

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

*An Action Plan for Wildfire and
Conservation of Natural
Resources*

Terrell County, Georgia



September 2017

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Attachments:

Terrell County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

Executive Summary

The extreme weather conditions that are conducive to wildfire disasters (usually a combination of extended drought, low humidity and high winds) occur in this area of Georgia every 10-15 years. This is not a regular event, but, the number of homes that have been built in or adjacent to forested or wildland areas, can turn a wildfire under these weather conditions into a major disaster. Wildfires move fast and can quickly overwhelm the resources of even the best equipped fire department. Advance planning can save lives, homes and businesses.

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan includes an evaluation of the wildland fire susceptibility of wildland/urban interface “communities-at-risk”, an analysis of fire service resources and training and an Action Plan to address the increasing threat of wildfire. The CWPP does not obligate the county financially in any way, but instead, lays a foundation for improved emergency response if and when grant funding is available to the County.

The plan is provided at no cost to the County and can be very important for County applications for hazard mitigation grants through the National Fire Plan, FEMA mitigation grants, and others. Under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, communities (counties) that seek grants from the federal government for hazardous fuels reduction work are required to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The plan will:

- Enhance public safety
- Improve community sustainability
- Protect ecosystem health
- Raise public awareness of wildfire hazards and wildfire risk
- Educate landowners on how to reduce home ignitability
- Build and improve collaboration at multiple levels

The public does not have to fall victim to this type of disaster. Homes (and communities) can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire engines and firefighters on the scene. It takes planning and commitment at the community level BEFORE the wildfire disaster occurs --- and that is what the Community Wildfire Protection Plan is all about.

II. SIGNATURE PAGE

Honorable Wilbur Gamble, Chairman
Terrell County Board of County Commissioners

Date

Terrell County Fire Chief, Edward Harvey

Date

GFC Chief Ranger Jon Lee Wright

Date

III. OVERVIEW OF WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE FIRE DISASTERS

Fire influenced and defined the landscape we call the United States, well before the arrival of the first Europeans. Scientists, in fact, think that fires started by lightning or Native Americans occurred over most of the Southeast every 3 to 7 years. These were typically low intensity fires (because of their frequency) which kept the forests open and “park-like” in appearance and prevented heavy accumulations of dense underbrush. When communities became well established across the South, wildfires began to impact public safety and had to be controlled. State forestry agencies became established between 1915 and 1928 and the landscape was generally segregated into communities (or human habitations) and natural or wildland areas.

In the mid 1980’s, following a new wave of development in what was previously forest or wildland areas, agencies across the country became aware of an increasingly common phenomena – wildfires were more and more frequently impacting communities . In 1985, a milestone year, over 1400 homes nationwide were lost to wildfire. The catastrophes became known as wildland/urban interface fires and occur when the fuel feeding the fire changes from natural vegetation (trees, shrubs and herbs) and begins to include manmade structures (homes, outbuildings and vehicles). Wildland/urban interface fires can occur anywhere in the United States and can become major disasters when associated with extremes in weather (extended droughts, high winds, and low relative humidity).

The public does not have to fall victim to this type of disaster. Homes (and communities) can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire engines and firefighters on the scene. But, it takes planning and commitment at the community level BEFORE a wildfire emergency occurs.



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

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

There are several great reasons to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). First and foremost, a successful Community Wildfire Protection Plan provides a community with a set of objectives and actions specifically designed to address the threat of wildfire. These objectives and actions can help:

- Enhance public safety
- Improve community sustainability
- Protect ecosystem health
- Raise public awareness of wildfire hazards and wildfire risk
- Educate landowners on how to reduce home ignitability
- Build and improve collaboration at multiple levels

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan is a critical tool required to obtain hazard mitigation grants through the National Fire Plan, FEMA mitigation grants, and others. Under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, communities that seek grants from the federal government for hazardous fuels reduction work are required to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The minimum requirements for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan as described in the HFRA are:

- **Collaboration:** A Community Wildfire Protection Plan must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies* and other interested parties.
- **Prioritized Fuel Reduction:** A Community Wildfire Protection Plan must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
- **Treatment of Structural ignitability:** A Community Wildfire Protection Plan must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

* Federal agencies are involved in the CWPP process if U.S. Forest Service or BLM lands exist in the county.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

It is important that a collaborative approach be taken in the development of a successful Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This means allowing for the involvement of interested parties in the development of the CWPP and providing the opportunity for stakeholders in the community (county) to review and comment on the CWPP. During development of the Terrell County CWPP, a news release was submitted to the local paper (*Dawson News*) explaining the objectives of the Terrell County CWPP, the planning process and the procedure for obtaining a draft copy for review and/or comment.

V. DESCRIPTION & HISTORY OF TERRELL COUNTY



Terrell County, located in southwest Georgia, was created from neighboring counties, Lee and Randolph, by an act of the state legislature approved February 16, 1856. By this same act it was named for the eminent Georgia physician and statesman William Terrell. The county has a land area consisting of 335.5 square miles and, according to the 2010 U.S. census, a population of 9,315, a decrease from the 2000 population of 10,970. It was once a thriving farming area, but agriculture has been replaced as the primary source of income by services, manufacturing, and retail trade. The nearest metropolitan

shopping center is Albany, in neighboring Dougherty County

Dawson, the county seat as well as the largest town in the county, was established on 100 acres of land purchased in 1856 from Moses Baldwin. It was named in honor of William Crosby Dawson, a U.S.

senator from Georgia. The town was incorporated in 1857 and built on a square with the courthouse in the center. The Civil War (1861-65) interrupted the town's early business growth, but after the war it

quickly recovered, and by the turn of the century it had a telephone system, waterworks, and an electric plant. Dawson also developed culturally, having an early library, debating society, a local band, a public entertainment hall, and two newspapers.



Two sites in the county are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Terrell County Courthouse and the Garden Club House. The present courthouse is the second one to be built in the county; it was constructed in 1892 and renovated in 1936. Its architectural style is Late Victorian, and it was designed by William H. Parkins. Another interesting building in the county is the Chickasawhatchee Primitive Baptist Church, built in 1858 and the oldest church still standing on its original site in Terrell County.



During the past several years a concerted effort has been made by the Terrell County Historic Preservation Society and the Better Hometown Dawson Task Force to increase cultural awareness, improve the appearance of streets and buildings, and preserve places of historical importance. Renovations have recently been completed on the courthouse, the Carnegie Library building, and the Garden Club House. The old McDowell Building has been remodeled; it is

now the headquarters for the Terrell County Chamber of Commerce. Work is scheduled to begin soon on the old cotton warehouse known as the Hill and Hill Building.

The Tour of Homes, which allows the public to view the inside of Dawson's antebellum and Victorian houses, is held each year on the first Saturday in May.



Parrott, located about ten miles northwest of Dawson, is a picturesque little town that has been the setting for several Western movies, including *The Long Riders* (1980). In recent years its citizens have worked diligently to restore the historic downtown area in the hope of attracting antique-minded tourists traveling on Highway 520 en route to Columbus. Bronwood, originally called Brown's Station, was incorporated in 1883 and is located six miles east of Dawson. Sasser, located in the southeastern section of the county, was incorporated in 1890 and named for pioneer citizen Abraham Sasser. The county also has several unincorporated communities, among them Chickasawhatchee, Dover, Graves, Herod, Pleasant Hill, and Yeomans.

VI. WILDFIRE HISTORY

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) is the state agency responsible for providing leadership, service, and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources. Commission professionals provide a wide variety of services including fire detection, issuing burn permits, wildfire suppression and prevention services, emergency and incident command system expertise, rural fire department assistance, forest management assistance to landowners and communities, the marketing and utilization of forest resources and nature services, and growing and selling quality tree seedlings for planting. Forestry is a \$28.7 billion a year industry in the State of Georgia creating 128,000 jobs statewide. Forestry is a valuable part of the Terrell County economy.

Vision: Healthy sustainable forests providing clean air, clean water and abundant products for future generations.

Mission: To provide leadership, service and education in protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources.

The local Georgia Forestry Commission office serving Randolph-Terrell Counties is located at Route 1, Box 407, Shellman, Georgia, 39886. Telephone: 229-679-5472.

Personnel:

Jon Lee Wright, Chief Ranger
Loran F. Anderson, Ranger
Joe Fincher, Ranger
Willie Jackson, Ranger
Edward Dean Wiley, Ranger /Forest Tech

Chart of Wildfire Activity during the 2017 fiscal year, July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.

County = Terrell	Cause	Fires		Acres	Fires 5 Yr Avg	Acres 5 Yr Avg
Campfire	Campfire	0		0.00	0.20	9.80
Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc	1		0.03	0.40	0.21
Debris: Construction Land Clearing	Debris: Construction Land Clearing	0		0.00	0.40	2.80
Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn	1		8.00	0.80	2.36
Debris: Household Garbage	Debris: Household Garbage	1		0.25	0.20	0.05
Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc	1		0.95	0.20	0.19
Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related	0		0.00	0.40	4.06
Incendiary	Incendiary	0		0.00	0.20	0.60
Lightning	Lightning	0		0.00	0.40	3.96
Machine Use	Machine Use	1		2.10	0.40	0.49
Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	Miscellaneous: Power lines/Electric fences	0		0.00	0.20	0.15
Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	Miscellaneous: Structure/Vehicle Fires	1		0.01	0.20	0.00
Smoking	Smoking	1		0.01	0.20	0.00
Undetermined	Undetermined	2		59.30	0.60	11.89
Totals for County: Terrell Year: 2017		9		70.65	4.80	36.57

The table below charts Terrell County wildfire activity during fiscal years 2007-2016. Statewide averages were exceptionally high in 2007 and 2011 due to drought and large wildfires in SE Georgia. Terrell County, as well as statewide, has experienced record breaking low wildfire activity in 2010, 2013, 2014, and 2016 because of above normal rainfall during peak wildfire seasons.

Year	Acreage Burned	Number of Fires	Average Size	Statewide Average Size
2007	77.20	15	5.15	18.64
2008	94.62	26	3.64	4.56
2009	14.06	11	1.29	3.90
2010	0.16	1	.16	3.93
2011	710.13	33	21.52	17.56
2012	31.08	7	4.44	5.08
2013	0.35	1	.35	4.53
2014	63.25	3	21.08	5.02
2015	28.28	9	3.14	4.42
2016	20.31	2	10.16	6.29

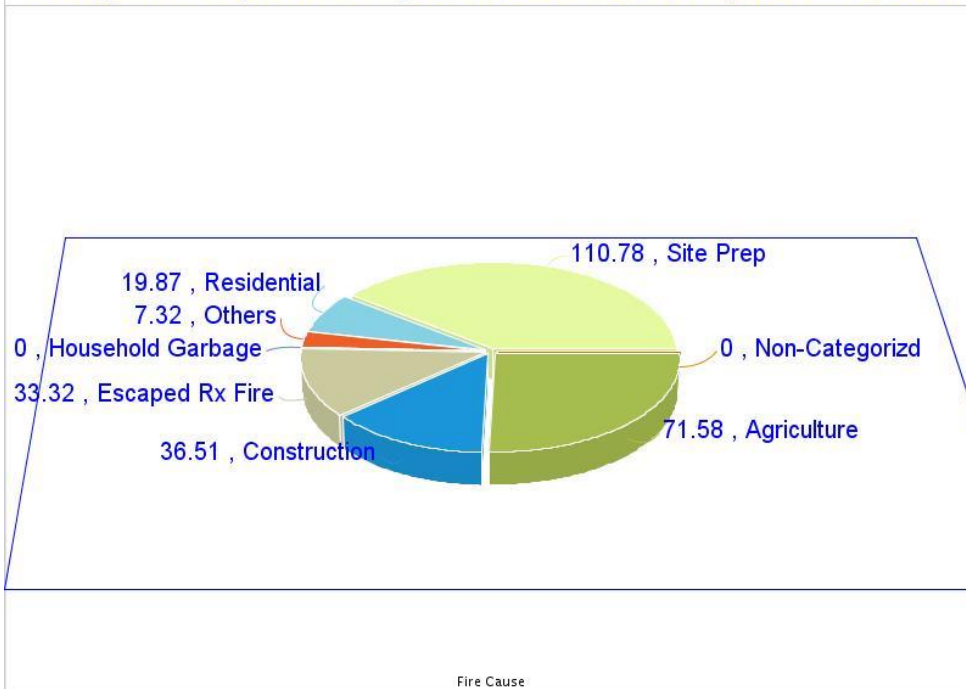
On a year-to-year basis, the leading causes of wildfires in Terrell County are debris burning, followed by machine use (example: harvesting combine) and lightning.

Cause	10 Year Annual Avg. (FY2007-2016)	FY 2017
Debris Burning	5.80/27.96 acres	4/9.23
Machine Use	2.40/6.35 acres	1/2.10
Lightning	1.1/7.3 acres	0/0

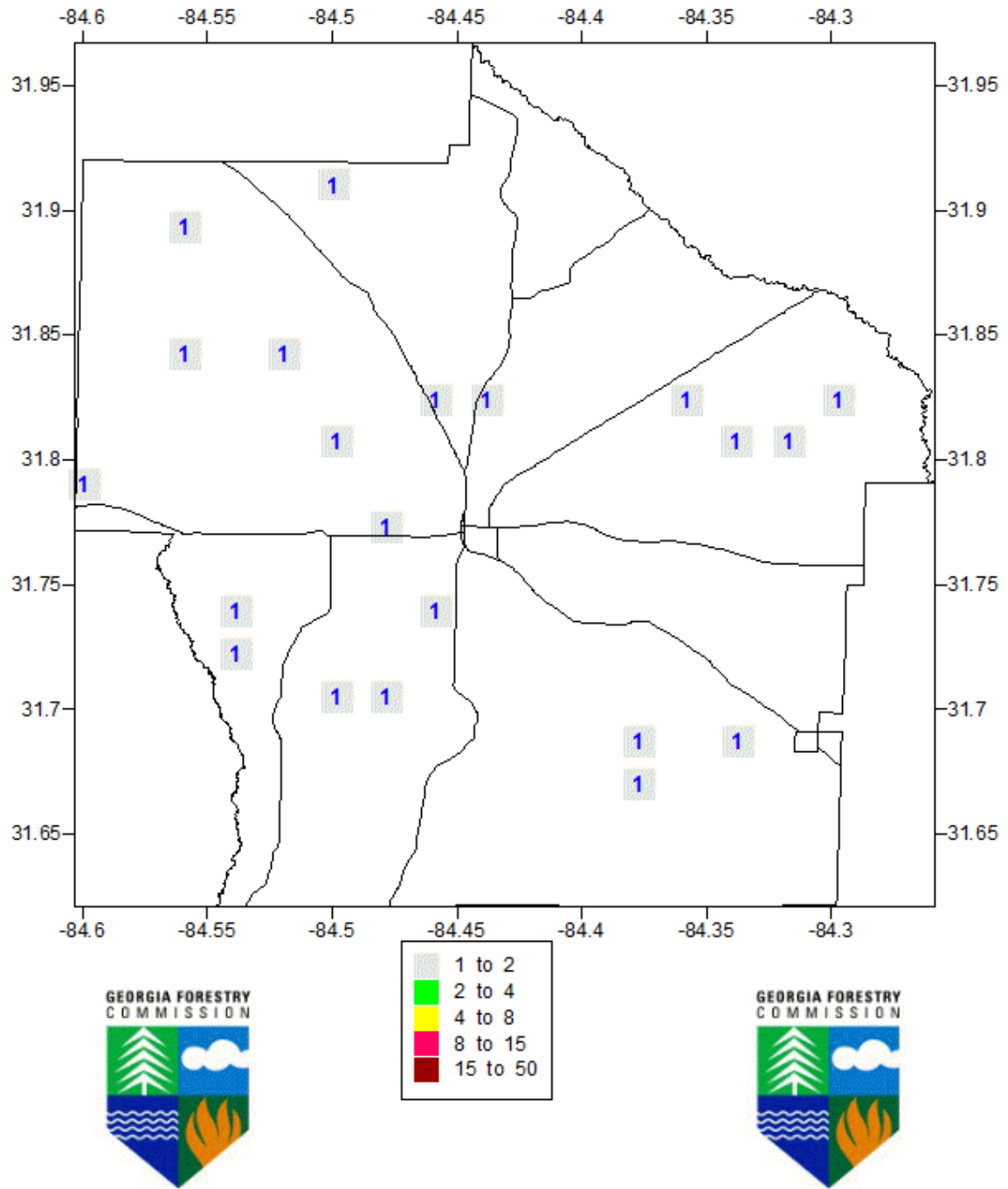
**Acreage Burned /Number of Fires by Fire Cause
For Terrell County
For FY 2007-2016**

Fire Cause	Acreage Burned	Number of Fires
Campfire	51.35	5
Children	3.82	1
Debris Burning	279.38	58
Incendiary	3.83	3
Lightning	73.09	11
MachineUse	613.53	24
Miscellaneous	14.29	5
Railroad	0.00	0
Smoking	0.00	0
Undetermined	0.15	1
Total	1,039.44	108

Acreage Burned By Debris Burning Sub Cause For Terrell County For FY 2007-2016

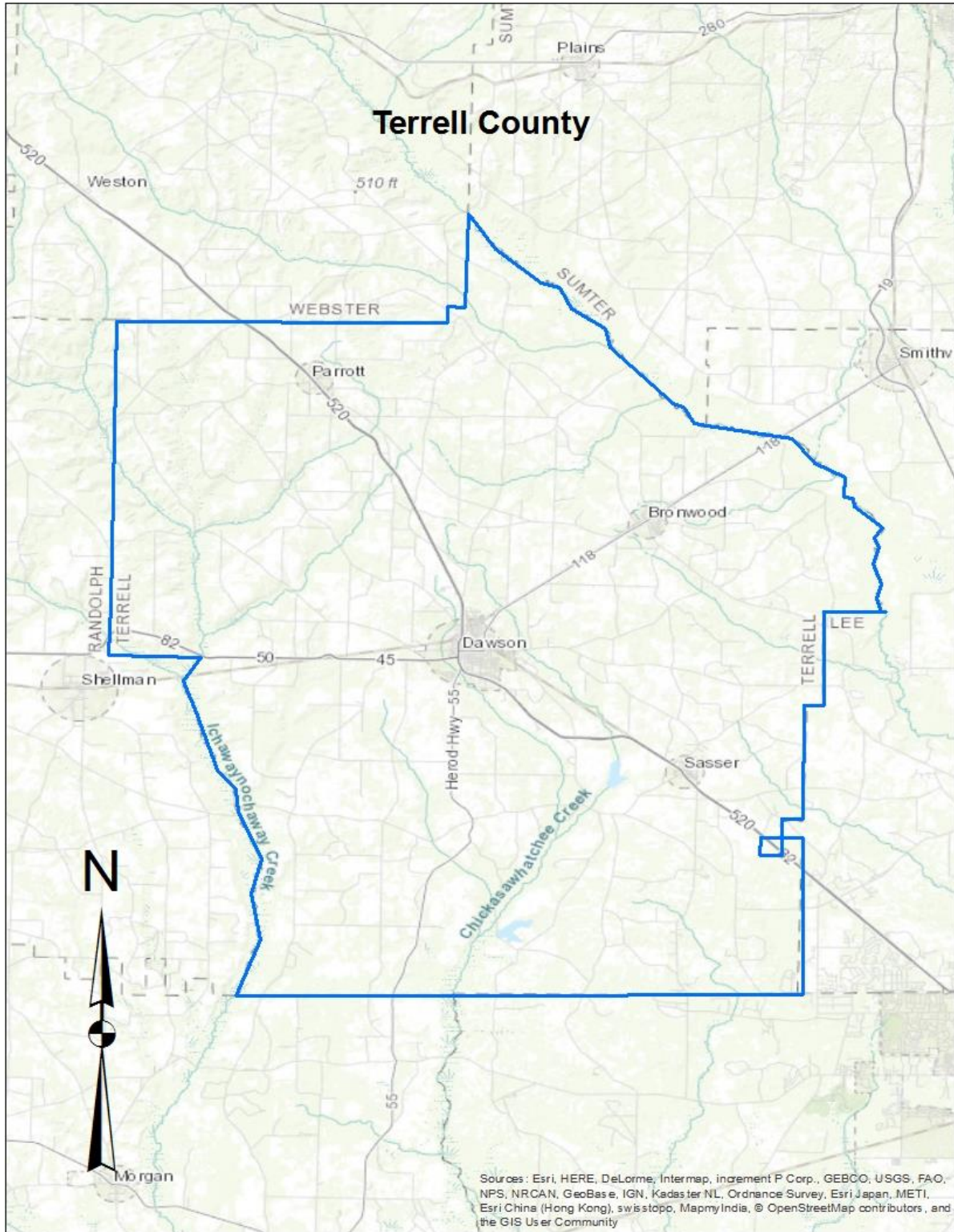


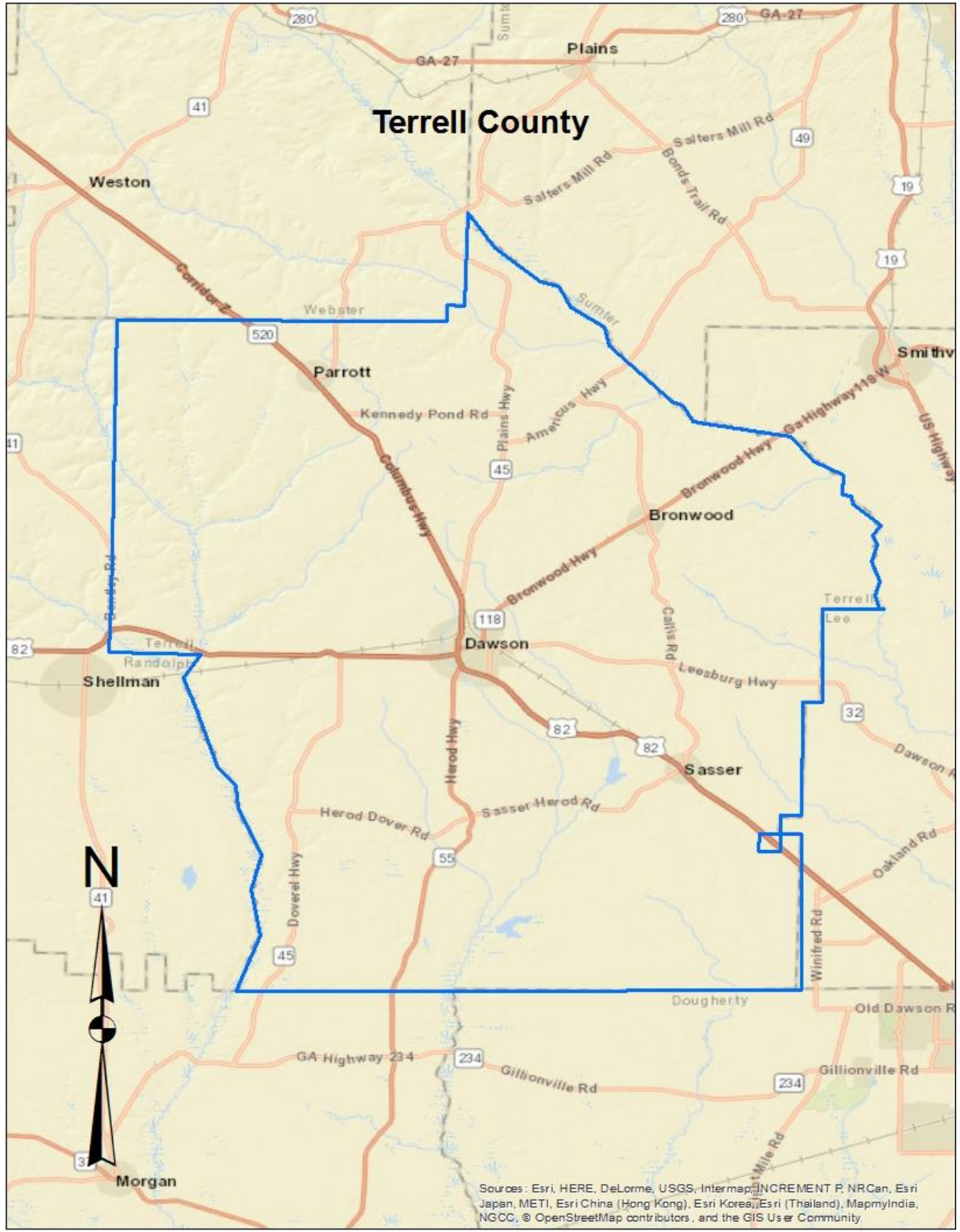
Fire Occurrence Map for Terrell County for Fiscal Year 2012-2016



The above graphic indicates the number & location of wildfires in Terrell County (2012-2016)

VII. COUNTY BASE MAPS







VIII. WHAT ARE “COMMUNITIES-AT-RISK”?

Communities-at-risk are locations where a group of two or more structures in close proximity to a forested or wildland area places homes and residents at some degree of risk from wildfire. Other characteristics of the “community” such as the closeness of structures, building materials, accumulated debris near the structures, access in and out and the distance from the nearest fire station or a permanent water source such as a pond or dry hydrant may contribute to the risk.

While there may be relatively few groups of homes that fit the above description in Terrell County, that does not mean there is not a significant risk of structural damage during the severe weather conditions are conducive to a disastrous wildfire (severe drought, low relative humidity and high winds).

In Terrell County, there are many individual (isolated) homes and outbuildings on farms and small properties that could be damaged or destroyed in the event of a disastrous wildfire. On these properties, the owners must assume a greater responsibility for wildfire protection - - - by making improvements to the landscape and structures that will provide some degree of wildfire protection until the fire department can arrive. This can only be accomplished if rural residents know how to make their homes and properties “Firewise”.

Improvements to the community infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc.) may be beyond the capabilities of the homeowners. However, if access by emergency vehicles can be enhanced by widening the entrance right-of-way(s), creating “hammerhead-T’s” or other ways for fire trucks to turn around and operate safely and identifying residences with reflective “911 addresses” wildfire protection can be greatly improved.

More extensive modifications in and around individual residences may need to be budgeted by the residents over time (for example, making a roof more fire resistant may have to wait until it is time to replace the current roof covering). Moving firewood away from the home, skirting raised decks and keeping roofs free of accumulated flammable debris are improvements that can be accomplished in the short-run.

In most instances, communities-at-risk will benefit from (vegetative) fuel reduction within 100 feet of homes and outbuildings through prescribed burning or by mechanical means. Fuel management within the home ignition zone (within 100 feet of the home) either by removing highly flammable vegetation or by replacing the vegetation with fire resistant plant species will significantly improve wildfire safety.

TERRELL COUNTY "COMMUNITIES AT RISK" FROM WILDFIRE

Community	Score	Hazard Rating
Graves	99	High Hazard
Dover	97	High Hazard
Laing Crossroads	90	High Hazard
Chickasawhatchee	90	High Hazard
Parrott	90	High Hazard
Bronwood	85	High Hazard

These hazard ratings were completed by Rangers of the Randolph-Terrell Forestry Unit during the month of September, 2010. The Georgia Forestry Commission Hazard and Wildfire Risk Assessment Scoresheet was used to determine these wildfire hazard ratings. This document evaluates communities (groups of homes) based upon six criteria: community access, surrounding vegetation, building construction, fire protection, utilities and additional rating factors. The cumulative wildfire hazard rating scores range from a low rating of 0 to 50 points to an extreme hazard rating with over 120 points.

The cumulative wildfire hazard rating scores help establish priorities for the Terrell County CWPP Mitigation & Action Plan on page 21.

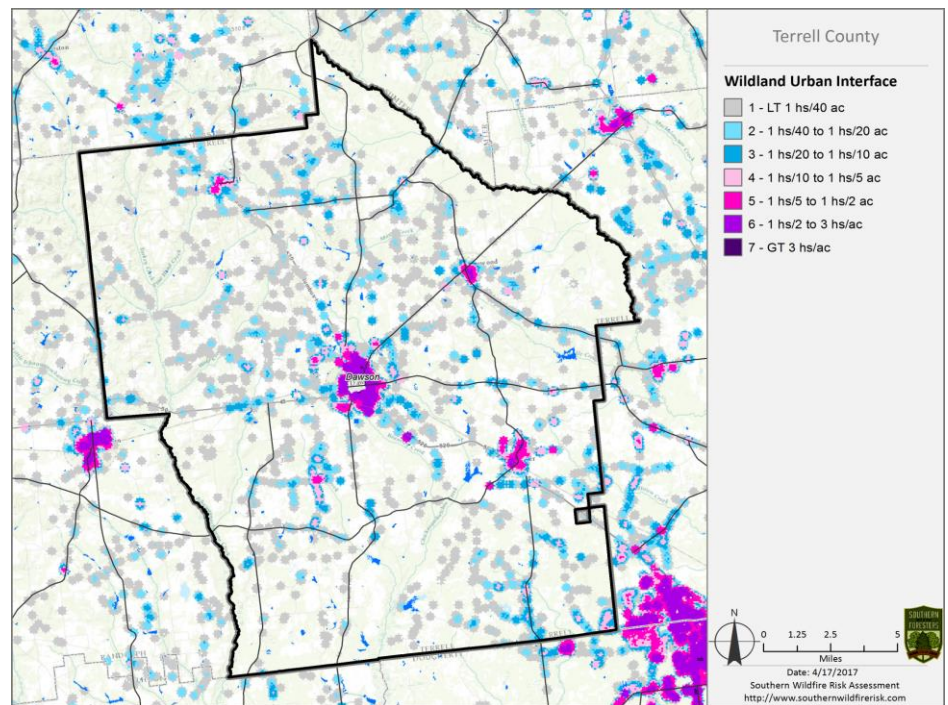


Prescribed burning of woodlands is the best management practice to reduce hazardous fuel accumulation. The Georgia Forestry Commission can provide a prescribed burning plan, establish fire breaks, and can also provide equipment standby and assist with burning when personnel are available.

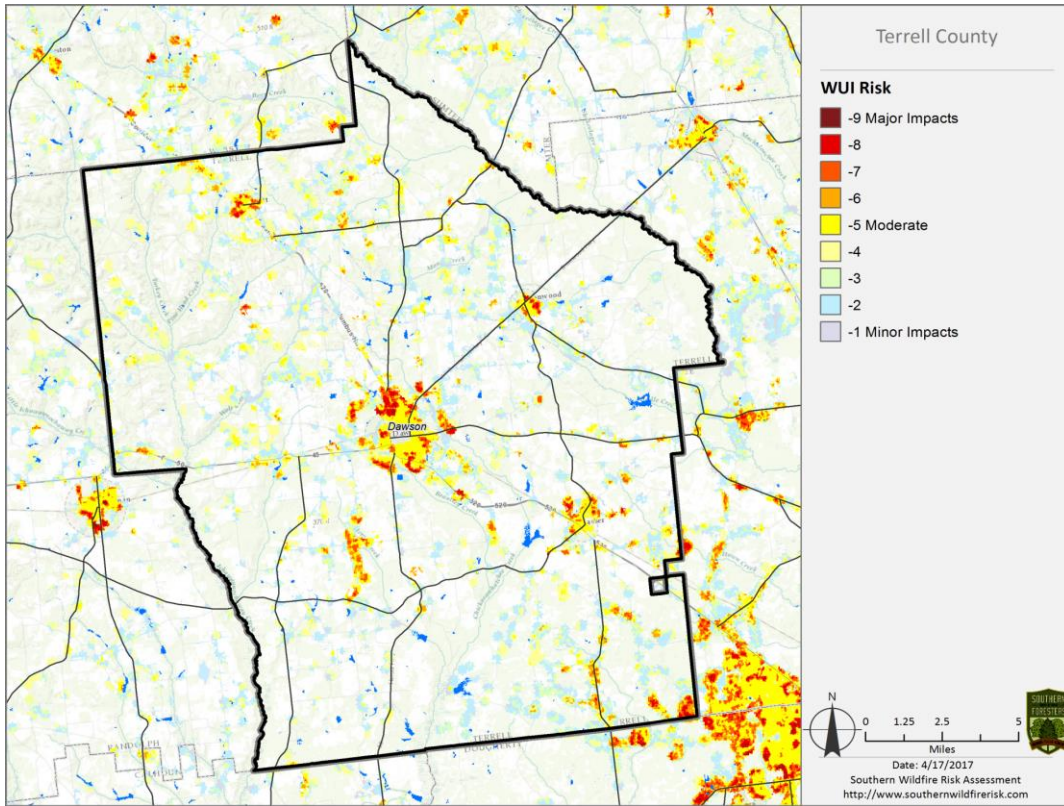
IX. SOUTHERN WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK HAZARDS MAPS

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 Terrell County. The SouthWRAP (SWRA) products included in this report are designed to provide the information needed to support the following key priorities:

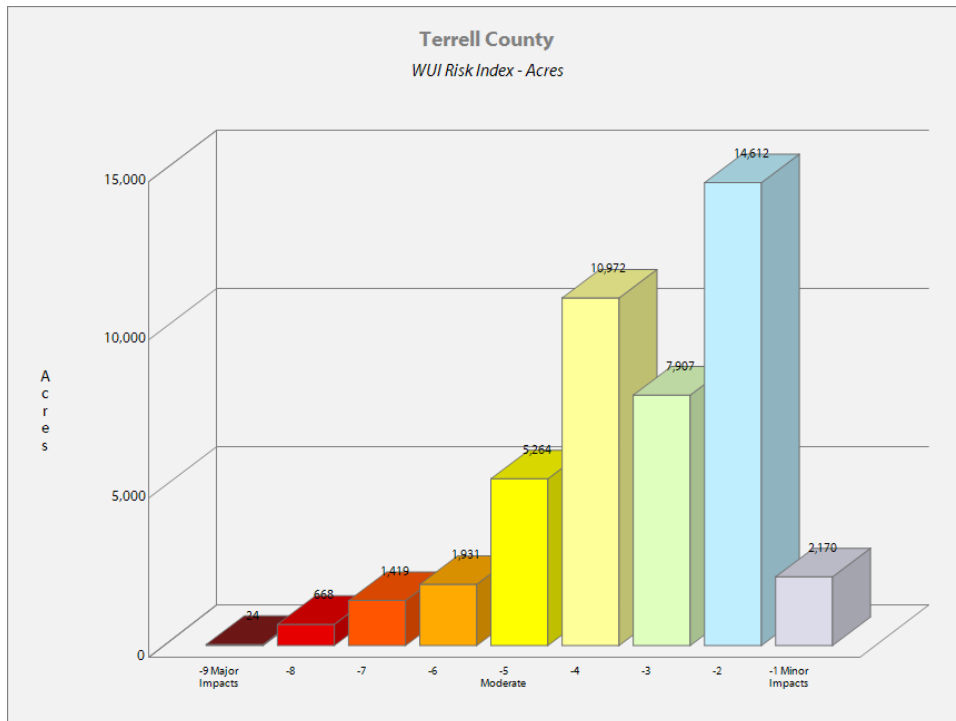
- Identify areas that are most prone to wildfire
- Identify areas that may require additional tactical planning, specifically related to mitigation projects and Community Wildfire Protection Planning
- Provide the information necessary to justify resource, budget and funding requests
- Allow agencies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

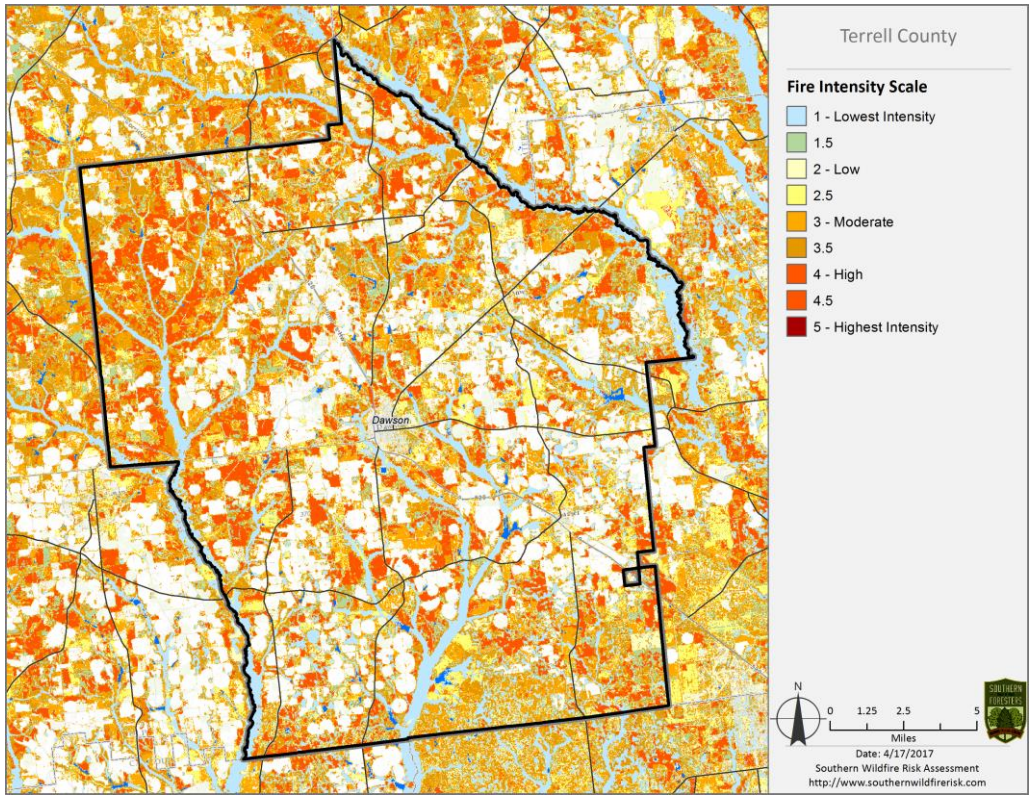


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map from the Terrell County SWRA

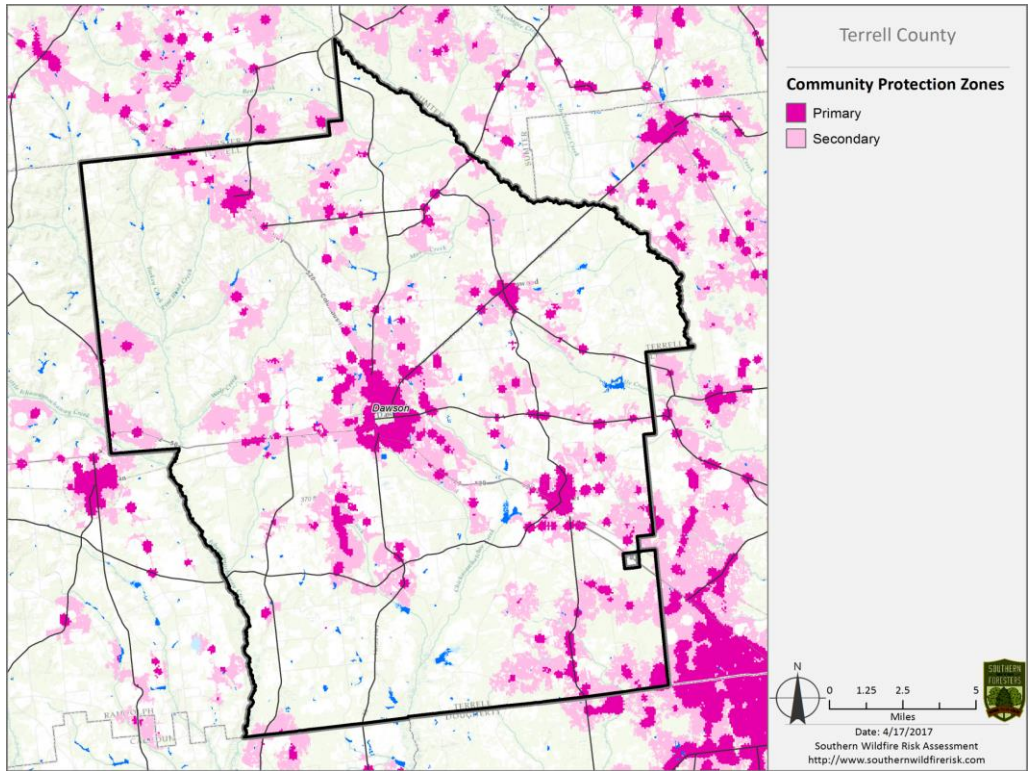


Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk map, above, and WUI Risk Acres graph, below





Fire Intensity Scale map, above, and Community protection Zones map, below



X. MITIGATION & ACTION PLAN

The following recommendations were developed by the Terrell 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.

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**	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, and 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. Driveway Access	Culvert installation	See that adequate lengths of culverts are installed to allow emergency vehicle access.
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 Corridors	Reduce hazardous fuels	Encourage railroads 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	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. Locate additional dry hydrants as needed.
2. Fire Stations	Equipment	Wildland hand tools. Lightweight Wildland PPE Gear. Investigate need for “brush” trucks for high risk areas.
3. Water Sources	Drafting equipment	Investigate need for additional drafting pumps.
4. Personnel	Training	Obtain Wildland Fire Suppression training for fire personnel to include S130, S190, and S215. Ready Set Go training.

PROTECTING EXISTING STRUCTURES

Critical Facilities

Critical facilities are unique structures which may require special consideration in the event of an emergency such as a wildland/urban interface fire. Every county will have some critical facilities and some more urbanized counties will have many. Critical facilities include: a nursing home that may need special consideration because the smoke accompanying a wildfire may be hazardous to the health of elderly residents, a law enforcement dispatch center is a critical facility that will need special consideration to insure there is no disruption of emergency communications in the event of a disastrous wildfire. Other examples of critical facilities are ethanol plants, auto junkyards and facilities that produce chemicals that could be hazardous to the local population if released into the atmosphere. Owner/operators of critical facilities need to be aware of the hazards that an approaching wildfire could present. There may be immediate action that could be taken by owner/operators to lessen the impact of a wildfire in the immediate area (such as the elimination of encroaching wildland vegetation in and around the critical facility).

Critical Facilities:

Bronwood Assisted Living
Seymour Southern Comforts
Dawson Terrell County Airport
Terrell County Correctional Institute

Terrell County High School
Terrell County Middle School
Carver Elementary School
Lilly Cooper Primary School
Terrell Academy

RECOMMENDATION: Meet with owner/operators of Critical Facilities to evaluate any wildfire hazard and suggest what owner/operators might do to mitigate any observed hazards and improve wildfire protection.

Public Education Needs

“Firewise” structures are homes and other buildings in the wildland/urban interface that have been built, designed or maintained to survive a wildfire event even in the absence of firefighters on the scene. Over the past fifty years, many Georgia residents have left the city or the suburbs to build homes in or adjacent to forested areas with a desire to be “close to nature”. Unfortunately, this has resulted in neighborhoods or single-family dwellings with one way in and out, with long narrow driveways, no pressurized hydrants or draft source for water and so close to wildland fuel that even the best equipped fire department could not be successful in a severe wildfire event. Most of these homeowners don’t understand the risk associated with living in the wildland/urban interface and expect to be rescued by the fire department in the event of a wildfire emergency.

The key to the reduction of structural losses in the wildland/urban interface cannot rest solely with improved response by the local fire services. There will never be enough fire trucks and firefighters to adequately protect homes in the wildland/urban interface. A major part of the solution to this problem lies with the homeowner – homeowners in the wildland/urban interface must become “partners” with the fire services and assume some responsibility for maintaining their home (structure) and landscape (yard) so that ignitions in and around the home are less likely should a wildfire occur in the immediate area. This means a home with no debris on the roof and in the gutters, wood decks that are skirted underneath, chunky bark or lava rock mulch near the house instead of pine straw or cypress mulch and a “lean, clean and green” landscape of less-flammable plants within 30 feet of the structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Initiate a community public education program for Terrell County residents
- Make Firewise Communities brochures available to the public at central locations such as: Farm Services Agency, Chamber of Commerce and the County Courthouse.
- Encourage communities (neighborhoods) that qualify to apply for recognition as a Firewise Community/USA.

Reduction of Hazardous Fuels

Because almost 75 percent of Terrell County is forested, the accumulation of brush and other (mostly ground) vegetation can create conditions over extensive areas that could fuel a disastrous wildfire. Treatment of forested areas with prescribed fire can significantly reduce this hazard while improving pulpwood and sawtimber production and enhancing wildlife habitat. Prescribed burning, however, must be conducted by experienced personnel when weather conditions are conducive to a safe burn and when an authorization has been obtained from the local office of the Georgia Forestry Commission. Other ways to reduce wildland fuel (vegetation) include:

- Mechanical treatment
- Chemical treatment (herbicides)
- Livestock grazing

The above alternatives to prescribed burning are more intensive and hence, more costly and generally suitable only for smaller acreages.

The goal for structural protection should be a “Firewise” landscape. A Firewise landscape is characterized by trees, shrubs and grasses that are carefully managed within 100 feet of structures - an area called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). Most critical is the space within 30 feet of a structure which is usually referred to as the area of Defensible Space. The Defensible Space should include a landscape of less flammable plants, coarse bark or lava rock as mulch adjacent the structure, tree limbs trimmed away from the structure and any decks skirted so leaves and other debris cannot accumulate underneath. The idea is to create a landscape that will prevent flames or fire brands (aerial borne embers) from igniting the structure.

Smoke on the highway from prescribed burning or wildfires can create hazardous conditions on roadways when certain weather conditions exist. It is important that motorists be warned when visibility deteriorates due to smoke.

RECOMMENDATION: Promote prescribed burning in Terrell County.

- Help landowners understand how to prescribe burn legally and safely.
- Educate the general public on the benefits of prescribed burning.
- Work with the Georgia State Patrol and local law enforcement to ensure motorists are alerted to smoke hazards on local roadways.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Site Plan Review

Growth pressure is expected to increase new home starts in Terrell County over the next 20 years. If farm and ranch land is conserved as a mainstay of the County’s rural economy, new development will, by necessity, occur more frequently on forest and wildland areas. The County Code Enforcement Office will have an opportunity to significantly influence the wildland fire safety of new developments. It is important that new development be planned and constructed to provide for public safety in the event of a wildland fire emergency.

Over the past 20 years, much has been learned about how and why homes burn during wildland fire emergencies. Perhaps most importantly, case histories and research have shown that even in the most severe circumstances, wildland fire disasters can be avoided. Homes can be designed, built and maintained to withstand a wildfire even in the absence of fire services on the scene. The National Firewise Communities program is a national awareness initiative to help people understand that they don’t have to be victims in a wildfire emergency. The National Fire Protection Association has produced two standards for reference: NFPA 1144 Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland

Fire. 2008 Edition and NFPA 1141 Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas. Additionally the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) was established in 2012 and adopted in Georgia in 2013. This code can be utilized by Georgia Counties to assist in establishing building codes in high risk areas.

When new multi-unit subdivisions are built in rural areas (Wildland/Urban Interface), a number of public safety challenges may be created for the local fire services: (1) the water supply in the immediate areas may be inadequate for fire suppression; (2) if the Development is in an outlying area, there may be a longer response time for emergency services; (3) in a wildfire emergency, the access road(s) may need to simultaneously support evacuation of residents and the arrival of emergency vehicles; and (4) when wildland fire disasters strike, many structures may be involved simultaneously, quickly exceeding the capability of even the best equipped fire departments,

RECOMMENDATION:

Strengthen the site plan review process for multi-unit residential development in rural areas subject to wildfires.

- Evaluate the wildfire hazard of proposed new development in rural areas as part of the site plan review process (GFC Hazard & Wildfire Risk Assessment Scoresheet).
- Consider the “adoption by reference” of NFPA 1144 Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire, 2008 Edition and NFPA 1141 Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas.
- Consider the adoption of the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC).

FIRE SERVICES CAPABILITY

Structural fire protection in rural Terrell County is provided by the Terrell County Correctional Institution Fire Department. The one and only county VFD station is located at the correctional facility Inmates serve as firefighters under the supervision of the County Fire Chief. While the primary responsibility of the county volunteer firefighters is structural protection, the firefighters regularly provide support to the Georgia Forestry Commission or find themselves the first units on the scene of brush fires (wildfires) that may threaten homes and outbuildings.

The Communities of Parrott, Dawson and Bronwood each have a volunteer fire department. The primary response area of these three VFD’s is fire response within the municipalities.

Fire Department	Engines	Water Tankers	Brush Trucks	# Firefighters
Terrell County CI	2 pumpers 3 fireknockers	0	0	18
Parrott VFD	2 pumpers	0	0	9
Dawson VFD	3 pumpers	0	0	15

Bronwood VFD 2 pumpers 0 0 5

Wildland Fire Training

Although not red carded by the Georgia Forestry Commission, inmates of the Terrell County Correctional Facility who serve as volunteer firefighters have had the basic NIIMS training courses (I-100 and I-700) and the basic NWCG courses in wildland firefighting (S-130 and S-190).

Personal Protective Equipment

Nomex type wildland personal protective equipment (PPE) is not available for use by volunteer firefighters and the VFD is not equipped with wildland fire shelters. The VFD engines have some wildland fire hand tools.

Pressurized Hydrants

Pressurized fire hydrants exist within the below-listed communities:

- Dawson
- Bronwood
- Sasser

Dry Hydrants

There are some dry hydrants in the county, but many (if not most) are not tested on a regular basis.

ACTION PLAN

Community/Area	Project	Agency	Funding Needed	Priority	Community Recommendation
Countywide	2,000-3,000 gallon Water Tanker	County	\$250,000	High	Improve water availability in remote areas of the county
Countywide	Firefighter Training	GFC/County	\$15,000	High	Two courses for volunteer firefighters: Standards for Survival (S-130) & Wildland Fire Behavior (S-190)
Countywide	Wildland Fire PPE & Hand Tools	County	\$15,000 PPE \$2,500 Hand Tools	High	Personal Protective Equipment & Fire Shelters plus hand tools
Countywide	Dry Hydrants	County	\$15,000	Medium	Maintenance and repair of existing system of dry hydrants
Countywide	Wildland Fire Hose	County	\$2,500 Hose & \$12,000 Nozzles	High	1 ¾ inch fire hose with nozzles

Countywide	Brush Truck	Locate at Terrell County Correctional Institute Station 1 for Countywide Response	\$90,000	High	Brush Truck with equipment & tools to improve off-road fire response in rural areas
Countywide	Homeowner Education	GFC/County	-0-	Medium	Provide Firewise educational materials and interpretative display at local festivals
Countywide	Six Water Storage Tanks sited at strategic rural locations in the county	County	\$30,000	High	6,000 gallon water storage tanks equipped with couplings to connect to hoses

The above table summarizes a recommended course of action for implementation of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Although some actions could be implemented at little or no added cost, the County (or assigned agency) will be able to implement most projects only if grant funding is available.

ASSESSMENT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To accurately assess progress and effectiveness of the action plan, the CWPP Core Committee will:

- Review assessments of “communities-at-risk” to re-evaluate wildfire hazards and prioritize needed actions.
- Incorporate mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning or clearing of defensible space) into a revision of the original CWPP action plan.
- Incorporate elements of the Mitigation & Action Plan that could not be funded in the requested year into the annual renewal of the original CWPP.
- Continue to emphasize “Firewise” and wildfire prevention education in public outreach programs.
- Continue a year-to-year focus on the wildland/urban interface fire challenges in the county and update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan each year summarizing mitigation projects initiated and completed, progress for ongoing actions, funds received, funds expended and in-kind services utilized. Recommendations will be incorporated into an update of the Mitigation & Action Plan.

XI. 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.

XII. 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 wildfires.

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*

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)*

XIII. 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.wildfireprepdlay.org

Appended Documents:

Terrell County Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SWRA)

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



Georgia Forestry Commission
5645 Riggins Mill Rd.
Dry Branch, GA 31020

800-GA-TREES
GaTrees.org

The Georgia Forestry Commission provides leadership, service, and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources.

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