

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Putnam County

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



AUGUST 2019

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.

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Preface

The extreme weather conditions that are conducive to wildfire disasters (usually a combination of extended drought, low relative humidity and high winds) can occur in this area of Georgia as infrequently as every 10-15 years. This is not a regular event, but as the number of homes that have been built in or adjacent to forested or wildland areas increases, it can turn a wildfire under these weather conditions into a major disaster. Wildfires move fast and can quickly overwhelm the resources of even the best equipped fire department. Advance planning can save lives, homes and businesses.

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) includes a locally assessed evaluation of the wildland urban interface areas of the county, looking at the critical issues regarding access to these areas, risk to properties from general issues such as building characteristics and “fire wise” practices and response from local firefighting resources. It further incorporates a locally devised action plan to mitigate these risks and hazards through planning, education and other avenues that may become available to address the increasing threat of wildland fire. The CWPP does not obligate the county financially in any way, but instead lays a foundation for improved emergency response if and when grant funding is available to the county.

The Plan is provided at no cost to the county and can be very important for county applications for hazard mitigation grant funds through the National Fire Plan, FEMA mitigation grants and Homeland Security. Under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, communities (counties) that seek grants from the federal government for hazardous fuels reduction work are required to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

This plan will:

- Enhance public safety
- Raise public awareness of wildfire hazards and risks
- Educate homeowners on how to reduce home ignitability
- Build and improve collaboration at multiple levels

The public does not have to fall victim to this type of disaster. Homes (and communities) can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire equipment and firefighters on the scene. It takes planning and commitment at the local level before the wildfire disaster occurs and that is what the Community Wildfire Protection Plan is all about.

1. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Putnam 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. 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 this follow up this plan will have limited value.

2. COUNTY BACKGROUND & WILDFIRE HISTORY

Location and County Information

Putnam County



Emerging from its agricultural past, Putnam County has become an important center of industry and recreation in Georgia. Once the land of cotton, large plantations, and great wealth, a different look is now taking hold in the county with the establishment of golf resorts, gated communities, and new businesses. Putnam County is located seventy-five miles southeast of Atlanta and covers 345 square miles. According to the 2000 U.S. census, Putnam County's population was 18,812 (67.5 percent white, 29.9 percent black, and 2.2 percent Hispanic).

Antebellum Years

Putnam County was created in 1807 after being sectioned off from neighboring Baldwin County. Its name honors General Israel Putnam, a hero of the at Lexington and Breed's (Bunker) Hill in Massachusetts. Eatonton became the county seat in 1808. It was incorporated in 1809 and remains the county's only incorporated town. Farmers represented the majority of the county's original settlers, and cotton quickly became the predominant crop. By 1810 slaves made up more than 30 percent of the county's residents. A cotton factory opened in 1836, and by 1849 the county possessed fourteen sawmills and five gristmills to service the area's other agricultural products and natural resources. In 1854 a railroad spur line connected Eatonton to Milledgeville, the state capital.



Putnam County Courthouse

Education proved important to residents of Putnam County during the antebellum period. The Union Academy, later renamed the Eatonton Academy, was founded in 1809, followed ten years later by the Union School. William H. Seward, the future secretary of state under U.S. president Abraham Lincoln, was the school's first rector. In 1828 Adiel Sherwood established on his plantation the Manual Labor Training School, which was founded to teach new planting techniques to local farmers and plantation owners.

Civil War and Reconstruction

The Civil War (1861-65) visited Putnam County in 1864, when Union general William T. Sherman and his army passed through the area on their March to the Sea. Putnam County had voted against secession in 1861, but this fact did not prevent the burning and destruction of cotton gins, railroads, and bridges. (The writer and Putnam County resident Joel Chandler Harris recounts these events in his 1892 book, *On the Plantation*.)

Putnam County experienced difficulty recovering from the war. The wealth of the great plantations had disappeared, and the county spent the remaining decades of the nineteenth century trying to revive its economy. A solution came at the turn of the century when dairy production emerged as an economic force. In 1876 Benjamin Hunt brought fifteen Jersey cows to the region and created Panola Farm, an experimental dairy facility that helped to establish the dairy industry in Putnam County.

By 1901 Putnam had become the third- leading dairy county in Georgia, shipping cream to Athens and butter to Atlanta. A cooperative created by fifty-eight local farmers in 1909, made various dairy products, including "Sweet Clover Butter" which was served to U.S. president William Howard Taft on a visit to Georgia. Dairy continues to play a part in the county's economy. To celebrate the industry's importance, the Dairy Festival is held annually during the first weekend of June.

Industrial Growth



Haband House

A variety of industries later moved into Putnam County. In 1970 Horton Homes began producing manufactured homes. The New Jersey-based Haband Company, a clothing retailer, began operations in the county in 1988 and has become a key provider of jobs. Other important industries include Georgia Power Company, whose plant at Lake Sinclair provides many jobs for the county.

Recreation and Tourism

The creation of Lake Sinclair in 1953 and Lake Oconee in 1979 helped give birth to the tourism and recreation industry in Putnam County. The lakes provide opportunities to fish, hike, camp, or simply relax on the beach. Several golf courses have been created in the area, including the Jack Nicklaus-designed Great Waters Course at Reynolds Plantation. Putnam County also possesses several other points of interest. Two sites unique to the county are Rock Eagle Effigy Mound and Rock Hawk Effigy Mound, which were built by Native Americans more than 1,000 years ago and are the only two effigy mounds in the United States.

Downtown Eatontown has been awarded "Better Hometown" status by Georgia, allowing the town to revitalize the area with the help of state funding. The focus of the downtown area is the Putnam County Courthouse, located on one of the largest public squares in the state. The oldest part of the courthouse dates from 1824; the building underwent renovations in 1994. The county's literary tradition can be explored by visiting the Uncle Remus Museum, which is dedicated to the works of Joel Chandler Harris. Alice Walker, another Putnam County native, won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for her book *The Color Purple*.



Uncle Remus Museum

Wildfire History

Over the past 10 years, FY 2008-FY2017, the leading cause for all wildfires was debris burning causing 50% of the fires and 53% of the acres burned. The 2nd leading cause was machine use causing 22% of the fires and burning 17% of the total acreage burned. During these years the County averaged having 20 wildfires burning about 87 acres annually.

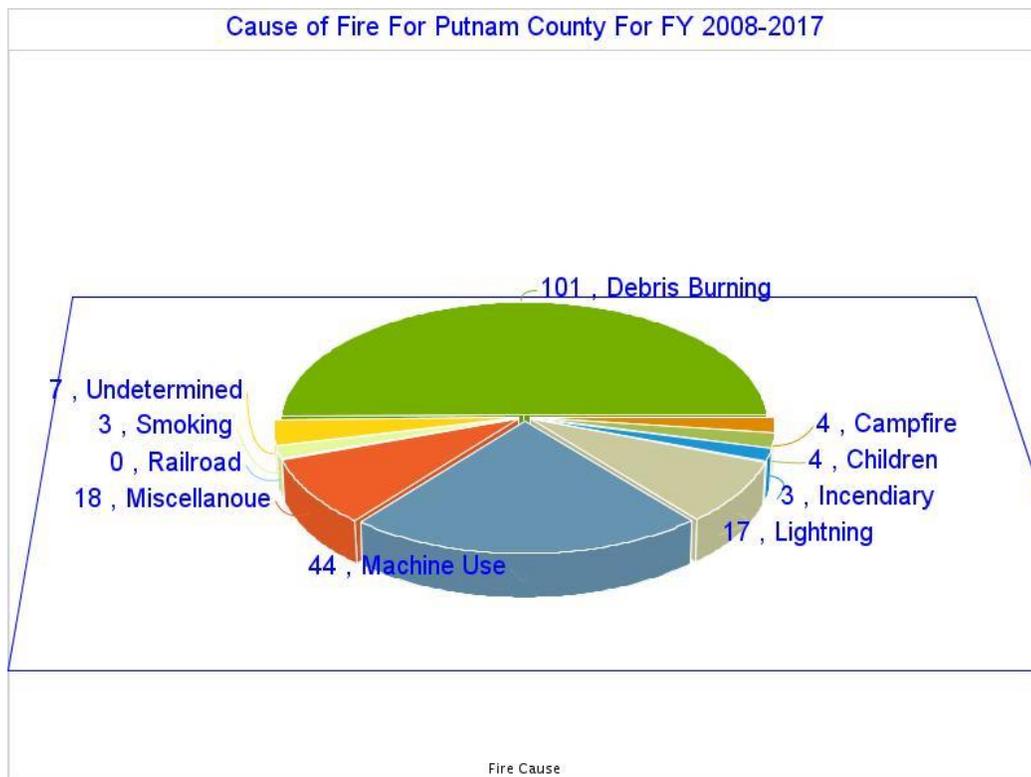
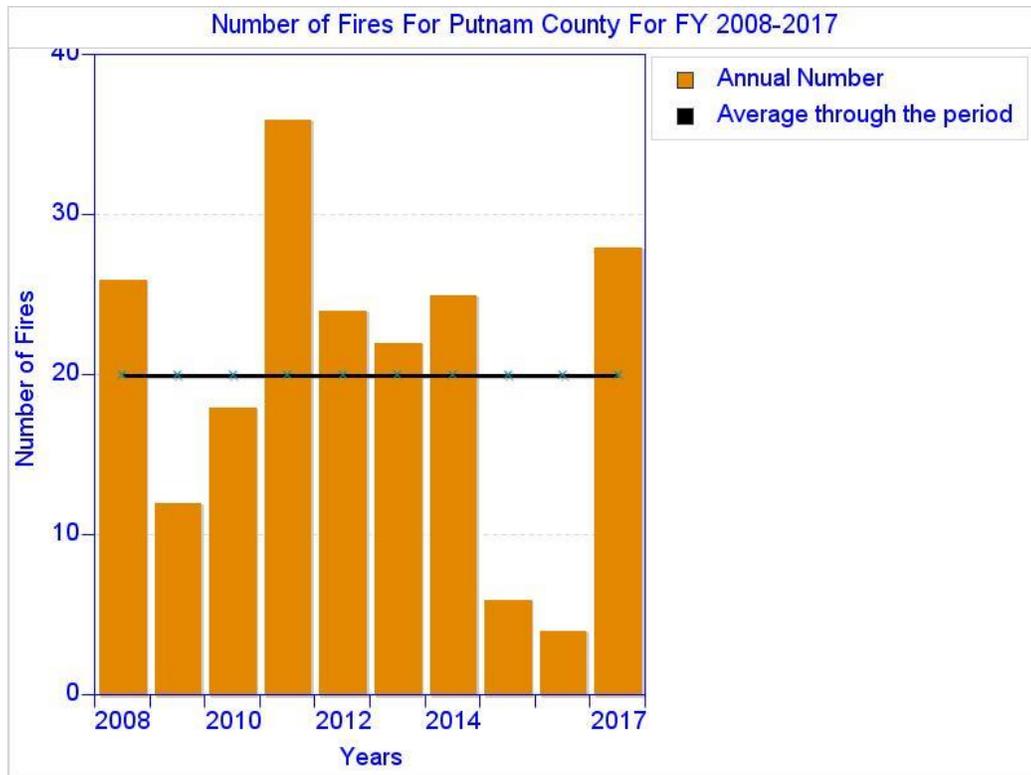
Georgia Forestry Commission Wildfire Records show that in the past five years, FY2014 – FY2018, one home has been lost or damaged by wildfire in Putnam County resulting in estimated losses of \$50,000 along with 7 outbuildings valued at \$35,300. According to reports during this period 17 homes have been directly or indirectly threatened by these fires. Additionally 2 vehicles valued at \$305,000 and 2 pieces of mechanized equipment valued at \$203,000 have been lost.

The following table is wildfire activity during the 2018 fiscal year, July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018. On the following pages 11-15, is information on wildfire activity during the past 10 years, 2008 – 2017.

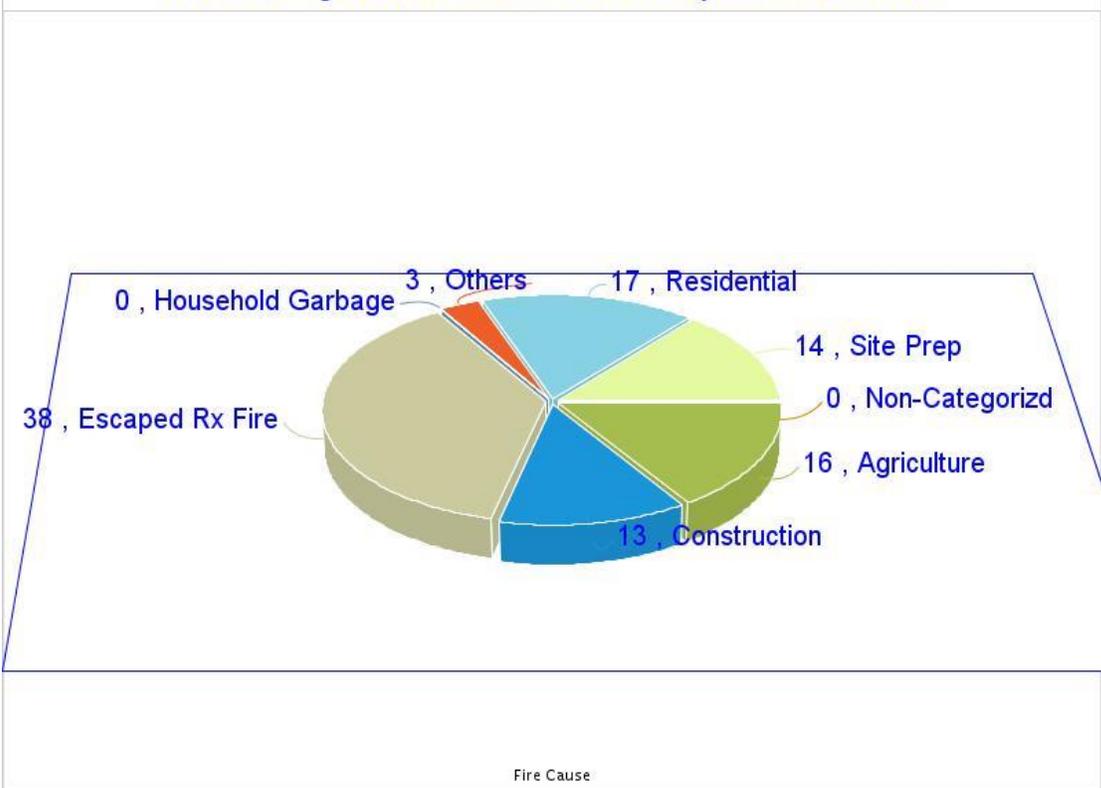
County = Putnam	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1	1.50	0.20	0.30
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0	0.00	0.60	1.10
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1	2.70	0.40	1.88
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1	0.75	2.80	40.94
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0	0.00	0.20	0.76
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1	2.00	0.40	0.46
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1	3.00	2.40	2.30
Incendiary	Incendiary	0	0.00	0.20	0.00
Lightning	Lightning	1	0.01	1.20	4.62
Machine Use	Machine Use	1	2.50	2.20	8.01
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	1	0.10	1.00	3.22
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	0	0.00	0.40	0.62
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	0.40	0.32
Smoking	Smoking	0	0.00	0.40	1.04
Undetermined	Undetermined	0	0.00	1.40	23.52
Totals for County: Putnam Year: 2018		8	12.56	14.20	89.08

Acres Burned /Number of Fires For Putnam County For FY 2008-2017				
Year	Acres Burned	Number of Fires	Average Size	Statewide Average Size
2008	61.78	26	10.38	4.56
2009	14.32	12	5.66	3.90
2010	33.44	18	7.01	3.93
2011	120.02	36	7.61	17.56
2012	106.49	24	6.74	5.08
2013	97.42	22	14.37	4.53
2014	46.77	25	11.94	5.02
2015	48.28	6	7.03	4.42
2016	14.80	4	3.90	6.29
2017	323.00	28	4.15	11.60

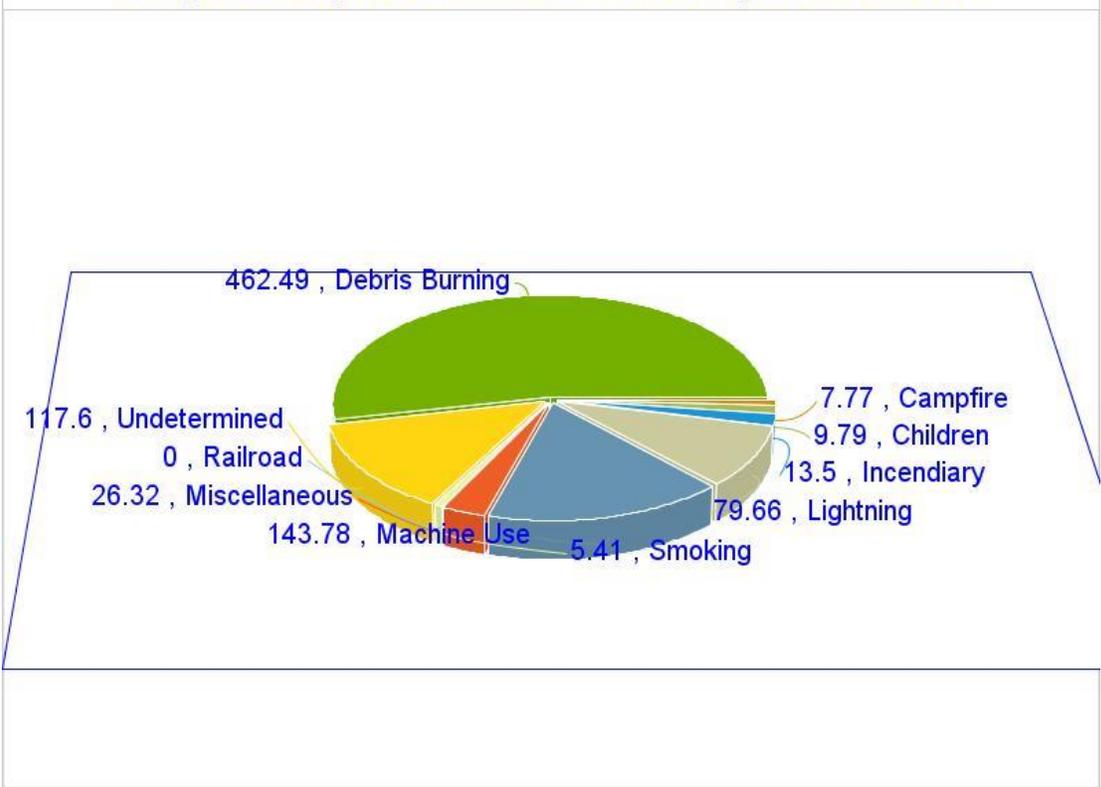
Acres Burned /Number of Fires by Fire Cause For Putnam County For FY 2008-2017		
Fire Cause	Acres Burned	Number of Fires
Campfire	7.77	4
Children	9.79	4
Debris Burning	462.49	101
Incendiary	13.50	3
Lightning	79.66	17
Machine Use	143.78	44
Miscellaneous	26.32	18
Railroad	0.00	0
Smoking	5.41	3
Undetermined	117.60	7
Total	866.32	201



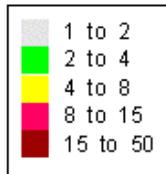
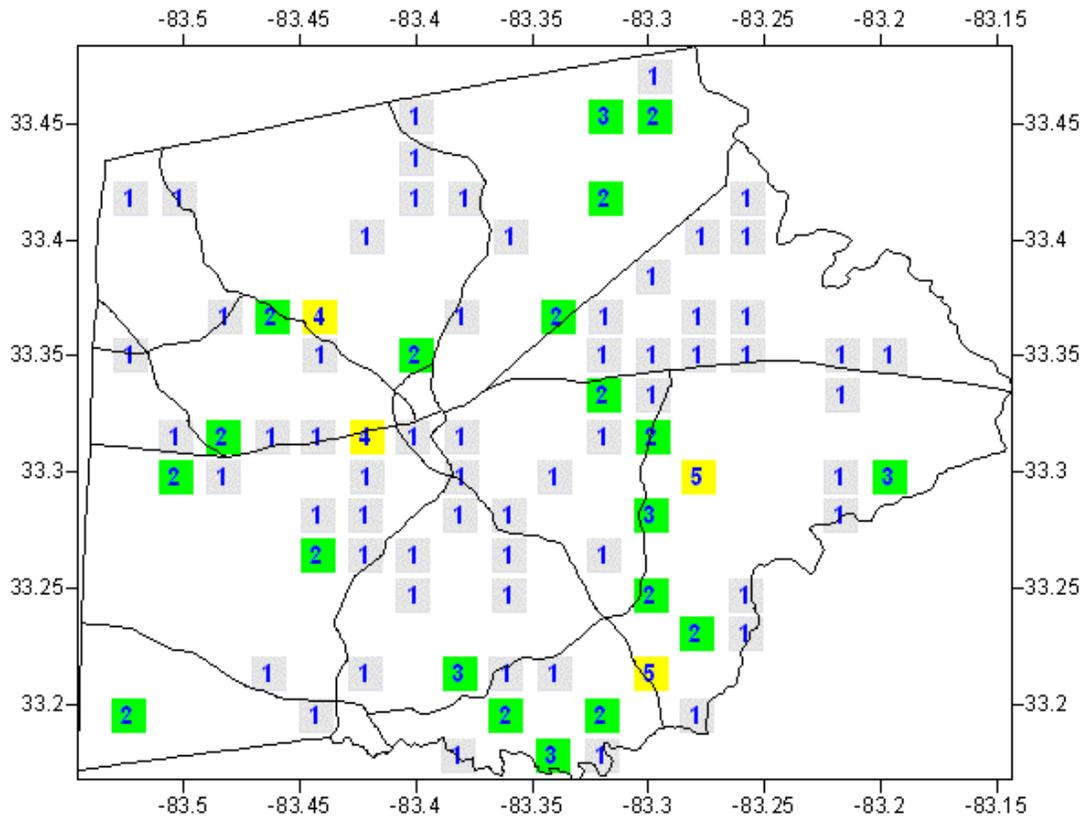
Debris Burning Sub Cause For Putnam County For FY 2008-2017



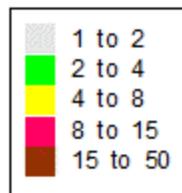
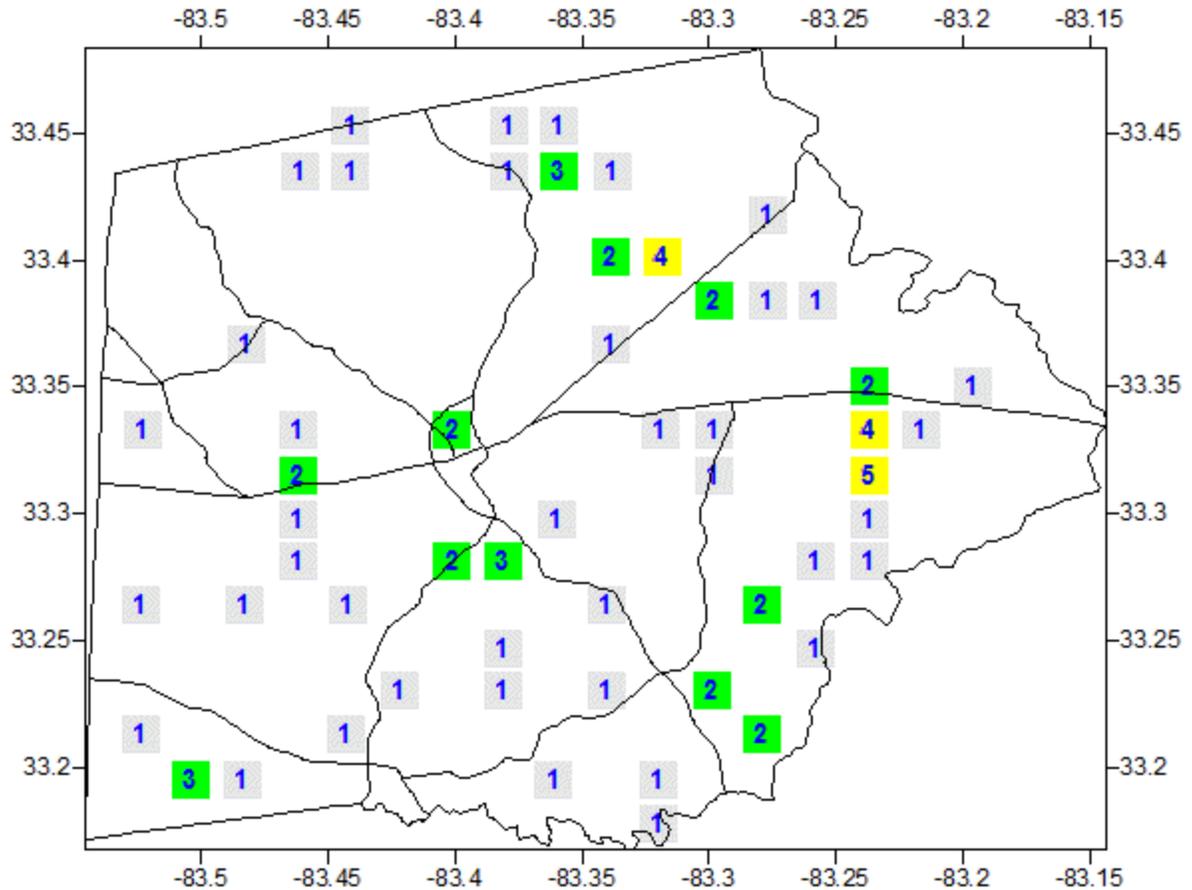
Acreage Burned by Cause of Fire For Putnam County For FY 2008-2017



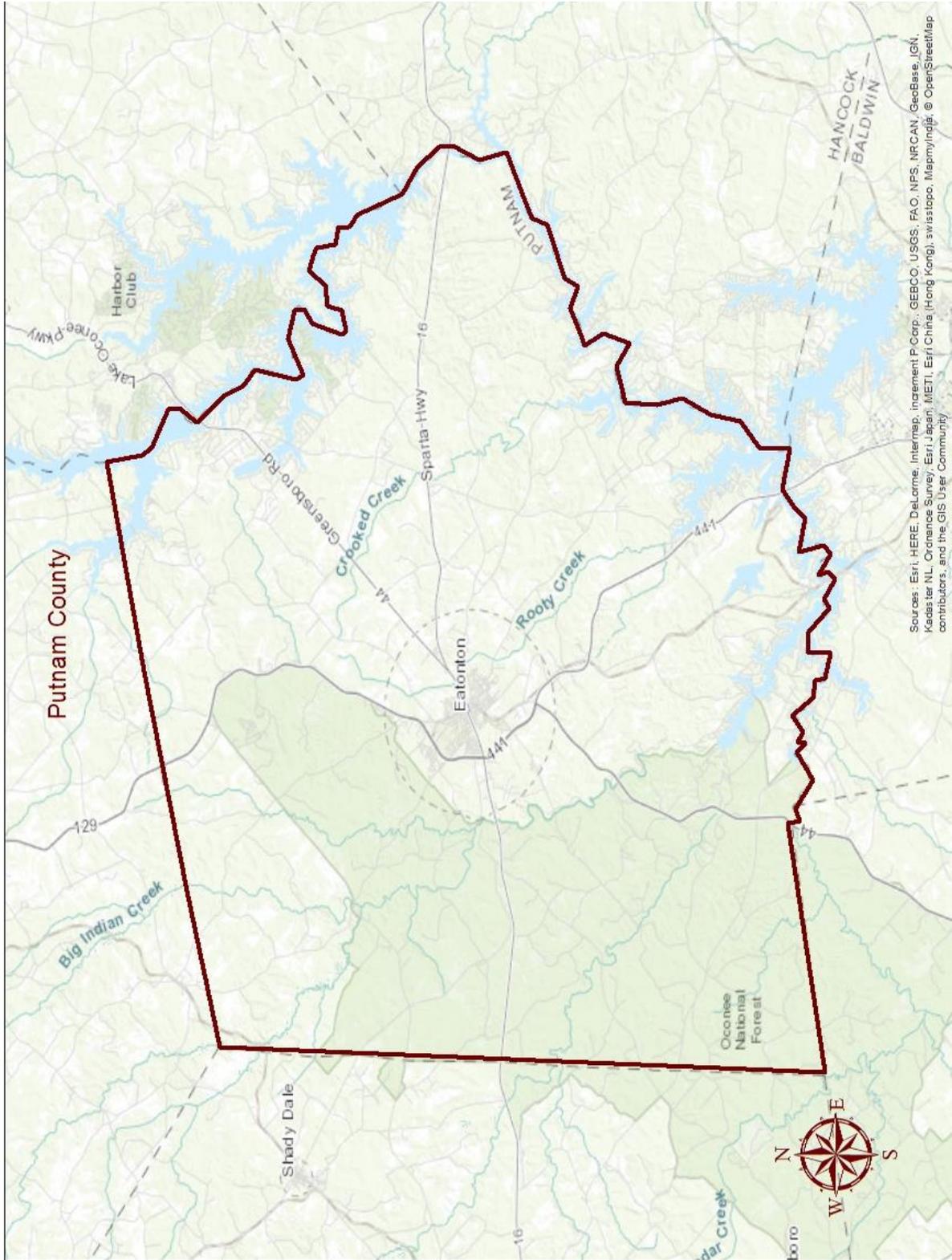
Fire Occurrence Map for Putnam County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

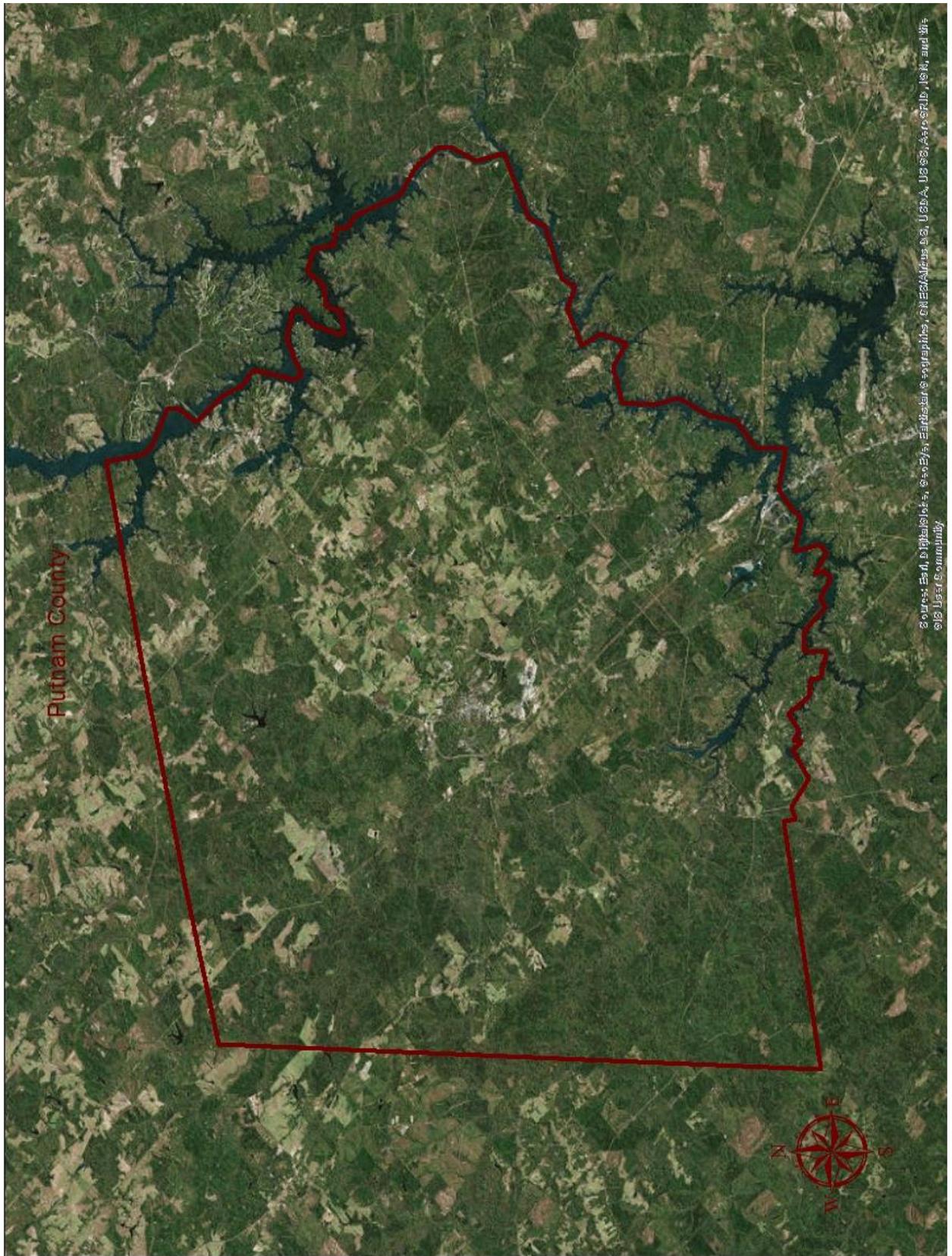


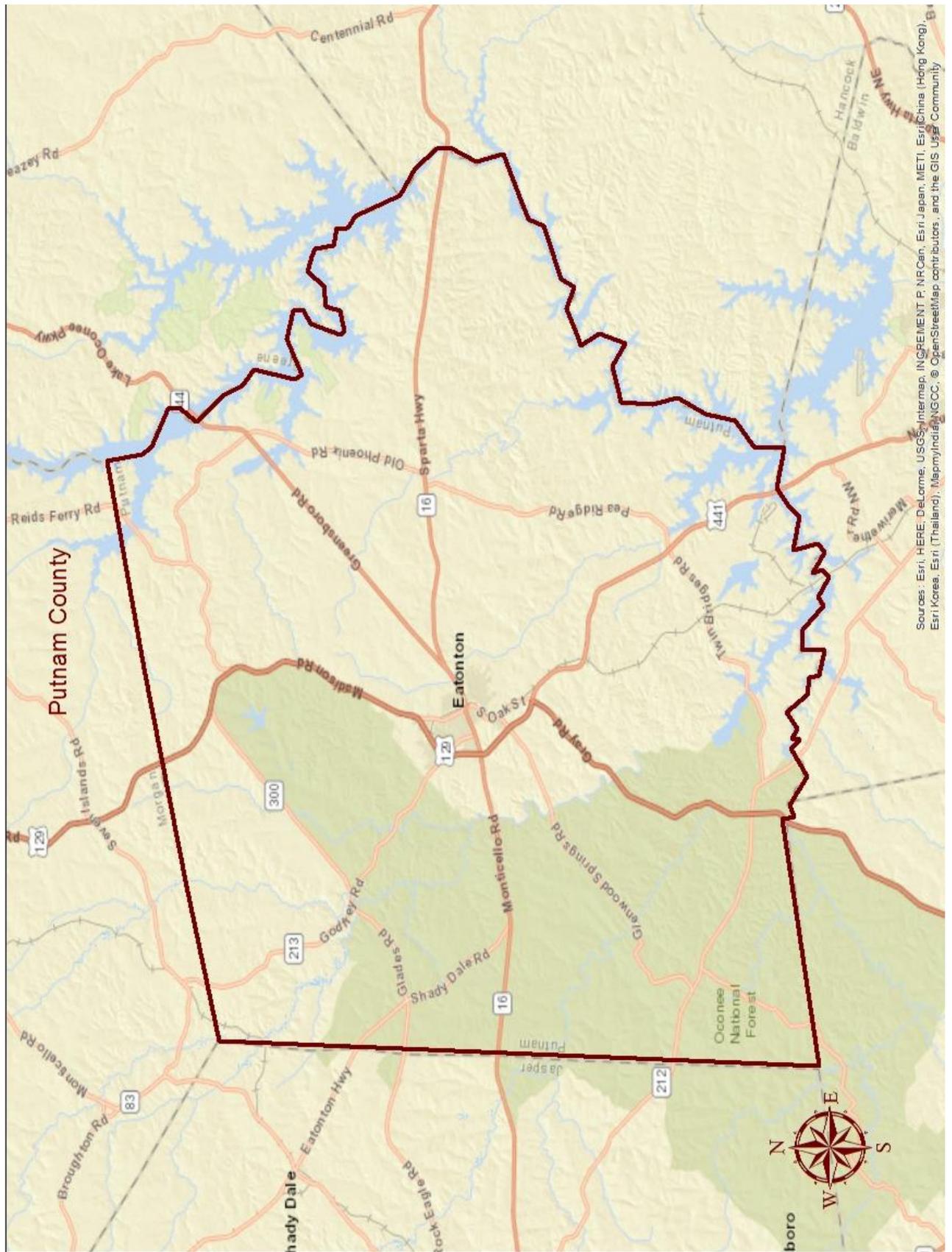
Fire Occurrence Map for Putnam County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



3. COUNTY BASE MAPS







4. 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.

Putnam County is typical of a County in the Southeastern United States in that it contains areas of both boundary and intermix WUI. Proximity to a large metropolitan with rapid and continuous development results in communities near extensive unbroken wildland fuel and also sited such that wildland fuels are present within the community.

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.



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

Risk Summary

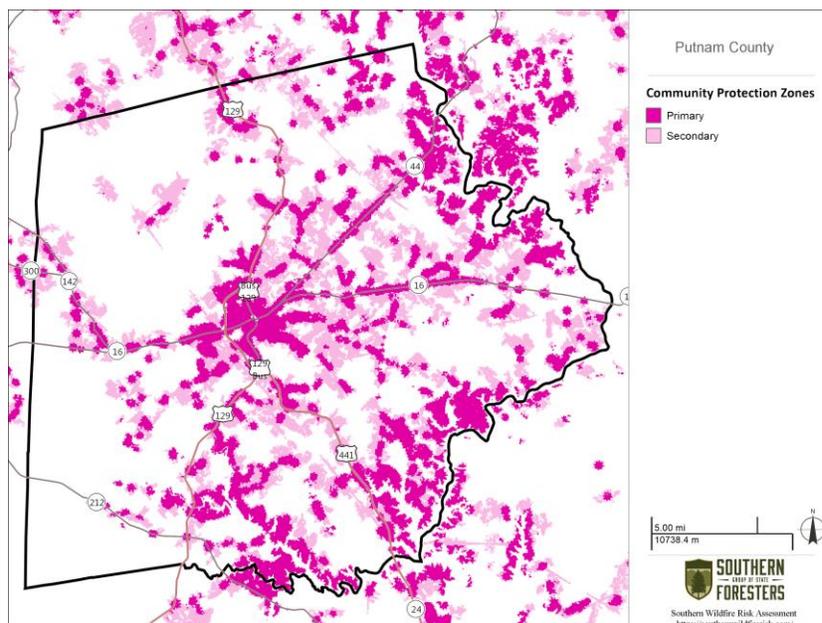
All of the areas that were assessed in Putnam County are newer developments that are in close proximity to Lake Oconee. Some of these areas are high density communities that are located in old farmland or forestland. Values for the communities assessed from the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) level of concern category for Putnam County are predominantly in the moderate to low range. This is in line with the generally low fire numbers, excellent response times, and rapid containment of those that do occur. Wildland fuels are also generally not continuous or of a type that promotes rapid spread or fires that are difficult to suppress. Some of the newer developments are located in proximity to hazardous fuel that could be hazardous during periods of high to extreme fire danger. Some also contain pockets of hazardous fuel internally that resulted from past uses. Based on data from the Communities at risk data layer the following counties were assessed during the first 6 months of 2009. Original copies of the assessments are retained by the Putnam County Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission. It should be noted that other communities exist that are in need of assessment. The communities listed below are representative of those in Putnam County that are in need of protection from wildland fire.

Map Number	Community	Location	Jurisdiction	Size and Structural Information	Overall Wildfire Hazard Rating
1	Cuscowilla	126 Cuscowilla Dr.	Harmony	700 acres 295 lots 263 homes	79
2	Hidden Lake	Hwy 44 N	Harmony	50 acres 32 homes	61
3	Hoot Owl / Beaverdam	Hoot Owl Lane	Harmony	42 acres 9 lots 31 homes	84
4	Lockhaven	Lockhaven	Harmony	70 acres 6 lots 45 homes	81
5	Sebastian Cove	Hwy 44 N	Harmony	400 acres 30 lots 200 homes	77
6	Hickory Point	Sugar Creek Rd	Harmony / Sugar Creek	40 acres 23 homes	69
7	Forest Lake village	Hwy 441 S	Flat Rock	300 acres 13 lots 123 homes	74
8	Little River	Little River Rd	Twin Bridges	200 acres 21 lots 100 homes	80

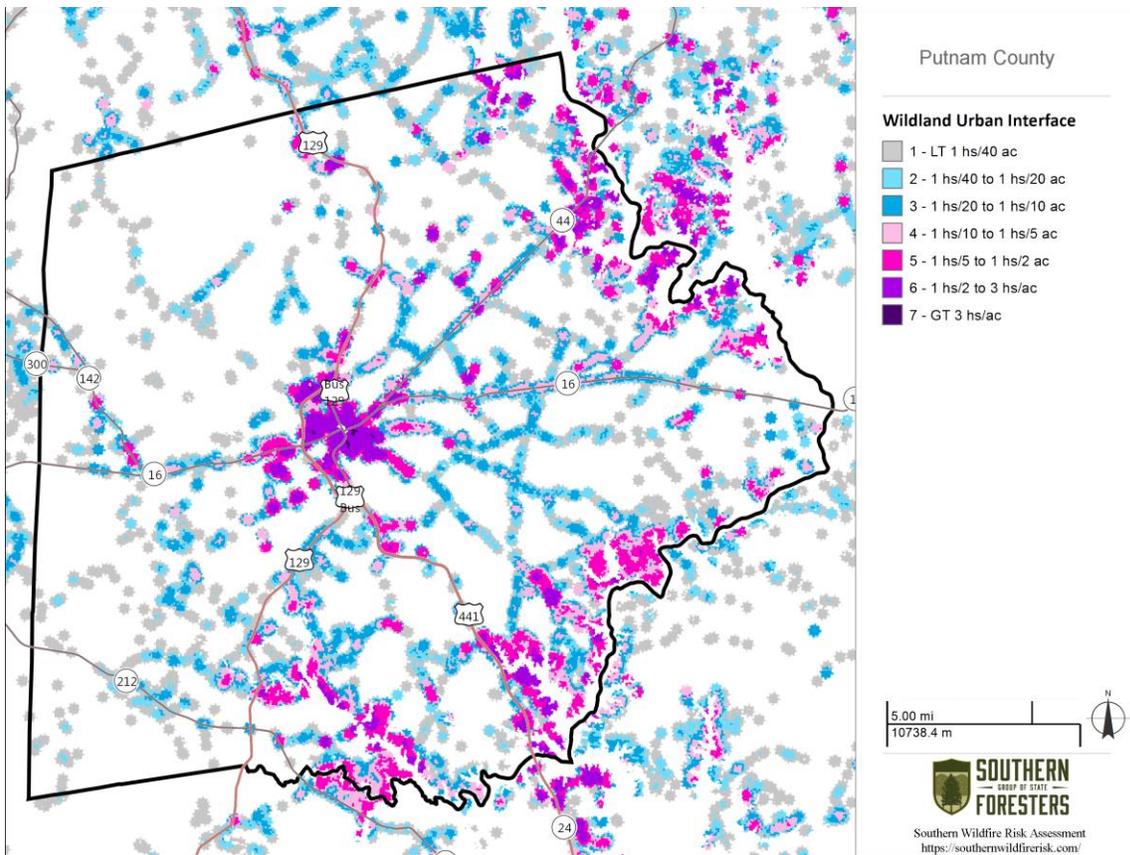
5. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARD MAPS

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

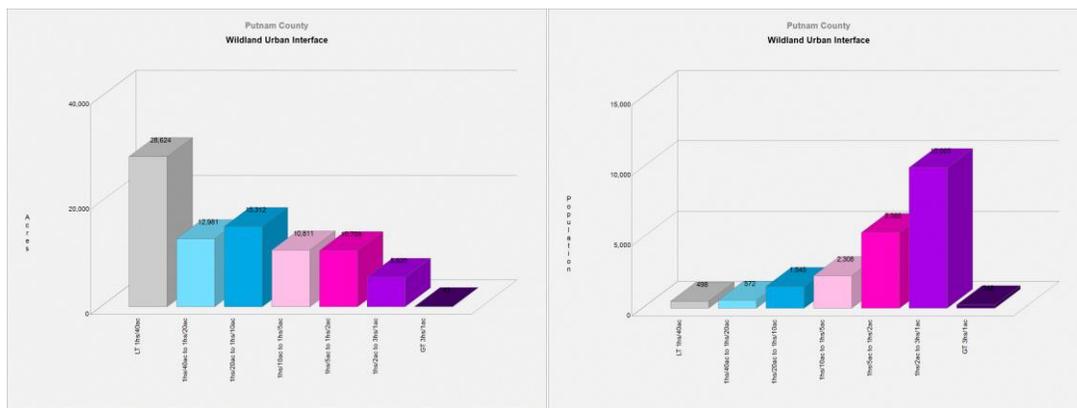
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire.
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning.
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests.
- Allow agencies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

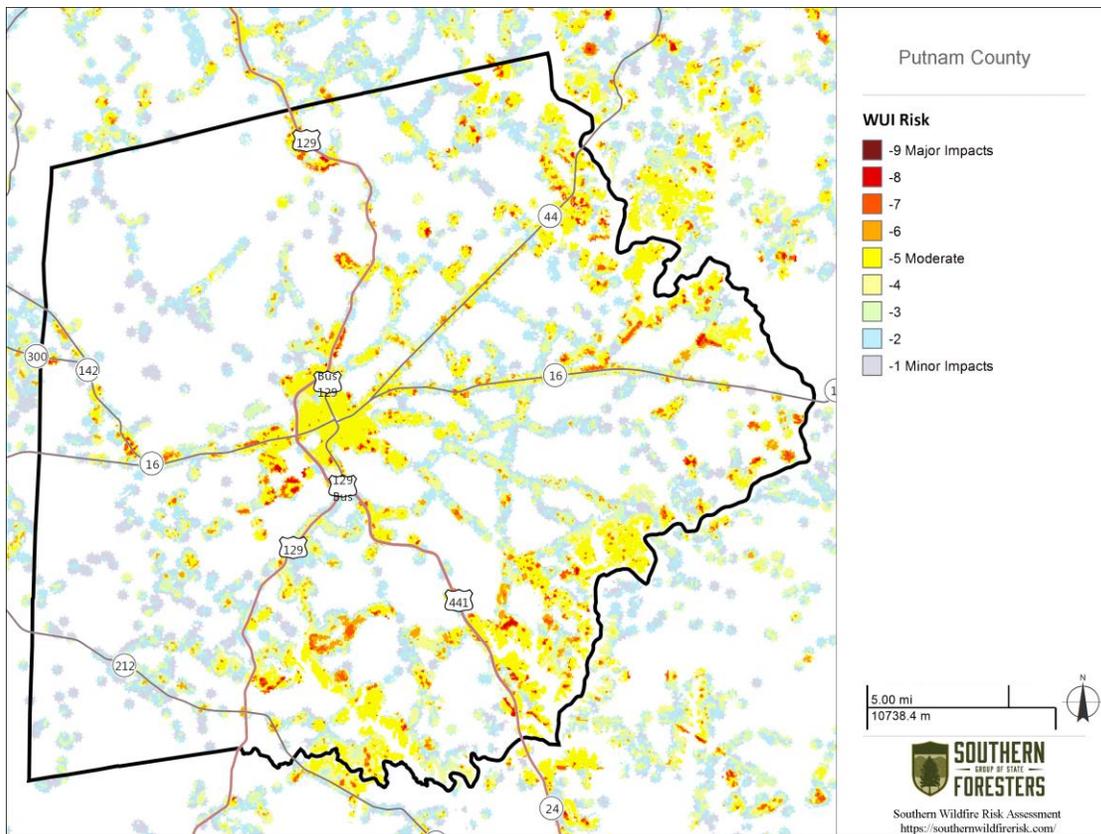


Community Protection Zones map from the Putnam County SWRA

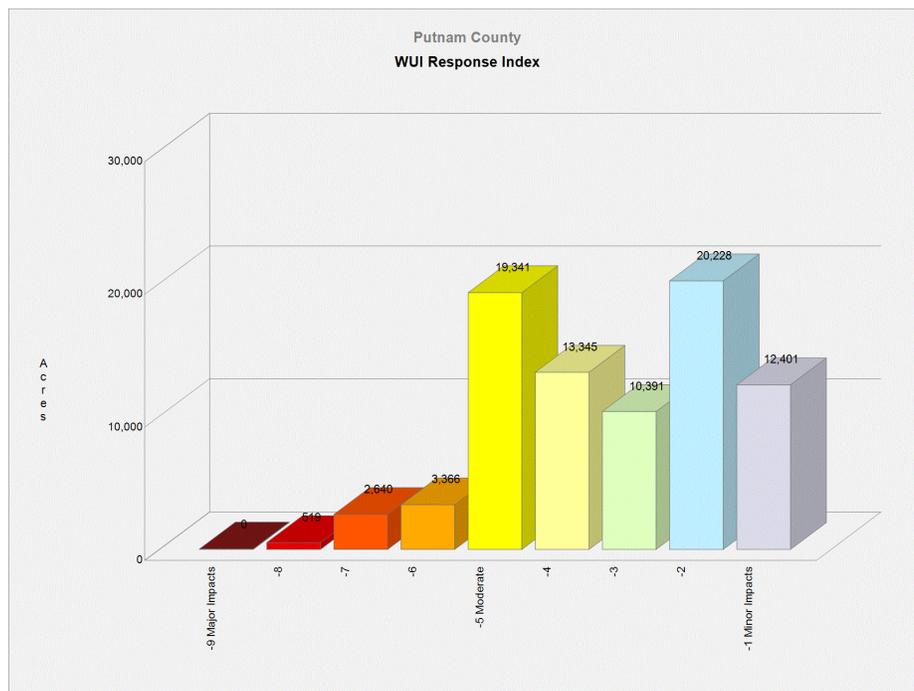


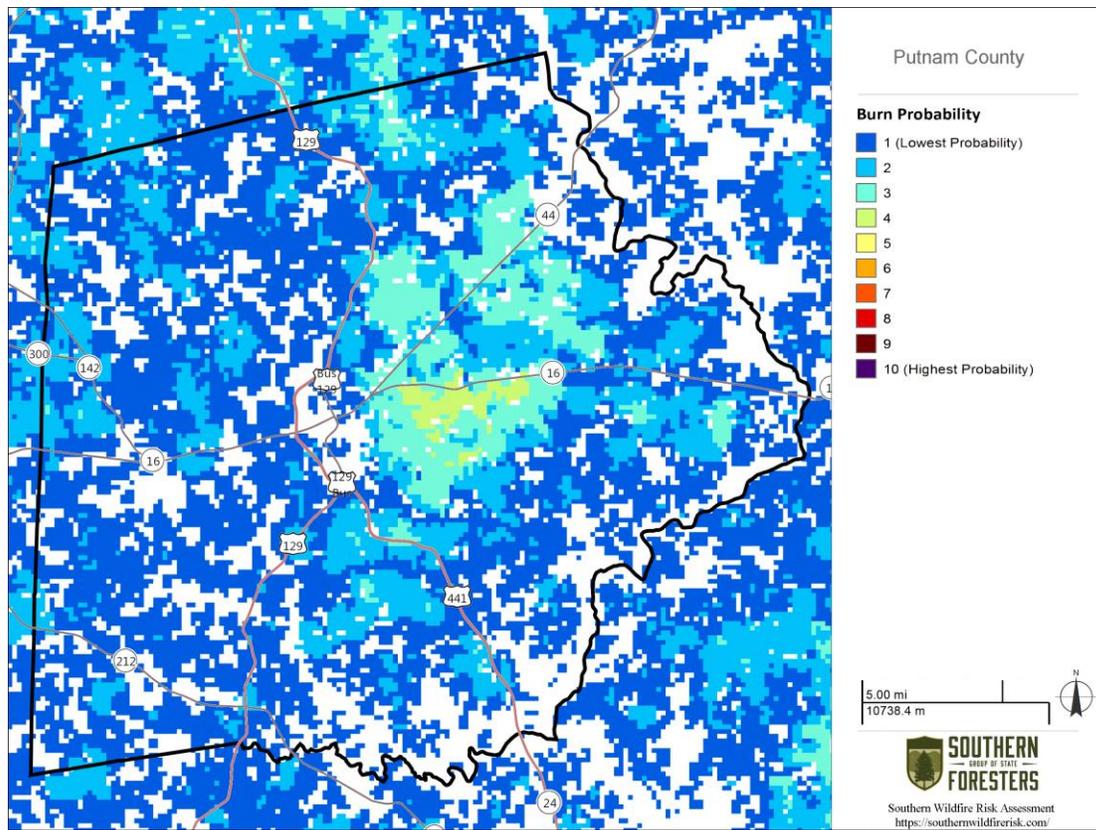
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map
 Below: WUI acres (left) WUI Population (right)



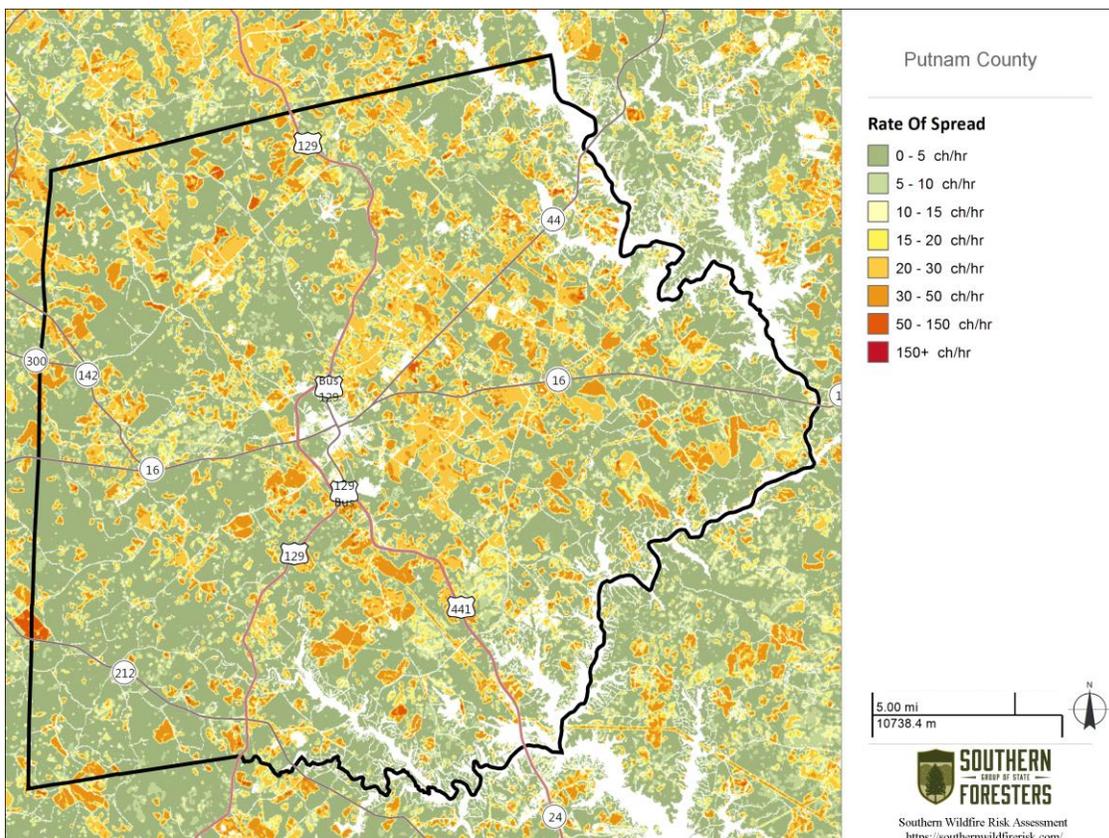


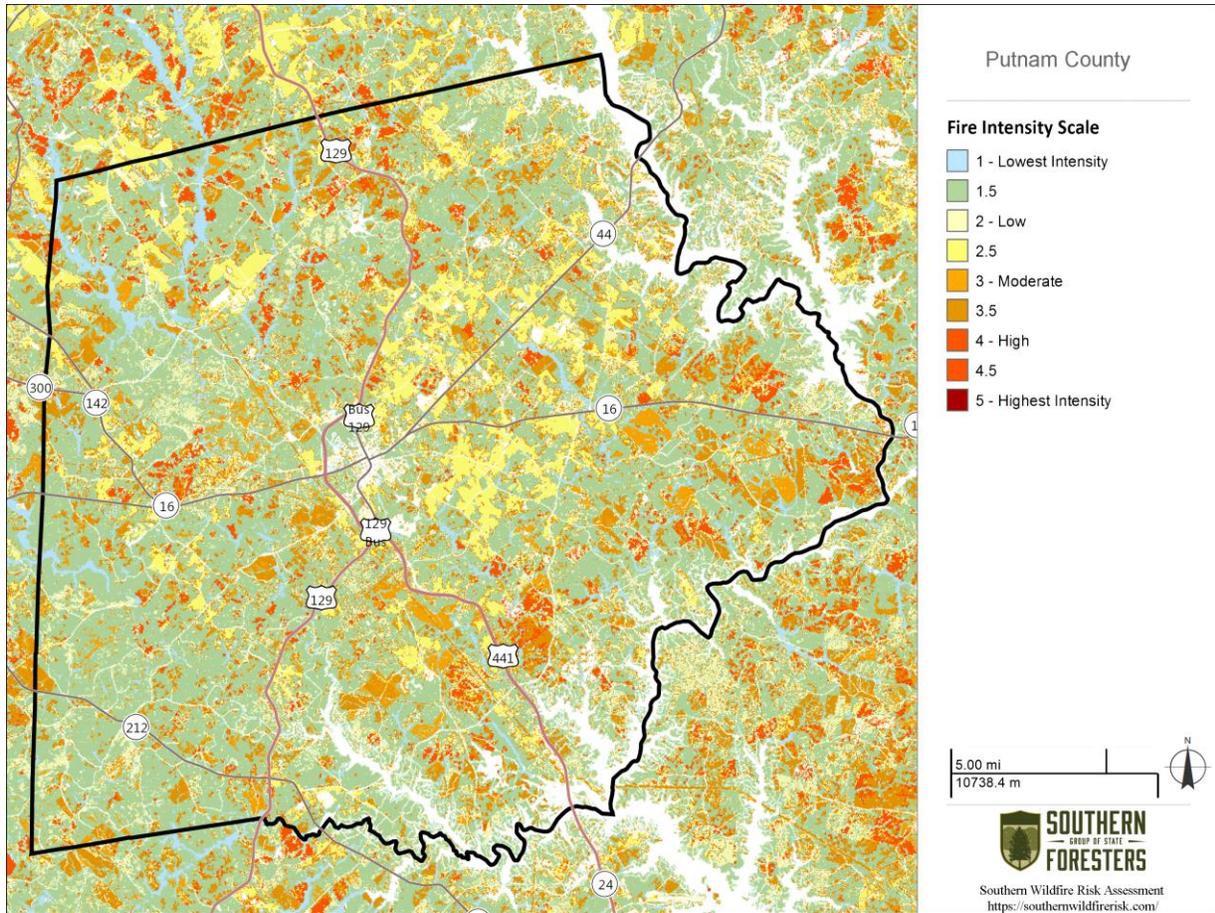
Above: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map Below: WUI Risk Index Acres



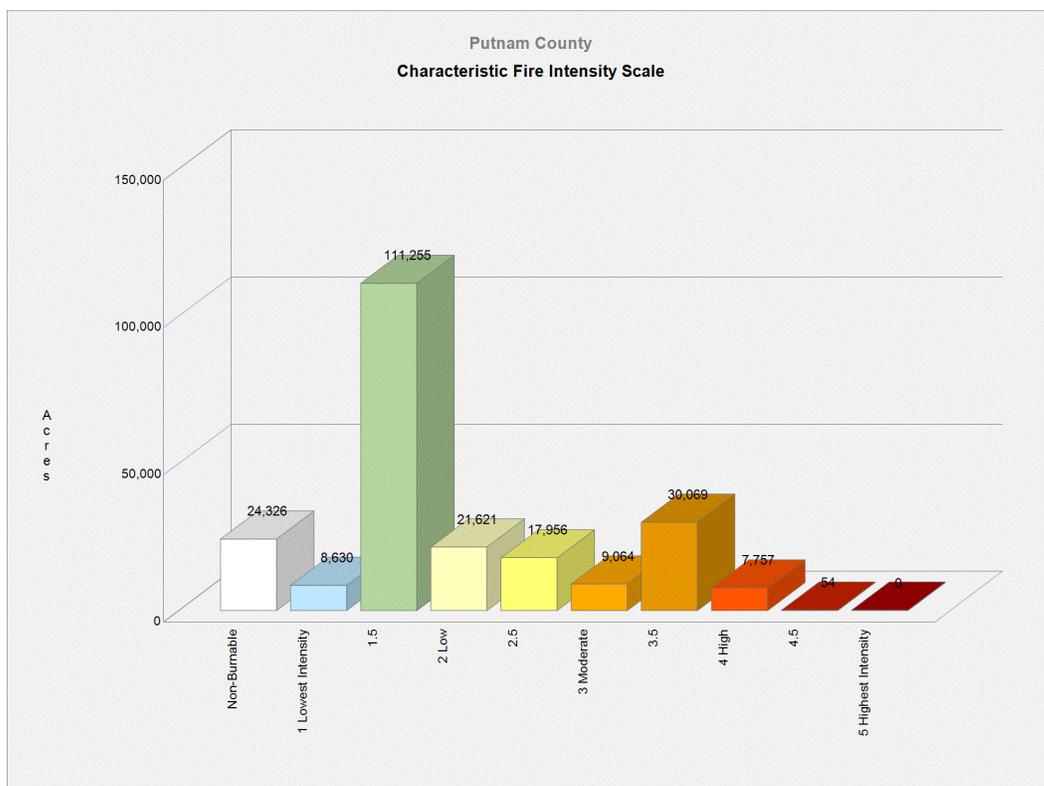


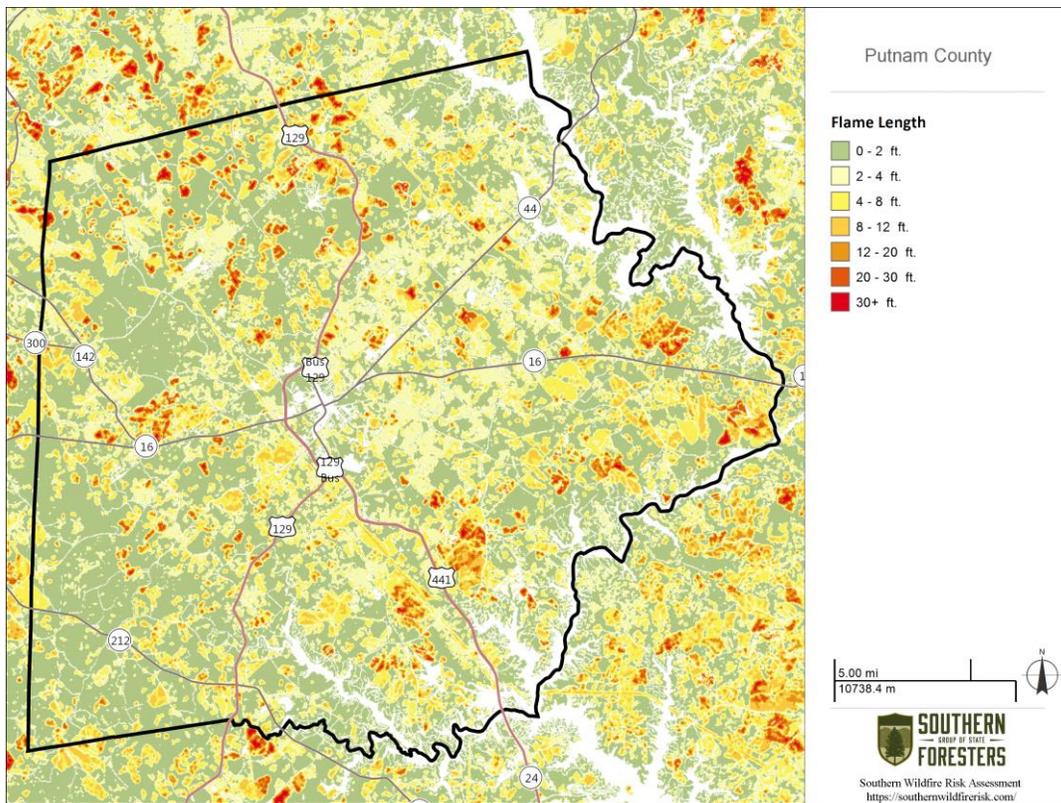
Above: Burn Probability map Below: Rate of Spread map



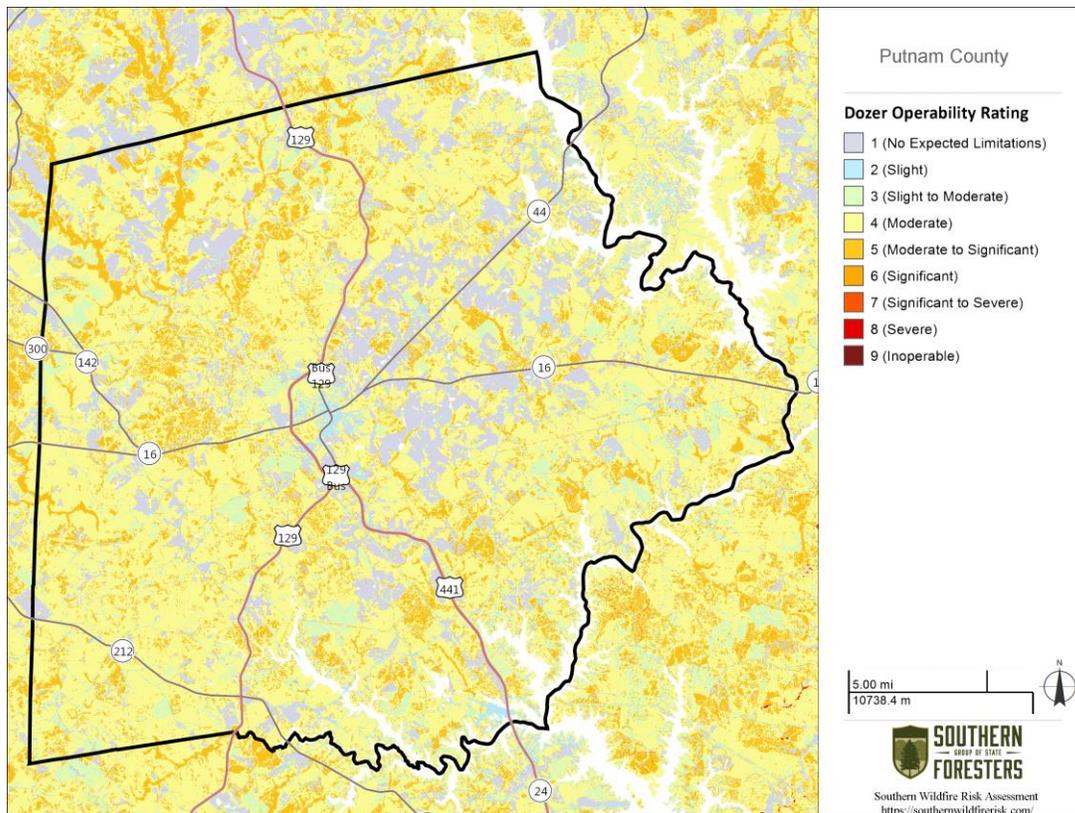


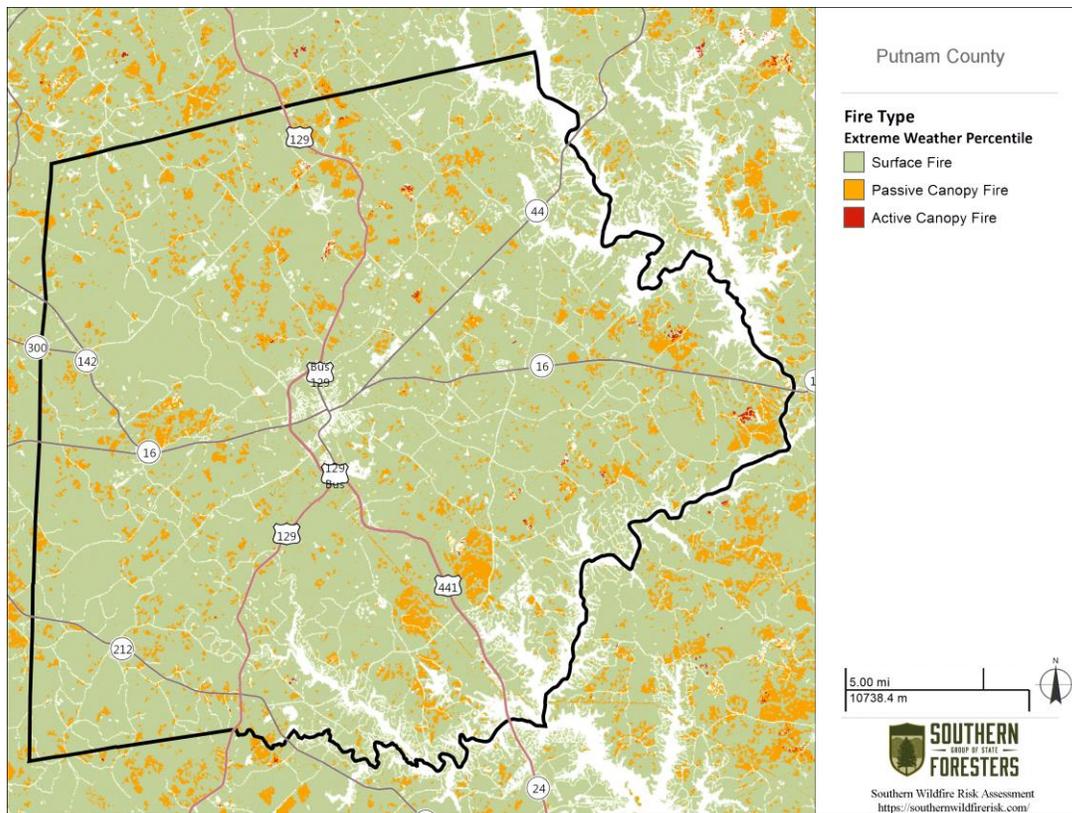
Above: Fire Intensity Scale map Below: Fire Intensity Scale Acres





Above: Flame Length map Below: Dozer Operability Rating map





There are two primary fire types – surface fire and canopy fire. Canopy fire can be further subdivided into passive canopy fire and active canopy fire. A short description of each of these is provided below.

Surface Fire

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



Passive Canopy Fire

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



Active Canopy Fire

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



6. MITIGATION PLAN

Executive Summary

As Putnam County continues to see increased growth from Augusta and other areas seeking less crowded and warmer climates, new development will occur more frequently on forest and wildland areas. Putnam 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 25 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.

In 2012 the International Code Council developed the International Wildland Urban Interface Code. The code is endorsed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and in 2014 the code was adopted by the Georgia Legislature to be used by counties to help lower fire risk in the higher risk interface areas.

The following recommendations were developed by the Putnam 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	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Driveway Access	Right of Way Clearance	Maintain vertical and horizontal clearance for emergency equipment. 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.
6. Codes and Ordinances	Examine existing codes and ordinances. Utilize the International Wildland Urban Interface Code. IWUIC	Amend and enforce existing building codes as they relate to skirting, propane tank locations, public nuisances (trash/debris on property), Property address marking standards and other relevant concerns. Review Subdivision and development ordinances for public safety concerns. Enforce uniform addressing ordinance.
7. Burn Permits	Education and Enforcement	Greater Burn Permit enforcement and education from the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities

Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas. Seek grant for prescribed burning in WUI areas. 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.
3. Existing Fire Lines	Reduce hazardous fuels	Clean and re-harrow existing lines.
Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed. Locate and pre-clear helicopter dip sites
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear.
3. Wildland Fire Response	GFC Office	Pre-clear and map aerial dip locations.
4. Mapping	GIS	Up to date mapping of roads and water sources.
5. Road Names	Road Signage	Improved Road Signage at Crossroads. “Dead End” or “No Outlet” Tags on Road Signs
6. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel. Ready Set Go training.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Putnam County Residents
<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. Target local schools, community groups and local senior centers.</p> <p>Distribute materials promoting firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>

2. Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders

Arrange for GFC Firewise program to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and codes in the county as the need arises. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible firewise community recognition.

3. Spring Clean-up Event (National Wildfire Preparedness Day – 1st Saturday in May annually)

Consider conducting an annual clean-up event in a selected high risk community involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Putnam County Fire Services 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:

- 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

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

4. Informational Packets

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

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

5. Wildfire Protection Display

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

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

6. Media

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

Utilize radio, TV, and Social Media to reach public.

7. ACTION PLAN

Timetables:

For each project (list highest priority projects first), list project, responsible agency, method, estimated duration, and effective dates.

Community and Structural Ignitability Reduction

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Improve defensible space in communities at risk to meet firewise standards.	Putnam County Fire Rescue and Georgia Forestry Commission	Conduct training at public meetings in communities at risk or through individual inspection	2 years	January 2020 through December 2021
Identify access problems in communities at risk.	Putnam County Fire Rescue and Georgia Forestry Commission	Each response station should identify problems within their response area	1 year	January 2020 through December 2020
Identify structural ignitability concerns in communities at risk to meet firewise standards.	Putnam County Fire Rescue and Georgia Forestry Commission	Conduct training during the public meeting when defensible space is addressed or at the time when individual inspections are conducted	2 years	January 2020 through December 2021
Identify problems with codes covenants and ordinances.	Putnam County Fire Rescue, GFC, Leaders of Homeowners associations, and EMA Director	Examine and resolve problems which negatively influence wildland suppression	2 years	January 2020 through December 2021

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 Putnam County Fire Rescue	Concentrate on Communities in proximity to plantation pine or natural pine stands that are west or north of the communities.	ongoing	Winter 2019/20 then every 3-4 years.
Identify prescribed burning projects on federal lands near communities at risk	Georgia Forestry Commission, US Forest Service, Supported by Putnam County Fire Rescue	Prescribed burn goals set by the U S Forest Service should also take fuel reduction near communities at risk into consideration as part of the prescription. Both agencies should work toward planning to see any proposed burn projects could be done concurrently. This will require changes in how these burns are carried out as regards logistics and technique.	Ongoing	Winter 2019/20 and repeated in succeeding years.
Provide assistance to communities at risk during periods of increased burning activity	Putnam County Fire Rescue	Provide a common burning area inside or adjacent to communities where citizens can safely burn debris supported by local fire services.	ongoing	Winter 2019/20 repeated in succeeding years
Provide assistance to communities with burning and other fuel mitigation practices	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	Winter 2019/20 and in succeeding years

Improvements to Capabilities of Wildland Response agencies

Provide support to individuals interested or skilled in wildland areas in regard to enhanced training.	Georgia Forestry Commission	Supported by the District Training officer Chief Ranger Bill Lee should coordinate with Putnam County 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	2019 and beyond
Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Identify needs for training and qualification of wildland responders	Georgia Forestry Commission and Putnam County Fire Chief	Supported by the District Training officer and Chief Ranger, training records of all wildland responders to insure all are FFT2 or Georgia Basic Wildland certified.	ongoing	2019 and beyond
Identify needs and acquire wildland equipment for County and State wildland responders to insure all wildland equipment meets NWCG standards. NWCG standards.	Georgia Forestry Commission and Putnam County Fire Rescue	Chief Ranger Lee and Fire Chief should inventory present wildland equipment and PPE. Identify needs and apply through local funding or grant funding.	ongoing	2019 and beyond

Public Education and Outreach

Project	Responsible Agency	Method	Estimated Duration	Effective Dates
Achieve Firewise USA status for Communities at Risk	Georgia Forestry Commission and Putnam County Fire Rescue	Pursue and achieve Firewise status for Cuscowilla and Hickory Point Communities. Should this be realized it would serve as a model for other communities to follow.	Ongoing	2019 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 Putnam County Fire Rescue	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	2019 and beyond
Improve public knowledge regarding Firewise principles	Georgia Forestry Commission	Acquire a firewise display to be retained by the Putnam County unit. 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	2019 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, newsarticles published, radio programs aired, etc. would be the best measure of success.
- The number of communities certified as Firewise USA would be an excellent measure of success.

8. 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 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.

9. 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).*

10. 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.wildlandfirersq.org
- National Wildfire Preparedness Day www.wildfireprepdays.org

Appended Documents:

Putnam County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Putnam County Wildfire assessment scoresheets

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



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