



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Heard County



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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Heard County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Heard County Wildfire Pre-suppression Plan

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

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.

I. OBJECTIVE OF THE CWPP

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 Heard 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 in early March 2010 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local county government, local fire authorities, emergency management, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

II. COMMUNITY & WILDFIRE HISTORY



Heard County, in west central Georgia on the border with Alabama, is the state's seventy-seventh county. Created in 1830 from 301 square miles of Carroll, Coweta, and Troup counties, it was named for Stephen Heard, an influential patriot of the American Revolution (1775-83), a planter, and a governor of Georgia from 1780 to 1781. The land now encompassed by Heard County was originally held by Creek Indians, who lost it at the Treaty of Indian Springs in 1825. The first white inhabitants arrived soon after the signing of the treaty and acquired most of their property by state-run land lotteries. Most of the new settlers came from other parts of Georgia in the search for better land.

The county seat, Franklin, named in honor of Benjamin Franklin, was an established village by 1770 but not incorporated until 1831. The first courthouse burned down in 1893 and was replaced the following year. The second courthouse was, in turn, replaced in 1964 by the building currently in service.

The Heard County Historical Society, organized in 1979, maintains a museum and archive of historical records in the "Old Jail" building in Franklin. Other incorporated communities in the county are Centralhatchee (incorporated in 1903), Corinth (incorporated in 1839), and Ephesus (incorporated in 1964).



Heard County Courthouse

Rocky soil prevented the county's farmers from developing large-scale operations; they were required instead to engage primarily in subsistence farming during the early days of the county's history. Eventually able to grow cotton as well, county residents

entered a period of relative prosperity after the Civil War (1861-65) until a drop in the cotton market, damage wrought by the boll weevil, and the Great Depression forced many farmers to leave. The remaining inhabitants discovered that devoting much of their land to forestry was profitable, and today a large proportion of the county's acreage is reserved for the lumber industry. A few farmers raise some beef cattle and poultry for market, and a number of residents are employed by factories.



Cotton Farmers

Today manufacturing is the largest employment category. Georgia Power Company is a major employer in the county. A satellite campus of West Georgia Technical College is located in Heard County.

Notable residents of the county include Mayhayley Lancaster, a fortune-teller, lawyer, political activist, schoolteacher, and self-proclaimed "oracle of the ages," who became a west Georgia legend in the first half of the twentieth century;

Dot Moore coauthor of *Oracle of the Ages: Reflections on the Curious Life of Fortune Teller Mayhayley Lancaster* (2001). Moore's book was awarded the 2002 Lilla M. Hawes Award, which is given by the Georgia Historical Society to "the book judged the most worthy contribution to Georgia county or local history published during the previous year."

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of Heard County was 11,012 (87.5 percent white, 10.8 percent black, and 1.1 percent Hispanic), a 27.6 percent increase since 1990.

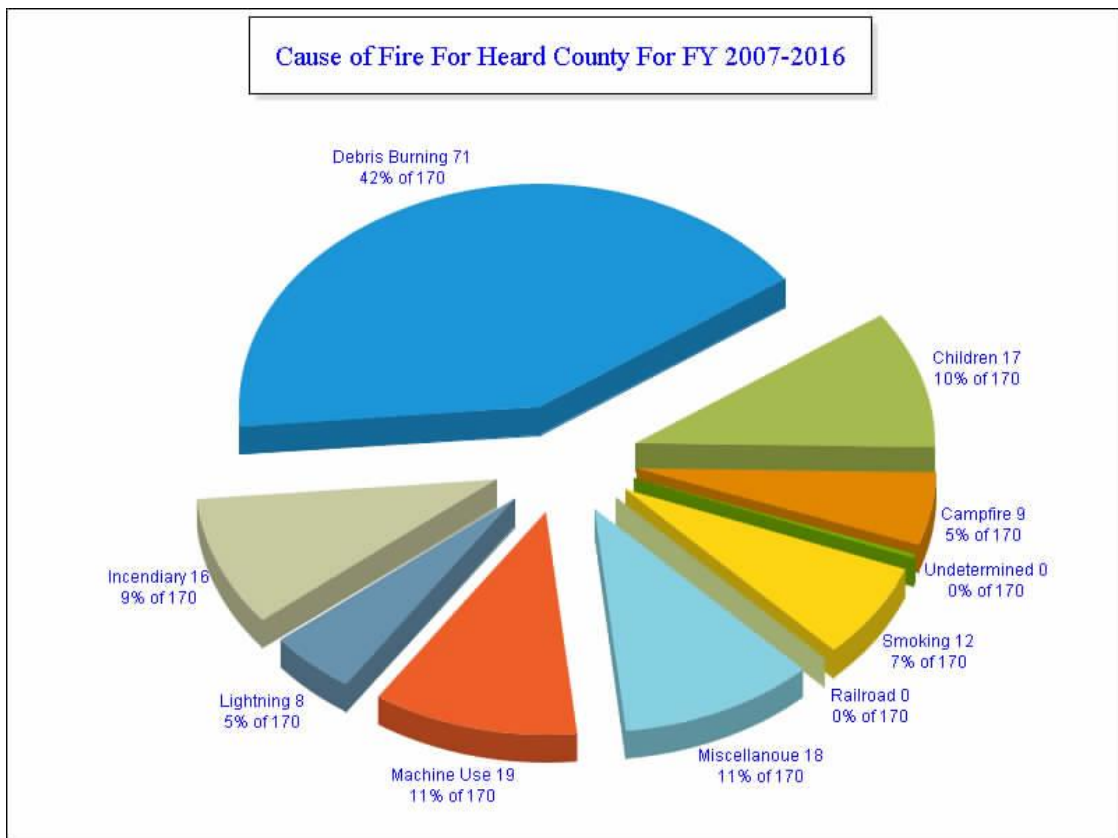
Wildfire History

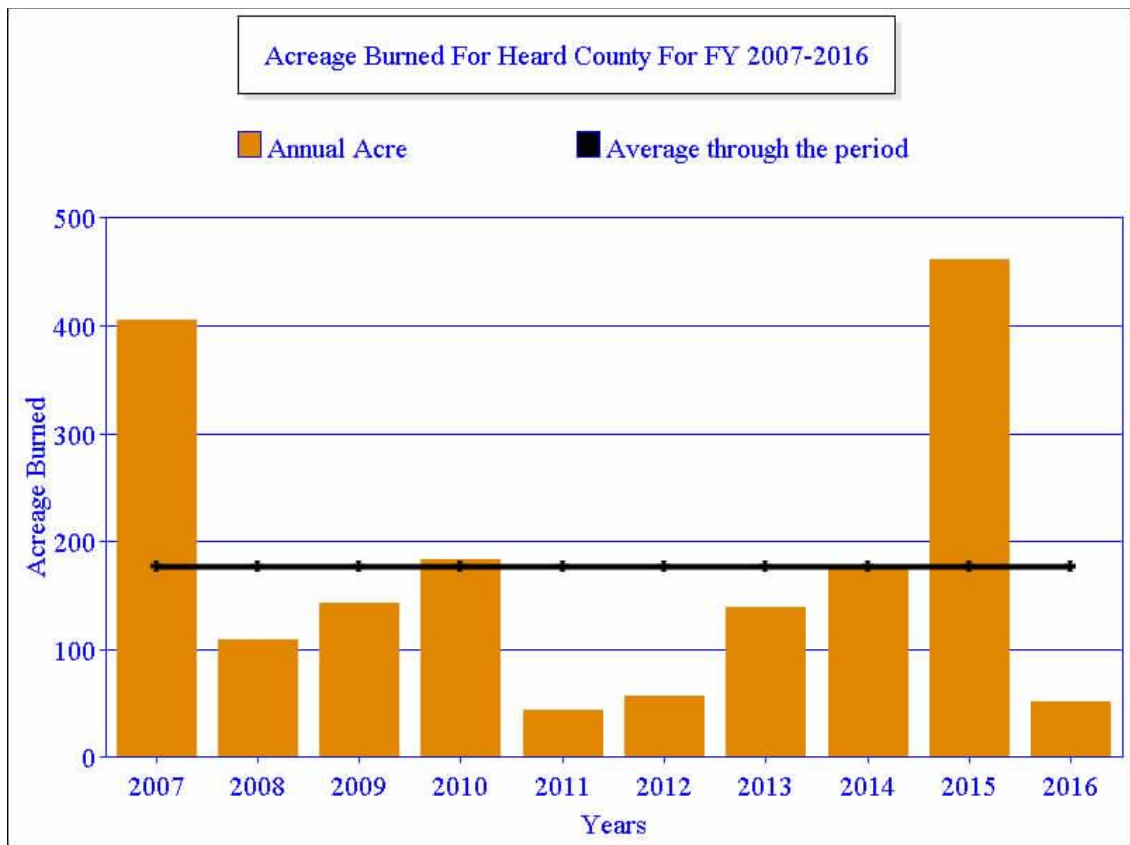
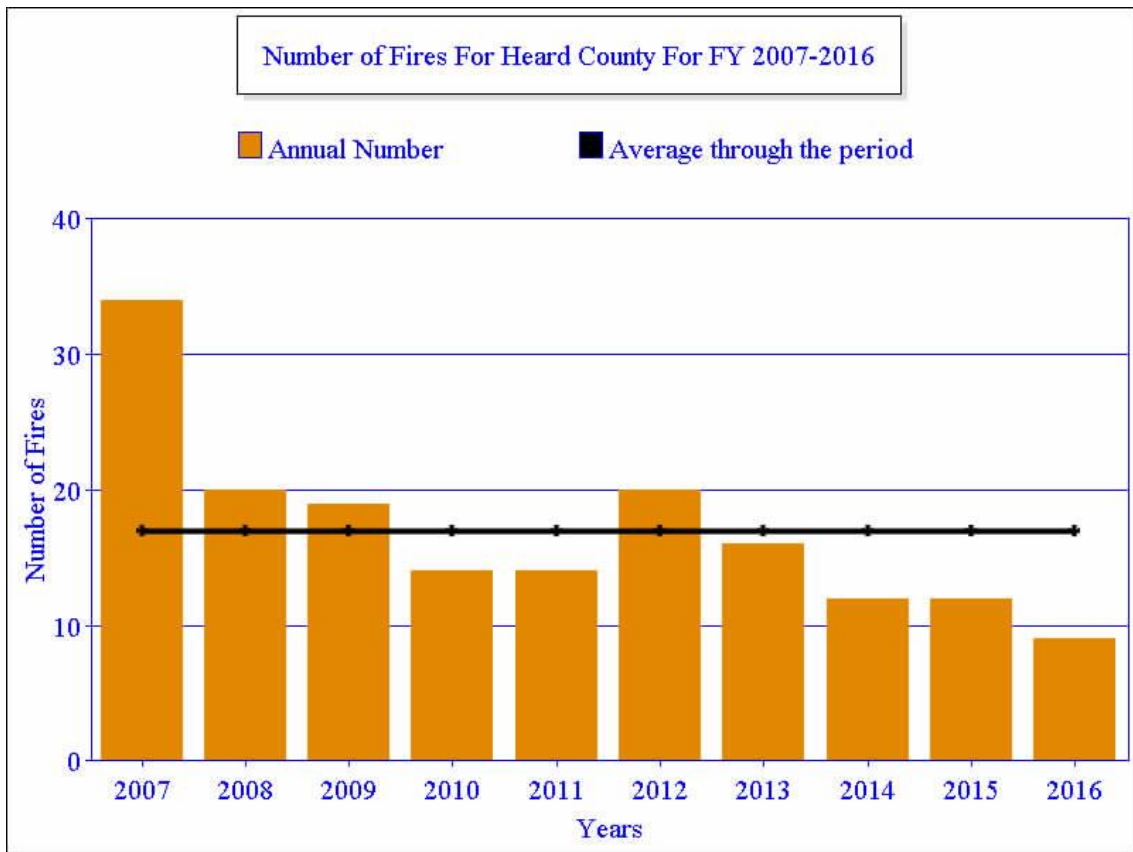
Wildland fire is not a serious problem in Heard County when compared to many other counties in Georgia. It falls in the midrange as far as activity statewide. The following table outlines fire activity during the past complete fiscal year 2017 which began on July 1, 2016 and ended on June 30, 2017. Fire activity during this past fiscal year is indicative of above average rainfall and lessened fire danger factors.

Over the next several pages (8-10) is wildfire data from the previous 10 years (FY2007 thru FY 2016). The major cause of these fires during this period was Debris Burning (42%). The 2nd leading cause was Machine Use (11%) followed by Children (10%). Incendiary (arson) is always a concern and accounted for 9% of these wildfires. The average annual number of wildfires was 17 burning 177 acres annually.

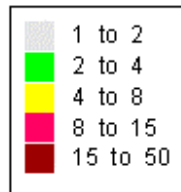
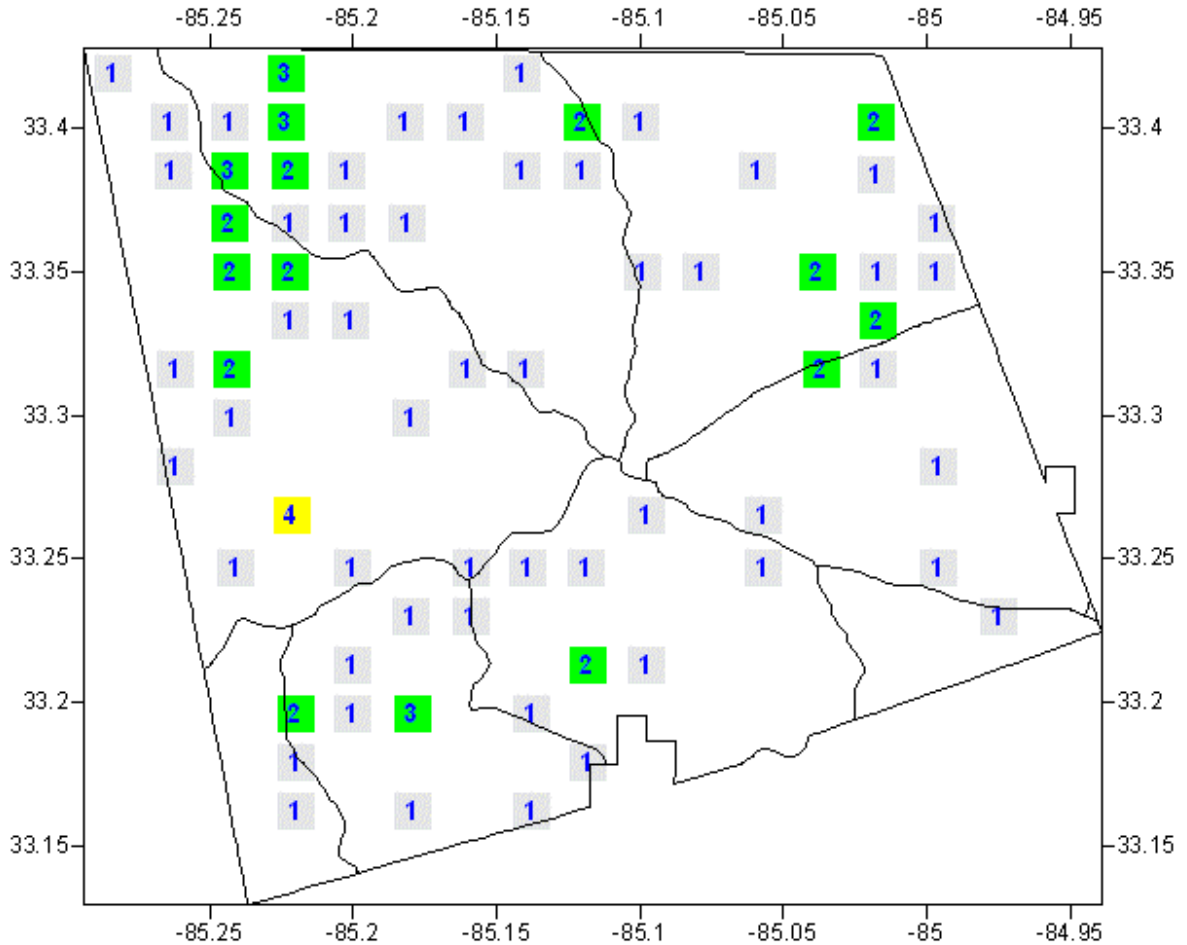
Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	0	0.00	0.80	1.62
Children	1	4.50	0.60	6.36
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0	0.00	0.40	0.42
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0	0.00	0.20	0.28
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1	20.00	2.00	45.73
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1	0.10	1.60	5.16
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1	1.00	0.40	0.80
Incendiary	0	0.00	1.00	84.05
Lightning	0	0.00	0.40	12.34
Machine Use	1	0.00	0.40	0.80
Miscellaneous: Other	0	0.00	0.20	0.60
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0	0.00	1.00	0.50
Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	0	0.00	0.40	1.61
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1	0.17	1.80	5.22
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	0.20	0.44
Smoking	0	0.00	0.40	0.76
Undetermined	0	0.00	0.20	0.20
Totals for County: Heard Year: 2017	6	25.77	12.00	166.8

Acreege Burned /Number of Fires For Heard County For FY 2007-2016				
Year	Acreege Burned	Number of Fires	Average Size	Statewide Average Size
2007	404.77	34	11.91	18.64
2008	108.43	20	5.42	4.56
2009	142.50	19	7.50	3.90
2010	183.20	14	13.09	3.93
2011	44.33	14	3.17	17.56
2012	56.99	20	2.85	5.08
2013	138.98	16	8.69	4.53
2014	177.10	12	14.76	5.02
2015	461.70	12	38.46	4.42
2016	51.70	9	5.74	6.29

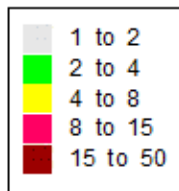
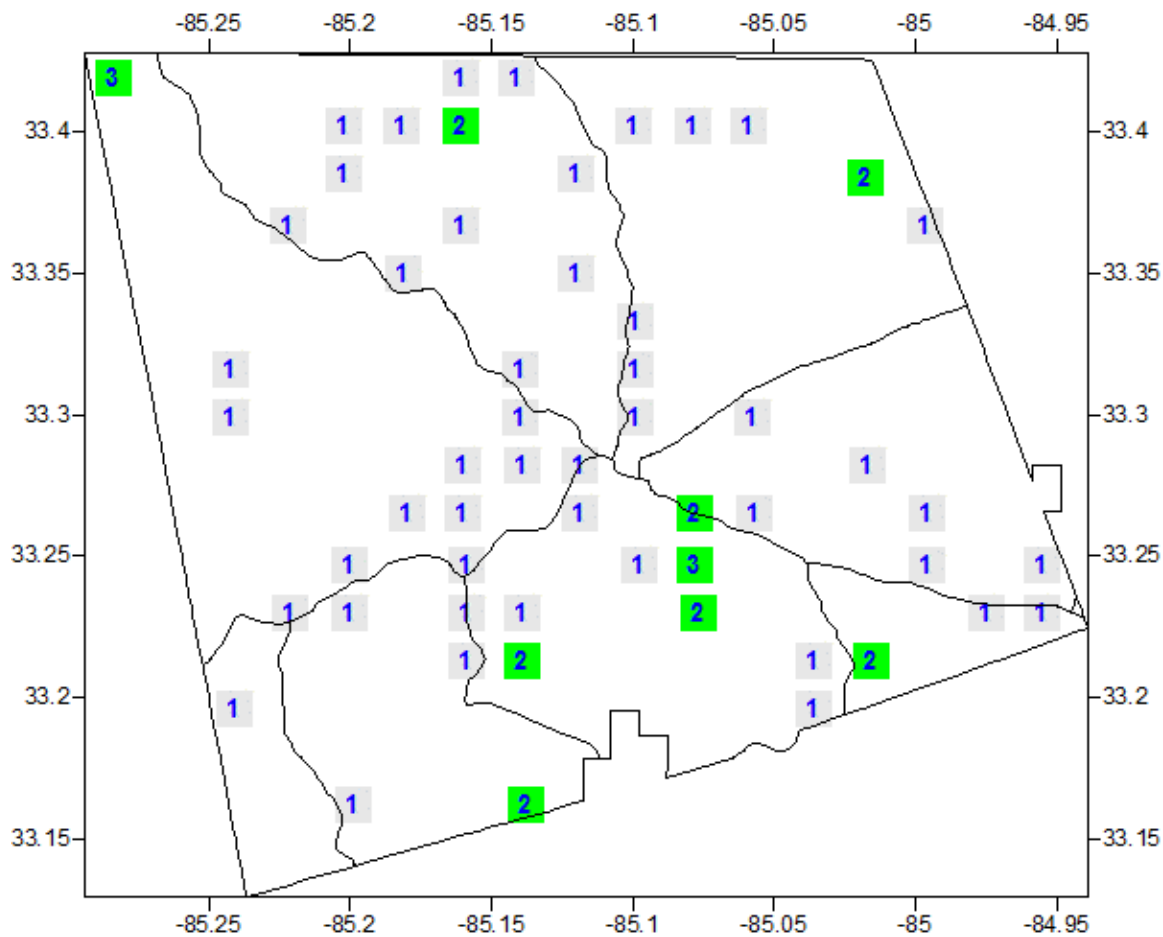




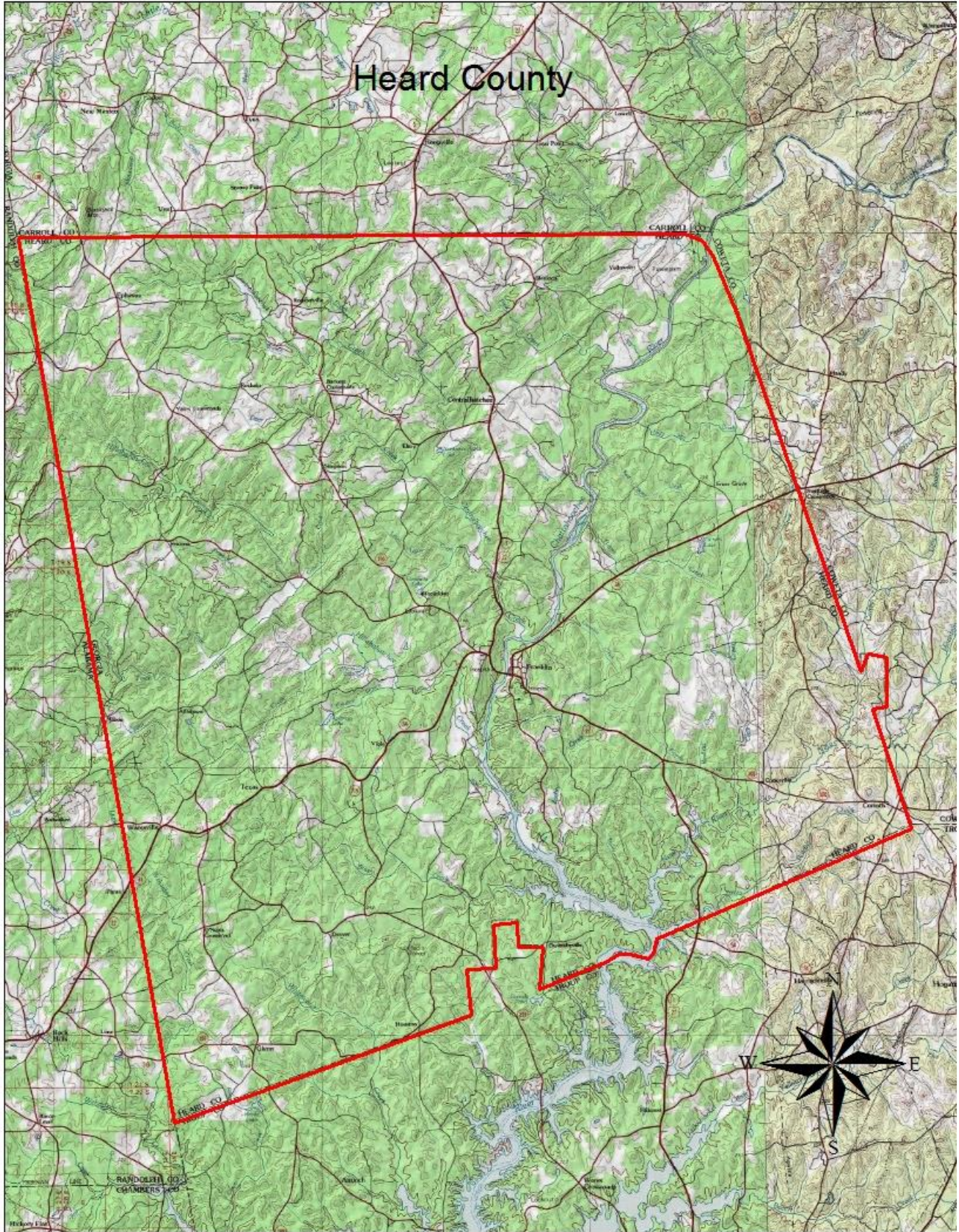
Fire Occurrence Map for Heard County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

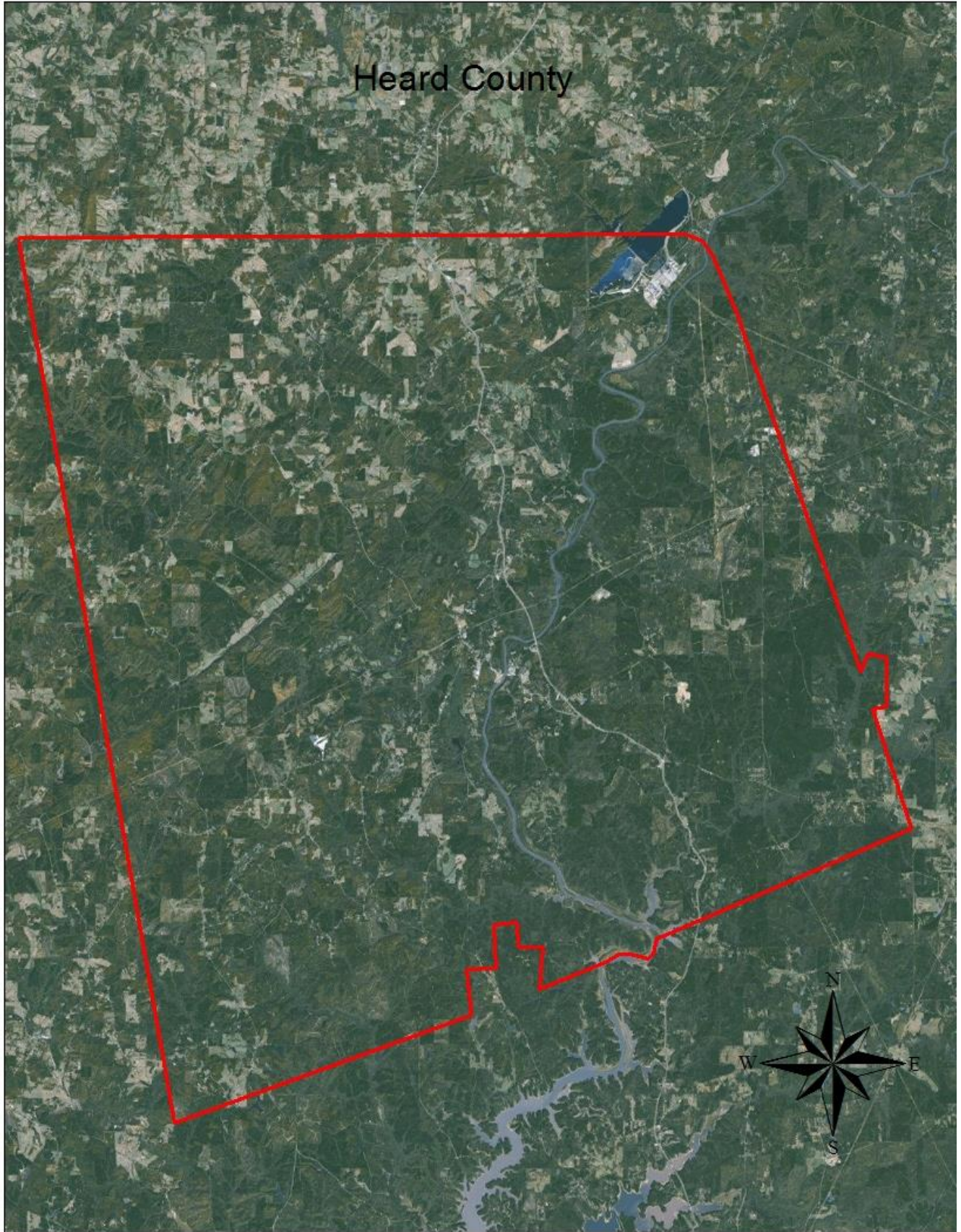


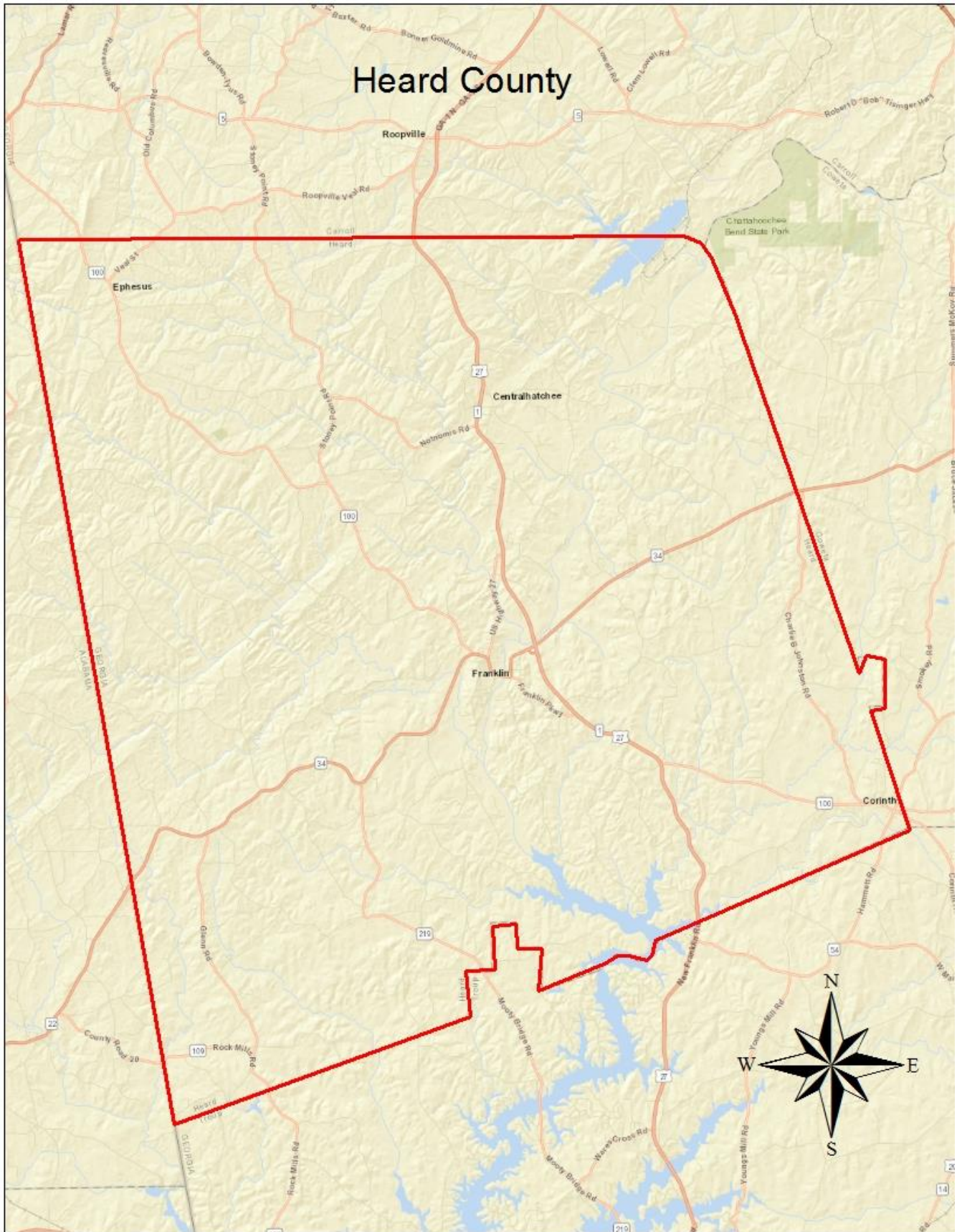
Fire Occurrence Map for Heard County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



III. COUNTY BASE MAP







IV. 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.

Heard County is typical of a County in the Southeastern United States in that it contains areas of both boundary and intermix WUI. Development is not as rapid as counties closer to large metropolitan areas.

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.

● 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.



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

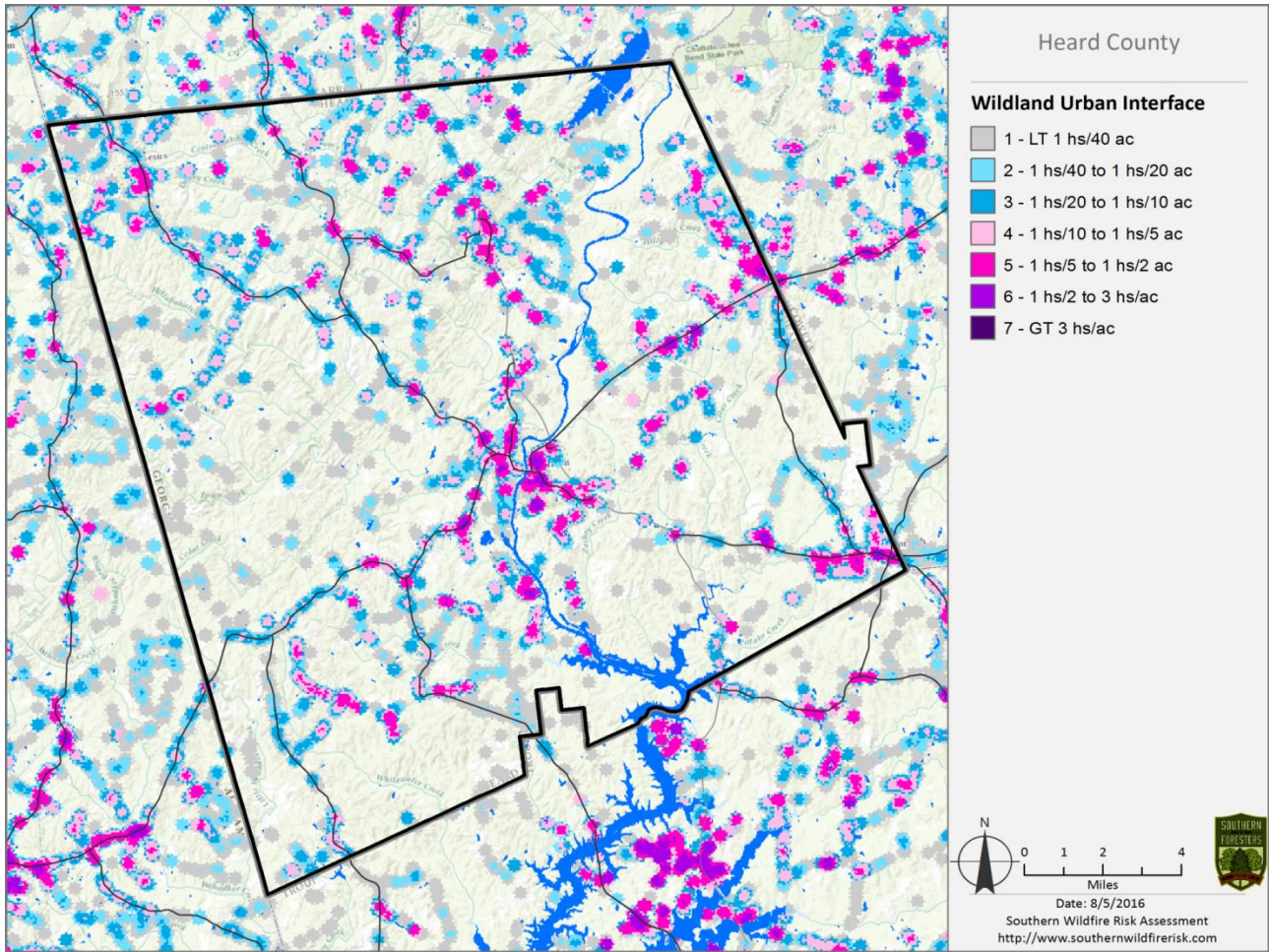
V. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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

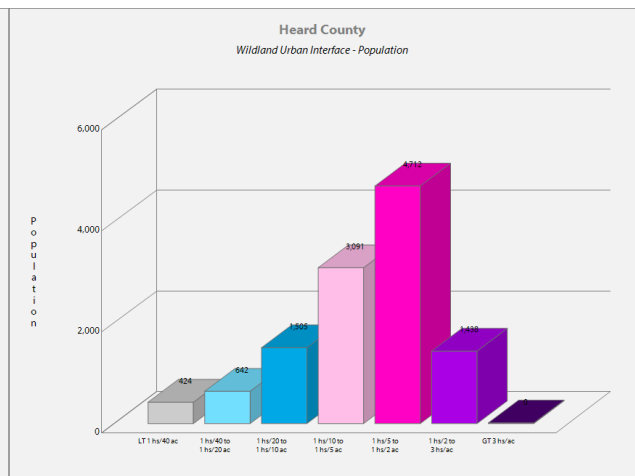
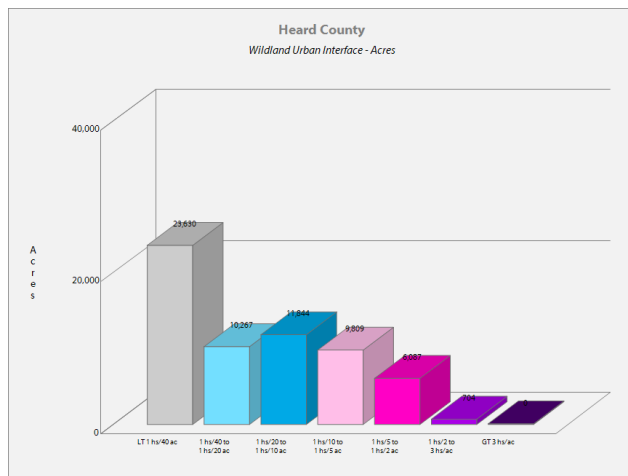
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies 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

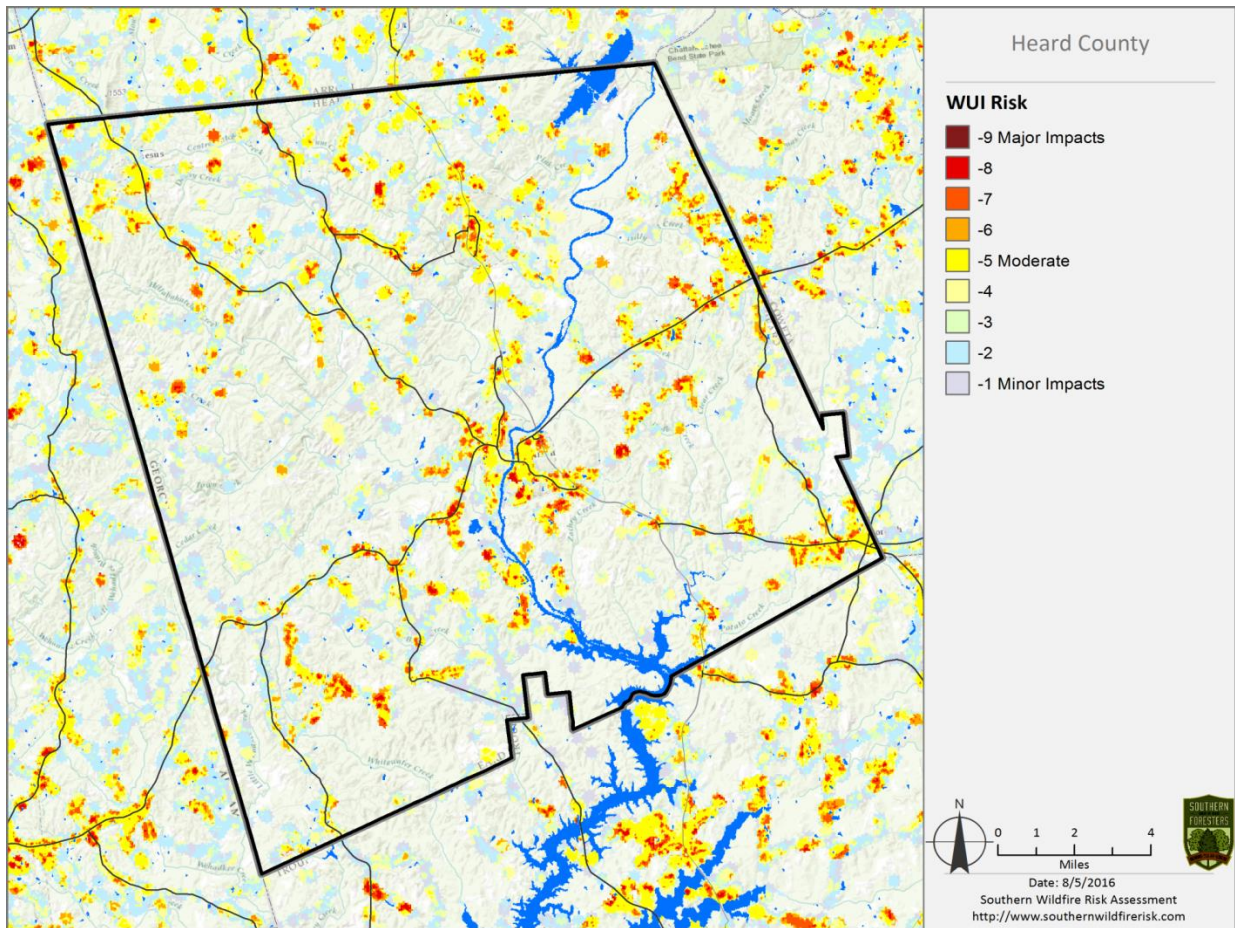
Risk Summary

Following an initial meeting between officials with Heard County Fire Services and the Georgia Forestry Commission on February 8, 2010 an assessment of communities at risk from wildland fire was undertaken by the Georgia Forestry Commission. Assessments were declared complete on May 13, 2010. A total of 11 areas were assessed using the Georgia Forestry Commission Form 140 Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. There was one community declared to be at extreme risk in the Birch Road Area. One community was declared to be at high risk in the Cheeks Road area. The remaining 9 communities were declared to be at moderate risk. Information on all assessment areas is included in a spreadsheet in the appendix entitled 'Heard County Risk Assessment'. Opportunities for assessment still exist in the County.

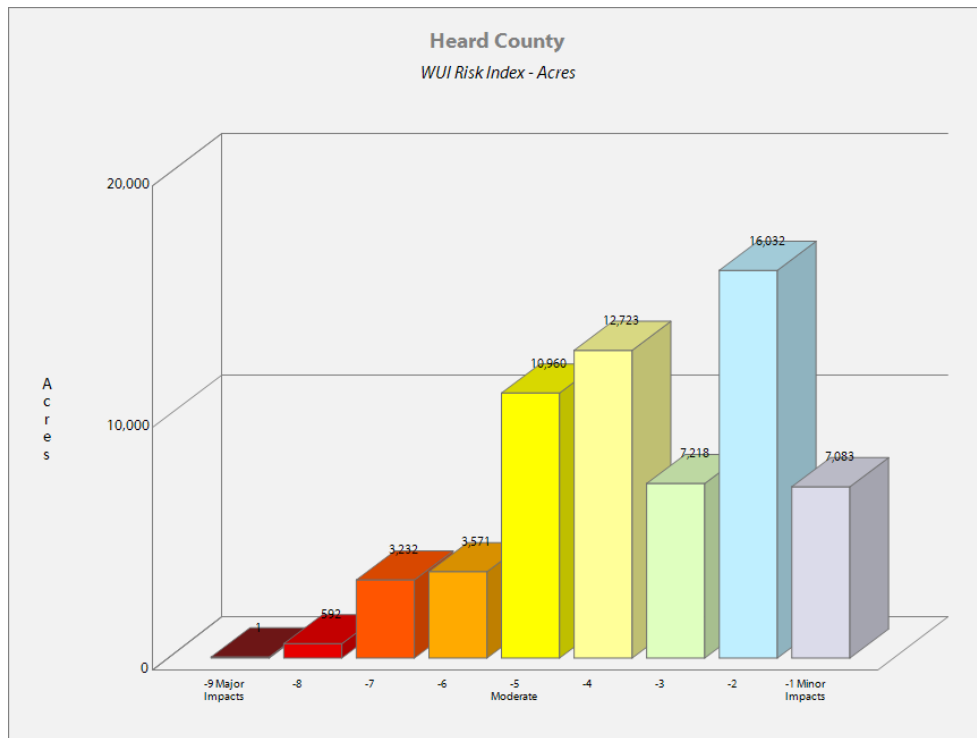


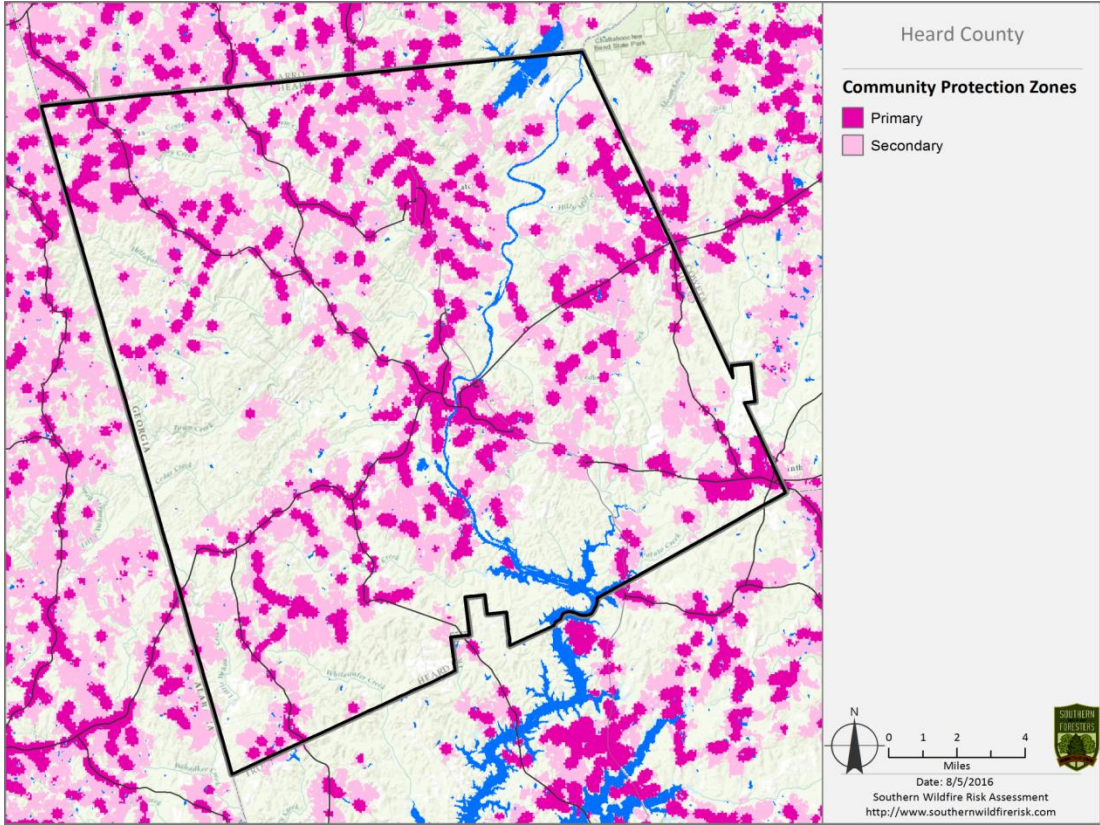
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map Below: WUI Population (left) WUI Acres (right)



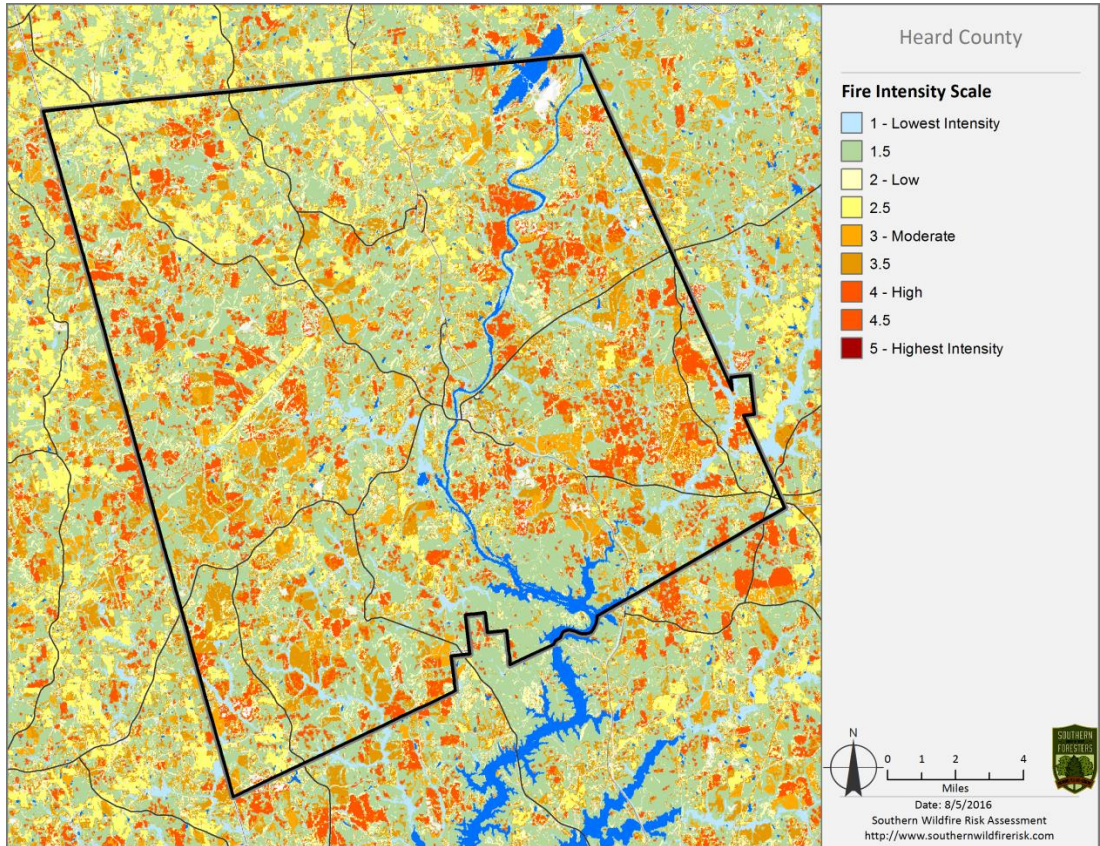


Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map Below: WUI Risk Index - Acres





Above: Community Protection Zones map Below: Fire Intensity Scale map



VI. MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

As Central Georgia continues to see increased growth from other areas seeking less crowded and warmer climates, new development will occur more frequently on forest and wildland areas. 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. In 2012 the International Code Council developed the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). This code was adopted by the Georgia Legislature in 2014 for Georgia counties to utilize when developing zoning and building codes to help reduce structure loss in the WUI.

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

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-feet 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.
3. Existing Fire Lines	Reduce hazardous fuels	Clean and re-harrow existing lines.

Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities

1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed.
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. Ready Set Go training
**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
<p>Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include defensible space, landscaping, building construction, etc. Workshop will be scheduled for evenings or weekends when most homeowners are available and advertised through local media outlets.</p> <p>Distribute materials promoting Firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>
2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders
<p>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: Willow Wood, Quail Valley, and Fairfield should be sought after for inclusion in the National Firewise Communities Program.</p>

3. Spring Clean-up Event (National Wildfire Preparedness Day 1st Saturday in May)

Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Newton County Fire Departments, and local residence of rural Newton 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 program materials
- Fire Adapted Community materials
- Ready Set Go brochures

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. Press

Invite the local and regional news media to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Heard County. Utilize radio and social media to reach new audiences.

VII. ACTION PLAN

Community and Structural Ignitability Reduction

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Improve defensible space in communities at risk to meet Firewise standards.	Heard County Fire Services and Georgia Forestry Commission	Conduct training at public meetings in communities at risk or through individual inspection	Ongoing	2018 and beyond
Identify access problems in communities at risk.	Heard County Fire Services and Georgia Forestry Commission	Each response station should identify problems within their response area	1 year	2018-2019
Identify structural ignitability concerns in communities at risk to meet Firewise standards.	Heard County Fire Services and Georgia Forestry Commission	Conduct training during the public meeting when defensible space is addressed or at the time when individual inspections are conducted	2 years	2018-2020
Identify and resolve problems with codes, covenants, and ordinances.	Heard County Fire services, GFC, Leaders of Homeowners associations and EMA Director	Examine and resolve problems which negatively influence wildland suppression. Guidance for fire conscious development can be found in NFPA 1141 at www.nfpa.org	2 years	2018-2020

Wildland Fuel Reduction or Modification

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Identify prescribed burning projects near Communities at Risk	Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Services	Concentrate on Communities in proximity to plantation pine or natural pine stands that are west or north of the communities.	ongoing	Winter 2018-2019 then every third year
Install and maintain permanent firebreaks near Communities at Risk	Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Services	Determine communities where burning is not desired or can be conducted safely. Locate, install, and maintain permanent firebreaks and make their locations known to all response agencies.	ongoing	Initiate as determination is made and continue as opportunities are found.
Provide assistance to communities at risk during periods of increased burning activity	Heard County Fire Services	Provide a common burning area inside or adjacent to communities where citizens can safely burn debris on specific days either unsupported or supported by local fire services	ongoing	Winter 2018-2019 repeated in succeeding years
Provide assistance to communities with alternates to burning	Georgia Forestry Commission	Through grant acquisition or by using local funds, acquire a small chipper which could be loaned to communities (could be used on the same day as burn assistance)	ongoing	2018 and beyond

Photographs of proposed prescribed burning projects are included in the appendix. Additional projects are possible near assessed areas and should be sought as additional areas are assessed beyond this plan. The photographs only reveal potential project areas and do not contain specific information regarding land ownership. Such information and landowner participation will need to be obtained prior to planning and execution.

Improvements to Capabilities of Wildland Response agencies

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Provide support to individuals interested or skilled in wildland areas in regard to enhanced training	Georgia Forestry Commission	Supported by the Newnan District Training officer, Chief Ranger Weaver should coordinate with Heard Fire Services to locate individuals with skills or interests to improve training or qualification to fill ICS positions on the District Type 3 organization	ongoing	2018 and beyond
Identify needs for training and qualification of wildland responders	Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Chief(s)	Supported by the District Training officer, Chief Ranger Weaver and Fire Chief(s) should examine training records of all wildland responders to insure all are FFT2 or Georgia Basic wildland certified. Provide Ready set Go training to Fire Department and public.	ongoing	2018 and beyond
Identify equipment needs and acquire wildland equipment for County and State wildland responders to insure all wildland equipment meets NWCG standards.	Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Services	Chief Ranger Weaver and Fire Chief(s) should inventory present wildland equipment and PPE identify needs and acquire needed material through local or grant funding.	ongoing	2018 and beyond

Public Education and Outreach

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Achieve Firewise USA status for Communities at Risk	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Service	Consider one of high risk communities for certification as a Firewise USA certified community. Should this be realized it would serve as a model for other communities that would follow.	1 year	2018-2019
Notification of Communities at Risk regarding risk of wildland fire hazard and during periods of high to extreme fire danger.	Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Services	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.	Ongoing	2018 and beyond
Improve public knowledge regarding Firewise principles	Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Services	Acquire a Firewise display to be retained by the Georgia Forestry Commission. This display could be loaned to fire response stations for training of people in communities in their response areas. Firewise brochures should be provided to the building permit office for distribution.	Ongoing	2018 and beyond

Assessment:

Describe the strategy used to assess the plans progress and effectiveness.

Reduction of Community hazard and structural ignitability

- Direct measurement of the number of communities and individual structures 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 for Public Education and Outreach

- 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 certified as Firewise USA would be an obvious measure of success.

A standard method of measurement should be agreed upon and adopted by both the Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire Services. This could be adopted as standard practice at regular meetings.

The following recommendations were developed by collaboration between the Georgia Forestry Commission and Heard County Fire and Emergency Services. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildfire in the assessment area

- 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 and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities:

1. Locate lack of and improve defensible space around structures in communities at risk
2. Identify access problems that affect initial attack in communities at risk
3. Identify structural ignitability concerns in communities at risk
4. Identify and resolve problems with codes, covenants, or ordinances that negatively influence structural ignitability

Proposed Wildland Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities:

1. Reduction or modification of wildland fuel in proximity to communities at risk
2. Reduction or modification of fuel concentrations in shared spaces inside communities at risk

Proposed Improvements to capabilities of Wildland Response agencies:

1. Identify needs and improve training and qualification of wildland response agencies
2. Identify needs and recommend equipment acquisitions for wildland response agencies

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities:

1. Improve public knowledge in communities at risk and in the general population of Meriwether County regarding Firewise principles.
2. Identify opportunities and achieve Firewise USA certification for communities at risk.
3. Notification of communities at risk regarding wildland fire hazard.
4. Improvements to public notification during periods of high to extreme fire danger.

VII. MITIGATION ASSISTANCE & GRANT FUNDING

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

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

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

Georgia Forestry Commission: Plowing and prescribed burning assistance, as well as 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.

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

IX. GLOSSARY

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

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

CWPP – The Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

X. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites:

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

Appended Documents:

Heard County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)
Heard County Wildfire assessment scoresheets

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



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