

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

Wilkinson County



March 2017

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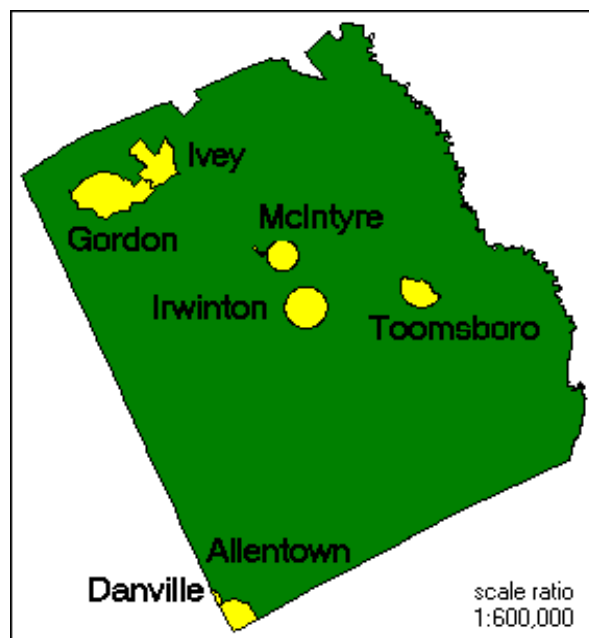
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I. OBJECTIVES

The mission of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Wilkinson 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 Wilkinson County Court House attended by the following core planning team;

Will Fell	GFC CWPP Specialist
Greg Coley	GFC Chief Ranger Twiggs-Wilkinson Counties
Jerry Chandler	GFC Ranger II Wilkinson County
Gary Brown	Wilkinson County EMA Director and Fire Chief Irwinton VFD
Ricky Schneider	McIntyre VFD
David Franks	County Manager, Wilkinson County

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

Wilkinson County, near the geographic center of Georgia, was established in 1803 from territory between the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers ceded by the Creek confederation. The Georgia state legislature divided the area into Wilkinson and Baldwin counties. A later treaty, which pushed the frontier of Georgia west to the Ocmulgee River, added land to the earlier portion and gave rise to the need for smaller county areas. The legislature then partitioned Laurens and Telfair counties from Wilkinson and established their boundaries in 1807. Two years later Twiggs County was created from Wilkinson. The county was named for General James Wilkinson, a veteran of the American Revolution (1775-83) and one of the federal commissioners who negotiated the Creek cessions. Its landscape rises approximately 400 feet above sea level at its highest point and covers almost 450 square miles, making it the forty-third largest county in Georgia. The seat is Irwinton, established on May 11, 1816, and named for three-term Georgia governor Jared Irwin.

Drained by the Oconee River and its numerous tributary creeks, Wilkinson County was home to Native Americans from the Archaic period (8,000 to 1,000 B.C.) into historical times. Creek towns and fields were situated along waterways and paths in the area that became Wilkinson County. For several decades the area was caught in the midst of friction among Federal forces charged with maintaining garrisoned forts on frontier boundaries; white settlers eagerly occupying newly ceded lands; and Creek natives contesting the increasing inroads made by those settlers.

In 1803 Benjamin Hawkins, principal agent for the Creeks, chose a tract of land along the Flint River in present-day Crawford County to build the Creek Agency Reserve. Hawkins's jurisdiction included Wilkinson County. Representatives of the federal government and members of the Creek confederation signed two treaties, the Treaty of Fort Wilkinson (1802) and the Treaty of Washington (1805), that transferred the land between the forks of the Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers to the state of Georgia. Commissioner Creek (also known as Commissioner Creek), which flows through present-day Wilkinson County, was named for the U.S. commissioners who negotiated the Treaty of Fort Wilkinson. The newly acquired lands were opened for settlement and distributed in a lottery held at Louisville, then the state capital, in 1807.

Agriculture was the economic mainstay of Wilkinson County during the nineteenth century. Cotton and food crops were planted by local farmers for domestic use and shipment to market. Early transportation in the county consisted of roads, often following Creek footpaths, which connected area settlements with rivers, forts, and fords; ferries soon replaced the shallow river crossings used by Native Americans. Steamboats plied the Oconee as far north as Milledgeville in the first decades of the county's development until agricultural practices caused silt to narrow the navigation channels. Crossroads communities, such as Allentown, emerged as stagecoach stops and post offices for the surrounding area. In 1843 the Central of Georgia Railway completed its line through Wilkinson, encouraging the growth of such communities as Gordon, the junction of a spur line to Milledgeville; Toombsboro; and McIntyre, named for Sarah McIntyre, the first station agent.

During the Civil War (1861-65), the county raised at least four regular army regiments for the Confederacy, including the Wilkinson Invincibles. Those at home saw Union forces traverse the region during the March to the Sea in 1864. Union general George Stoneman's raiders destroyed railroad lines in the county before the Confederates intercepted them on July 31, 1864. Irwinton lost its courthouse and school to Northern troops who crossed the Oconee River near Toombsboro; these troops were subsequently attacked by Georgia militia forces on November 23.

Postwar years brought increased railroad development to middle Georgia; a small portion of the Macon-Savannah line crossed into the far southern portion of the county and gave Allentown a railway depot. Economic depression set in during the first half of the twentieth century. Deposits of kaolin were found near Gordon around 1916, and the mining and refining industry that developed around the mineral's source gave the county a new revenue stream to join those derived from agriculture and pulpwood plantations.

Present-day Wilkinson County has a mixed economy of manufacturing, construction, agricultural, educational, service, and extractive industries. Beef cattle and hogs, silage, soybeans, peanuts, corn, and wheat are grown in the county.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of Wilkinson County was 10,220 (58 percent white, 40.7 percent black, and 1 percent Hispanic). (Courtesy *New Georgia Encyclopedia*)

Wildfire History

Wilkinson County is located near the center of the state in the rolling red hills region of the upper coastal plain. It is still a rural county with over 95% of its land area forested, broken only by Kaolin mines and a few scattered small communities. Where these homes are, the risks from the wildland urban interface can be significant.

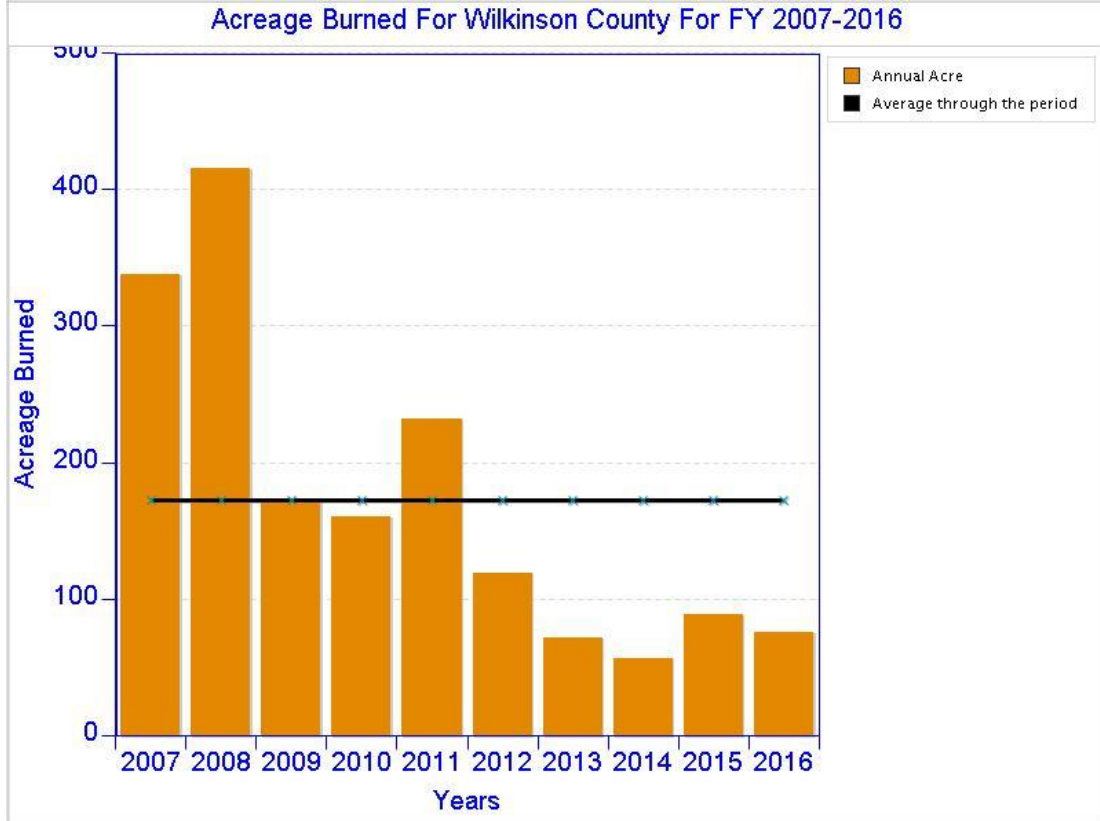
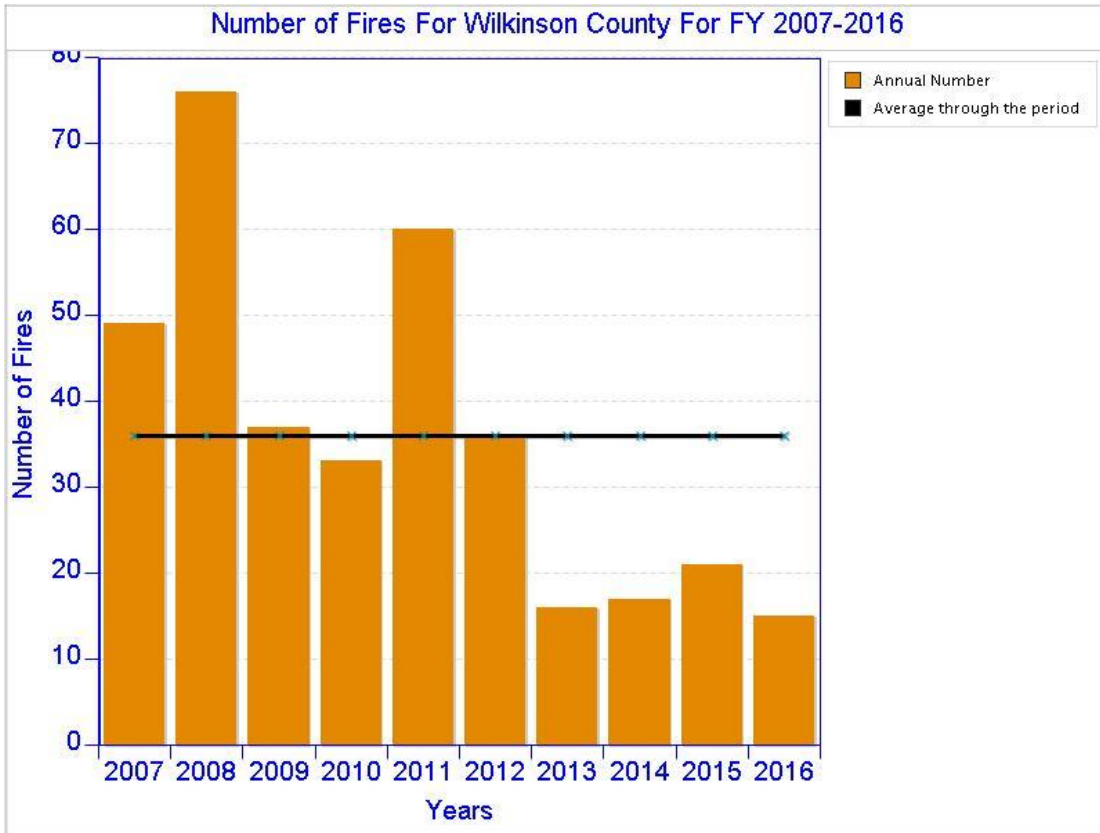
Over the past fifty years, Wilkinson County has averaged almost 54 reported wildland fires per year and 43% of these have occurred during the months of February, March and April. These fires have burned an average of 238 acres annually. Of this annual acreage burned, 55% was lost during the above three months. Despite the advent of the outdoor burning permit law about 30 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.

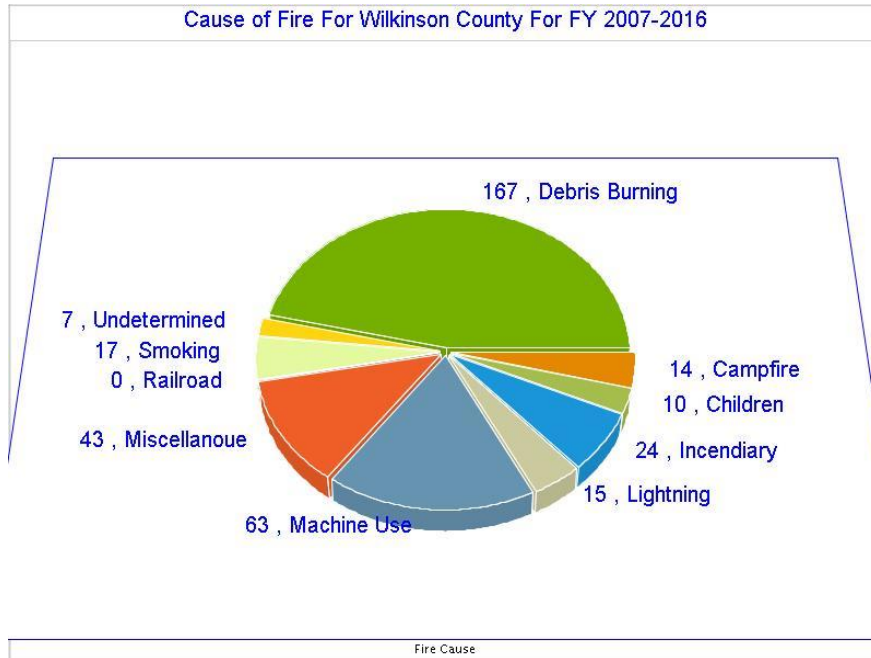
Over the past 10 years, 2007 thru 2016, the leading cause of these wildfires was debris burning accounting for 46% of the total number of wildfires. The second leading cause of wildfires during the 10 year period is machine use accounting for 18%. Also of concern are incendiary or arson fires causing 8% of the total.

County = Wilkinson	Cause	Fires	Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	1	0.50	0.80	1.01
Children	Children	0	0.00	0.20	2.36
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	0	0.00	0.20	4.20
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	0	0.00	5.00	31.95
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	0	0.00	0.60	1.76
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	1	2.56	1.00	0.74
Incendiary	Incendiary	0	0.00	0.20	0.46
Lightning	Lightning	2	25.26	1.60	12.62
Machine Use	Machine Use	1	0.01	2.00	3.57
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	2	0.17	1.60	2.66
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1	0.14	0.40	0.25
Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	Miscellaneous: Woodstove Ashes	0	0.00	0.40	0.27
Undetermined	Undetermined	25	136.85	6.40	29.72
Totals for County: Wilkinson Year: 2017		33	165.49	20.40	91.56

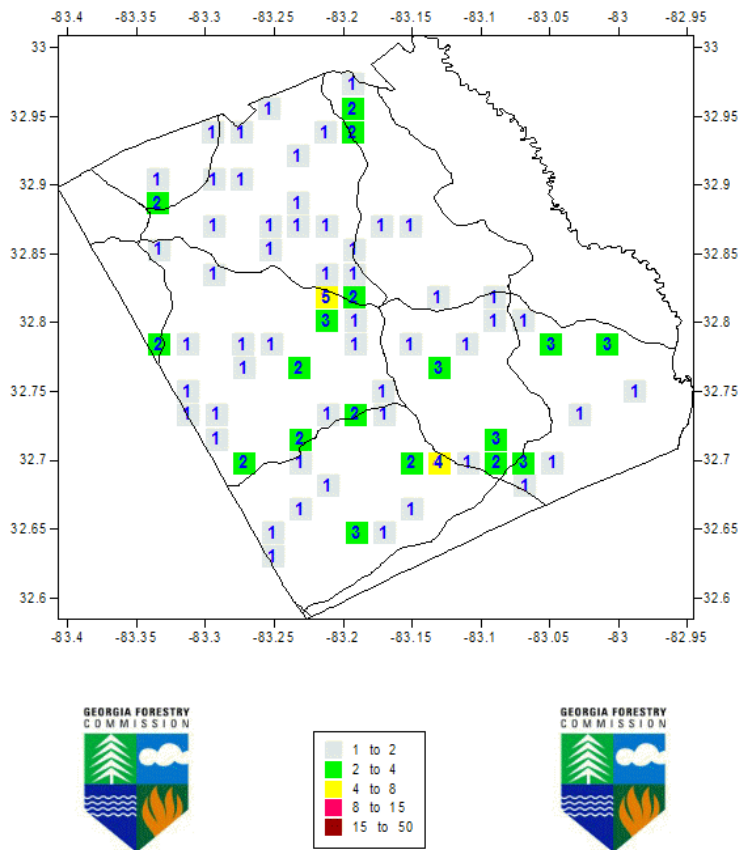
The table above is a record of the wildfires in Wilkinson County so far in fiscal year 2017, which started in July 2016 and ends in June 2017. This year there has been over a 50% increase in the number of wildfires and acres burned to date. The table below reflects the wildfire activity during the last five fiscal years in Wilkinson County.

Year	# wildfires	Acres Burned	Average Size	Statewide average size
2016	15	75.60	5.04	6.29
2015	21	88.41	4.21	4.42
2014	17	56.40	3.31	5.02
2013	16	71.90	4.49	4.53
2012	36	118.85	3.30	5.08

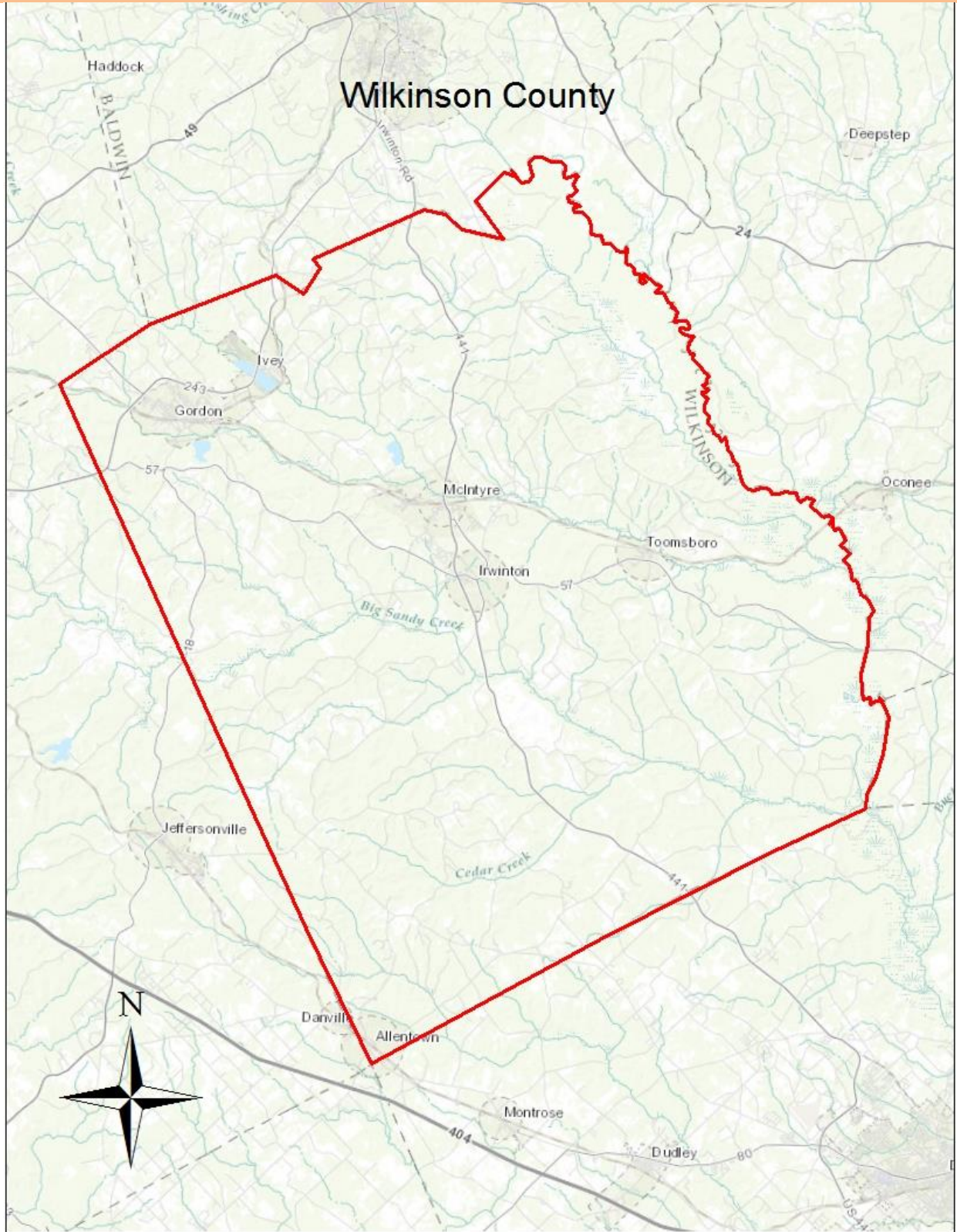




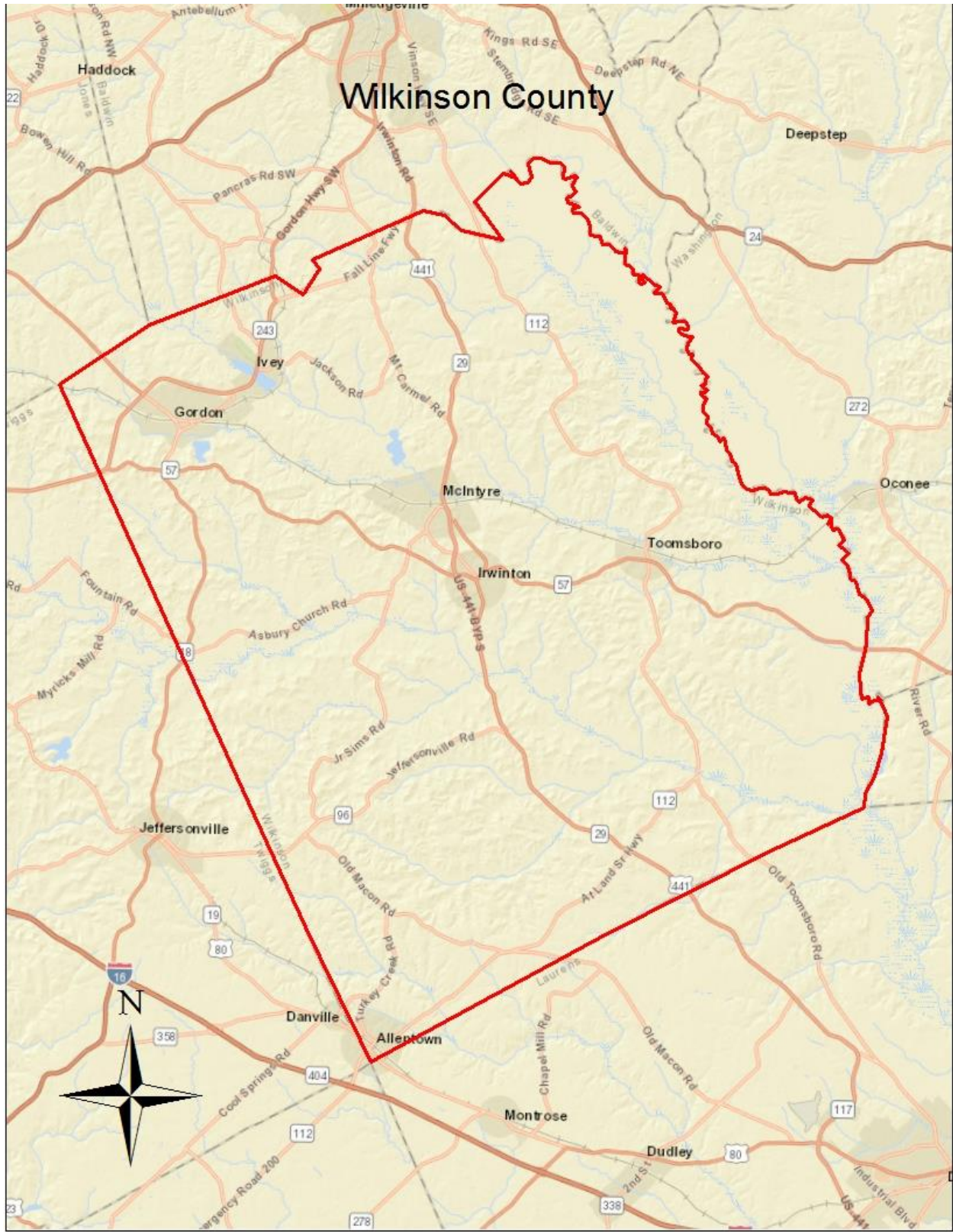
Fire Occurrence Map for Wilkinson County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



IV. COUNTY BASE MAPS







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)

Wildland Urban Interface Hazards



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

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.

● 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!

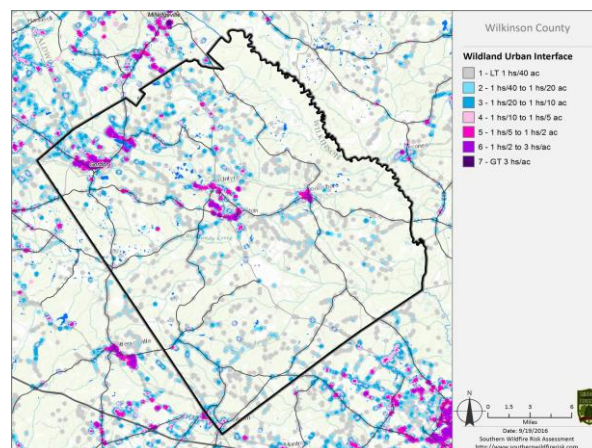
● Limited access

- 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.

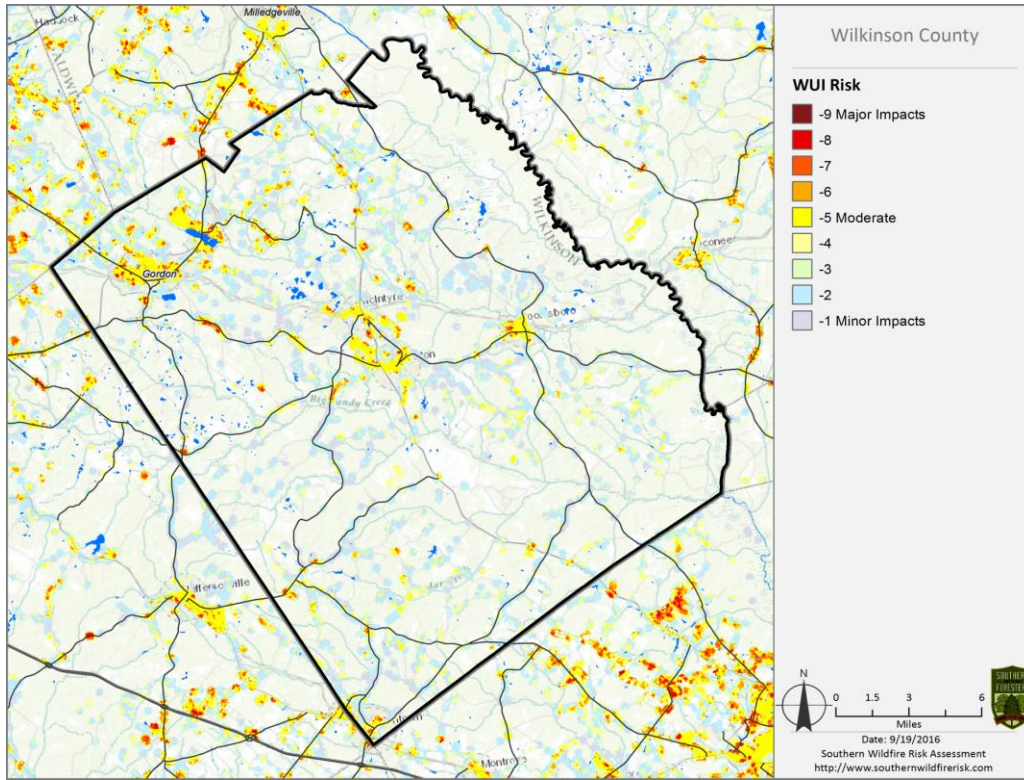
VI. Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment & Risk Hazard Maps

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

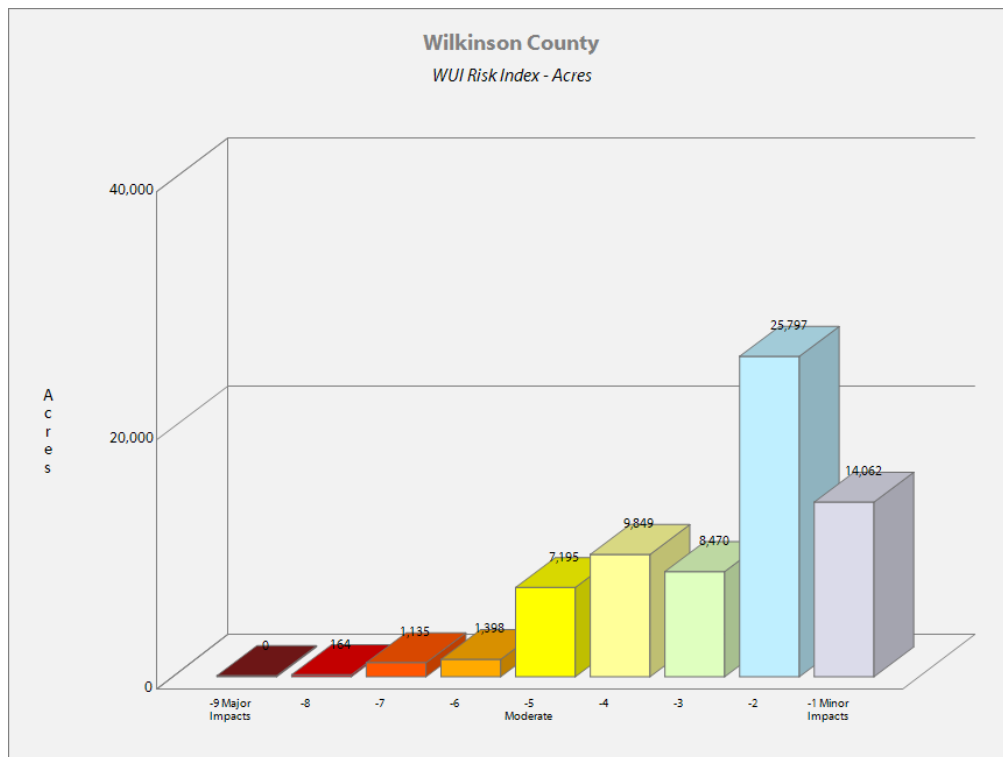
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

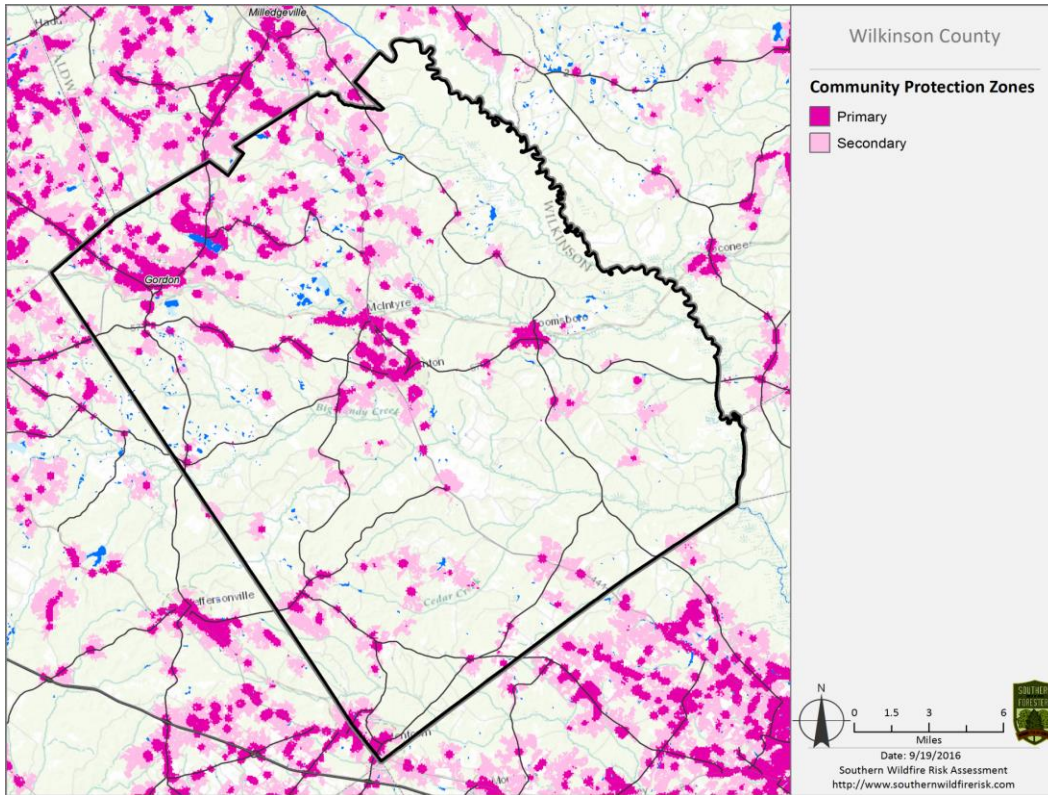


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map

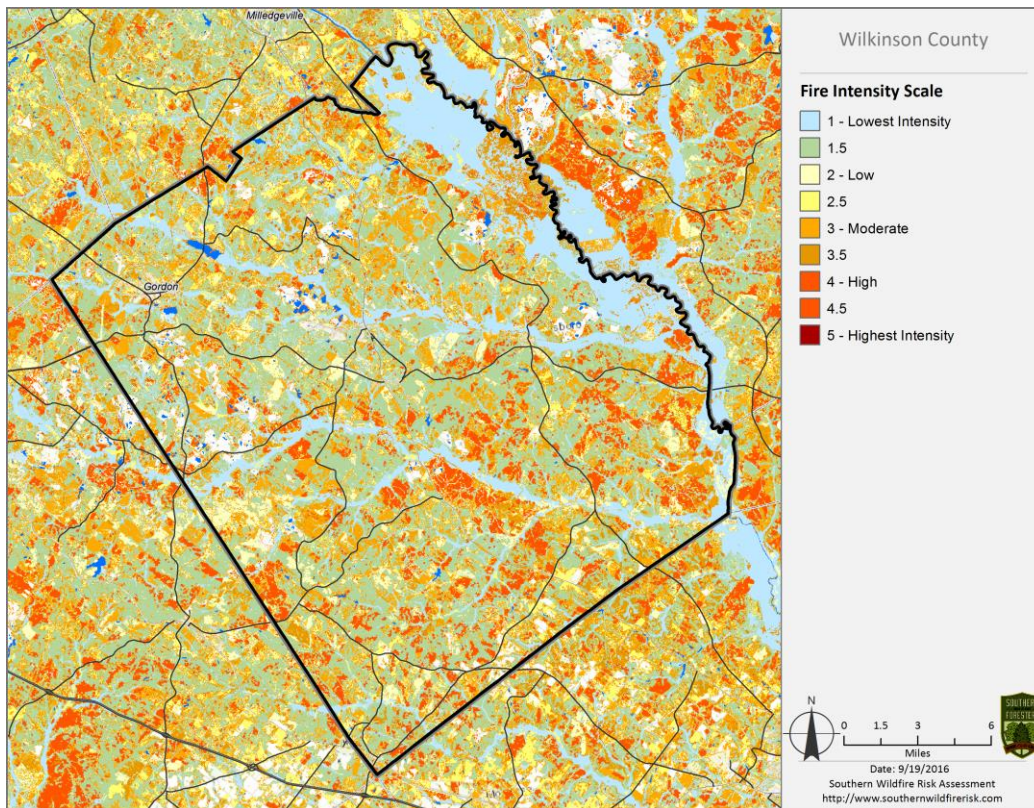


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map (above) and WUI Risk Index-Acres graph (below)





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



The wildland fire risk assessments conducted in 2009 by the Wilkinson County Fire Departments returned an average score of 89, placing Wilkinson County in the “high” hazard range. The risk assessment instrument used to evaluate wildfire hazards to Wilkinson 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 Wilkinson 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.
- High occurrence of wildfires in the several locations

Summary of Wilkinson County Assessment Ratings

Fire District	Site Access	Site Hazard	Bldg Hazard	Fire Protection	Utilities	Add. Hazards	Total Risk Score
Irwinton	7	20	25	20	7	30	109
McIntyre	8	20	20	9	6	32	95
Gordon	8	20	20	13	6	16	83
Danville	2	15	20	17	4	19	77
Toomsboro	5	20	25	20	4	32	106
Allentown	9	20	25	15	4	22	95
Nickelsville	5	10	20	26	4	16	81
High Hill	7	10	20	8	4	14	63
Average	6	17	22	16	5	23	89
Less than 50	Low Hazard						
50-74	Moderate Hazard						
75-99	High Hazard						
100-120	Very High Hazard						
greater than 120	Extreme Hazard						

VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

The following recommendations were developed by the Wilkinson County CWPP Core team as a result of surveying and assessing fuels and structures and by conducting meetings and interviews with county and city officials. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildfire in the assessment area.

Proposed Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities

Primary Protection for Community and Its Essential Infrastructure		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-foot of defensible space**	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plants near homes with less flammable varieties, remove vegetation around chimneys.
2. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability**	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised structures, store water hoses for ready access, replace pine straw and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials.
3. Community Clean-up Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning**	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
4. 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.
5. Road Access	Identify needed road improvements	As roads are upgraded, widen to minimum standards with at least 50 foot diameter cul de sacs.
6. 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.

7. 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.
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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. Adjacent WUI Lands	Reduce hazardous fuels	Seek Grant funding to fund mitigation burning, four wheelers to assist in burning.
3. Existing Fire Lines	Reduce hazardous fuels	Clean and re-harrow existing lines.

Proposed Improved Community Wildland Fire Response Priorities

1. Water Sources	Dry Hydrants	Inspect, maintain and improve access to existing dry hydrants. Add signage along road to mark the hydrants
2. Fire Stations	Water Tankers	Seek grant or other funding for new chassis for county FD tankers
3. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Larger capacity hose. Investigate need for “brush” trucks.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training and Ready Set Go training for Fire Personnel.

**Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities

<p>1. Conduct “How to Have a Firewise Home” Workshop for Wilkinson 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.</p> <p>Distribute materials promoting firewise practices and planning through local community and governmental meetings.</p>
<p>2. 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>3. Spring Clean-up Event</p>
<p>Conduct clean-up event every spring involving the Georgia Forestry Commission, Wilkinson 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. 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 <p>Celebrate the work with a community cookout, with Community officials, GFC and Wilkinson County Fire Departments discussing and commending the work accomplished.</p>
<p>4. 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 brochures • Fire Adapted Community information

5. Wildfire Protection Display

Create and exhibit a display for the general public at the Gordon Picnic on the Green and other area festivals. Display can be independent or combined with the Georgia Forestry Commission display.

6. 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 Wilkinson 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	
Wilkinson County Wildland Urban Interface Fire Council	Create this informal team or council comprised of residents, GFC officials, Wilkinson County Fire Department officials, a representative from the city and county government and the EMA Director for Wilkinson 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, Wilkinson 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 roofing materials and skirting around raised structures, planned maintenance of community lots.	No Cost	To be adopted by city and county governments.

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 Wilkinson 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 Wilkinson County WUFC 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 Wilkinson County WUFC 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

VIII. 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.

IX. 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*

X. 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:

Wilkinson County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP)

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

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



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