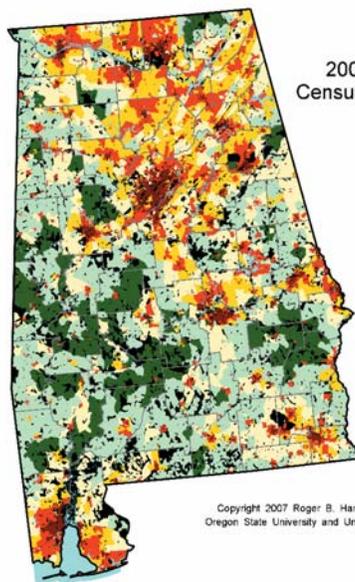
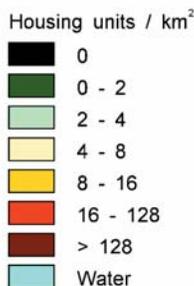


Fire Protection Around Your Home

By Bruce Springer, SE Regional Forester, Alabama Forestry Commission



Alabama
2000 Housing density
Census partial block groups



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forestland. It is unacceptable to continue the trend of property being destroyed and lives lost, when a few simple and inexpensive fire prevention measures can prevent these tragedies.

The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) has been promoting fire protection in the wildland urban interface for several years. Many areas in the state are now protected as a result. However, most areas are still unprotected from wildfires. As a result, the AFC is increasing efforts to further protect these areas.

2. Establish Incident Command Response Teams to quickly respond to large wildfires.
3. Expand the WUI Professional Development Program to train AFC employees, volunteer fire departments, urban planners, and developers on how to implement fire protection measures, as well as design and implement smarter urban planning development strategies.
4. Develop and implement a Homeowner Wildfire Protection Assessment and Mitigation Plan for individual homeowners to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to their property.

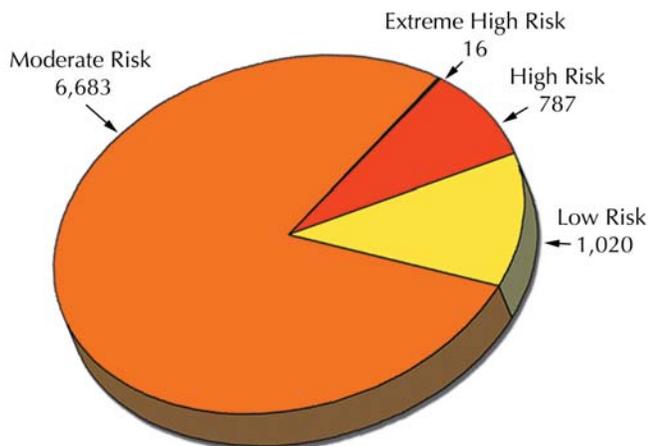
Among many emerging resource-related concerns of national attention, one that continues to receive discussion is the population movement into the rural areas and the impacts to fire fighting. There has been a dramatic increase in population, especially in the Southeast United States.

In the wildland-urban interface (WUI), the Alabama Forestry Commission's challenges include wildfire control. Recent research indicates that 803 communities in Alabama are at a high risk of wildfire damage and 6,683 communities are at a moderate risk.

Nearly three quarters of all wildfires occur within two miles of a structure. During 2007, the Alabama Forestry Commission and volunteer fire departments saved 3,264 homes with an estimated value of 277 million dollars.

As unplanned development continues to increase, devastating wildfires will destroy homes and property that are built next to traditionally rural agriculture and

Alabama Communities at Risk of Wildfire Damage



Some of the future activities planned by the Commission include:

1. Utilize the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment to identify specific areas at moderate-to-extreme wildfire risk and develop comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Develop attack strategies and public escape plans during wildfire emergencies for these areas.

5. Assist subdivisions and communities to protect their area from wildfires.
6. Promote Firewise Communities/USA certification and serve as the statewide contact agency.
7. Better equip volunteer fire departments with wildland fire fighting equipment and training.
8. Administer a cost-share assistance program to homeowners to build defensible space around their primary residence.
9. Continue to provide firelane installation and prescribed burning services to reduce fuel levels in the forested areas of the state.

10. Continue to publish fire prevention information and public service announcements.

For additional information on obtaining a Firewise assessment or Community Wildfire Protection Plan, contact your county Alabama Forestry Commission office. 🏠