

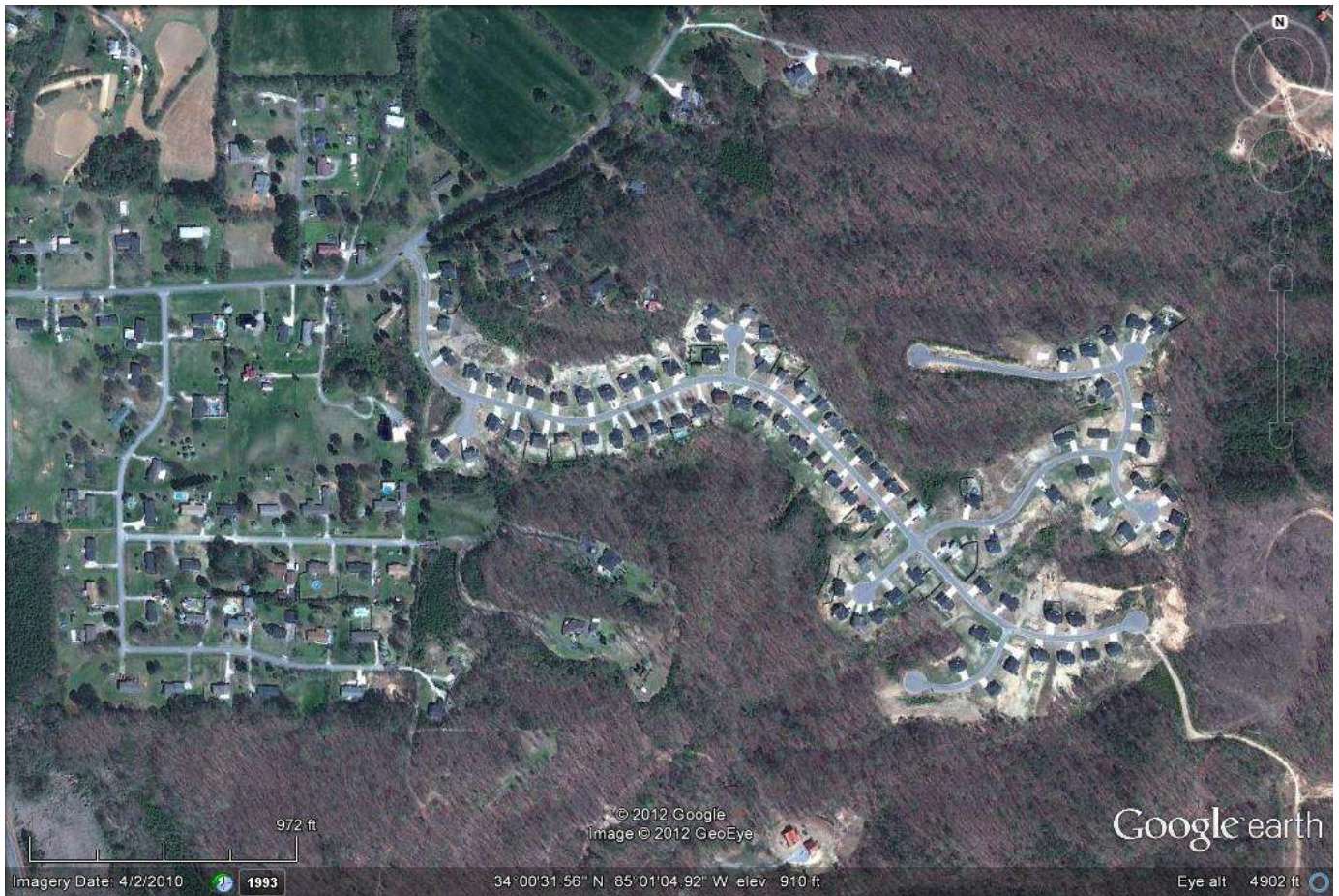


A Program of the Georgia Forestry Commission
with support from the U.S. Forest Service

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

An Action Plan for Wildfire Mitigation and Conservation of Natural Resources

Polk County



Polk County contains residential development into wildland. This community is typical of one at higher risk due to location in the landscape, one way access, and proximity to wildland fuel.

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

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1) OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

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

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

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

2) COUNTY BACKGROUND AND EXISTING SITUATION

The following is courtesy of the New Georgia Encyclopedia

Polk County



Covering 311 square miles in northwest Georgia, Polk County is the state's ninety-sixth county, created in 1851 from [Floyd](#) and [Paulding](#) counties. It was named for U.S. president James K. Polk. Originally held by [Creek Indians](#), the land was lost to the [Cherokee Nation](#) before white settlers arrived there in the nineteenth century.

Many of the first white settlers migrated from other parts of Georgia and from other states soon after gold was discovered in northwest Georgia in 1829. Upon this discovery the state broke all its treaties with the Cherokees and divided the land into forty-acre "Gold Lots," which it distributed by [lottery](#) in 1832. For those who came during the [gold rush](#) but did not succeed at prospecting, the free land was alluring, and many stayed to farm. Other early settlers included men who established a trading post on a spot along Cedar Creek and Welsh miners who came to work as quarriers.

Big Spring, an important regional water source that once provided a flow of 3-4.5 million gallons per day, is near a Cherokee village called Beaver Dam. During the [Cherokee removal](#), from 1838 to 1839, the stockade Fort Cedar Town was built near Cedartown as an internment camp for Indians on the Trail of Tears.

Several well-to-do planters established homes in Cedartown during the next twenty years. One of them, Asa Prior, acquired the springs and deeded it and ten acres of land around it to Cedartown just before the town was incorporated in 1854. Cedartown is the current county seat. The first courthouse was built there in 1852 and reportedly burned down in 1856. During the [Civil War](#) (1861-65), Union troops led by Judson Kilpatrick (often erroneously referred to as James Kirkpatrick) set fire to all of Cedartown, and the county did not rebuild its courthouse until 1867. The postwar structure was replaced in 1951 by the current courthouse.



[Polk County Courthouse](#)

The burning of Cedartown was the most serious involvement of Polk County residents with the Civil War. Another war-related event took place in the county following the [Battle of Atlanta](#) in 1864, when Union general James McPherson and his men camped at Peak Springs, near the town of Aragon and marched them through Van Wert the next day.

During [Reconstruction](#), [railroads](#) began building lines through the region, leading to the early industrialization of the area. The Cherokee Railroad built a line from [Bartow County](#) into Polk County in the 1870s, and the town of Rockmart developed around its depot about one mile north of the town of Van Wert. Incorporated in 1872, Rockmart was originally called Rock Market, indicating the importance of nearby slate deposits to its economy. Many of its buildings are built of slate and brick from local mines and brickyards.



[East and West Railroad](#)

There are several other communities in the county. Aragon (named after the mineral aragonite) was incorporated in 1914. Unincorporated towns include Esom Hill, Lake, Prior, and Seney. Esom Hill grew up around the Shiloh Baptist Church, which was founded in 1848.

Railroad transportation, the availability of rich natural resources (clay, iron shale, limestone, slate, and timber), and ample water power resulted in the area's becoming an industrial powerhouse. With the

globalization of some of the county's major mills and factories, the economy has suffered losses, however. Still, the early emphasis on industry has influenced the modern county economy.

Notable persons from Polk County include actor [Sterling Holloway](#), [blues](#) singer [Ida Cox](#), and Lula Hurst, the first [Georgia Wonder](#).

The Polk County Historical Society operates a museum in Cedartown in the former Hawkes Children's Library, which was built in 1921 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. In 1992 the entire Cedartown Commercial Historic District, with sixty-four buildings, was added to the National Register of Historic Places.



[Silver Comet Trail](#)

Big Spring Park, a public park since 1852, is the location of the city's waterworks, built in 1892, and its electric light plant. Today the springs are housed inside a concrete enclosure. The park and its Cedartown Waterworks and the Woman's Building were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.

The Silver Comet Trail for bicyclists and hikers runs for 61.5 miles from Smyrna (about ten miles northeast of [Atlanta](#)) through Polk County, where it joins Alabama's Chief Ladiga Trail at the Georgia–Alabama state line. Covering a total of 95.5 miles from Smyrna to its terminus in Anniston, Alabama, the trail is the longest continuous bicycle path in the country. In the early twentieth century Cedartown had active [minor league baseball](#) teams, in the Georgia-Alabama League, Georgia State League, and Southeastern League.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the population of Polk County was 41,475, an increase from the 2000 population of 38,127.

Fire History and Existing Situation

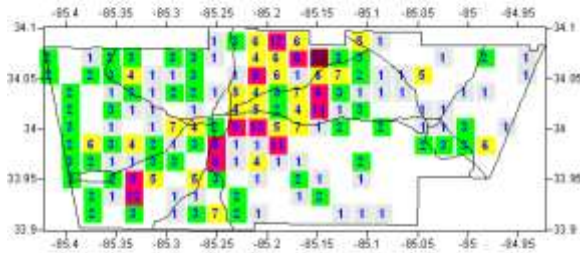
Wildland Fire has been a constant problem in Polk County. History of fire activity indicates that this problem is tied to the county in general as well as specific areas. The map of Historical Fire Occurrence included in the appendix indicates the locations of highest occurrence from Georgia Forestry Commission responses during the period calendar 1997 through 2002. In FY 2009, Polk County was the second highest County in the state in regard to fire reports completed. During the five year period that encompassed fiscal years 2008 through 2012, Polk County averaged 90.8 fires each year that burned an average of 578.67 acres. Thus far in FY 2013 there have been 12 fires that have burned 403.2 acres. The following table outlines fire activity in Polk County for the past five complete fiscal years (July – June).

| Fiscal Year | Number of Fires | Acres | Average Size | Statewide Average Size |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|--------------|------------------------|
| 2012 | 92 | 709.90 | 7.72 | 4.98 |
| 2011 | 92 | 648.37 | 7.05 | 16.16 |
| 2010 | 28 | 140.57 | 5.02 | 3.56 |
| 2009 | 137 | 588.37 | 4.29 | 3.90 |
| 2008 | 105 | 806.13 | 7.68 | 4.56 |

Polk County is typical of many counties in North Georgia in that incendiarism is a common occurrence. Thus far in FY 2013, 11 of the 12 fires that have occurred were due to woods arson. In FY 2009 119 of the 137 fires were attributed to this cause. Examination of fire report records for the past 10 years indicates this cause is the leading cause. This trend extends back into years beyond this finding. It is a common problem over the entire county.

Fire Occurrence Map for Polk County for Fiscal Year 2007-2011

This map depicts where fires occur in Polk County during the most recent years. There is also a map in the appendix which shows fire occurrence areas based on Georgia Forestry Commission responses during fiscal years 1997 through 2002



This table details fire activity during the most recent complete fiscal year 2012

| County = Polk | Cause | Fires | | Acres | Fires 5 Yr Avg | Acres 5 Yr Avg |
|--|---|-------|---|--------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Campfire | Campfire | 3 | ↑ | 16.81 | 1.20 | 7.83 |
| Children | Children | 1 | | 0.32 | 1.40 | 4.80 |
| Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc | Debris: Ag Fields, Pastures, Orchards, Etc | 1 | ↑ | 5.00 | 0.80 | 4.69 |
| Debris: Construction Land Clearing | Debris: Construction Land Clearing | 1 | ↑ | 0.25 | 0.60 | 0.54 |
| Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn | Debris: Escaped Prescribed Burn | 0 | | 0.00 | 0.20 | 5.34 |
| Debris: Household Garbage | Debris: Household Garbage | 0 | | 0.00 | 0.80 | 5.61 |
| Debris: Other | Debris: Other | 2 | ↑ | 0.46 | 1.60 | 2.55 |
| Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc | Debris: Residential, Leafpiles, Yard, Etc | 3 | | 6.30 | 5.00 | 8.02 |
| Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related | Debris: Site Prep - Forestry Related | 0 | | 0.00 | 0.60 | 20.24 |
| Incendiary | Incendiary | 65 | ↑ | 585.53 | 63.80 | 420.76 |
| Lightning | Lightning | 3 | ↑ | 65.05 | 2.20 | 55.05 |
| Machine Use | Machine Use | 5 | | 16.60 | 5.40 | 29.09 |
| Miscellaneous | Miscellaneous | 7 | ↑ | 8.58 | 6.40 | 5.90 |
| Railroad | Railroad | 0 | | 0.00 | 0.60 | 7.27 |
| Smoking | Smoking | 1 | ↑ | 5.00 | 0.20 | 1.00 |
| Totals for County: Polk Year: 2012 | | 92 | ↑ | 709.90 | 90.80 | 578.67 |

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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)

Polk County is undergoing a transition from a relatively rural county to one that is undergoing development of both boundary and intermix interface.

Wildland Urban Interface Hazards

Firefighters in the wildland urban interface may encounter hazards other than the fire itself, such as hazardous materials, utility lines and poor access.

- **Hazardous Materials**
Common chemicals used around the home may be a direct hazard to firefighters from flammability, explosion potential and/or vapors or off-gassing. Such chemicals include paint, varnish and other flammable liquids; fertilizer; pesticides; cleansers; aerosol cans, fireworks, batteries and ammunition. In addition, some common household products such as plastics may give off very toxic fumes when they burn. Stay OUT of the smoke from burning structures and any unknown sources such as trash piles.
- **Illicit Activities**
Marijuana plantations or drug production labs may be found in wildland urban interface areas. Extremely hazardous materials such as propane tanks and flammable/toxic chemicals may be encountered, as well as booby traps.
- **Propane tanks**
Both large (household size) and small (gas grill size) liquefied propane gas (LPG) tanks can present hazards to firefighters, including explosion. See the "LPG Tank Hazards" discussion for details.
- **Utility lines**
Utility lines may be located above and below ground and may be cut or damaged by tools or equipment. Don't spray water on utility lines or boxes.
- **Septic tanks and fields**
Below-ground structures may not be readily apparent and may not support the weight of engines or other apparatus.



Liquefied Propane Gas (LPG) Tank Hazards

Liquefied Propane Gas (LPG) tanks are commonly found in the wildland-urban interface and present hazards to firefighters in that environment. LPG tanks may be found in a number of other environments such as motor homes, travel trailers, grills, camp stoves, lanterns, etc. Directly attacking LPG tank fires is a structural fire task involving hazardous materials and should only be attempted by trained personnel using full structural personal protective equipment and equipped with a volume of water adequate to safely attack the fire.

● Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosions (BLEVE)

- The most recognized hazard with LPG tanks is BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosions) or sudden complete failure of the tank. Some training courses have directed responders to approach the tank from the sides, believing that the force of the explosion will occur on the ends of the tank. However, this is not a guarantee that you will be safe from projectiles or missiles from the explosion, as they may travel in ALL directions up to 2,500 feet away. Leave the area immediately if you smell propane, hear a rising sound from venting safety devices or see discoloration or deformation of the tank. If you leave the area, get at least 2,500 feet away and do not go down wind or down slope of the leaking propane. BLEVEs are a major hazard to emergency responders!

● Fuel Reduction Around Tanks

- Wildland firefighters may take action to prevent direct flame impingement on LPG tanks by removing wildland fuels in the area. However, be aware that lines from the tank to structures may be above or below ground, and may be cut by tools or equipment. Propane gas is heavier than air, and may move along the ground at some distance, and may ignited when in reaches open flame or another ignition source. Use extreme caution when doing fuels reduction around tanks, and flag any lines you encounter.

● Other Wildland Fire Considerations

- Do not position engines or other apparatus near LPG tanks or downwind / down slope from tanks.
- Do not deploy fire shelters near LPG tanks or downwind / down slope from tanks.

● Cooling Tanks

- In light fuels such as grasses, where any heat exposure to the tank will be very limited, rapid application of cooling water on the outside of the tank above the liquid level can reduce the likelihood of container failure by lowering the external temperature of the shell of the exposed tank. Water should not be directed at the valve safety devices, due to the potential of "icing" the valve closed.
- In heavy fuels where long duration heat exposure to the LPG tank is likely, evacuate all personnel and equipment 2,500 feet away and not down slope or down wind. NFPA says that direct flame impingement protection requires water flow of at least 500 gpm from an unmanned monitor nozzle. This is a situation for properly trained, equipped and supported structural firefighters.

References:

[Propane Safety Web Site](#)

[Natl. Institute for Occupational Safety & Health's Web Site](#)

[National Propane Gas Association's Web Site](#)

[National Fire Protection Association's Web Site](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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[6 Minutes Home](#)

- **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.

3) Risk Summary

Following a meeting with Polk County volunteer firefighters, assessments were completed of woodland communities in the County. Twelve (12) assessments were completed using the GFC form 140 for Woodland Community Wildfire Hazard Assessment. This form rates wildland fire hazard based on 4 criteria, subdivision design, site hazard, building construction, and additional factors. Communities are then assigned a numerical score which corresponds to a rating of extreme, high, moderate, or low. These communities are detailed in an excel spreadsheet in the appendix entitled Polk County Risk Summary. The locations of the communities are shown on the map entitled Wildland Fire Susceptibility which is in the appendix. There are still numerous opportunities for woodland community assessment in Polk County.

There was one (1) community rated as being at extreme risk. This community is the Cedartown Rod and Gun Club property in the Hightower area. There were 9 communities rated at moderate risk and 2 rated as low risk.

4) Prioritized Mitigation Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed by collaboration between the Georgia Forestry Commission and various County Fire and Emergency Services. A priority order was determined based on which mitigation projects would best reduce the hazard of wildfire in the assessment area. **It is noted that as incendiary fire remains the leading cause in the county, all fires that are determined to be caused by arson should be investigated as standard practice.**

- **Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Reduction**
- **Wildland Fuel Reduction or Modification**
- **Improvements to Capabilities of Wildland Response Agencies**
- **Public Education Regarding Risk of Wildland Fire**

Proposed Community and Structural Ignitability Reduction Priorities:

1. **Locate lack of and improve defensible space around structures in communities at risk**
2. **Identify access problems that affect initial attack in communities at risk**
3. **Identify structural ignitability concerns in communities at risk**
4. **Identify and resolve problems with codes, covenants, or ordinances that negatively influence structural ignitability**

Proposed Wildland Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities:

1. **Reduction or modification of wildland fuel in proximity to communities at risk**
2. **Reduction or modification of fuel concentrations in shared spaces inside communities at risk**

Proposed Improvements to capabilities of Wildland Response agencies:

1. **Identify needs and improve training and qualification of wildland response agencies**
2. **Identify needs and recommend equipment acquisitions for wildland response agencies**

Proposed Education and Outreach Priorities:

1. **Improve public knowledge in communities at risk and in the general population of the County regarding Firewise principles.**
2. **Notification of communities at risk regarding wildland fire hazard**
3. **Improvements to public notification during periods of high to extreme fire danger.**

5) Action Plan, Timetables, and Assessment Strategy

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES:

As funding is questionable in these times of tight government budgets and economic uncertainty, unconventional means should be identified whereby the need for funding can be reduced or eliminated.

Publications / Brochures –

- FIREWISE materials are available for cost of shipping only at www.firewise.org.
- Another source of mitigation information can be found at www.nfpa.org.
- Access to reduced cost or free of charge copy services should be sought whereby publications can be reproduced.
- Free of charge public meeting areas should be identified where communities could gather to be educated regarding prevention and firewise principles.

Mitigation –

- Community Protection Grant:
 - USFS sponsored prescribed burn program. Communities with at risk properties that lie within 3 miles of the USFS border may apply with the GFC to have their forest land prescribed burned free of charge.
 - FEMA Mitigation Policy MRR-2-08-01: through GEMA - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM)
 - To provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to assist in the implementation of long term cost effective hazard mitigation measures.
 - 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 fuels reduction to protect life and property.
 - With a complete and registered plan (addendum to the State plan) counties can apply for pre-mitigation funding. They will also be eligible for HMGP if the county is declared under a wildfire disaster.
 - GFC - Plowing and burning assistance can be provided through the Georgia Forestry Commission as a low cost option for mitigation efforts.
- Individual Homeowners –
- In most cases of structural protection ultimately falls on the responsibility of the community and the homeowner. They will bear the cost; yet they will reap the benefit from properly implemented mitigation efforts.
- GEMA Grant - PDM (See above)

Ultimately it is our goal to help the communities by identifying the communities threatened with a high risk to wildfire and educate those communities on methods to implement on reducing those risks.

5) Action Plan

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

| Hazard | Specific Action and Responsible Party |
|--------------------------|--|
| Incendiarism | The Georgia Forestry Commission should conduct investigations on all fires determined to be caused by incendiarism on its jurisdiction. The use of local law enforcement should be standard practice especially when arson is identified as a problem in a specific area. The use of reward based incentives to locate arsonists should be considered. |
| Lack of Defensible Space | Using the risk summaries referenced in section 3, each department should conduct inspections of communities at risk in their jurisdiction or area of response for lack of defensible space. Findings will be conveyed to residents and treatment methods will be recommended in accordance with Firewise principles. This would probably be best accomplished by approaching homeowners associations or organizations. Ultimately, the message should reach individual homeowners in each community. Should local organizations not exist, the builder or developer could be contacted. Such contacts would also influence future projects or developments |
| Access problems | Using individual Communities at Risk maps for each station, the Georgia Forestry Commission and Polk County Fire officials should visit all identified communities at risk for the purpose of locating and resolving access difficulties. This inspection should extend into the wildland adjacent to the communities at risk looking for hindrances to suppression tactics |
| Structural Ignitability | Polk County Fire officials should examine structures for structural ignitability concerns at the time when the communities at risk are inspected for lack of defensible space. Using Firewise guidelines for reducing structural ignitability, (a checklist could be formulated and used) structures should be assessed and findings conveyed to residents. This could be through use of media or by direct contact with residents or homeowners associations. |
| Codes and Ordinances | Polk County and municipal Fire Marshalls should closely examine all codes and ordinances for gaps and oversights which could cause problems in the wildland fire arena. Examples include proximity of propane tanks to structures, accumulations of debris, lack of proper identification pertaining address or street names, set back distances from wildland fuels, and road widths in new developments. |

In regard to priority, the above steps should first extend to the higher numbers in the extreme category from the risk summary as these communities are at a higher degree of risk.

5) Action Plan

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

| Hazard | Specific Action and Responsible Party |
|---|--|
| Hazardous Wildland Fuel Accumulations | The Georgia Forestry Commission will prioritize prescribed burning projects on lands adjacent to Communities at risk where burning is determined to be appropriate. A suggested project to protect the Dogwood Glen subdivision is shown on a map in the appendix. <u>This is a suggestion only</u> as landowner information and cooperation will need to be obtained prior to taking any action. |
| Fuel Continuity between Wildland and Woodland Communities | In areas where the need exists and fuel reduction by burning is determined to be inappropriate, permanent or semi-permanent fuel breaks could be established. These breaks should be maintained annually prior to the arrival of prime burning times. Their locations should be mapped and made known to local and state response personnel. Residents of the Communities adjacent to these breaks should be advised of their purpose and their cooperation in protecting them should be gained. These breaks could be installed by the Georgia Forestry Commission. |
| Hazardous Fuel Accumulations in communities and hindrances to suppression | Using the risk summary in section 3, Fire departments could conduct community clean up days in communities at risk in their respective jurisdictions aimed at reducing hazardous fuels and hindrances to suppression in shared community space. Residents would be provided with guidance and access to disposal alternatives for materials removed. |

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

| Improvement needed | Responsible Party and specific action |
|---|--|
| Improve training and qualification of Polk County Wildland firefighters | Chief Ranger Denise Croker, Assistant District Manager Troy Floyd Jr. of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Polk County Fire Chiefs should examine all training records for personnel under their supervision. All current or potential wildland personnel should be certified Georgia Basic Wildland Firefighters or higher in qualification. Additional training and qualification should be sought for personnel identified in the Polk County Fire plan who are assigned specific Incident Command System (ICS) functions. Sources for available funds for training should be sought at State and Federal levels. |
| Improve or acquire wildland fire fighting equipment | All stations for Polk County Fire Departments should inventory their present equipment relating to their wildland capability. Funding sources should be investigated from available grants or other sources. Needs for job specific wildland responsibilities should be examined by Chief Ranger Croker and all Fire Chiefs. |

5) Action Plan

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

| Opportunity | Responsible Party and Specific Action |
|--|---|
| <p>Improve Public Education through direct contact</p> | <p>Prior to the onset of fire season(s) rangers of the Georgia Forestry Commission and Polk County Fire personnel should conduct Firewise meetings in conjunction with normally scheduled fire department meetings. People living in or near extreme and high risk communities should be invited to these meetings by use of door to door campaigns or by mailbox flyers. Notices regarding these meetings could be placed in local post offices or stores near communities at risk. A Firewise display should be acquired and utilized at this meeting. This display would be retained by the Polk County unit of the Georgia Forestry Commission and used for all Firewise meetings in Polk County. Local news media should be invited to these meetings. Goals for potential Firewise certified communities in Polk County could be considered after these meetings are completed.</p> |
| <p>Improve Public Education through use of media</p> | <p>Prior to the onset of fire season(s) or during periods of particularly high fire danger use of the media should be stepped up by personnel of the Georgia Forestry Commission. This should include use of all available media in the County. PSA's should be run weekly during periods of high to extreme fire danger. Signs or poster boards could be developed for display in public spaces near communities at risk advising residents that they live in areas that are susceptible to wildland fire and directing them to sources of information regarding wildland fire and their role in improving their own personal safety.</p> |
| <p>Improve Public Education through formal certification</p> | <p>Before the end of calendar year 2013 the station listed below should seek and obtain Firewise certification for the communities listed. Should lack of interest or other problems prevent certification of the listed communities an effort should be made with another community listed on the Communities at Risk list.</p> |

Cedartown Rod and Gun Club

5) Action Plan

Timetables for Actions

Steps to implement Community Hazard and Structural Ignitability Priorities

- Steps to standardize and coordinate investigation practices should begin as soon as possible between agencies involved.
- Steps to examine communities at risk for defensible space and structural ignitability should take place during the winter of 2012 - 2013.
- Pre-planning to examine access and suppression problems should take place at any time during the current burning season.
- Codes and Ordinances should be examined as soon as possible in order for the legal workings of changes to take place.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Any identified prescribed burn projects should take place in late winter 2012 - 2013. Any other priority burn projects or installation of pre suppression fuel breaks should take place during this same window.
- Steps to reduce fuels in communities at risk should coincide with steps to improve defensible space and reduce structural ignitability. Timing of these actions would be dependent upon Fire station availability during the late winter of 2012 - 2013.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- Cooperation between state and local wildland suppression forces regarding improvements to training and equipment should begin immediately.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct contact with residents in Communities at risk should take place as soon as possible during early calendar year 2013
- The use of media should coincide with the above action.
- Certification of Firewise communities should follow the timetable associated with the action plan

5) Action Plan

Assessment of Actions

Reduction of Community hazard and structural ignitability

- Direct measurement of the number of communities assessed would be the appropriate measure of success
- Any meetings that result in cooperation between wildland departments should be logged along with minutes of those meetings. Goals should be set and reviewed after each meeting.
- Any changes to or additions to codes and ordinances would be an obvious measure of success.
- Steps to achieve cooperation across law enforcement agencies would be the most obvious measure of success as regards incendiaryism reduction.

Steps to implement Fuel Reduction or Modification Priorities

- Acres burned would be the appropriate measure for fuel reduction. A direct measure of linear feet of firebreaks would be an appropriate measure for pre suppression breaks.
- Fuel reduction in communities at risk would be measured by the number of communities affected and number of projects completed.

Steps to implement improvements to wildland response capability

- A direct measure of the number of capabilities or qualifications gained would be the appropriate measure of success.
- Any equipment acquired or any equipment brought up to national standards would be the appropriate measure of success.

Steps to educate or inform the Public regarding wildland fire prevention and responsibilities

- Direct measurement of the number of persons contacted, literature distributed, public notices posted, and news articles published, radio programs aired, etc. would be the best measure of success. The number of communities that achieve Firewise status would be an obvious measure of success.

6) Wildfire Pre-Suppression Plan

This document is located in the appendix of this plan

7) County Base and Hazards Maps

Maps of, wildland fire susceptibility, Surface Fuels, and historical fire occurrence are included in the appendix of this plan. The map of wildland fire susceptibility contains the locations of the communities that were assessed as well as the locations of response stations in the county. The map of surface fuels are those as recognized by NWCG guidelines and the fire occurrence is based on GFC responses during the period fiscal 1997 through 2002. These two maps contain no labeling in order to preserve continuity of content. All maps are in PDF format and are available from the Georgia Forestry Commission. When viewed in this electronic format increased magnification and resolution capabilities are realized which will make these maps more useful. Large format printing capabilities are also realized.

8) Appendix

- Risk Summary table
- County maps of wildland fire susceptibility, surface fuels, and historical fire occurrence
- Photograph of proposed prescribed burn project
- Polk County Pre suppression plan



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