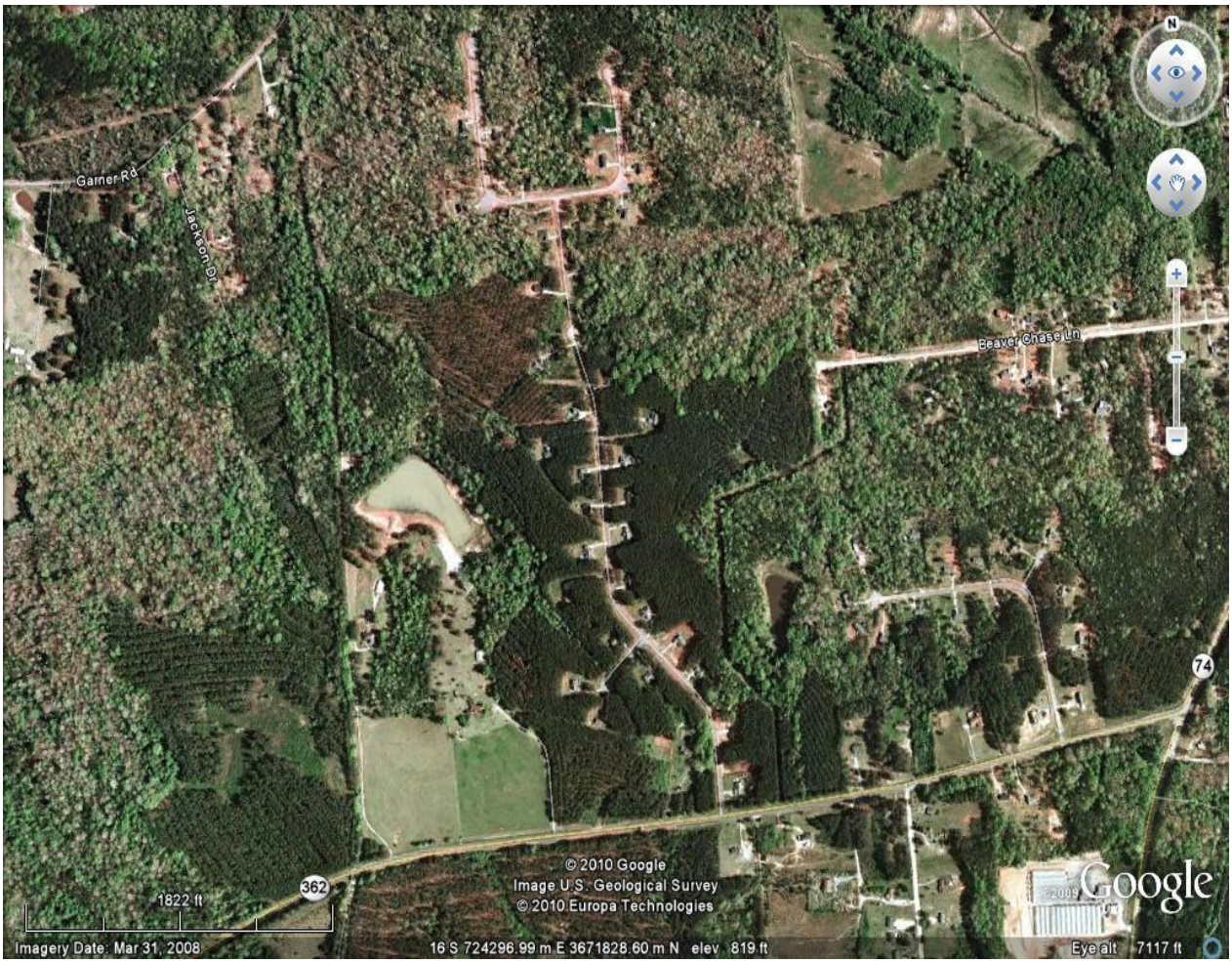
GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Meriwether County

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



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

County Representative(s):

Name Beth Neely-Hadley, Chairman, District 5
Signature

Name Alfred "Buster" McCoy, Vice Chairman, District 3
Signature

Name Shirley Hines, District 1
Signature

Name Mary Bray, District 2
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Name Brian Threadgill, District 4
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Local Georgia Forestry Commission Representative(s):

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PLAN CONTENTS

Appended Documents

Meriwether County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary (SouthWRAP)

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

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

The collaborative core team convened on January 25, 2010 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local county government, local fire authorities, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Below are the groups included in the task force:

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

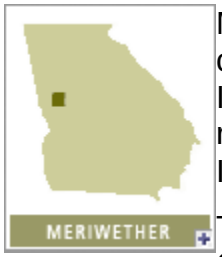
It was decided to conduct community assessments on the basis of the on high risk communities and the individual fire districts in the county. The Community Wildfire Protection Specialist and the representative of the local Georgia Forestry Commission office reconvened in late July for the purpose of 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 & Wildfire History

Location and County Information

Meriwether County



Meriwether County, in west central Georgia, is the state's seventy-first county, created in 1827 from 503 square miles taken from Troup County. It is named for David Meriwether, a Revolutionary War (1775-83) general remembered for his accomplishments as an interpreter for Creek Indians, a state legislator, and a U.S. congressman.

The land in Meriwether County was originally held by the Creek Indians. Greenville, the county seat and the oldest town in the county, was laid out in 1828 on land owned by General Hugh W. Ector and first settled by Abraham B. Ragan, whose log cabin store stood on the site of the current courthouse square. Greenville, originally spelled "Greeneville," was named for Nathanael Greene and incorporated twice—in 1828 and again in 1852. The first courthouse, reportedly built in 1832, was damaged by a tornado in 1893, restored, and used until 1904, when a second courthouse replaced it. A fire destroyed all but the outer walls of the new courthouse in 1976, but restoration of its exterior, along with a major modification of its interior, was completed in 1980.

Meriwether County Courthouse

In addition to Greenville, incorporated towns in Meriwether County include Gay, Lone Oak, Luthersville, Manchester, Warm Springs, and Woodbury. Manchester, incorporated in 1909 and nicknamed "The Magic City," was created at the junction of three railroad lines. It was designated a "Better Hometown" in 1997 and has restored its downtown area to the look of the 1930s. Gay, settled by William Sasser, was first called Sasserville, but the name was changed when someone discovered that there was already a town named Sasser in Georgia. The new name honors William F. Gay, the first store owner in town and the first mayor under the town's incorporation in 1907.

Meriwether Inn

Luthersville,first settled in the mid-nineteenth century and called Keith Crossroad, changed its name to honor Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran denomination of Christianity. Luthersville was incorporated in 1872. Warm Springs, first named Bullochville when it was incorporated in 1893, took the name Warm Springs in 1924 to reflect its now renowned mineral springs, to which thousands have come for therapy.

The most famous of these visitors was U.S president Franklin D. Roosevelt, who first came to Warm Springs in 1924 and liked it so well that he built a second home there, known as the Little White House. Woodbury, settled long before its incorporation in 1872, was first named Sandtown for its sandy land. When the first post office was established there in 1845, the town's name was changed to Woodberry. The current spelling of Woodbury was officially adopted in 1854.

Cotton Weighing

Tourism has been a substantial part of Meriwether County's economy since 1832, when resorts complete with inns and cabins were built around the area's mineral springs. At first, visitors came from the cities of the South, but as railroads reduced reliance on horse and carriage, people from farther away were able to enjoy the curative springs and stay for a season. By 1900 the transient nature of this income source was augmented by the arrival of wealthy families who built summer homes in the area. Another early component of Meriwether County's economy was the processing of cotton. The county continues to lean heavily on industry, and one of the largest employers is Georgia-Pacific.

John M. Slaton, governor of Georgia in 1911-12 and again in 1913-15, was born near Greenville. As governor, Slaton commuted the sentence of Leo Frank in 1915. Jasper Guy Woodroof, often called "the father of food science," was also born in Meriwether County.

Little White House

Warm Springs, with Roosevelt's Little White House, is a major attraction. In association with the historic home, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources operates a state park. The adjacent Georgia Rehabilitation Center (later Roosevelt Warm Spring Institute for Rehabilitation), founded in 1964 and brought under state control in 1974, treats those with brain and spinal cord injuries, strokes, and other conditions needing rehabilitation. The film *Warm Springs* (2005), which chronicles Roosevelt's time in Warm Springs during the 1920s, was made on location at the park and center.

The historic section of the village of Warm Springs was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The register lists twenty-two other sites in Meriwether County, among them the historic district of Greenville and many private homes, farms, and churches.

A satellite campus of West Georgia Technical College is located in Meriwether County.

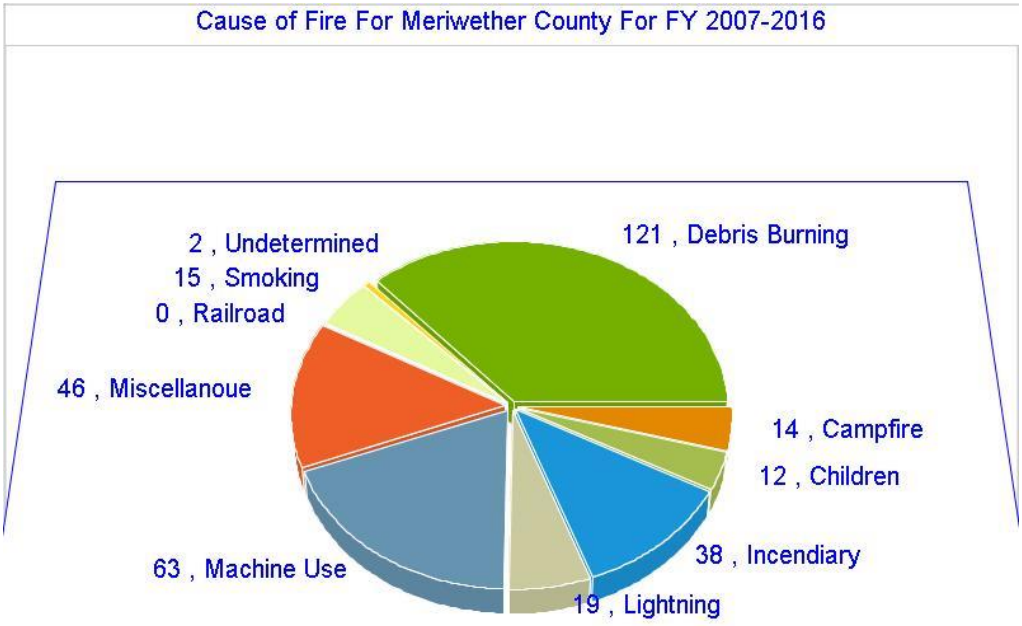
According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of Meriwether County is 22,534 (56.1 percent white, 42.2 percent black, and 0.8 percent Hispanic), an increase of less than 1 percent since 1990.

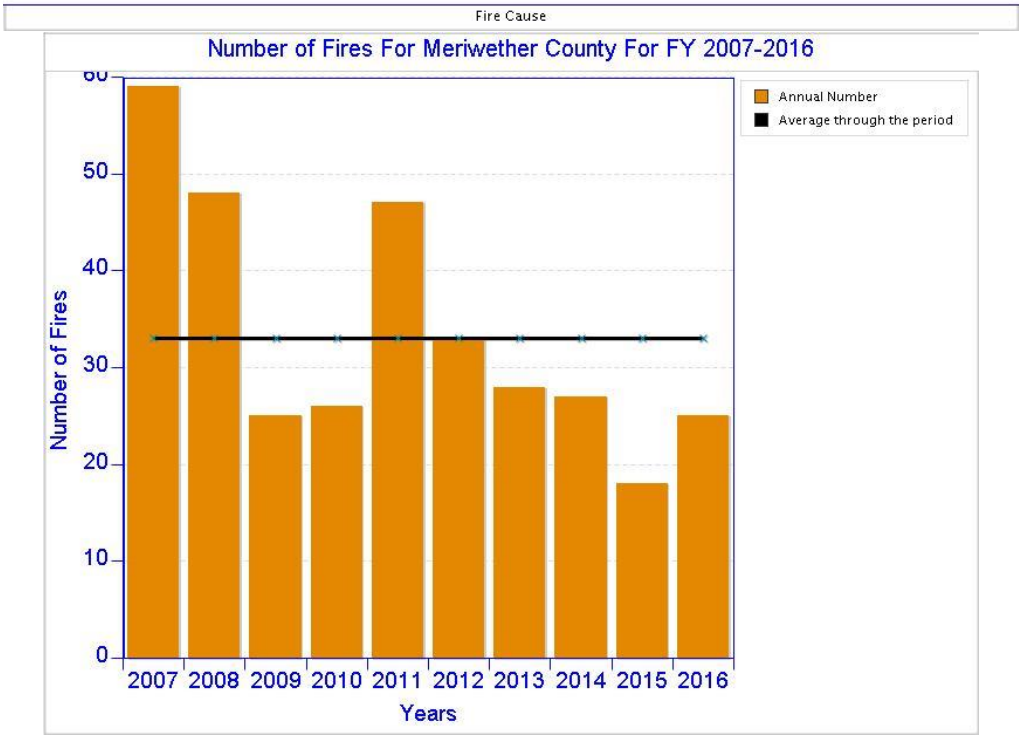
Wildfire History

Meriwether County typically does not have a serious problem with wildfire. This is due to rapid response and suppression and excellent cooperation between Meriwether County and the Georgia Forestry Commission. Thus far in FY 2017 which started on July 1, 2016 there have been 31 wildfires which burned 122.17 acres. The following table outlines fire activity so far in 2017 and includes the 5 year average information. The leading cause of these fires is residential debris burning. This year the number of wildfires and acreage burned is already well above the 5 year average, due to drought conditions.

County = Meriwether	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	2		0.43	1.40	2.56
Children	Children	0		0.00	0.60	1.14
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.20	0.06
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1		1.20	4.40	21.99
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	2		7.70	0.40	1.54
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.20	1.00
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	6		15.88	3.20	5.70
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0		0.00	1.40	4.02
Incendiary	Incendiary	0		0.00	2.00	34.65
Lightning	Lightning	3		7.62	1.60	5.95
Machine Use	Machine Use	0		0.00	2.80	13.51
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	1		0.20	0.40	0.04
Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	0		0.00	0.20	0.04
Miscellaneous: Fireworks/Explosives	Miscellaneous: Fireworks/Explosives	0		0.00	0.60	3.02
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	3		2.50	0.80	0.65
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	4		3.56	1.40	0.96
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1		1.30	0.40	0.52
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	3		0.46	1.60	2.57
Smoking	Smoking	0		0.00	0.80	0.77
Undetermined	Undetermined	5		81.32	1.40	16.72
Totals for County: Meriwether 2017		31		122.17	25.80	117.40

Fire activity during this past fiscal year is indicative of more normal rainfall and lessened fire danger factors. Examination of Georgia Forestry Commission records reveals that causes of wildland fire in the county are generally spread over most causes. Although incendiary related wildfire is not a serious problem in the county it was the leading cause in FY 2008 and 2009. Escaped debris burns and prescribed fire along with machine use are the most common causes.





The following table outlines fire activity in Meriwether County for fiscal years 2007 through 2016. It should be remembered that the statewide average in 2007 was influenced by the Sweat Farm, Big Turnaround, and Bugaboo Fires that burned in the Okefenokee and again large fires occurred in SE Georgia in 2011 making the State averages much higher.

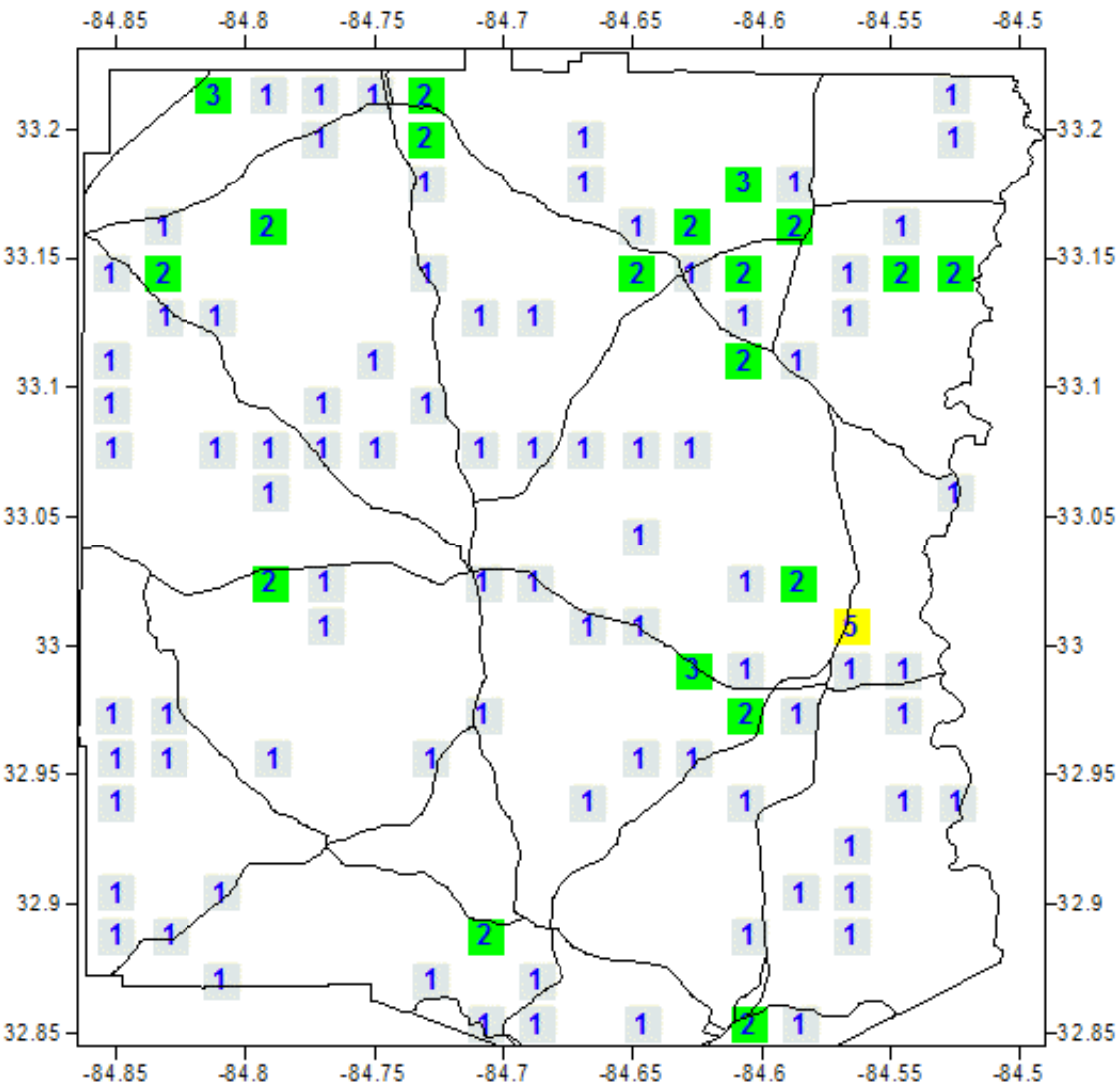
Fiscal Year	Number of Fires	Acres	Average size	Statewide average size
2016	25	96.22	3.85	6.29
2015	18	57.77	3.21	4.42
2014	27	81.60	3.02	5.02
2013	28	229.24	8.18	4.53
2012	33	153.05	4.64	5.08
2011	47	242.52	5.16	17.56
2010	26	90.03	3.46	3.93
2009	25	161.96	6.48	3.90
2008	48	163.97	3.42	4.56
2007	59	148.30	2.51	18.64

Number of Fires by Cause for Meriwether County for FY 2007 to 2016

Year	Campfire	Children	Debris Burning	Incendiary	Lightning	Machine Use	Miscellaneous	Railroad	Smoking
2007	3	1	20	4	7	10	9	1	4
2008	1	2	19	11	2	9	2	0	2
2009	0	2	8	4	1	4	3	1	2
2010	0	3	9	2	2	4	2	2	2
2011	4	1	16	3	2	13	6	1	1
2012	1	0	9	4	0	9	9	1	0
2013	1	1	12	2	3	4	5	0	0
2014	0	2	9	2	0	6	5	0	3
2015	3	0	8	1	0	2	4	0	0
2016	1	0	11	5	2	2	3	0	1

The table above indicates the number of wildfires by cause in 2007-2016 and the map on the following page indicates where wildfires occurred in the County in 2012-2016.

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



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2 to 4
4 to 8
8 to 15
15 to 50

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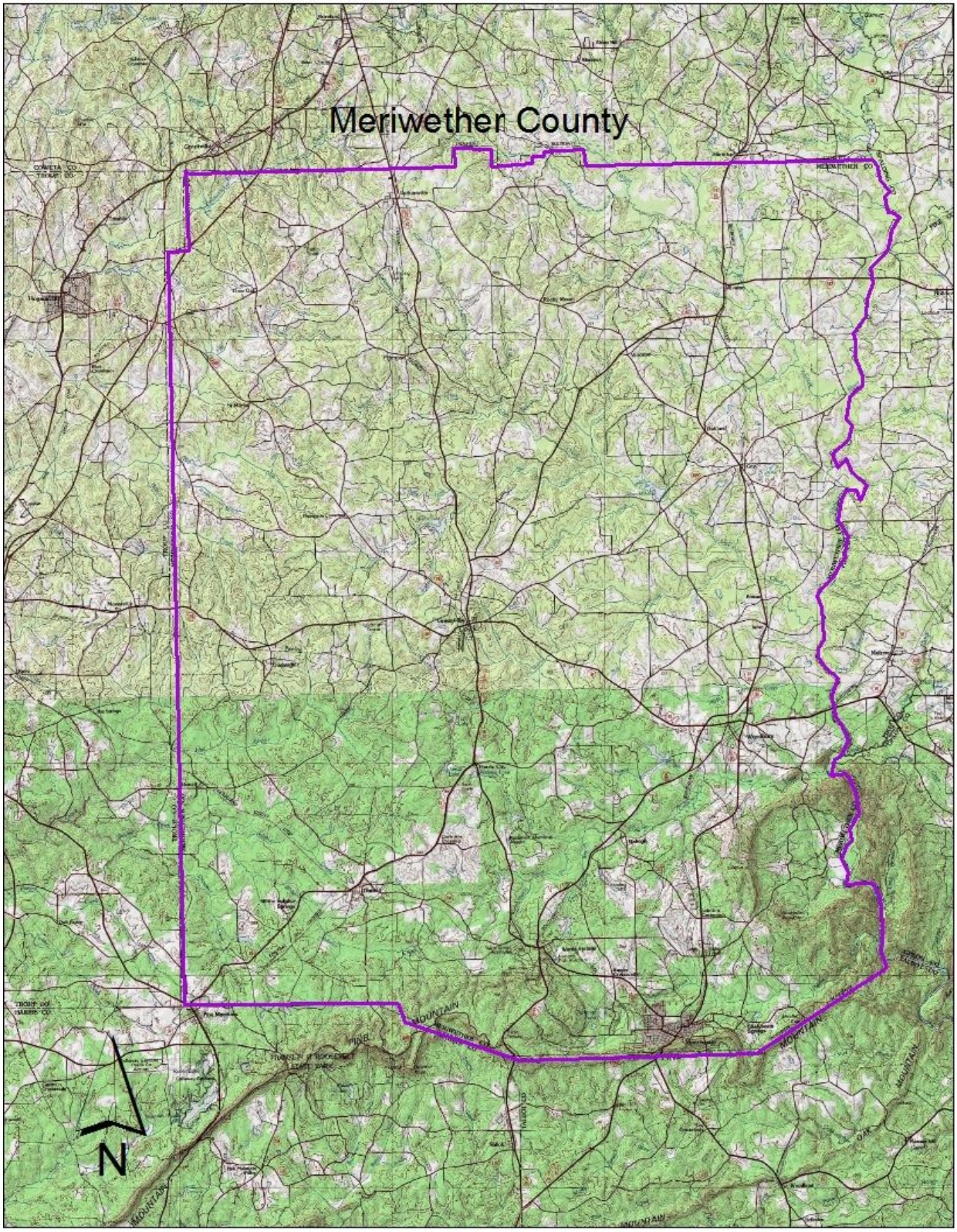
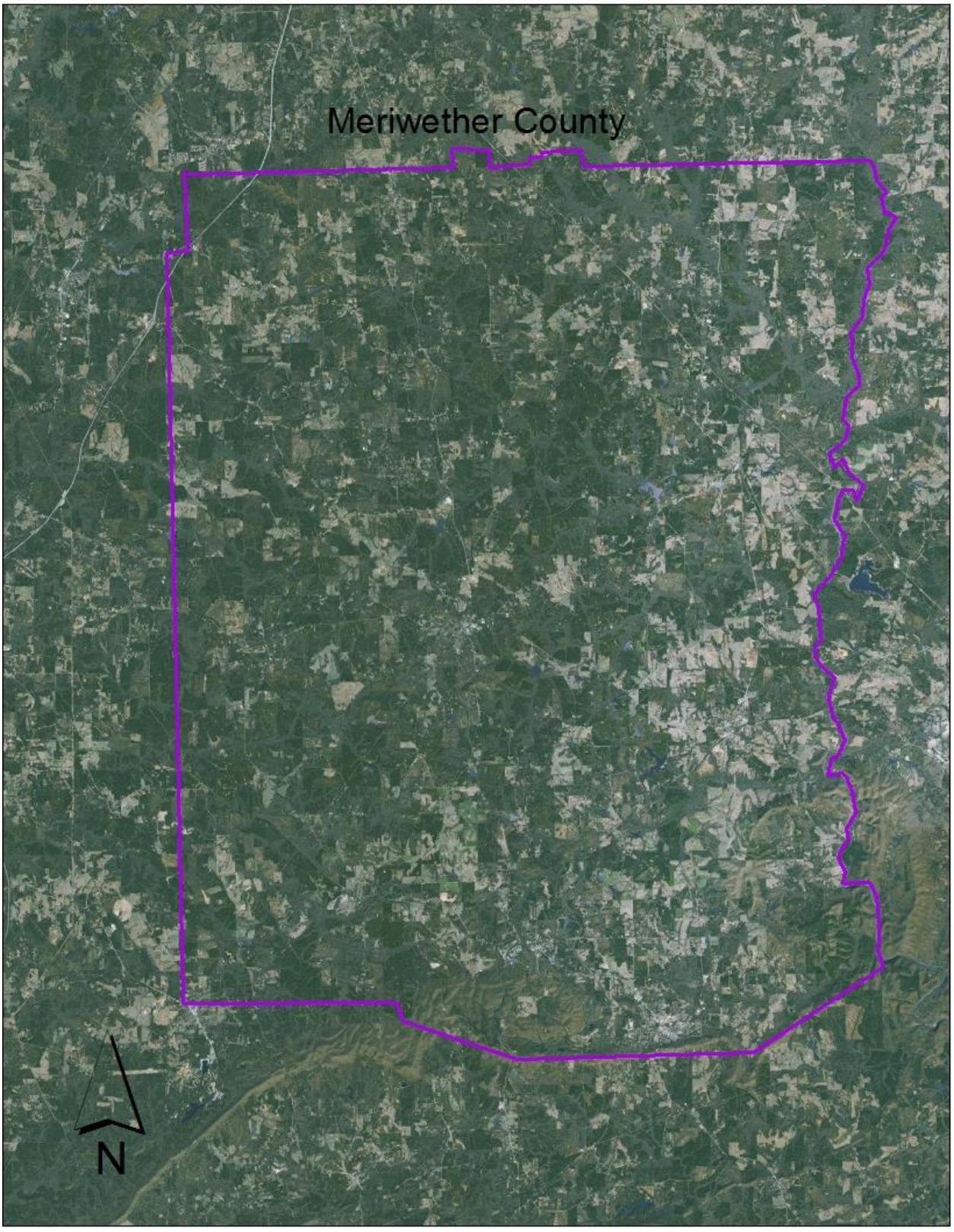
IV. County Base Maps




Meriwether County
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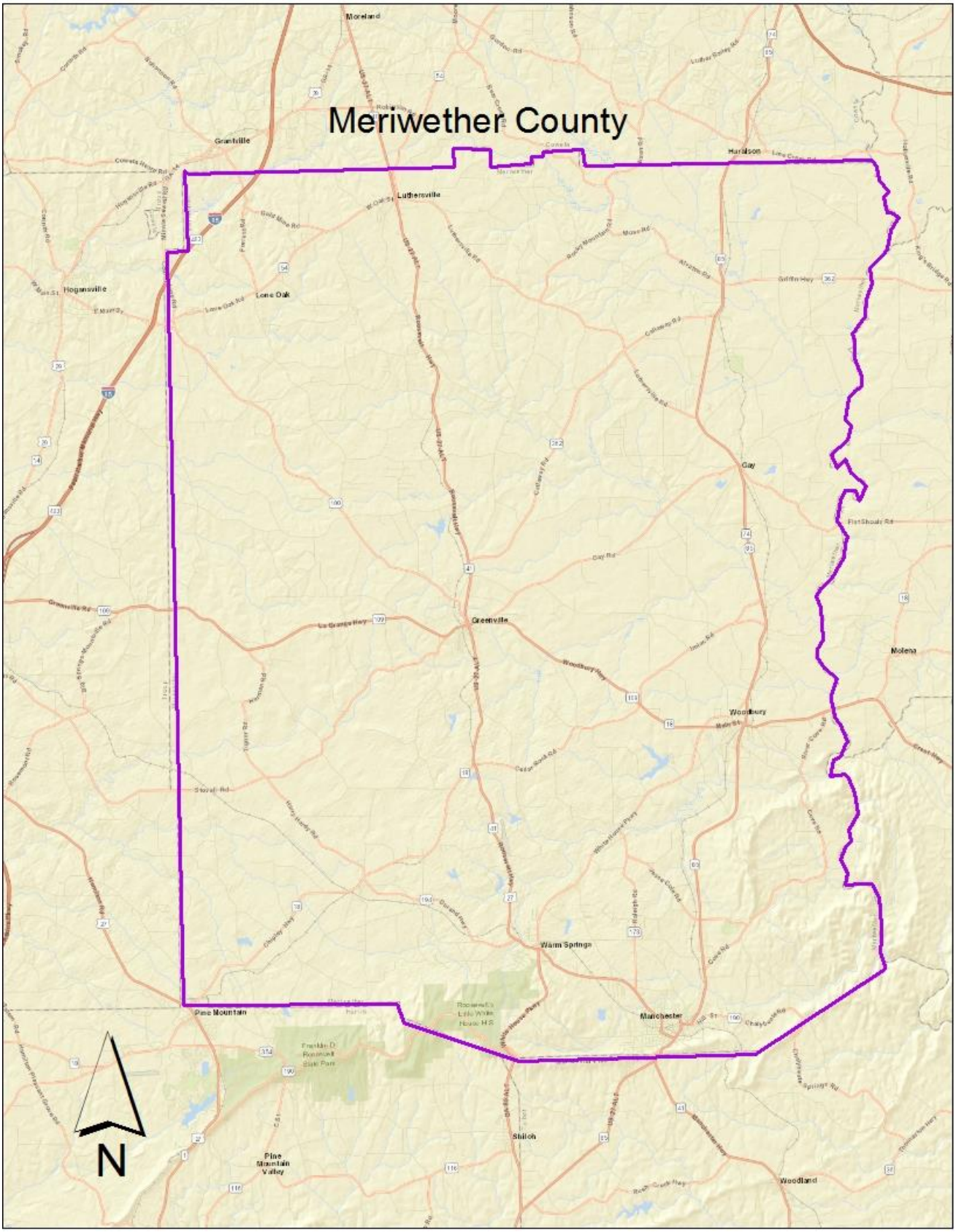

Meriwether County
Moreland
Grantville
Harralson
Luthersville
Hogansville
Lone Oak
Gay
Greenville
Molena
Woodbury
Warm Springs
Pine Mountain
Manchester
Shiloh
Pine Mountain Valley
Woodland
N

V. 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)

Meriwether County is typical of a County in the Southeastern United States in that it contains areas of both boundary and intermix WUI. Relative proximity to a large metropolitan area and continuous development results in communities near extensive unbroken wildland fuel and also sited such that wildland fuels are present within the community. Development is most prevalent in the northwest part of the county which is influenced by the I-85 corridor. Development is not as rapid as counties nearer to large metropolitan areas**.**

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

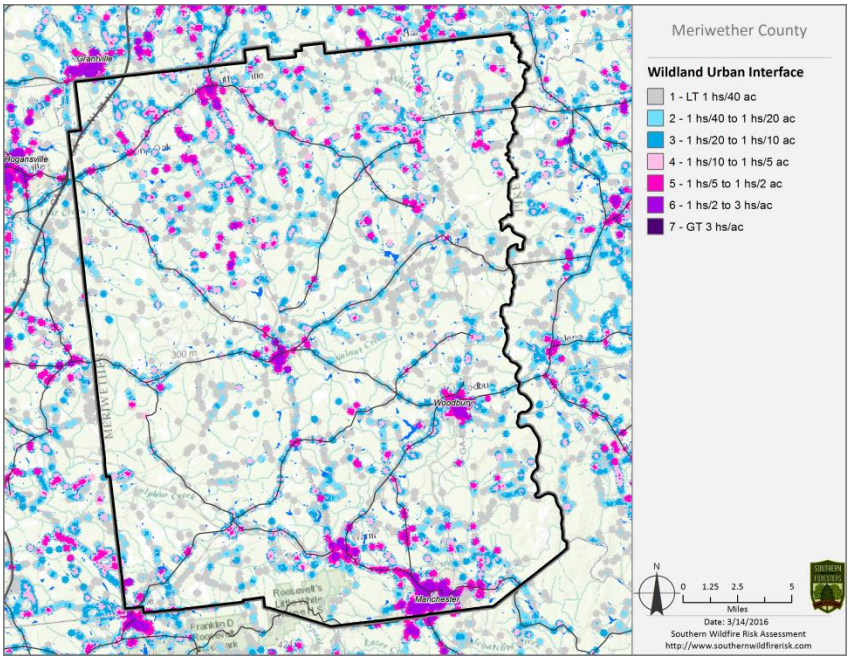
  - Both large (household size) and small (gas grill size) liquefied propane gas (LPG) tanks can present hazards to firefighters, including explosion. See the "LPG Tank Hazards" discussion for details.

- 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 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.

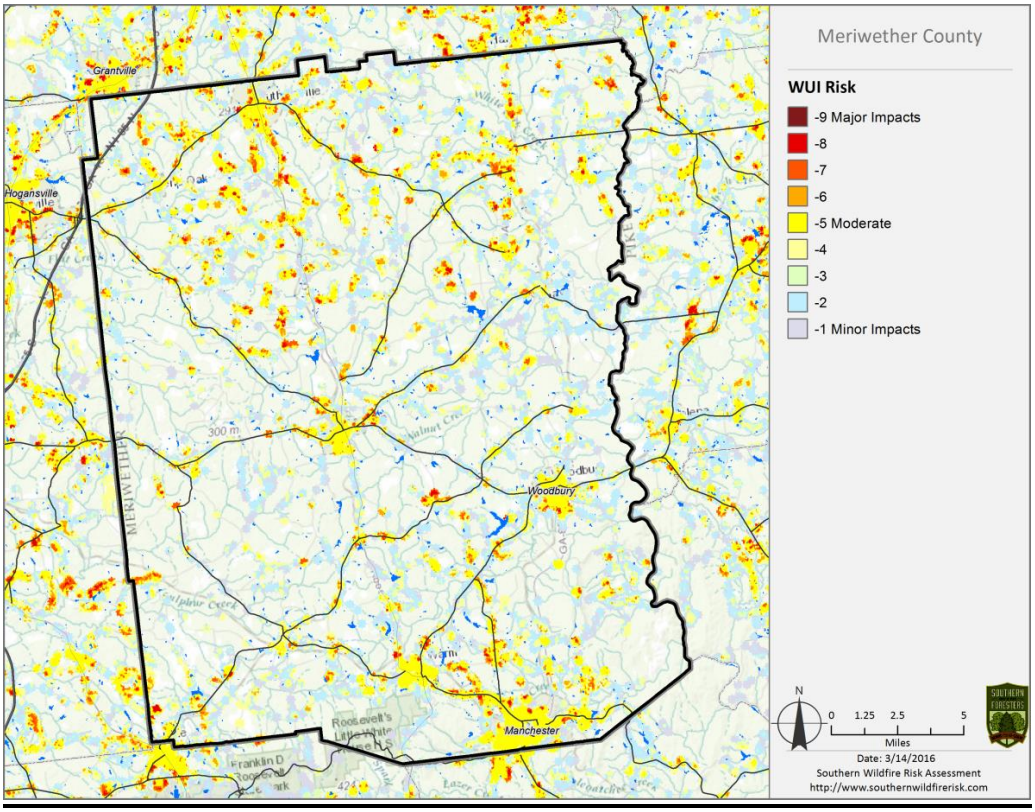
VI. Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment & Risk Hazard Maps

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

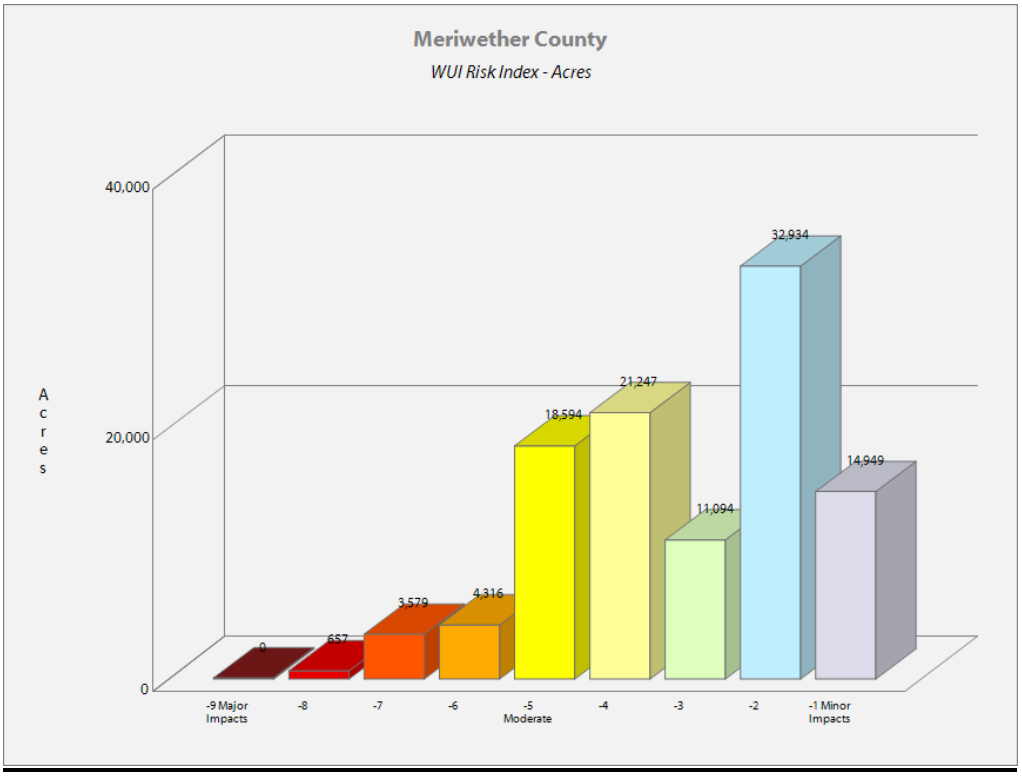
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

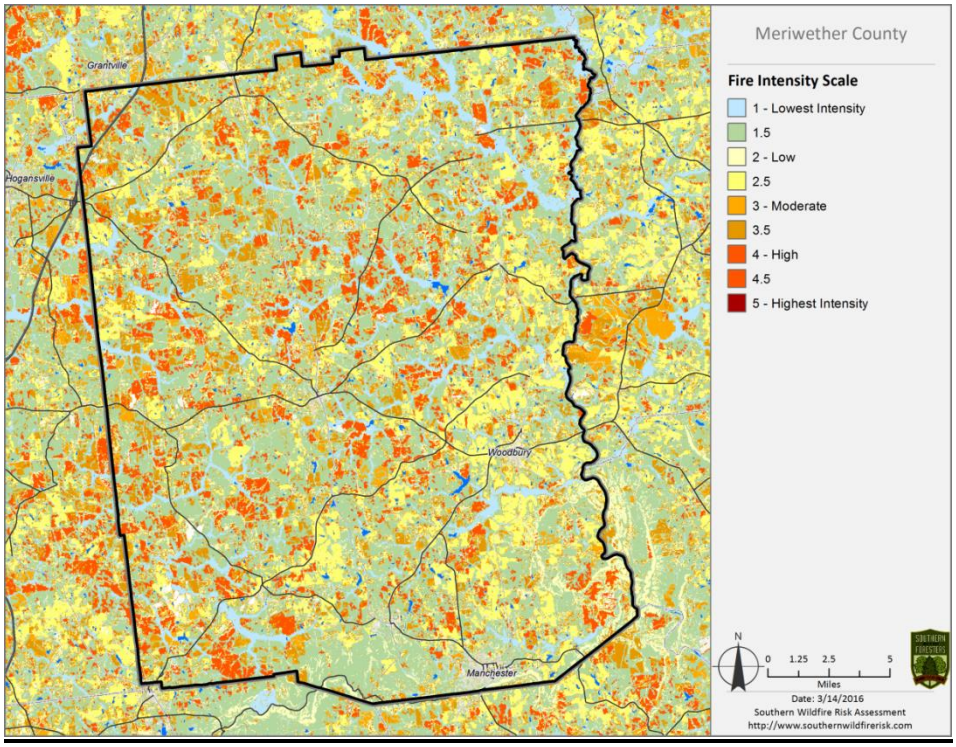


Wildland Urban Interface Map from the Meriwether County SWRA Report

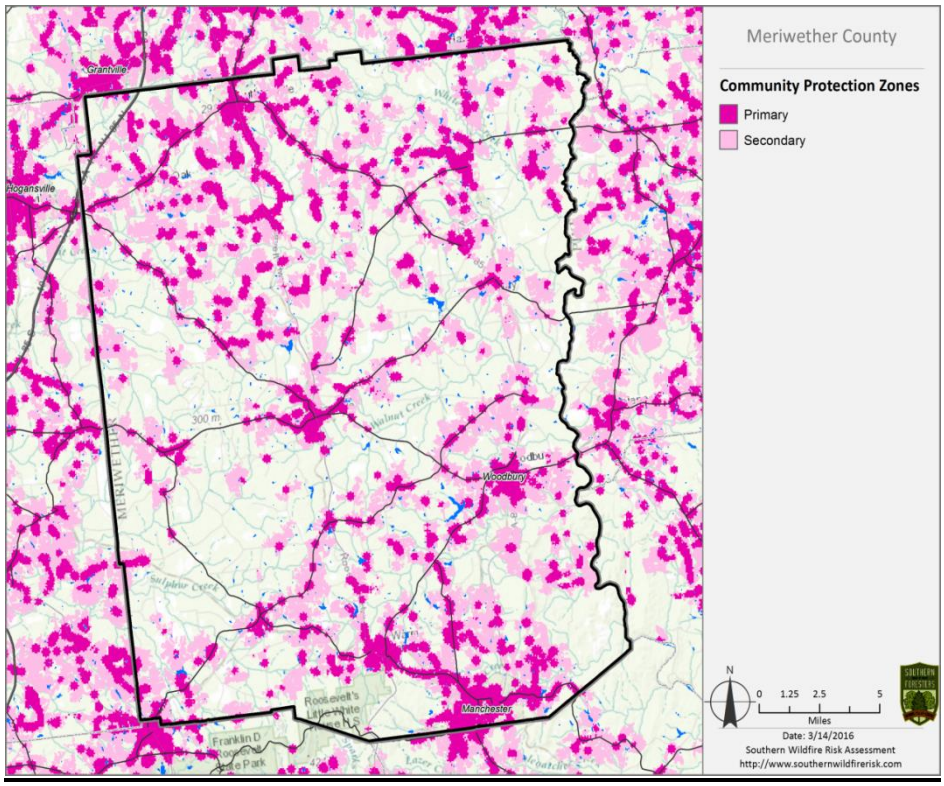


Pictured above Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map from the Meriwether SWRA Report and pictured below WUI Risk Acres table.





Pictured above is the Fire Intensity Scale Map and below is the Community Protection Zone map from the Meriwether County SWRA report



Community Risk Assessments

Following an initial meeting with County officials on 6/18/09, assessments were made of communities at risk in Meriwether County. Areas designated for assessment were based on guidelines from Georgia Forestry Commission CWPP specialist Carl Melear. The Communities at Risk layer from the Southern Fire Risk Assessment System (SFRAS) was provided to local fire response personnel for guidance and their local knowledge was requested to decide where assessments would be made. Assessments were made using the Georgia Forestry Commission Form 140 for wildland community fire risk assessment. In all 19 communities were assessed. These areas were mostly evenly distributed over the county.

Three (3) communities were designated as in the High risk category, eleven (11) were designed as moderate, and five (5) were at low risk. Each of these communities are listed in the table below by name, a map number that corresponds to the community location on all maps, the overall score from the risk assessment, the approximate acreage and number of homes, the risk category, approximate coordinate location, fire dept. jurisdiction, and suggested mitigation methods. Opportunities for assessment still exist in the County.

Map #	Score	Risk Category	Homes	Latitude	Longitude	Jurisdiction	Mitigation Method(s) Suggested
1	137	High	19	33 6.258'	84 37.935'	Sta 6	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
2	137	High	19	33 6.499'	84 37.929'	Sta 6	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
3	133	High	27	33 6.396'	84 37.913'	Sta 6	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
4	121	Moderate	9	33 09.530'	84 47.215'	Sta 3	Firewise training
5	120	Moderate	22	33 11.307'	84 42.597'	Sta 2	Firewise training
6	118	Moderate	33	33 9.418'	84 35.479'	Sta 4	Improve Defensible space reduce Struc. Ignitability
7	105	Moderate	7	33 10.187'	84 41.011'	Sta 4	Improve Defensible space reduce Struc. Ignitability
8	104	Moderate	9	33 5.654'	84 44.671'	Sta 5	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
9	97	Moderate	20	33 5.924'	84 44.659'	Sta 5	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
10	90	Moderate	23	33 5.695'	84 44.577'	Sta 5	Improve Defensible space reduce Struc. Ignitability
11	88	Moderate	11	33 09.954'	84 47.219'	Sta 3	Improve Defensible space reduce Struc. Ignitability
12	85	Moderate	24	32 55.326'	84 42.047'	Sta 12	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
13	80	Moderate	20	33 11.421'	84 42.711'	Sta 2	Improve Defensible space reduce Struc. Ignitability
14	78	Moderate	20	32 50.93'	84 38.309'	Manchester	Improve Defensible space reduce Struc. Ignitability
15	74	Low	17	33 5.14'	84 44.774'	Sta 5	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
16	71	Low	20	33 5.235'	84 44.777	Sta 5	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
17	54	Low	15	33 5.659'	84 44.668'	Sta 5	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
18	51	Low	26	33 11.469'	84 47.554'	Sta 3	Fuel Reduction (burning) Firewise training
19	45	Low	26	33 09.826'	84 50.905'	Sta 3	Firewise training

VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

As Central 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. The County will have an opportunity to significantly influence the wildland fire safety of new developments. It is important that new development be planned and constructed to provide for public safety in the event of a wildland fire emergency.

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

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

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-feet of defensible space**	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store

		firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, and replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day, National Wildfire Preparedness Day is held annually on the 1st Saturday in May.	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Driveway Access	Culvert installation	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed to allow emergency vehicle access.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul de sacs or turn arounds.
Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas. Seek grant for WUI mitigation team.
2. Railroad Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads to better maintain their ROW eliminating brush and grass through herbicide and mowing. Maintain firebreaks along ROW adjacent to residential areas.
Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		

1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Investigate need for "brush" trucks near communities at risk.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Investigate need for additional drafting pumps.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel to include S130, S190, and S215. Ready Set Go training
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

VIII. ACTION PLAN

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" including: City of Milner and North MHP Community 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,

Meriwether County Fire Departments, City of Greenville, Manchester, Luthersville, Warm Springs, Woodbury, and local residents of Meriwether 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. National Wildfire Preparedness Day is held on the 1st Saturday in May. 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 Community USA brochure
- Fire Adapted Community information
- Ready Set Go materials

5. Wildfire Protection Display

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

6. Press

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

Wildland Fuel Reduction or Modification

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Identify prescribed burning projects near Communities at Risk	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Services	Concentrate on Communities in proximity to plantation pine or natural pine stands that are west or north of the communities.	ongoing	Late winter 2010 - 11 then every third year
Install and maintain permanent firebreaks near Communities at	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Services	Determine communities where burning is not desired or can be conducted safely. Locate, install, and	ongoing	Initiate as determination is made and continue as opportunities are found.

Risk		maintain permanent firebreaks and make their locations known to all response agencies.		

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Provide support to individuals interested or skilled in wildland areas in regard to enhanced training	Georgia Forestry Commission	Supported by the Newnan District Training officer, Chief Ranger should coordinate with Meriwether Fire Services to locate individuals with skills or interests to improve training or qualification to fill ICS positions on the District Type 3 organization	ongoing	January 2011 and beyond
Provide assistance to communities at risk during periods of increased burning activity	Meriwether County Fire Services	Provide a common burning area inside or adjacent to communities where citizens can safely burn debris on specific days either unsupported or supported by local fire services	ongoing	Late winter 2010 - 11 repeated in succeeding years
Provide assistance to communities with alternates to burning	Georgia Forestry Commission	Through grant acquisition or by using local funds, acquire a small chipper which could be loaned to communities (could be used on the same day as burn assistance)	ongoing	Late winter 2010 - 11 and in succeeding years

Improvements to Capabilities of Wildland Response agencies

Identify needs for training and qualification of wildland responders	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Chief(s)	Supported by the District Training officer, Chief Ranger and Fire Chief(s) should examine training records of all wildland responders to insure all are FFT2 or Georgia Basic wildland certified.	ongoing	January 2011 and beyond
Identify equipment needs and acquire wildland equipment for County and State wildland responders to insure all wildland equipment meets NWCG standards.	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Services	Chief Ranger and Fire Chief(s)should inventory present wildland equipment and PPE identify needs and acquire needed material through local or grant funding	ongoing	January 2011 and beyond

Public Education and Outreach

Achieve Firewise USA status for Communities at Risk	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Service	Consider one of high risk communities for certification as a Firewise USA certified community. Should this be realized it would serve as a model for other communities that would follow.	1 year	January 2011 and beyond
Notification of Communities at Risk regarding risk of wildland fire hazard and during periods of high to extreme fire danger.	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Services	Use PSA's in local newspapers and local radio stations. Utilize Firewise displays in local post offices and banks. Seek use of local EMC newsletter for Firewise message. Create poster sized notices for use in common public places (stores post offices etc. adjacent to high hazard areas advising residents about the hazard and how to protect themselves and their property. Distribute public notices concerning Firewise at local sporting events and other public gatherings.	Ongoing	October 2010 and beyond
Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Improve public knowledge regarding Firewise principles	Georgia Forestry Commission and Meriwether County Fire Services	Acquire a Firewise display to be retained by the Georgia Forestry Commission. This display could be loaned to fire response stations for training of people in communities in their response areas. Firewise brochures should be provided to the building permit office for distribution.	Ongoing	January 2011 and beyond

Assessment:

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

Reduction of Community hazard and structural ignitability

- Direct measurement of the number of communities and individual structures assessed would be the appropriate measure of success
- Any meetings that result in cooperation between wildland departments should be logged along with minutes of those meetings. Goals should be set and reviewed after each meeting.
- Any changes to or additions to codes and ordinances would be an obvious measure of success.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Acres burned would be the appropriate measure for fuel reduction. A direct measure of linear feet of firebreaks would be an appropriate measure for pre-suppression breaks.
- Fuel reduction in communities at risk would be measured by the number of communities affected and number of projects completed.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- A direct measure of the number of capabilities or qualifications gained would be the appropriate measure of success.
- Any equipment acquired or any equipment brought up to national standards would be the appropriate measure of success.

Steps for Public Education and Outreach

- Direct measurement of the number of persons contacted, literature distributed, public notices posted, news articles published, radio programs aired, etc. would be the best measure of success.
- The number of communities certified as Firewise USA would be an obvious measure of success.

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

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

Appended Documents:

Meriwether 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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The Georgia Forestry Commission provides leadership, service, and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources.

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