

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Lee County, Georgia

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



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Appended Documents:

1. Lee County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary (SWRA)
2. Lee County Wildfire Pre-suppression Plan
3. NFPA 1141 Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas.

I. OBJECTIVES

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Lee 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

The core team convened on May 13th, 2009 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local government, local fire authorities, and the state agency responsible for forest management. Below are the groups included in the task force:

Lee County Government

County Fire Rescue

Emergency Management

Georgia Forestry Commission

Dougherty/Lee County Forestry Unit

It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the individual fire districts in the county. The chiefs of the seven fire departments in the county assessed their districts and reconvened on Oct 22nd, 2009 for the purpose of completing the following:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Risk Assessment | Assessed wildfire hazard risks and prioritized mitigation actions. |
| 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. |

III. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND & WILDFIRE HISTORY

BACKGROUND

Lee County, which spans 356 square miles, was created by an act of the state legislature on June 9, 1825, along with Carroll, Coweta, and Troup counties (although the counties were not officially named until December 1826). Georgia's sixty-first county was formed from land that was ceded by the Creek Indians in a treaty signed on February 12, 1825. One of Georgia's earliest counties in the southwestern part of the state, Lee originally comprised the subsequently created counties of Quitman, Randolph, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, and Webster and parts of Chattahoochee, Clay, Macon, Marion, and Schley. The original county boundaries ran from the Flint River to the Chattahoochee River on the Alabama border. The total population in the 1830 census was 1,680. In 1832 the county seat was named Starkville after General John Stark, a Revolutionary War (1775-83) hero of the battles of Bunker Hill in Massachusetts and Bennington in Vermont.

With the completion of the Southwestern Railroad from Americus to Albany in 1857, two towns were created along the railroad. Smithville, in the northern section of the county, was incorporated in 1863. In 1872 Wooten Station, located in the central part of the county, was chosen as the county seat and incorporated as Wooten the same year. In 1874 Wooten was renamed Leesburg. As Leesburg continued to grow, Starkville, the old county seat, lost its population and eventually became a ghost town. Today, the only reminder of Starkville is an old public cemetery, where some of the first county officials are buried.

In 1814, on his way to fight in a campaign against the Creek Indians, General Andrew Jackson camped in an area that would become part of Lee County. Four years later, near the future site of Leesburg, the Georgia militia mistakenly attacked the Indian town of Chehaw and several friendly Chehaw Indians were killed. In 1912 the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a memorial marker at the site in remembrance of the massacre.

With some of the best agricultural soils in the area, Lee County became a large cotton producer, and cotton plantations were located throughout the county. Later, peanuts and corn became the major cash crops for local farmers, and thousands of acres of land are still planted with the crops today.

During the first half of the twentieth century, politics were an important part of the local community. In the October 25, 1938, issue of *Look* magazine, Lee County was shown as the most solidly Democratic area in the United States; in the 1936 presidential election 490 votes were cast for Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt and only one vote was cast for his opponent, Republican Alf Landon.

Since the 1950s, Lee County has changed from an agricultural area to an area of rapid residential and commercial development. Between 1990 and 2000, according to U.S. census records, the county grew at an astonishing rate. The 2000 population of 24,757 (82 percent white, 15.5 percent black, and 1.2 percent Hispanic) showed a 52 percent increase since 1990, much of it from Albany, in adjacent Dougherty County. As a growing market area, Lee County has become an important economic center for southwest Georgia.

(Courtesy J Lee Stanley *New Georgia Encyclopedia*)

Wildfire History

Lee County located in Southwestern Georgia, despite becoming a bedroom community of Albany, is still 57% forested. The southern half of the county is rapidly developing with subdivisions and suburban homes. In the remainder of the county with the exception of a few large blocks of woodlands along the Flint River and some of the larger creeks, there are homes and communities scattered throughout the county. The risks and hazards from the wildland urban interface are fairly general and substantial throughout the county even in the developed southern areas.

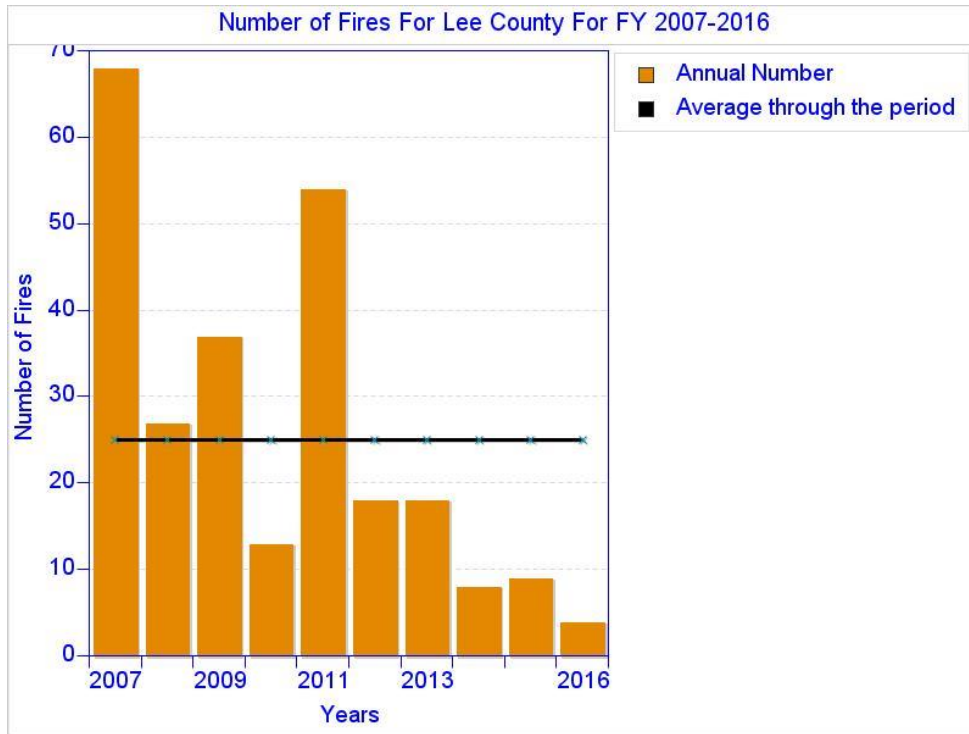
Lee County is protected by an organized countywide fire department with six well spaced fire departments throughout the county, Palmyra, Century, Redbone, Leesburg, Lee State Prison, and Smithville. The County is planning to build an additional station at Chokee. The Georgia Forestry Commission maintains a county protection unit for Lee County located on Slapppy Drive in Albany to respond to wildfires throughout the county. Much of the southern half of the county along with Smithville is serviced by a pressurized water system with well placed hydrants throughout.

Over the past 52 years, Lee County has averaged 52 reported wildland fires per year. The occurrence of these fires shows a peak in the months of January, February and March. These fires have burned an average of 286 acres annually. The monthly acreage burned fairly well corresponds with the number of fires. Using more recent data, the average annual number of fires over the past 20 years has decreased to 48 fires with an average loss of 132 acres. This reduction in numbers and average size from 5.5 acres per fire to 2.8 acres per fire is perhaps the result of better response and equipment from both the Georgia Forestry Commission and the increased presence of rural fire departments. Despite this welcome trend in fire behavior, more homes are being built outside of traditional communities into the wildland urban interface.

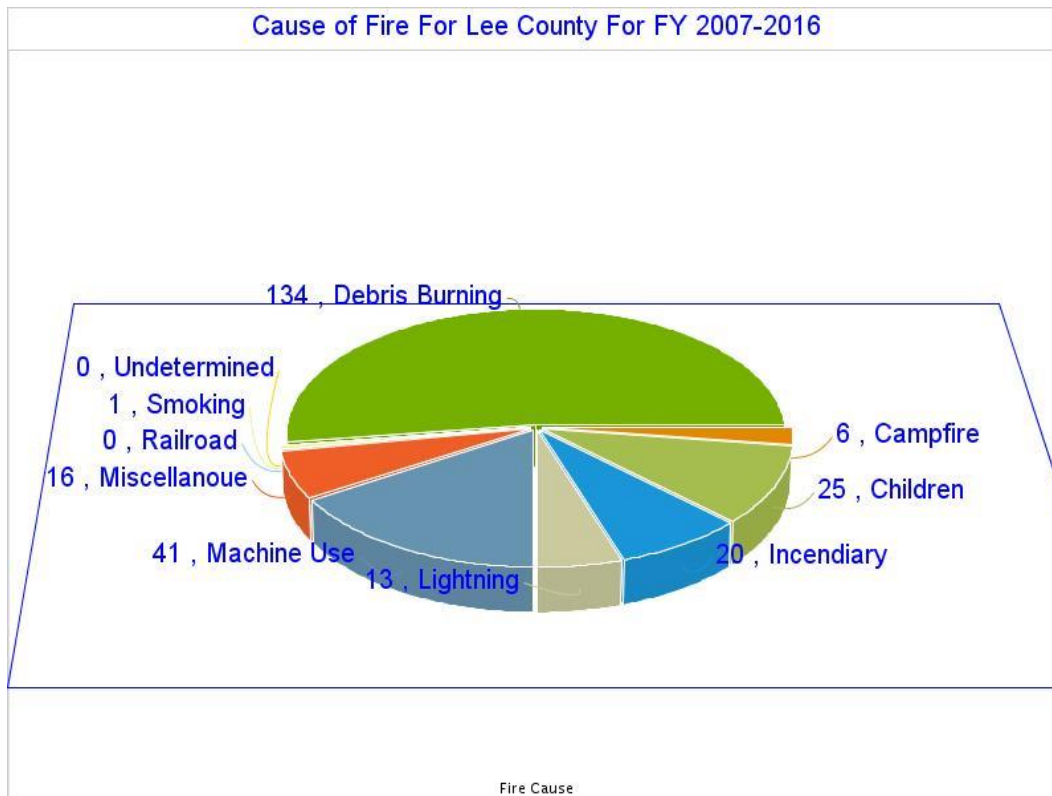
| Acreage Burned /Number of Fires, Lee County, FY 2007-2016 | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Year | Acreage Burned | Number of Fires | Average Size | Statewide Average |
| 2007 | 308.98 | 68 | 4.54 | 18.64 |
| 2008 | 98.47 | 27 | 3.65 | 4.56 |
| 2009 | 73.31 | 37 | 1.98 | 3.90 |
| 2010 | 153.95 | 13 | 11.84 | 3.93 |
| 2011 | 396.20 | 54 | 7.34 | 17.56 |
| 2012 | 161.16 | 18 | 8.95 | 5.08 |
| 2013 | 191.53 | 18 | 10.64 | 4.53 |
| 2014 | 25.56 | 8 | 3.20 | 5.02 |
| 2015 | 29.92 | 9 | 3.32 | 4.42 |
| 2016 | 10.07 | 4 | 2.52 | 6.29 |

| County = Lee | Cause | Fires | Acres | Fires 5 Yr Avg | Acres 5 Yr Avg |
|---|---|-------|--------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Campfire | Campfire | 0 | 0.00 | 0.60 | 1.67 |
| Children | Children | 0 | 0.00 | 0.40 | 0.41 |
| Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc | Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc | 2 | 6.51 | 1.20 | 3.52 |
| Debris: Construction Land Clearing | Debris: Construction Land Clearing | 2 | 0.50 | 0.60 | 0.12 |
| Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn | Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn | 5 | 233.12 | 2.40 | 48.95 |
| Debris: Household Garbage | Debris: Household Garbage | 0 | 0.00 | 0.40 | 4.40 |
| Debris: Other | Debris: Other | 0 | 0.00 | 0.20 | 0.03 |
| Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc | Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc | 6 | 3.37 | 1.80 | 1.26 |
| Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related | Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related | 0 | 0.00 | 1.20 | 11.53 |
| Incendiary | Incendiary | 7 | 46.82 | 1.80 | 9.83 |
| Lightning | Lightning | 0 | 0.00 | 0.80 | 21.72 |
| Machine Use | Machine Use | 2 | 8.51 | 0.60 | 1.71 |
| Miscellaneous: Other | Miscellaneous: Other | 0 | 0.00 | 0.40 | 0.71 |
| Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences | Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences | 1 | 15.98 | 0.20 | 3.20 |
| Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion | Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion | 0 | 0.00 | 0.20 | 5.30 |
| Totals for County: Lee Year: 2017 | | 25 | 314.81 | 12.80 | 114.38 |

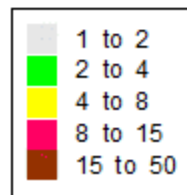
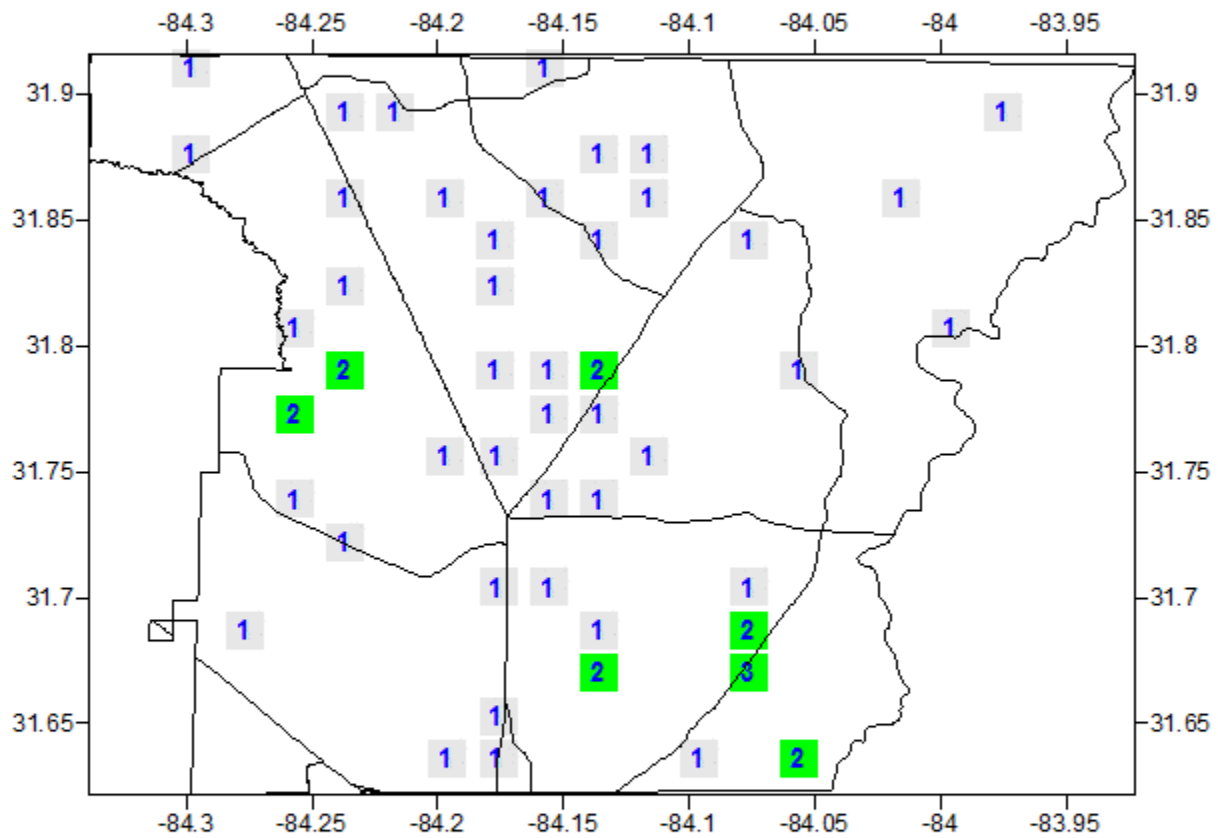
The table above shows wildfire activity for Lee County during Fiscal Year 2017, which started July 1, 2016 and ends June 30, 2017. Wildfire activity and acreage burned has significantly increased this year due to increased fire danger from drought. Prior to this year in FY 2015 and 2016 Lee County, as well as most of the State, had experienced record breaking low wildfire occurrence due to above normal rainfall.



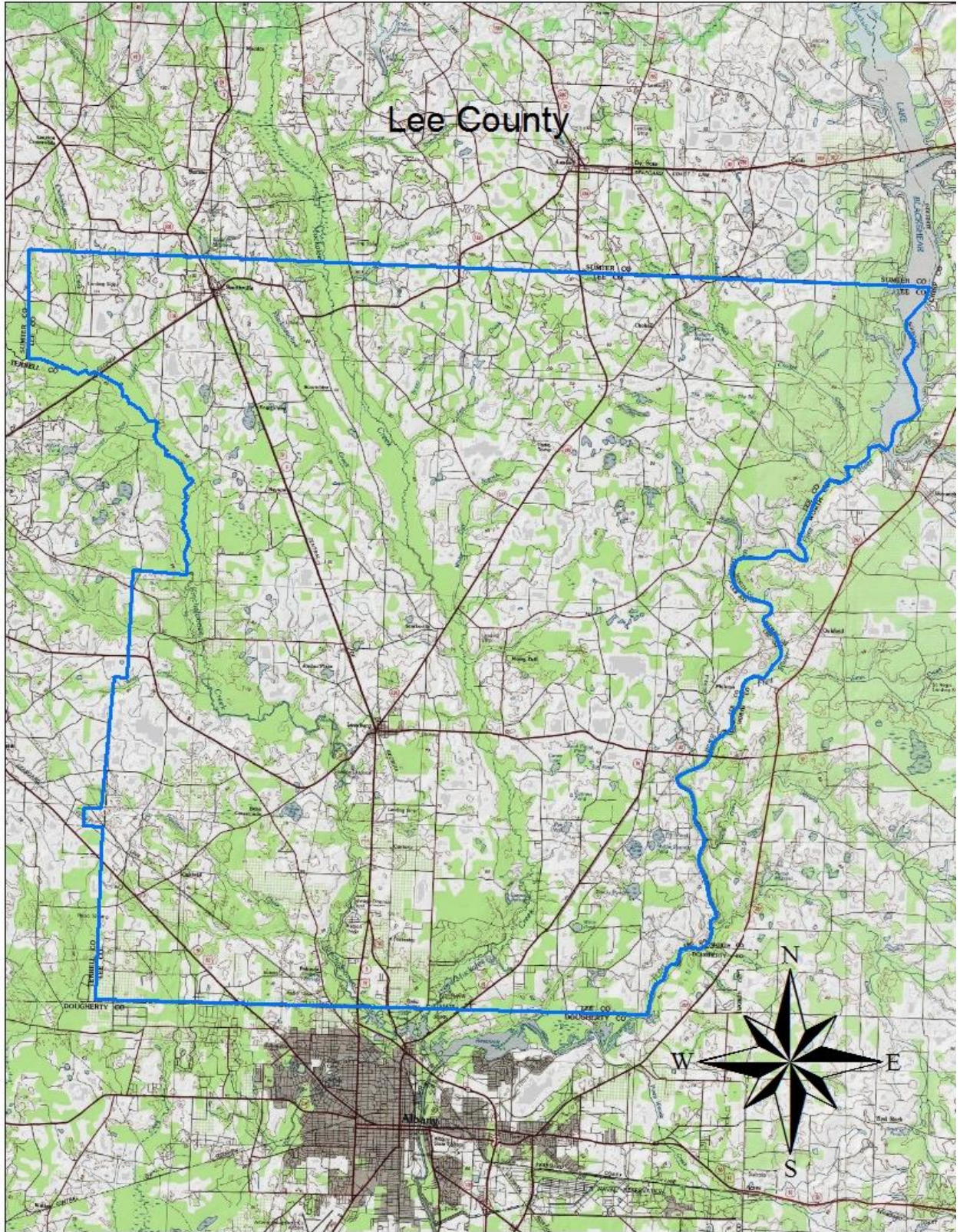
The graph above indicates the # of wildfires for Lee County from 2007-2016. The primary cause for over half of these wildfires was Debris Burning. The second leading cause was Machine Use followed by Children playing.

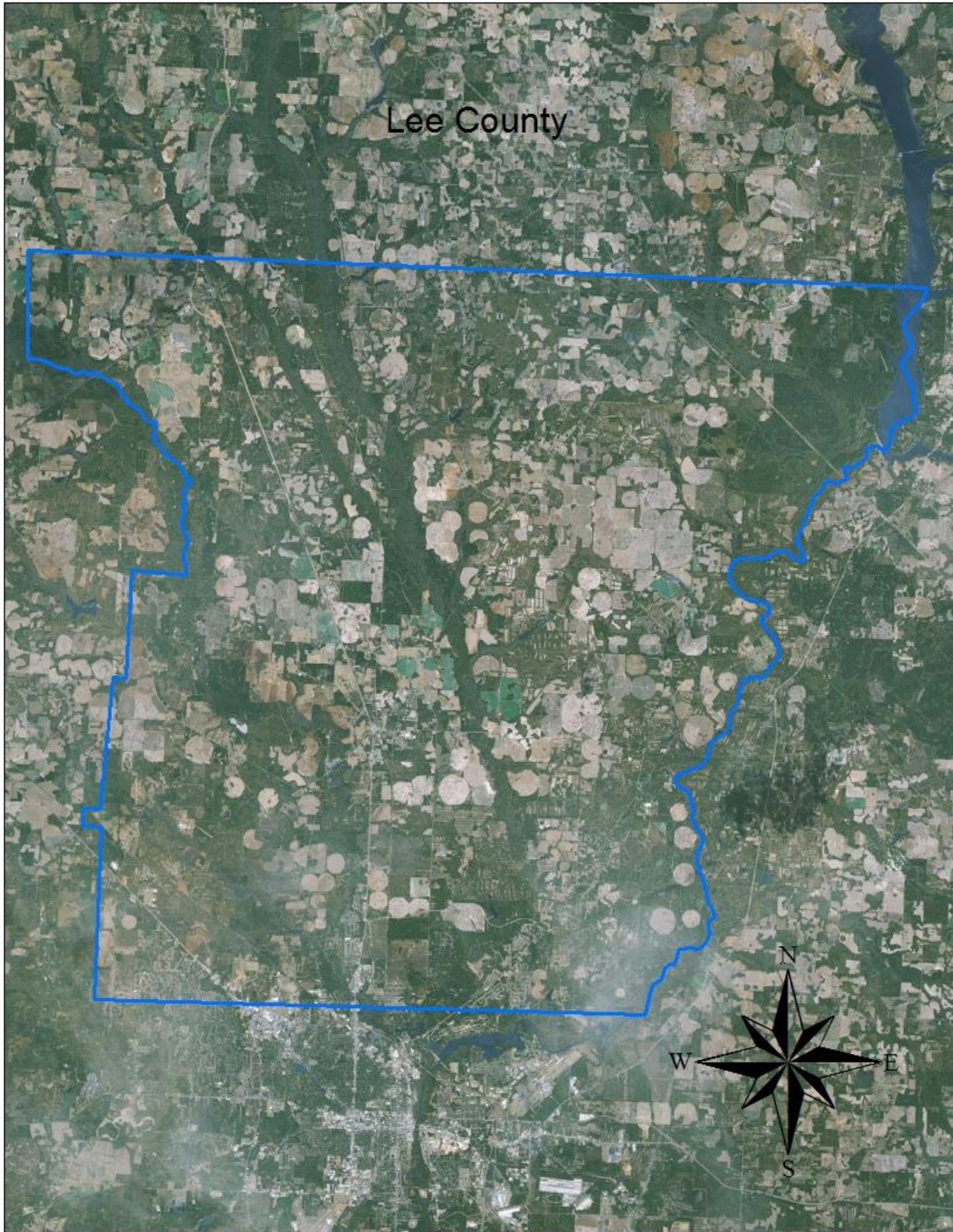


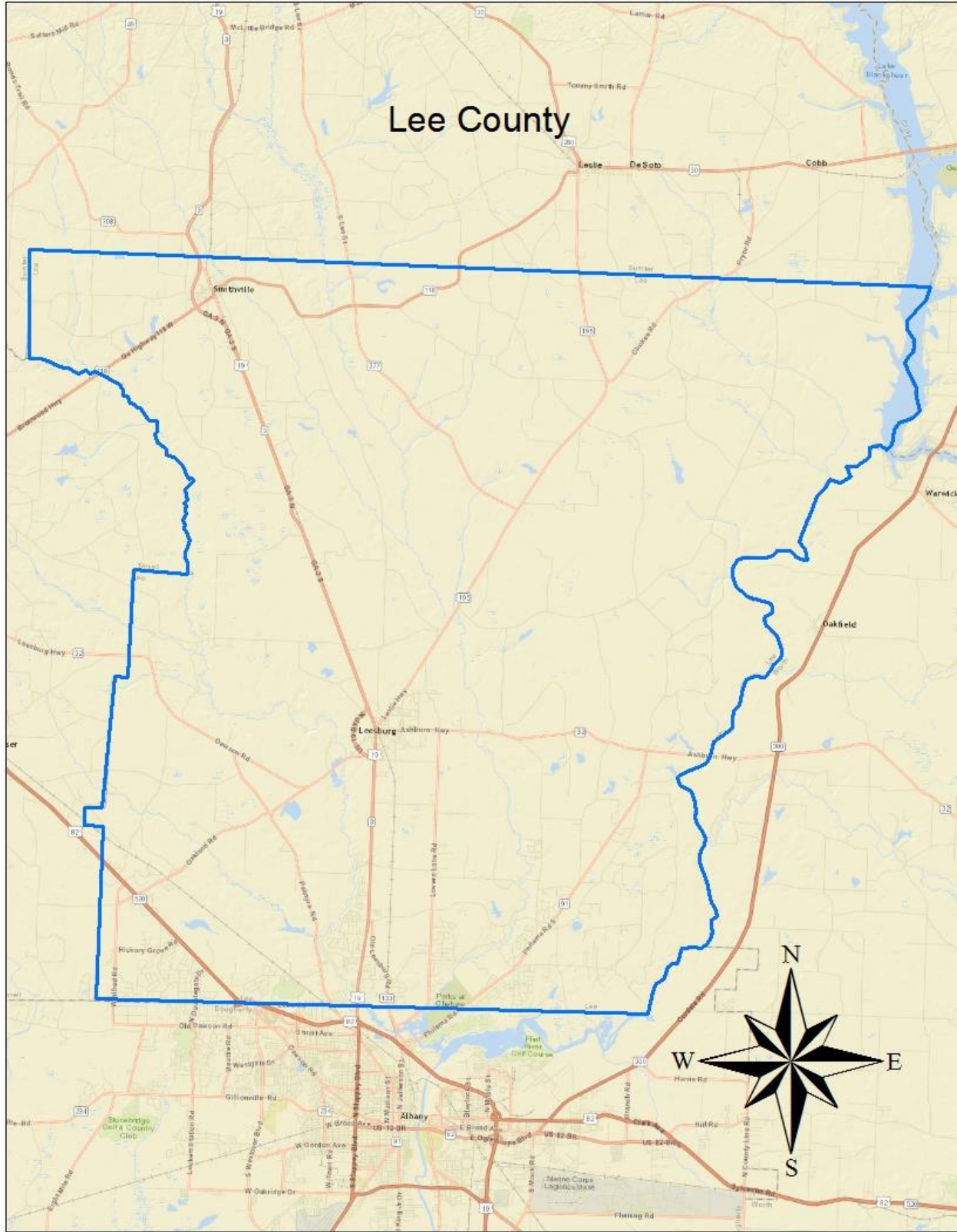
Fire Occurrence Map for Lee County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAPS







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)



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

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 for those that won't 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 have evacuation plan for all emergency personnel should be

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Lee County Fire Departments returned an average score of 84, placing Lee County in the “high” hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Lee County’s WUI was the Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Checklist. 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 Lee County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Inadequate bridges in places
- Narrow inaccessible private drives
- Lack of uniform address signage
- Gates in private subdivisions
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available
- Above ground utilities
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations
- Lack of homeowner or community organizations

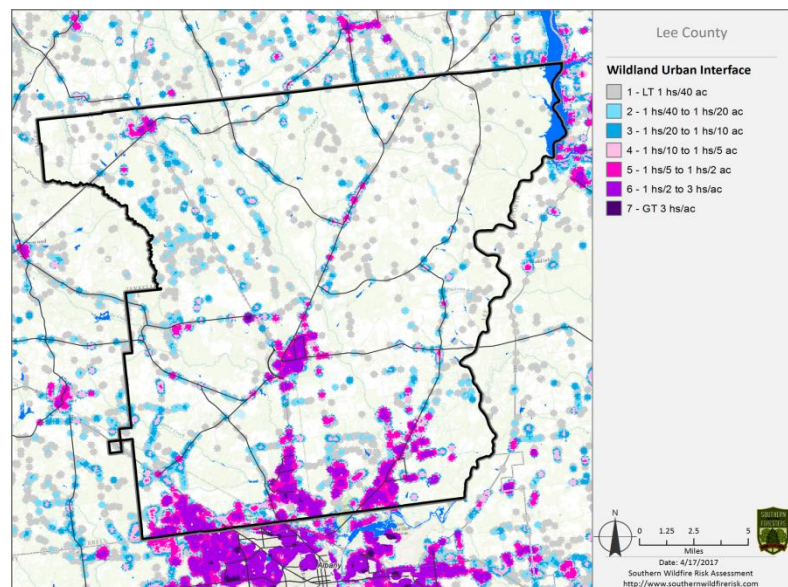
Summary of Lee County Assessment Ratings

| Fire District | Access | Surrounding Vegetation | Bldg Construction | Fire Protection | Utilities | Additional Factors | Score | Hazard Rating |
|----------------|--------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Leesburg | 5 | 15 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 20 | 51 | Moderate |
| Century | 5 | 15 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 53 | Moderate |
| Palmyra | 5 | 15 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 53 | Moderate |
| Redbone | 7 | 15 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 30 | 70 | Moderate |
| Smithville | 7 | 20 | 5 | 14 | 4 | 20 | 70 | Moderate |
| Chokee I | 7 | 20 | 5 | 25 | 4 | 15 | 76 | High |
| Chokee II | 7 | 20 | 5 | 29 | 4 | 15 | 80 | High |
| Average | | | | | | | 65 | Moderate |

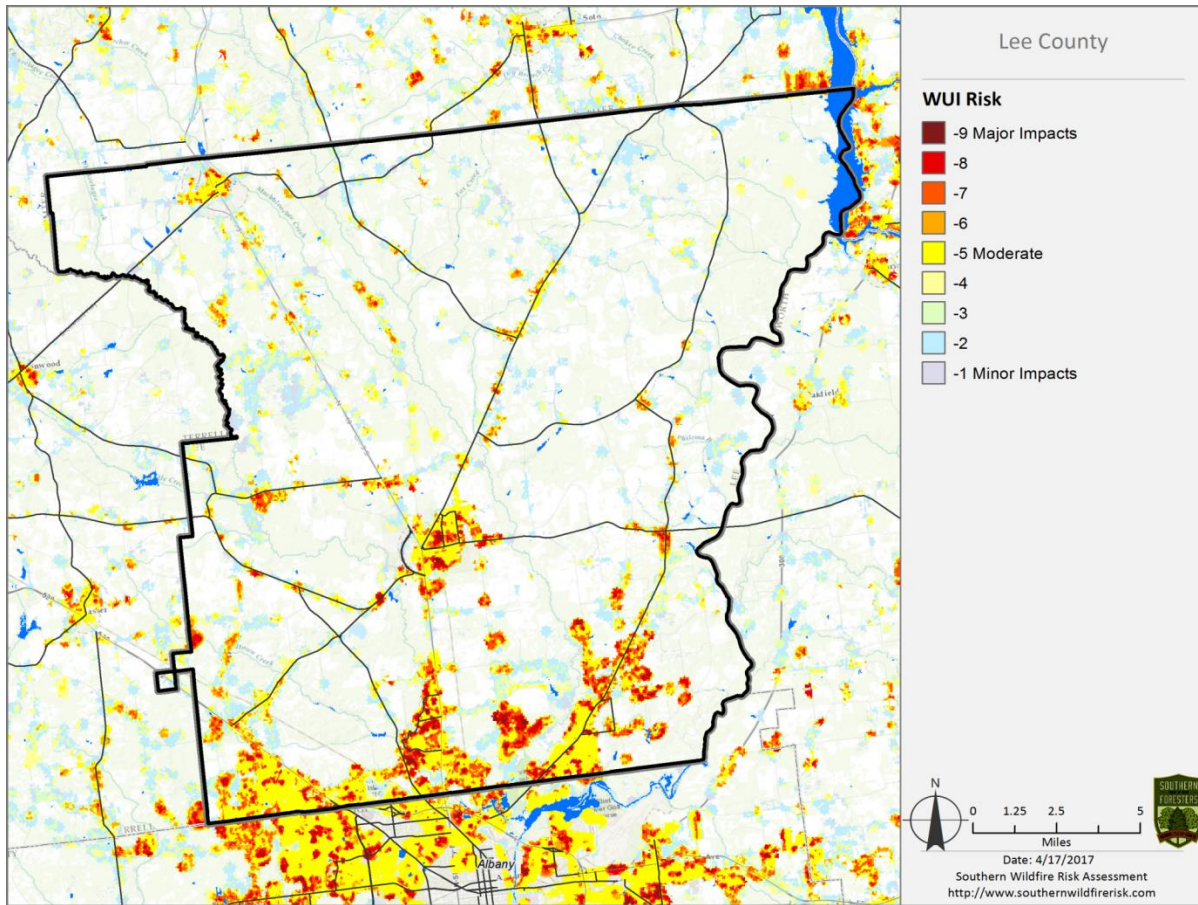
VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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

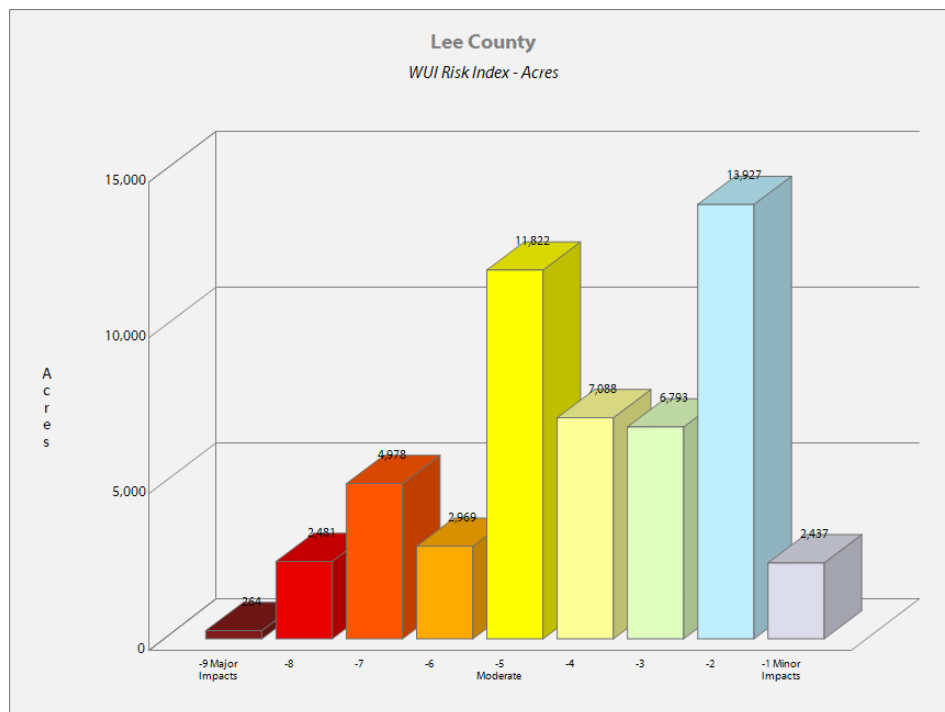
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

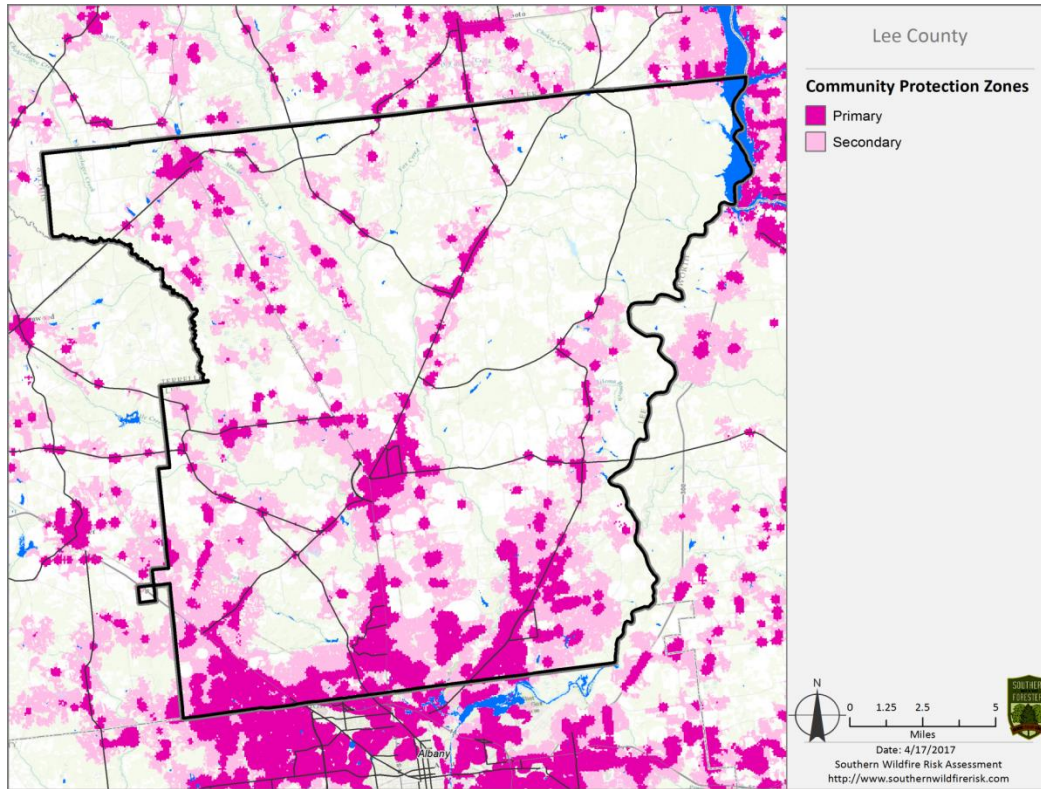


Wildland Urban Interface map from the Lee County SWRA

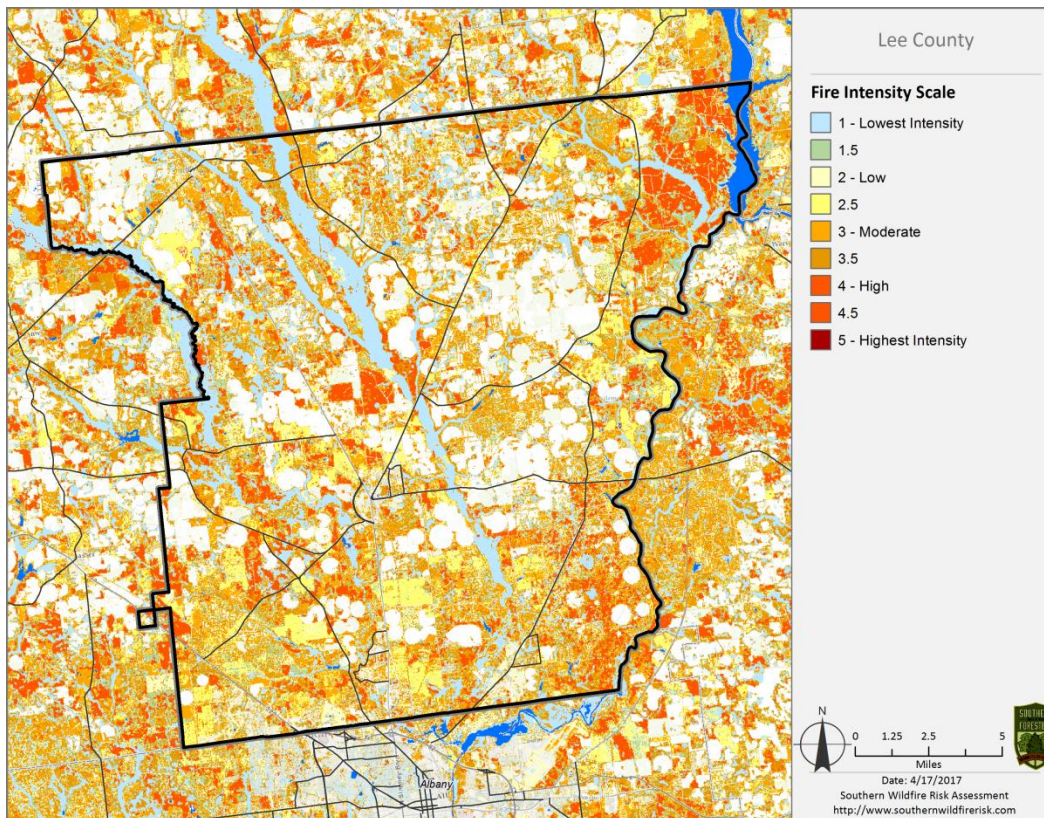


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map (above) and WUI Acres graph (below)





Community Protection Zones map (above) and Fire Intensity Scale map (below)



VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

As Southwest 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. Lee 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 by the Lee 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-foot 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 | Private ROW | Maintain adequate clearance 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. Replace bridges with inadequate weight limits. |
| 6. Codes and Ordinances | Examine existing codes and ordinances. Georgia adopted the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). | Amend and enforce existing building codes as they relate to skirting, propane tank locations, public nuisances (trash/debris on property), Property address marking standards and other relevant concerns Review Subdivision and development ordinances for public safety concerns. Enforce uniform addressing ordinance. |

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 prescribed burning in WUI areas. |
| 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. Create maps of dry hydrant & drafting locations |
| 2. Fire Stations | Equipment | Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. |
| 3. Water Sources | Drafting equipment | Investigate need for additional drafting pumps. |
| 4. Road Names | Road Signage | “Dead End” or “No Outlet” Tags on Road Signs |
| 5. Personnel | Training | Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel. 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 Lee 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 program 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. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible firewise community recognition. |

3. Spring Clean-up Event

Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Lee County Fire Department and community residents. The 1st Saturday in May is National Wildfire Preparedness Day. 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
- Conduct individual home risk assessments

Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Lee County Fire Department discussing and commending the work accomplished.

4. Informational Packets

Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors, building permit office and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following:

- Be Firewise Around Your Home
- Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction
- Firewise Communities USA materials
- Ready Set Go materials
- Fire Adapted Community information

5. Wildfire Protection Display

Create and exhibit a display for the general public at the area shopping centers and other local events. Display can be independent or combined with the Georgia Forestry Commission display.

Hold Open House at individual Fire Stations to promote Community Firewise Safety and develop community support and understanding of local fire departments and current issues.

6. Press

Invite the local news media to community “Firewise” functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements in Lee County.

VIII. 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 | |
| Lee County WUI Fire Council | Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Lee County Fire Department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Lee 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 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping 2 Debris Burning Safety 3 Firewise information for homeowners 4 Prescribed burning benefits |
| Communications objectives | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Homeowners 2 Forest Landowners and users 3 Civic Groups 4 School Groups 5 Hunt Clubs |
| Methods | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 News Releases 2 Radio and TV PSAs 3 Personal Contacts 4 Key messages and prevention tips 5 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, Lee County Fire Department 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 | \$35 / acre | FEMA & USFS Grants |

Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Lee County 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 1 month and 6 months following workshop date.
- The Lee 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 Lee County WUI Council meeting. Needed actions will be discussed and delegated.

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

IX. GRANT FUNDING & 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. 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.

X. GLOSSARY

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

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

CWPP – The Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prescribed Burning (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 edition).*

XI. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites:

- FIREWISE materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org
- Georgia Forestry Commission www.gatrees
- 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.wildfireprepdays.org

Appended Documents:

Dougherty County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

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

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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service, and education in the protection and conservation of
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