

GEORGIA FORESTRY  
COMMISSION



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with support from the U.S. Forest Service

# **Community Wildfire Protection Plan** *An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources*

## **Colquitt - Miller County**



MAY 2018

Prepared by;

Rock Holt, Chief Ranger, Miller County  
Will Fell CWPP Specialist (Initial plan 2009)  
Beryl Budd, Wildfire Prevention Specialist (Revised 2018)

Georgia Forestry Commission  
716 Hwy 91 South  
Colquitt, GA 39837

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

Craig Tully  
Colquitt Miller County FD (229) 758-6300  
[ctullycmcfire@bellsouth.net](mailto:ctullycmcfire@bellsouth.net)

Debbie Henry  
Miller County EMA Director (229) 364-2905  
[millerema2@bellsouth.net](mailto:millerema2@bellsouth.net).

Rock Holt  
Chief Ranger, Miller County Forestry Unit (229) 758-3322  
[hholt@gfc.state.ga.us](mailto:hholt@gfc.state.ga.us)

Darren Martin  
Assistant District Manager, Flint District (229) 522-3580  
[dmartin@gfc.state.ga.us](mailto:dmartin@gfc.state.ga.us)

Cory Thomas  
City Manager/Deputy EMA Director (229) 758-1103  
[coryjthomas@bellsouth.net](mailto:coryjthomas@bellsouth.net)

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Miller County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Miller County Wildfire Plan

## I. OBJECTIVES

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

An initial meeting was held on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2009 at the Colquitt Miller Co Fire Department attended by the following core planning team;

Will Fell	GFC CWPP Specialist (Initial
Beryl Budd	GFC Wildfire Prevention Specialist (revised 2018)
Rock Holt	GFC Chief Ranger Miller County
Craig Tully	Fire Chief Colquitt Miller Co FD
Debbie Henry	Miller County EMA Director
Cory Thomas	City Manager/Deputy EMA Director
Darren Martin	GFC Assistant District Manager, Flint District
Trent Ingram	GFC District Manager, Flint District

After an initial discussion of the processes and goals we hope to accomplish with this report, it was decided that we would identify and evaluate selected high risk communities and areas within the wildland urban interface. At the completion of this we would reconvene and discuss and evaluate the completed community wildfire risk assessments. It was further decided that we would provide for mitigation recommendations for Miller County. The Chief of the Colquitt Miller Co FD and GFC Chief Ranger assessed the chosen areas and reconvened on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 for the purpose of completing the following:

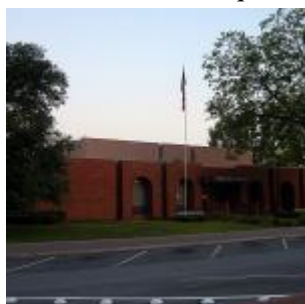
Risk Assessment	Assessed wildfire hazard risks and prioritized mitigation actions.
Fuels Reduction	Identified strategies for coordinating fuels treatment projects.
Structure Ignitability	Identified strategies for reducing the ignitability of structures within the Wildland interface.
Emergency Management	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 AND WILDFIRE HISTORY



Miller County, the state's 117th county, was created by the state legislature in 1856 out of portions of Early and Baker counties. Located in southwest Georgia, close to the Alabama border, it is bounded by Baker, Decatur, Early, Mitchell, and Seminole counties and encompasses 283 square miles. The county was named for attorney Andrew Miller, who served in the state senate and later became president of the Medical College of Georgia (later Georgia Health Sciences University) in Augusta.

Colquitt was designated as the county seat in the same year as the county's founding. The city was named after Walter T. Colquitt, a clergyman, attorney, and judge, who served in the U.S. Senate from 1843 to 1848.



The county's first courthouse, built in Colquitt, was replaced once and then burned twice before the current structure was completed in 1977. While Colquitt remains the only communities.

Creek Indians were the earliest known inhabitants. White explorers first came through the area with Hernando de Soto in 1540, while the first known white settlers arrived in 1817. By 1860 the county had nearly 1,800 inhabitants. The population reached a high of 9,998 in 1940 before losing more than a third of its

**Miller County Courthouse** population during the next fifty years.

Agriculture remains the primary occupation in Miller County, although over time agriculture has become agribusiness. In 1830 crops included cotton, corn, sugarcane, and sweet potatoes—cane-grinding and syrup-making were neighborhood social events. By 1900 cotton was still a main crop, but farmers had turned from agricultural crops to naval stores like rosin, turpentine, and lumber. Mechanization spurred the growth in farms from an average of 107 acres at the turn of the twentieth century to plantation-size holdings. In the 1930s forestry also became part of an agribusiness geared toward the production of paper. The county has 62,900 acres of forest.



In 1968 the first pivotal irrigation system was installed, and today 66,000 acres in Miller County are watered by irrigation systems. In 1996 the Cooperative Extension Service helped introduce a life-changing crop improvement: transgenic cotton. Transgenic cotton is modified to produce a toxin lethal to tobacco budworms and corn-ear worms, the primary cotton pests since the eradication of the boll weevil in the early 1990s. Ninety percent of the cotton planted in Miller County in 2003 was transgenic.

#### **Swamp Gravy**

At the turn of the twenty-first century, cotton, peanuts, and corn for grain were the top crops in Miller County, which today ranks fourth in total peanut production in Georgia.

Miller County is home to Georgia's official folklife play, *Swamp Gravy*. The ever-changing play is regularly scheduled at the historic Cotton Hall in Colquitt, which also houses the Museum of Southern Cultures. Storytelling circles are also popular because of the play. The Swamp Gravy Institute, an arts service organization formed as an outgrowth of the play, is a consulting and training unit of the Colquitt-Miller Arts Council. The Mayhaw Festival, honoring the tart south Georgia fruit, is held in April at Spring Creek Park, which also contains ecologically fragile wetlands.



Peace Wall

The ongoing Millennium Murals Project, funded by public and private sources, has become a community beautification project. Using walls on area schools and business establishments, project designers pair artists with local middle and high school students, teachers, and community members. The murals depict stories told by locals about community happenings. According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Miller County was 6,125, a slight decrease from the 2000 population of 6,383.

## Wildfire History

While Miller County is largely an agricultural area, still about 34% of the land area is in woodland. With the exception of a few large blocks of woodland, northwest of Colquitt in the WMA, there are homes scattered throughout the county. Many woodlots are small and regularly prescribed burned to keep fuels down. However the risk from fire in the wildland urban interface is fairly substantial in places, particularly in some areas on the south and eastern edges of the city of Colquitt where unburned woodlots abut residential areas.

Over the past fifty years, Miller County has averaged 39 reported wildland fires per year and 77% of these have occurred during the period from October through March. These fires have burned an average of 232 acres annually. Of this annual acreage burned, 83% was lost during the above six months. Despite the advent of the outdoor burning permit law about 30 years ago, the numbers of fires have remained steady over the years as more residences have moved out of towns into the wildland urban interface.

During the last 10 fiscal years (FY2007 – FY2016) the leading causes of these fires, was debris burning causing 50% of the fires and 52% of the acres burned. Machine Use is the second leading cause accounting for 24% of these fires and 11% of the acreage burned. Incendiary or arson was the next leading cause with 10% of the fires and 7% of the acres burned. Lighting accounted for 6% of these fires and 25% of the acreage burned. More detailed records of wildfire activity during this 10 year period can be found on the following pages 8 thru 12.

The table below is wildfire data from the last complete fiscal year, July 1, 2016 thru June 30 2017. The table includes the number of fires, cause, acres burned and 5 year averages.

County = Miller	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
<a href="#">Children</a>	Children	4	9.96	1.00	2.08
<a href="#">Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc</a>	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0	0.00	0.80	4.34
<a href="#">Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn</a>	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	8	32.57	5.80	40.02
<a href="#">Debris: Household Garbage</a>	Debris: Household Garbage	0	0.00	0.20	0.60
<a href="#">Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc</a>	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1	0.34	1.60	3.51
<a href="#">Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related</a>	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0	0.00	0.20	6.00
<a href="#">Incendiary</a>	Incendiary	2	2.65	1.40	1.27
<a href="#">Lightning</a>	Lightning	4	29.09	0.80	5.82
<a href="#">Machine Use</a>	Machine Use	4	12.26	3.60	27.03
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding</a>	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	1	1.76	0.20	0.35
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Other</a>	Miscellaneous: Other	2	21.56	0.40	4.31
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences</a>	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	3	29.13	1.00	6.57
<a href="#">Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires</a>	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	0	0.00	0.20	0.52
<a href="#">Undetermined</a>	Undetermined	2	10.51	1.20	2.29
<b>Totals for County: Miller Year: 2017</b>		31	149.83	18.40	104.71

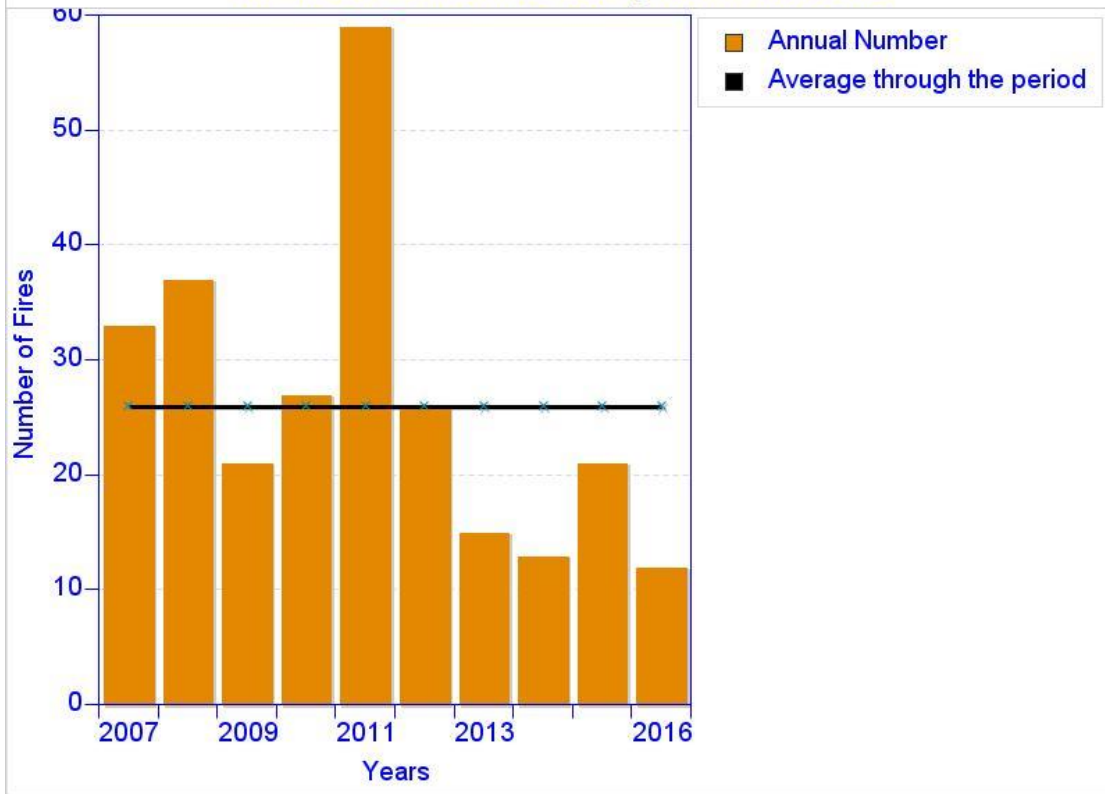
<b>Acres Burned /Number of Fires For Miller County For FY 2007-2016</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Acres Burned</b>	<b>Number of Fires</b>	<b>Average Size</b>	<b>Statewide Average Size</b>
2007	375.35	33	11.37	18.64
2008	121.75	37	3.29	4.56
2009	149.46	21	7.12	3.90
2010	254.57	27	9.43	3.93
2011	231.60	59	3.93	17.56
2012	430.84	26	16.57	5.08
2013	99.52	15	6.63	4.53
2014	86.55	13	6.66	5.02
2015	178.31	21	8.49	4.42
2016	9.33	12	.78	6.29

**Number of Fires by Cause for Miller County for FY 2007 to 2016**

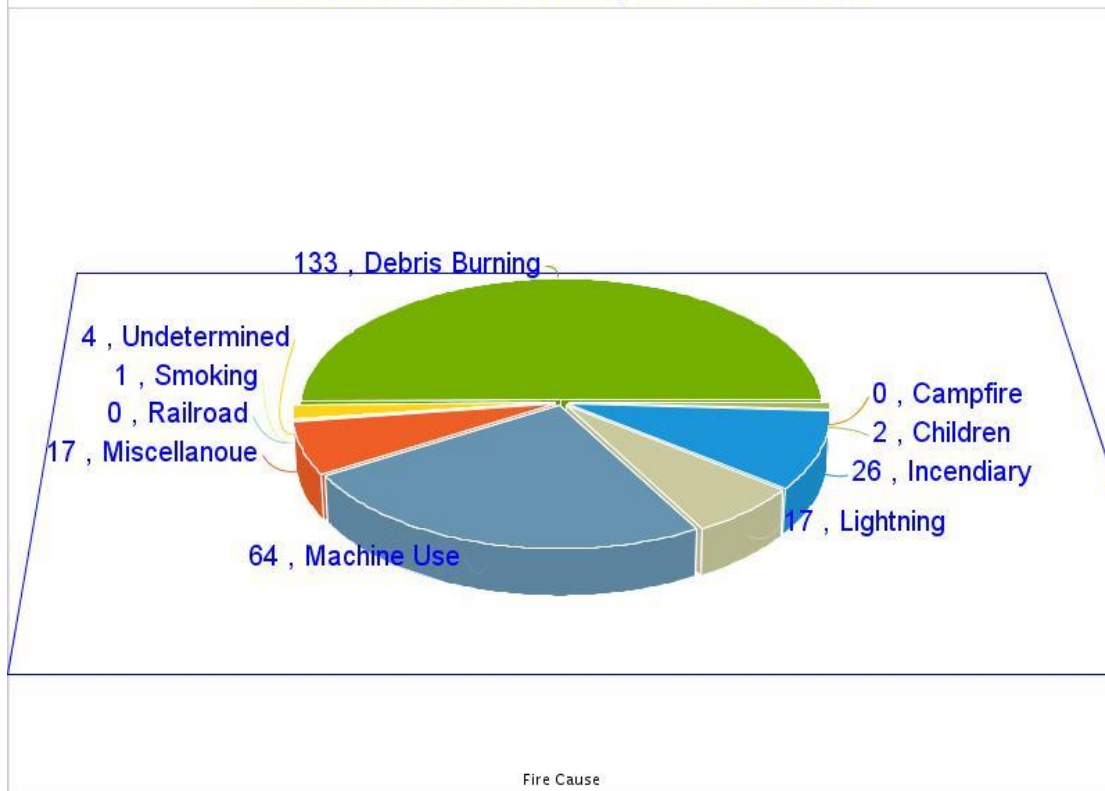
<b>Year</b>	<b>Camp fire</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Debris Burning</b>	<b>Incendiary</b>	<b>Lightning</b>	<b>Machine Use</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Rail road</b>	<b>Smoking</b>
<b>2007</b>	0	0	15	2	2	13	1	0	0
<b>2008</b>	0	1	16	3	6	6	5	0	0
<b>2009</b>	0	0	11	5	0	4	1	0	0
<b>2010</b>	0	0	16	3	2	4	2	0	0
<b>2011</b>	0	0	31	4	5	15	3	0	1
<b>2012</b>	0	0	10	4	2	8	2	0	0
<b>2013</b>	0	0	10	2	0	2	1	0	0
<b>2014</b>	0	1	7	1	0	3	1	0	0
<b>2015</b>	0	0	11	2	0	6	2	0	0
<b>2016</b>	0	0	6	0	0	3	3	0	0



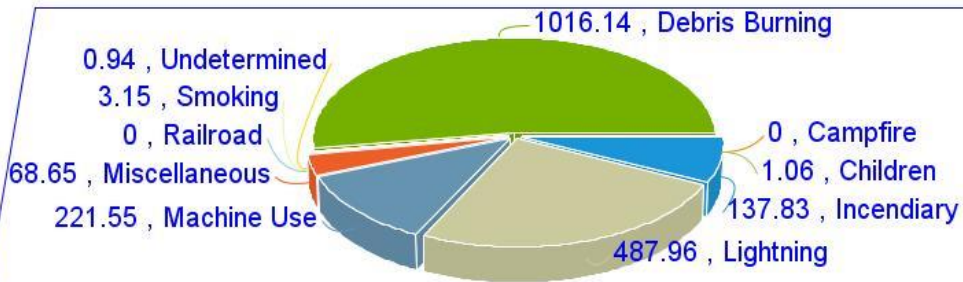
Number of Fires For Miller County For FY 2007-2016



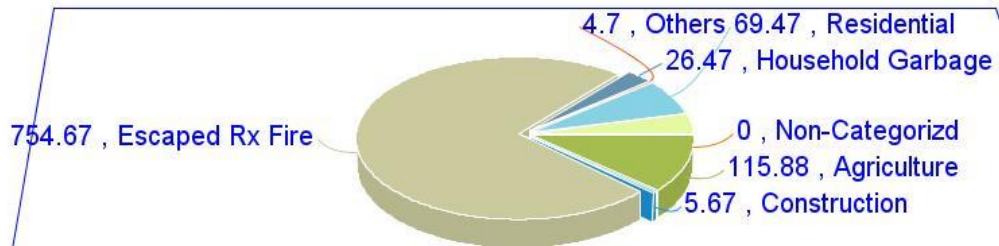
Cause of Fire For Miller County For FY 2007-2016



Acreage Burned by Cause of Fire For Miller County For FY 2007-2016

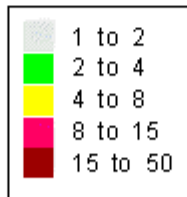
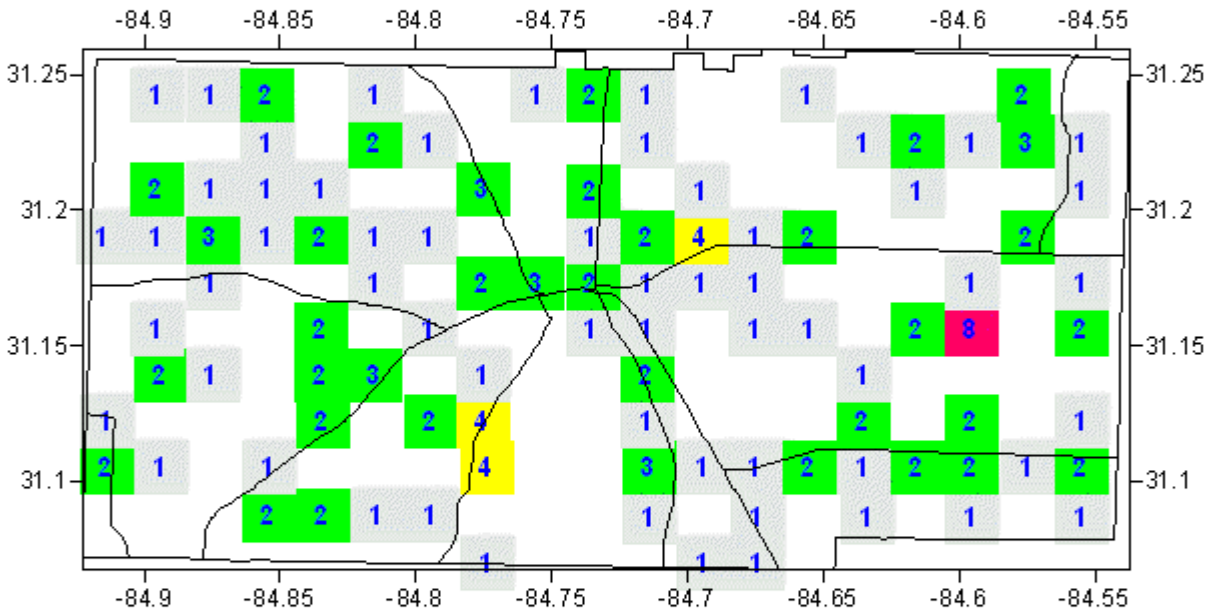


Acreage Burned By Debris Burning Sub Cause For Miller County For FY 2007-2016

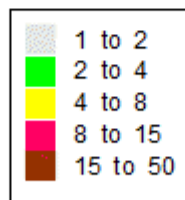
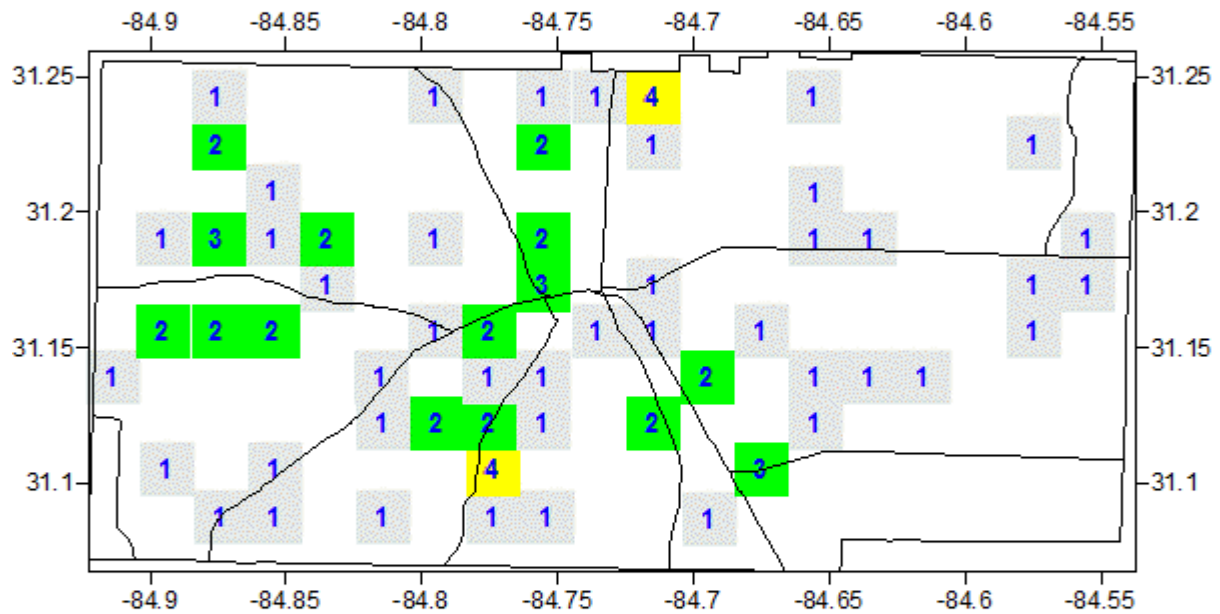


Fire Cause

# Fire Occurrence Map for Miller County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

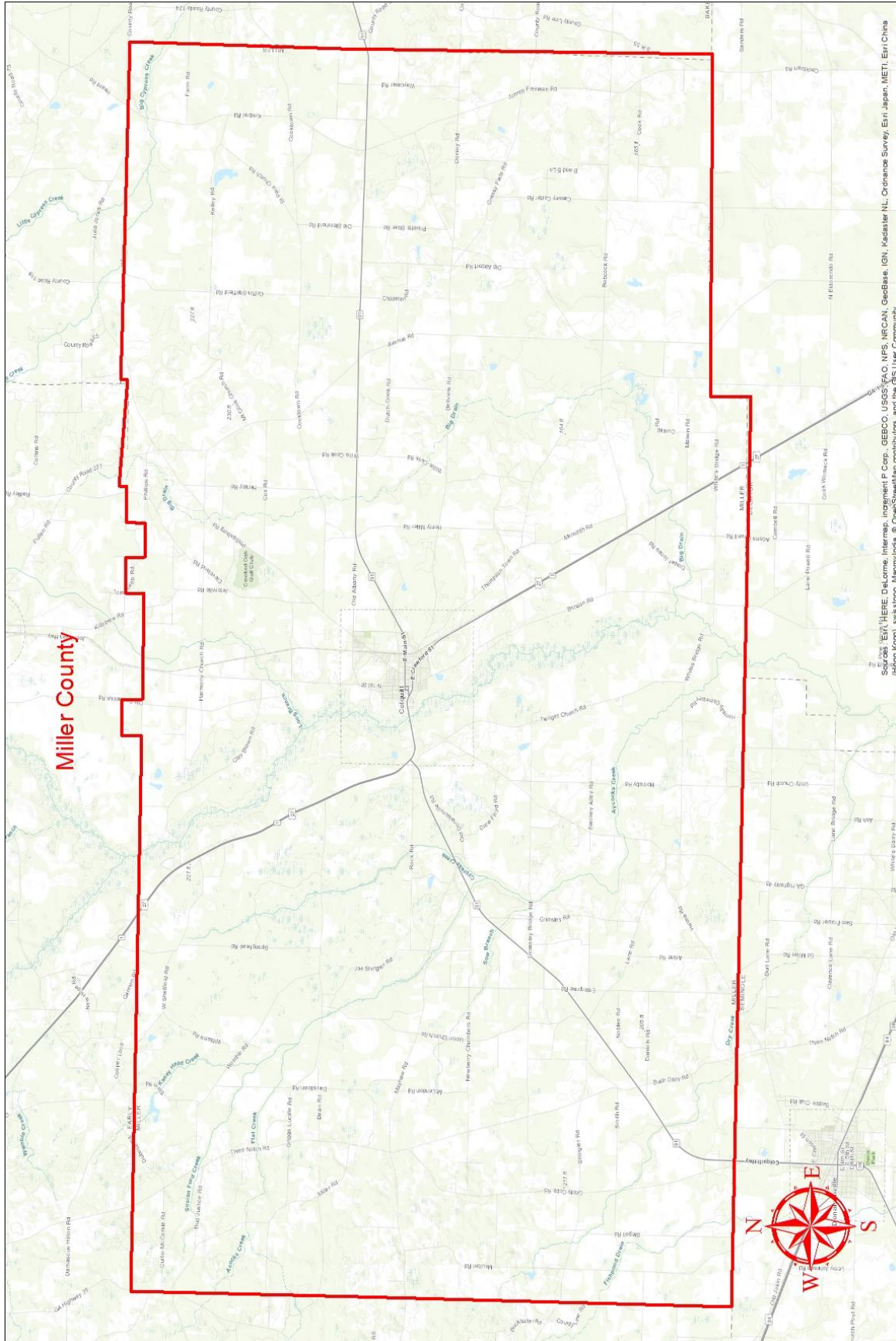


# Fire Occurrence Map for Miller County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



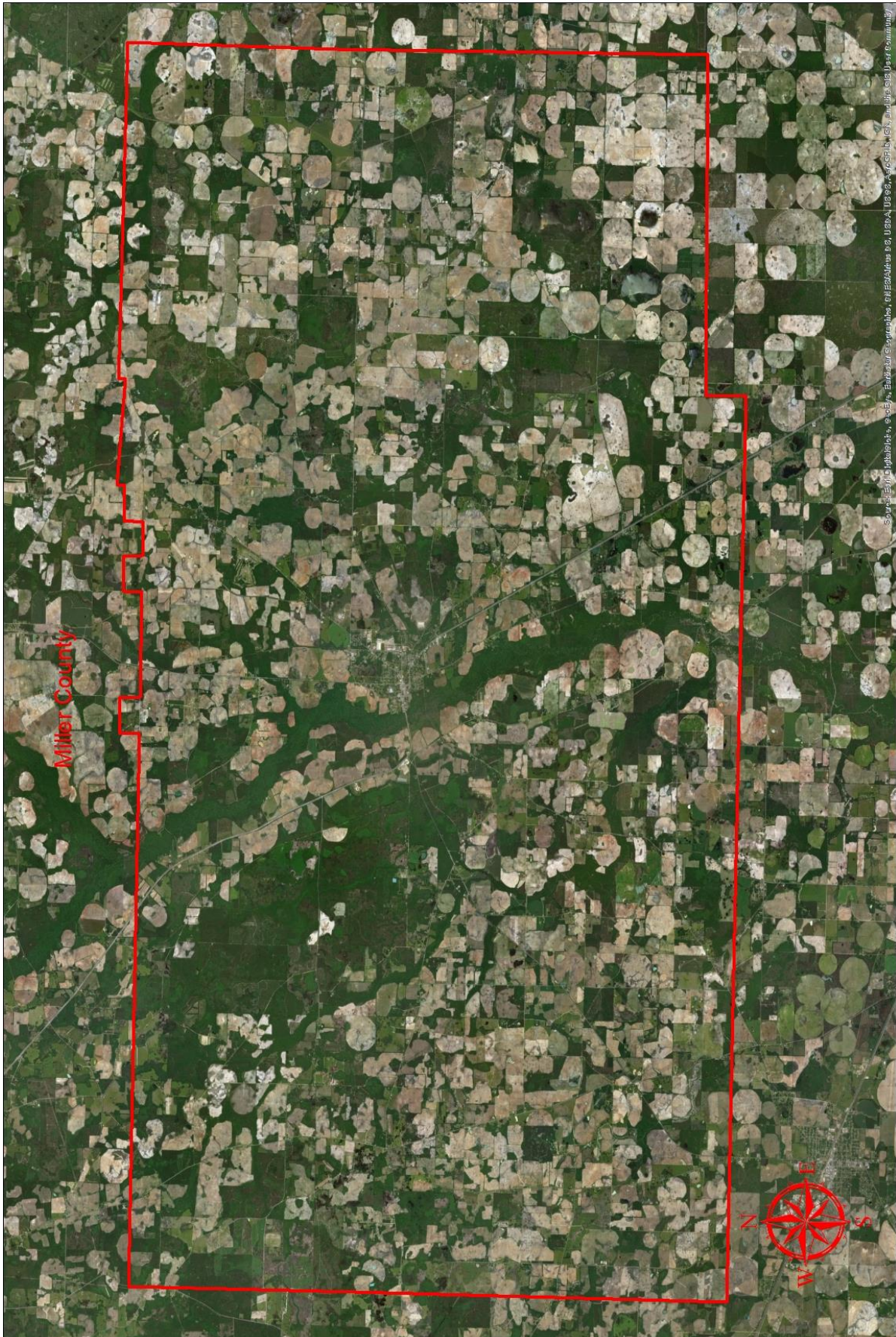


# IV. COUNTY BASE MAPS

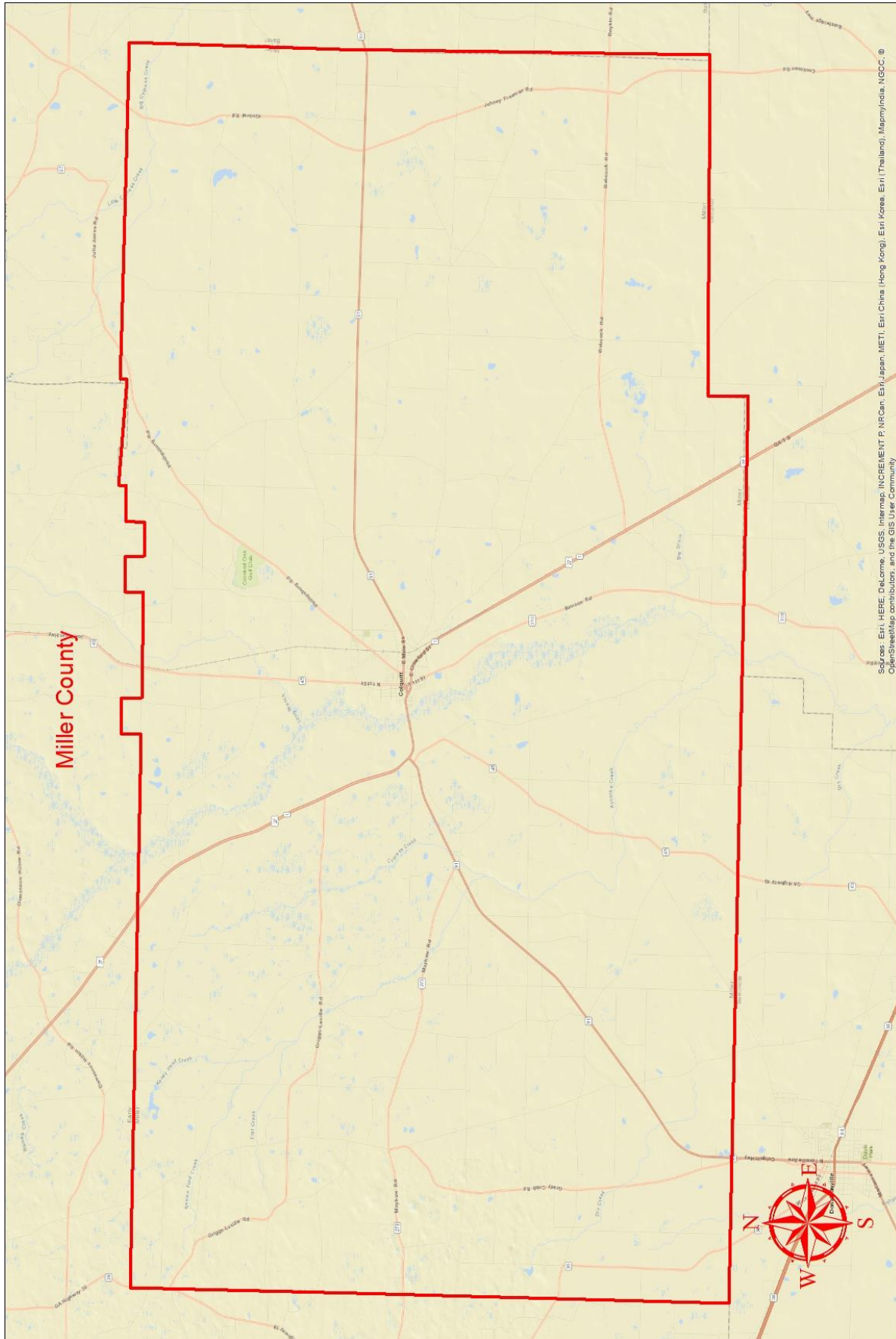


Sources: 'EARTH HERE' DeLorme, Intermap, Ingram P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri, Japan, METI, Esri China (Beijing), Swisstopo, Mapbox, and the OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community









## 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.



The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Colquitt Miller County Fire Department returned an average score of 112, placing Miller County in the “moderate” hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Miller County’s WUI was the Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Risk Assessment Checklist. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), topography, 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 Miller County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Unopened easements
- Narrow streets and roads without drivable shoulders
- Roads and entrances to communities too narrow for equipment
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Limited street signs and homes not clearly marked
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with heavy accumulations of vegetative debris.
- Above ground utilities
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots on edge of town.

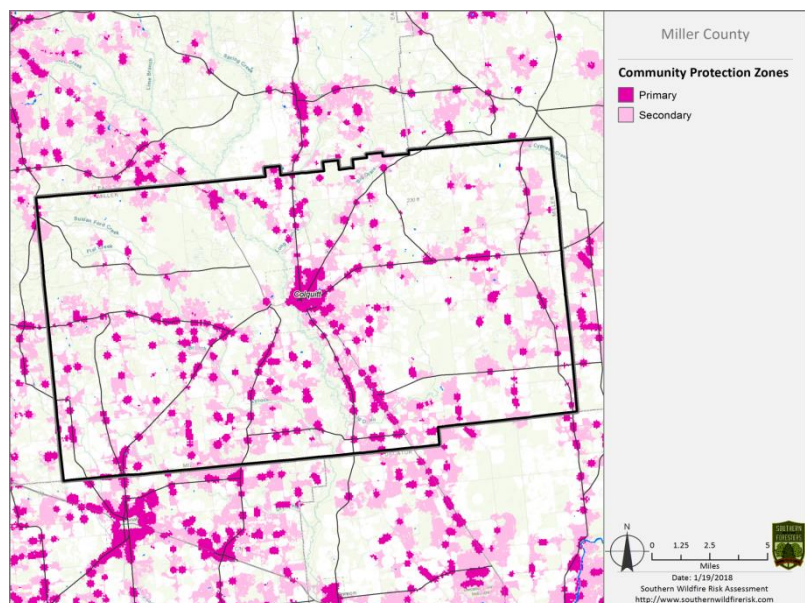
### Summary of Community Assessments

Community/Neighborhood	Comm Design	Site Hazard	Bldg Construction	Add. Factors	Overall Hazard Rating	Risk Rating
E. Dancer/E Pine St. (300 block)	6	67	35	26	134	High
MLK / Dancer (600 block)	8	72	25	31	136	High
MLK / Perry St.	10	67	35	33	145	Extreme
Bellview ThompsonTown	3	65	20	40	128	Moderate
Varnadoe	5	58	20	27	100	Moderate
ThompsonTown Community	20	40	0	27	87	Moderate
South Cuthbert St.	8	25	15	8	56	Low
<b>Average for Miller County</b>					<b>112</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

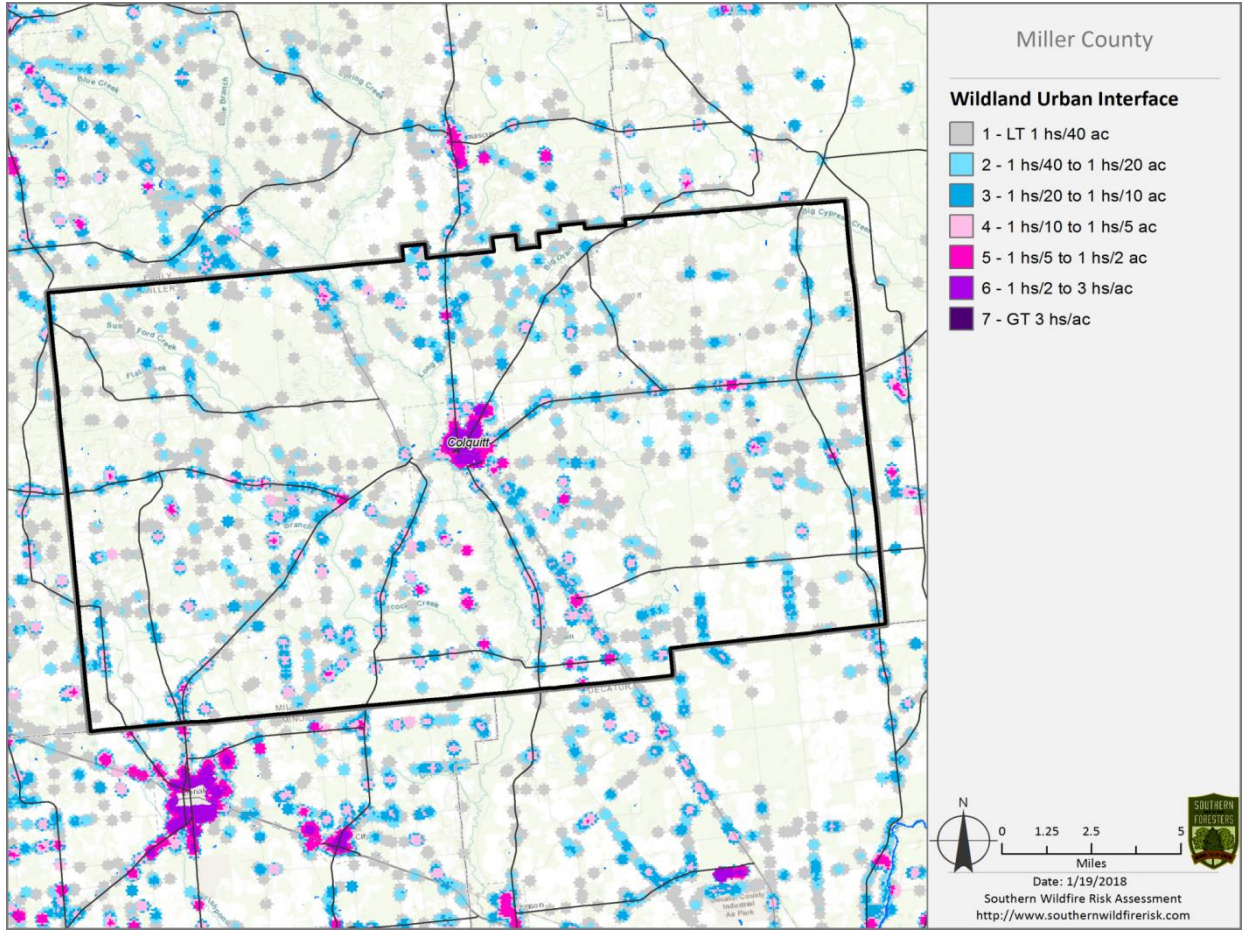
## VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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 Miller 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

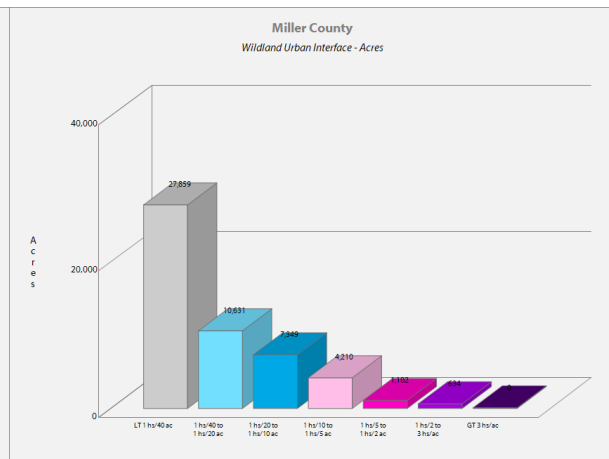
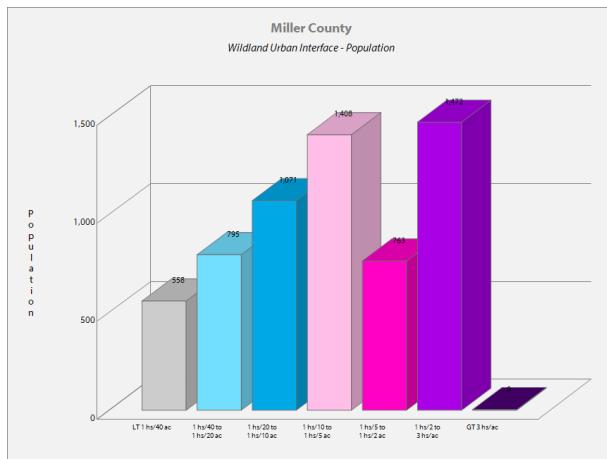


**Community Protection Zones map from the Miller County SWRA**

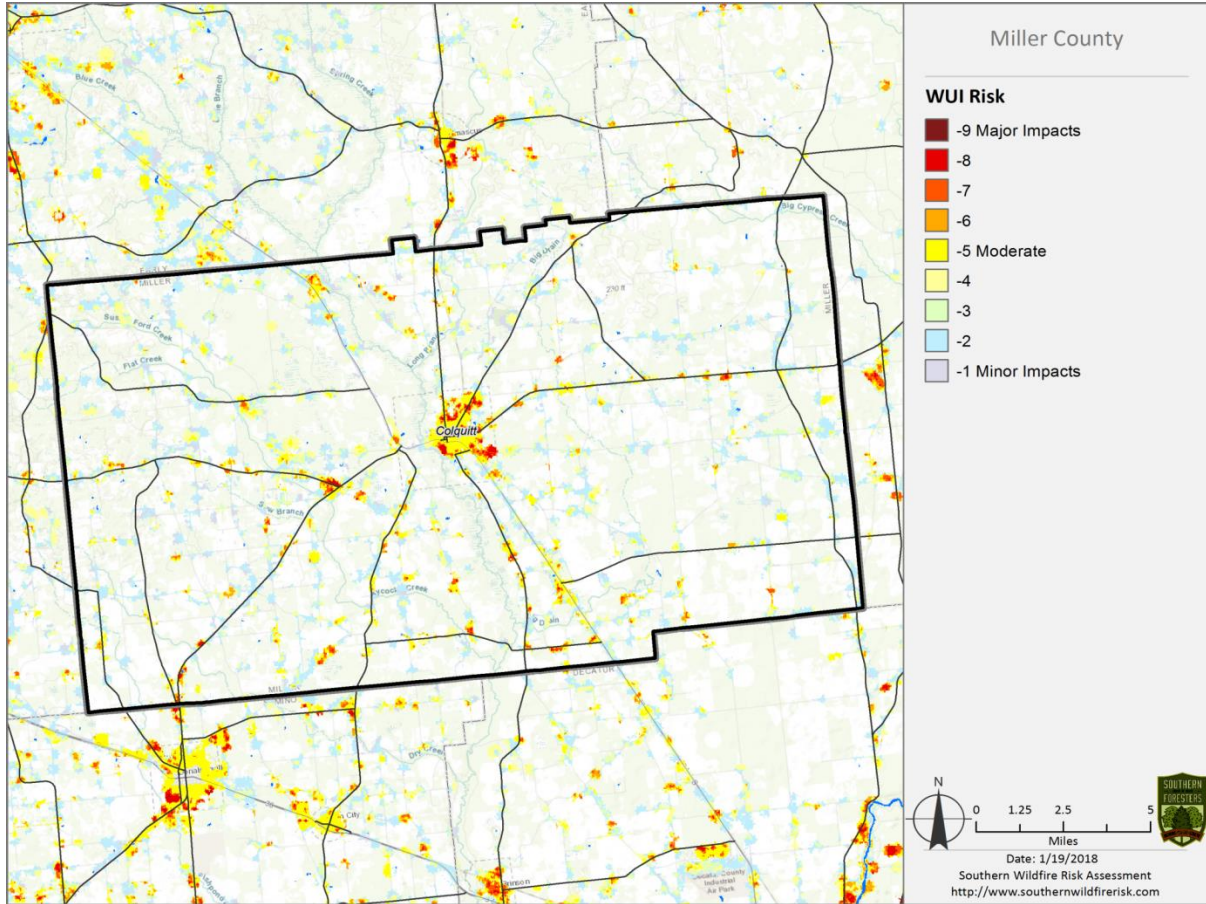


Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map

Below: WUI Population (left) acres (right)

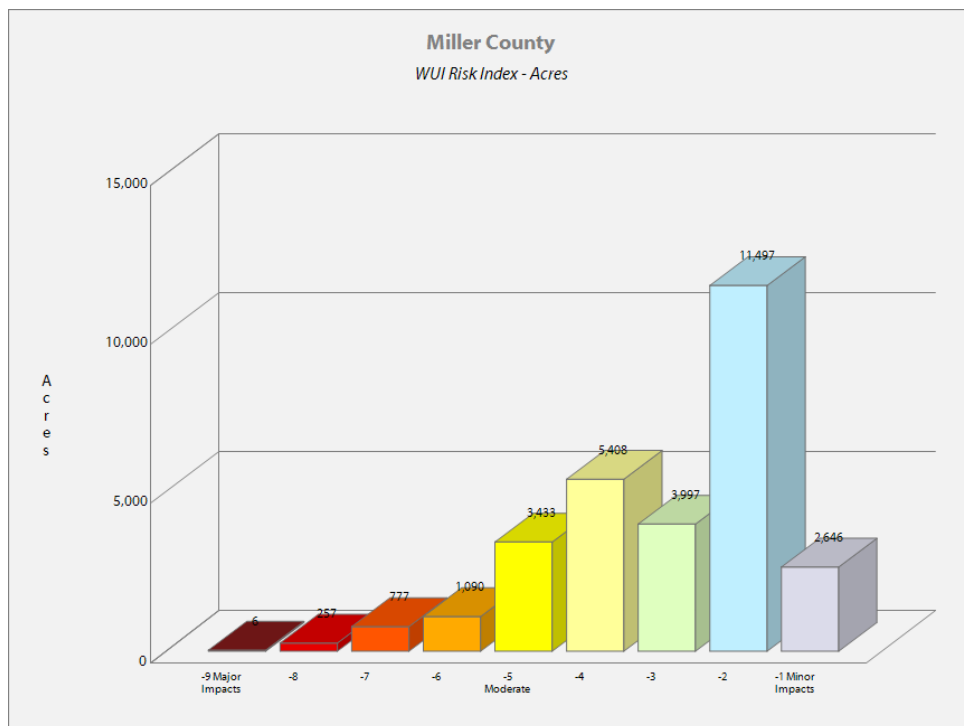


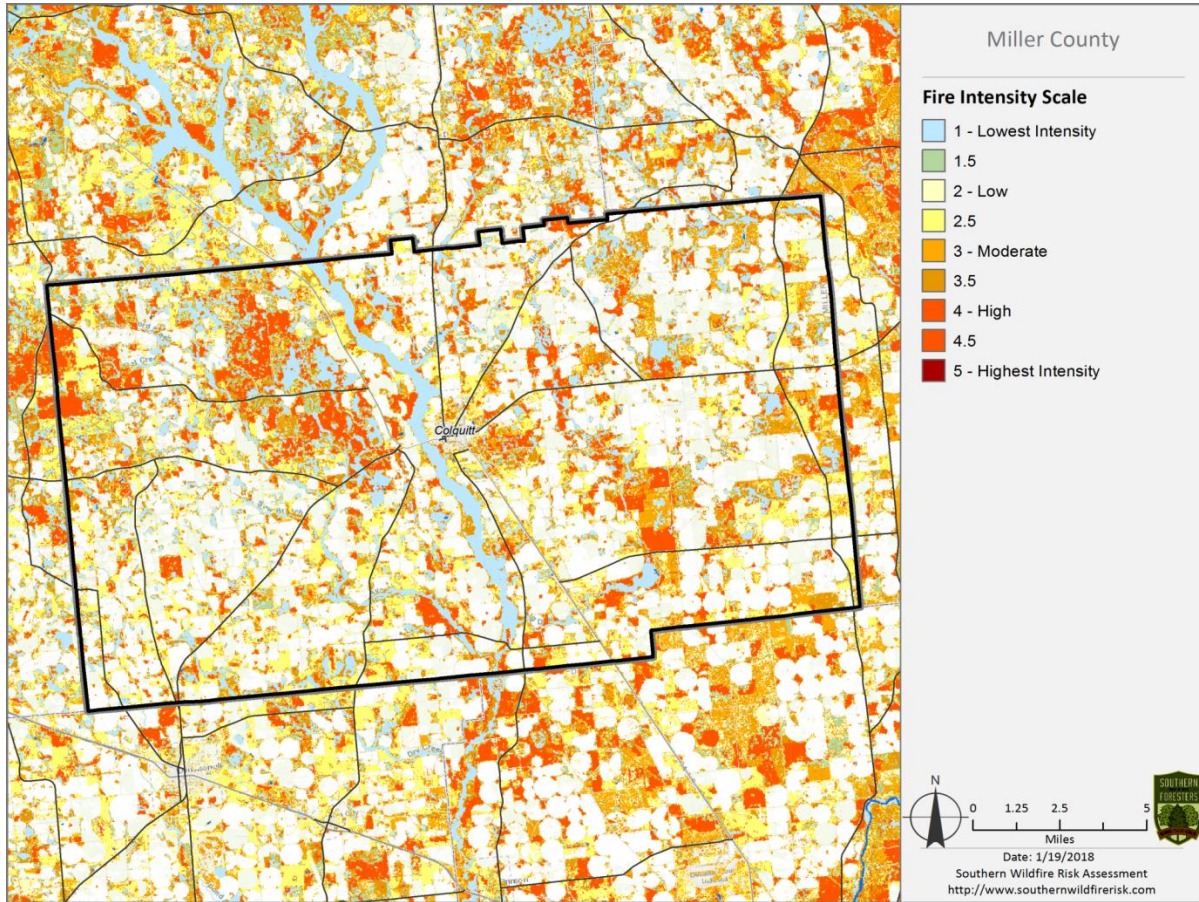




Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map

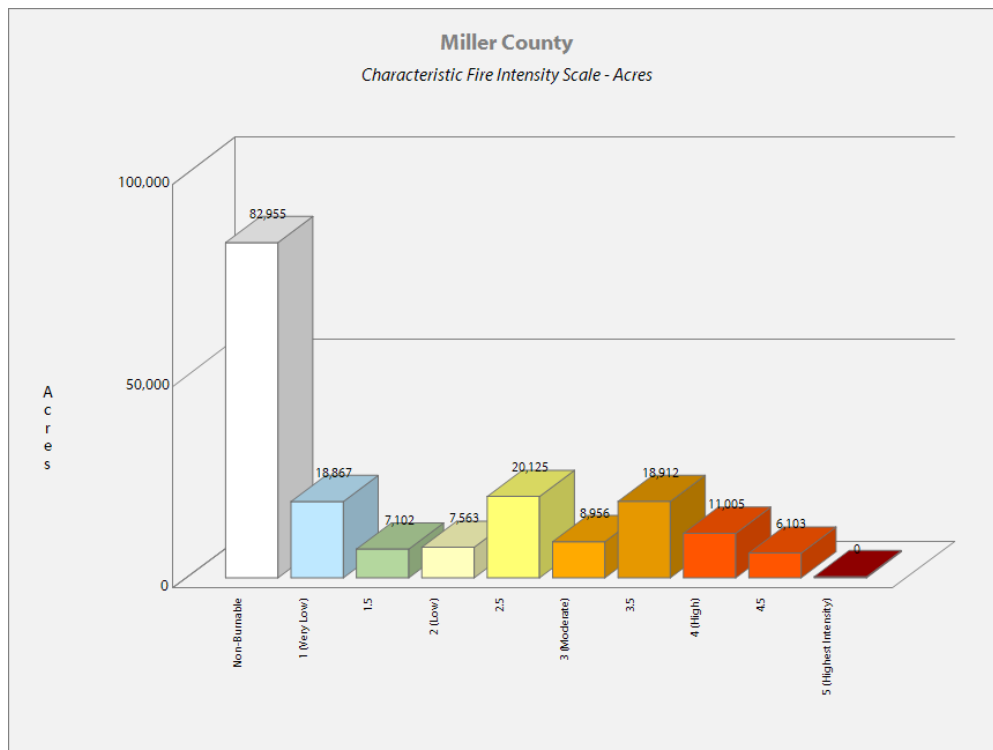
Below: WUI Risk Index - Acres



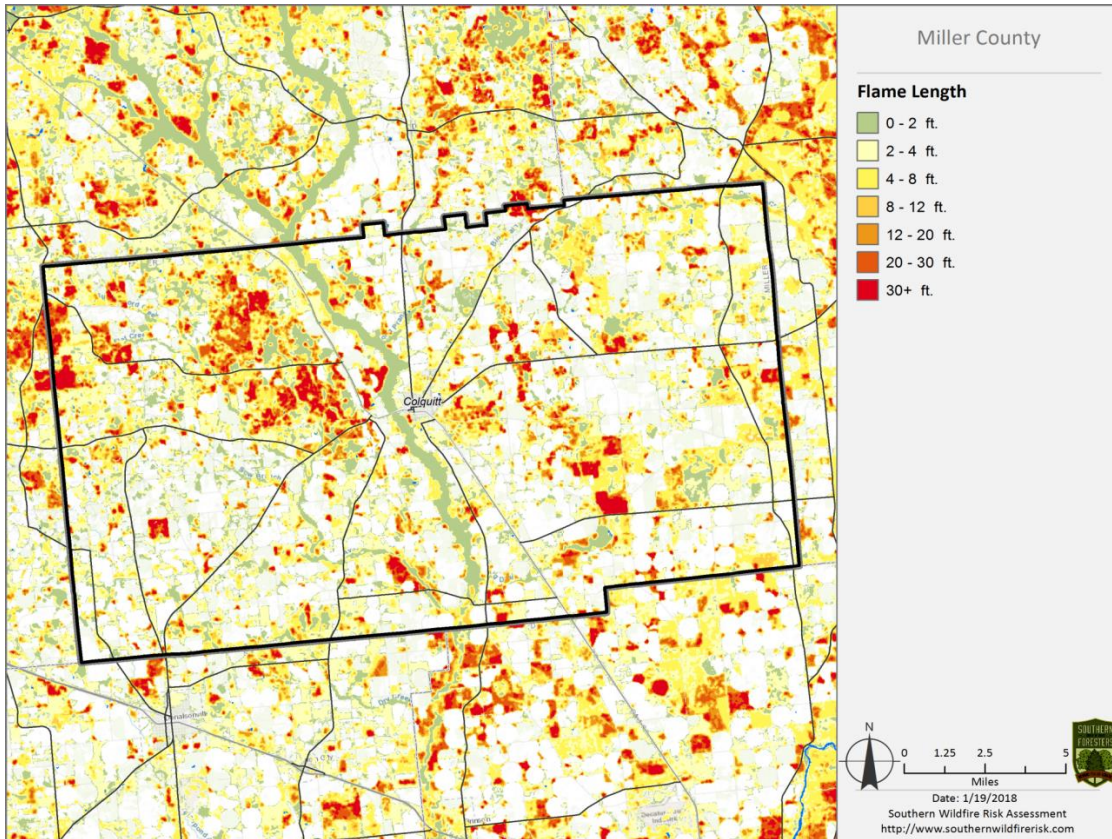


Above: Fire Intensity Scale Map

Below: Fire Intensity Scale-Acres

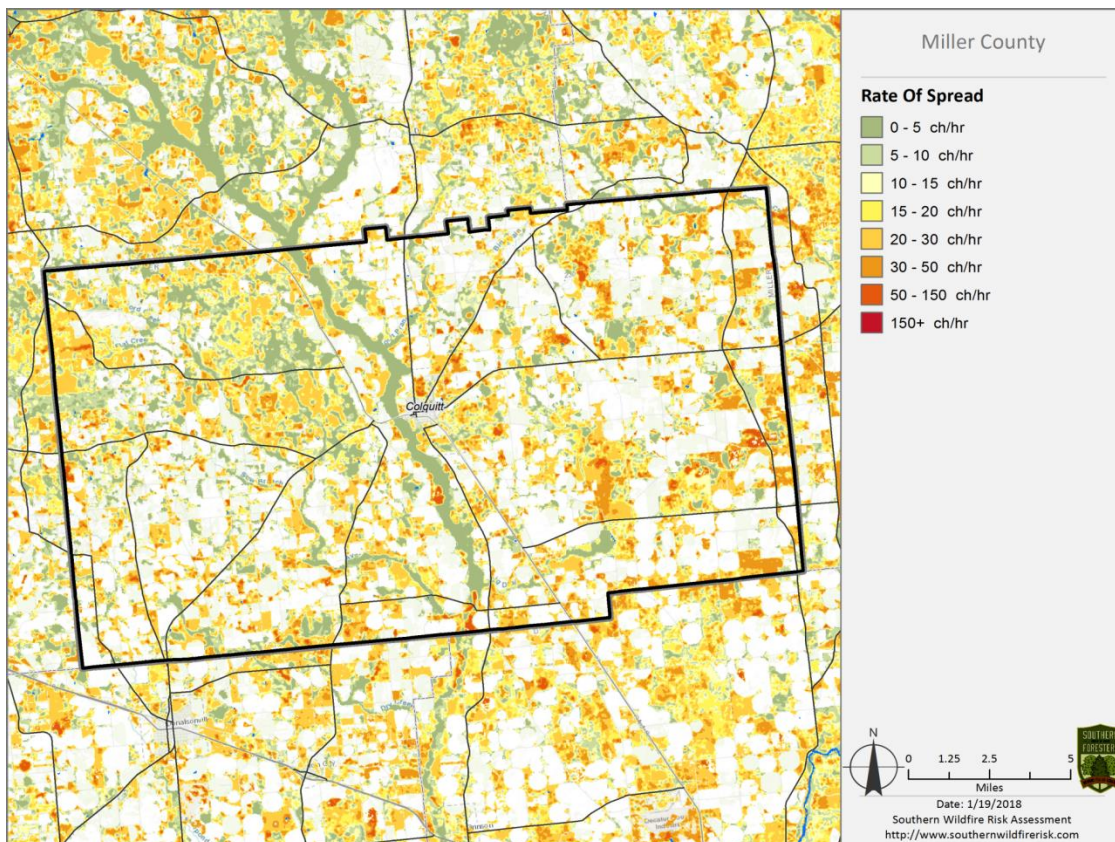






Above: Flame Length map

Below: Rate of Spread map



## VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Executive Summary

The following recommendations were developed by the Miller 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, replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day National Wildfire Preparedness Day – 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday in May	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Road Signage	At Replacement	New road signage with minimum 4 inch reflective lettering on non-flammable poles. Dead end (no outlet or turn-around) should be prominently tagged.
5. 911 Addressing	Enforce Codes	Enforce or amend ordinances to provide for uniform standards of addressing property.
6. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul de sacs.

7. Codes and Ordinances	<p>Examine existing codes and ordinances.</p> <p>Utilize the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC)</p>	<p>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</p> <p>At such time as the development of zoning, planning and subdivision ordinances become practical include fire department and emergency services input in the design of these.</p>
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**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 and public landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas
2. Adjacent Public Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Obtain grant for forestry mulcher or flail mower for brush reduction on public property 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. Install additional dry hydrants in practical locations.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Larger capacity hose. Investigate need for “brush” trucks.
3. 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

<p>1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Miller County Residents</p>
<p>Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include defensible space, landscaping, building construction, etc. Workshop will be scheduled for evenings or weekends when most homeowners are available and advertised through local media outlets.</p> <p>Distribute materials promoting firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>
<p>2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>3. Spring Clean-up Event (Wildfire Preparedness Day is held nationally on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in May)</p>
<p>Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Colquitt Miller County Fire Department and community residents. 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters</li> <li>• Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet away from structures</li> <li>• Trim overhanging limbs</li> <li>• Clean hazardous or flammable debris from adjacent properties</li> </ul> <p>Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Colquitt Miller County Fire Department discussing and commending the work accomplished.</p>
<p>4. Informational Packets</p>
<p>Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be Firewise Around Your Home</li> <li>• Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction</li> <li>• Firewise Communities USA materials</li> <li>• Ready Set Go materials</li> <li>• Fire Adapted Community information</li> </ul>

5. Wildfire Protection Display

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

6. Media

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



**Prescribed burning is a best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel buildup. The Georgia Forestry Commission can assist landowners by developing a prescribed burning plan, installation of firebreaks, and can provide equipment standby and burning assistance when personnel are available. Private forestry contractors can also provide this service.**

## VIII. ACTION PLAN

### Roles and Responsibilities

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

Role	Responsibility
<b>Hazardous Fuels and Structural Ignitability Reduction</b>	
Colquitt Miller County Wildland Urban Interface Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Colquitt Miller County Fire Department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Miller 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"> <li>1 Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping</li> <li>2 Debris Burning Safety</li> <li>3 Firewise information for homeowners</li> <li>4 Prescribed burning benefits</li> </ol>
Communications objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Create public awareness for fire danger and defensible space issues</li> <li>2 Identify most significant human cause fire issues</li> <li>3 Enlist public support to help prevent these causes</li> <li>4 Encourage people to employ fire prevention and defensible spaces in their communities.</li> </ol>
Target Audiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Homeowners</li> <li>2 Forest Landowners and users</li> <li>3 Civic Groups</li> <li>4 School Groups</li> </ol>
Methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 News Releases</li> <li>2 Personal Contacts</li> <li>3 Key messages and prevention tips</li> <li>4 Visuals such as signs, brochures and posters</li> </ol>

Spring Clean-up Day (National Wildfire Preparedness Day is held annually on the 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday in May)	
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. State Farm Insurance Company sponsors a \$500 Grant for National Wildfire Preparedness Day events.
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, Colquitt Miller 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 (National Wildfire Preparedness Day 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday in May)	Varies	Community Business Donations. State Farm Grants
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$30 / Acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

## Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Colquitt Miller 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, 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 Colquitt Miller County WUIFC 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 Colquitt Miller County WUIFC 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. MITIGATION ASSISTANCE & GRANT FUNDING

Community Protection Grant: US Forest Service sponsored prescribed fire program. Communities with “at-risk” properties that lie within ten miles of a National Forest, National Park Service or Bureau of Land Management tracts may apply with the Georgia Forestry Commission to have their land prescribed 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 approaching wildfire season. It is held annually on the first Saturday in May.*

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

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

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

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

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

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



## XI. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites:

- FIREWISE materials can be ordered at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)
- Georgia Forestry Commission [www.georgiafirewise.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.interfacesouth.org)
- Information on codes and standards for emergency services including wildfire can be found at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- Information on FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) can be found at [www.firegrantsupport.com](http://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](http://www.SouthernWildfireRisk.com)
- Fire Adapted Communities [www.fireadapted.org](http://www.fireadapted.org)
- Ready, Set, Go [www.wildlandfirersg.org](http://www.wildlandfirersg.org)
- National Wildfire Preparedness Day [www.wildfirepreeday.org](http://www.wildfirepreeday.org)

### Appended Documents:

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

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



**Georgia Forestry Commission**  
**5645 Riggins Mill Rd.**  
**Dry Branch, GA 31020**

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

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

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