Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Houston County, Georgia

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

September, 2016

SIGNATURE PAGE

Honorable Tommy Stainaker, Chairman
Houston County Board of Commissioners, Post 1

_____ _____

Date

Robbie Dunbar, Director of Operations
Houston County

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Crawford, Houston, Peach Counties
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Prepared by:

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The following report is a collaborative effort among various entities; the representatives listed below comprise the core decision-making team responsible for this report and mutually agree on the plan's contents:

- Houston County, Board of Commissioners

- Houston County Fire Department

- Houston County Emergency Management

- Nick Tresco, Chief Ranger
  Crawford, Houston, Peach County Unit
  Georgia Forestry Commission

- Beryl Budd, Wildfire Prevention Specialist
  Georgia Forestry Commission

PLAN CONTENTS PAGE

Appended Documents:

Houston County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

I. OBJECTIVES & GOALS

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, home owner 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 Houston County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will help 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 about 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.
- Develop and implement effective community ordinances and codes.

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Wildfire risk reduction strategies are most effective when approached collaboratively – involving groups of residents, elected officials, community decision makers, emergency managers, and natural resource managers –and when combined with effective outreach approaches.

Collaborative approaches make sense as the initial focus of any community attempting to work toward wildfire risk reduction. In all Community Wildfire Protection Plan collaborations, the goal is to cooperatively identify problems and reach a consensus for mutual action. In the case of wildfire mitigation, a reduction in the wildfire risk to the community's lives, houses, and property is the desired outcome.

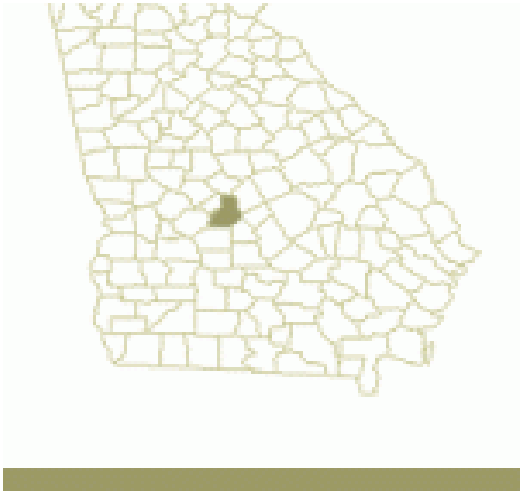
The collaborative core team convened in 2015 to initiate development of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local Houston County Board of Commissioners, Houston County Fire Department, Houston County Emergency Management, and the Georgia Forestry Commission. The benefits that will be gained from the development of this CWPP are summarized below:

- 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

Georgia Forestry Commission contact information:

Menu	
County	Houston
Name:	Crawford-Houston-Peach County; District 2
Contact:	Nick Tresco, Chief Ranger
Address:	2454 Hwy 41 South
City:	Perry GA 31069
Coordinates:	Latitude: 32° 23' 18.05" Longitude: -83° 47' 16.57" (click to see location on Google Map)
Phone:	478-988-7124
Fax Number:	478-988-7123
E-mail Address:	ntresco@gfc.state.ga.us
Org Number:	4203102039 - Crawford-Houston-Peach
	Maps & Locations
Location:	US 41, 5 Miles S. Perry
Yahoo Map	Click Here for a Yahoo Map
	The Statistics below are for Houston County
Total Land Area:	241,100 Acres
Total In Forest:	120,419 Acres
Percent In Forest:	49.95 %
	Forester for this County
Forester:	Davis, Matt
Email:	mdavis@gfc.state.ga.us
Phone:	478-946-2457

III. Community Background and Wildfire History



Houston County, in central Georgia just south of Macon, was created on May 15, 1821, through a treaty with the Creek Indians. Named for Governor John Houstoun, the spelling of the county later evolved to "Houston." The pronunciation, however, remains to this day "howston." Perry, the county seat, was incorporated in 1824. Warner Robins, the largest city, was incorporated in 1943, when a major military base was established nearby during World War II (1941-45). Centerville was incorporated in 1958.
Houston County was carved from the wilderness by an act of the state legislature as one of five huge counties.

Pecan Orchard, Perry

The geographic center of the county was given the name Wattsville, which was later changed to Perry. Land was lost to the formation of Bibb, Crawford, DeKalb, and Pike counties. Later, more land was lost to Macon and Peach counties. Early settlers, mostly winners of the land lottery of 1821, came from the Georgia coast and from the Carolinas and Virginia to grow corn, wheat, potatoes, and garden vegetables in the rich sandy loam that makes up most of the county. Proximity to the Ocmulgee River made the exporting of cotton and the importing of manufactured goods a reality. Log cabins gave way to sturdy white farmhouses and plantations. Many of the settlements previously mentioned appeared and flourished as the railroad came, later in the nineteenth century.

Houston County Courthouse

Houston County sent its militias to engage both the Seminoles in Florida and the Creeks in Alabama in 1836, and to fight in the Civil War (1861-65), the Spanish-American War (1898), and World War I (1917-18). In 1875 the development of the Elberta peach brought a viable new industry to the county; by 1889 the Georgia Department of Agriculture concluded that Houston was the largest peach-growing county in the United States. In 1912 electricity came to Perry, followed by Rural Free Delivery of the U.S. mail in 1917. In 1924 the Clinchfield cement plant was opened at Coreen due to the rich deposits of limestone and kaolin there. The abundance of yellow pine also spurred a prosperous lumbering

industry in the 1920s. After each of these events, life in Houston County settled back down to its quiet agrarian routine.

Houston County's participation in World War II, however, had a very different outcome. Not only did its men go out to war, but war efforts entered the north end of the county. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took possession of cotton fields on the vast plain at the railroad stop of Wellston and built an army depot named Robins Field, in memory of General Augustine Warner Robins. The depot became a critical site for the war effort, and a town rapidly grew adjacent to the depot. On March 5, 1943, this town was incorporated as the city of Warner Robins.

Fairground's Lake, Perry

There were about fifty permanent residents living in the area when Wellston's transformation began. By the time the devastating tornado of 1953 struck, the population had grown to more than 8,000. The physical damage done by the tornado only strengthened the spirit of the town, which continued to grow along with the importance of the base. In the twenty-first century Robins Air Force Base fuels the economy of much of middle Georgia.

Sonny Perdue

Houston County was further transformed in the early 1960s by Interstate 75, which runs north-south through the county, touching the city of Perry. In recent years citizens of the county have played a variety of parts on the state and national scene, most notably Sam Nunn, of Perry, who served as U.S. senator from 1972 to 1996 and chaired the Senate Armed Services Committee. Other well-known natives of the county include architect Charles Choate and Nathan Toomer, the father of writer Jean Toomer.

The educational opportunites in the county were expanded in 1974, when the first classes were held at the Houston Vocational Center (later Central Georgia Technical College). In 2002, Sonny Perdue a native of Bonaire and graduate of Warner Robins High School, was elected the first Republican governor of Georgia since 1872.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Houston County is 139,900, an increase from the 2000 population of 110,765.

Courtesy of the *New Georgia Encyclopedia*

WILDFIRE HISTORY

County = Houston Fiscal Year 2016 (July 2015 thru June 2016)	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0		0.00	0.80	2.91
Children	Children	0		0.00	3.00	5.02
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1		1.63	1.60	9.89
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.20	3.05
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	4		25.83	1.20	7.93
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	1		0.10	0.60	1.48
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1		0.50	2.60	10.52
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0		0.00	0.60	3.76
Incendiary	Incendiary	2		4.58	0.80	1.90
Lightning	Lightning	0		0.00	1.00	4.46
Machine Use	Machine Use	5		1.63	8.00	20.71
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	0		0.00	0.40	0.78
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	0		0.00	0.20	0.94
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	0		0.00	0.20	2.03
Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	0		0.00	0.20	0.08
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1		1.50	0.40	0.36
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0		0.00	1.00	3.21
Railroad	Railroad	0		0.00	0.20	3.48
Smoking	Smoking	0		0.00	0.20	2.25
Undetermined	Undetermined	1		2.92	2.40	19.70
Totals for County: Houston Year: 2016		16		38.69	25.60	104.47

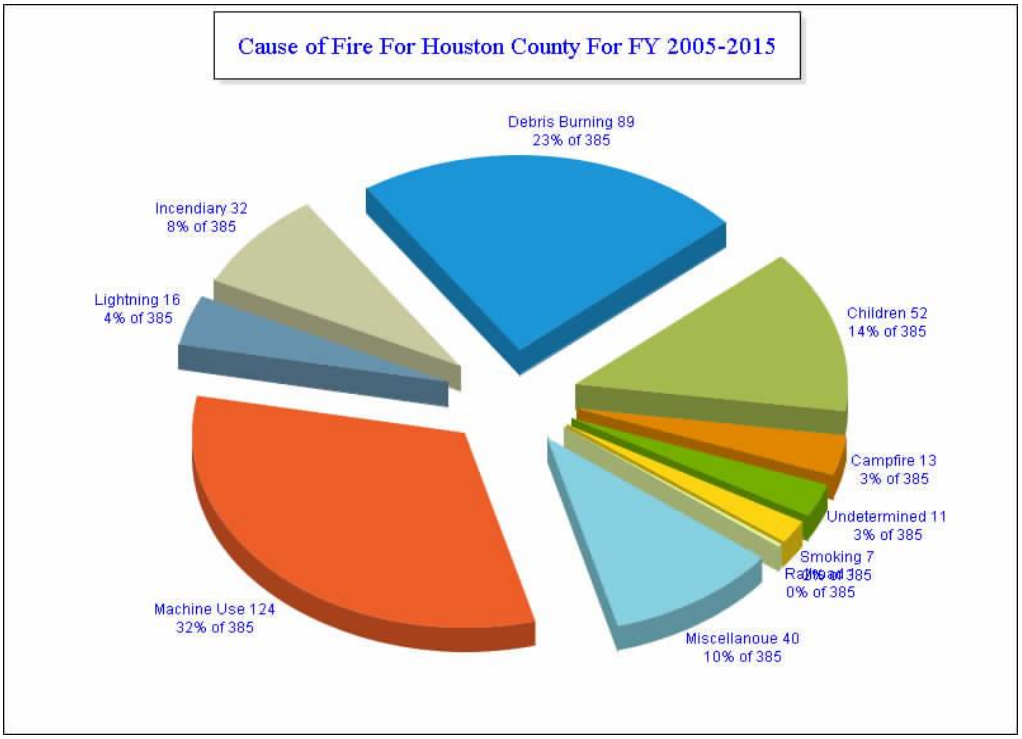
Year	Number of Fires	Acreage Burned	Average size	Statewide Average size
2006	**46**	**202.72**	**4.41**	**3.93**
2007	**43**	**171.35**	**3.98**	**18.64**
2008	**43**	**68.61**	**1.60**	**4.56**
2009	**36**	**99.93**	**2.78**	**3.90**
2010	**30**	**52.35**	**1.75**	**3.56**
2011	**51**	**365.55**	**7.17**	**16.16**
2012	**42**	**129.61**	**3.09**	**4.98**
2013	**16**	**130.48**	**8.16**	**4.75**
2014	**34**	**177.04**	**5.21**	**5.02**
2015	**20**	**46.55**	**2.33**	**4.50**
Average	**36**	**144.42**	**4.05**	**7.00**

The table above indicates the County average number of wildfires, acreage burned and average size compared to the statewide average size for the 10 year period 2006-2015. In 2007 and 2011 Georgia had record breaking wildfire activity due to drought and large wildfires in SE Georgia and the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge area. In 2010 and 2015 the exact opposite was seen with record breaking low wildfire occurrence and acreage burned due to extremely wet seasons.

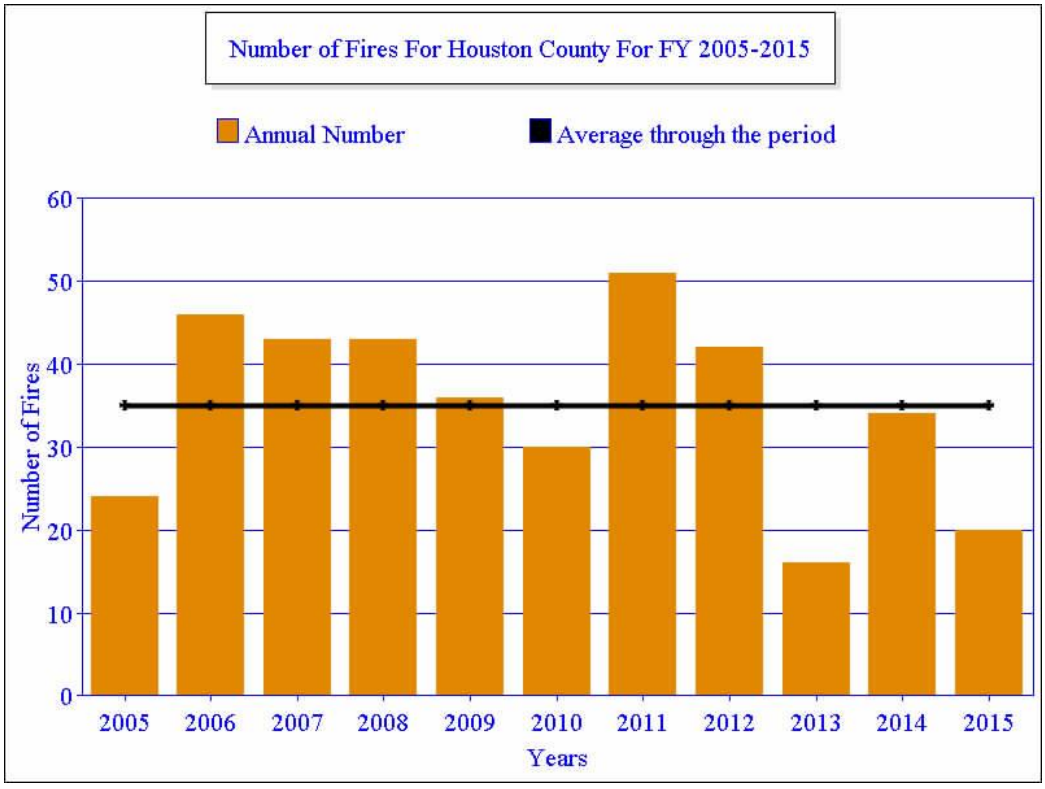
The table below indicates the number of wildfires by cause during the last 10 year period. The primary cause of these wildfires was machine use accounting for 32%. The second highest cause was debris burning (23%). Typically careless debris burning is the primary cause of wildfires statewide.

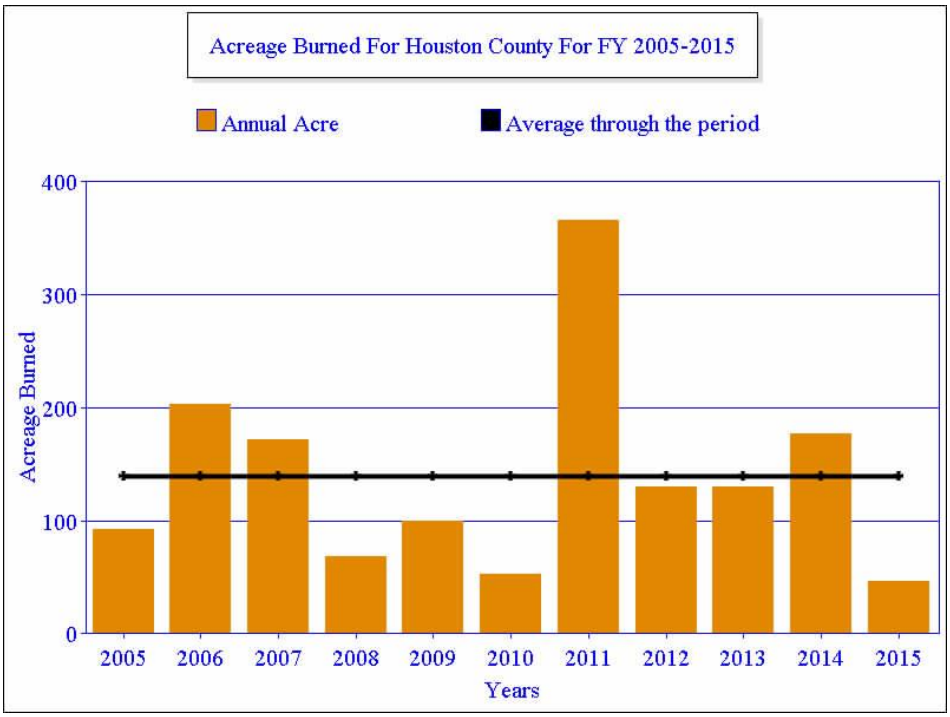
Number of Fires by Cause for Houston County for CY 2006 to 2015

Year	Campfire	Children	Debris Burning	Incendiary	Lightning	Machine Use	Miscellaneous	Railroad	Smoking
2006	**0**	**9**	**14**	**12**	**4**	**10**	**6**	**0**	**0**
2007	**2**	**5**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**15**	**2**	**0**	**2**
2008	**3**	**3**	**8**	**5**	**4**	**14**	**6**	**0**	**3**
2009	**0**	**4**	**9**	**1**	**0**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**
2010	**1**	**7**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**13**	**2**	**0**	**0**
2011	**2**	**10**	**11**	**2**	**0**	**26**	**7**	**0**	**1**
2012	**1**	**2**	**10**	**0**	**2**	**11**	**5**	**0**	**0**
2013	**1**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**1**
2014	**2**	**2**	**10**	**1**	**2**	**8**	**5**	**0**	**0**
2015	**0**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**5**	**6**	**0**	**0**

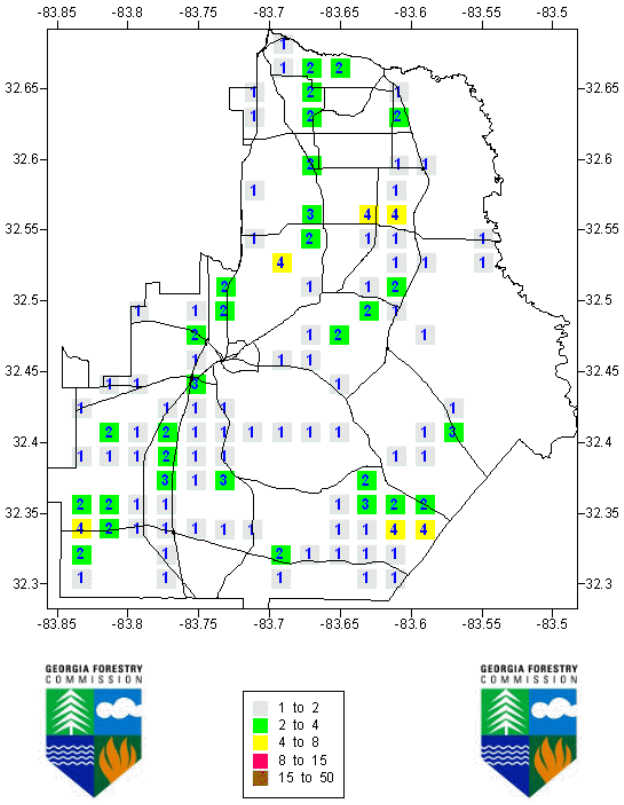


The following graphs indicate the # of fires and acres burned FY 2005 – 2015. Map on the following page indicates where wildfires occurred 2011-2015.

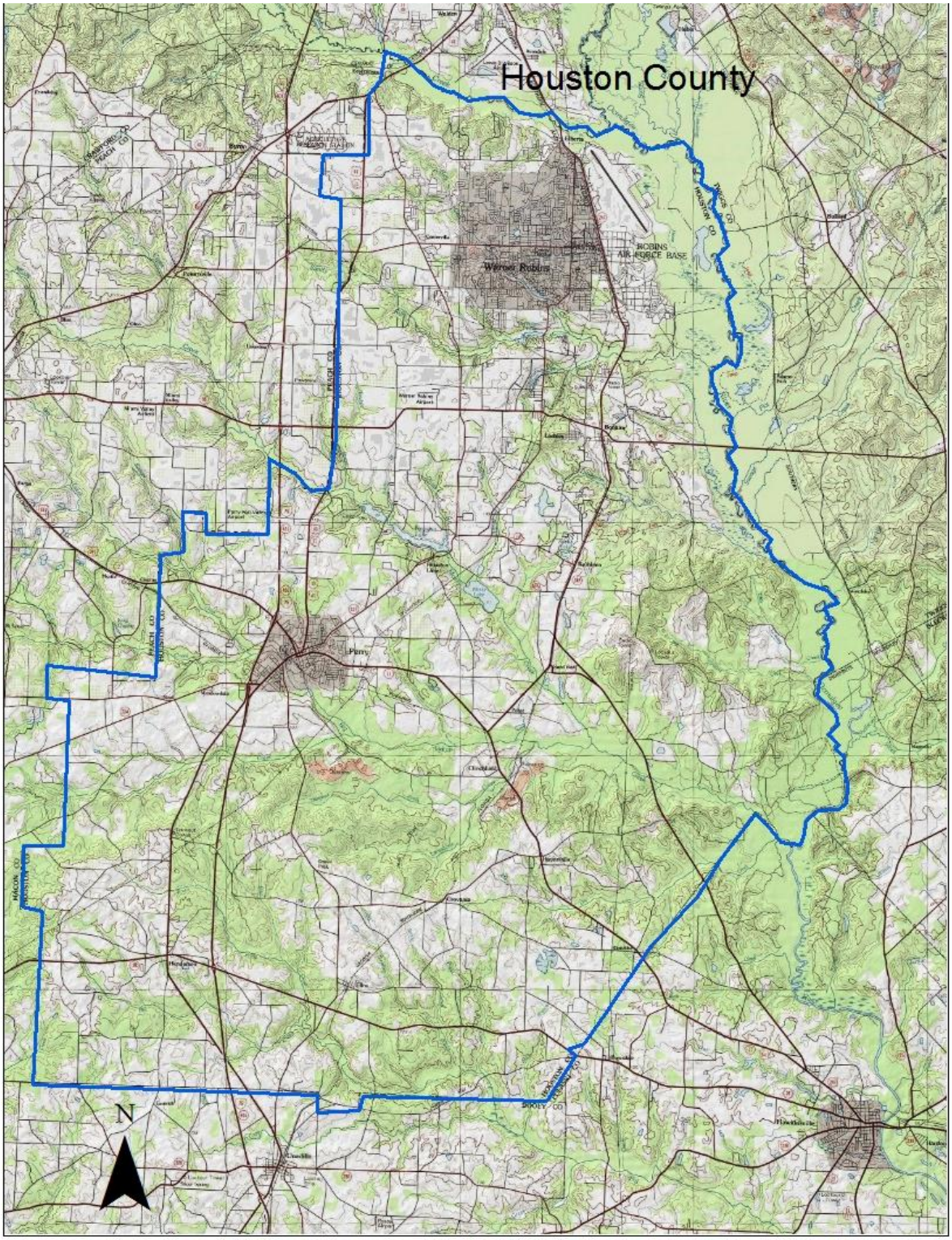


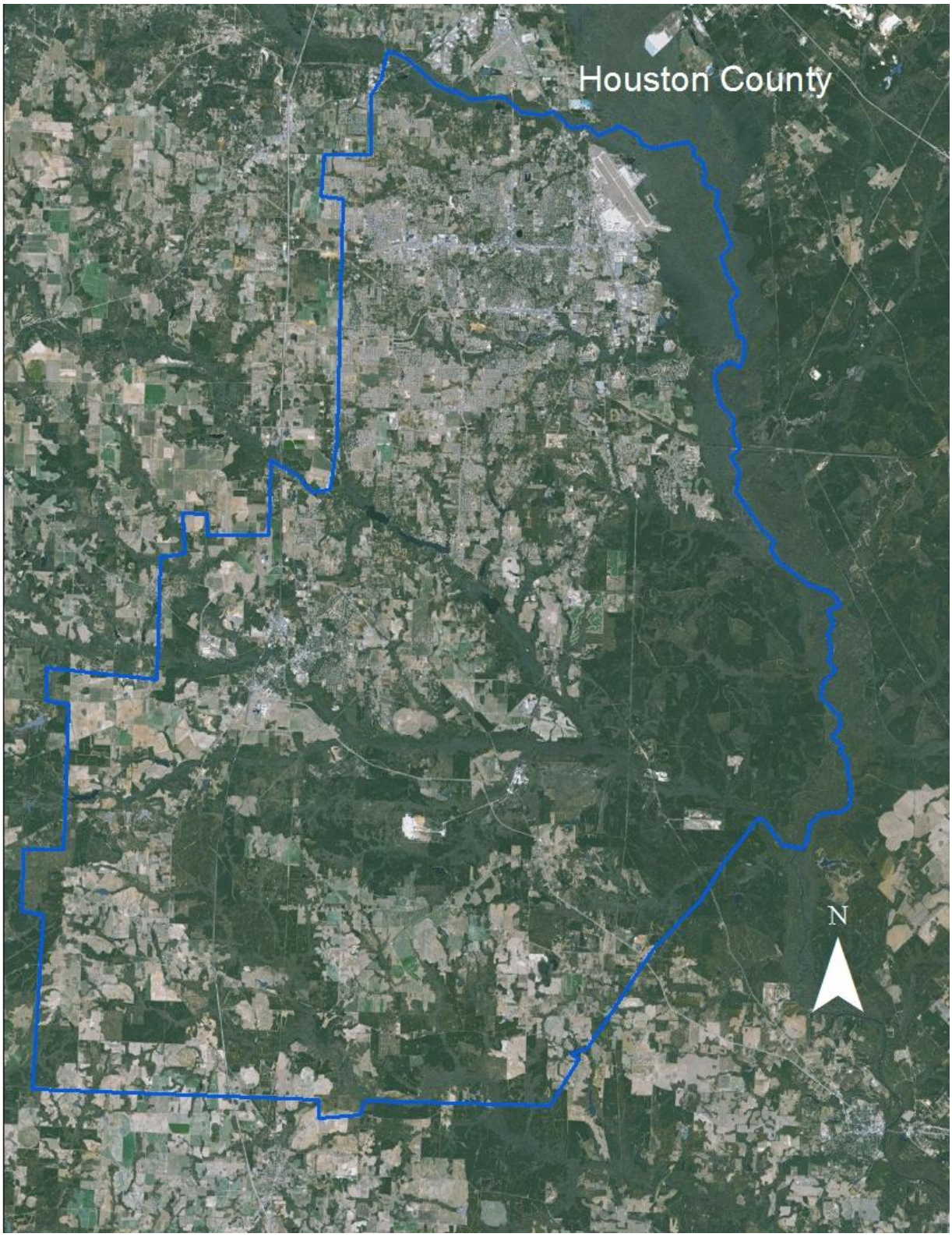


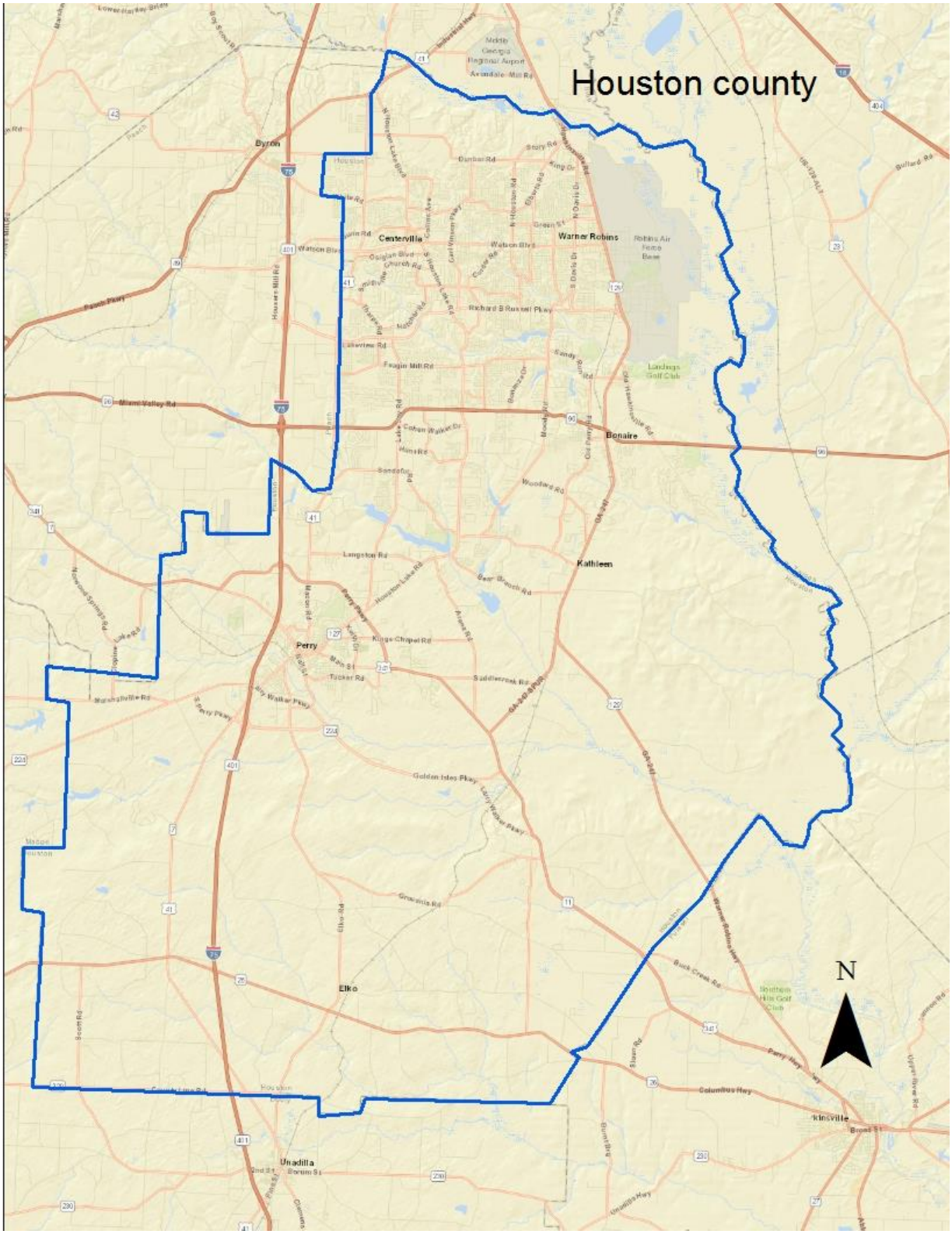
Fire Occurrence Map for
Houston County for Fiscal Year 2011-2015



IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAPS:



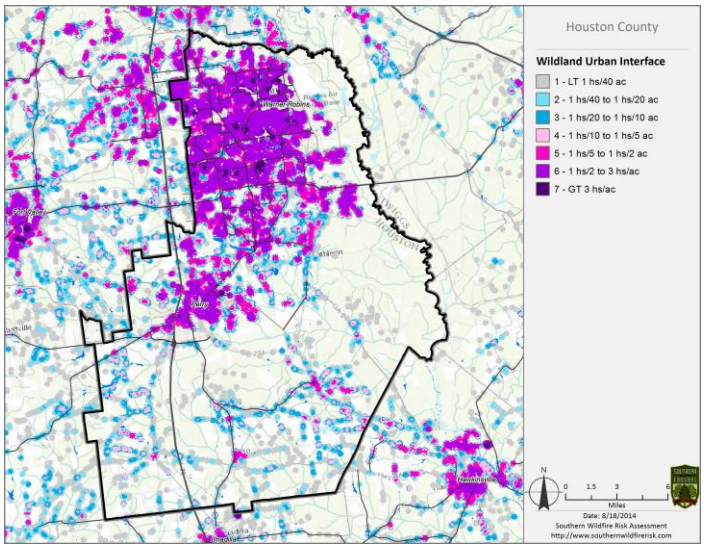

Houston County
N


Houston county
Byron
Centerville
Warner Robins
Robins Air Force Base
Perry
Kathleen
Bonaire
Elko
Unadilla
Kinsville
N

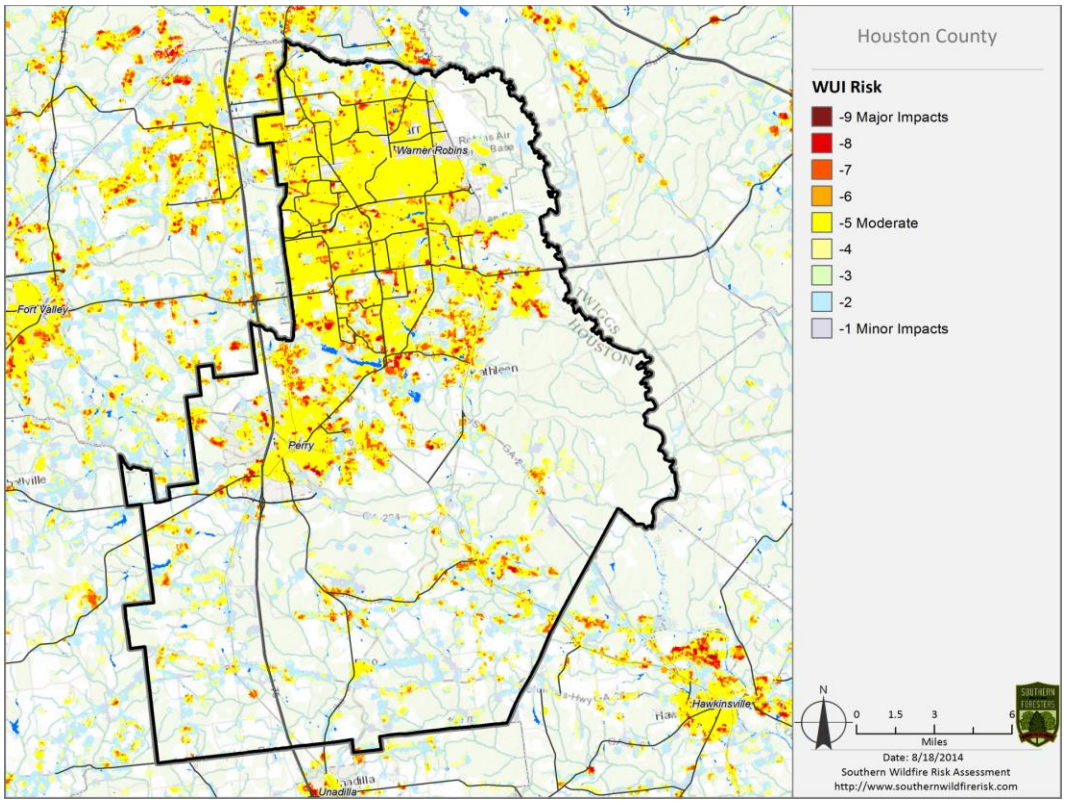
V. Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary (SouthWRAP)

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 Houston County. The SouthWRAP (SWRA) products included in this report are designed to provide the information needed to support the following key priorities:

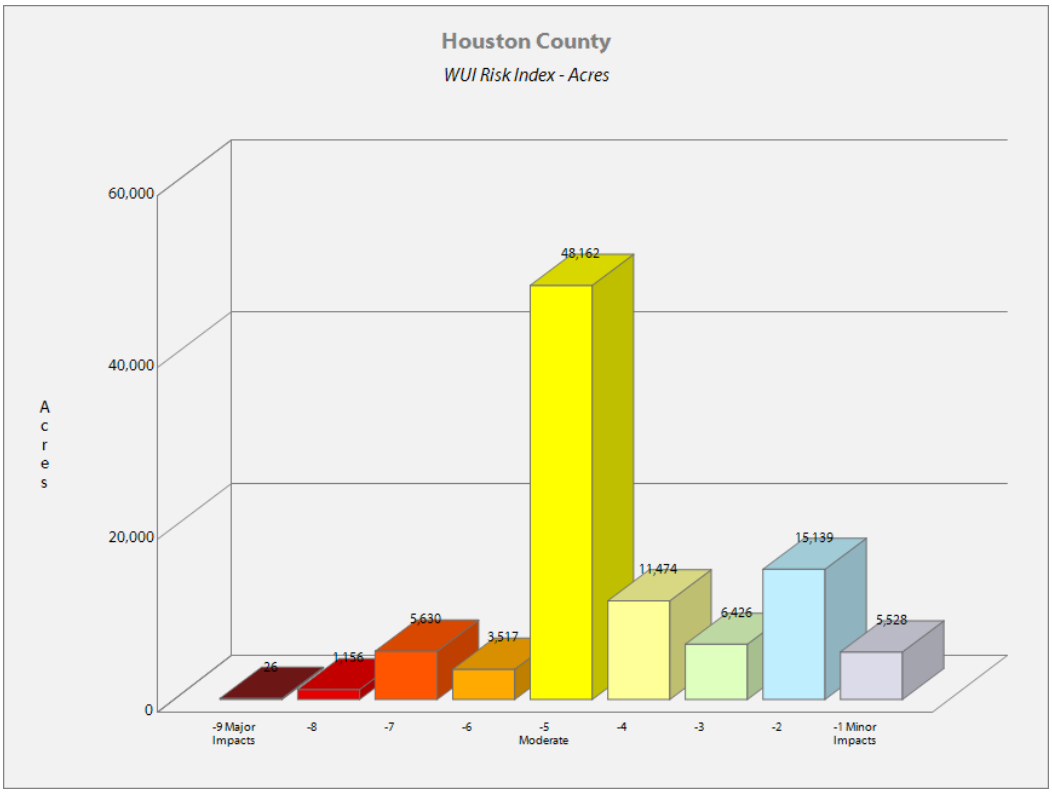
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

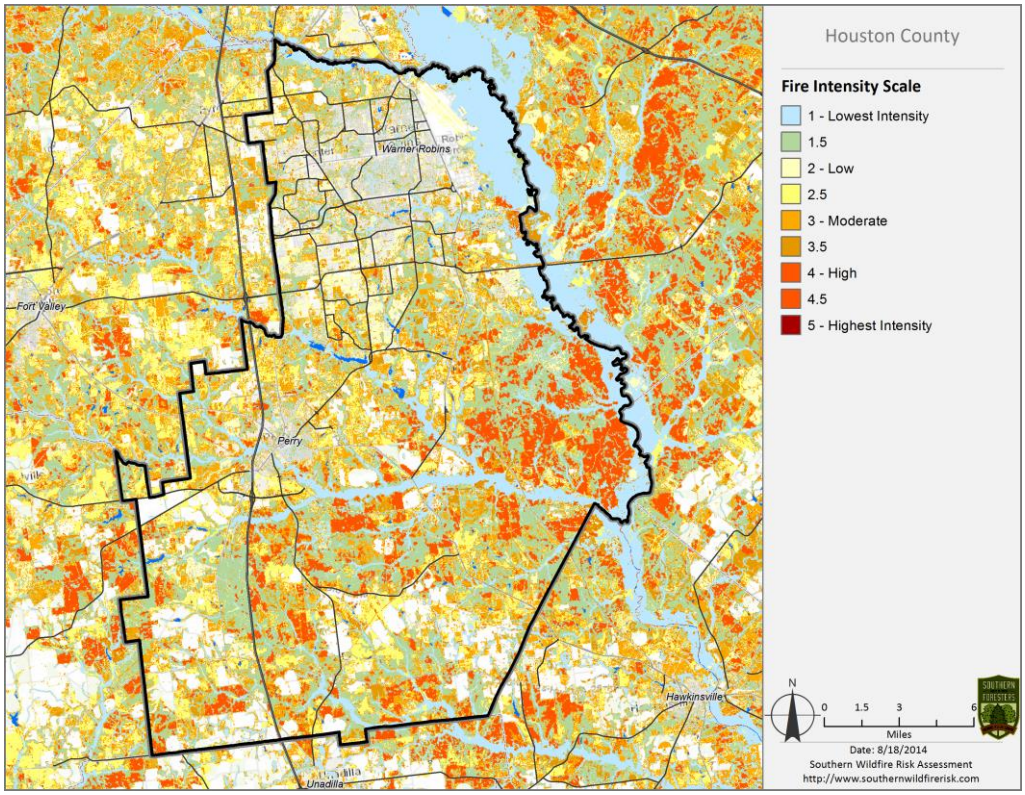


Wildland Urban Interface map from Houston County SouthWRAP report

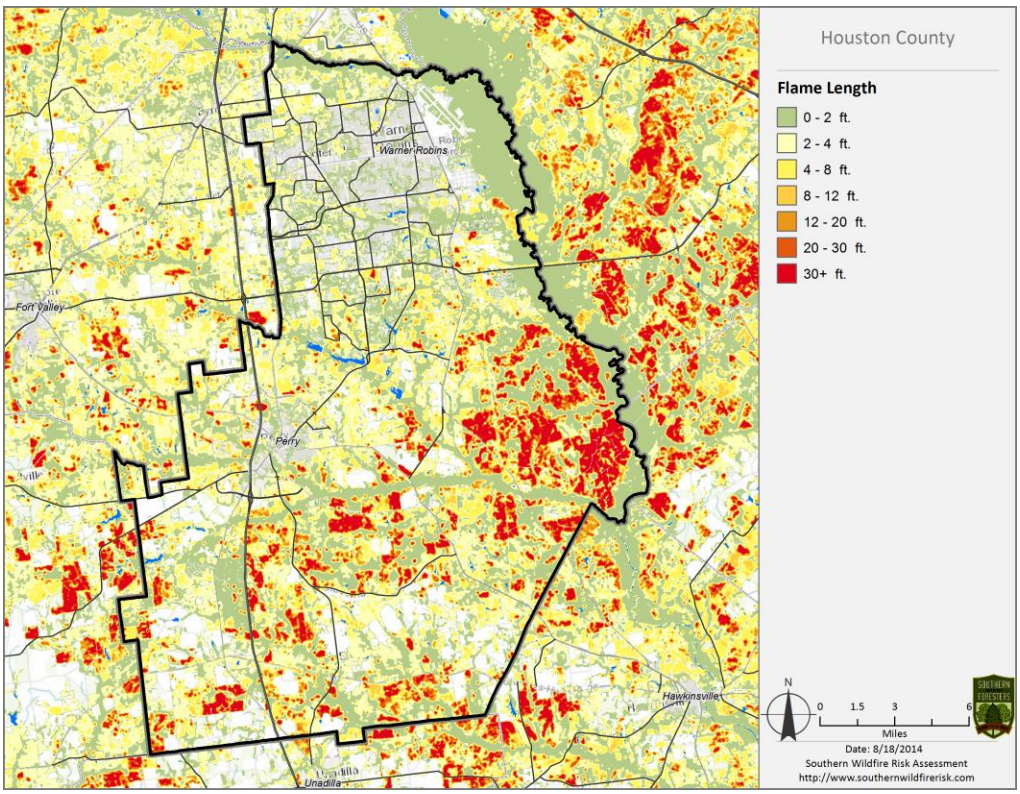


Wildland Urban Interface risk map (above) and WUI Risk Index acres graph





Fire Intensity Scale map (above) and Flame Length map from the report



VI. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

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.

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) reflects housing density depicting where humans and their structures meet or intermix with wildland fuels. For the **Houston County** project area, it is estimated that **132,369** people or **95 percent** of the total project area population (139,737) live within the WUI.

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. Some of these hazards are listed below:

- **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.

Wildfire Risk Assessments

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted by the Georgia Forestry Commission returned an average score of 81, placing Houston County in the "moderate risk" hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards was the GFC Community Wildfire Risk Assessment. This instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors. The following factors contributed to the wildfire hazard score for the higher risk communities and developments in Houston County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Limited street signs and homes not clearly addressed
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with accumulations of vegetative debris
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available
- Above ground utilities
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Heavy fuel buildups in adjacent wildlands
- Undeveloped lots
- High occurrence of wildfires in several locations
- Distance from fire stations
- Lack of homeowner or community organizations

Wildfire Risk (rating scale):

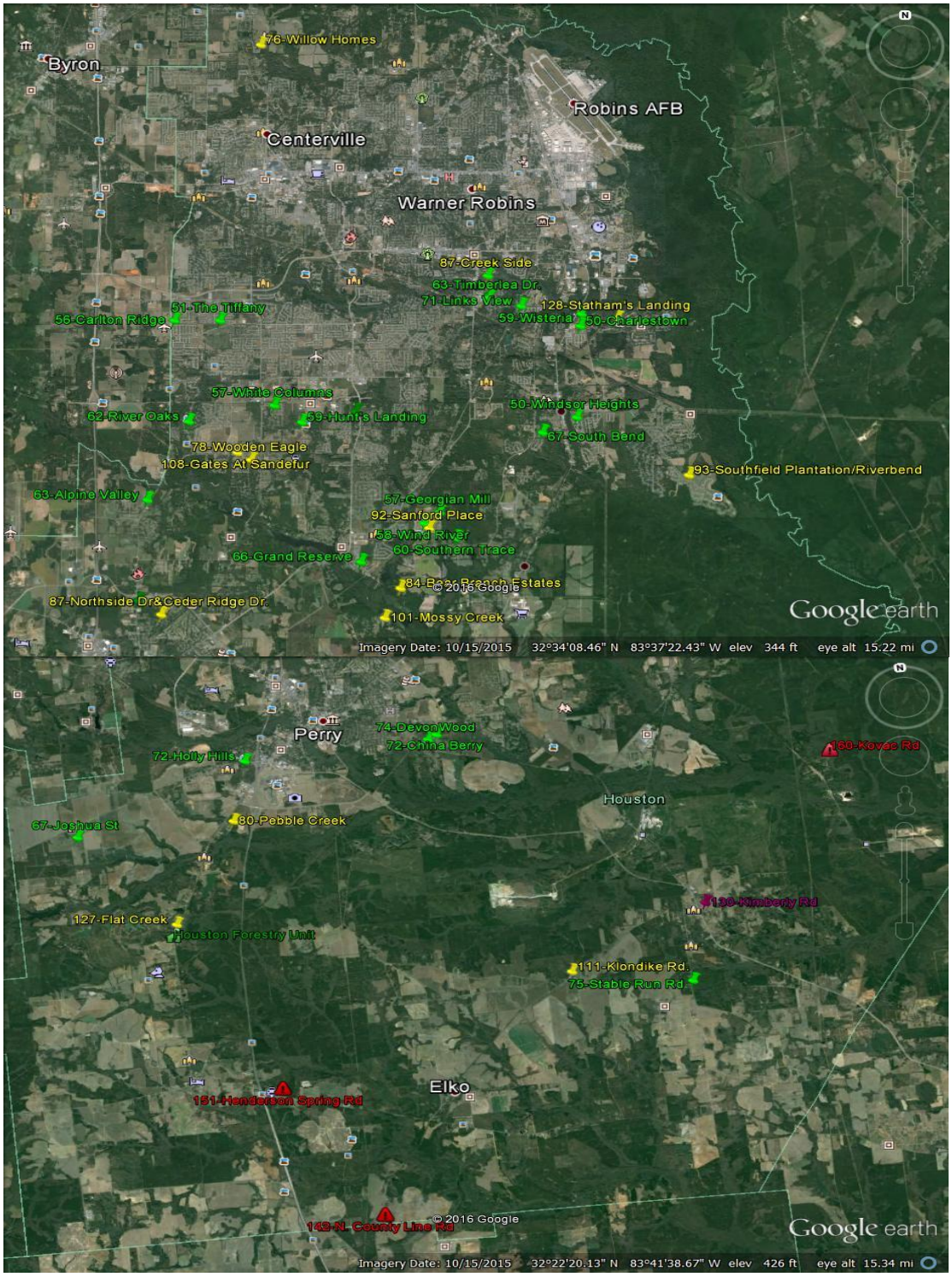
Low Risk: **Total Wildfire Risk Rating is 0 - 75 points:**
The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are GOOD. Little is needed to improve your situation.

Moderate Risk: **Total Wildfire Risk Rating is 76 - 130 points:**
The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are FAIR. Some Minor improvements will make your home more fire resistant.

High Risk: **Total Wildfire Risk Rating is Over 130 points**:
Your home is at risk and improvements are necessary to reduce risk!

Extreme Risk: **Total Wildfire Risk Rating is Over 140 points:**
Your home MAY NOT SURVIVE if a wildfire passes through the area.

Houston County Community Wildfire Risk Assessments



Pictured here is a map showing the location of communities where the Georgia Forestry Commission completed community wildfire risk assessments in Houston County. The communities are color coded with red-extreme risk, burgundy-high risk, yellow-moderate risk and green-low risk. The table on the following page is a summary of the community risk assessments.

Subdivision/Community	Number of Lots	Subdivision Design Hazard Rating	Site Hazard Rating	Building Construction Hazard Rating	Additional Factor Hazard Rating	Overall Wildfire Hazard Rating
Kovac Rd.	25	20	80	10	50	160 Extreme
County Line Rd. (North)	15	16	62	10	54	142 Extreme
Henderson Spring Rd.	10	17	72	10	52	151 Extreme
Kimberly Rd.	43	7	67	10	46	120 Moderate
Bear Branch Estates	20	10	37	10	27	84 Moderate
Creekside	45	5	47	10	25	87 Moderate
Flat Creek	39	13	67	10	37	127 Moderate
Gates at Sandefur	35	13	50	10	35	108 Moderate
Klondike Rd.	64	3	57	10	41	111 Moderate
Mossy Creek	35	11	52	10	30	101 Moderate
Northside Dr./Cedar Ridge	150	5	50	10	22	87 Moderate
Pebble Creek	35	13	30	10	27	80 Moderate
Sanford Place	60	8	42	10	32	92 Moderate
Southfield Plantation/Tivol	100	8	50	10	25	93 Moderate
Statham's Landing	200	13	72	10	33	128 Moderate
Wooden Eagle	80	6	32	10	30	78 Moderate
Carlton Ridge	125	5	21	10	20	56 Low
Charlestown	81	8	11	10	21	50 Low
China Berry	24	10	30	10	22	72 Low
Cross Creek	75	5	25	10	17	57 Low
Devonwood	42	7	35	10	22	74 Low
Eagles Bluff	100	10	35	10	20	75 Low
Georgian Mill	70	5	25	10	17	57 Low
Grand Reserve	85	11	25	10	20	66 Low
Holly Hills	75	6	42	10	15	72 Low
Hunt's Landing	20	11	26	10	12	59 Low
Joshua St/Hwy 224	55	8	32	10	17	67 Low
Links View	53	11	25	10	25	71 Low
Longbridge	75	13	22	10	24	69 Low
River Oaks	100	5	25	10	22	62 Low
South Bend	60	11	21	10	25	67 Low
Southern Trace	45	8	25	10	17	60 Low
Stable Run Rd.	12	11	32	10	22	75 Low
The Tiffany	150	8	16	10	17	51 Low
Timberlea Dr.	50	5	30	10	18	63 Low
White Columns	45	5	25	10	17	57 Low
Wind River	75	11	20	10	17	58 Low
Wisteria	21	4	30	10	15	59 Low

VII. MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION PLAN

Prescribed burning is a best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel buildup.
The Georgia Forestry Commission can assist with developing a prescribed burning plan, installation of firebreaks, and can provide equipment standby and burning assistance when personnel are available.

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 in home ignition zone.*	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. (National Wildfire Preparedness Day is recognized annually on the 1st Saturday in May)
4. Driveway Access	Culvert installation	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed to allow emergency vehicle access. Remove trees or limbs that may restrict access for fire equipment.
5. Local Codes and Ordinances	Improve and amend codes and ordinances pertaining to infrastructure and community protection from wildland fires.	Examine all existing codes and ordinances for problems regarding direct conflicts to wildland safety or lack of needed codes. The International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) was adopted in Georgia in 2014.
6. 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 grants for WUI fuel mitigation.
2. Railroad and utility Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads and utilities to better maintain their Right of Way (ROW) by 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 fuel breaks. Maintain existing logging roads, trails, etc. as fuel breaks in high risk areas.

Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Water Sources	Water lines and Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing water lines and hydrants. Add signage along road to identify location if needed. Install dry hydrants if need is established.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Provide fire personnel with wildland hand tools and lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Upgrade and outfit existing "brush" trucks as needed. Acquire ATV for fire and rescue in remote areas.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Acquire additional drafting pumps and other equipment that may be needed to meet department needs.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel to include basic Incident Command System (ICS) courses S130, S190, and S215. Ready, Set, Go, training
5. Community developments and subdivisions	Firewise Certification	Seek certification in the National Firewise Community USA program. The program encourages residential risk reduction activities, while engaging community neighbors to become active participants in building a safer place to live. Certification requires a wildfire risk assessment, developing an action plan, organizing a community firewise board and having an annual community firewise event.

Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders
1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for County Residents
GFC and Houston County Fire education specialist should set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include home ignition zone, 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. Utilize local cable TV channels to promote and broadcast the workshop. Distribute materials promoting Firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.
2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders
Arrange for GFC Wildfire Prevention Specialist to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and WUI codes in the county as the need arises. Identified “communities-at-risk” should be contacted and encouraged to participate and become certified in the National Firewise Communities USA Program.
3. Spring Clean-up Event (Wildfire Preparedness)
Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Houston County Fire Department, and local County residents. National Wildfire Preparedness Day, promoted by the National Fire Protection Association, is the first Saturday of May. Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. Activities may 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, insurance agents, etc. Included in the packets are the following: • Be Firewise Around Your Home • Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction • Firewise Communities and Fire Adapted Community information • Ready, Set, Go, program information
5. Wildfire Protection Display
Create and exhibit a display for the general public at local events. Display can be independent or combined with a Georgia Forestry Commission exhibit.

6. Media
Invite the local and regional news media to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Houston County. Utilize local cable Television for promotion of all prevention education programs.

VIII. GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

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.

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.

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 whose purpose is the reduction of structural losses from wildland fires.*

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

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

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

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

Healthy Forests Initiative - *Launched in August 2002 by President Bush (following passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act by Congress) with the*

intent to reduce the risks severe wildfires pose to people, communities, and the environment.

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

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

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

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

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)

X. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites

- FIREWISE materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org
- Georgia Forestry Commission www.georgiafirewise.org
- Houston County Fire Department www.houstoncountyfd.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.wildfireprepday.org

Appended Documents:

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

Community Wildfire Risk Assessments for individual communities are maintained at the Crawford, Houston, Peach County Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission.

P. O. Box 819 Macon, GA 31202

1-800-GA-TREES www.GaTrees.org

The Georgia Forestry Commission provides leadership, service, and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources. An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider

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.