

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Twiggs County

April, 2017



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I. OBJECTIVES

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Twiggs County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect this community and its essential infrastructure. It also includes a plan for wildfire suppression. Specifically, the plan includes community-centered actions that will:

- Educate citizens on wildfire, its risks, and ways to protect lives and properties,
- Support fire rescue and suppression entities,
- Focus on collaborative decision-making and citizen participation,
- Develop and implement effective mitigation strategies, and
- Develop and implement effective community ordinances and codes.

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

An initial meeting was held on May 14th 2009 at the Twiggs County Court House attended by the following core planning team;

Will Fell	GFC CWPP Specialist
Greg Coley	GFC Chief Ranger, Bibb/Twiggs/Wilkinson Counties
Daniel Wimberly	Fire Chief, Dry Branch/Pearson VFD
Andy Thompson	Fire Chief, Higgsville VFD
Oscar Basley	Jeffersonville Police Chief
David Epps	District Ranger, GFC

After an initial discussion of the processes and goals we hope to accomplish with this report, it was decided that we would identify and evaluate by fire district, communities and areas within the wildland urban interface. At the completion of this we would reconvene and discuss and evaluate the completed community wildfire risk assessments. It was further decided that we would provide general mitigation recommendations for the county. The fire chiefs of the fire departments in the county assessed their districts and reconvened on June 24th, 2009 for the purpose of completing the following:

Risk Assessment	Assessed wildfire hazard risks and prioritized mitigation actions.
Fuels Reduction	Identified strategies for coordinating fuels treatment projects.
Structure Ignitability	Identified strategies for reducing the ignitability of structures within the Wildland interface.
Emergency Management	Forged relationships among local government and fire districts and developed/refined a pre-suppression plan.
Education and Outreach	Developed strategies for increasing citizen awareness and action and to conduct homeowner and community leader workshops.

III. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND WILDFIRE HISTORY

Background

Twiggs County, in central Georgia, was created by the state legislature in 1809 by the division of Wilkinson County. The county's name honors John Twiggs, a Revolutionary War (1775-83) general. Located on the fall line, its terrain includes both Upper Coastal Plain and lower Piedmont features. Bounded on the west by the Ocmulgee River, Twiggs County covers 360 square miles and adjoins Bibb, Bleckley, Jones, Houston, and Wilkinson counties.

Places of interest include the Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area, which Twiggs shares with Bleckley County, and the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, which Twiggs shares with Bibb County. According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population was 10,590 (54.9 percent white, 43.7 percent black, and 1.1 percent Hispanic), an 8 percent increase since 1990.

Settlement

Early inhabitants of the area were members of the Mississippian culture that prospered in Georgia centuries before contact with European explorers. The region then became home to Creek Indians, whose towns were located along trading paths and waterways in the area. In 1802 the Treaty of Fort Wilkinson transferred control of the area to the state of Georgia.

Settlements in the area were determined primarily by transportation technologies. Wagon roads widened from existing Creek trails became migration routes for settlers who arrived to establish farms and towns. Their settlements clustered first around river fords, then commercial crossroads and railroad junctions. Towns grew at Rain's Store (later Jeffersonville) and Danville, named for merchant Daniel Hughes, the father of U.S. congressman Dudley Hughes. Bullard was first the site of a steamboat landing on the Ocmulgee River; it later became Bullard Depot on the Southern Railway. Westlake began as a ferry crossing known as Buzzard Roost.

The county seat was originally mandated by the legislature to occupy the most convenient location for the citizenry, toward the center of the new county. A site was surveyed, and the town, named Marion for Revolutionary War general Frances Marion, was incorporated in 1816. Near that site, now deserted, geographers mapped the exact geographic center of the state. In 1868 nearby Jeffersonville became the county seat. That decision necessitated the dismantling of the first courthouse and its removal by oxcart to the new location. The present brick courthouse was completed in 1904. Jeffersonville is the only incorporated city in the county.

Other communities include Huber, an older agricultural settlement renamed in the 1910s to indicate the prominence of the Huber kaolin processing plant nearby, and Adams Park, a real-estate investor's planned community and recreation center. The construction of Interstate 16 gave Twiggs County increased access to both the coastal areas of Georgia and the metropolitan areas to the north, once more placing the area in its historic context as a crossroads of commerce and migration.

Economy

Twiggs County farmers became part of the southern plantation system in the nineteenth century with the development of upland cotton, which they grew for export. After the Civil War (1861-65), agriculture remained a predominant business in the area, along with the later addition of forestry products and, in the twentieth century, kaolin mining.

Railroads arrived in the county with the construction of the Macon and Brunswick (later Norfolk Southern) line in 1861, which was completed in 1870. The Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railroad (later CSX), completed in 1891, passed through Dry Branch, Fitzpatrick, and Ripley, bringing increased commercial opportunities to those communities. With the development of the national highway system in the 1920s, local merchants served traffic moving between Atlanta and Savannah on U.S. Highway 80, also known as the Dixie Overland Highway. The Dixie Overland Highway Association's motto was "The Shortest and Only Year Round Ocean-to-Ocean Highway." (Courtesy *New Georgia Encyclopedia*)

Wildfire History

Twiggs County, located near the center of the state in the rolling red hills region of the upper coastal plain, is still a largely rural county. While there is some agriculture in the lower reaches of the county, 87% of it's land area is still forested, broken only by Kaolin mines and a few scattered small communities. The county is starting to see some influx of residential development in the northwestern corner adjacent to Macon. Where these homes are, the risks from the wildland urban interface can be significant.

Over the past fifty years, Twiggs County has averaged 89 reported wildland fires per year and 46% of these have occurred during the months of February, March and April. These fires have burned an average of 308 acres annually. Of this annual acreage burned, 56% was lost during the above three months. Despite the advent of the outdoor burning permit law about 20 years ago, the numbers of fires have not changed significantly over the years, perhaps as more residences have moved out of towns into the wildland urban interface.

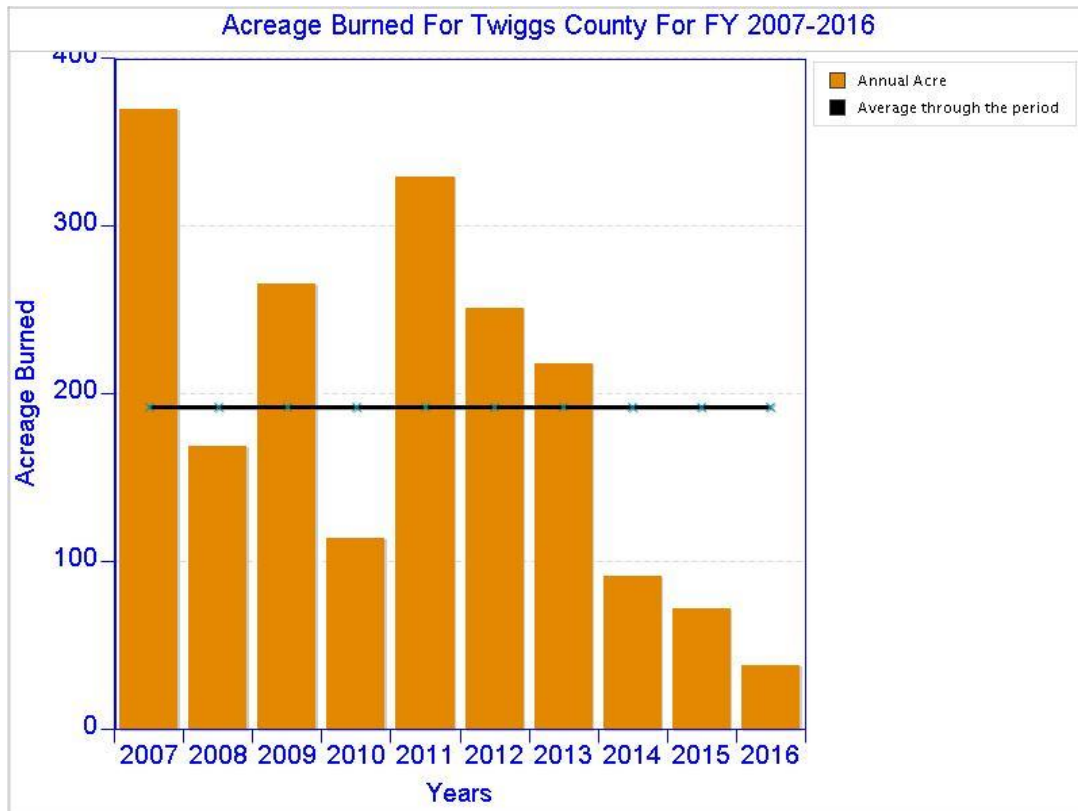
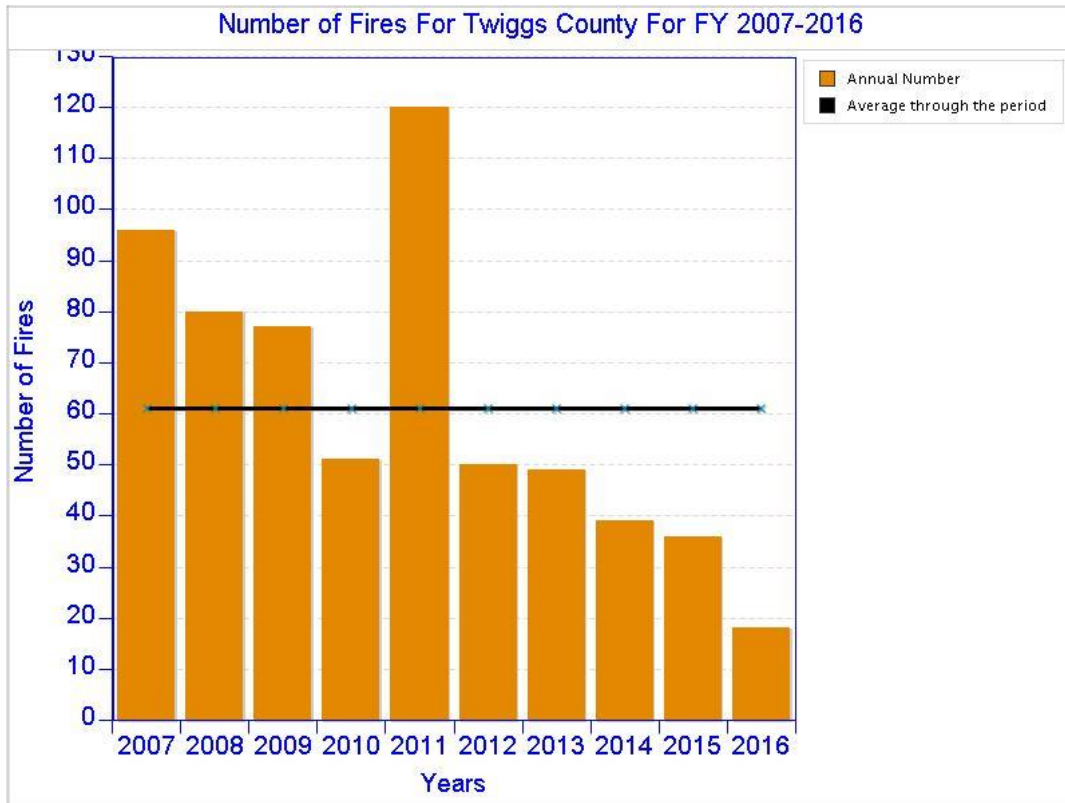
Over the past 20 years, the leading causes of these fires, was debris burning causing 45% of the fires and 46% of the acres burned. The second leading causes of fires were incendiary or arson fires, causing 15% of the fires, with 23% of the acres burned.

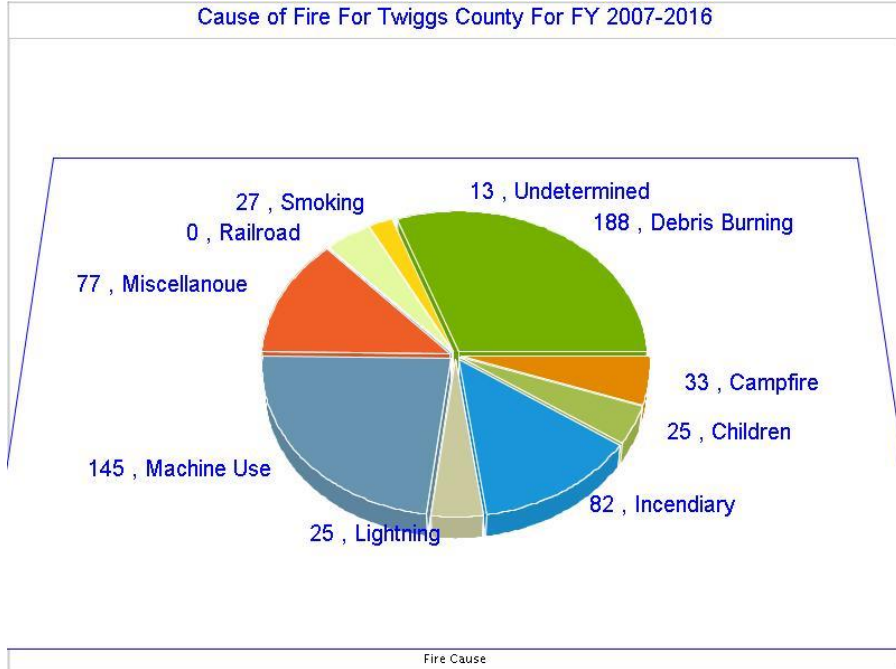
The table below indicates wildfire activity in Twiggs County during the last 10 fiscal years showing the number of wildfires and acreage burned. The average annual size wildfire is compared to the Statewide average. In 2007 and 2011 the Statewide average was influenced by large wildfires and record wildfire activity in SE Georgia and the Okefenokee Refuge.

Fiscal Year	Number of Wildfires	Acres burned Twiggs County	Average Size	Statewide Average Size
2007	96	369.15	3.84	18.64
2008	80	168.78	2.11	4.56
2009	77	265.71	3.45	3.90
2010	51	113.49	2.23	3.56
2011	120	329.16	2.74	17.56
2012	50	251.03	5.02	4.98
2013	49	217.37	4.44	4.53
2014	39	90.84	2.33	5.02
2015	36	72.16	2.00	4.42
2016	18	37.80	2.10	6.29

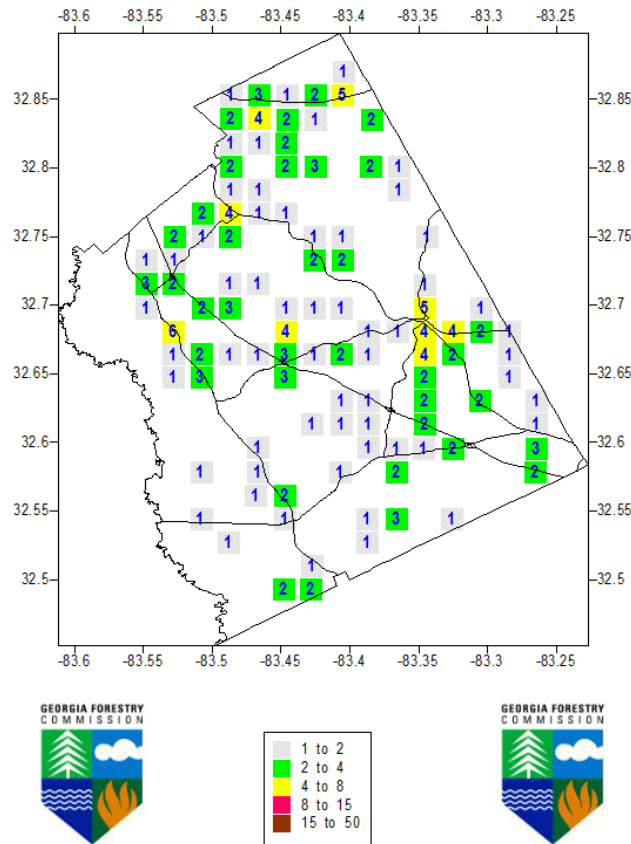
The table below indicates wildfire activity this 2017 fiscal year, July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017. The County has seen an increase so far this year due to drought last fall.

County = Twiggs	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0	0.00	1.80	2.27
Children	Children	0	0.00	0.60	0.10
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0	0.00	0.60	1.94
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1	44.72	1.40	9.91
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	6	30.59	9.00	56.55
Debris: Other	Debris: Other	0	0.00	0.20	0.09
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	0	0.00	1.40	3.69
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0	0.00	0.40	0.67
Incendiary	Incendiary	0	0.00	1.00	7.11
Lightning	Lightning	2	1.76	1.20	0.44
Machine Use	Machine Use	3	5.01	2.20	4.23
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	0	0.00	0.60	0.78
Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	Miscellaneous: Firearms/Ammunition	0	0.00	0.20	0.02
Miscellaneous: Other	Miscellaneous: Other	0	0.00	0.20	0.25
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	3	7.16	3.80	6.92
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	4	1.33	3.40	1.68
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	1.60	4.24
Undetermined	Undetermined	22	183.20	7.00	37.51
Totals for County: Twiggs Year: 2017		41	273.77	36.60	138.39

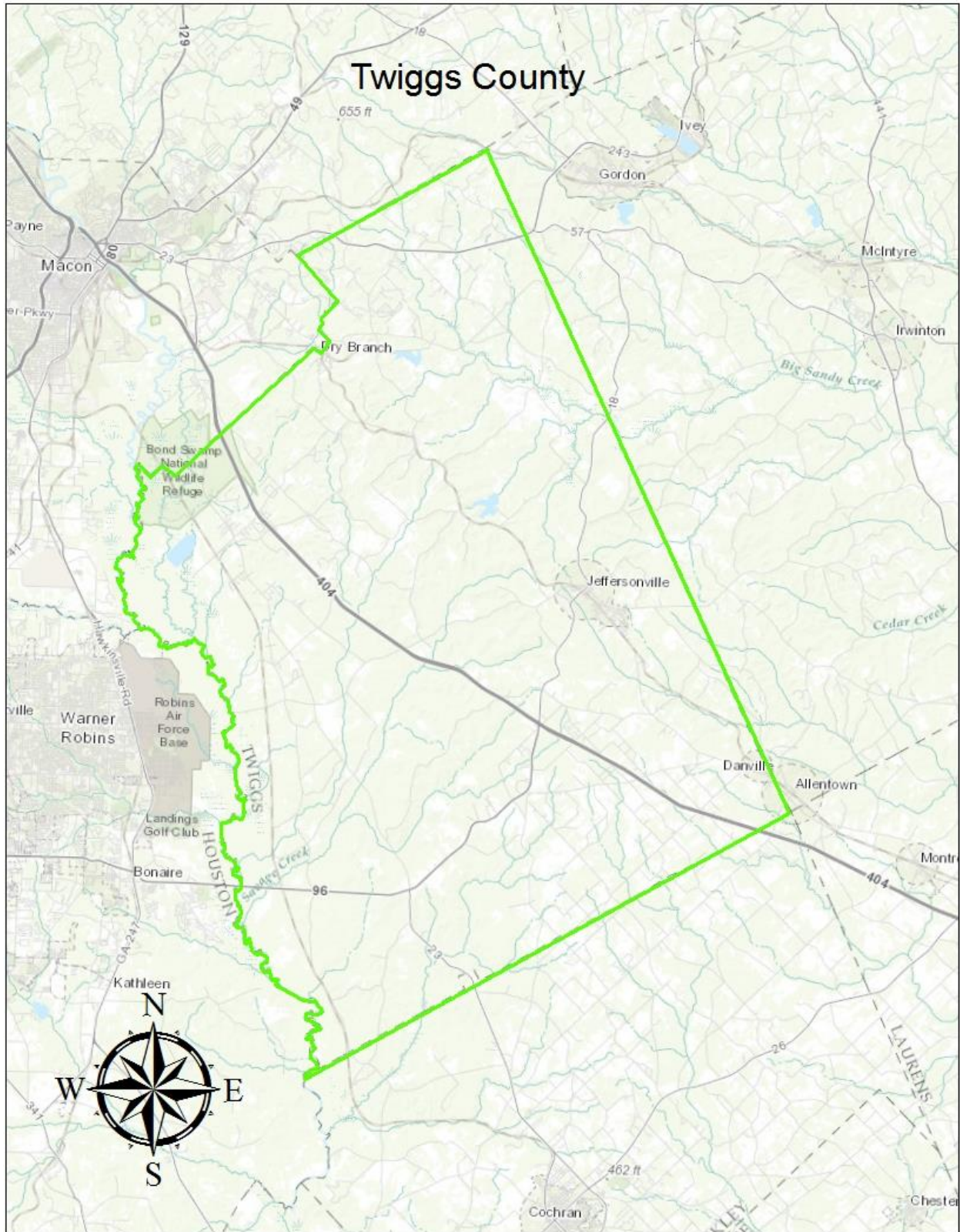


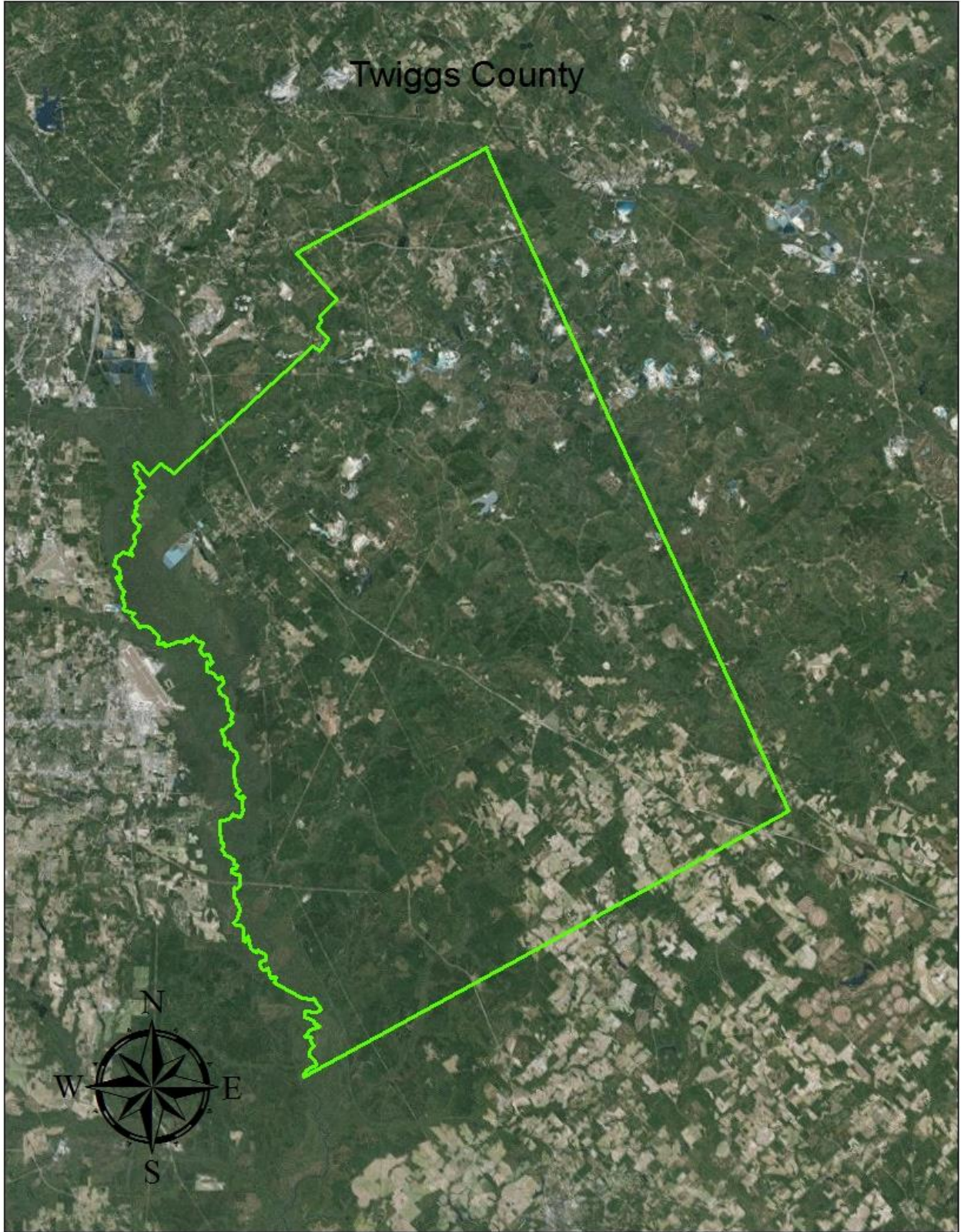


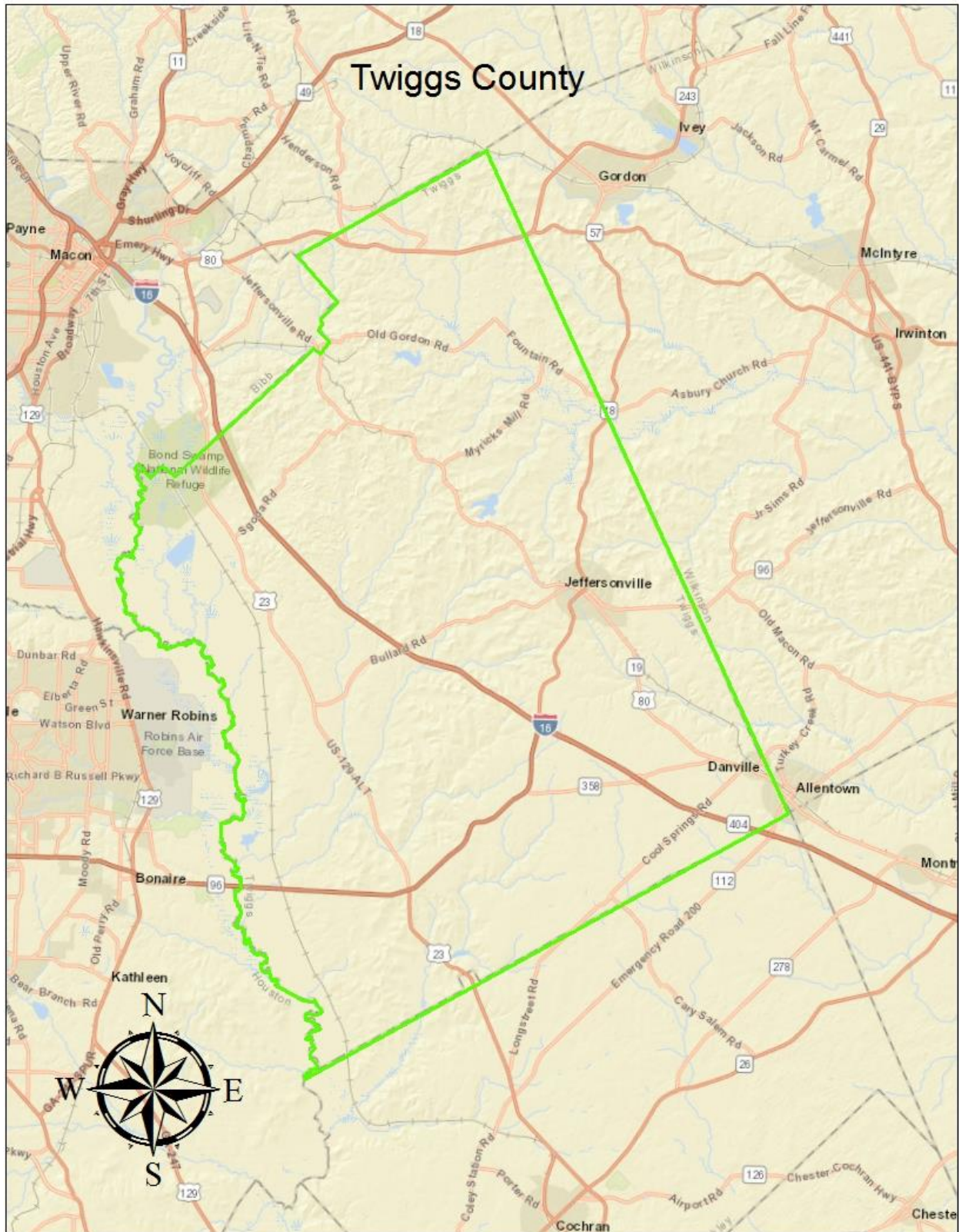
Fire Occurrence Map for Twiggs County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAP







V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Wildland-Urban Interface

There are many definitions of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), however from a fire management perspective it is commonly defined as an area where structures and other human development meet or intermingles with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. As fire is dependent on a certain set of conditions, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group has defined the wildland-urban interface as a set of conditions that exists in or near areas of wildland fuels, regardless of ownership. This set of conditions includes type of vegetation, building construction, accessibility, lot size, topography and other factors such as weather and humidity. When these conditions are present in certain combinations, they make some communities more vulnerable to wildfire damage than others. This “set of conditions” method is perhaps the best way to define wildland-urban interface areas when planning for wildfire prevention, mitigation, and protection activities.

There are three major categories of wildland-urban interface. Depending on the set of conditions present, any of these areas may be at risk from wildfire. A wildfire risk assessment can determine the level of risk.

1. **“Boundary” wildland-urban interface** is characterized by areas of development where homes, especially new subdivisions, press against public and private wildlands, such as private or commercial forest land or public forests or parks. This is the classic type of wildland-urban interface, with a clearly defined boundary between the suburban fringe and the rural countryside.
2. **“Intermix” wildland-urban interface** areas are places where improved property and/or structures are scattered and interspersed in wildland areas. These may be isolated rural homes or an area that is just beginning to go through the transition from rural to urban land use.
3. **“Island” wildland-urban interface**, also called occluded interface, are areas of wildland within predominately urban or suburban areas. As cities or subdivisions grow, islands of undeveloped land may remain, creating remnant forests. Sometimes these remnants exist as parks, or as land that cannot be developed due to site limitations, such as wetlands.

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



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

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.

The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Twiggs County Fire Departments returned an average score of 105, placing Twiggs County in the “high” hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Twiggs County’s WUI was the Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Scoresheet. The instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), topography, roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors. The following factors contributed to the wildfire hazard score for Twiggs County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Significant number of unpaved roads
- Residential addresses not clearly marked
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with heavy accumulations of vegetative debris.
- Lack of pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available in rural areas.
- Dry hydrants and drafting sources unusable.
- Above ground utilities and unmarked septic tanks.
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Undeveloped lots comprising half the total lots in many rural communities.
- Missing road signage.
- High incidence of fire occurrence in areas

Summary of Twiggs County Assessment Ratings

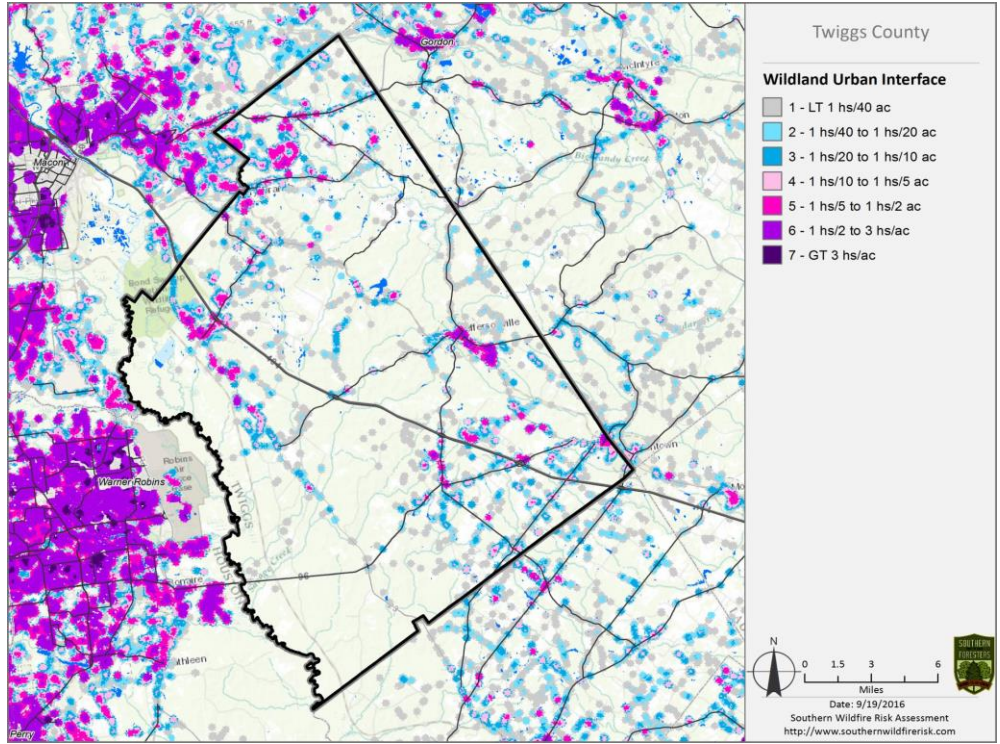
Fire District	Site Access	Site Hazard	Bldg Hazard	Fire Protection	Utilities	Add. Hazards	Total Risk Score
Jeffersonville	11	10	30	7	7	10	75
Dry Branch	21	20	30	32	7	35	145
Pearson	19	10	25	32	7	25	118
Danville	2	15	20	17	4	19	77
Balls Church	10	15	20	27	7	25	104
Higgsville	23	20	20	27	7	25	122
Average	14	15	24	23	6	23	105

Less than 50	Low Hazard
50-74	Moderate Hazard
75-99	High Hazard
100-120	Very High Hazard
greater than 120	Extreme Hazard

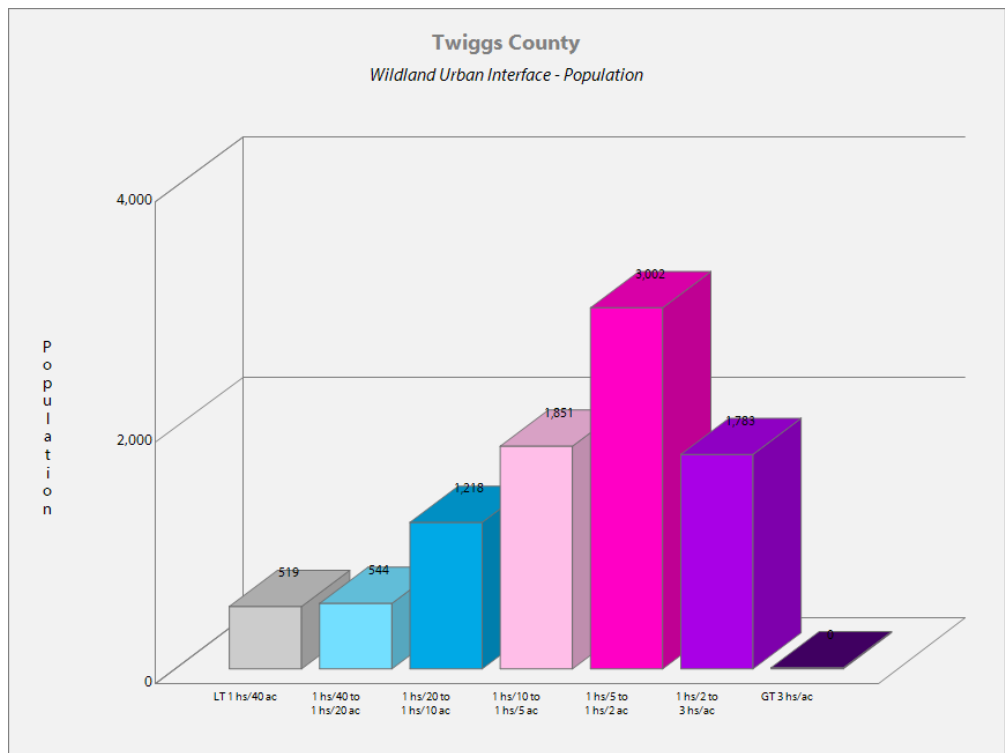
VI. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & HAZARDS MAPS

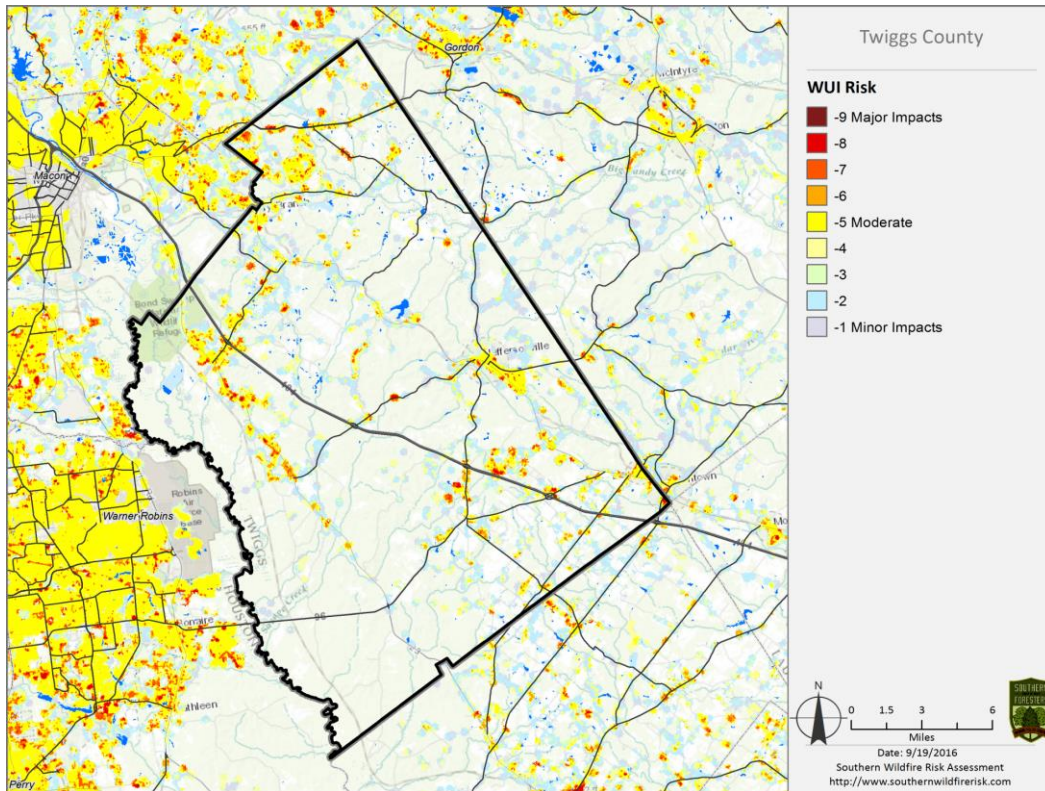
The Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment tool, developed by the Southern Group of State Foresters, was released to the public in July 2014. This tool allows users of the Professional Viewer application of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) web Portal (SouthWRAP) to define a specific project area 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 Twiggs 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

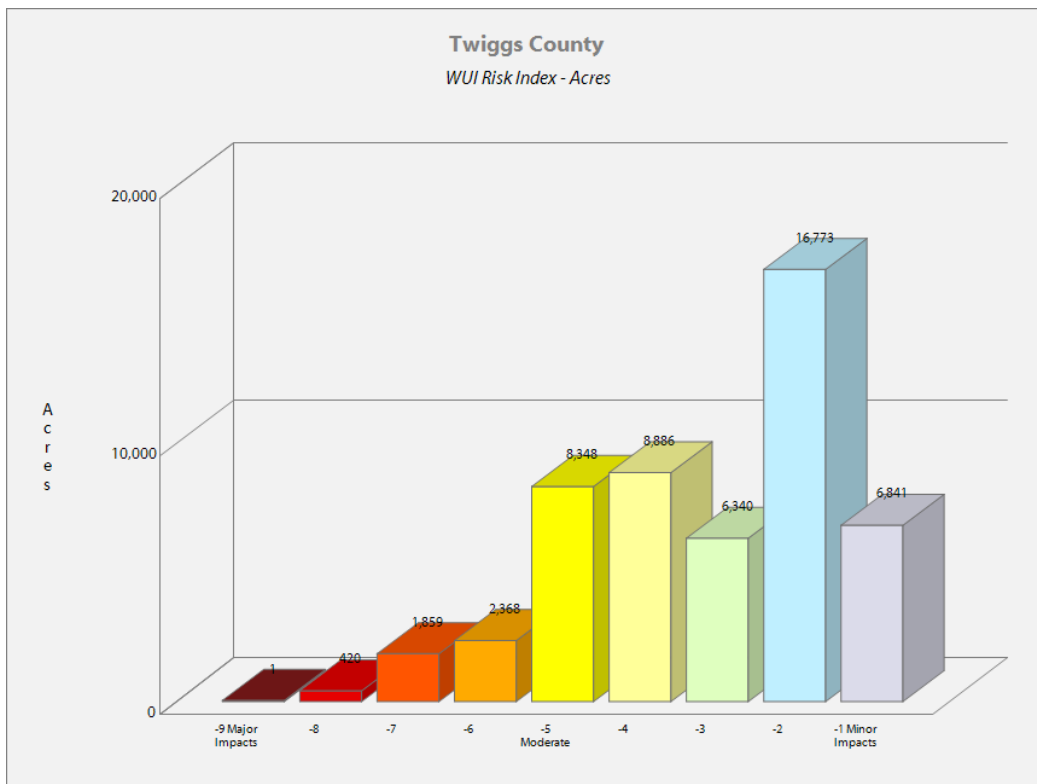


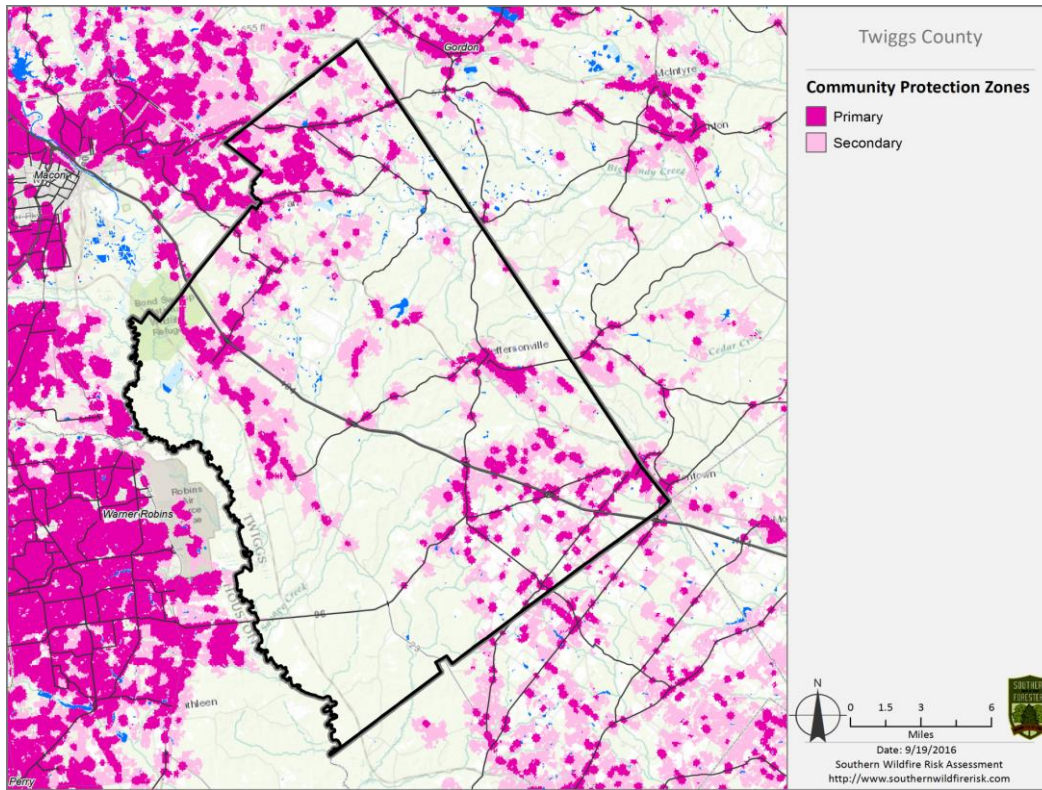
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map from the Twigg SWRA summary (above) and Wildland Urban Interface Population graph (below)



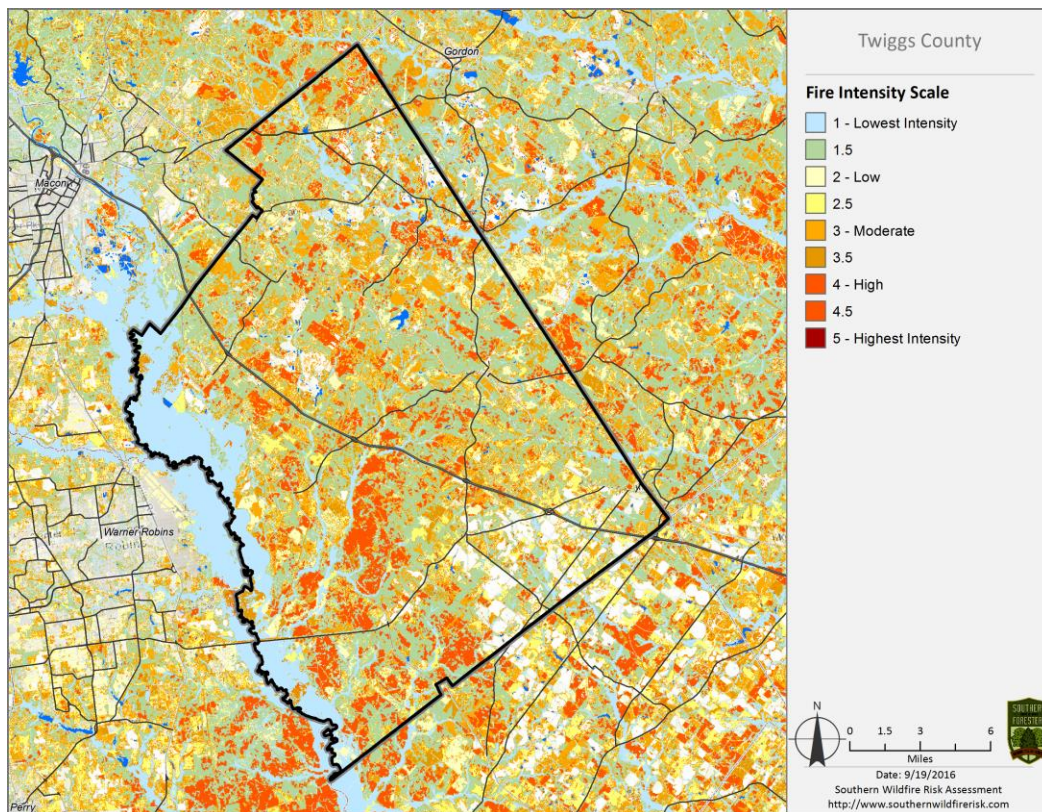


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map (above) and WUI Risk Index-Acres map (below)





Community Protection Zones map (above) and Fire Intensity Scale map (below)



VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed by the Twiggs 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)
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.
Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
Community Clean-up Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
Road Signage	At Replacement	New road signage with minimum 4 inch reflective lettering on non flammable poles. Dead end (no outlet or turn-around) should be prominently tagged.
Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul de sacs.
Subdivision Access	Alternate exits	Work with developers to identify and create alternate access and exits routes to subdivisions and communities with only one way in and out.

Water Supply	Ordinance	Require new subdivisions to install and maintain water systems and hydrants
Codes and Ordinances	Examine existing codes and ordinances.	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 At such time as the development of zoning, planning and subdivision ordinances become practical include fire department and emergency services input in the design of these.
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
2. 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
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Larger capacity hose. Investigate need for “brush” trucks.
3. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for Fire Personnel.
**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders		

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

<p>Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Twiggs County Residents</p>
<p>Set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include defensible space, landscaping, building construction, etc. Workshop will be scheduled for evenings or weekends when most homeowners are available and advertised through local media outlets. Distribute materials promoting firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>
<p>Conduct “Firewise” Workshop for Community Leaders</p>
<p>Arrange for GFC Firewise program to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of “Firewise Planning” in developing ordinances and codes as the county as the need arises. Identify “Communities at Risk” within the county for possible firewise community recognition.</p>
<p>Spring Clean-up Event</p>
<p>Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Twiggs County Fire Departments 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. National Wildfire Prevention Day is held annually on the first Saturday in May,</p> <p>Activities to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Twiggs County Fire Departments.
<p>Informational Packets</p>
<p>Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed by realtors and insurance agents. Included in the packets are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Firewise Around Your Home • Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction • Firewise Communities USA materials • Ready Set Go material • Fire Adapted Community materials

Wildfire Protection Display

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

Press

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



Prescribed burning of woodlands is the best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel accumulation. The Georgia Forestry Commission can provide a prescribed burning plan, establish fire breaks, and can also provide equipment standby and assist with burning when personnel are available.

VIII. ACTION PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities

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

Role	Responsibility
Hazardous Fuels and Structural Ignitability Reduction	
Twiggs County Wildland Urban Interface Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Twiggs County Fire Department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Twiggs county. Meet periodically to review progress towards mitigation goals, appoint and delegate special activities, work with federal, state, and local officials to assess progress and develop future goals and action plans. Work with residents to implement projects and firewise activities.
Key Messages to focus on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Defensible Space and Firewise Landscaping 2 Debris Burning Safety 3 Firewise information for homeowners 4 Prescribed burning benefits
Communications objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Create public awareness for fire danger and defensible space issues 2 Identify most significant human cause fire issues 3 Enlist public support to help prevent these causes 4 Encourage people to employ fire prevention and defensible spaces in their communities.
Target Audiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Homeowners 2 Forest Landowners and users 3 Civic Groups 4 School Groups
Methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 News Releases 2 Personal Contacts 3 Key messages and prevention tips 4 Visuals such as signs, brochures and posters

Spring Clean-up Day	
Event Coordinator	Coordinate day's events and schedule, catering for cookout, guest attendance, and moderate activities the day of the day of the event.
Event Treasurer	Collect funds from residents to cover food, equipment rentals, and supplies.
Publicity Coordinator	Advertise event through neighborhood newsletter, letters to officials, and public service announcements (PSAs) for local media outlets. Publicize post-event through local paper and radio PSAs.
Work Supervisor	Develop volunteer labor force of community residents, develop labor/advisory force from Georgia Forestry Commission, Twiggs County Fire Departments, and Emergency Management Agency. Procure needed equipment and supplies. In cooperation with local city and county officials, develop safety protocol. Supervise work and monitor activities for safety the day of the event.

Funding Needs

The following funding is needed to implement the action plan:

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Create a minimum of 30 feet of defensible space around structures	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
2. Reduce structural ignitability by cleaning flammable vegetation from roofs and gutters, appropriately storing firewood, installing skirting around raised structures, storing water hoses for ready access, replacing pine needles and mulch around plantings with less flammable material.	Varies	Residents will supply labor and fund required work on their own properties.
3. Amend codes and ordinances to provide better driveway access, increased visibility of house numbers, properly stored firewood, minimum defensible space brush clearance, required Class A	No Cost	To be adopted by city and county governments.

roofing materials and skirting around raised structures, planned maintenance of community lots.		
4. Spring Cleanup Day	Varies	Community Business Donations.
5. Fuel Reduction Activities	\$35 / Acre	FEMA & USFS Grants

Assessment Strategy

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness for the action plan, the Twiggs County WUI Fire Council will implement the following:

- Annual wildfire risk assessment will be conducted to re-assess wildfire hazards and prioritize needed actions.
- Mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning, clearing of defensible space) will be incorporated into an annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Mitigation efforts that could not be funded in the requested year will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the original action plan.
- Continuing educational and outreach programs will be conducted and assessed for effectiveness. Workshops will be evaluated based on attendance and post surveys that are distributed by mail 1 month and 6 months following workshop date.
- The Twiggs County WUIFC will publish an annual report detailing mitigation projects initiated and completed, progress for ongoing actions, funds received, funds spent, and in-kind services utilized. The report will include a “state of the community” section that critically evaluates mitigation progress and identifies areas for improvement. Recommendations will be incorporated into the annual renewal of the action plan.
- An annual survey will be distributed to residents soliciting information on individual mitigation efforts on their own property (e.g., defensible space). Responses will be tallied and reviewed at the next Twiggs County WUIFC meeting. Needed actions will be discussed and delegated.

This plan should become a working document that is shared by local, state, and federal agencies that will use it to accomplish common goals. An agreed-upon schedule for meeting to review accomplishments, solve problems, and plan for the future should extend beyond the scope of this plan. Without this follow up this plan will have limited value

X. GRANT FUNDING AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

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.

X1. 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 fire 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 edition.*

XI. 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.wildlandfirersg.org
- National Wildfire Preparedness Day www.wildfireprepdays.org

Appended Documents:

Twiggs County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

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



**P. O. Box 819 Macon, GA 31201
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