdiction assisted by Georgia Forestry Commission (state) and USDA Forest Service (federal). Conduct a door to door campaign in particularly hazardous communities
Increase public awareness concerning firewise principles and fire prevention through use of media	County, State, and municipal governments	Use PSA's in local newspapers and local radio stations. Utilize firewise displays in local post offices and banks. Seek use of local EMC newsletter for firewise message. Create poster sized notices for use in common public places (stores, post offices, etc. adjacent to high hazard areas advising residents about the hazard and how to protect themselves and their property. Distribute public notices concerning firewise at local sporting events and other public gatherings.
Increase public awareness concerning firewise	Federal, State, County, and municipal governments	Supported by the USFS and the Georgia Forestry Commission a goal of achieving

principles and fire prevention through formal certification and recognition		firewise status for at least one extreme or high risk category community should be realized before the end of calendar year 2013. The goal of adding at least one community annually should extend beyond this initial goal.

5) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES:

As funding is questionable in these times of tight government budgets and economic uncertainty, unconventional means should be identified whereby the need for funding can be reduced or eliminated.

Publications / Brochures –

- FIREWISE materials are available at www.firewise.org.
- Another source of mitigation information can be found at www.nfpa.org.
- Access to reduced cost or free of charge copy services should be sought whereby publications can be reproduced.
- Free of charge public meeting areas should be identified where communities could gather to be educated regarding prevention and firewise principles.

Mitigation –

- Community Protection Grant:
  - USFS sponsored prescribed burn program. Communities with at risk properties that lie within 3 miles of the USFS border may apply with the GFC to have their forest land prescribed burned free of charge.
- FEMA Mitigation Policy MRR-2-08-01: through GEMA - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM)
  - To provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to assist in the implementation of long term cost effective hazard mitigation measures.
  - 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 fuels reduction to protect life and property.
  - With a complete and registered plan (addendum to the State plan) counties can apply for pre-mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.
- GFC - Plowing and burning assistance can be provided through the Georgia Forestry Commission as a low cost option for mitigation efforts.
- Individual Homeowners –
- In most cases of structural protection ultimately falls on the responsibility of the community and the homeowner. They will bear the cost; yet they will reap the benefit from properly implemented mitigation efforts.
- GEMA Grant - PDM (See above)

Ultimately it is our goal to help the communities by identifying the communities threatened with a high risk to wildfire and educate those communities on methods to implement on reducing those risks.

5) Action Plan

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Lack of Defensible Space	Using the risk summaries referenced in section 3, each department should conduct inspections of communities at risk in their jurisdiction or area of response for lack of defensible space. Findings will be conveyed to residents and treatment methods will be recommended in accordance with Firewise principles. This would probably be best accomplished by approaching homeowners associations or organizations. Ultimately, the message should reach individual homeowners in each community. Should local organizations not exist, the builder or developer could be contacted. Such contacts would also influence future projects or developments
Access problems	Using individual Communities at Risk maps for each station, the Georgia Forestry Commission and Hall County Fire officials should visit all identified communities at risk for the purpose of locating and resolving access difficulties. This inspection should extend into the wildland adjacent to the communities at risk looking for hindrances to suppression tactics
Structural Ignitability	Hall County Fire officials should examine structures for structural ignitability concerns at the time when the communities at risk are inspected for lack of defensible space. Using firewise guidelines for reducing structural ignitability, (a checklist could be formulated and used) structures should be assessed and findings conveyed to residents. This could be through use of media or by direct contact with residents or homeowners associations.
Codes and Ordinances	Hall County and municipal Fire Marshalls should closely examine all codes and ordinances for gaps and oversights which could cause problems in the wildland fire arena. Examples include proximity of propane tanks to structures, accumulations of debris, lack of proper identification pertaining address or street names, set back distances from wildland fuels, road widths in new developments.

In regard to priority, the above steps should first extend to the higher numbers in the extreme category from the risk summary as these communities are at a higher degree of risk. **Another means of reaching homeowners would be to distribute literature on Firewise principles through the building permit office. Checklists for Homeowners are available on the Georgia Forestry Commission public website http://www.gfc.state.ga.us . Look under Forest Fire – Wildland Urban Interface- Firewise**

5) Action Plan

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Hazardous Wildland Fuel Accumulations	The Georgia Forestry Commission will prioritize prescribed burning projects adjacent to Communities at risk where burning is determined to be appropriate. As Hall County is becoming more densely populated and communities are located in close proximity to transportation corridors burning will have more impact as regards smoke management. This will require changes in how these burns are carried out as regards logistics and technique.
Fuel Continuity between Wildland and Woodland Communities	In areas where the need exists and fuel reduction by burning is determined to be inappropriate, permanent or semi-permanent fuel breaks could be established. These breaks should be maintained annually prior to the arrival of prime burning times. Their locations should be mapped and made known to local, state, and federal response personnel. Residents of the Communities adjacent to these breaks should be advised of their purpose and their cooperation in protecting them should be gained. These breaks could be installed by the Georgia Forestry Commission.
Hazardous Fuel Accumulations in communities and hindrances to suppression	Using the risk summary in section 3, Fire departments could conduct community clean up days in communities at risk in their respective jurisdictions aimed at reducing hazardous fuels and hindrances to suppression in shared community space. Residents would be provided with guidance and access to disposal alternatives for materials removed.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

Improvement needed	Responsible Party and specific action
Improve training and qualification of Hall County Wildland firefighters	The Hall County Chief Ranger of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Hall County Fire Chief should examine all training records for personnel under their supervision. All personnel should be certified Georgia Basic Wildland Firefighters or higher in qualification. Additional training and qualification should be sought for personnel identified in the Hall County Fire plan who are assigned specific Incident Command System (ICS) functions. Sources for available funds for training should be sought at State and Federal levels.
Improve or acquire wildland firefighting equipment	All stations for Hall County Fire Departments should inventory their present equipment relating to their wildland capability. Funding sources should be investigated from available grants or other sources. Needs for job specific wildland responses should be examined by the Chief Ranger for Hall County and the Hall County Fire Chief.

5) Action Plan

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

Opportunity	Responsible Party and Specific Action
Improve Public Education through direct contact	Prior to the onset of fire season(s) rangers of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Hall County Fire personnel should conduct firewise meetings in conjunction with normally scheduled fire department meetings. People living in or near extreme and high risk communities should be invited to these meetings by use of door to door campaigns or by mailbox flyers. Notices regarding these meetings could be placed in local post offices or stores near communities at risk. A Firewise display should be acquired and utilized at this meeting. This display would be retained by the Banks Hall Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission and used for all Firewise meetings in Hall County. Local news media should be invited to these meetings. Goals for potential Firewise certified communities in Hall County could be considered after these meetings are completed.
Improve Public Education through use of media	Prior to the onset of fire season(s) or during periods of particularly high fire danger use of the media should be stepped up by personnel of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Hall County Fire Services. This should include use of all available media in the County. PSA's should be run weekly during periods of high to extreme fire danger. Signs or poster boards could be developed for display in public spaces near communities at risk advising residents that they live in areas that are susceptible to wildland fire and directing them to sources of information regarding wildland fire and their role in improving their own personal safety.
Improve Public Education through formal certification	Before the end of calendar year 2013 at least one community in the high or moderate risk category should be considered for formal certification as a firewise community. Should this goal be realized it should be repeated in following years.

5) Action Plan

Timetables for Actions

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

- Steps to examine communities at risk for defensible space and structural ignitability should take place during the late winter / early spring of 2013.
- Pre-planning to examine access and suppression problems should take place at any time during the current burning season.
- Codes and Ordinances should be examined as soon as possible in order for the legal workings of changes to take place.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Any identified prescribed burn projects should take place in late winter / early spring 2013. Any other priority burn projects or installation of pre suppression fuel breaks should take place during this same window.
- Steps to reduce fuels in communities at risk should coincide with steps to improve defensible space and reduce structural ignitability. Timing of these actions would be dependent upon Fire station availabity during late winter / early spring 2013.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- Cooperation between state and local wildland suppression forces regarding improvements to training and equipment should begin immediately.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct contact with residents in Communities at risk should take place as soon as possible during early calendar year 2013
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.
- Certification of Firewise communities should follow the timetable associated with the action plan

5) Action Plan

Assessment of Actions

Reduction of Community hazard and structural ignitability

- Direct measurement of the number of communities assessed would be the appropriate measure of success
- Any meetings that result in cooperation between wildland departments should be logged along with minutes of those meetings. Goals should be set and reviewed after each meeting.
- Any changes to or additions to codes and ordinances would be an obvious measure of success.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Acres burned would be the appropriate measure for fuel reduction. A direct measure of linear feet of firebreaks would be an appropriate measure for pre suppression breaks.
- Fuel reduction in communities at risk would be measured by the number of communities affected and number of projects completed.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- A direct measure of the number of capabilities or qualifications gained would be the appropriate measure of success.
- Any equipment acquired or any equipment brought up to national standards would be the appropriate measure of success.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct measurement of the number of persons contacted, literature distributed, public notices posted, news articles published, radio programs aired, etc. would be the best measure of success. The number of communities that achieve Firewise status would be an obvious measure of success.

6) Wildfire Pre-Suppression Plan

This document is located in the appendix of this plan

7) County Base and Hazards Maps

Maps of the Surface Fuels and Fire Occurrence areas are included in the appendix of this plan. As was mentioned in the risk summary, a map of the Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index with points relating to the assessment areas is also included. The surface fuel and fire occurrence maps do not show assessment areas to preserve continuity of displayed information. The surface fuel map is based on the 13 fuel models recognized by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). The Fire Occurrence map is based on Georgia Forestry Commission responses during the period 1997 through 2002. These maps are in PDF format and are available from the Georgia Forestry Commission. When viewed in this electronic format increased magnification and resolution capabilities are realized which will make these maps more useful. This format will also support large format printing.

8) Appendix

- Risk Summary tables with respective tables organized by station
- County maps of surface fuels, Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index with initial dispatch points, and fire occurrence areas
- Hall County Pre-Suppression plan.

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