Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Jackson County, Georgia

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

OCTOBER 2022

SIGNATURE PAGE

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

County Commissioners Office, Jackson County

Jackson County Emergency Management/Fire Departments

Doug Andrews
Chief Ranger, Georgia Forestry Commission

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PLAN CONTENTS

I. OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

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

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Wildfire risk reduction strategies are most effective when approached collaboratively – involving groups of residents, elected officials, community decision makers, emergency managers, and natural resource mangers –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 Fall of 2012 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local Jackson County

government, fire department district reps, Department of Emergency Services, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Below are the groups included in the task force:

Jackson County Government *County*
Fire Chiefs
Emergency Management
County Commissioners
Georgia Forestry Commission

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the high risk communities and the individual fire districts in the county. The representatives of the local Georgia Forestry Commission and Jackson County EMA office reconvened in early July 2012 for the purpose of completing the following:

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

III. COUNTY BACKGROUND AND WILDFIRE HISTORY

County Background:

Jackson County

Jackson County, in northeast Georgia, is the state's twenty-second county, created in 1796 from part of Franklin County on land formerly held by Cherokee and Creek Indians. It was named for James Jackson, who was a general in the Revolutionary War (1775-83). Over time, Jackson County lost territory when portions of it went to the formation of Barrow, Clarke, Madison, and Walton counties. Today Jackson County encompasses 342 square miles.

Veterans of the Revolutionary War, arriving in 1784 just after the Franklin County land cession, were among the first white settlers of the county. The first permanent settlement was Groaning Rock, established in 1784 on land owned by William Dunson, a settler from Germany. Residents of the area built homes, a fort, a gristmill, and a smelting plant for iron ore. In 1825 the town changed its name to Harmony Grove and was incorporated in 1884. In 1904 the town's name changed to Commerce, which reflected the town's position as a thriving market town for the buying and selling of cotton during the era when cotton was "king." Commerce bears the distinction of having done well economically even during the Great Depression of the 1930s

In 1784 the state legislature provided for a state college, whose original site was in the part of Jackson County ceded to Clarke County in 1801. This college, first called Franklin College, became the University of Georgia, which thus held its first classes in Jackson County.

Cotton Weighing

The community of Clarkesboro, located in what was then the center of the county, was the county seat from 1796 until 1802. The creation of Clarke County made it necessary to move Jackson County's seat to a more central location. In 1803 a former Indian site, Thomocoggan, was chosen and renamed Jefferson, after Thomas Jefferson. Three years later the town was incorporated and officially became the county seat

The first courthouse in Jefferson was a log building south of the public square. It was replaced about 1820 by a brick building. This, in turn, was replaced in 1879, in part because the earlier site, located at the bottom of a poorly drained hill, often required residents to wade through knee-deep mud to attend to government business. The current courthouse, built in 2004, is the county's fifth.

Jackson County Courthouse

Development of other communities followed the pattern of railroad routes, many of which crossed the area. The earliest of these lines was developed in 1870 and went through Center, an unincorporated community near the southeastern corner of the county, and through Maysville, a town near its northeastern corner.

Pendergrass Depot

First known as Midway, Maysville was renamed for John May and incorporated in 1879. Maysville was also referred to as "the Brick Store" in the mid-nineteenth century, for a store building made of brick owned by Abraham Atkins. It was at that time the only brick store north of Athens. The town's cotton-centered industries (such as cotton ginning and cottonseed-oil production) as well as several other industries made Maysville an active industrial center for a time, but the town's population has declined steadily since 1910. Today Maysville straddles Banks and Jackson counties and is the second-oldest extant community in Jackson County.

In addition to Commerce, Jefferson, and Maysville, other incorporated towns in the county are Arcade, Braselton, Hoschton, Nicholson, Pendergrass, and Talmo. The historic districts of Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Maysville, and Talmo are all listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chateau Elan

Residents have included novelist Olive Ann Burns, Georgia governor Lamartine Hardman, and physician Crawford Long.

Places of interest include Chateau Elan, a 3,500-acre winery and resort in Braselton, and the Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm, an outdoor living history museum.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Jackson County is 60,485, an increase from the 2000 population of 41,589.

Wildfire History:

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

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

Over the past five years, Jackson County has averaged 2.80 reported wildfires per year. The occurrence of these fires is fairly uniform throughout the year with a slight peak in the months of February and March and a slight decrease during the fall months. These fires have burned an average

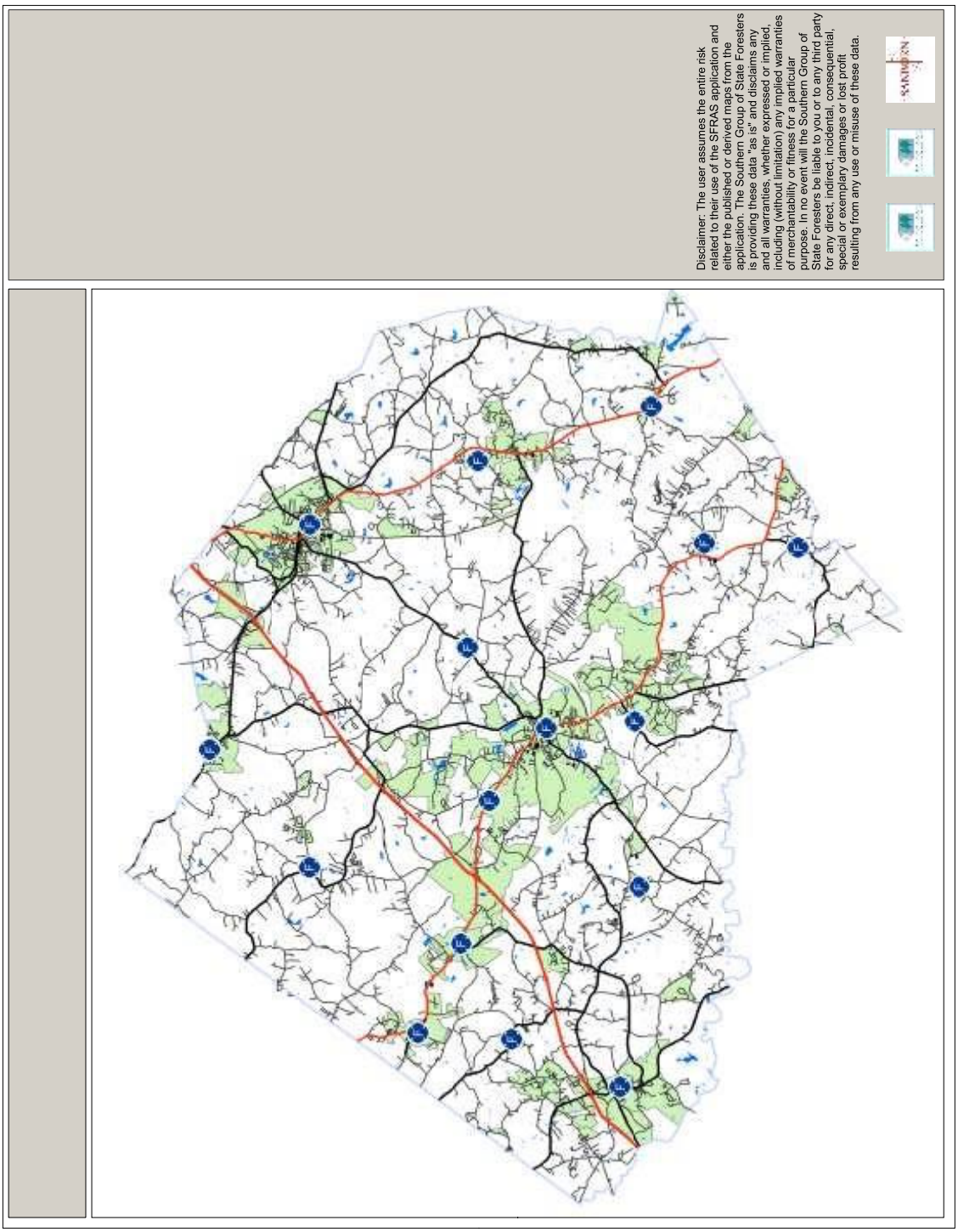
of 8.42 acres annually. While the numbers of fires remain fairly similar every month, there is a marked difference in the monthly acreage lost. The monthly acres lost during the late winter through summer period show a tenfold increase over the acres lost during the fall and early winter. Additionally, while the annual numbers of fires have not increased noticeably during the 5-year period that records are available, the annual acreage lost appears to have decreased in later years. This perhaps a result of the increase in the practice of prescribed burning. The local Georgia Forestry Commission office needs to be commended for their valiant work increasing their very impressive prescribed burning regiment. Despite their work, more homes are being built outside of traditional communities into the wildland urban interface. With this migration of people to the wildland urban interface the potential for a wildfire disaster continues to increase for Jackson County.

The leading causes of these fires over the past 5 years in Jackson County were miscellaneous fires, with debris burning the second leading cause. Though these causes are a bit disturbing, local efforts of outreach and education can easily curb this problem.

County: Jackson Year: 2022 Generate List

Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Children	0		0.00	0.20	0.06
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1		2.10	0.20	0.42
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1		8.94	0.20	1.79
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1		11.35	0.20	2.27
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1		2.30	0.60	0.67
Incendiary	0		0.00	0.40	1.40
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	1		2.17	0.80	0.87
Undetermined	0		0.00	0.20	0.93
Totals for County: Jackson Year: 2022	5		26.86	2.80	8.42

IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAP



V. 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.

(courtesy *Fire Ecology and Wildfire Mitigation in Florida* 2004)

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

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

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

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

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in the Winter of 2012 by the Georgia Forestry Commission and the Jackson County Fire Departments returned an average score of 101, placing Jackson County in the "Moderate Risk" hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Jackson County's WUI was the Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Scoresheet. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors. The following factors contributed to the wildfire hazard score for Jackson County:

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

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

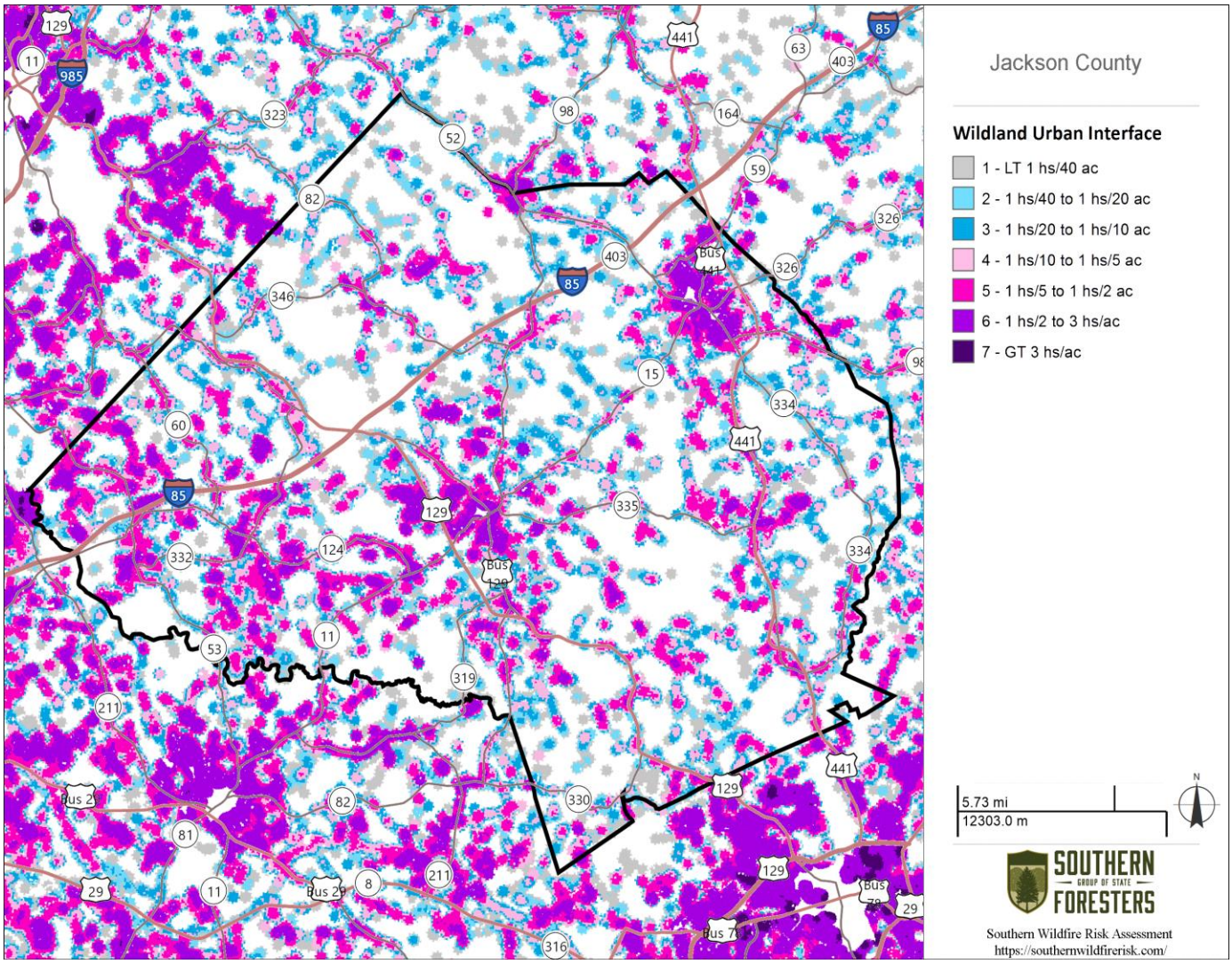
Communities-at-Risk	Score	Hazard Rating
Redstone, Clarksboro	157	Extreme Risk
Ivy Plantation	46	Low Risk
Staghorn Plantation	22	Low Risk
Presley Estates	138	High Risk
Fox Chase	49	Low Risk
Church Street Complex	38	Low Risk
River Glen	30	Low Risk
Whispering Falls	40	Low Risk
Hickory Woods	24	Low Risk
Cabin Creek Estates	22	Low Risk
Hawks Landing	77	Moderate Risk
Ward Estates	51	Low Risk
Quail Ridge	84	Moderate Risk
Hunters Ridge	76	Moderate Risk
Deer Brook	66	Low Risk
Waterford Estates	21	Low Risk
Kingsbrook Crossing	21	Low Risk
Massey Hill	24	Low Risk
Hidden Meadows	47	Low Risk
Beacon Hills	50	Low Risk
Rouach Road	61	Low Risk
Barry Landing	58	Low Risk
Scenic Falls	88	Moderate Risk
Habersham Oaks	110	Low Risk
Fairview Station	45	Low Risk
Berry's Estates	100	Moderate Risk
The Fields of Walnut Creek	72	Moderate Risk
Fountain Springs	120	High Risk
Seasons at Pendergrass	105	Moderate Risk
Brooks Village	107	Moderate Risk
Story Meadows	88	Low Risk
Blackberry Farms	55	Low Risk

The Estates at Allen Bridge	107	Low Risk
Allen Creek Farms	88	Moderate Risk
Pleasant Hill	55	Low Risk
Pond Fork Overlook	77	Moderate Risk
Cedar Hollow	109	Moderate Risk

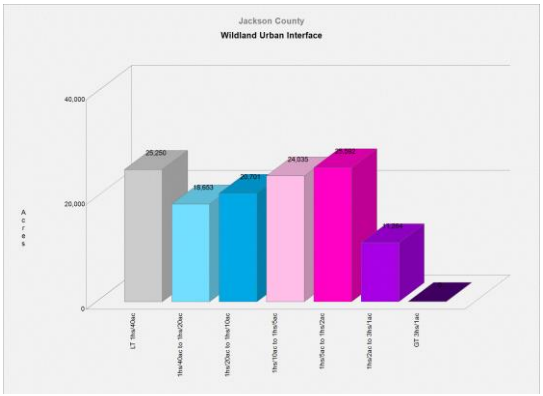
Meadows	76	Low Risk
Belmont	99	Moderate Risk
City of Jefferson	49	Low Risk
Arcade Fire District	132	Extreme Risk
Belmont Park Subdivision	95	Moderate Risk
Oconee Point Subdivision	98	Moderate Risk
Montgomery Shores	80	Moderate Risk
Whitehill Lane Subdivision	83	Moderate Risk
Ridge Mill Manor Subdivision	87	Moderate Risk
Waterwheel Drive	85	Moderate Risk
Eagle Trace Subdivision	88	Moderate Risk
Westcott	121	High Risk
Wood Farms	54	Low Risk
Woods Hollow	99	Moderate Risk
Andrews Walk	52	Low Risk
Atrium Glen	121	High Risk
Autumn Ridge	72	Moderate Risk
Becca’s Walk	37	Low Risk
Braselton Farms	72	Low Risk
Briarwood Manor	104	Moderate Risk
Bryceland Manor	101	Moderate Risk
Cabot Creek	104	Moderate Risk
Chadwick Farms	59	Low Risk
Charlotte Estates	119	Moderate Risk
Clover Mill Farms	112	Moderate Risk
Dillions Walk	84	Low Risk
DJ Mobile Home Park	106	Moderate Risk

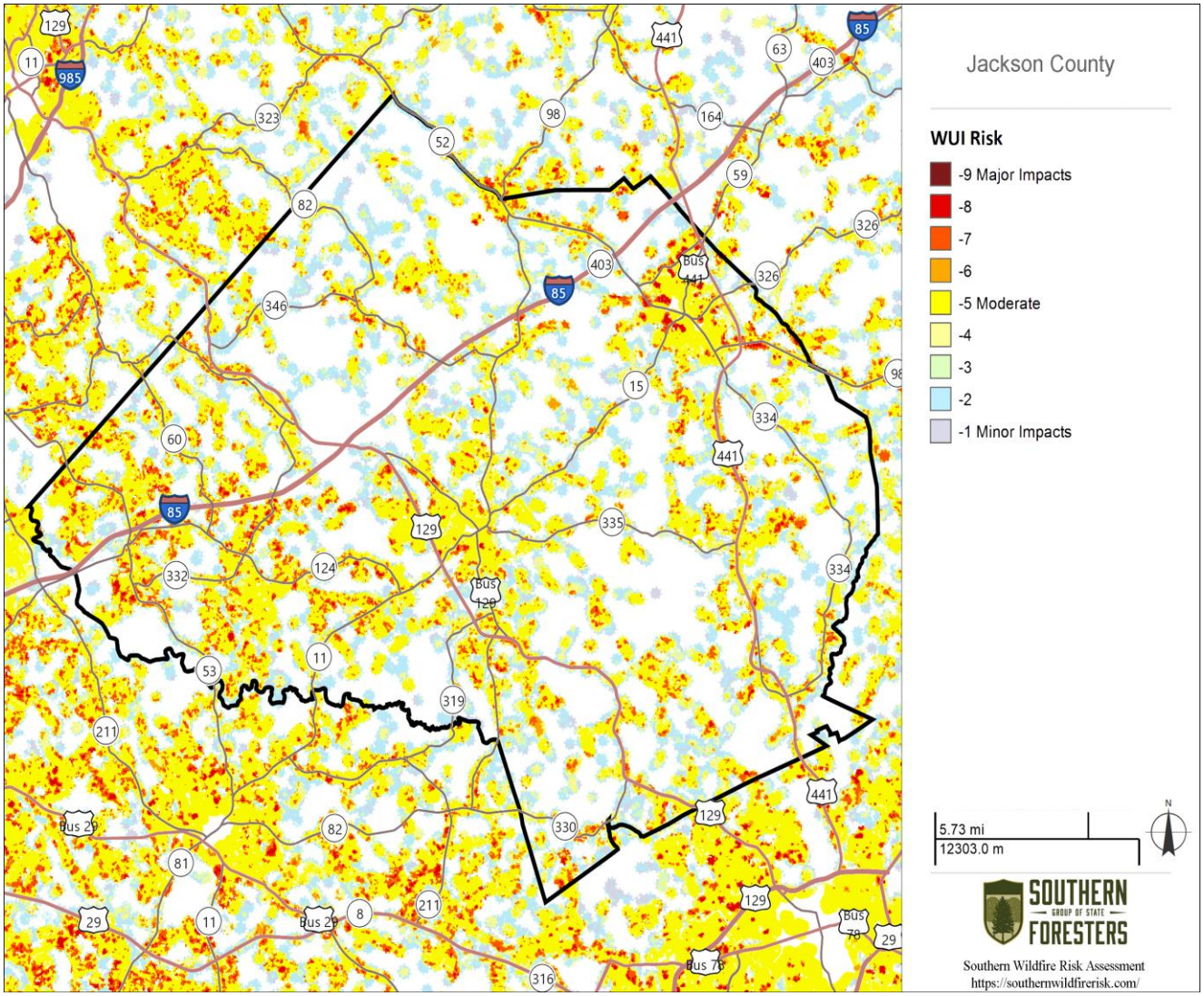
Dogwood Farms	111	Moderate Risk
Finch Landing	72	Low Risk
Fox Chase	104	Moderate Risk
Gum Springs Estates	111	Moderate Risk
Heritage Point	84	Moderate Risk
Hogan's Mill	84	Moderate Risk
Howards Hollow	104	Moderate Risk
Jackson Meadows	104	Moderate Risk
Jackson Park	53	Low Risk
Lake Vista Estates	74	Low Risk
Laurel Cove	119	Moderate Risk
Lea Meadows	62	Low Risk
Magnolia Point	44	Low Risk
McClain Farms	62	Low Risk
Meadow Creek Farms	74	Low Risk
Millstone Crossing	87	Moderate Risk
Mullberry River Farms	60	Low Risk
Oconee Station	114	Moderate Risk
Olde Trail	109	Moderate Risk
Poplar Creek Estates	104	Moderate Risk
Richwood	104	Moderate Risk
River's Edge	107	Moderate Risk
Steeple Chase	79	Moderate Risk
Summer Hill Estates	104	Moderate Risk
Summit Chase Estates	102	Moderate Risk
Summit Chase	59	Low Risk
Tanglewood	62	Low Risk
The Cloisters	42	Low Risk
Traditions	76	Moderate Risk
Trailside Crossing	84	Moderate Risk
Total Avearge:	**101**	**Moderate Hazard Rating**

VI. COMMUNITY HAZARDS MAPS

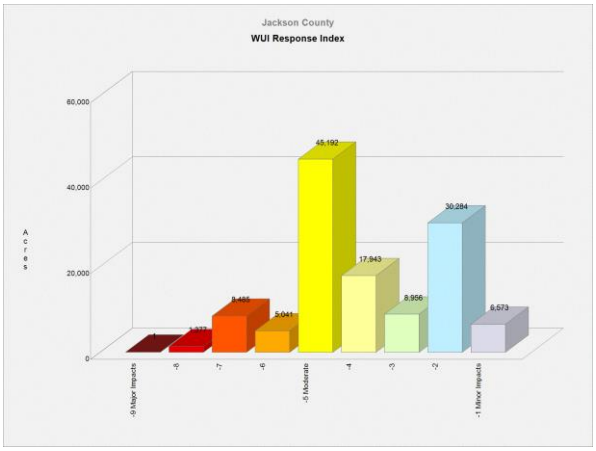


WUI housing density is categorized based on the standard Federal Register and U.S. Forest Service SILVIS data set categories, long considered a de facto standard for depicting WUI. However, in the SWRA WUI data the number of housing density categories is extended to provide a better gradation of housing distribution to meet specific requirements for fire protection planning activities. While units of the actual data set are in *houses per sq. km.*, the data is presented as the *number of houses per acre* to aid with interpretation and use by fire planners in the South.

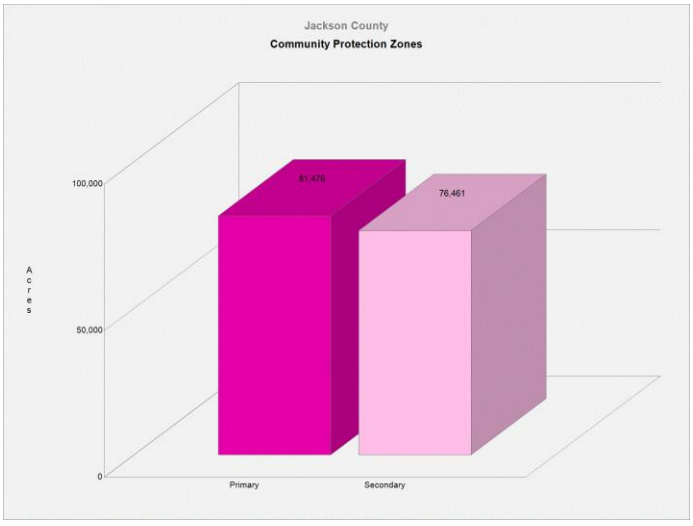


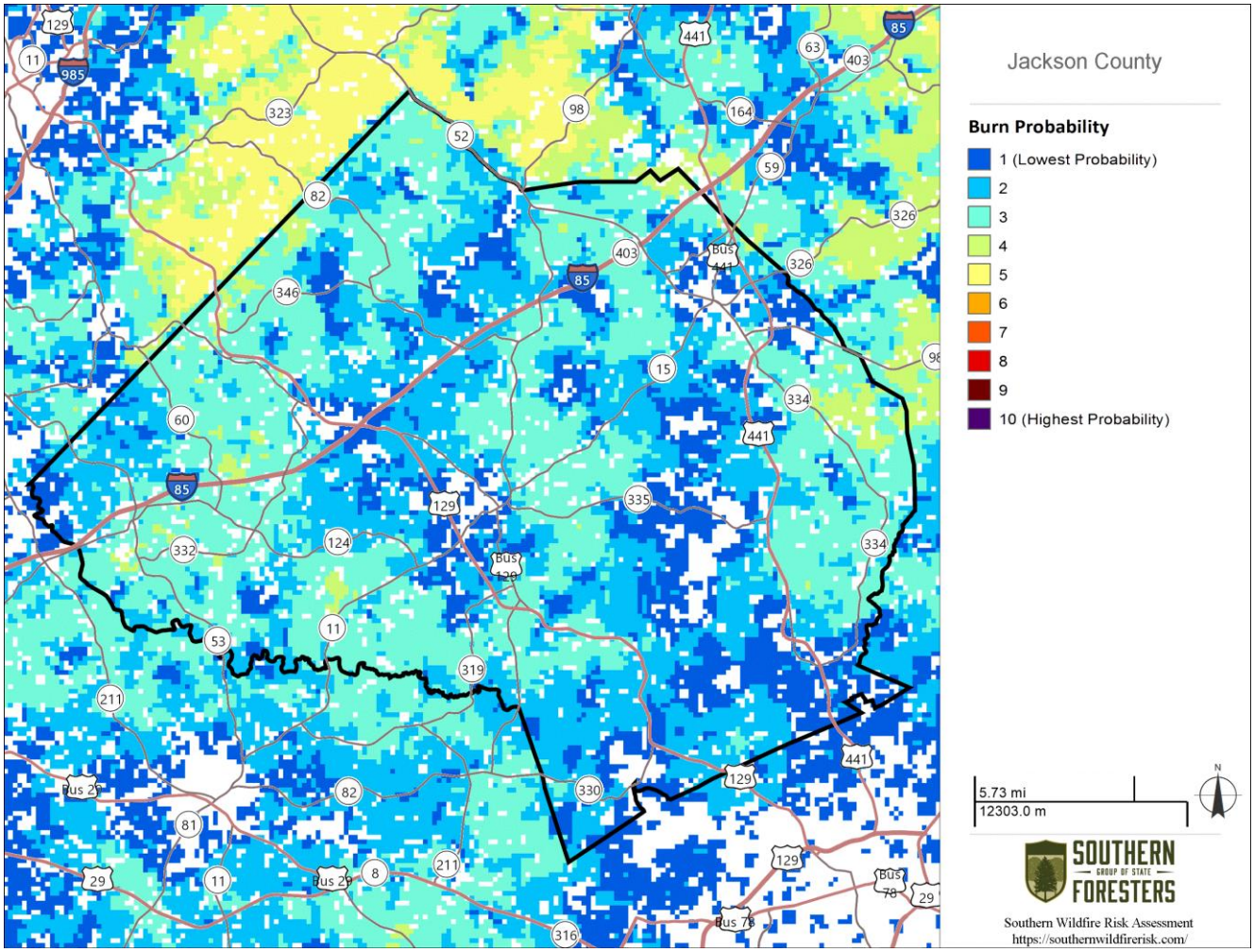


The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk Index layer is a rating of the potential impact of a wildfire on people and their homes. The key input, WUI, reflects housing density (houses per acre) consistent with Federal Register National standards. The location of people living in the Wildland Urban Interface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

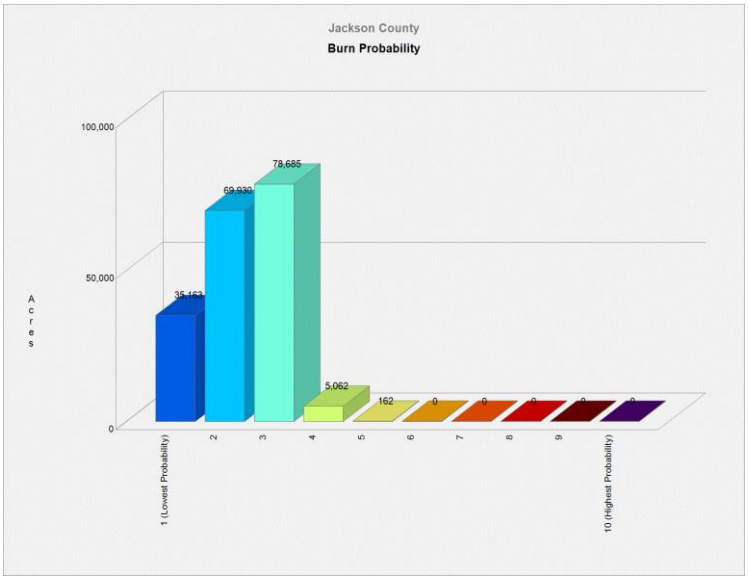


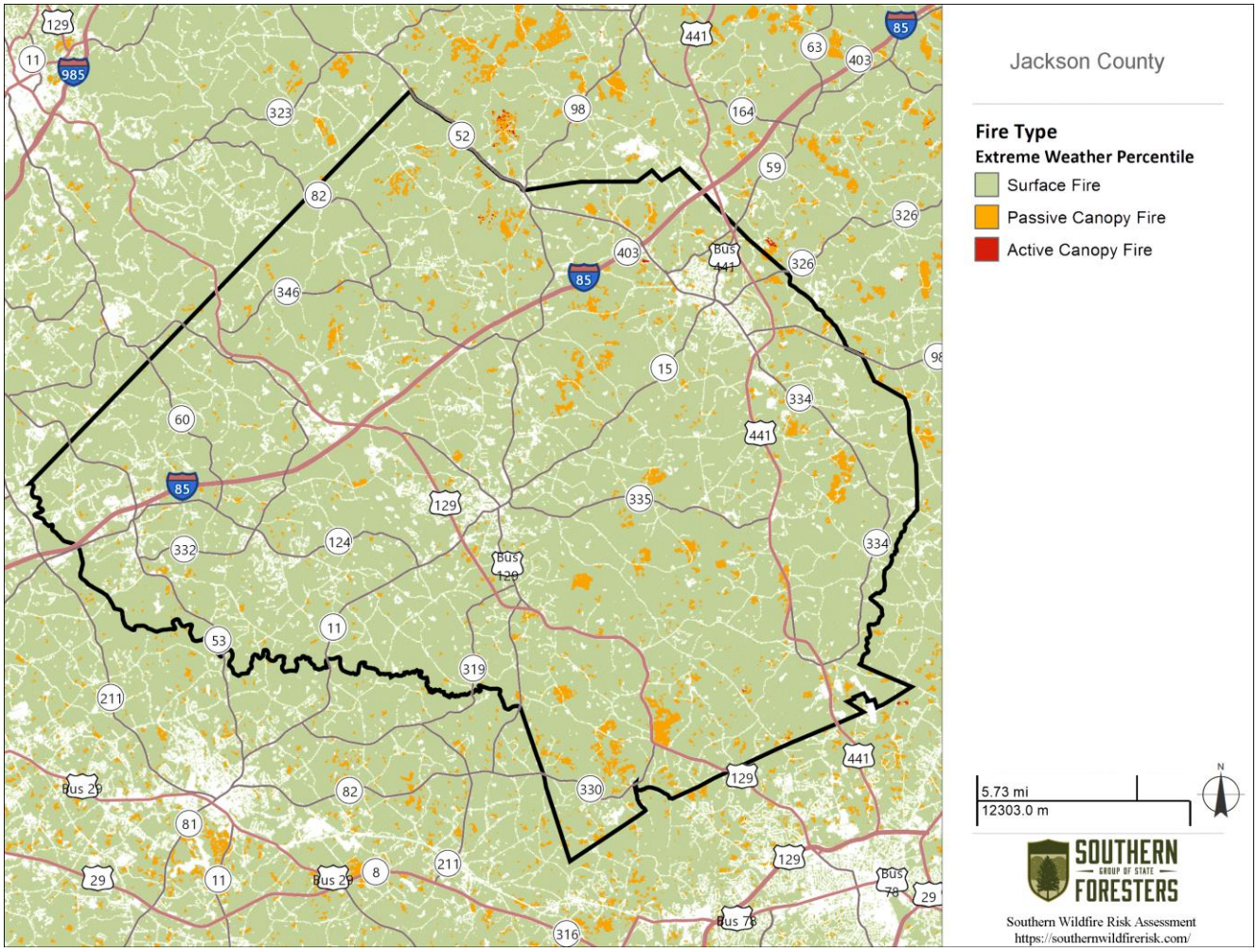
Community Protection Zones (CPZ) represent those areas considered highest priority for mitigation planning activities. CPZs are based on an analysis of the Where People Live housing density data and surrounding fire behavior potential. Rate of Spread data is used to determine the areas of concern around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





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

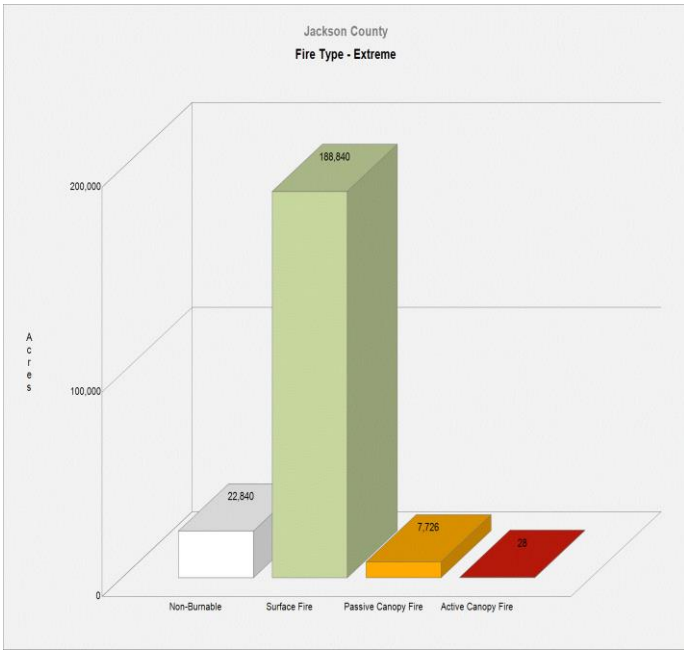




Surface Fire
A fire that spreads through surface fuel without consuming any overlying canopy fuel. Surface fuels include grass, timber litter, shrub/brush, slash and other dead or live vegetation within about 6 feet of the ground.

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

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



VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

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

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

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

The following recommendations were developed for the Jackson County CWPP by the Community Wildfire Protection Specialist as a result of surveying and assessing fuels and structures and by conducting meetings and interviews with county and city officials. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildfire in the assessment area.

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30feet of defensible space**	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, and replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Driveway Access	Culvert installation	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed to allow emergency vehicle access.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50-foot diameter cul-de-sacs or turn-around.
Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas. Seek grant for WUI mitigation team.

2. Railroad Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads to better maintain their ROW eliminating brush and grass through herbicide and mowing. Maintain firebreaks along ROW adjacent to residential areas.
Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Investigate need for "brush" trucks near communities at risk.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Investigate need for additional drafting pumps.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel to include S130, S190, and S215.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

1. Conduct "How to Have a Firewise Home" Workshop for County Residents
Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include defensible space, landscaping, building construction, etc. Workshop will be scheduled for evenings or weekends when most homeowners are available and advertised through local media outlets. Distribute materials promoting Firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.

2. Conduct "Firewise" Workshop for Community Leaders
Arrange for GFC Firewise Coordinator to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of "Firewise Planning" in developing ordinances and codes as the county as the need arises. Identified "communities-at-risk" are Arcade Fire District, Atrium Glen, Fountain Springs, Presley Estates and Westcott, and should be sought after for inclusion in the National Firewise Communities Program.

3. Spring Clean-up Event
Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Jackson County Fire Departments, and local residents of Jackson County. Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC Firewise coordinator and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. Activities to include the following: • Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters • Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet away from structures • Trim overhanging limbs • Clean hazardous or flammable debris from adjacent properties

4. Informational Packets
Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following: • Be Firewise Around Your Home • Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction • Firewise Communities USA Bookmarks

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

6. Media
Invite the local and regional news media to community "Firewise" functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Jackson County.

IX. ACTION PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities have been developed to implement the action plan:

Role	Responsibility
Hazardous Fuels and Structural Ignitability Reduction	
Jackson County WUI Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, County Fire department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Jackson County. Meet periodically to review progress towards mitigation goals, appoint and delegate special activities, work with federal, state, and local officials to assess progress and develop future goals and action plans. Work with residents to implement projects and Firewise activities.
Key Messages to focus on	1 Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping 2 Debris Burning Safety 3 Firewise information for homeowners 4 Prescribed burning benefits
Communications objectives	1. Create public awareness for fire danger and defensible space issues 2. Identify most significant human cause fire issues 3. Enlist public support to help prevent these causes 4. Encourage people to employ fire prevention and defensible spaces in their communities.
Target Audiences	1 Homeowners 2 Forest Landowners and users 3 Civic Groups 4 School Groups

Methods	1 News Releases 2 Personal Contacts 3 Key messages and prevention tips 4 Visuals such as signs, brochures and posters
Spring Clean-up Day	
Event Coordinator	Coordinate day's events and schedule, catering for cookout, guest attendance, and moderate activities the day of the day of the event.
Event Treasurer	Collect funds from residents to cover food, equipment rentals, and supplies.
Publicity Coordinator	Advertise event through neighborhood newsletter, letters to officials, and public service announcements (PSAs) for local media outlets. Publicize post-event through local paper and radio PSAs.
Work Supervisor	Develop volunteer labor force of community residents; develop labor/advisory force from Georgia Forestry Commission, Jackson County Fire Departments, and Emergency Management Agency. Procure needed equipment and supplies. In cooperation with local city and county officials, develop safety protocol. Supervise work and monitor activities for safety the day of the event.

Funding Needs

The following funding is needed to implement the action plan:

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Create a minimum of 30 feet of defensible space around structures	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
2. Reduce structural ignitability by cleaning flammable vegetation from roofs and gutters; appropriately storing firewood, installing skirting around raised structures, storing water hoses for ready access, replacing pine needles and mulch around plantings with less flammable material.	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.

3. Amend codes and ordinances to provide better driveway access, increased visibility of house numbers, properly stored firewood, minimum defensible space brush clearance, required Class A roofing materials and skirting around raised structures, planned maintenance of community lots.	No Cost	To be adopted by city and county government.
4. Spring Cleanup Day	Varies	Community Business Donations.
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	$15 / acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

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

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

    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 complete a registered plan (addendum to the State Plan) counties can apply for pre-mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP funding if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.

- FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

    1. Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). The purpose of AFG's is to award oneyear grants directly to fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) organizations of a state to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and related hazards.

2. Fire Prevention and Safety Grants. The purpose of these grants is to assist state, regional, national or local organizations to address fire prevention and safety. Emphasis of the program is on prevention of fire-related injuries to children.

3. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER). The purpose of SAFER is to award grants directly to volunteer, combination and career fire departments to help the departments increase their cadre of firefighters (enhance their ability for 24-hour response).

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

- Individual Homeowners:

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

Glossary of Terms

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

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

CWPP – *The Community Wildfire Protection Plan*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/ Brochures/Websites

- FIREWISE Communities materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org
- Examples of successful wildfire mitigation programs can be viewed at the website for National Database of State and Local wildfire Hazard Mitigation Programs sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters www.wildfireprograms.com
- Information about a variety of interface issues (including wildfire)can be found at the USFS website for Interface South: www.interfacesouth.org
- Information on codes and standards for emergency services including wildfire can be found at www.nfpa.org
- Information on FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) can be found at www.firegrantsupport.com
- Information on National Fire Plan grants can be found at http://www.federalgrantswire.com/national-fire-plan--rural-fire-assistance.html
  Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Albany-Dougherty WUI Fire Council will implement the following:

- Annual wildfire risk assessment will be conducted to re-assess wildfire hazards and prioritize needed actions.
- Mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning, and clearing of defensible space) will be incorporated into an annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Mitigation efforts that could not be funded in the requested year will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Continuing educational and outreach programs will be conducted and assessed for effectiveness. Workshops will be evaluated based on attendance and post surveys that are distributed by mail 1month and 6 months following workshop date.
- The Jackson County WUI Council will publish an annual report detailing mitigation projects initiated and completed, progress for ongoing actions, funds received, funds spent, and in-kind services utilized. The report will include a “state of the community” section that critically evaluates mitigation progress and identifies areas for improvement. Recommendations will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the action plan.
- An annual survey will be distributed to residents soliciting information on individual mitigation efforts on their own property (e.g., defensible space). Responses will be tallied and reviewed at the next Jackson County WUI Council meeting. Needed actions will be discussed and delegated.

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