GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Stephens County

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

APRIL 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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PLAN CONTENTS

1) OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

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

Stephens County

Stephens County, located in the northeast Georgia foothills, is known for its scenic beauty. Places of interest include 900-foot-high Currahee Mountain, the last mountain in the Blue Ridge Mountain chain, and 186-foot-high Toccoa Falls.

Originally inhabited by Mississippian Indians known as "Mound Builders" and then by Cherokees, the first non-Indians in the area were Revolutionary War (1775-83) veterans who settled there just after that war. On August 18, 1905, the state legislature established the 179-square-mile Stephens County, Georgia's 143rd, from parts of Franklin and Habersham counties. It is named for the statesman Alexander Stephens, who served in the state legislature and the U.S. Congress, as vice president of the Confederacy, and as the state's governor in the two years preceding his death.

Stephens County Courthouse

Only three communities in the county are incorporated: Avalon, Martin, and Toccoa, the county seat. The name for the city of Toccoa, which is located ninety miles north of Atlanta, comes from the Cherokee word for "beautiful" or "where the Catawbas lived." It was laid out in 1873 around an area formerly known as "Dry Pond" (for a pool there that was dry nearly year-round). In its early days after the Civil War (1861-65), it was the site of a coaling station for the Georgia Air Line Railroad. Toccoa's position on the railroad between Atlanta and Charlotte, North Carolina, and later to points further east, as well as its proximity to waterpower, were key factors in its rapid growth. Incorporated in 1897, Toccoa became known as the "Furniture, Thread, and Steel City" for the industries that grew up there. It has received several honors, including the Georgia Chamber of Commerce "Stay and See Georgia" award in 1974, designation as a "Georgia Certified City," and selection as an "All-Georgia" community in 1987. The original courthouse, built in 1908, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and restored in 2008. The current courthouse was built in 2000.

Avalon (named for the Arthurian island of paradise) was founded in 1882 by Richard Dempsey Yow and incorporated in 1909. Yow and two brothers started a successful mercantile business there. Although it was at one time a self-contained village with a railway station, post office, school, and church, Avalon's tiny population now shares these functions with those dwelling in nearby towns.

Southern Railroad

Martin was incorporated in 1891. Its first settler, Henry C. Black, was the Air Line Railroad agent at its station (set up in 1877) at the junction of Red Hollow Road and the railroad. Henry Black built houses and established stores around the junction, which attracted other settlers. The Red Hollow Road was an important conduit for farm products from the mountain areas to Augusta and Savannah. The town was named for John Martin, a Rhode Island man who became governor of Georgia in 1782.

Stephens County is home to two institutions of higher learning, Toccoa Falls College and the Currahee Campus of North Georgia Technical College.

Along with natural beauty, the county is known for its historic sites and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Traveler's Rest, a two-story building constructed before 1825 near Lake Hartwell, was used as a tavern, trading post, post office, and inn in the mid-1800s. Today the Georgia Historical Commission owns Traveler's Rest and operates it as a historic site. Both Lake Hartwell and Yonah Lake were built on the Tugaloo River to produce hydroelectric power in the mid-twentieth century. Lake Hartwell is surrounded by eighty public park sites, including Tugaloo State Park, that offer fishing, boating, hiking, and other outdoor

pursuits.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the county population was 25,435 (85.7 percent white, 12 percent black, and 1 percent Hispanic), an 8.5 percent increase from 1990. Notable residents of Stephens County include Paul Anderson, an Olympic gold medalist in weight lifting.

The above material is courtesy of the New Georgia Encyclopedia

The Wildland-Urban Interface

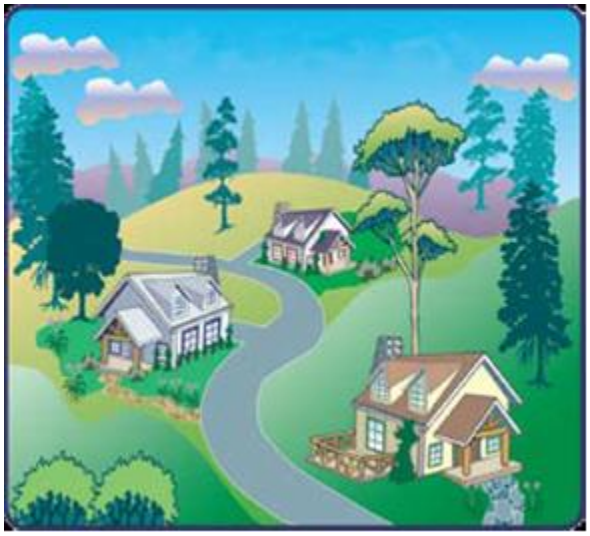
There are many definitions of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), however from a fire management perspective it is commonly defined as an area where structures and other human development meet or intermingles with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. As fire is dependent on a certain set of conditions, 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.



(courtesy *Fire Ecology and Wildfire Mitigation in Florida* 2004)

Stephens 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.

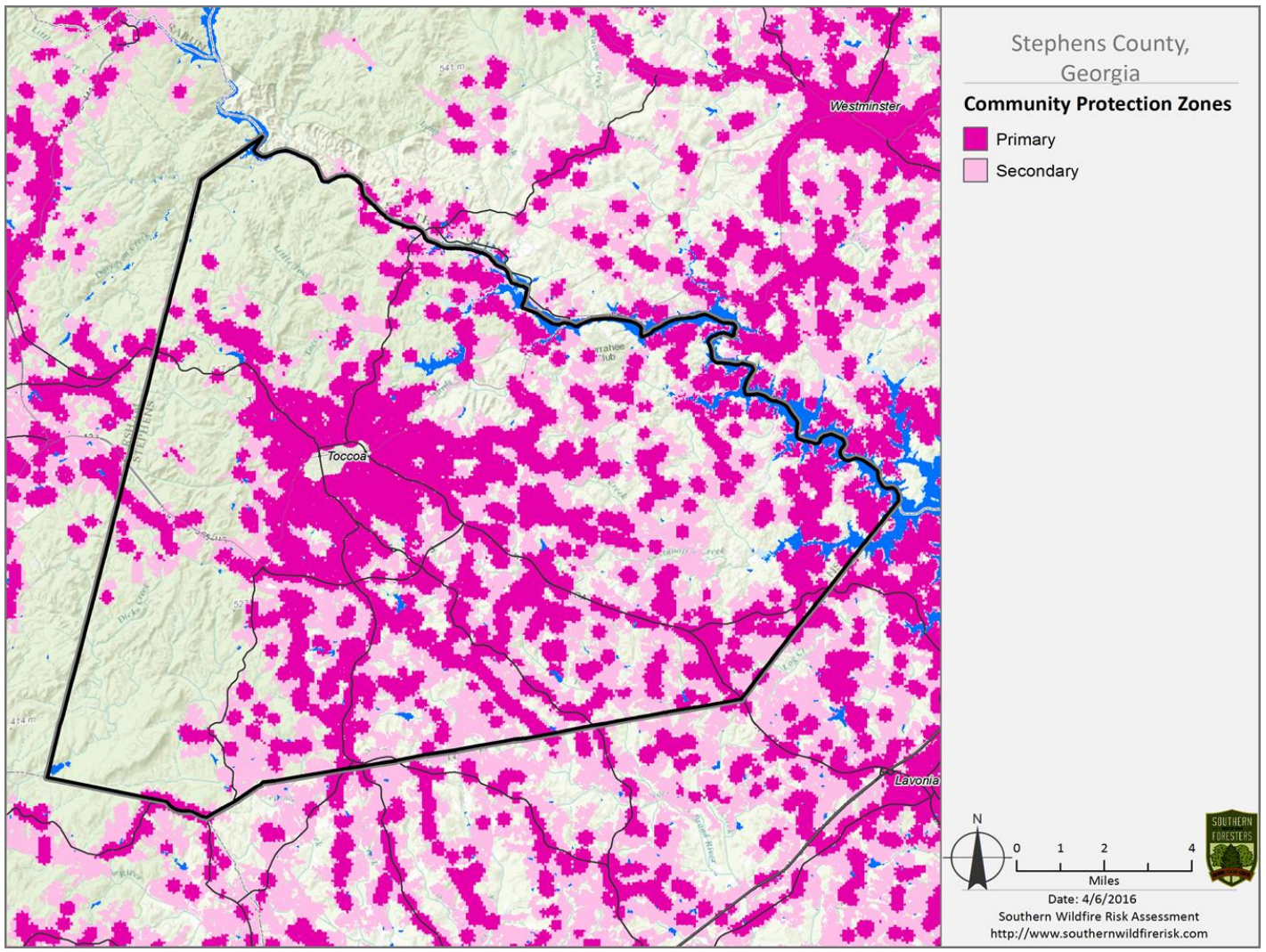
Stephens County is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountain Region

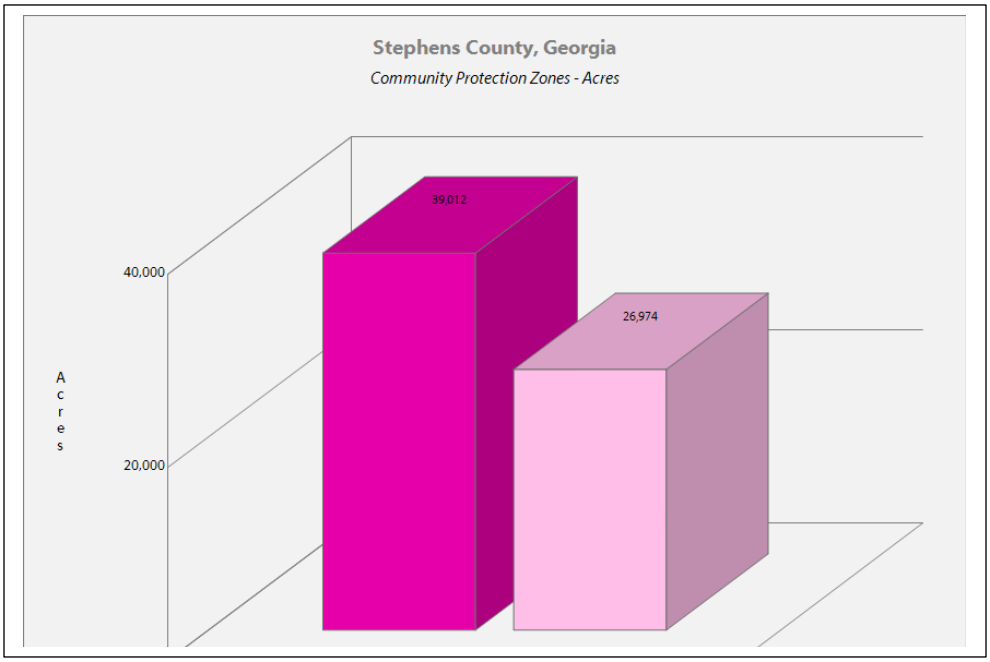
Fire History and Existing Situation

Wildland Fire has not been a serious problem in Stephens County in regards to the number of occurrences when compared to some counties in the state. During FY 2015 there were 6 fires, which burned a total of 12.89 acres. This fire activity is outlined in the table below, which is the most complete fiscal year (July 2014 – June 2015). The 5 year average size fire in Stephens County was 32.58 acres. This increase in acreage is a result of several larger fires which occurred in steep terrain and were difficult to control, hence resulting in larger acres. Fires were reduced statewide during FY2015 due to normal to above average rainfall. During FY 2012 there were 13 fires documented of which causes were spread over five of the fifteen cause categories. The average size fire during FY 2012 (3.4 acres) was less than the state average of 4.98 acres. In considering statewide fire activity for the past 5 years it should be remembered that the statewide average in FY 2011 was influenced by the very large fires that burned in the spring of 2011 in the Okefenokee. Thus far in FY 2016 which began on July 1 of 2015 there has been 6 fires documented. The majority of these fires were caused by escaped debris burns and one was classified as miscellaneous. Each burned less than one acre.

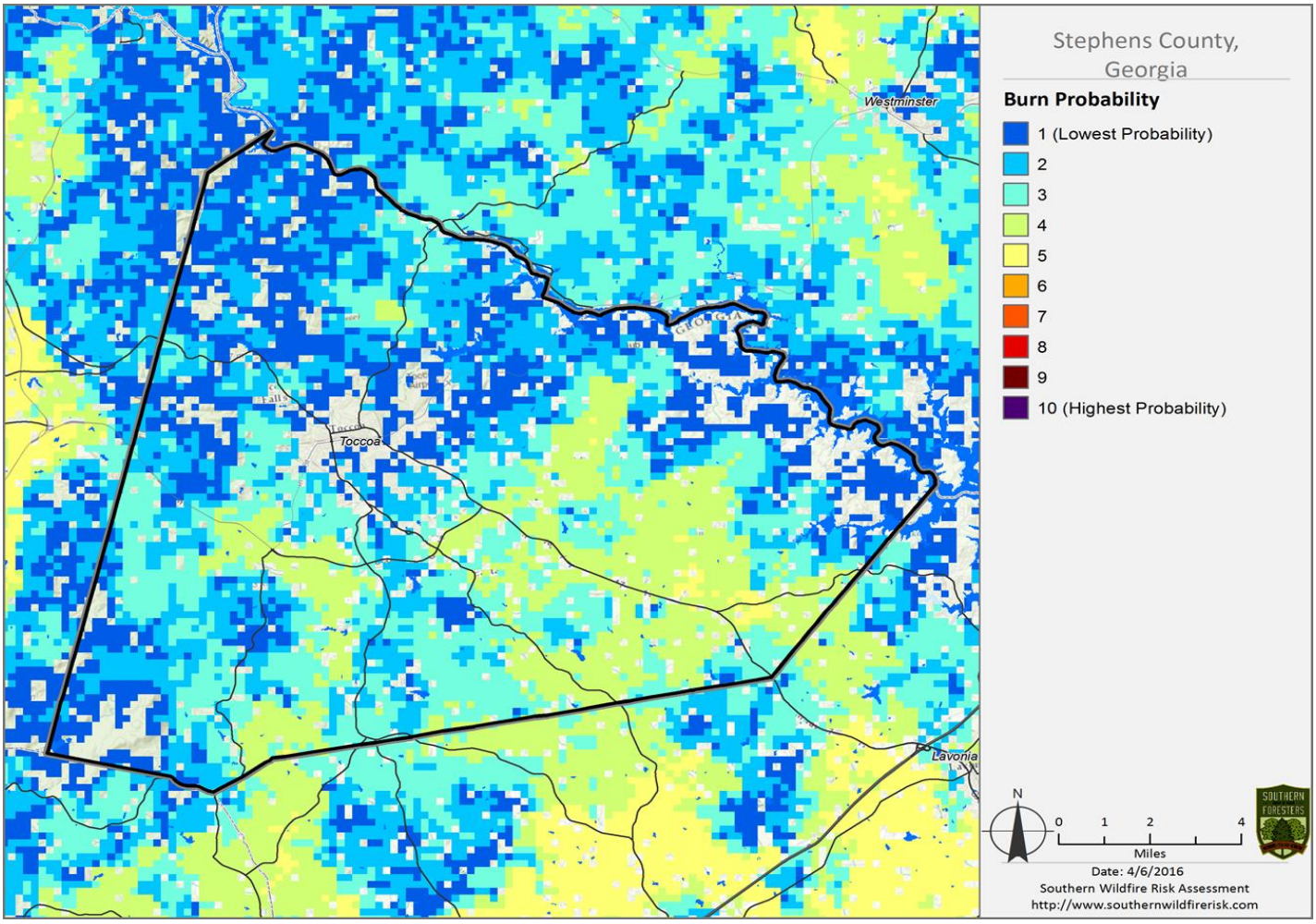
County = Stephens	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0		0.00	0.20	0.68
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.60	9.48
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	1.00	2.57
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.20	0.13
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	2	↑	2.60	0.80	0.57
Incendiary	Incendiary	1		0.90	1.80	12.28
Machine Use	Machine Use	1	↑	7.38	0.80	2.58
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	0		0.00	0.40	0.40
Undetermined	Undetermined	2	↑	2.01	1.00	3.89
Totals for County: Stephens Year: 2015		6		12.89	6.80	32.58

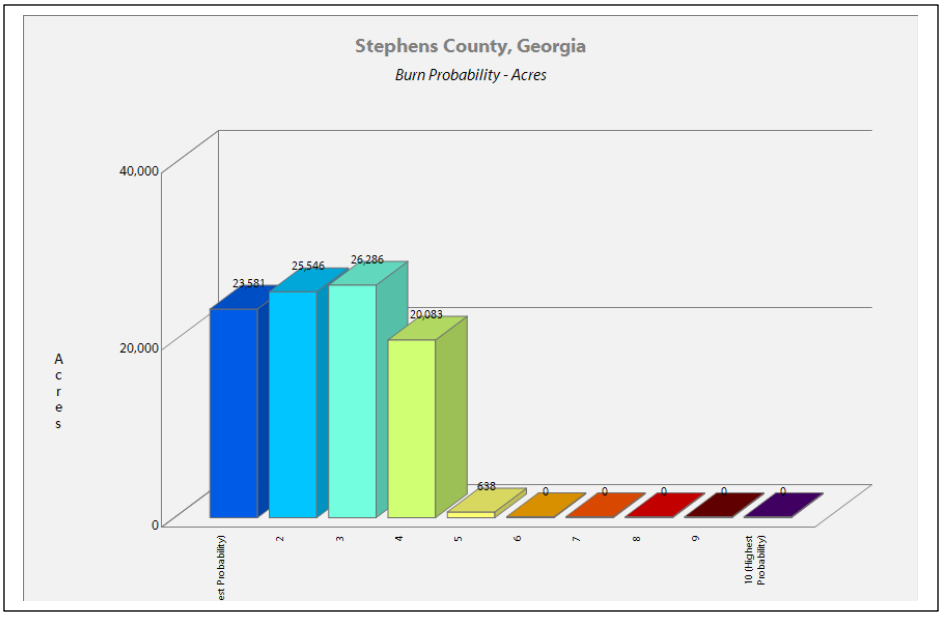
3) Community Base Map

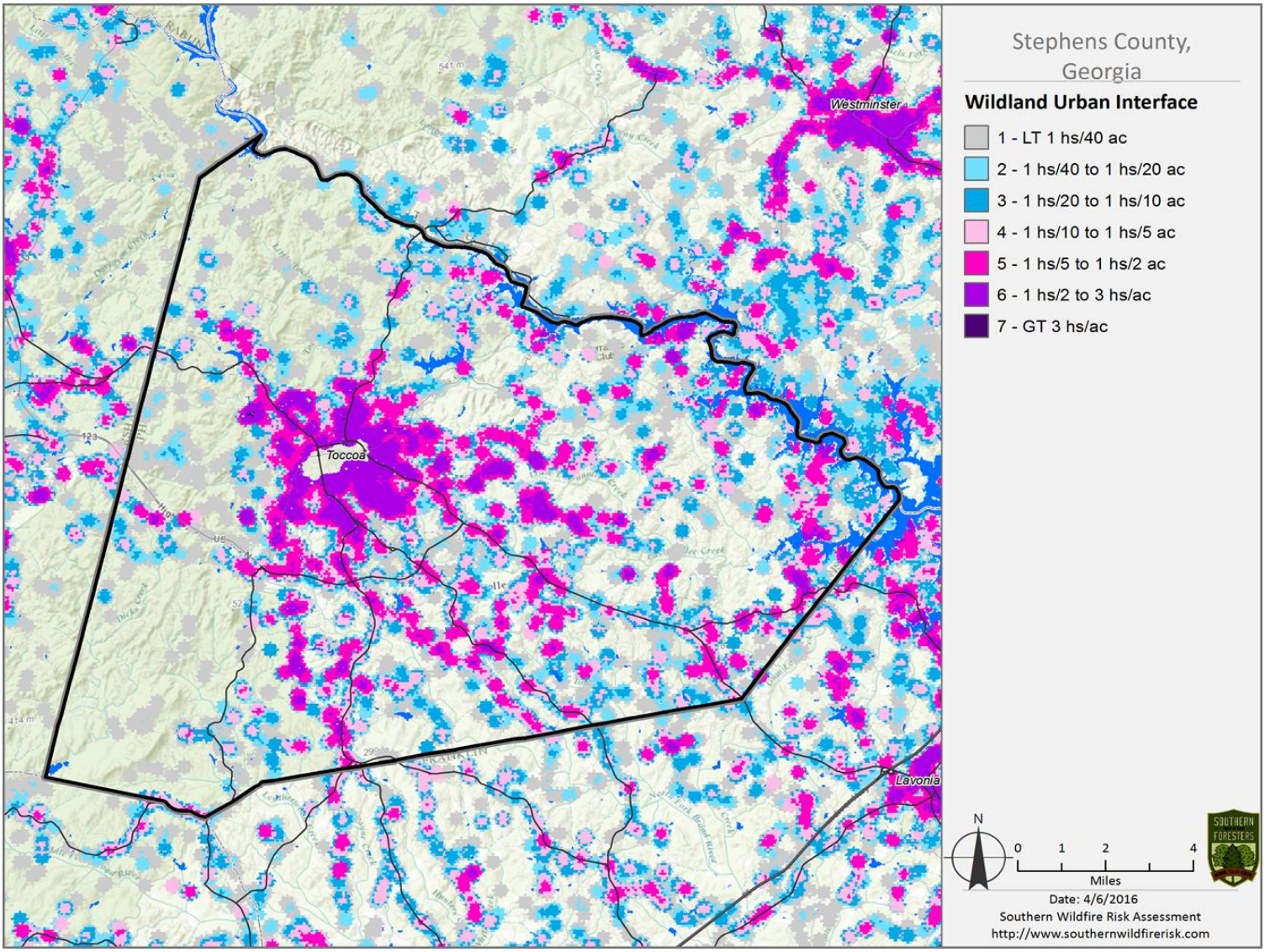


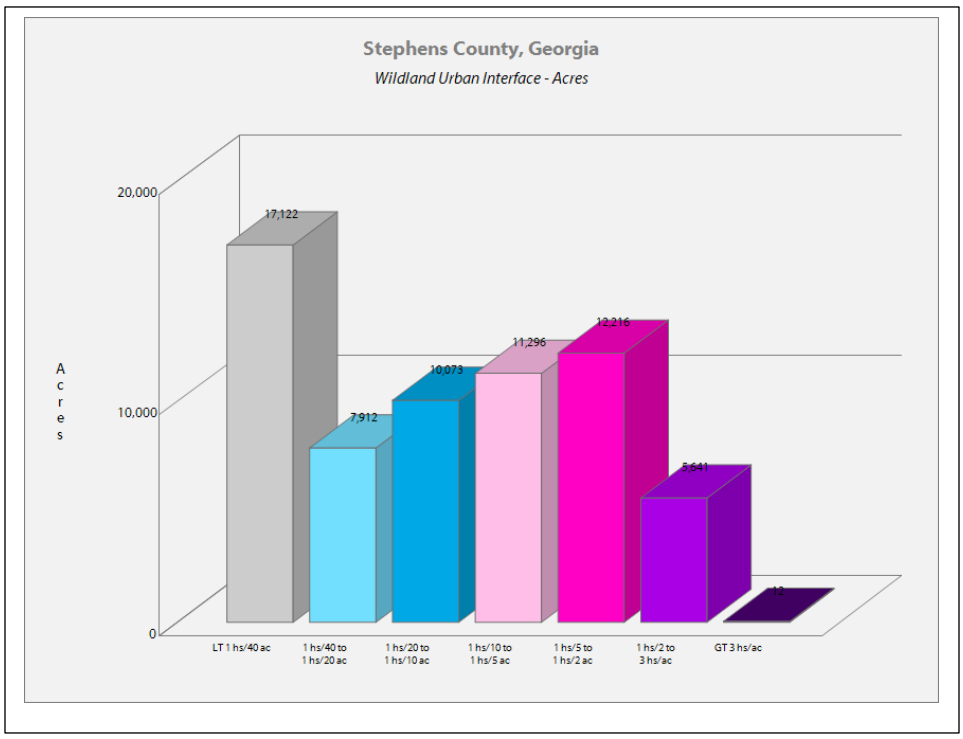


4) Community Hazard Mapping






Stephens County, Georgia
Wildland Urban Interface
1 - LT 1 hs/40 ac
2 - 1 hs/40 to 1 hs/20 ac
3 - 1 hs/20 to 1 hs/10 ac
4 - 1 hs/10 to 1 hs/5 ac
5 - 1 hs/5 to 1 hs/2 ac
6 - 1 hs/2 to 3 hs/ac
7 - GT 3 hs/ac
Westminster
Toccoa
Lavonia
N
0 1 2 4
Miles
Date: 4/6/2016
Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment
http://www.southernwildfirerisk.com


Stephens County, Georgia
Wildland Urban Interface - Acres
Acres
20,000
10,000
0
17,122
7,912
10,073
11,296
12,216
5,641
12
LT 1 hs/40 ac
1 hs/40 to 1 hs/20 ac
1 hs/20 to 1 hs/10 ac
1 hs/10 to 1 hs/5 ac
1 hs/5 to 1 hs/2 ac
1 hs/2 to 3 hs/ac
GT 3 hs/ac

5) Risk Summary

The Georgia Forestry Commission updated this plan in the spring of 2016. This update considers information obtained from recent fire data, as well as the assessments that were completed in 2009. There have been two Firewise Communities established in Stephens County since the creation of the initial plan in 2009. Following an initial meeting on 11/30/ 2009 between the Georgia Forestry Commission and an official of the Stephens County Fire Department, assessments were made of areas of concern in Stephens County. These assessments were made by personnel of the Stephens office of 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. This table, which is organized by fire department jurisdiction, lists the community name, Map #, Lat / Long, number of homes, hazard rating, risk category, fire department jurisdiction, 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 Stephens County office of the Georgia Forestry Commission. These documents would be valuable in mitigating specific hazards should they be able to be changed. These assessment areas are also represented on the level of concern and fire occurrence maps. The colors for the symbols correspond to the colors on the risk summary table. Extreme risk communities are red, high risk is orange, moderate risk is purple, and low risk is green.

Thirty nine areas were assessed. Two (2) were classified as at extreme risk, three (3) as high, twenty (20) as moderate, and fourteen (14) were classified as at low risk. 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 of properties and driveways, 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.

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
Increase public awareness concerning firewise principles and fire prevention through direct contact	Federal, State, County,and municipal governments	Conduct 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
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.
Increase public awareness concerning Firewise principles and fire prevention through formal certification and recognition	Federal, State, County, and municipal governments	Supported by the USFS and the Georgia Forestry Commission a goal of achieving more Firewise status for at least one extreme or high risk category community should be realized before the end of calendar year 2016. The goal of adding at least one community annually should extend beyond this initial goal.

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 Stephens 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	Stephens 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	Stephens 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

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.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

Improvement needed	Responsible Party and specific action
Improve training and qualification of Stephens County Wildland firefighters	The Stephens County Chief Ranger of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Stephens County Fire Coordinator 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 Stephens 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 Stephens 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 the Chief Ranger for Stephens County and the Stephens County Volunteer Fire Coordinator.

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 Stephens 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 Stephens County Unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission and used for all Firewise meetings in Stephens County. Local news media should be invited to these meetings. Goals for potential Firewise certified communities in Stephens 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 and Stephens 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.
Improve Public Education through formal certification	Before the end of calendar year 2010 at least one community in the extreme or high risk category should be considered for formal certification as a Firewise community. Should this goal be realized it should be repeated in following years.

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 2016.
- 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 winter to early spring months. 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 availabity during 2016.

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 2016.
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.
- Certification of Firewise communities should follow the timetable associated with the action plan

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
- Stephens County Pre-Suppression plan.

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