

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Rabun County

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



JULY 2016

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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1) OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

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

2) COUNTY BACKGROUND AND EXISTING SITUATION

Rabun County



Rabun County, in northeast Georgia, is the state's forty-seventh county. Comprising 371 square miles, the county was created by the [state legislature](#) in 1819 from land ceded by the [Cherokees](#) and was named for Georgia [governor William Rabun](#). In 1821 the legislature established the county seat, naming it Claytonville in honor of Judge Augustin S. Clayton. The location of the seat changed in 1823, at the citizens' request, and the town's name was shortened to Clayton. The current county courthouse in Clayton was built in 1967; since then a second floor and other remodeling have been completed.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, Rabun County's population was 15,050 (94.9 percent white, 0.8 percent black, and 4.5 percent Hispanic). The population has increased 29 percent since the 1990 census.

Towns

In addition to Clayton, Rabun County's incorporated communities are Dillard, Mountain City, Sky Valley, Tiger, and part of Tallulah Falls.

Dillard, incorporated in 1906, was named for [Revolutionary War](#) (1775-83) veterans John and James Dillard, who were early settlers there. Mountain City, originally called Passover (as the place where travelers passed over the Blue Ridge divide), was incorporated in 1907. Bounded on its east by the [Chattooga River](#) and on its west by the [Appalachian Trail](#), Mountain City is the northern gateway to the [Tallulah Gorge](#). The Eastern Divide runs through Mountain City, with waters flowing on the east side to the Atlantic Ocean and on the west to the Gulf of Mexico. The Bartram Trail, named for naturalist [William Bartram](#), provides scenic views of the surrounding [Blue Ridge Mountains](#) along seven miles at nearby Rabun Bald, Georgia's second highest mountain.



[Rabun County Courthouse](#)



[Sky Valley Resort](#)

Sky Valley was incorporated in 1978 as one of Georgia's newest chartered towns. It was founded on former cattle ranch land in 1969 as a ski resort community. Sky Valley's northern boundary is the Georgia-North Carolina state line, and its remaining three boundaries are formed by mountain ridges.

Tiger, located three miles from Clayton, was incorporated in 1904. Although some sources state that Tiger was named after a Cherokee chief, Tiger Tail, the story is doubtful. Another conjecture, that its name and that of nearby Tiger Mountain came from the wildcats roaming the area, seems more likely. Tiger is home to the Rabun County High School.

The town of Tallulah Falls, incorporated in 1884, straddles the border between Rabun and [Habersham](#) counties, and most of its population is concentrated on the Rabun County side.

Places of Interest



Moccasin Creek
Waterfall

Five Places in Rabun County are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hambidge Center Historic District, west of Dillard, was placed on the register in 1982. It includes the internationally renowned [Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences](#).

The York House, north of Mountain City, is the state's oldest continuously operating bed-and-breakfast inn. Founded in 1896, the inn has welcomed such guests as [Joel Chandler Harris](#) and Walt Disney. It was placed on the register in 1982. Hoojah Branch Site, near Dillard, was listed in 1987 and appears to be an

Indian mound site. The Tallulah Falls Train Depot

on U.S. Highway 441 at Tallulah Falls was placed on the register in 1988. It was built in 1913-14 to replace an older building that had burned down that year. Passenger service ended at Tallulah Falls in 1946, but freight hauls continued until the line was abandoned in 1961. The depot is now used as a gift shop.

The [Rabun Gap–Nacoochee School](#) is a private school for grades six through twelve. It formed as a consolidation between two schools, the Nacoochee Institute in Sautee, founded in 1903 by the [Presbyterian](#) minister Joel Wade, and the Rabun Gap Industrial School, founded in 1905 by Andrew Jackson Ritchie, Rabun Gap's first college graduate. Both were farm schools, where children attended classes, grew and prepared their own food, and maintained the [school buildings](#). In 1917 Ritchie initiated a "Farm Family Plan" by which whole families could work their way through school. A fire at the Rabun Gap school in 1926 occasioned the merging of the two schools into a larger one, for which Ritchie served as president until 1939. In the late 1960s, Eliot Wigginton created the [Foxfire](#) program at the school. Today Foxfire is no longer affiliated with any school but functions as a separate, nonprofit organization in the county.



York House

With access to the Appalachian Trail, as well as five [lakes](#) and two rivers, Rabun County features much to attract those interested in the wilderness and outdoor recreation. The county is also home to three [state parks](#): Black Rock Mountain State Park, Tallulah Gorge State Park, and Moccasin Creek State Park.

Among notable persons who have lived in Rabun County is the writer, editor, and social critic [Lillian Smith](#).

The above material is courtesy of the New Georgia Encyclopedia

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.

Rabun County is typical of a county that is undergoing a rapid transition from an isolated rural county to a highly desirable recreational and retirement destination. It contains mixtures of both boundary and intermix interface.

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.

Fire History and Existing Situation

Wildland Fire has not been a serious problem in Rabun County as regards number of occurrences when compared to some counties in the state. During FY 2015 there were 8 fires. There were three of these fires were caused by residential debris burning (2), and burning of household garbage (1). There were two fires caused by fallen powerlines, one fire caused by an escaped campfire and one caused by a burning vehicle. It should be noted that one of the fire causes was undetermined. The five year average size fire in Rabun County in FY 2015 was 9.60 fires, with an average of 35.23 acres. This acreage is considerably above the statewide average, due to the challenges of fire suppression in Rabun County’s mountainous terrain. Fires were reduced statewide during FY2015 due to normal to above average rainfall. The following table outlines fire activity in Rabun County for the past complete fiscal year (July 2014 – June 2015). It should be remembered that the statewide average in FY 2011 was influenced by the Honey Prairie and Race Pond that burned in the spring and summer of 2011 in the Okefenokee. Thus far in FY 2016 which began on July 1 of 2015 there has been eight fires documented.

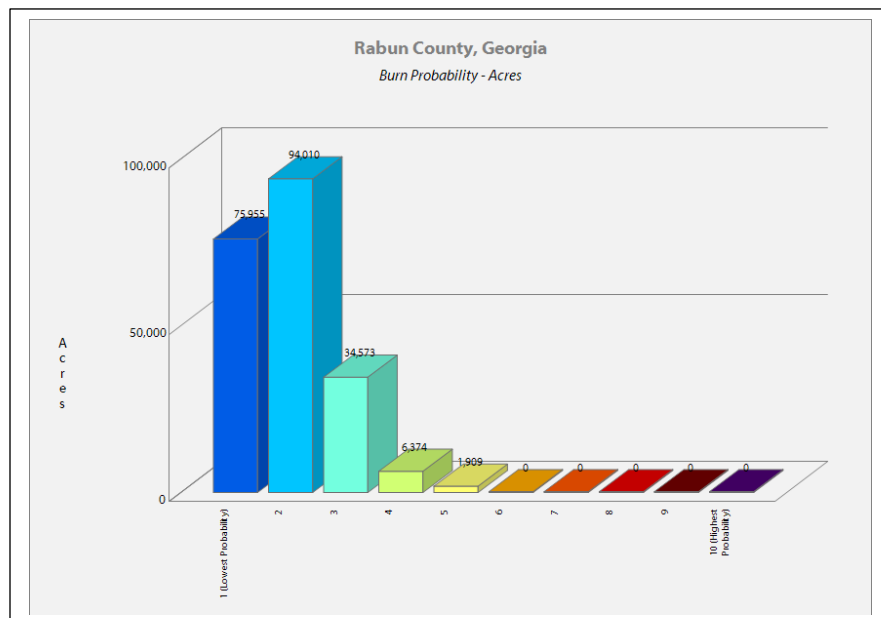
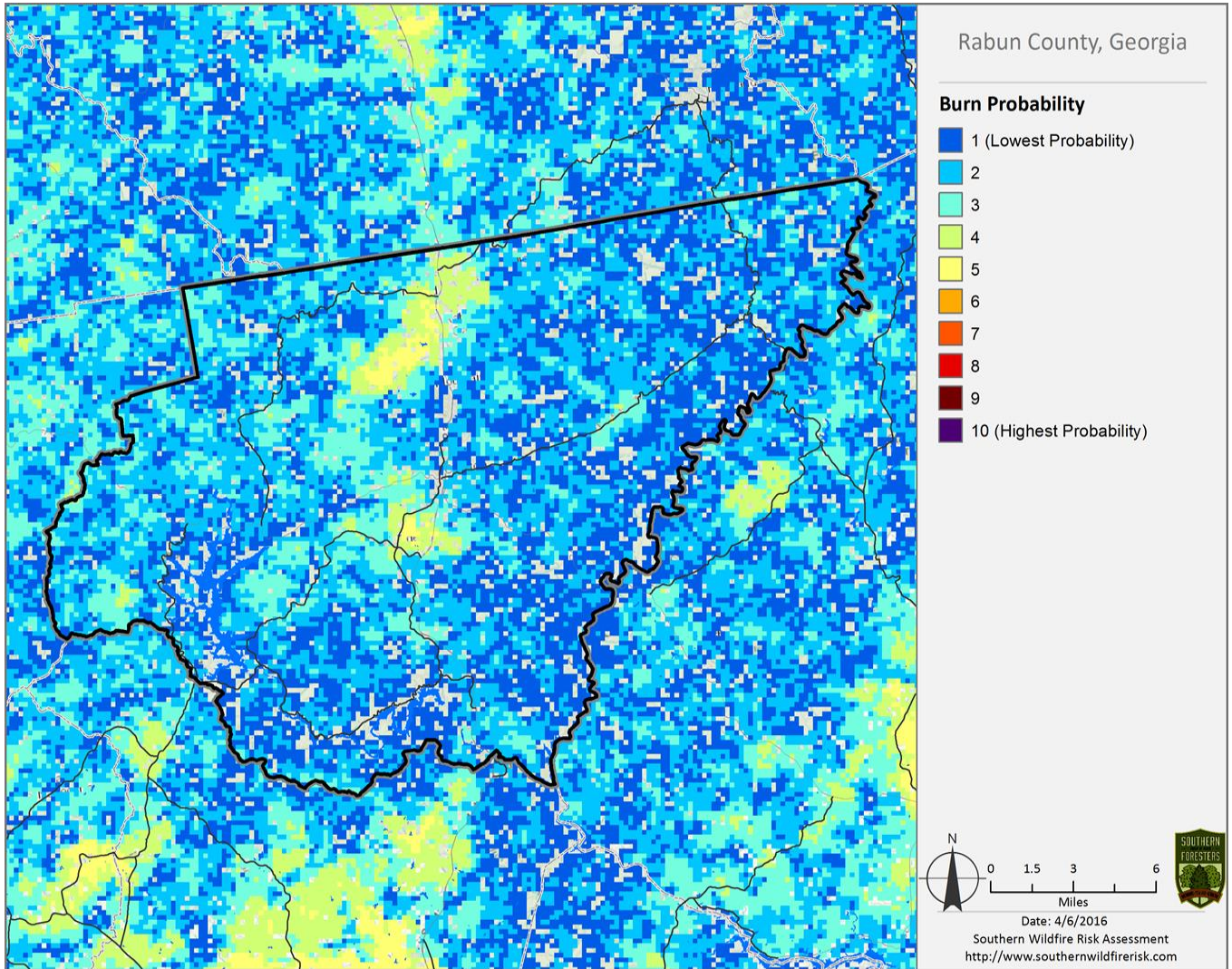
County = Rabun	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1	↑	0.30	0.40	0.10
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.40	0.51
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.20	0.19
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	0		0.00	0.20	2.58
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	3		3.73	3.20	1.61
Incendiary	Incendiary	0		0.00	1.20	9.55
Lightning	Lightning	0		0.00	0.20	0.00
Machine Use	Machine Use	0		0.00	0.40	0.02
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	0		0.00	0.80	7.11
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	0		0.00	0.20	0.38
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	0		0.00	0.20	0.06
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	2	↑	3.70	0.40	0.74
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1	↑	0.95	0.80	0.67
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0		0.00	0.20	8.50
Undetermined	Undetermined	1	↑	0.90	0.80	3.22
Totals for County: Rabun Year: 2015		8		9.58	9.60	35.23

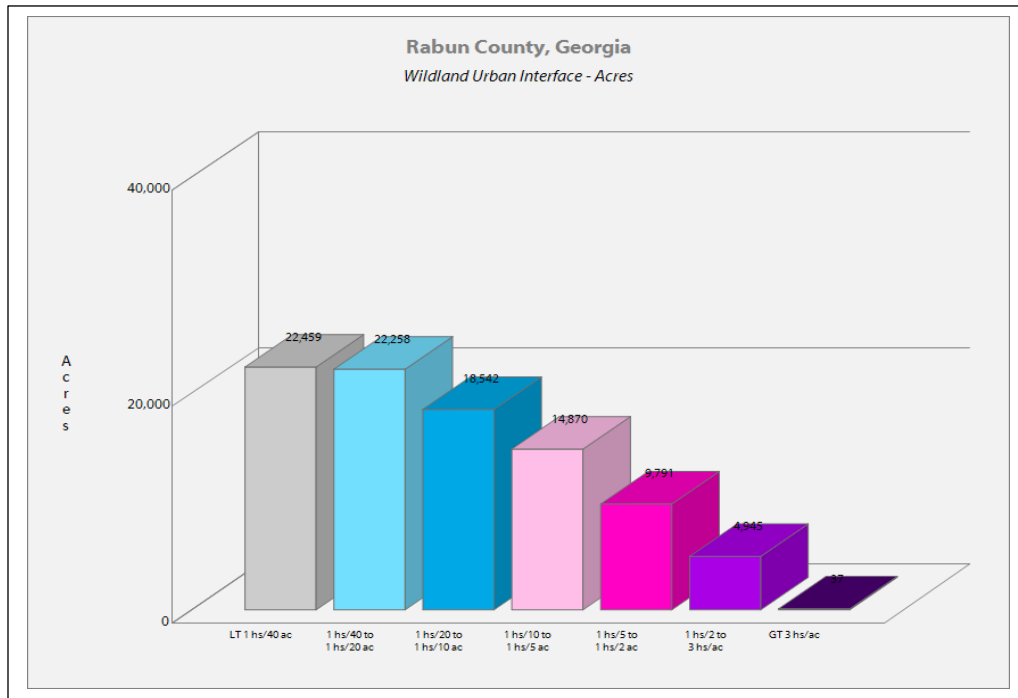
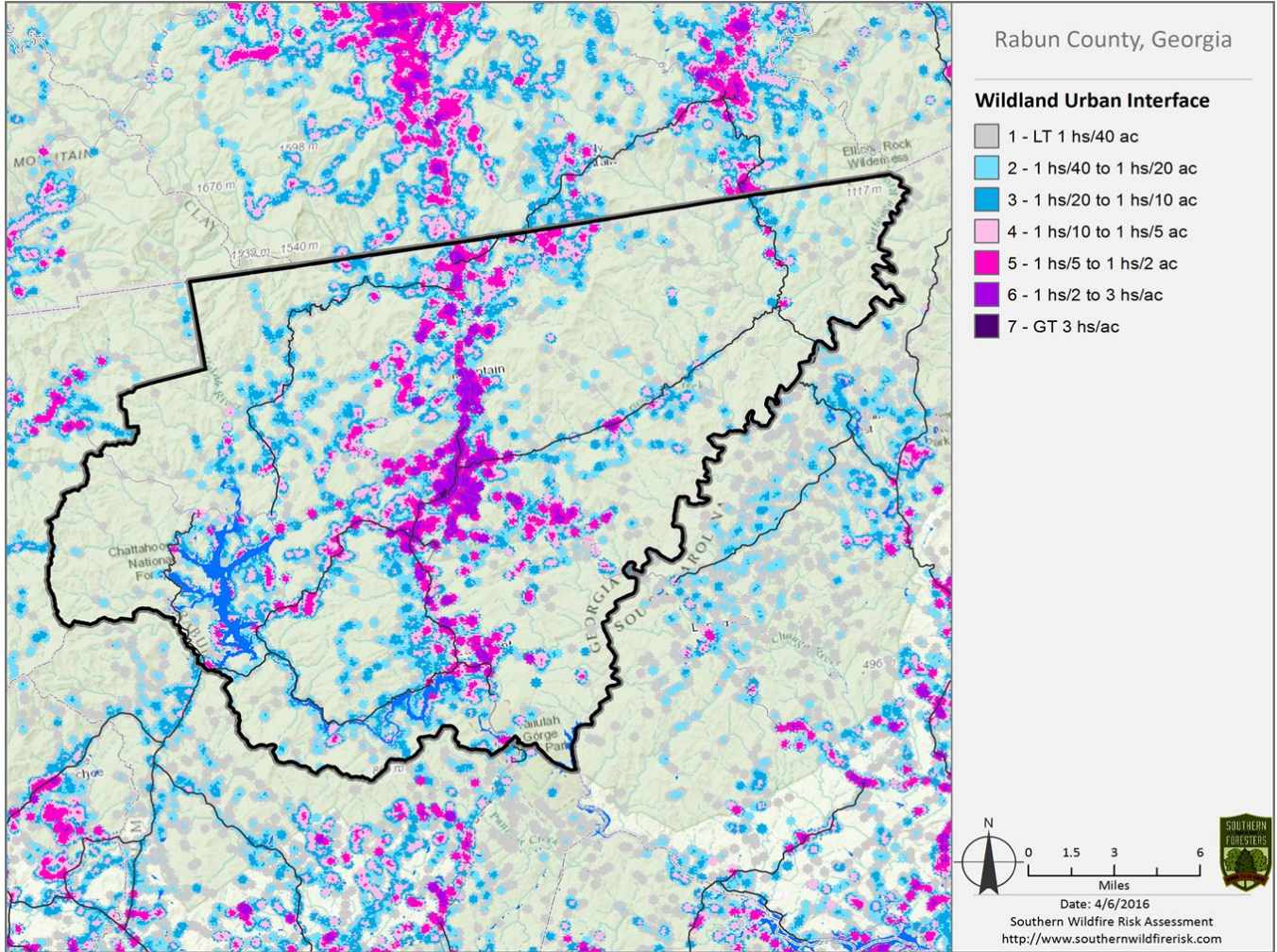
4) Risk Summary

This document reflects updates that were recorded in 2016. It should be noted that 9 Firewise Communities have been established in Rabun County since the initial assessments were completed in 2009. These communities were established in areas of high risk. The Firewise Program has been successful in educating community leaders and members on the risk of wildfire, and has engrained a sense of awareness for the establishment of defensible space around structures on their properties. The program is also beneficial in educating residents on how to mitigate the fuels on their property. Following a series of initial meetings in early 2009 assessments were made of areas of concern in Rabun County. These assessments were made by personnel of the Rabun County Fire Services following guidelines provided by the Georgia Forestry Commission. Assessments were made using the Georgia Forestry Commission Form 140 for Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. Areas selected for assessment were based on the communities at risk GIS layer from the Southern Fire Risk Assessment supplemented by local knowledge of hazardous areas. Information from the assessment process is displayed in tabular form in the appendix. There are 3 spreadsheets which combine station jurisdictions with the exception of Station 12 (Tiger) which is on a single table. These tables list the community name, Map #, Lat / Long, number of homes, hazard rating, risk category, and the presence or absence of the area in the Southern Fire Risk Assessment. The original assessment documents contain detailed specific information relating to the particular hazards affecting the community and are retained by the Rabun County Fire Chief. These documents would be valuable in mitigating specific hazards should they be able to be changed.

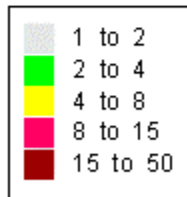
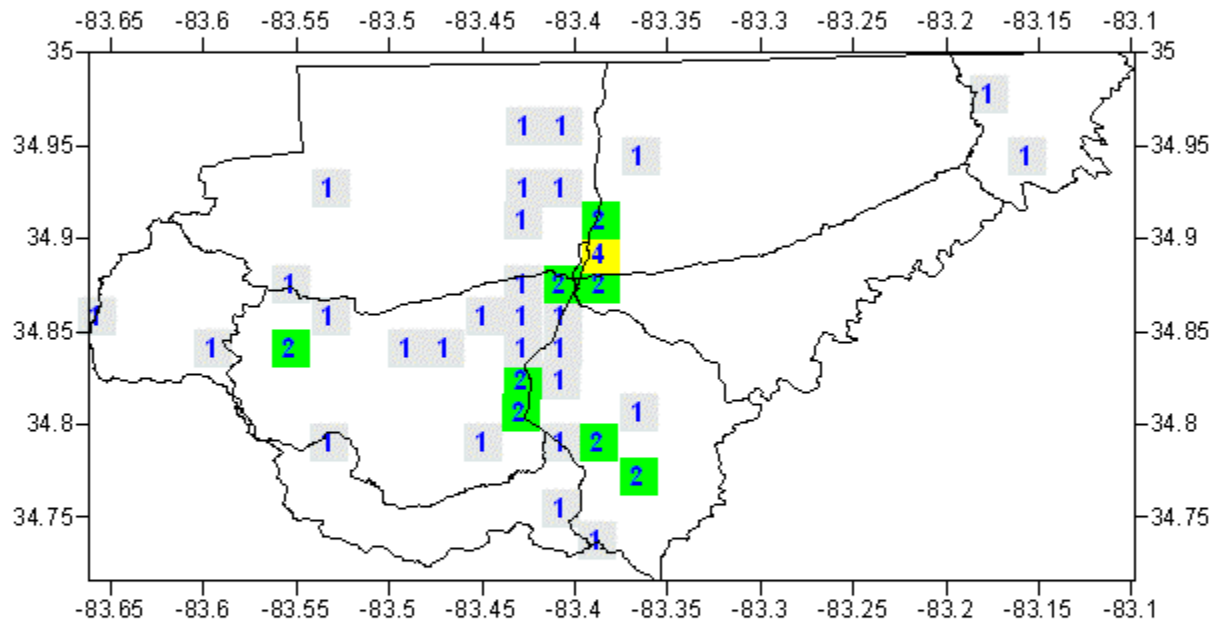
One hundred one (101) areas were assessed. Forty two (42) were classified as at extreme risk, nineteen (19) as high, and forty (40) were classified as moderate. It should be recognized that additional opportunities for assessment exist in all response jurisdictions. Principal hazards affecting communities classified as extreme or high were related to extreme slope, poor access related to one way access, narrow roads, unpaved roads on steep slopes, lack of defensible space, high structural ignitability factors, and dead end roads. Varying degrees of suppression difficulty exist due to heavy fuel loading and steep slopes. There are some areas that are affected by extended response time due to winding roads on mountain slopes or along large lakes. All jurisdictions experience these hazards to some degree. Many of the structures are vacation homes or are not occupied full time. This leads to a lack of maintenance which greatly increases structural ignitability. This is probably the greatest danger faced by full or part time residents in the county and is the most likely to be improved by citizen involvement or participation. County codes could address future development and road construction standards. Numerous educational opportunities exist. Again, as many of the areas at greatest risk are occupied part time, signage identifying the hazard and directing residents to the Firewise website would seem to be an effective approach as direct communication may be more difficult.

5) Community Hazard Maps





Fire Occurrence Map for Rabun County for Fiscal Year 2011-2015



6) 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.

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Hazard	Mitigation	Method
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. Organized burning could be conducted on these days supported by local fire department personnel.

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
<p>Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through direct contact</p>	<p>Federal, State, County, and municipal governments</p>	<p>Continue Firewise meetings by each fire response jurisdiction assisted by Georgia Forestry Commission (state) and USDA Forest Service (federal). Conduct a door to door campaign in particularly hazardous communities</p>
<p>Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through use of media</p>	<p>County, State, and municipal governments</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through formal certification and recognition</p>	<p>Federal, State, County, and municipal governments</p>	<p>Supported by the USFS and the Georgia Forestry Commission a goal of achieving Firewise status for at least one new community per year. This goal should also include maintaining support for current Firewise communities in the county.</p>

7) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

- Georgia Firewise Community Hazard Mitigation Grant: Georgia Forestry Commission grant designed to assist Firewise communities in the mitigation of fire hazards within their community. The grant is designed to provide financial assistance in helping the community to carry out the recommendations of their Firewise Action Plan.
- Community Protection Grant: U.S.F.S. 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.
- 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 complete a 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.
- FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
 1. Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). The purpose of AFG’s is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) organizations of a state to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and related hazards.
 2. Fire Prevention and Safety Grants. The purpose of these grants is to assist state, regional, national or local organizations to address fire prevention and safety. Emphasis of the program is on prevention of fire-related injuries to children.
 3. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER). The purpose of SAFER is to award grants directly to volunteer; combination and career fire departments to help the departments increase their cadre of firefighters (enhance their ability for 24-hour response).
- 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.
- Individual Homeowners:

1. The elimination of hazardous conditions around a structure must ultimately be the responsibility of the community and the homeowner. They will bear the cost and reap the benefit from properly implemented mitigation efforts.
2. GEMA: Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program



7) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

Hazard	Specific Action and Responsible Party
Lack of Defensible Space	Using the risk summaries referenced 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. This would probably be best accomplished by approaching homeowners associations or organizations. Ultimately, the message should reach individual homeowners in each community. Should local organizations not exist, the builder or developer could be contacted. Such contacts would also influence future projects or developments

Access problems	Using individual Communities at Risk maps for each station, the Georgia Forestry Commission and Rabun 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	Rabun 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 could be formulated and used) structures should be assessed and findings conveyed to residents. This could be through use of media or by direct contact with residents or homeowners associations.
Codes and Ordinances	Rabun 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, lack of proper identification pertaining address or street names, set back distances from wildland fuels, road widths in new developments.

In regard to priority, the above steps should first extend to the higher numbers in the extreme category from the risk summary as these communities are at a higher degree of risk. **Another means of reaching homeowners would be to distribute literature on Firewise principles through the building permit office. Checklists for Homeowners are available on the Georgia Forestry Commission public website <http://www.gfc.state.ga.us> . Look under Forest Fire – Wildland Urban Interface- Firewise**

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

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. 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.
Fuel Continuity between Federal Wildland and Woodland Communities	In areas where the need exists and fuel reduction by burning is determined to be inappropriate, permanent or semi-permanent fuel breaks could be established. These breaks should be maintained annually prior to the arrival of prime burning times. Their locations should be mapped and made known to local, state, and federal response personnel. Residents of the Communities adjacent to these breaks should be advised of their purpose and their cooperation in protecting them should be gained. These breaks could be installed by the USDA Forest Service in cooperation with and assisted by the Georgia Forestry Commission.
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.
Improvement needed	Responsible Party and specific action
Improve training and qualification of Rabun County Wildland firefighters	Chief Ranger Phil Black, District Ranger Shawn Alexander of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Rabun County Fire Chief James Reed 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 the Rabun County Fire plan 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 Rabun 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 Black and Fire Chief Reed.

7) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

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

Opportunity	Responsible Party and Specific Action
<p>Improve Public Education through direct contact</p>	<p>Prior to the onset of fire season(s) rangers of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Rabun 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 Rabun County Station in Tiger, Georgia and used for all Firewise meetings in Rabun County. Local news media should be invited to these meetings. Goals for potential Firewise certified communities in Rabun County could be considered after these meetings are completed.</p>
<p>Improve Public Education through use of media</p>	<p>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 and Rabun County Fire Services. 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 and their role in improving their own personal safety.</p>
<p>Improve Public Education through formal certification</p>	<p>Georgia Forestry Commission, US Forest Service and County Fire Officials should continue support for all current Firewise Communities within the county. They should also set a goal of achieving at least one new Firewise community within the county each year</p>

7) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

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 take place during the winter of 2017.
- Pre-planning to examine access and suppression problems should take place at any time during the current burning season.
- Codes and Ordinances should be examined as soon as possible in order for the legal workings of changes to take place.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Any identified prescribed burn projects should take place in late winter 2017. 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. Timing of these actions would be dependent upon Fire station availability during the late winter of 2017.

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 during early calendar year 2017
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.
- Certification of Firewise communities should follow the timetable associated with the action plan

7) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

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. The number of communities that achieve Firewise status would be an obvious measure of success.

8) Wildfire Pre-Suppression Plan

This document is located in the appendix of this plan

9) Appendix

- Risk Summary tables with respective tables organized by station
- County maps of surface fuels, USFS Chattooga Ranger District, Level of concern with initial dispatch points, and fire occurrence areas
- Rabun County Pre-Suppression plan.



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