

# National Fire Plan

## Community Assistance Overview

### Southern Region - 2002



The Southern Region is bridging and broadening relationships with citizens and community leaders daily.

#### Alabama

- €# In Jefferson and Shelby counties, a contractor is currently outreaching to local citizens by conducting and promoting fire and prevention programs in areas with wildland interface problems. Twenty thousand dollars was provided to finalize the *Jefferson-Shelby Wild land Interface Extended Outreach Project*.
- €# A *Fire Wise Council* was established in Southwest Alabama. South Alabama Regional Planning Commission members gave Firewise presentations to the Baldwin County Forestry Planning Committee during a South Alabama Regional Planning Strategic planning session, to the Mobile County League of Municipalities, and to the Baldwin County Soil and Water Conservation District. Fifty thousand dollars was provided to insure the success of this program.

The *Fire Wise Council* completed work on the *Woodland Subdivision Forest Fire Hazard Assessment*, distributed brochures and a door hanger entitled, "Are you safe in the Interface", and continues to seek pilot communities to distribute fire literature.

#### Arkansas

- €# The *Ozark Forest Landowners Needs Assessment* was conducted by sending surveys to forest landowners. The intent of the survey was to determine the landowners' attitudes toward and knowledge of forestland management in 11 counties of the Ozark Foothills Resource Conservations and Development Council. The project is in the process of collecting, analyzing and distributing responses to the survey.
- €# A two-year *Water Needs Feasibility Study for Fire Protection* is underway to determine the amount of water needed for fire protection for Newton, Searcy, Northern Johnson and Northern Pope Counties.

#### Florida

- €# A pilot project in high risk and fire-impacted areas of Lake Wales Ridge is underway to demonstrate hazardous fuel reduction, economic uses of fuels removed, and fire compatible (FIREWISE) living.

#### Georgia

- €# In Camden and Ware Counties an ISO survey helped lower the insurance burden for about 9,000 homeowners by about 35 to 60 percent on fire insurance premiums per household. Their regularly scheduled fire protection class went from a Class 9 to a Class 4 or 6. County officials hope to get an unincorporated countywide Class 5 rating. \$75,000 was provided for this effort.

€# A risk assessment designed to evaluate the threat of wildland fires in Brantley County was conducted. Development and the population within the community are increasing thereby increasing the potential of a devastating wildfire in the rural urban interface. This is an excellent example of early planning by community leaders to remove hazardous fuels. \$24,000 was provided for this effort.

€# A *Wildfire Risk Assessment and Action Plan* was completed in McCreary County. \$67,000 was identified for this effort.

## Louisiana

€# Reducing fuel loading is a priority of the state. A study was funded in the Florida Parishes to determine the amount of biomass that should be removed, available harvesting techniques, accessibility and potential end use of removed fuels from fuel to wood-based products. Economic development activities for the communities with biomass will be identified and potential prospects for establishing a new operation for biomass removed contracted out. A mechanical engineer was hired to study forestry principles and what to do with harvesting systems. \$25,000 was identified for this effort.

€# Plans are underway to develop and implement the wild land urban interface fire prevention and suppression needs in the Florida Parishes. A hired consultant will develop implementation strategies designed to improve the awareness of interface fire problems among the citizens of the area and create partnerships between state and local governments and other entities to better coordinate fire suppression efforts in the interface. \$25,000 was identified for this effort.

€# The first phase of the *Wildfire Awareness Program* occurred in eight parishes where local, state and federal firefighters taught communities how to coordinate in the event of a wildfire. Participants discussed community issues and responsibilities, developed an educational brochure and disseminated questionnaires to the residents. The final phase of the program consists of developing a guide for each Parish that creates a community plan that address solutions, needs assessment and fire insurance ratings. \$25,000 was identified for this effort.

## Mississippi

€# About 50 rural fire fighters are invited to participate in the ongoing *Wild land Urban Fire Control Training*. The training academy instructs members of rural fire departments within 12 counties in Southwest Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development Area of the principles of fighting fires in rural and suburban high-risk areas that interface with grass-brush-timber ecotypes. The participants use handbooks, instructional videos, tools and equipment. \$8400 was identified for this effort.

€# The *Interface Fire Plan Education Workshops* were held in 6 Southwest Mississippi counties to inform and increase residents of the need to actively remove hazardous materials from forest lands in rural and adjoining urban areas. \$25,000 was provided for this effort.

## North Carolina

€# Equipment was purchased for Anson, Montgomery, Moore and Richmond counties for the installation of *dry hydrants*. Training is scheduled to teach community members how non-pressurized fire hydrants can be installed and used to save lives and property. \$23,400 was provided for this effort.

€# *Cherokee County* completed a video that educates private landowners about fire prevention methods and how to create defensible space around their homes. Follow up plans are underway to provide technical and financial assistance to community leaders to create green space in and around developments. \$36,000 was provided for this effort.

## Oklahoma

€# The Ouachita National Forest activated a National Fire prevention team to develop a fire prevention plan specific to the ice storm that occurred in 2001. The plan includes pamphlets and news releases, public service announcements (PSAs) and video spots to raise awareness of landowners. \$24,000 was provided for this effort.

## South Carolina

€# The University of South Carolina is developing the *Wood Residue Generation, Recycling, and Biomass to Energy* database. This comprehensive database will provide state wood industries with information on where to acquire raw materials from biomass and wood residue. Once implemented, less wood residue would go into landfills, provide guidance to new wood industries in acquiring raw materials from biomass, and add value to current industries using wood residue. \$13,000 was provided for this effort.

€# Information technology was installed at the South Carolina Forestry Commission to establish linkages with rural communities and community development organizations. The effort will provide efficient and effective response to business development needs of rural communities. \$3,500 was provided for this effort.

€# A study is underway to assess the potential for economic use of small-diameter hazardous material removed from the Edisto River Basin. The results of this study will provide information to existing or potential products companies in an effort to encourage market and production operations. \$38,000 was provided for this effort.

## Tennessee

€# A fire Risk assessment is underway to identify interface areas with high populations, structures and hazardous fuels. \$20,000 was provided for this effort.

## Texas

€# Because of an increase in industrial ownership, thousands of acres have been converted from natural stands of pine/hardwood to pine plantations. Arson has become a major challenge. To combat this effort, \$40,000 was provided to the Buena volunteer Fire Department to purchase a firefighting training facility.

€# A devastating ice storm struck northeast Texas in late 2000 severely damaging about 80,000 acres of the forest woodlands and increasing the potential for wildfires. \$20,000 was provided to fund fire prevention teams. The teams will work with the media and community leaders to get messages out about safe use of fire.

## Virginia

€# Three efforts, the Wild land Urban Interface Fire Training and Demonstration project, New River highlands forest Recovery Project and Wildfire risk Training and Fuel Reduction Utilization project have been instituted to combat wildfires. \$60,000 was provided for this effort.