Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Wilcox County, Georgia

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

July , 2016

SIGNATURE PAGE

Honorable Jowan Johnson, Chairman
Wilcox County Board of Commissioners

_____   _____

Date

Paula Jones-Ball, County Manager
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Larry Brown, Director/Chief
Wilcox County Emergency Management
Abbeville Fire Department

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Norman Cohen, Chief, Cedar Creek VFD

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Jeffery Bloodworth, Chief, Pineview VFD

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Terry Phillips, Chief, Pitts VFD

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Wayne McGuinty, Chief, Rochelle VFD

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Ronald Culpepper, Wilcox Corrections Institute

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Prepared by:

- Mike Bloodworth, Chief Ranger
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  Georgia Forestry Commission

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  Georgia Forestry Commission

Georgia Forestry Commission
Dodge/Wilcox County Unit
11932 GA Hwy. 112
Rochelle GA 31079

The following report is a collaborative effort among various entities; the representatives listed below comprise the core decision-making team responsible for this report and mutually agree on the plan's contents:

- Wilcox County, Board of Commissioners

- Wilcox County Emergency Management

- Wilcox County Fire Department

- Mike Bloodworth, Chief Ranger
  Dodge/Wilcox County Unit
  Georgia Forestry Commission

- Beryl Budd, Wildfire Prevention Specialist
  Georgia Forestry Commission

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Appended Documents:

- Wilcox County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SouthWRAP)
  Summary Report

I. OBJECTIVES

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) provides a community with a road map to reduce its risk from wildfire. A CWPP is designed through collaboration between state and local fire agencies, homeowners and landowners, and other interested parties such as city councils, utilities, home owner associations, environmental organizations, and other local stakeholders.

The plan identifies strategic sites and methods for risk reduction and structural protection projects across jurisdictional boundaries.

Comprehensive plans provide long-term guidance for growth, reflecting a community's values and future expectations. The plan implements the community's values and serves to protect natural and community resources and public safety. Planning also enables communities to address their development patterns in the Wildland Urban Interface and determine how they can reduce their risk through alternative development patterns. The formal legal standing of the plan and its central role in local government decision making underscores the opportunity to use this planning process as an effective means for reducing wildfire risk.

The mission of the following plan is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Wilcox County. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will help 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 about 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.

- Develop and implement effective community ordinances and codes.

II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Wildfire risk reduction strategies are most effective when approached collaboratively – involving groups of residents, elected officials, community decision makers, emergency managers, and natural resource managers –and when combined with effective outreach approaches.

Collaborative approaches make sense as the initial focus of any community attempting to work toward wildfire risk reduction. In all Community Wildfire Protection Plan collaborations, the goal is to cooperatively identify problems and reach a consensus for mutual action. In the case of wildfire mitigation, a reduction in the wildfire risk to the community's lives, houses, and property is the desired outcome.

The collaborative core team convened in 2015 to initiate development of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group is comprised of representatives from local Wilcox County Board of Commissioners, Wilcox County Fire & Rescue, Wilcox County Emergency Management, and the Georgia Forestry Commission. The benefits that will be gained from the development of this CWPP are summarized below:

- 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

Georgia Forestry Commission contact information:

Menu	
County	**Wilcox**
County Number	**156**
Name:	**Wilcox County; District 6**
Contact:	Michael Bloodworth, Chief Ranger
Address:	11932 GA Hwy. 112
City:	Rochelle GA 31079
Coordinates:	Latitude: 32$^\theta$ 0' 7.30" Longitude: -83$^\theta$ 28' 49.05" (click to see location on Google Map)
Phone:	229-365-2320
Fax Number:	229-365-2304
E-mail Address:	wilcoxunit@gfc.state.ga.us
Maps & Locations	
Location:	US 112, 4 1/2 Miles N. Rochelle
Yahoo Map	Click Here for a Yahoo Map
The Statistics below are for Wilcox County	
Total Land Area:	243,400 Acres
Total In Forest:	168,155 Acres
Percent In Forest:	69.09 %
Forester for this County	
Forester:	Fore, Charles (Chuck) W.
Email:	cfore@gfc.state.ga.us
Phone:	478-448-4749
Forester Office Location:	126 Jim Harp Rd. Eastman, GA 31023

III. Community Background and Wildfire History

126th county, Wilcox County comprises 380 square miles and was created in 1857 in the central part of the state from Dooly, Irwin, and Pulaski counties. Later, parts of Wilcox County were used to create Turner (1905) and Ben Hill (1906) counties. Historians disagree about the origin of Wilcox County's name, some claiming that it is named after General Mark Wilcox, a soldier in the Indian Wars who later served in the Georgia General Assembly, and others believing that it is named for his father, Captain John Wilcox.
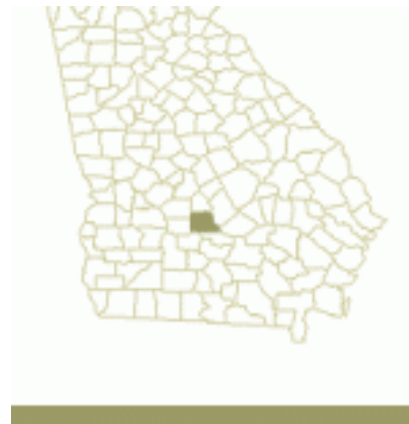
Hernando de Soto is believed to have discovered the Ocmulgee River, in the area that became Wilcox County, in 1540. The area's first inhabitants were Creek Indians who signed treaties in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, forfeiting their land. The first white settlers came from neighboring counties and states during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Much of the land was virgin pine forest. Many settlers lived first by subsistence farming and hunting and moved later into cattle ranching after establishing their homesteads. Eventually, settlers produced cotton and fruit, as well as cattle, for the market.

Wilcox County Courthouse

The county seat is Abbeville, established in 1858 but not incorporated until 1883. Its location, near the eastern boundary of Wilcox County, was reportedly chosen because David Fitzgerald donated sixty acres there for use as a county seat. A courthouse was built in 1858, and the town subsequently developed around it. In response to complaints that the seat of government was not centrally located, county taxpayers were invited by the state assembly to challenge the eastern location, but no one came forth. The old courthouse remained in use until 1903, when the brick structure that still serves today was completed. A large wild hog population in Abbeville led to its nickname, the "Wild Hog Capital of Georgia," and the town hosts an annual Ocmulgee Wild Hog Festival.

Wilcox County was relatively young when the Civil War (1861-65) began, but its citizens supported the war effort by sending their sons and husbands to fight. Confederate president Jefferson Davis camped on May 8, 1865, at Abbeville during his flight through Wilcox County at the end of the war, two nights before his capture by Union forces in Irwinville.

Wilcox County Workers

In 1887 a new town in the center of the county was created, partly as a result of the completion of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad through the area. Called Center at first, its name was changed to Rochelle when it was incorporated in 1888. The Hawkinsville and Florida Southern Railroad laid a line through northern Wilcox County, where the town of Pineview, incorporated in 1902, sprang up. The same railroad also served the western part of the county, where Pitts, incorporated in 1905, became the main rail center.

Pitts took its name from the H. H. Pitts family, who were early settlers. Other communities include Double Run, Owensboro, and Seville. Double Run's name reflects its place at the junction of two railroads. Seville (pronounced "see-vil") is named after the Spanish province and its capital.

Agriculture and timber remain the economic mainstays of Wilcox County. It is the second largest watermelon producer in Georgia. Other crops include peanuts and cotton. Wilcox County's development followed that of the railroads. While trains were a primary form of transportation, the county continued to thrive, but Wilcox County's fortunes followed those of the local railways as highways superseded rail transportation. The county's population, which had risen until the 1920s, began to decline, and communities that were established to serve train lines lost business to those in nearby counties served by the major highways.
The population started to climb again in the 1990s, when the Georgia Department of Corrections built Wilcox State Prison in the county. Commuters whose employment is outside the county have discovered the charms of Wilcox County's rural atmosphere and natural beauties, and have established households there in recent years.

The Ocmulgee River forms the county's eastern boundary and offers many outdoor recreational activities. Just south of Abbeville is the site of the 1818 Battle of Breakfast Branch, fought between Creek Indians and a white militia, and New Hope Primitive Baptist Church, which was established in 1830 and is the oldest church in the county.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Wilcox County was 9,255, an increase from the 2000 population of 8,577.

Courtesy of *New Georgia Encyclopedia*

WILDFIRE HISTORY

Historical data, over the last 60 years, shows that Wilcox County has averaged about 64 wildfires burning 463 acres annually. Debris burning has been the primary cause accounting for 45% of these wildfires. The secondary cause is arson accounting for 20% and the third major cause is machine use accounting for 10%. These numbers are very consistent with State averages over the same period.
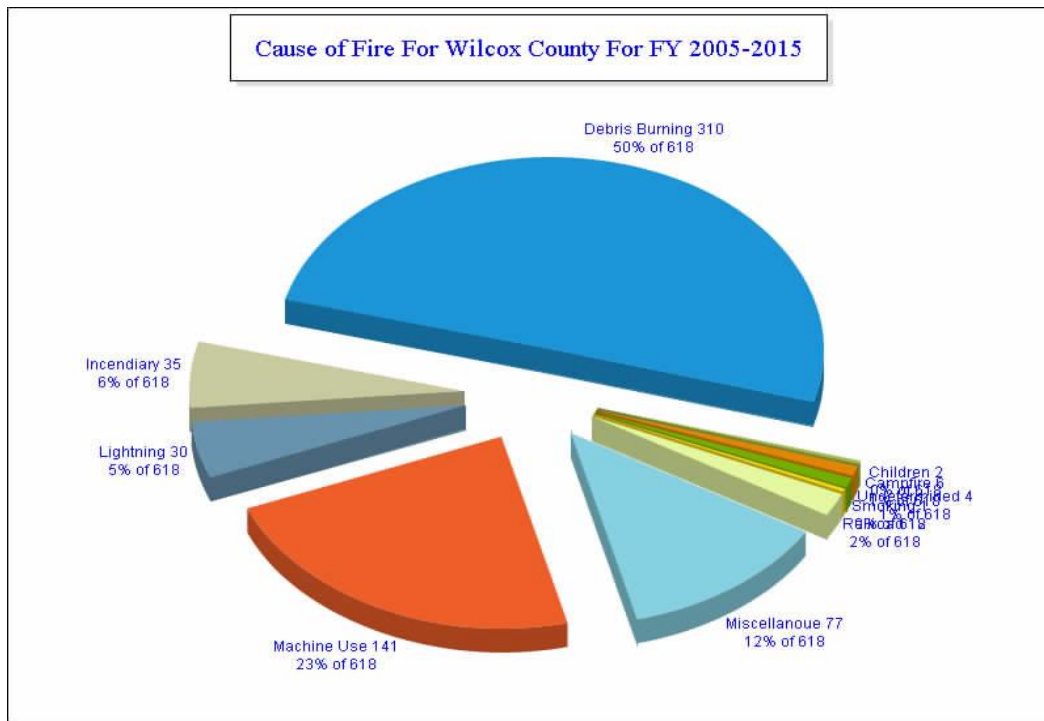
The 2016 fiscal year (July 2015 – June 2016) had above average rainfall resulting in record setting low wildfire occurrence across many parts of the State. Wilcox County had a near record low with only 13 wildfires during the year burning about 209 acres. Fiscal year 2017 is starting out with severe drought conditions and in July and August there have already been eight (8) wildfires burning over 85 acres. The table below shows the number of wildfires by cause and acreage burned during the 2016 fiscal year and the five year averages.

Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	2		72.90	0.60	14.94
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0		0.00	0.80	0.56
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	1		1.30	1.20	1.64
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1		1.90	4.60	28.60
Debris: Other	0		0.00	0.60	10.08
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1		2.30	3.20	2.86
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1		0.30	3.00	8.16
Incendiary	0		0.00	1.00	12.48
Lightning	3		78.60	1.60	22.38
Machine Use	1		0.10	4.00	4.30
Miscellaneous	0		0.00	1.20	6.10
Miscellaneous: Cutting/Welding/Grinding	2		0.62	0.60	0.52
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0		0.00	1.40	3.94
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	0		0.00	0.80	2.22
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0		0.00	0.20	0.10
Undetermined	1		51.20	1.00	23.74
Totals for County: Wilcox Year: 2016	13		209.22	25.80	142.62

The table below indicates the number of wildfires by cause during the 10 year period from 2005 through 2015. The primary cause of these wildfires was careless debris burning accounting for 50% of theses wildfires. The secondary major cause was machine use, which accounted for 23%.
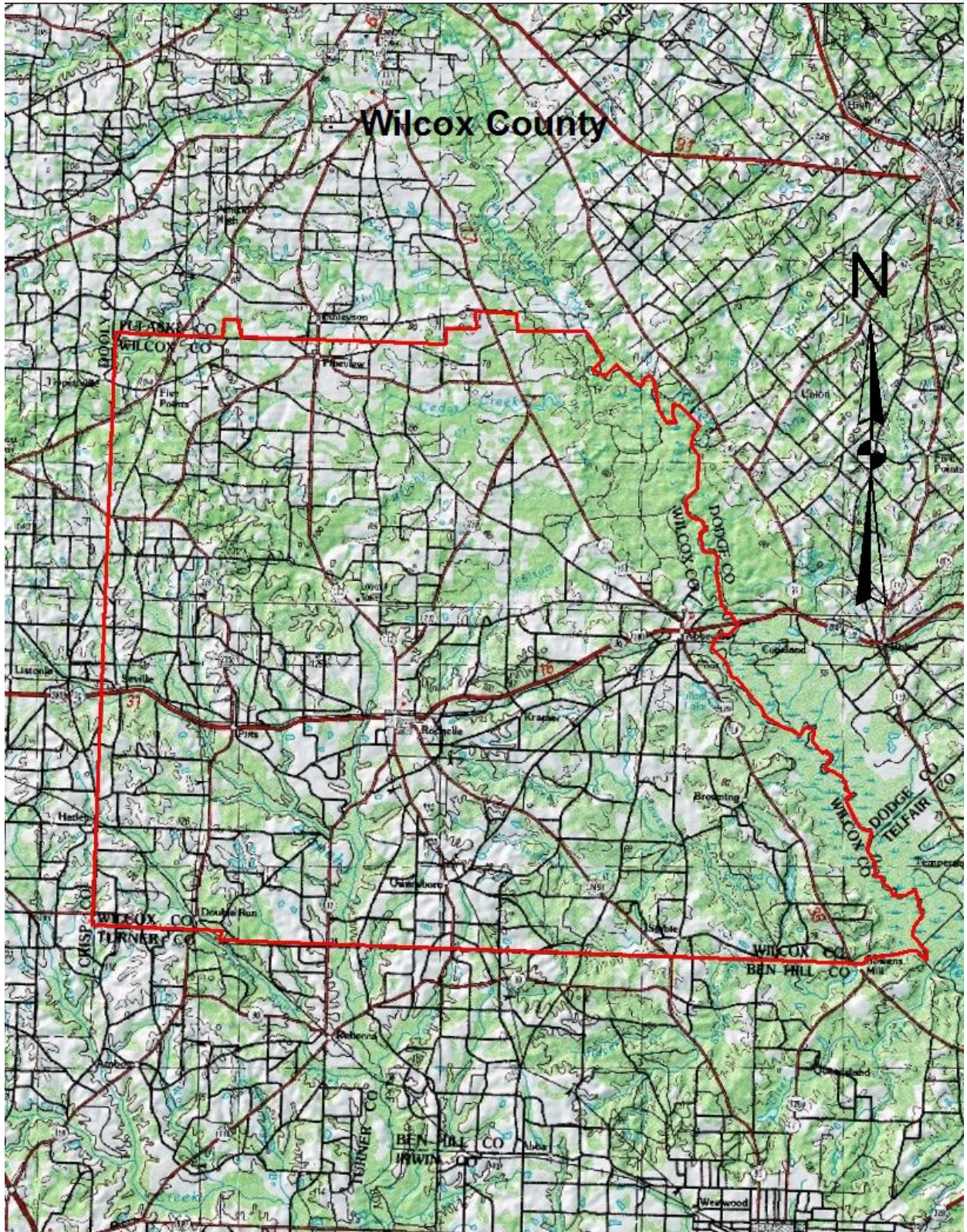
Year	Campfire	Children	Debris Burning	Incendiary	Lightning	Machine Use	Miscellaneous	Railroad	Smoking
2005	0	0	17	3	9	18	0	0	0
2006	2	1	31	7	2	9	4	0	0
2007	2	1	35	10	3	11	2	0	1
2008	1	0	49	1	2	17	22	1	0
2009	0	0	42	6	3	15	5	0	0
2010	0	0	11	1	4	11	6	0	0
2011	0	0	48	2	2	29	12	11	0
2012	1	0	42	4	1	19	13	0	0
2013	0	0	16	1	2	2	10	0	0
2014	0	0	8	0	0	2	1	0	0
2015	0	0	11	0	2	8	6	0	0

Cause of Fire For Wilcox County For FY 2005-2015

Debris Burning 310 50% of 618

Incendiary 35 6% of 618

Lightning 30 5% of 618

Machine Use 141 23% of 618

Miscellanoue 77 12% of 618

Children 2
Campfire 6
Smoking 1
Railroad 12
2% of 618

Number of Fires For Wilcox County For FY 2005-2015

■ Annual Number   ■ Average through the period

Acreage Burned For Wilcox County For FY 2005-2015

■ Annual Acre   ■ Average through the period
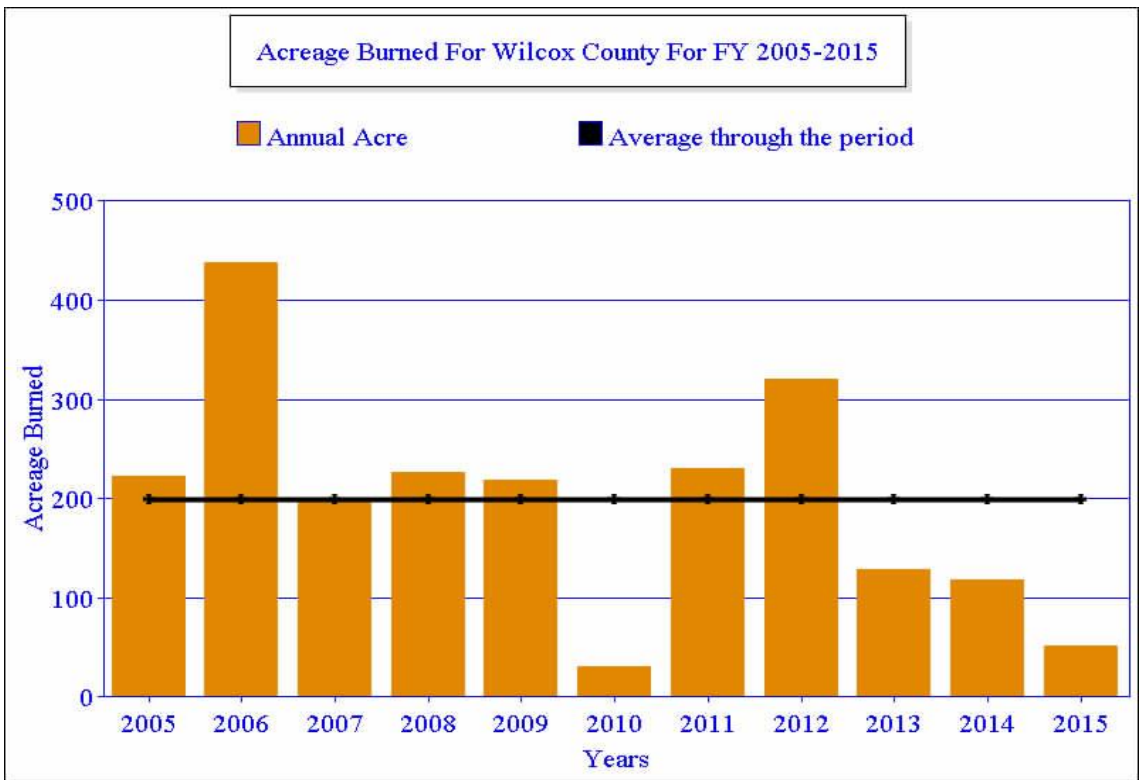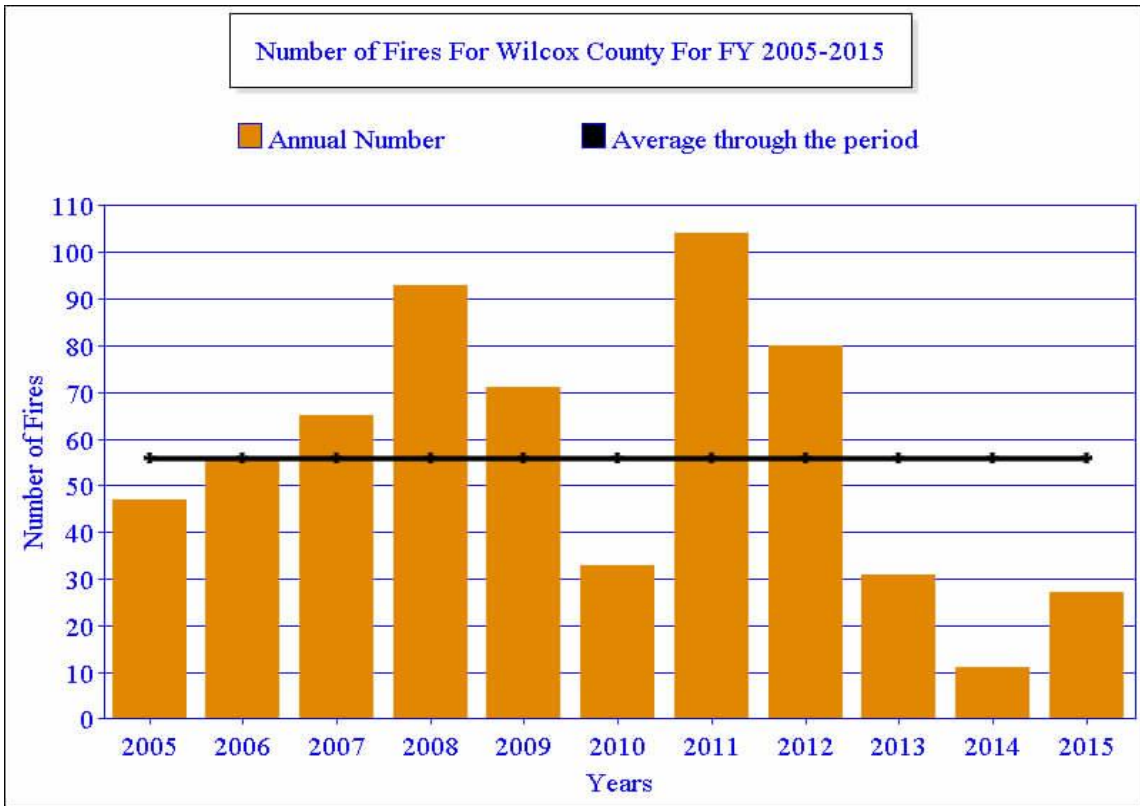
IV. Community Base Maps

Wilcox County

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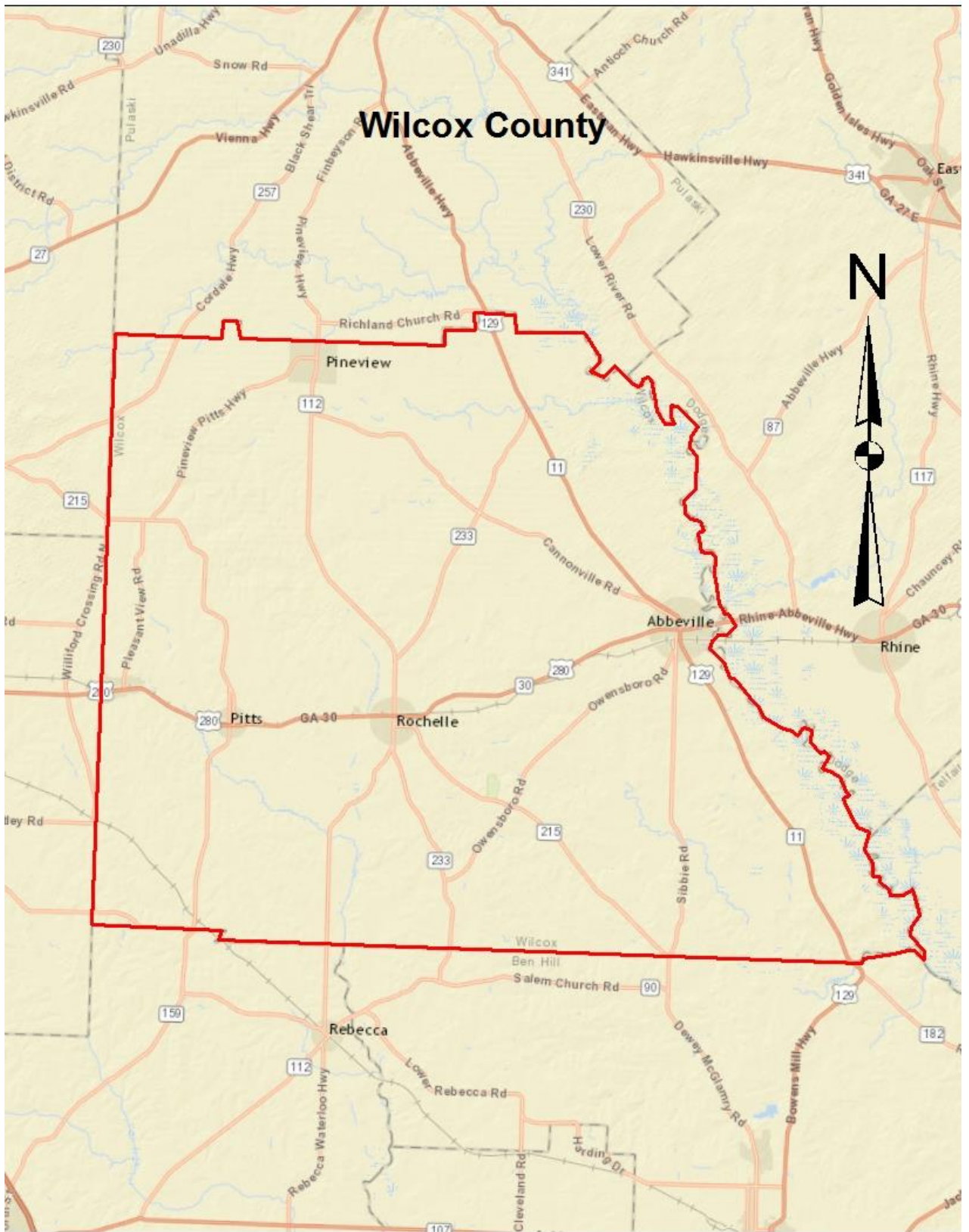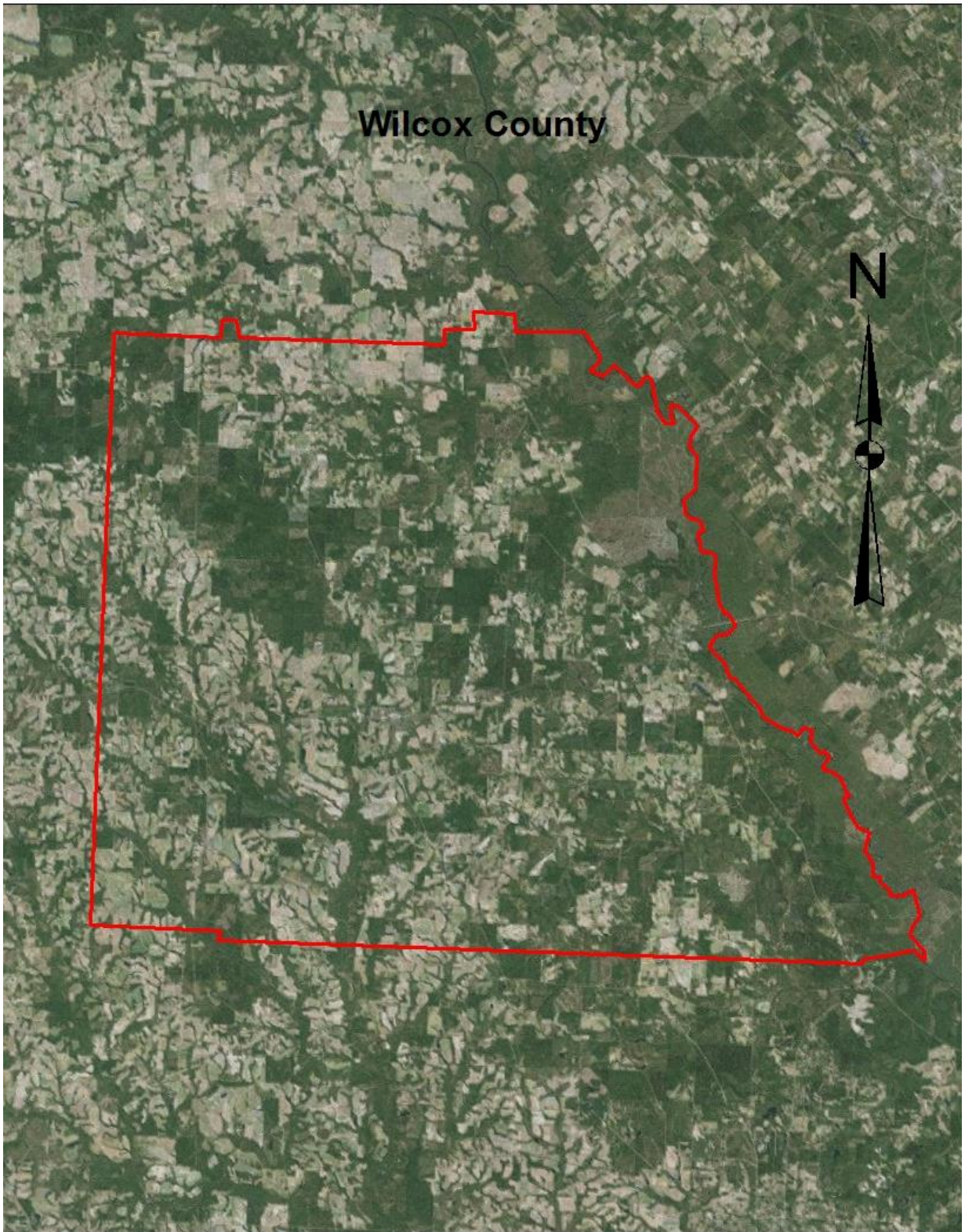
V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

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.

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 Material** 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. These areas may also contain some type of booby trap.

- **Propane Tanks** Both large (household size) and small (gas grill size) liquefied propane gas (LPG) tanks can present hazards to firefighters, including explosion.

- **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.

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- **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 structure strength at 180 degrees Fahrenheit 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.

- **Abandoned wells** Found around old home sites, open wells can be a hazard for firefighters, especially while working a wildfire during the night.
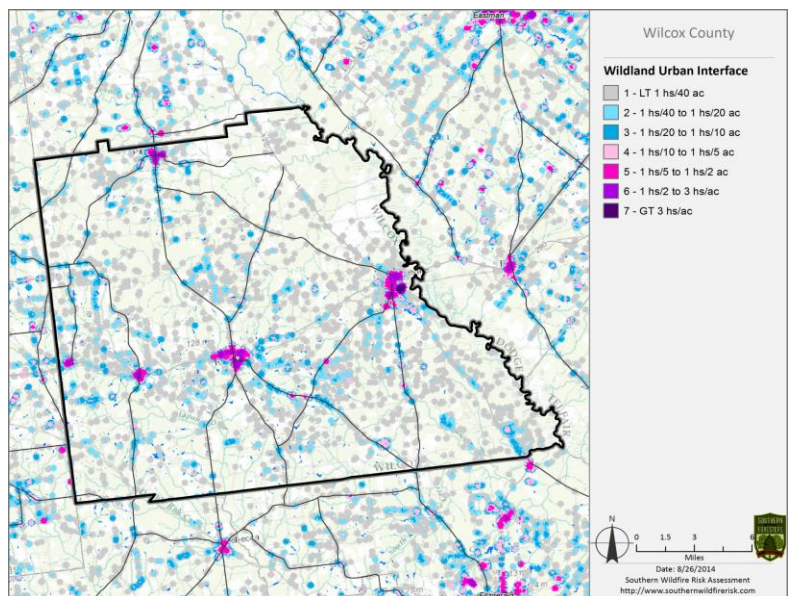

Young planted pine plantations, such as pictured here, are extremely vulnerable to wildfire and homes located adjacent or nearby may be at higher risk during a wildfire

**Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary & Hazard Maps**

The Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment tool, developed by the Southern Group of State Foresters, was released to the public in July 2014. This tool allows users of the Professional Viewer application of the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) web Portal (SouthWRAP) to define a specific project area and summarize wildfire related information for this area. A detailed risk summary report is generated using a set of predefined map products developed by the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment project which have been summarized explicitly for the user defined project area. A risk assessment summary was generated for Wilcox 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

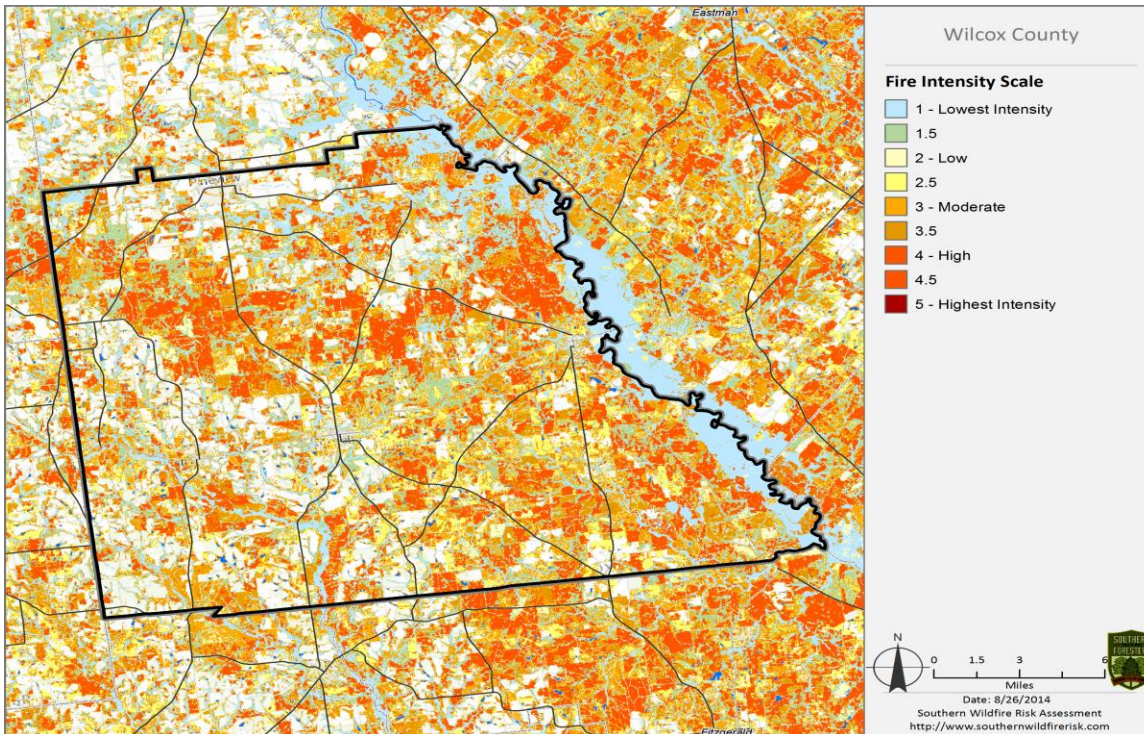- Plan and prioritize hazardous fuel treatment programs

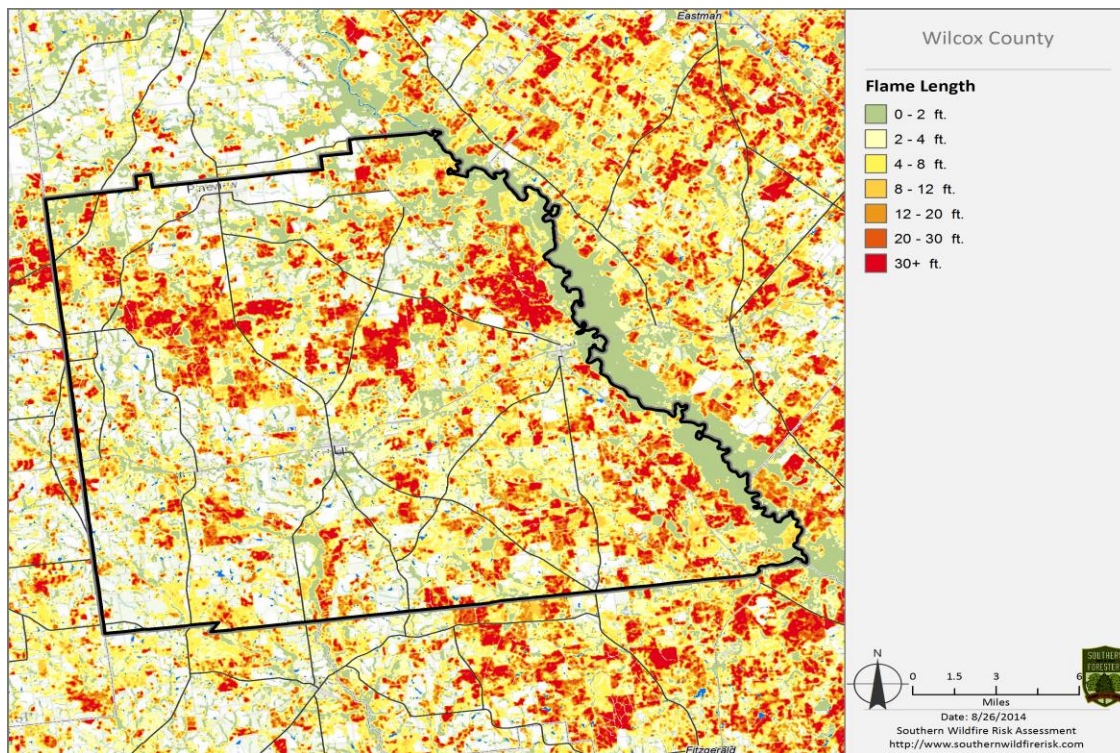**Wildland Urban interface map from the Wilcox County SouthWRAP report**
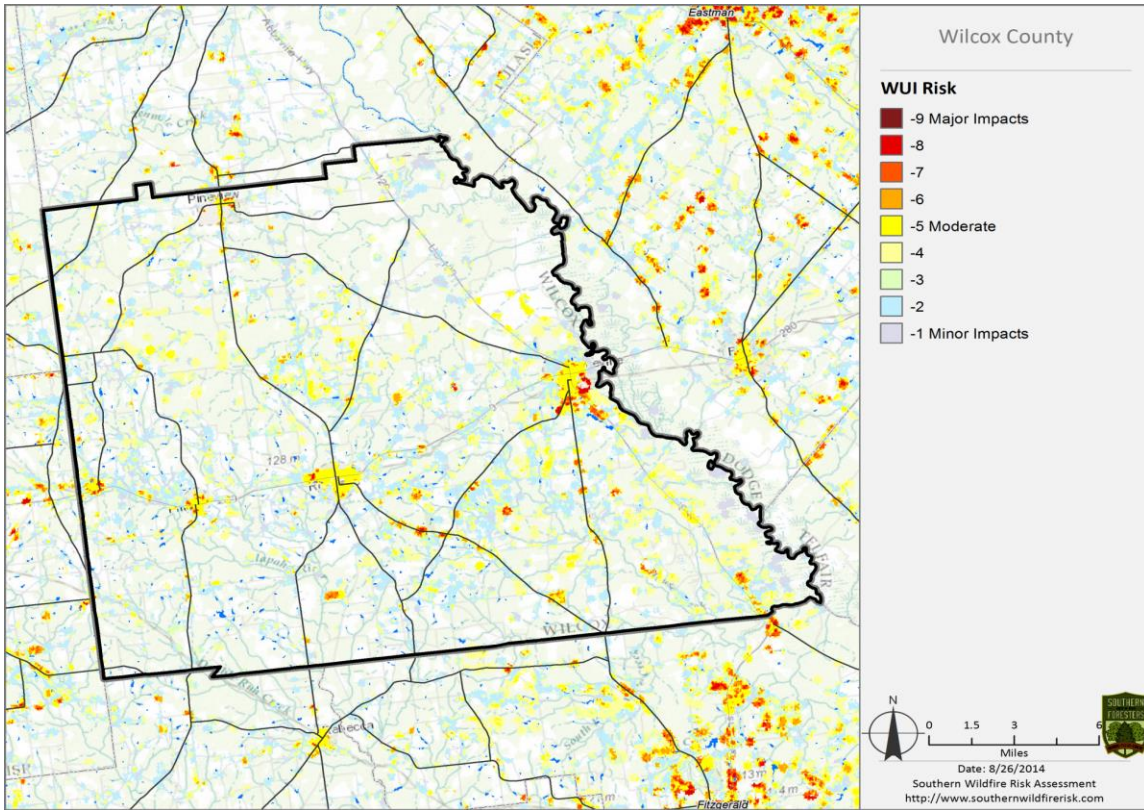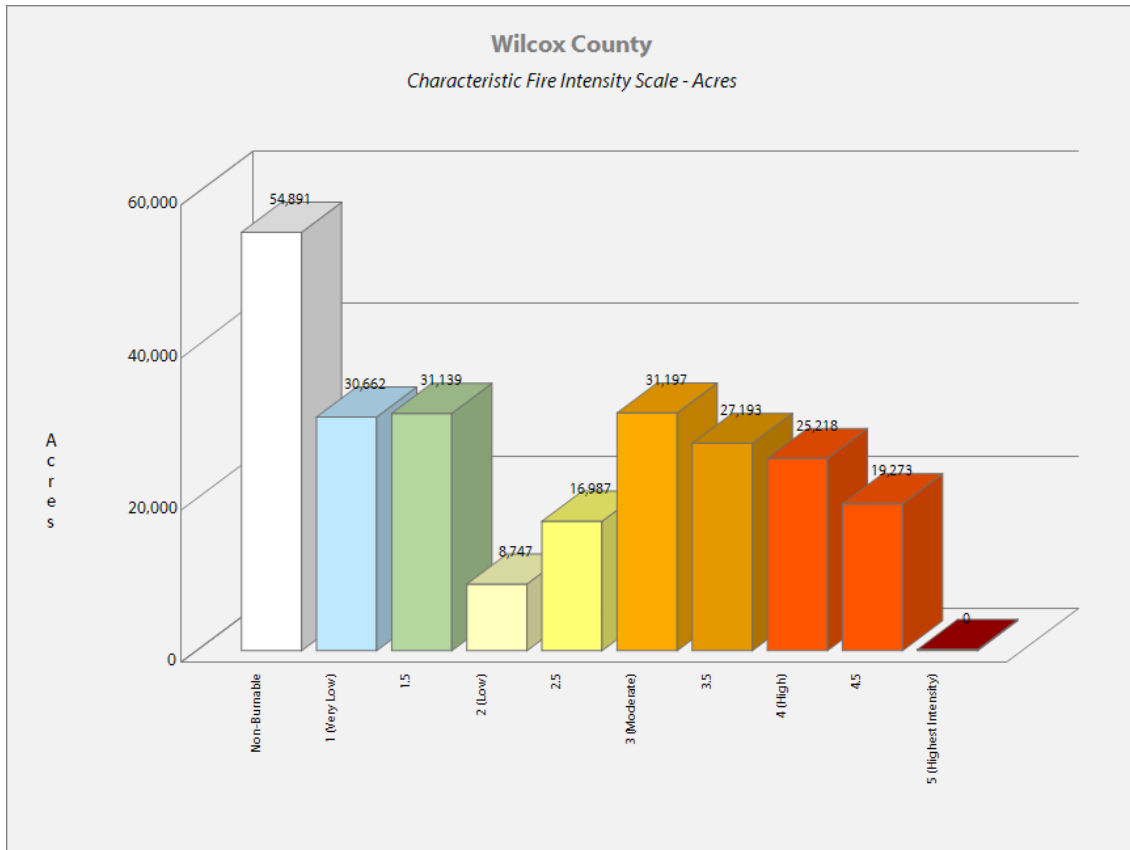
Wildland Urban interface risk map

Fire intensity map identifies areas where wildfire would be more difficult to control.   Fire Intensity Scale acreage graph on following page.

Wilcox County

Characteristic Fire Intensity Scale - Acres

Flame length map identifies areas that will burn with greater intensity during a wildfire.

Wilcox Community Wildfire Risk Assessment

Several community assessments were conducted by the Georgia Forestry Commission. Chief Ranger Michael Bloodworth and Wildfire Prevention Specialist Beryl Budd completed the standard GFC Community Wildfire Risk assessment instrument. This instrument takes into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), 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 the higher risk communities and developments in Wilcox County:

- Dead end roads with inadequate turn arounds
- Narrow roads without drivable shoulders
- Long, narrow, and poorly labeled driveways
- Limited street signs and homes not clearly addressed
- Thick, highly flammable vegetation surrounding many homes
- Minimal defensible space around structures
- Homes with wooden siding and roofs with accumulations of vegetative debris
- No pressurized or non-pressurized water systems available
- Above ground utilities
- Large, adjacent areas of forest or wildlands
- Heavy fuel buildups in adjacent wildlands
- Undeveloped lots
- High occurrence of wildfires in several locations
- Distance from fire stations
- Lack of homeowner or community organizations

Wildfire Risk (rating scale)

Low Risk: Total Wildfire Risk Rating is 0 - 75 points:
The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are GOOD. Little is needed to improve your situation.

Moderate Risk: Total Wildfire Risk Rating is 76 - 130 points:
The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are FAIR. Some Minor improvements will make your home more fire resistant.

High Risk: Total Wildfire Risk Rating is Over 130 points:
Your home is at risk and improvements are necessary to reduce risk!

Extreme Risk: Total Wildfire Risk Rating is Over 140 points:

The areas listed in the table below were evaluated using the GFC Community Hazard Risk Assessment. The rating scale on the preceding page is used to determine score and hazard risk.

Subdivision Development Area	# Lots	Fire Zone	Wildfire Hazard Rating
Statham Shoals Community	30	Abbeville VFD	171 Extreme
Seville Community	50	Pitts VFD	166 Extreme
Bowens Mill Community	40	Abbeville VFD	132 High
Five Points Community	12	Pineview VFD	122 Moderate
Owensboro Community	60	Rochelle VFD	109 Moderate
Cedar Creek Community	12	Cedar Creek VFD	90 Moderate

Prescribed burning of woodlands is the best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel buildup. The Georgia Forestry Commission can assist with developing a prescribed burning plan, installation of firebreaks, and also can provide equipment standby and burning assistance when personnel are available.

VI. MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION PLAN

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-feet of defensible space in home ignition zone.*	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability*	Clean flammable material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, and replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day (National Wildfire Preparedness Day is the 1st Saturday in May)	Cutting, mowing, pruning*	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. Driveway Access	Culvert installation Clearance	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed to allow emergency vehicle access. Remove trees or limbs that may restrict access for fire equipment.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul-de-sacs or turn arounds.
Proposed Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage prescribed burning for private landowners and industrial timberlands particularly adjacent to residential areas. Seek grants for WUI mitigation.

2. Railroad and utility Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads and utilities to better maintain their ROW eliminating brush and grass through herbicide and mowing. Maintain firebreaks along ROW adjacent to residential areas.
3. Existing Fire Lines	Reduce hazardous fuels	Maintain roads, trails, etc. as fire lines and create new fire 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. Install additional dry hydrants if need is established.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Upgrade or acquire a "brush" truck and acquire ATV for fire and rescue.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Acquire additional drafting pumps and other equipment that may be needed to meet department needs.
4. Fire Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel. Training should include S130, S190, and S215. Ready, Set, Go training.

Equipment is available that can be used to mitigate hazardous forest fuels in areas where burning and prescribed fire may not be practical. Pictured here is a Georgia Forestry Commission masticator mowing understory vegetation in a thinned loblolly pine stand.

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1. Conduct **"How to Have a Firewise Home"** Workshop for County Residents
GFC and Wilcox County Fire and Emergency Management should set up and conduct a workshop for homeowners that teach the principles of making homes and properties safe from wildfire. Topics for discussion include home ignition zone 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.
2. Conduct "Firewise" Workshop for Community Leaders
Arrange for GFC Wildfire Prevention Specialist to work with local community leaders and governmental officials on the importance of "Firewise Planning" in developing ordinances and WUI codes in the county as the need arises. The International Wildland-Urban Interface Code was adopted in Georgia in 2014. Identified "communities-at-risk" should be contacted and encouraged to participate in the Firewise Communities Program.
3. Spring Clean-up Event
Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Wilcox County, and local residents of rural Wilcox County. Set up information table with educational materials and refreshments. Initiate the event with a morning briefing by GFC and local fire officials detailing plans for the day and safety precautions. National Wildfire Preparedness Day is the 1st Saturday in May. Activities may include: • 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
4. Informational Packets
Develop and distribute informational packets to be distributed. Include these materials: • Be Firewise Around Your Home   • Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction   • Firewise Communities and Fire Adapted Community information   • Ready, Set, Go, program information
5. Wildfire Protection Display
Create and exhibit a display for the general public at local events. Display can be independent or combined with a Georgia Forestry Commission display.
6. Media
Invite the local and regional news media to community "Firewise" functions for news coverage and regularly submit press releases documenting wildfire risk improvements.

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VII. 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 a 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.

VIII. 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 a*ction 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 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.*

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.*

Prescribed Burning (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)

IX. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Publications/Brochures/Websites

- FIREWISE materials can be ordered at www.firewise.org . These materials can be ordered at no cost.

- 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

Appended Documents:

- Wilcox County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SouthWRAP) Summary Report

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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.