

National Fire Plan

Brantley County WUI Assessment

Georgia

2003



More than 83 percent of Brantley County, Georgia is classified as forestland. As the population increased (by 32 percent) in the 1990s, wildfires averaged 94 per year and structures were threatened. The increasing population spurred development of numerous low-density subdivisions and mobile home parks abutting forestlands.

Wildland/urban interface conditions are now concentrated near the incorporated cities of Nahunta and Hoboken as well as intermix communities throughout rural Brantley County. Some 237,000 forested acres are composed primarily of southern pine forest types with dense, highly combustible understory vegetation of palmetto, gallberry, and waxmyrtle.



Newly constructed homes do not have adequate defensible space from adjacent forest lands.

For these reasons, the Georgia Forestry Commission requested and received a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service to carry out a Wildland/Urban Interface Risk Assessment to evaluate potential impacts of wildland fires in rural areas.

In addition to identifying and mapping the location of these developments, six categories were used to determine interface risk. These included fuel, slope and structure hazards, emergency access, safety zones and factors such as water sources.



Two mobile homes destroyed in 2001 by an escaped debris fire near Hoboken in Brantley County, Georgia

An overall Fire Risk Rating was determined for each development based upon conditions in Southeast Georgia. A total of 133 threatened developments were surveyed and rated for risk. Of these developments, 83 had an overall high-risk rating, 34 had a moderate rating, and 16 were rated low-risk.

Recommendations

Included in the assessment were subdivision regulations concerning defensible space and access. Recommendations were made for hazardous fuel mitigation projects, public outreach programs, and rural fire department coordination. After the assessment is printed, meetings are planned to engage community leaders in FireWise concepts. Initial meetings will be scheduled for the Brantley County Board of Commissioners, Brantley County Planning Commission, and the Brantley County Development Authority.