GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Oglethorpe County

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

AUGUST 2023

Prepared by:
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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 Representatives:

District 1 Commissioner
Howard Sanders

District 2 Commissioner
Andy Saxon

District 3 Commissioner
David R. Clark

District 4 Commissioner
William Brown

District 5 Commissioner
Tracy Norman

Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Jay Paul

Local Fire Department Representatives:

Arnoldsville RFD
Chief Robby McCurly

Beaverdam RFD
Jay Post

Crawford VFD
Chief Robby McCurly

Devils Pond RFD
Chief Stanley Grimes

Glade RFD
Chief Bo Tucker

Maxeys RFD
Chief Russell Utley

Philomath RFD - Salem 3
Chief Justin Sanders

Pleasant Hill RFD
Chief AJ Wiles

Salem RFD 1 & 2
Chief Justin Sanders

Sandy Cross RFD
Chief Kelly Huff

Vesta RFD
Chief Wayne King

Wolfskin RFD
Chief Charleen Foot

Wesley Chapel RFD
Chief Chris Dickens

Local USDA Forest Service Representatives:

Tim Kolnik
Fire Management Officer
Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest

Local Georgia Forestry Commission Representatives:

Leland Bass Chief Ranger
Georgia Forestry Commission

Layne Paulk Ranger
Phillip Davis Ranger
Doug Spieth Ranger

Mark Wiles, Community Wildfire Protection Plan Specialist
Georgia Forestry Commission

PLAN CONTENTS

1) OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Oglethorpe County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect this county and its essential infrastructure. Prioritized activities to educate the public are included. 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.

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 follow up this plan will have limited value.

2) COUNTY BACKGROUND AND EXISTING FIRE SITUATION

Oglethorpe County

Oglethorpe County, in northeast Georgia, is the state's seventeenth county and comprises 441 square miles. Creek and Cherokee Indians lived there when the first white people arrived, but they lost their land through treaties signed in 1773. Fur trappers and traders traversed the area before the first non-Indians established permanent settlements. A few trappers established a temporary community known as Kennedy's Gate, but it was no longer extant by the time of the American Revolution (1775-83).

The first permanent white settlers, led by Revolutionary War veteran Colonel George Mathews to Georgia after the war, were a group of wealthy tobacco planters from Virginia. At first the area was all part of Wilkes County, but Oglethorpe County, named for Georgia's founder James Oglethorpe, was carved from Wilkes in 1793 to accommodate population growth. Over the years Oglethorpe County has gained land from surrounding counties, sometimes in exchange for parts of itself.

Towns and Communities

Lexington, the county seat, was first settled in 1774 by a group of North Carolinians who named it in honor of Lexington,

Oglethorpe County Courthouse

Massachusetts. It was incorporated on November 24, 1806. Oglethorpe County's other incorporated communities are Arnoldsville, Crawford, and Maxeys.

Arnoldsville, settled in the early 1800s by Virginians who established tobacco, cotton, and silkworm plantations, was not incorporated until 1969. In earlier days the site's proximity to a Cherokee trail linking Virginia to the Mississippi River made it a popular point for meetings and trading. Colonial governors established a settlement there in the 1770s to regulate Indian trade. The settlement was called Cherokee Corner until 1894, when a local store owner, Edwin Shaw, became postmaster and renamed the town Edwin, after himself. Shaw's store (and postal service rights) were later bought by N. D. Arnold, a wealthy landowner, and the town adopted his name in 1896. Arnold divided 5,000 acres of his land into small farms and sold them "on liberal terms" to encourage settlement of the area.

William H. Crawford

Crawford began as a train stop known as Lexington Depot. Farmers and merchants brought cotton by the wagonload to ship out by train and camped at the depot overnight before going home with goods delivered by the same train. A public well was dug for their convenience, and people later began building permanent dwellings there. Lexington Depot was incorporated in 1876 as Crawford in recognition of U.S. senator William Harris Crawford, who had held the original land grant on which the new settlement emerged. The depot was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Maxeys, first known as Shanty, then as Salmonville, was named in honor of Jesse Maxey, a landowner on whose property the town had developed. Maxey had initially encouraged the railroad to come through the area by giving land for the right of way. However, after the track was completed in 1839, Maxey became concerned about the possible dangers to his family and moved away. The town did not incorporate until 1907. One of Georgia's first commercial fertilizer plants was built there in 1874 by William B. Brightwell. John W. Moody started the state's first commercial scuppernong vineyard, which made thousands of gallons of wine each year from sixty varieties of the fruit, near Maxeys.

Children Picking Cotton

Aside from the incorporated towns, several communities in Oglethorpe County boast interesting histories of their own. Among them is Philomath, in the southernmost part of the county. Settled in the 1830s by Virginians and North Carolinians, the town was originally named Woodstock. It received its current name at the suggestion of Alexander Stephens, who often visited the town's John W. Reed Academy, a boarding school for boys. Philomath's historic district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Letz Feed Mill

Smithonia (also known as Smithsonia), in the northwestern part of the county, is another historic Oglethorpe County community. Originally called Pleasant Hill, the community began as the thirty-square-mile plantation of James Monroe Smith, an entrepreneur, farmer, gubernatorial candidate, and railroad developer. When the plantation became economically self-sufficient, it acquired a post office and was renamed Smithonia. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

Another community with historic associations is Stephens, built around the Antioch Baptist Church and called Antioch until its name was changed to honor Alexander Stephens. The development of Stephens was spurred by the Georgia Railroad's building of a line through the area in 1839, but in 1925, after a fire destroyed most of its business section and the boll weevil destroyed its cotton crop, the once thriving community lost population.

Economy

Soon after the American Revolution, the area now called Oglethorpe County focused on agriculture, which has remained a mainstay of its economy. The county was first settled by wealthy planters who set up tobacco plantations; residents later moved into cotton production with the invention of the cotton gin and the construction of railroads, which greatly assisted marketing efforts. After the plantation system lost its profitability in the aftermath of boll weevils, fire, war, and emancipation, the county's agriculture shifted to small farms, often operated on the sharecropping system. Grain, poultry, beef, and dairy cattle were among the county's major farm products. Farm income was augmented by employment in the lumber, granite, and textile industries.

Sunning Wheat

Places and People

Points of interest include Bartram Buffalo Lick and Watson Mill Bridge. Bartram Buffalo Lick, near Philomath, was described by naturalist William Bartram in the 1770s and named for its vast pits of kaolin, which were licked first by buffalo and later by cattle, deer, and horses to calm their stomachs. Indians used this location as a reference point and meeting place. Watson Mill Bridge, on the border of Oglethorpe and Madison counties, is the longest original covered bridge in Georgia. Built by W. W. King in 1885, the bridge was restored in 1973.

Kaolin Quarry

Notable residents of Oglethorpe County include author Marion Montgomery and politicians Middleton "Pope" Barrow, William H. Crawford, George R. Gilmer, John Henry Lumpkin, Wilson Lumpkin, and George Mathews.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the county population was 12,635 (78.3 percent white, 19.8 percent black, and 1.4 percent Hispanic). The population increased 29.4 percent from 1990 to 2000.

The above material courtesy of the New Georgia Encyclopedia

Current Fire Situation:

Wildland fire has not been a serious problem in Oglethorpe County when compared to the rest of the state. Thus far in FY 2022 there have been 28 fires that burned 183.21 acres. During this same period the statewide average was 2.22 acres. The following outlines fire activity in Oglethorpe County for the past 5 complete fiscal years.

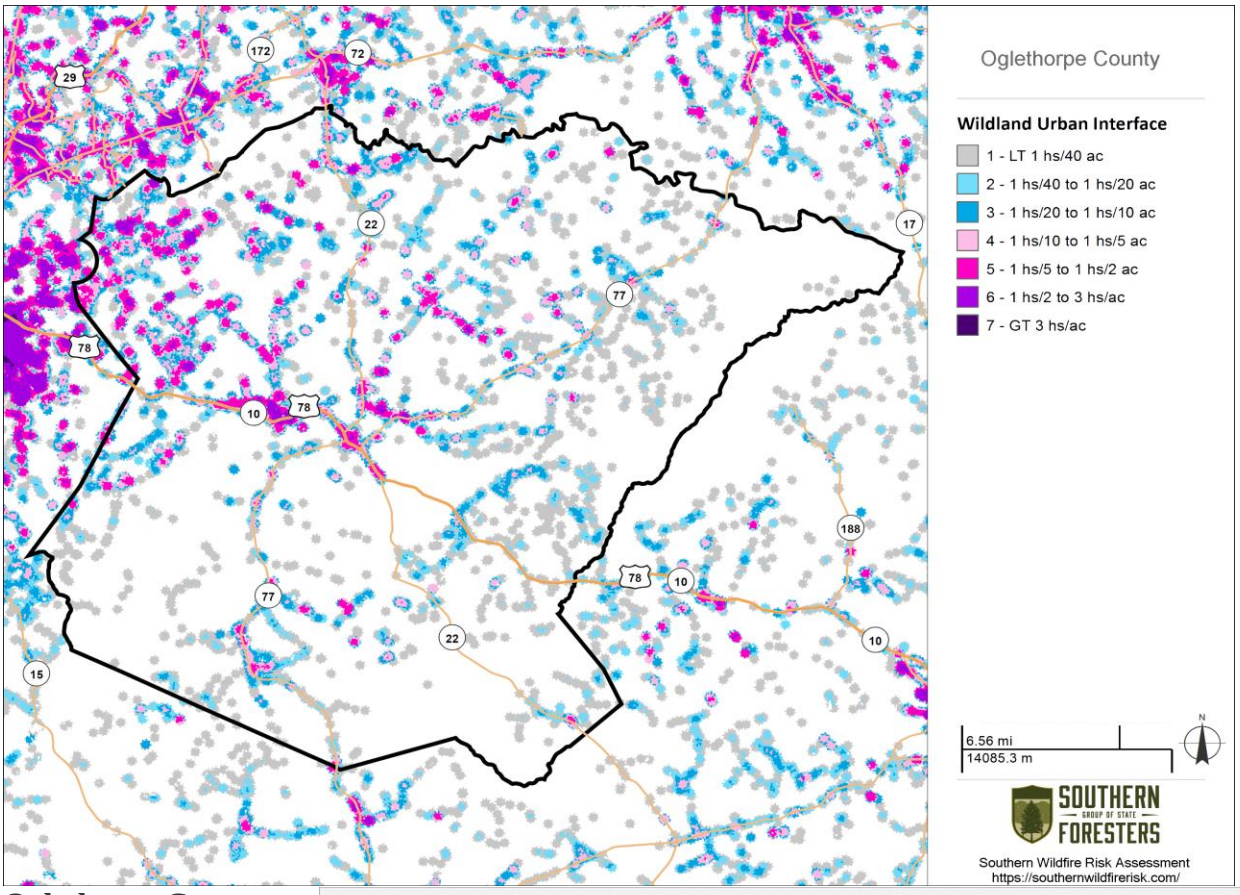
Fiscal Year	Number of Fires	Acres	Average size in Acres	Statewide average size
2022	28	183.21	6.54	6.73
2021	14	75.20	5.37	5.16
2020	5	17.97	3.59	3.45
2019	25	37.05	1.48	3.84
2018	19	41.85	2.20	5.50

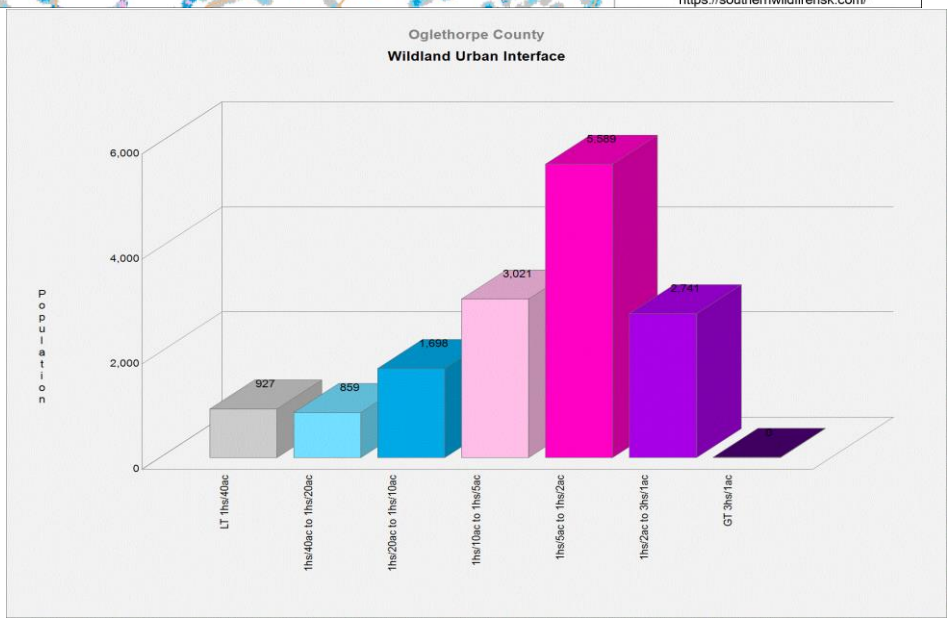
In FY 2022 debris burning was the most prevalent cause of fire in the county, as in all of the previous 5 years as well. The vast majority of these escaped debris burning fires were a result of citizens burning leaves and limbs in hand piles. This is the most common cause of wildfire in Georgia.

County: Oglethorpe Year: 2022 Generate List

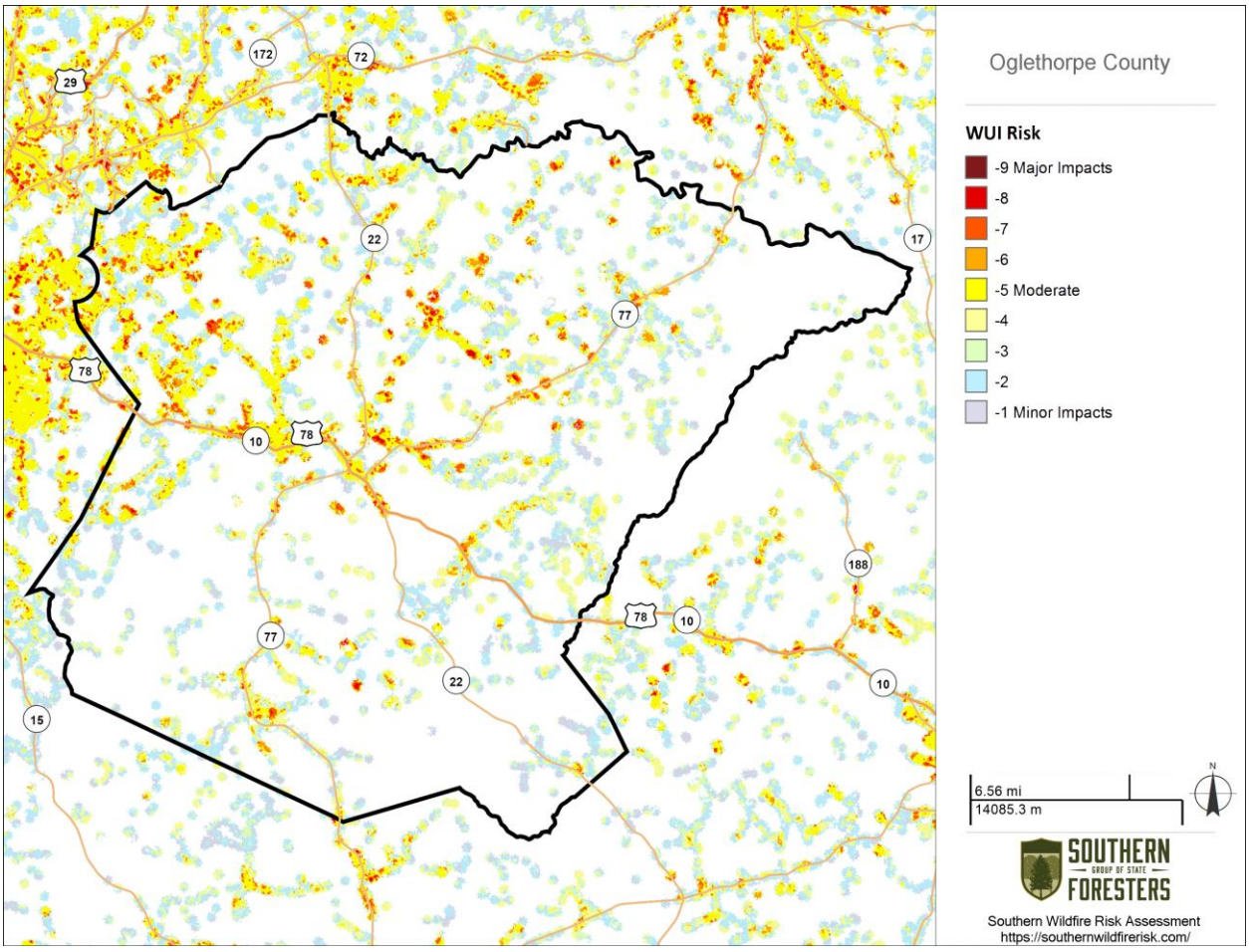
Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	2		2.80	0.60	1.00
Children	0		0.00	0.60	2.01
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.80	4.18
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1		4.15	0.80	1.11
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	6		10.84	3.00	7.67
Debris: Household Garbage	1		0.89	0.60	1.12
Debris: Other	1		3.95	0.40	4.79
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	2		2.42	1.40	1.07
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0		0.00	0.40	0.66
Incendiary	1		0.50	0.60	1.56
Lightning	0		0.00	0.60	2.42
Machine Use	9		90.04	3.80	19.10
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	1		0.01	0.60	0.08
Miscellaneous: Other	0		0.00	0.20	0.56
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	1		0.04	1.20	0.54
Miscellaneous: Spontaneous Heating/Combustion	0		0.00	0.20	0.00
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	3		67.57	1.40	14.20
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0		0.00	0.20	0.08
Undetermined	0		0.00	0.80	8.91
Totals for County: Oglethorpe Year: 2022	28		183.21	18.20	71.06

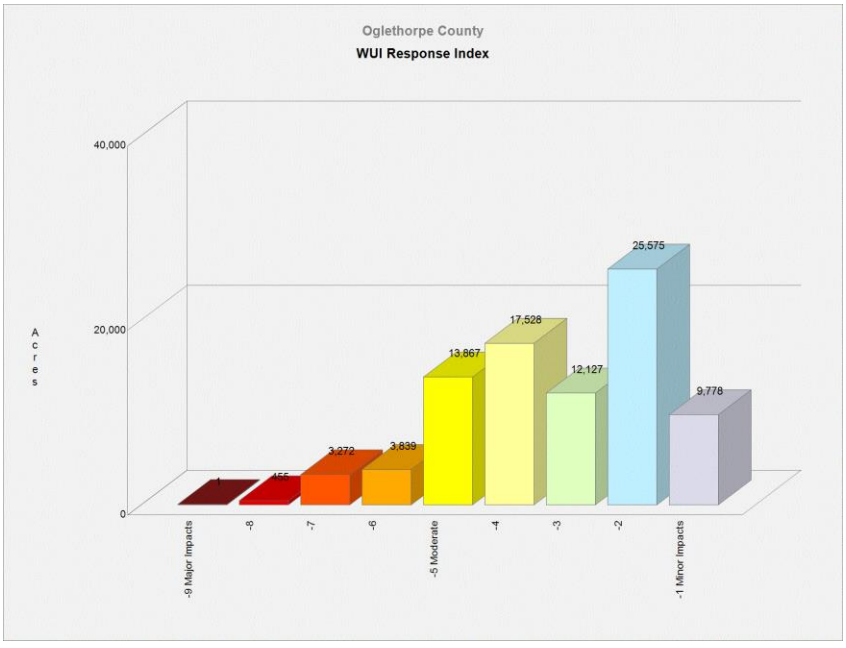
3) County Wildfire Risk Maps



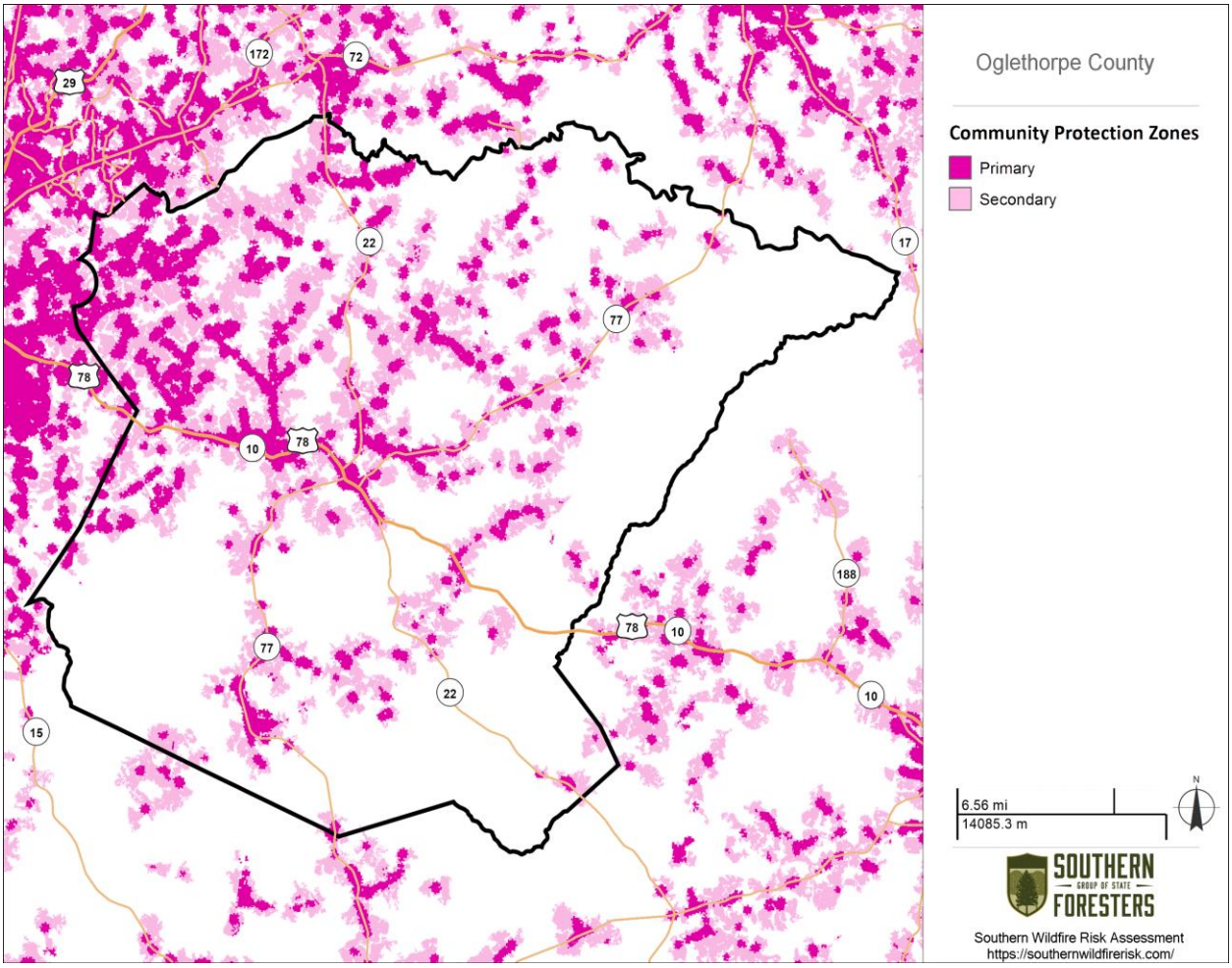


Oglethorpe County project area, it is estimated that **14,835** people or **99.6 % percent** of the total project area population (**14,889)** live within the WUI. WUI housing density is categorized based on the standard Federal Register and U.S. Forest Service SILVIS data set categories, long considered a de facto standard for depicting WUI. However, in the SWRA WUI data the number of housing density categories is extended to provide a better gradation of housing distribution to meet specific requirements for fire protection planning activities.

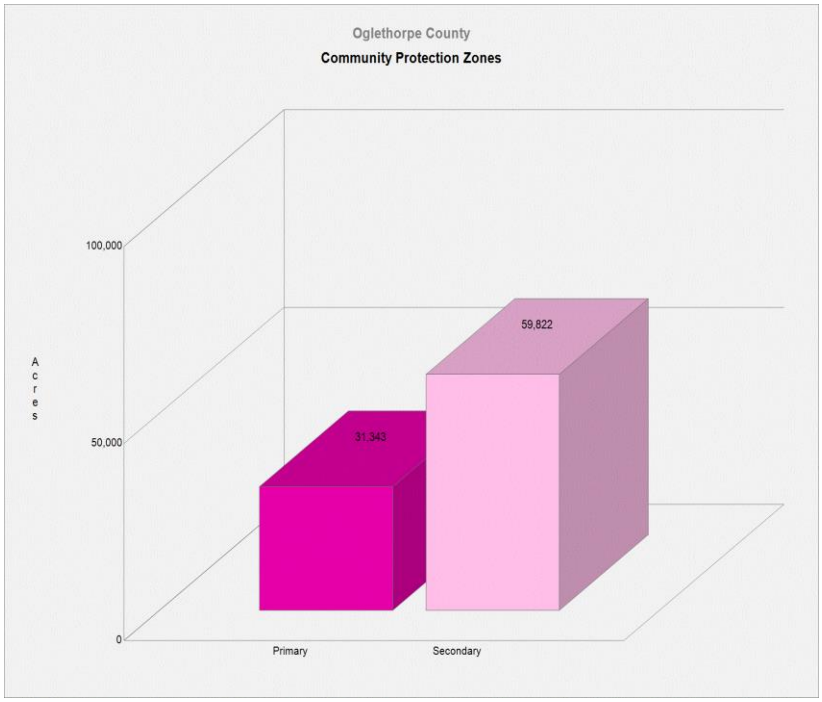


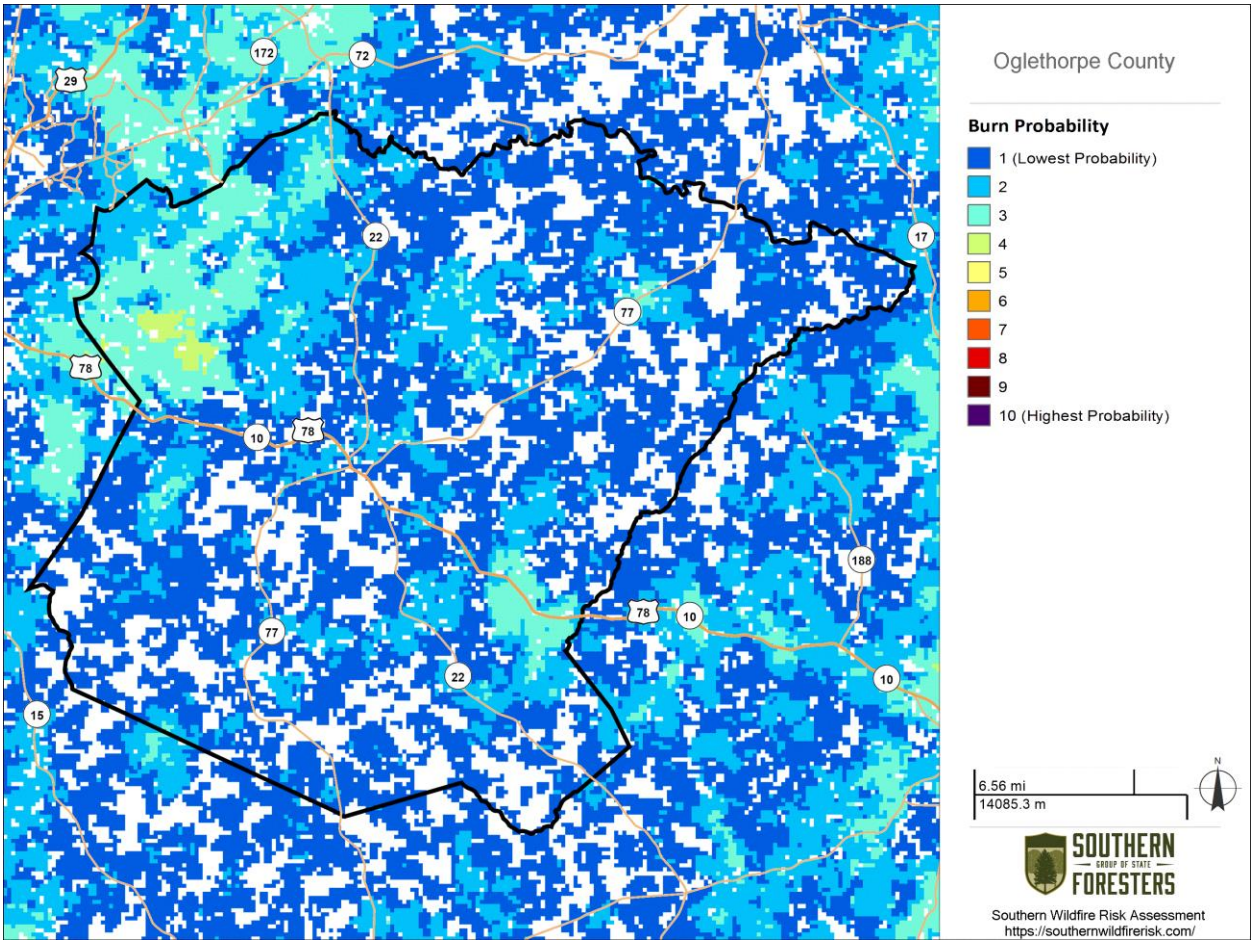


The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk Index layer is a rating of the potential impact of a wildfire on people and their homes. The key input, WUI, reflects housing density (houses per acre) consistent with Federal Register National standards. The location of people living in the Wildland Urban Interface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

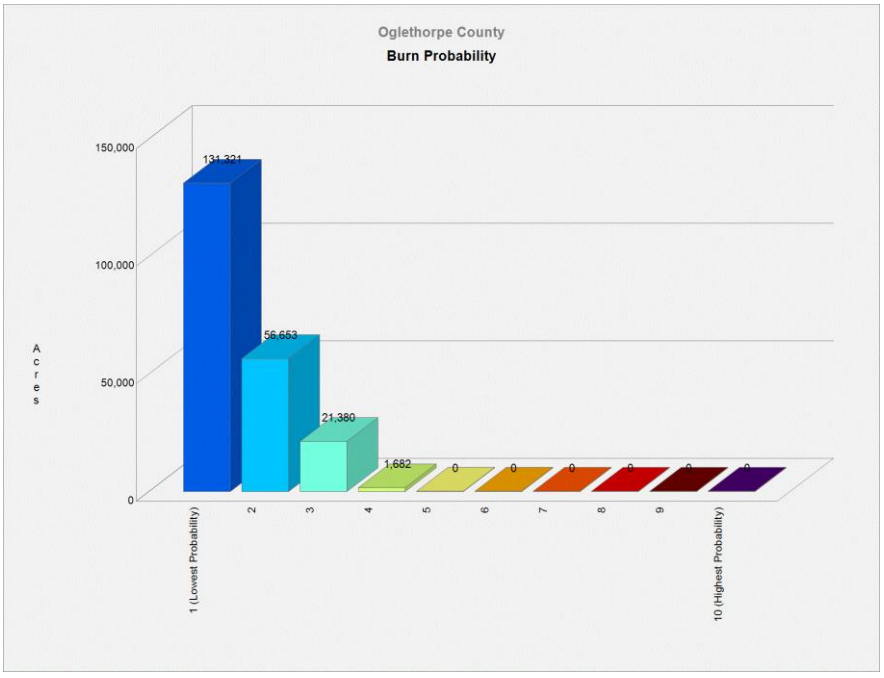


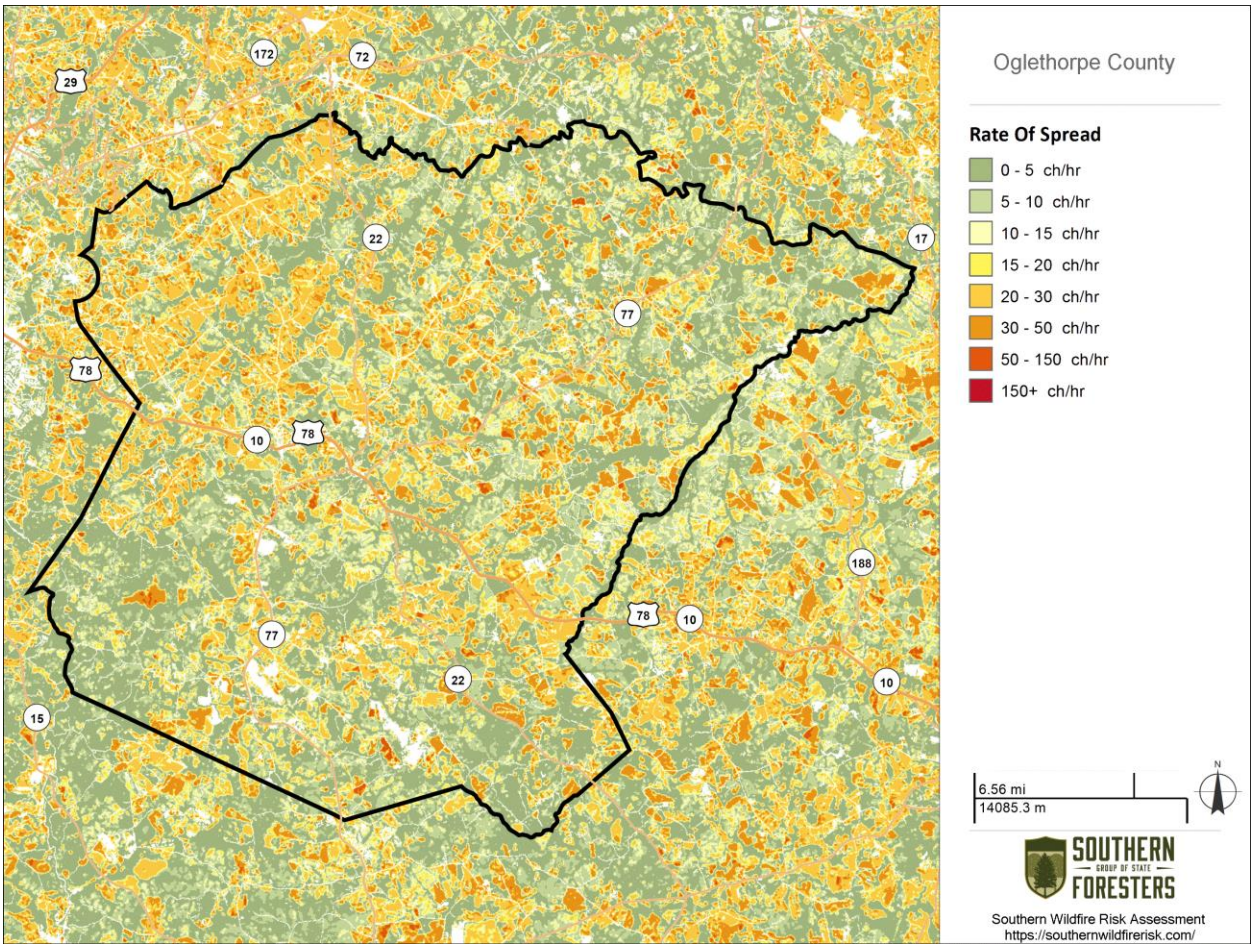
Community Protection Zones (CPZ) represent those areas considered highest priority for mitigation planning activities. CPZs are based on an analysis of the Where People Live housing density data and surrounding fire behavior potential. Rate of Spread data is used to determine the areas of concern around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

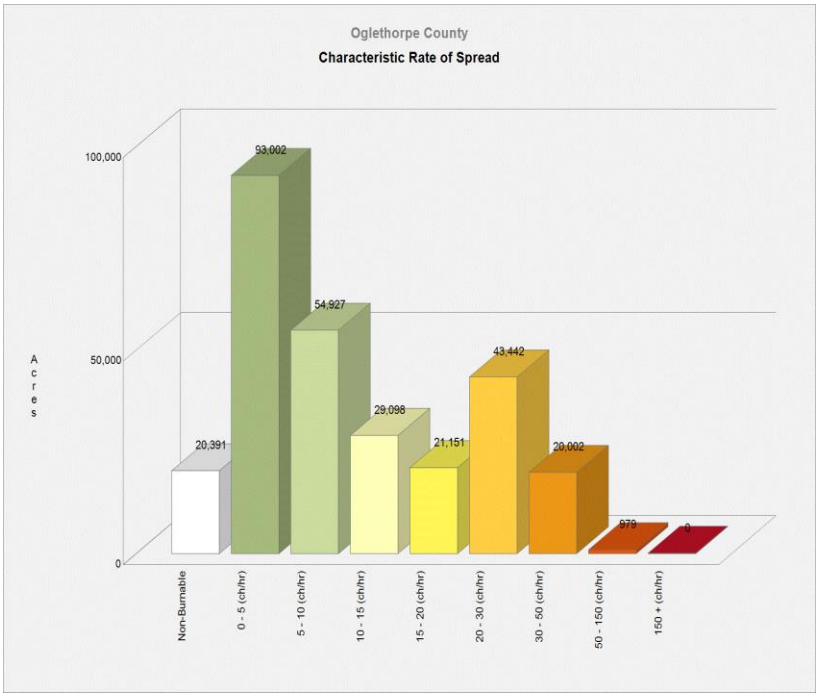




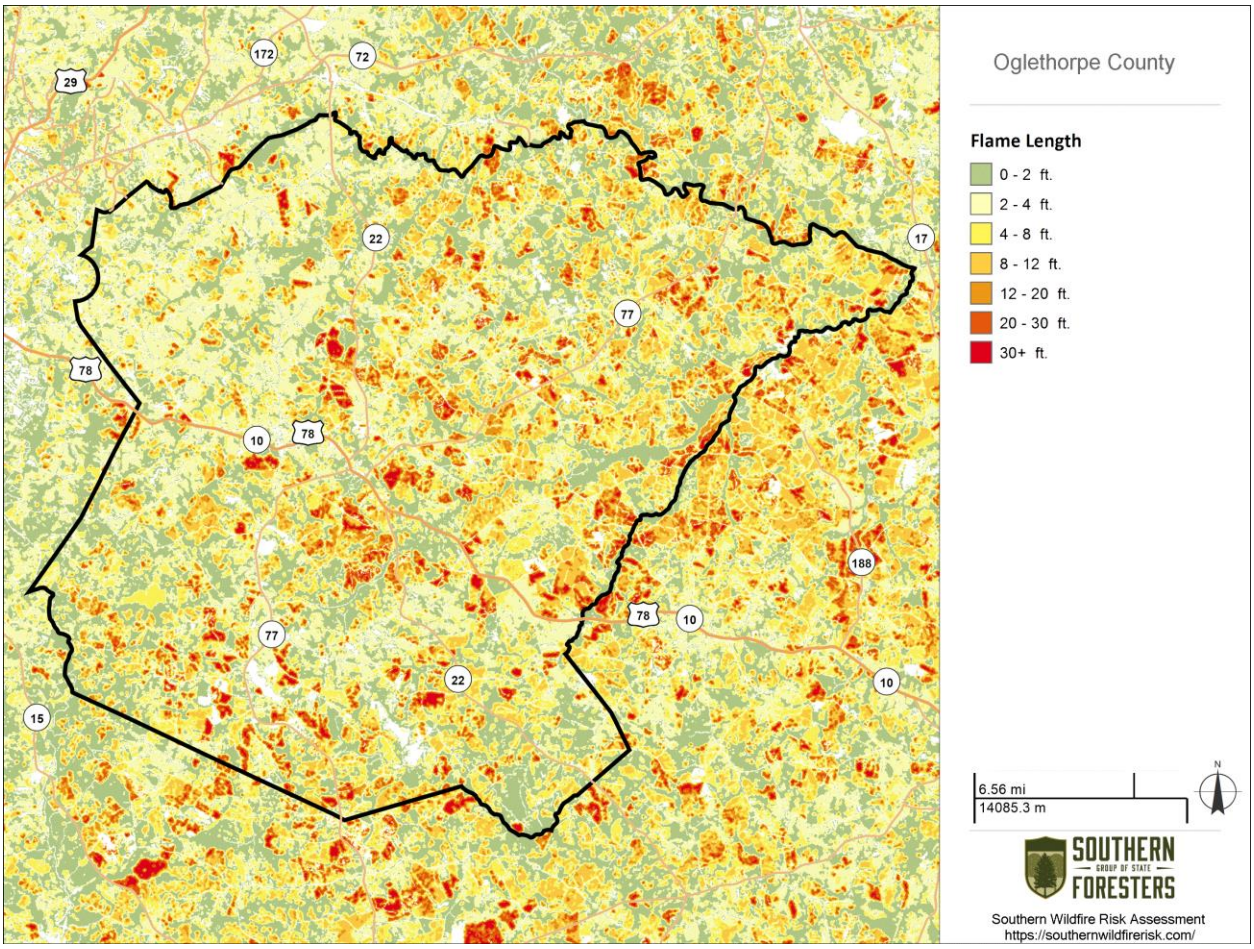
The Burn Probability (BP) layer depicts the probability of an area burning given current landscape conditions, percentile weather, historical ignition patterns and historical fire prevention and suppression efforts. Described in more detail, it is the tendency of any given pixel to burn, given the static landscape conditions depicted by the LANDFIRE Refresh 2008 dataset (as resampled by FPA), contemporary weather and ignition patterns, as well as contemporary fire management policies (entailing considerable fire prevention and suppression efforts).

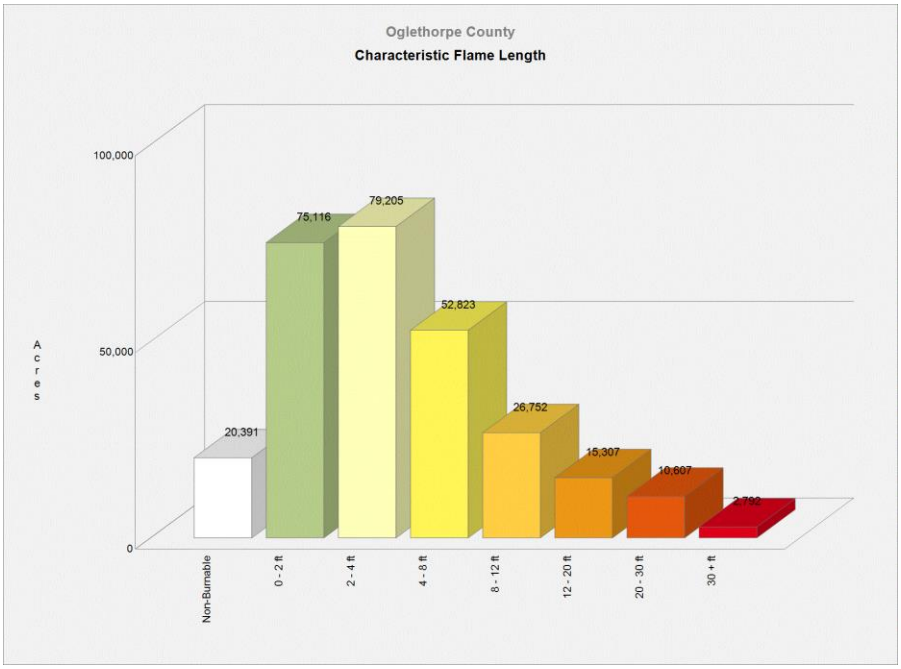




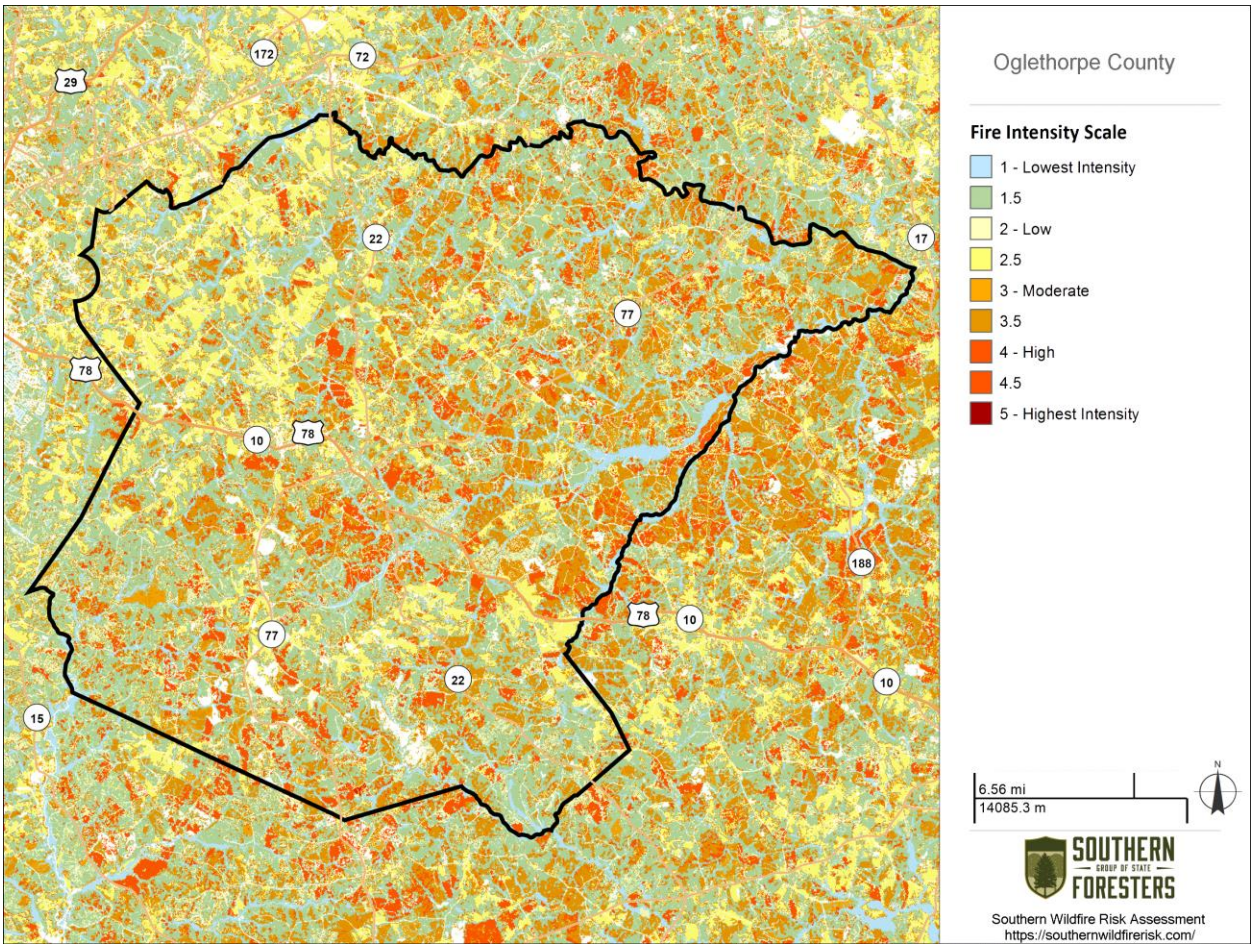


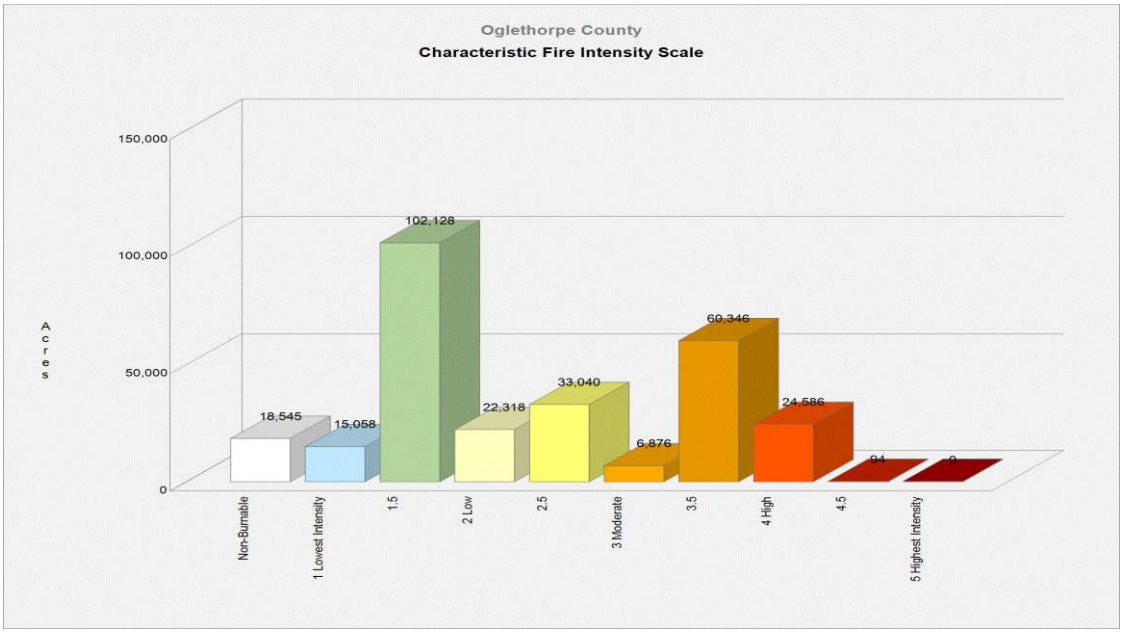
Characteristic Rate of Spread is the typical or representative rate of spread of a potential fire based on a weighted average of four percentile weather categories. Rate of spread is the speed with which a fire moves in a horizontal direction across the landscape, usually expressed in chains per hour (ch/hr) or feet per minute (ft/min). For purposes of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment, this measurement represents the maximum rate of spread of the fire front. Rate of Spread is the metric used to derive the Community Protection Zones.





Characteristic Flame Length is the typical or representative flame length of a potential fire based on a weighted average of four percentile weather categories. Flame Length is defined as the distance between the flame tip and the midpoint of the flame depth at the base of the flame, which is generally the ground surface. It is an indicator of fire intensity and is often used to estimate how much heat the fire is generating. Flame length is typically measured in feet (ft). Flame length is the measure of fire intensity used to generate the response index outputs for the SWRA.


Oglethorpe County
Fire Intensity Scale
1 - Lowest Intensity
1.5
2 - Low
2.5
3 - Moderate
3.5
4 - High
4.5
5 - Highest Intensity
6.56 mi
14085.3 m
N
SOUTHERN GROUP OF STATE FORESTERS
Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment
https://southernwildfirerisk.com/


Oglethorpe County
Characteristic Fire Intensity Scale
Acres
150,000
100,000
50,000
0
18,545
15,058
102,128
22,318
33,040
6,876
60,346
24,586
94
9
Non-Burnable
1 Lowest Intensity
1.5
2 Low
2.5
3 Moderate
3.5
4 High
4.5
5 Highest Intensity

Characteristic Fire Intensity Scale (FIS) specifically identifies areas where significant fuel hazards and associated dangerous fire behavior potential exist based on a weighted average of four percentile weather categories. Similar to the Richter scale for earthquakes, FIS provides a standard scale to measure potential wildfire intensity. FIS consist of 5 classes where the order of magnitude between classes is ten-fold. The minimum class, Class 1, represents very low wildfire intensities and the maximum class, Class 5, represents very high wildfire intensities. Refer to descriptions below.

- **Class 1, Very Low:**
  Very small, discontinuous flames, usually less than 1 foot in length; very low rate of spread; no spotting. Fires are typically easy to suppress by firefighters with basic training and non-specialized equipment.

- **Class 2, Low:**
  Small flames, usually less than two feet long; small amount of very short range spotting possible. Fires are easy to suppress by trained firefighters with protective equipment and specialized tools.

- **Class 3, Moderate:**
  Flames up to 8 feet in length; short-range spotting is possible. Trained firefighters will find these fires difficult to suppress without support from aircraft or engines, but dozer and plows are generally effective. Increasing potential for harm or damage to life and property.

- **Class 4, High:**
  Large Flames, up to 30 feet in length; short-range spotting common; medium range spotting possible. Direct attack by trained firefighters, engines, and dozers is generally ineffective, indirect attack may be effective. Significant potential for harm or damage to life and property.

- **Class 5, Very High:**
  Very large flames up to 150 feet in length; profuse short-range spotting, frequent long-range spotting; strong fire-induced winds. Indirect attack marginally effective at the head of the fire. Great potential for harm or damage to life and property.

4) RISK SUMMARY

Following a meeting of County officials and representatives of the Georgia Forestry Commission on February 17, 2009 assessments were made of communities at risk within the county. Areas designated for assessment were selected using the Southern Fire Risk Assessment (SFRA) Communities at risk layer supported by local knowledge. It should be noted that not all polygons within the SFRA layer were assessed. The SFRA information was used to assist local fire departments in locating areas that could be assessed. It was not to be the sole deciding factor for determining areas that should be assessed. In all 40 areas were assessed using the Georgia Forestry Commission Form 140 for Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. One community was recognized as being at extreme risk, three were designated as at high risk, nineteen were designated at moderate risk, and seventeen were classified as being low. These areas are located primarily in the northwest part of the county. Information on these areas is presented in tabular form in a document entitled 'Risk Summary for Areas of Concern Oglethorpe County, Georgia' located in the appendix. Plan received minor updates in 2023.

5) PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed during follow-up meetings with County and State fire response agencies. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildland fire to communities and infrastructure. The following priorities were considered.

- Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction
- Wildland Fuel reduction or modification
- Improvements to capabilities of Wildland response agencies
- Public Education regarding risk of wildland fire

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Lack of defensible space	Improve defensible space around structures in communities at risk	All departments should examine structures in communities at risk in their response areas. Improvements to defensible space as referenced in Firewise guidelines should be conveyed to residents through media or direct contact.
Access problems for initial attack	Improve access problems	All County response agencies and the Georgia Forestry Commission should closely examine access in all communities identified to be at risk. When problems are identified corrective measures should be made.
Structural Ignitability	Reduce structural ignitability	Citizens in communities at risk should be educated regarding methods to reduce structural ignitability as referenced in Firewise guidelines. This can be accomplished through media or direct contact.
Local Codes and Ordinances	Improve and amend to codes and ordinances pertaining to infrastructure and community protection from wildland fire.	Examine all existing codes and ordinances for problems regarding direct conflicts to wildland safety or lack of needed codes or enforcement.

Proposed Wildland Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
Fuel Hazards near Communities at risk	Prescribed Burning	Determine Communities at risk where Prescribed burning would be appropriate to use. Seek cooperation from adjacent landowners. Find funding to cover cost of burning. Prioritize burn compartments and execute.
Fuel Hazard in public or shared spaces	Fuel Modification or reduction	Determine where hazards exist. Determine appropriate method for modification or reduction. Chipping, raking and piling, County pick-up, Organized Community Clean-up days could be beneficial.

Proposed Improvements to capabilities of Wildland Response Agencies Priorities

Problem or need	Improvement or solution	Details
Lack of qualification or training	Provide training opportunities	Examine training records of all wildland responders to insure training and qualifications match expected duties. Insure that all wildland responders have Basic Wildland Certification. Locate and secure funding for enhanced training from state and federal agencies.
Equipment needs	Improve or acquire Wildland fire equipment	Determine specific equipment needs to bring all wildland response equipment to NWCG Standards. Provide appropriate PPE to all County wildland responders. Provide wildland hand tools to County departments. Investigate needs for improvements to all wildland water handing and supply (dry hydrants, brush trucks, hose, etc.)

Proposed Public Education Priorities

Educational Priority	Responsible party	Method
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through direct contact	County, State, and municipal governments	Conduct Firewise meetings by each fire response jurisdiction assisted by Georgia Forestry Commission (state). Conduct a door to door campaign in particularly hazardous communities
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through use of media	County, State, and municipal governments	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. Provide firewise materials to the county building permit office for distribution to developers and individual home builders.

6) ACTION PLAN

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Lack of Defensible Space	Using the risk summary in section 3, each department should conduct inspections of communities at risk in their jurisdiction or area of response for lack of defensible space. Findings will be conveyed to residents and treatment methods will be recommended in accordance with Firewise principles.
Access problems	Using the County Base map the Georgia Forestry Commission and Oglethorpe County Fire officials should visit all identified communities at risk for the purpose of locating and resolving access difficulties. This inspection should extend into the wildland adjacent to the communities at risk looking for hindrances to suppression tactics
Structural Ignitability	Oglethorpe County Fire officials should examine structures for structural ignitability concerns at the time when the communities at risk are inspected for lack of defensible space. Using Firewise guidelines for reducing structural ignitability, (a checklist from the Firewise web site could be used) structures should be assessed and findings conveyed to residents. This could be through use of media or by direct contact.
Codes and Ordinances	Oglethorpe County and municipal Fire Marshalls should closely examine all codes and ordinances for gaps and oversights which could cause problems in the wildland fire arena. Examples include proximity of propane tanks to structures, accumulations of debris, Road widths in proposed developments, lack of proper identification pertaining address or street names etc..

Steps to Implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Hazardous Wildland Fuel Accumulations	The Georgia Forestry Commission will prioritize prescribed burning projects adjacent to Communities at risk where burning is determined to be appropriate. The communities of Maxeys and Stephens should be considered. In any communities where burning is opposed or not practical, permanent or semi-permanent firebreaks could be installed. These breaks should be mapped and their location(s) made known to all responding agencies. Citizens should be educated as to their purpose.
Hazardous Fuel Accumulations in communities and hindrances to suppression	Using the risk summary in section 3, Fire departments could conduct community clean up days in communities at risk in their respective jurisdictions aimed at reducing hazardous fuels and hindrances to suppression in shared community space. Residents would be provided with guidance and access to disposal alternatives for materials removed. Organized burning support in a common area on a specific day could be considered along with the use of a chipper whereby residents could mulch debris as opposed to burning.

6) Action Plan (continued)

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

Improvement needed	Responsible Party and specific action
Improve training and qualification of Oglethorpe County Wildland firefighters	Chief Ranger Leland Bass of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Oglethorpe Co Fire Chief Russell Utley should examine all training records for personnel under their supervision. All personnel should be certified Georgia Basic Wildland Firefighters or higher in qualification. Additional training and qualification should be sought for personnel identified in Oglethorpe County who are assigned specific Incident Command System (ICS) functions. Sources for available funds for training should be sought at State and Federal levels.
Improve or acquire wildland firefighting equipment	All stations for Oglethorpe County Fire Departments should inventory their present equipment relating to their wildland capability. Funding sources should be investigated from available grants or other sources. Needs for job specific wildland responses should be examined by Chief Ranger Bass and individual Fire Chiefs for each station.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

Opportunity	Responsible Party and Specific Action
Improve Public Education through direct contact	Prior to the onset of fire season(s) rangers of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Oglethorpe County Fire personnel should conduct Firewise meetings in conjunction with normally scheduled fire department meetings. People living in or near extreme and high risk communities should be invited to these meetings by use of door to door campaigns or by mailbox flyers. Notices regarding these meetings could be placed in local post offices or stores near communities at risk. A Firewise display should be acquired and utilized at this meeting. This display would be retained by the Oglethorpe office of the Georgia Forestry Commission and used for all Firewise meetings in Oglethorpe County. Local news media should be invited to these meetings. Goals for potential Firewise certified communities in Oglethorpe County could be considered after these meetings are completed.
Improve Public Education through use of media	Prior to the onset of fire season(s) or during periods of particularly high fire danger use of the media should be stepped up by personnel of the Georgia Forestry Commission. This should include use of all available media in the County. PSA's should be run weekly during periods of high to extreme fire danger. Signs or poster boards could be developed for display in public spaces near communities at risk advising residents that they live in areas that are susceptible to wildland fire and directing them to sources of information regarding wildland fire safety.

Timetables for Actions

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

- Steps to examine communities at risk for defensible space and structural ignitability should begin as soon as practical with existing work schedules.
- This should occur prior to the time when most citizens begin fall or spring cleanup projects in order for recommendations regarding improvements to defensible space and reduction of structural ignitability to coincide with these seasonal actions.
- Pre-planning to examine access and suppression problems should take place as soon as possible by fire department jurisdiction.
- Codes and Ordinances should be examined as soon as possible.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- The prescribed burn project to reduce fuels near the Maxeys and Stephens Communities should take place in late winter 2023.
- Any other priority burn projects or installation of pre suppression fuel breaks should take place during this same window.
- Steps to reduce fuels in communities at risk should coincide with steps to improve defensible space and reduce structural ignitability – Late Winter 2023 and beyond.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- Cooperation between state and local wildland suppression forces regarding improvements to training and equipment should begin immediately.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct contact with residents in Communities at risk should take place as soon as possible.
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.

Assessment of Actions

Reduction of Community hazard and structural ignitability

- Direct measurement of the number of communities 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 to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- 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.

7) FUNDING SOURCES

As funding is questionable in these times of tight government budgets and economic uncertainty, unconventional means should be identified whereby the need for funding can be reduced or eliminated.

Publications / Brochures –

- FIREWISE materials are available for cost of shipping only at www.firewise.org.
- Another source of mitigation information can be found at www.nfpa.org.
- Access to reduced cost or free of charge copy services should be sought whereby publications can be reproduced.
- Free of charge public meeting areas should be identified where communities could gather to be educated regarding prevention and firewise principles.

Mitigation –

- Community Protection Grant:
- USFS sponsored prescribed burn program. Communities with at risk properties that lie within 3 miles of the USFS border may apply with the GFC to have their forest land prescribed burned free of charge.
- FEMA Mitigation Policy MRR-2-08-01: through GEMA - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM)
- To provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to assist in the implementation of long term cost effective hazard mitigation measures.
- 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 fuels reduction to protect life and property.
- With a complete and registered plan (addendum to the State plan) counties can apply for pre- mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.
- GFC - Plowing and burning assistance can be provided through the Georgia Forestry Commission as a low cost option for mitigation efforts.

Individual Homeowners –

- In most cases of structural protection ultimately falls on the responsibility of the community and the homeowner. They will bear the cost; yet they will reap the benefit from properly implemented mitigation efforts.
- GEMA Grant - PDM (See above)

Ultimately it is our goal to help the communities by identifying the communities threatened with a high risk to wildfire and educate those communities on methods to implement on reducing those risks

8) APPENDIX

- Wildfire Pre-Suppression Plan
- County Base and Hazards maps
- Risk Summary table

All files that make up this plan are available in an electronic format from the Georgia Forestry Commission. This is especially useful in regard to viewing the PDF files that make up the County Base and Hazards maps in that it will allow for increased magnification and better resolution.

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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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