



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Haralson 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.

Haralson County Board of Commissioners

H. Allen Poole Chairman

Signature _____

David Tarpley Commissioner District 1

Signature _____

Jamie Bennett Commissioner District 2

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Sammy Robinson Commissioner District 4

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Haralson County Emergency Services Representative

Brian Walker Fire Chief / EMA Director

Signature _____

Georgia Forestry Commission Representatives

Bryan Rooks Chief Ranger Haralson Douglas Carroll

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Carl Melear CWPP Specialist Forest Protection

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Haralson County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary (SouthWRAP)

I. OBJECTIVES & COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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 Haralson 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.

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 on June 1st, 2010 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local government, local fire authorities, and the state agency responsible for forest management.

Below are the groups included in the task force:

Haralson County Government
County Fire Department
Emergency Management
Board of County Commissioners
Georgia Forestry Commission

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the on high risk communities and the individual fire districts in the county. Haralson County Fire Department, the Georgia Forestry Commission Haralson County Unit, and the GFC Wildfire Protection Specialist reconvened 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 |
| 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. |

II. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND WILDFIRE HISTORY

Haralson County



Haralson County, the state's 113th county, is located in west central Georgia, on the border with Alabama, and covers 282 square miles. Created in 1856 from parts of Carroll and Polk counties, it was named after Hugh A. Haralson, a U.S. congressman and state legislator.

The Dahlonega gold vein, which runs through the region, attracted the first non-Indians to the area during the Georgia gold rush. Many of these people settled permanently, displacing the Cherokee and Creek Indians, who had held the land before white settlement.

The county seat, Buchanan, was incorporated in 1857. Prior to that year the town's name was Pierceville, but another Georgia town already held the name, so it was renamed after U.S. president James Buchanan, who had recently taken office. There is no solid information about the town's original courthouse, but one built in 1891 is still extant and today houses the Buchanan-Haralson Public Library and the Haralson County Historical Society. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The current courthouse was built in 1972.



Bremen Depot

Other incorporated communities in the county are Bremen, incorporated in 1883; Tallapoosa, incorporated in 1860; and Waco, incorporated in 1885.

Bremen, known between the 1940s and 1990s as the "Clothing Center of the South" for its then thriving clothing manufacturing industry, took its name from the local railroad station and the German seaport town of the same name. Bremen's location at the intersection of the Chattanooga, Rome, and Columbus Railroad and the Georgia Pacific Railway appealed to manufacturing industries.

Tallapoosa (said to mean "golden water" in the language of the Creek Indians) had been called "Possum Snout" by gold miners who panned the waters of the Tallapoosa River for the precious metal. Waco, known first as "Dean" and then as "Wacoville," was once a center for the shipment of cotton and lumber. In 2002 it became home to the ninety-acre Thomas B. Murphy campus of West Central Technical College (later West Georgia Technical College).



Lithia Springs Hotel

Although at first Haralson County's economy revolved around gold mining, after the mines were depleted inhabitants made their living by farming, chiefly cotton, and harvesting the stands of lumber prevalent in the area. Some residents, notably those in

Tallapoosa, took advantage of the area's magnificent natural beauty, a mineral springs, and the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s to encourage the tourist trade by developing hotels and resorts. One of the numerous northern visitors to the county was Ralph L. Spencer, a Connecticut land speculator and entrepreneur who established the Tallapoosa Land Mining and Manufacturing Company in 1887. Spencer organized Tallapoosa's first municipal electric light company, water works company, and athletic association. He also was a prime investor in a glassware factory in town.

When mining waned, Spencer embarked on what may have been his most interesting endeavor—the establishment of a planned community for the purpose of wine making. He invited some of Pennsylvania's Hungarian immigrants to leave their mining jobs and relocate to 2,000 acres near Tallapoosa, where they could produce wine. Led by their priest, Father Francis Janishek, 200 families accepted Spencer's invitation. They planted vineyards and established wineries in the community they named "Budapest." Their success with viticulture attracted other groups from around the country, many of whom established their own vineyards and wineries. Most notable among these were about 200 families of Slovakian origin who established a community called Nitra three miles north of Tallapoosa.



Haralson County Courthouse



HL-A Company

The county's population became quite diverse as immigrants from other European regions joined the first groups. Just as the county's vintners began to flourish, however, Georgia passed the Prohibition Act of 1907, effectively ruining the industry and causing many of those in the new communities to leave the county.

Notable residents of Haralson include Tom Murphy, longtime speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, and major league baseball player Whitlow Wyatt, who retired to a 700-acre cotton plantation near Buchanan.



State Representative Tom Murphy

Among places of interest are Helton Howland Park; the Homeplace, an 1800s house museum; Veteran's Memorial and Medal of Honor Park; and the West Georgia Museum of Tallapoosa.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Haralson County is 28,780, an increase from the 2000 population of 25,690.

Wildire History

Wildland Fire has been common in Haralson County for many years. The County has had an ongoing problem with Incendiary fires. Examination of Fire statistics for the County reveals that this has been the leading cause for the past 10 years and prior to that. Many of these fires are in areas where it has been a historical occurrence. The table below outlines fire numbers, acreages, and causes for part of fiscal year (2017) which ends in June of 2017.

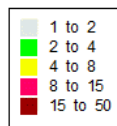
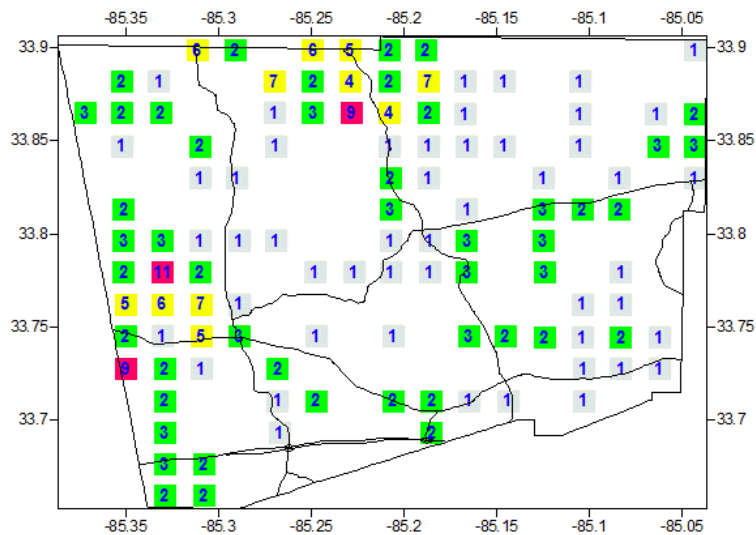
County = Haralson	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	7		19.20	4.20	18.36
Children	Children	3		2.20	1.80	3.38
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.60	5.34
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.20	0.55
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1		1.00	2.00	4.89
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	3		2.30	1.40	1.33
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	3		27.20	3.40	24.53
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1		0.00	1.20	2.30
Incendiary	Incendiary	39		1,955.45	31.00	551.26
Lightning	Lightning	0		0.00	1.00	3.16
Machine Use	Machine Use	4		1.83	2.40	9.93
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	1		8.35	0.60	4.98
Miscellaneous: Fireworks/Explosives	Miscellaneous: Fireworks/Explosives	1		24.80	0.20	4.96
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	1		15.00	0.60	4.46
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	4		19.60	1.40	6.36
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	7		12.95	2.20	3.34
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	1		5.00	0.60	1.54
Railroad	Railroad	0		0.00	0.20	0.50
Smoking	Smoking	0		0.00	0.40	0.62
Undetermined	Undetermined	5		7.50	1.80	2.83
Totals for Haralson Year: 2017		81		2,102.38	57.20	654.61

The table below reflects numbers, size, and average sizes for the past five complete fiscal years (2016 – 2011) for Haralson County. Average size is contrasted to the average size for all counties in Georgia. Fire activity was increased statewide in 2011 due to large fires in SE Georgia and due to extended drought in 2016.

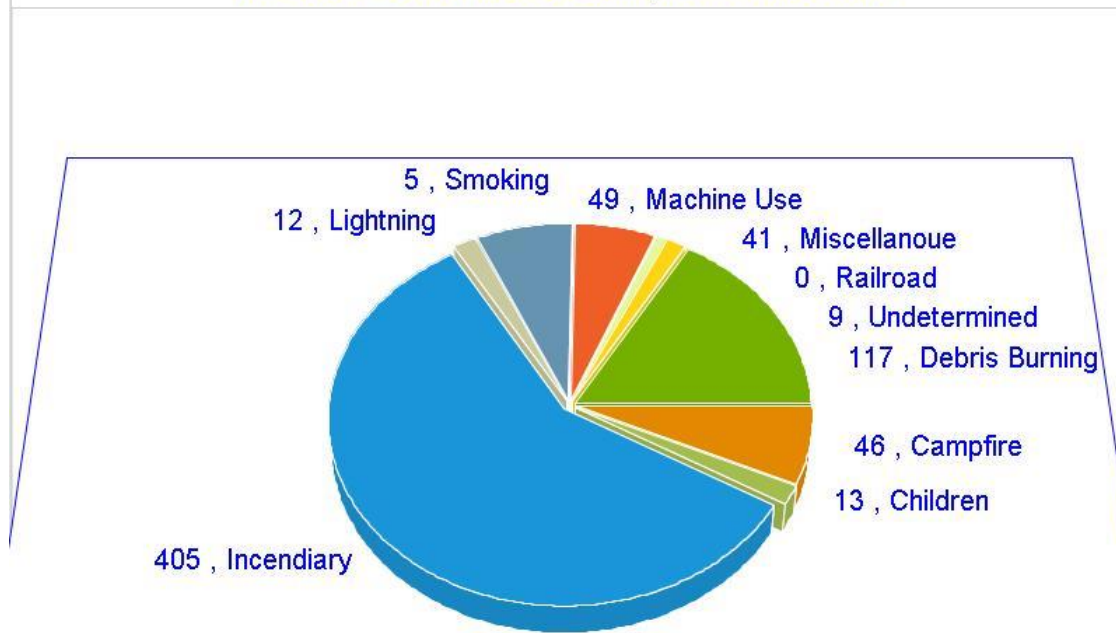
Fiscal Year	Number of Fires	Acres	Average size (acres)	Statewide average size
2016	90	2228.62	24.76	16.16
2015	18	86.10	4.78	3.56
2014	58	302.79	5.22	3.90
2013	51	376.74	7.39	4.56
2012	90	371.75	4.13	18.64

The map below represents occurrence for fiscal years 2012 through 2016. That map graphically represents the number of wildland ignitions within each block of a 1000 acre grid applied to the landscape.

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



Cause of Fire For Haralson County For FY 2007-2017

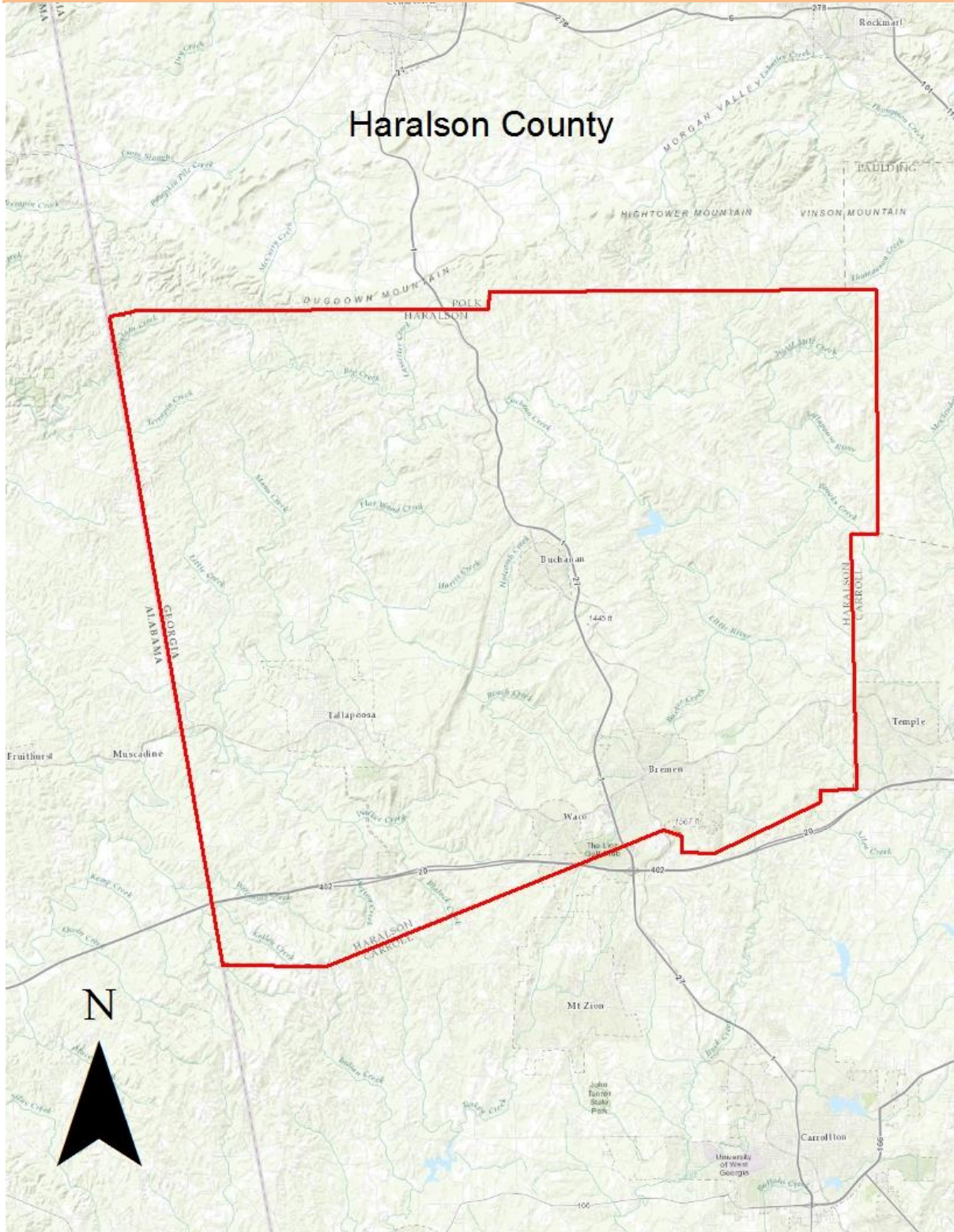


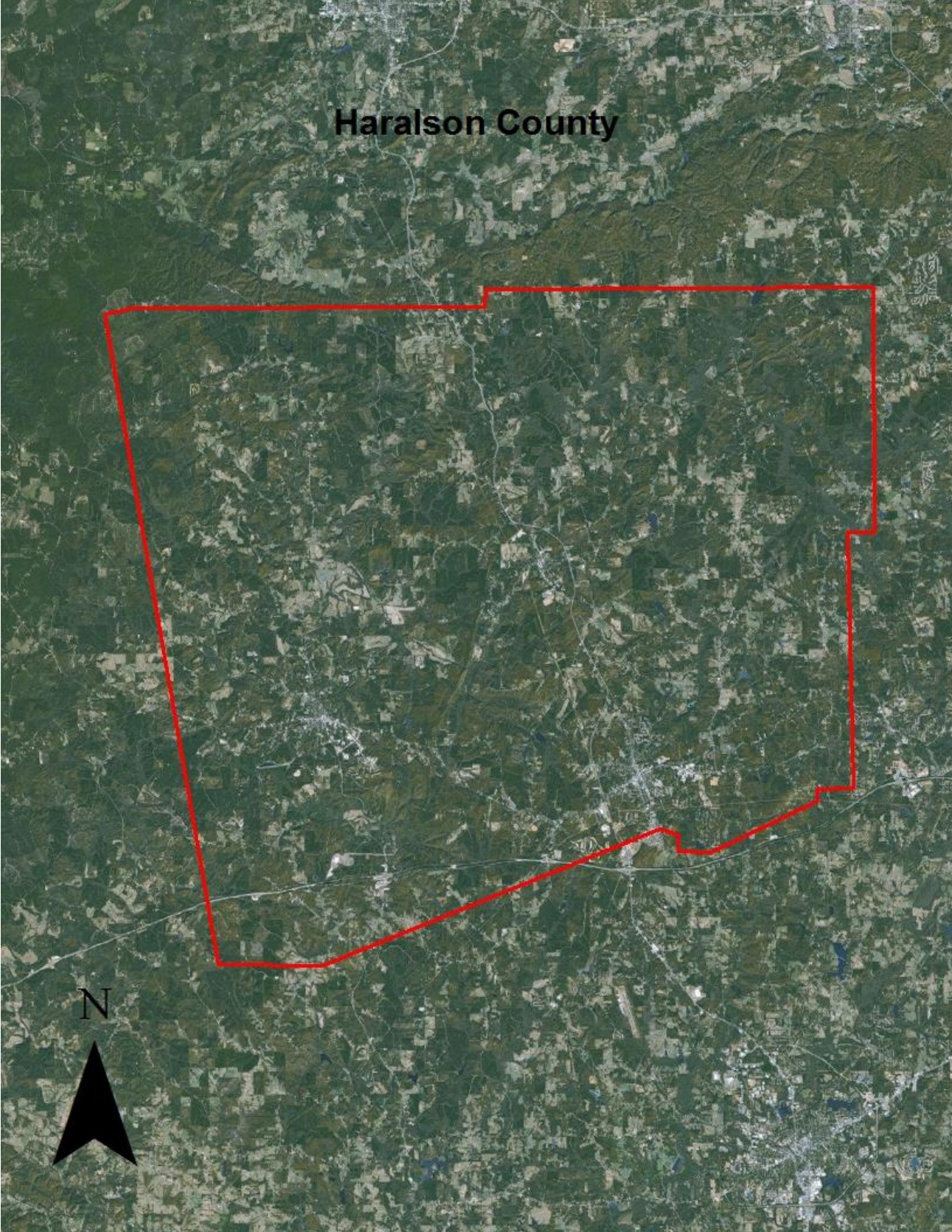
Fire Cause

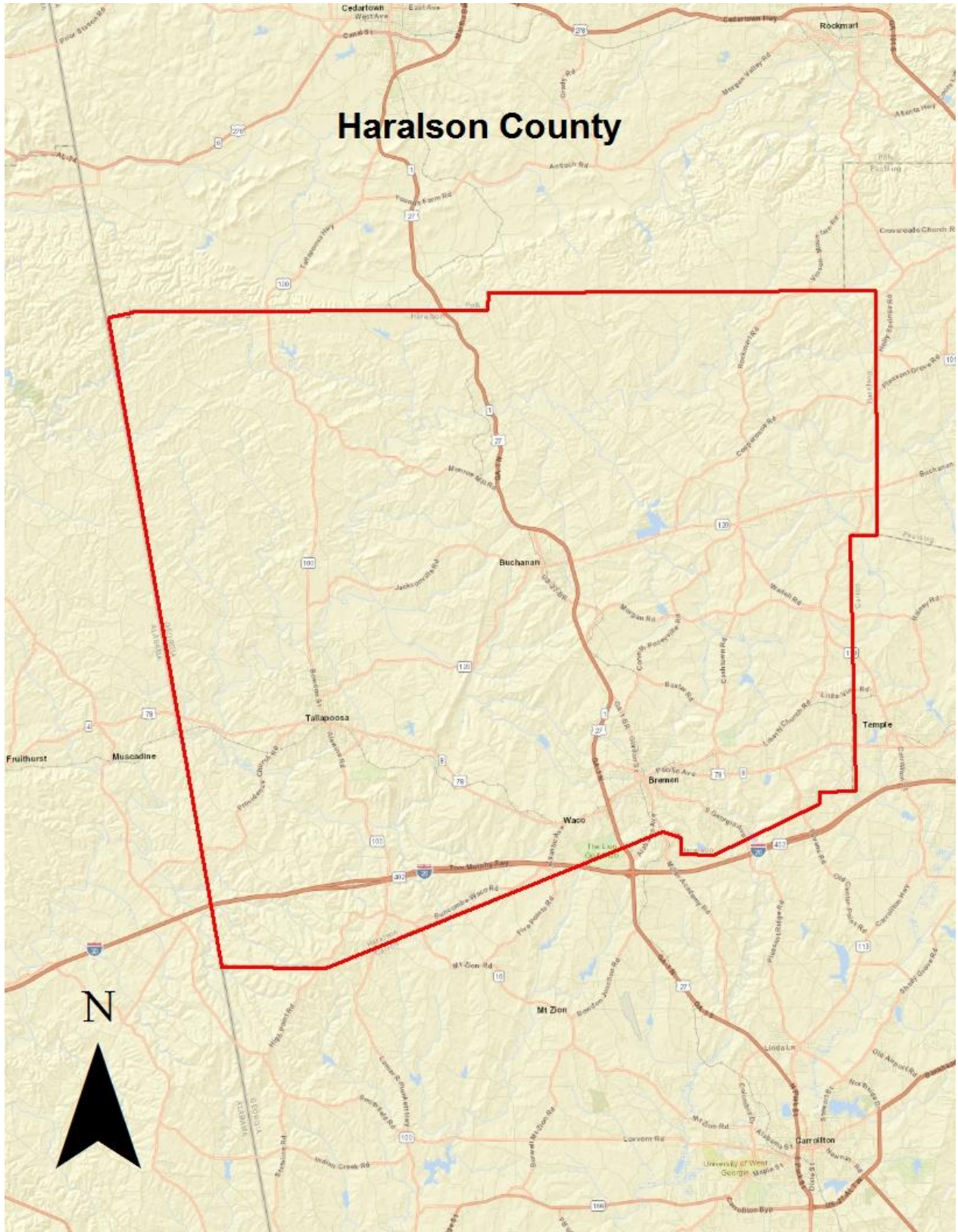
Number of Fires by Cause for Haralson County for FY 2007 to 2017

Year	Campfire	Children	Debris Burning	Incendiary	Lightning	Machine Use	Miscellaneous	Railroad	Smoking
2007	6	2	22	53	2	10	2	0	1
2008	4	0	20	32	1	10	2	1	1
2009	7	1	16	44	1	4	3	0	1
2010	2	0	4	24	0	3	2	0	0
2011	4	0	11	66	2	8	2	1	0
2012	3	1	6	33	1	3	4	0	0
2013	9	2	14	62	4	1	4	1	1
2014	3	0	9	21	0	1	5	0	0
2015	1	3	8	19	1	3	3	0	0
2016	1	1	5	14	0	3	5	0	1
2017	7	3	6	39	0	4	20	0	0

III. COUNTY BASE MAPS







IV. 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)

Haralson County is typical of a county that is undergoing a gradual transition from an isolated rural county to one that is more developed. This is due in large part to the influence of Interstate Hwy 20 It contains mixtures of both boundary and intermix interface.



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

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

- **Hazardous Material**

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. These areas may also contain some type of booby trap.

- **Propane Tanks**

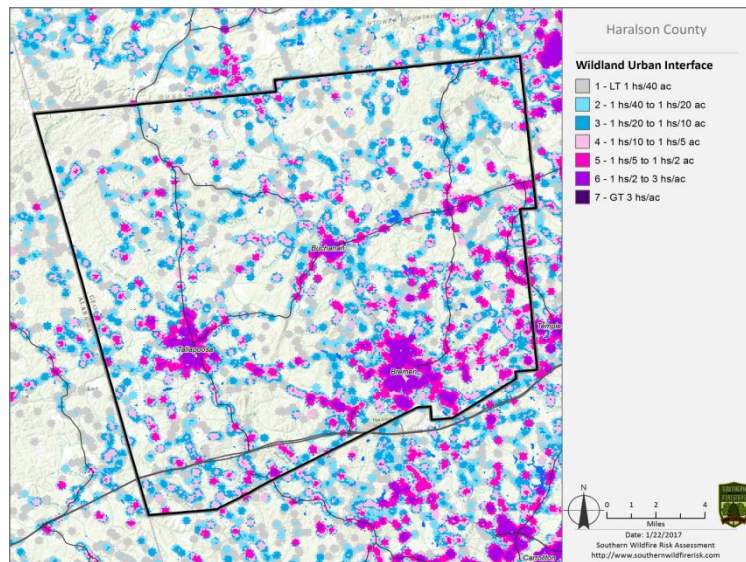
Both large (household size) and small (gas grill size) liquefied propane gas (LPG) tanks can present hazards to firefighters, including explosion.

- **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 "off-gas" extremely hazardous vapors. Plastic decking materials that resemble wood are becoming more common and may begin softening and losing structure strength at 180 degrees Fahrenheit 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.
- **Abandoned wells**
Found around old home sites, open wells can be a hazard for firefighters, especially while working a wildfire during the night.

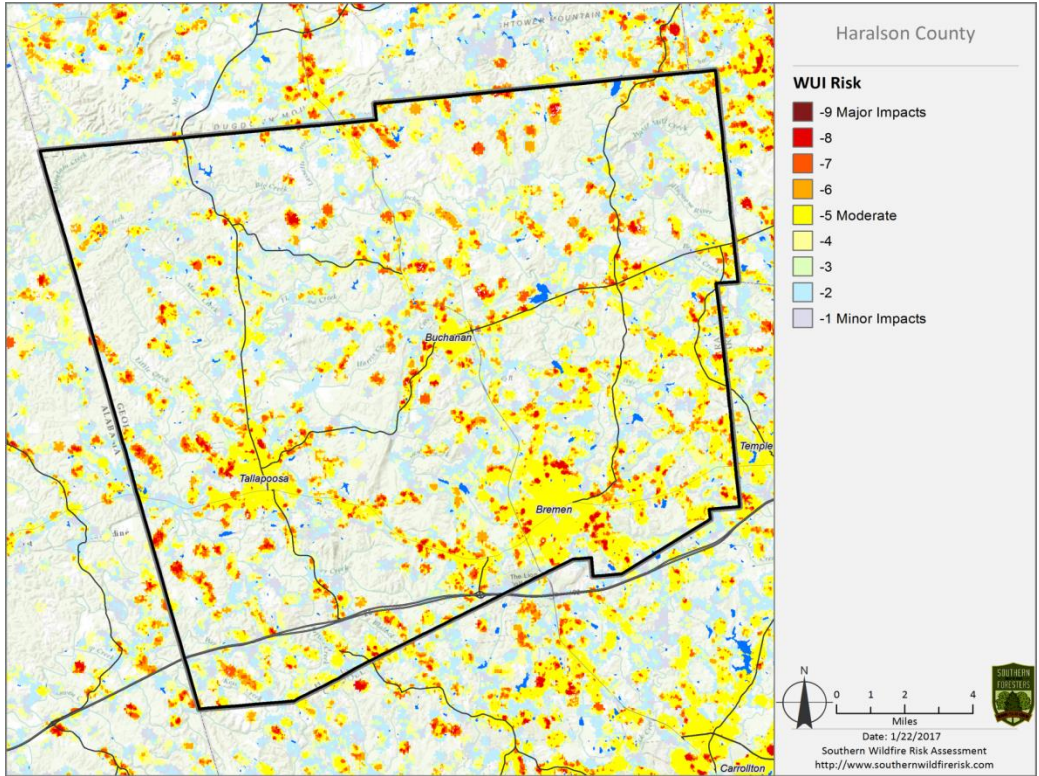
V. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT (SouthWRAP)

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

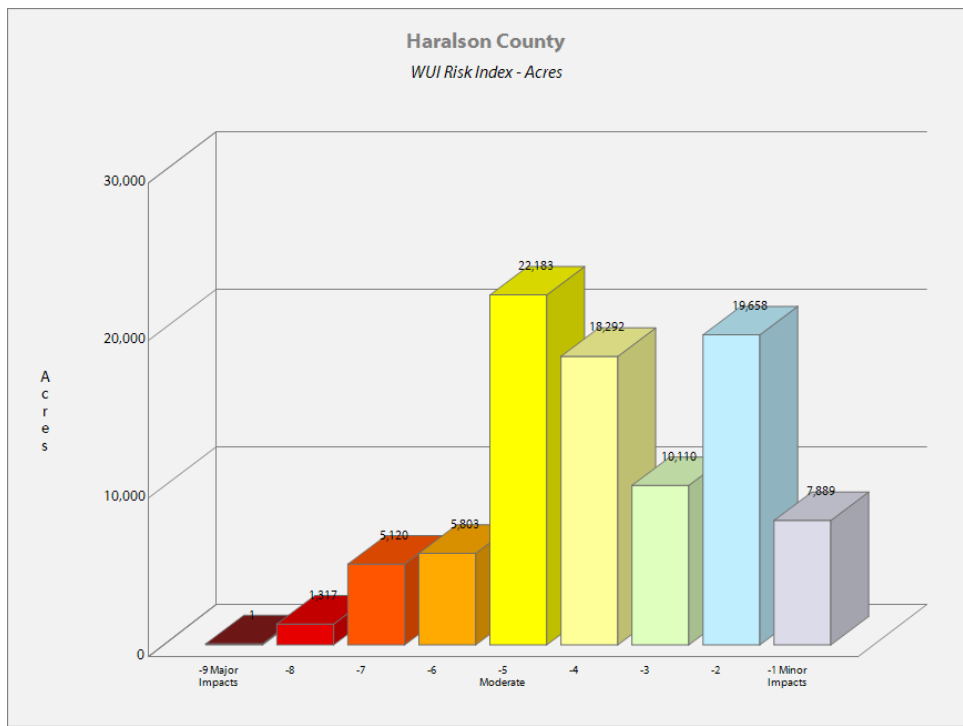
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

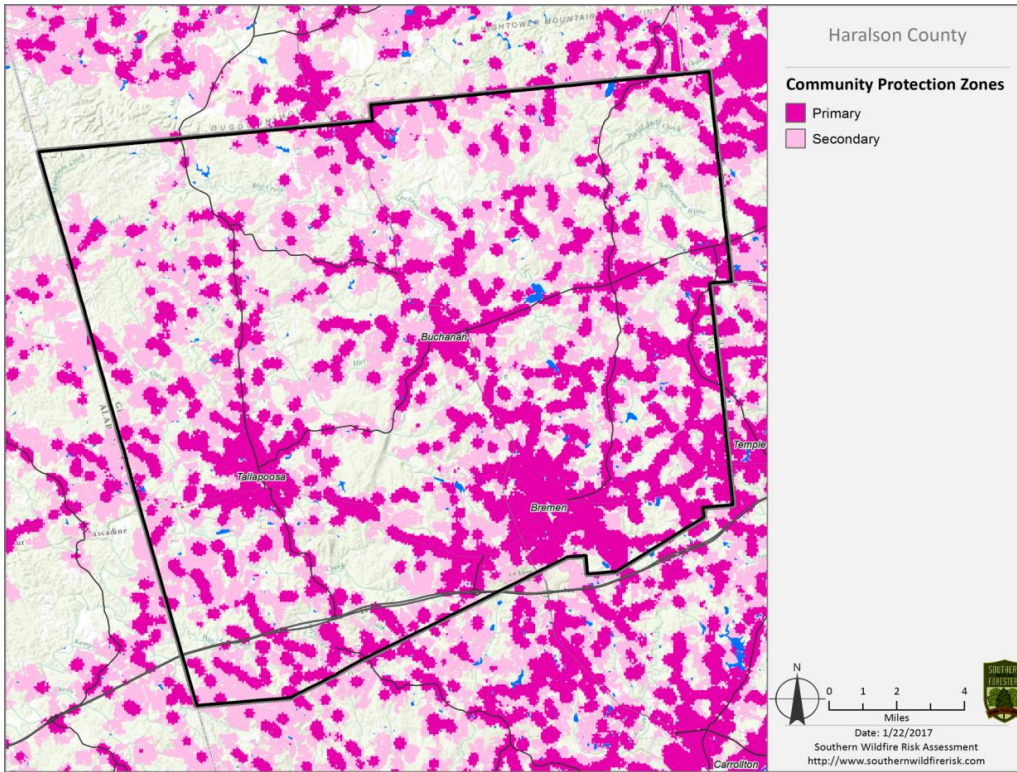


Wildland Urban Interface map from Haralson County SouthWRAP report

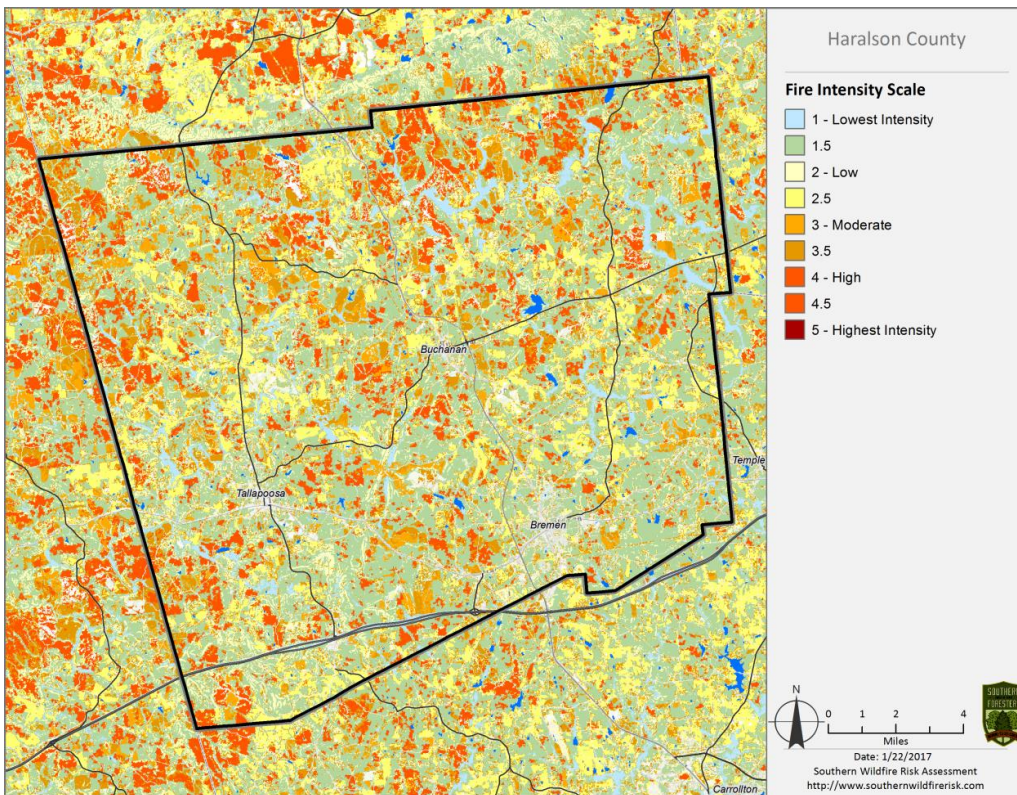


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map, above and below, WUI Risk index acres





Community Protection zone map (above) and Fire intensity scale map (below)



VI. Community Risk Assessments

Personnel of the Haralson County Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission conducted assessments of selected communities during early 2011. In all, 6 areas were assessed utilizing the Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment form 140. This form calculates community risk from wildland fire based on numerical scores in four hazard rating areas Subdivision design, Site hazard, Building Construction, and Additional factors. Communities are classified as being at extreme, high, moderate, or low risk. The following table contains information for the communities that were assessed. This information is also contained on a separate spreadsheet in the appendix entitled 'Haralson County Risk Summary'. In this form this document can be amended should additional assessments be conducted in the County. There was one community rated as being at extreme risk. This community, known as Beaverun Subdivision, is located in the Southwestern part of the County. It is located in an area of increased historical fire occurrence which adds to its degree of risk. Two communities were rated as being at high risk and three were classified as moderate risk. The locations of these communities are shown on the Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index map located in the appendix. Opportunities for community assessment still exist in Haralson County. The original assessment forms are retained by the Haralson County Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Community Name or Location	Map #	Latitude	Longitude	Homes	score	Risk Category	Jurisdiction
Beaverun Subdivision	1	33 40' 20"	85 19' 33"	64	156	Extreme	Buncombe
Golden Pond	2	33 53' 28"	85 12' 21"	14	139	High	Felton
Cherokee Estates	3	33 49' 9"	85 5' 26"	44	137	High	Cashtown
West Lake Club	4	33 44' 12"	85 11' 37"	9	129	Moderate	Bushmill
Gold Creek Drive	5	33 41' 34"	85 15' 42"	26	109	Moderate	Tallapoosa
Seabreeze	6	33 49' 3"	85 8' 46"	29	98	Moderate	Buchanan



Prescribed burning of woodlands is the best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel accumulation. The Georgia Forestry Commission can provide a prescribed burning plan, establish fire breaks, and can also provide equipment standby and assist with burning when personnel are available

VII. 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. ***It was acknowledged that in light of incendiary fire being a common cause in the county, protocol for investigation needs to be standard practice.***

- 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

<u>Hazard</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Method</u>
Incendiarism	Standardized investigation	Utilizing state and federal fire reports, investigations should be conducted on all fires determined to be caused by incendiarism on each jurisdiction. Coordination across agency and possibly geographic boundaries should be common practice.
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

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 ordinance 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. Utilize 2012 IWUIC International Code.

Proposed Wildland Fuel Reduction or modification Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Fuel Hazards near Communities at risk	Prescribed Burning and pre-suppression firebreaks	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. Should burning be inappropriate or undesirable install permanent or semi-permanent firebreaks
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	State, County, and municipal governments	Conduct Firewise meetings by each fire response jurisdiction. A door to door campaign in high risk areas
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. Distribute public notices concerning Firewise at local sporting events and other public gatherings.

Educational Priority	Responsible party	Method
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through formal certification and recognition	Federal, State, County, and municipal governments	The Georgia Forestry Commission and each local fire station should set a goal of achieving Firewise status for at least one extreme or high risk category community before the end of calendar year 2012. The goal of adding at least one community annually should extend beyond this initial goal.

In addition to the steps listed below each station should utilize individual community assessments for their response area to change individual line items to lessen the score of that line whenever possible. For example, if street signs are missing or marked with less than 4 inch letters or non reflective, the score could be reduced should steps be taken to improve street signage.

VIII. Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Incendiarism	The Georgia Forestry Commission and Haralson County Fire officials should conduct investigations on all fires determined to be caused by incendiarism on their jurisdictions. Cooperation and resource sharing (investigators) should be made standard practice. The use of local law enforcement should be standard practice especially when arson is identified as a problem in a specific area. The use of reward based incentives to locate arsonists should be considered.
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 Haralson 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 and most effective approaches to suppression tactics
Structural Ignitability	Haralson 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	Haralson 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 to 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.

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. A suggested burning project to reduce fuel near the Beaver run Community is depicted on a photograph contained in the appendix. It will be necessary to secure the cooperation of adjacent landowners on this and any burn project being considered.
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. A suggested fuel break is located on the photograph for the Beaver run Community.
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.

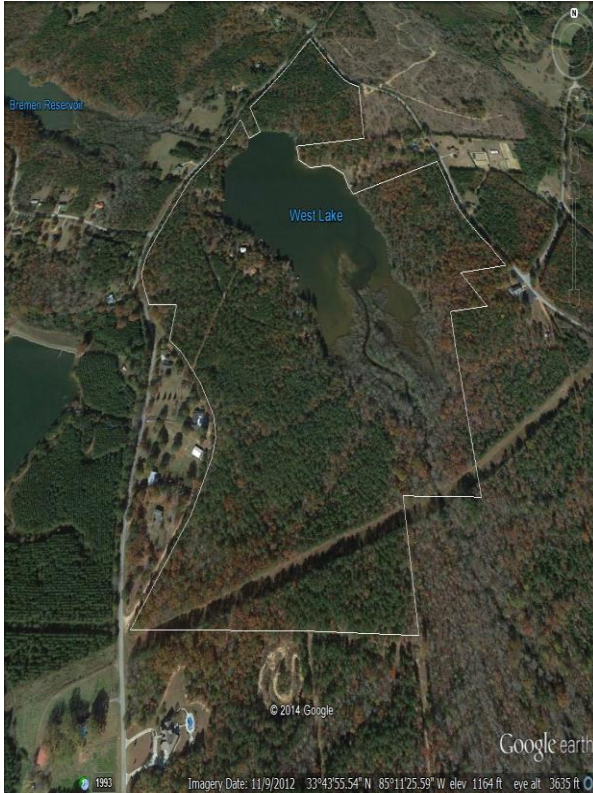
Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

Improvement needed	Responsible Party and specific action
Improve training and qualification of Haralson County Wildland firefighters	The Haralson County Chief Ranger, Assistant District Manager of Chattahoochee District of the Georgia Forestry Commission and the Haralson County Fire Chief should examine all training records for personnel under their supervision. All current or potential wildland personnel should be certified Georgia Basic Wildland Firefighters or higher in qualification. Additional training and qualification should be sought for personnel identified in the Haralson 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 Haralson 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 responsibilities should be examined by the GFC Chief Ranger and the Haralson County Fire Chief.

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 Haralson 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 mail outs. 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 Haralson Carroll Douglas County Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission and used for all Firewise meetings in the County. Local news media should be invited to these meetings.
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. 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 2012 Haralson County should seek and acquire Firewise certification for the Beaver Run Subdivision. Should lack of interest or other problems prevent certification of this community an effort should be made with another community listed on the Communities at Risk list.

Westlake Club community was certified as a Firewise Community in 2014.
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Pictured here is an aerial photo of Westlake Club Community, which was certified as a Firewise Community in 2014.

Timetables for Actions

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

- Steps to standardize and coordinate investigation practices should begin as soon as possible between agencies involved.
- Steps to examine communities at risk for defensible space and structural ignitability should take place as manpower and scheduling permits.
- 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 to early spring. 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 availability during the late winter to early spring.

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 calendar year 2012
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.
- Certification of Firewise communities should follow the timetable associated with the 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 achieve cooperation across law enforcement agencies would be the most obvious measure of success as regards incendiaryism reduction.

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, and 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.

IX. GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

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.

- FIREWISE materials are available for no cost 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 to reproduce materials.
- Free of charge public meeting areas should be identified where communities could gather for educational programs regarding prevention and firewise principles.

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

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

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

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

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

X. GLOSSARY

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

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

CWPP – The Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XI. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites

- FIREWISE materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org . These materials can be ordered at no cost.
- Georgia Forestry Commission www.georgiafirewise.org
- Examples of successful wildfire mitigation programs can be viewed at the website for National Database of State and Local Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Programs sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters www.wildfireprograms.com
- Information about a variety of interface issues (including wildfire) can be found at the USFS website for Interface South: www.interfacesouth.org
- Information on International Wildland-Urban Interface Code and standards for emergency services including wildfire can be found at www.nfpa.org
- Information on FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) can be found at www.firegrantsupport.com
- Information on National Fire Plan grants can be found at <http://www.federalgrantswire.com/national-fire-plan--rural-fire-assistance.html>
- Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment website (SouthWRAP) www.southernwildfirerisk.com
- Fire Adapted Community program www.fireadapted.org
- Ready Set Go program www.wildlandfirersg.org

Appended Documents:

- Haralson County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SouthWRAP) Summary Report



**P. O. Box 819 Macon, GA 31201
800-GA-TREESGaTrees.org**

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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.

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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