

WILDFIRE

RISKS, IMPACTS, & MANAGEMENT

Wildfire in South Carolina



**Average number of
wildfires per year**

3,000*

Average acres per year

20,000

Average acres per fire

7.0

*only includes SCFC response

Wildfires Happen:



- Independent of drought
- Right after rain
- Day or night
- Most often due to human activity
- Any time of year

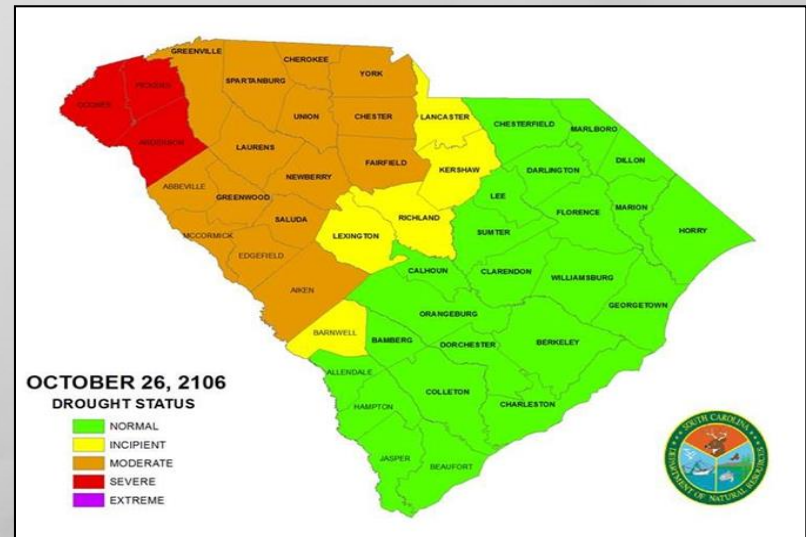
PINNACLE MOUNTAIN FIRE

LARGEST BLAZE IN UPSTATE HISTORY



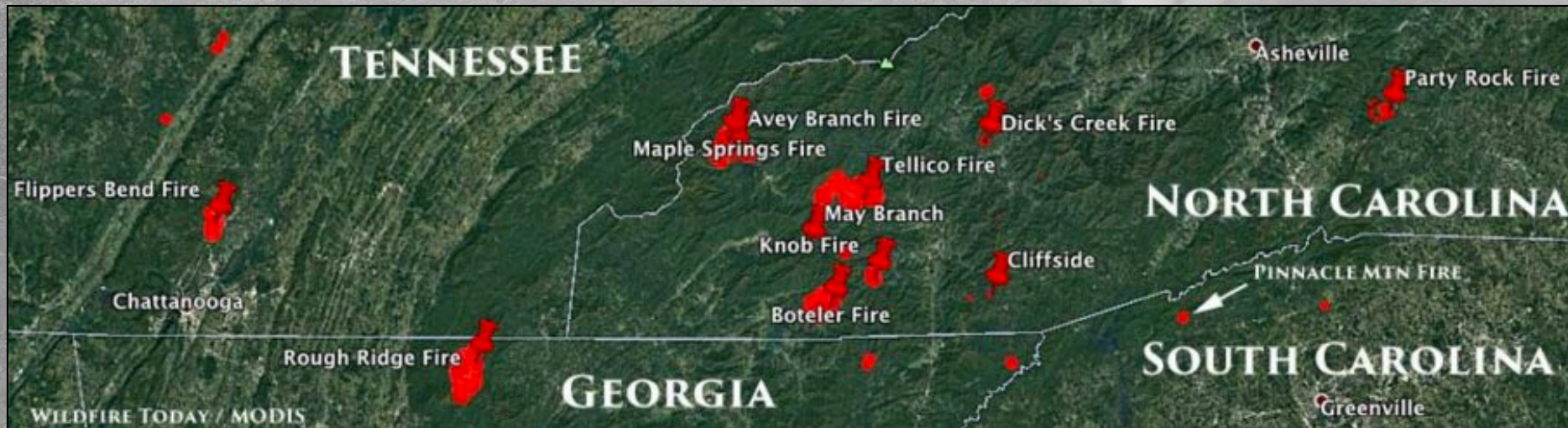
Drought Status Fall 2016

- SC Drought Response Committee placed Oconee, Pickens, and Anderson Counties in SEVERE Drought Status
- Keetch-Byram Drought Index was 701 (out of 800) in SC Mountains
- South Carolina Wildfire Occurrence Well Above 5-Year Average



Regional Wildfire Situation, November 8

- Fire occurrence in the Southern Appalachians began to increase in October
- On 11/8, there were 47 large, uncontained wildfires in the Southern Area, burning 30,814 acres (18 in KY, 13 in NC, 4 in TN, 3 in GA, 2 in AL)



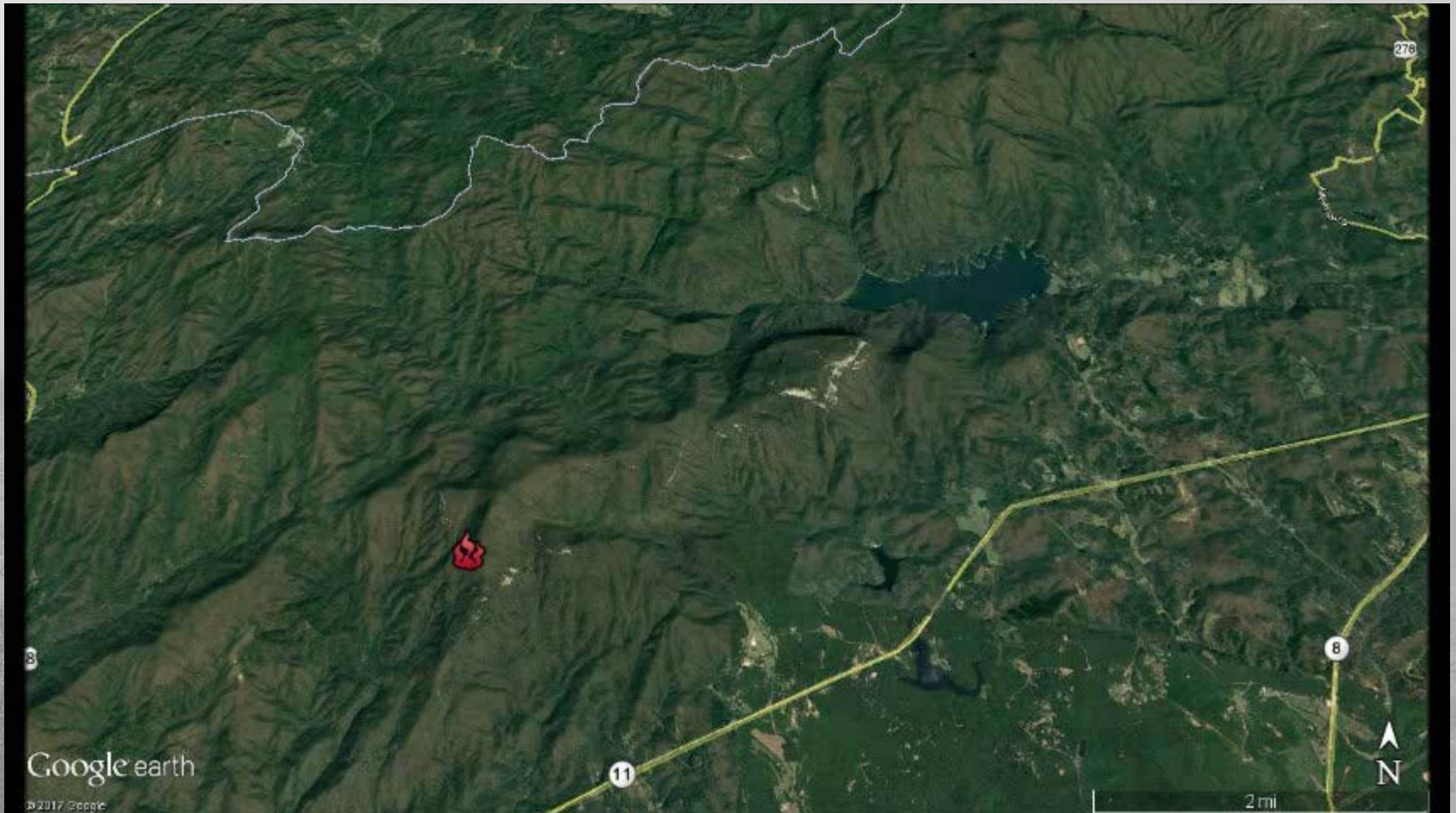
Pinnacle Mtn. Fire

November 9, 2016

- Estimated size on arrival - 2 acres
- Burn Ban enacted
- Resources from local area and statewide were mobilized
- Initial response hampered by rough terrain and difficult access
- Rapid fire growth due to drought conditions



Pinnacle Fire Progression, Nov 9- Dec 1, 2016



Pinnacle Mountain Fire Declared Controlled

December 16, 2016

- At its peak, more than 350 personnel were deployed daily
 - Firefighters
 - Aircraft (up to 9 per day)
 - Support
 - Command
- Fire costs estimate - greater than \$5 million
- First major SC Wildfire to require significant out-of-state resources
- Aircraft delivered more than 2 million gallons of water to the fire

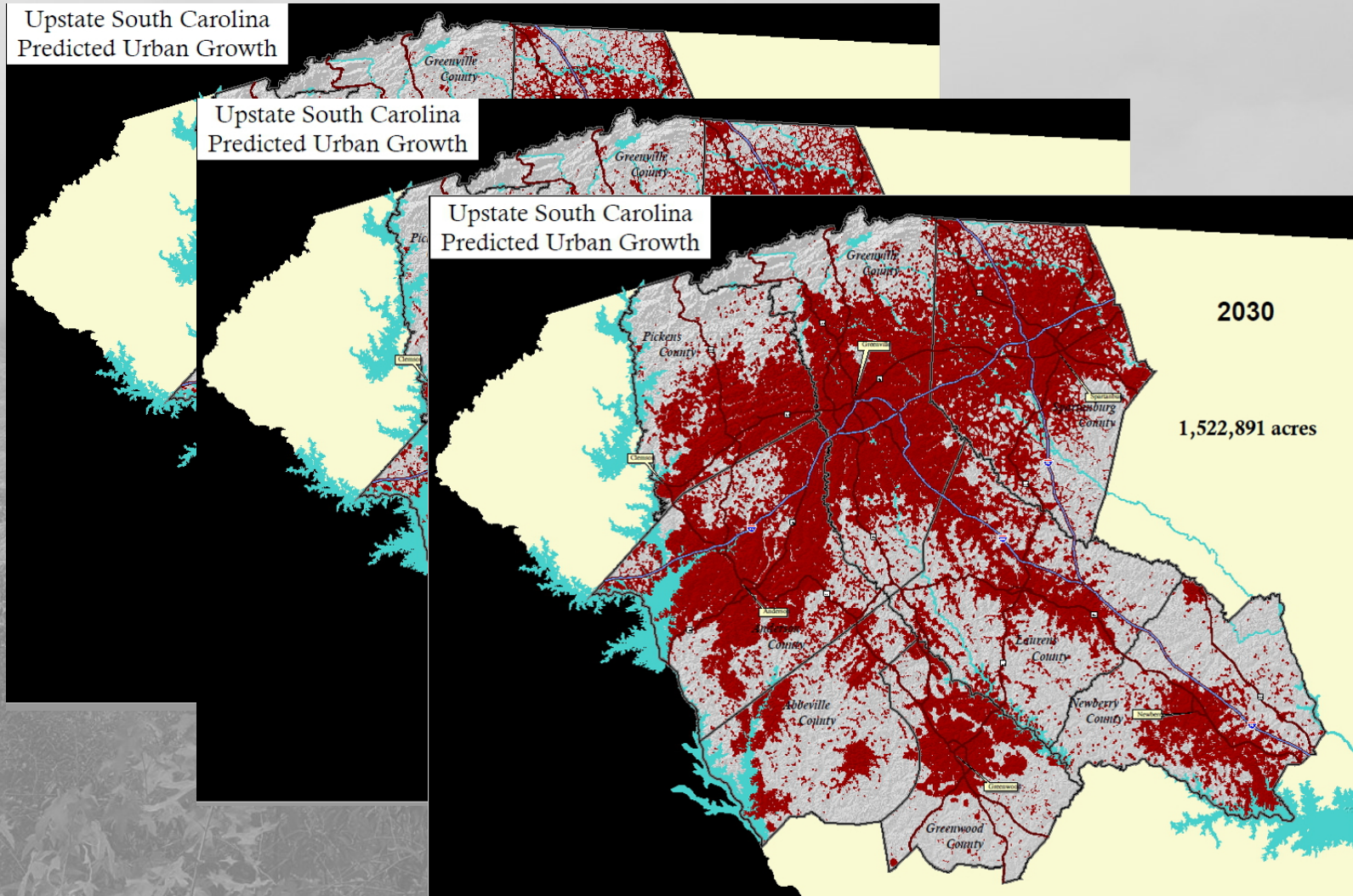


Pinnacle Mountain Fire- A Success Story

- Over the 26 days when the fire was actively burning 10,623 acres...
 - no homes lost
 - no injuries
 - no loss of life
- Fire Perimeter was over 31 miles



South Carolina's population is growing rapidly



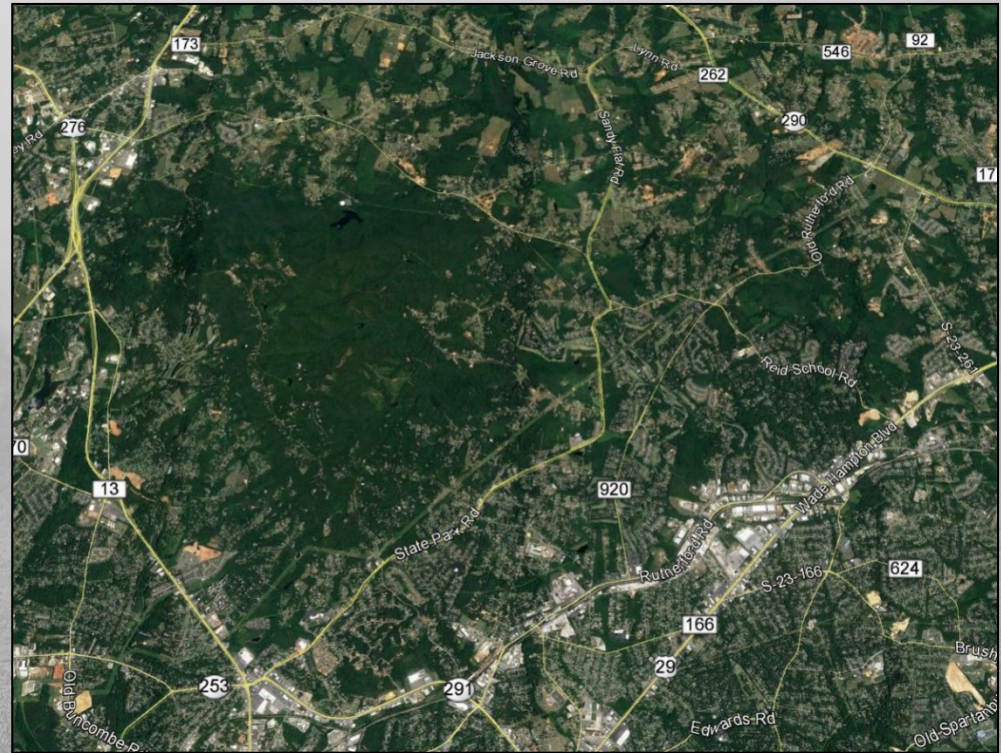
Wildland Urban Interface

- Where homes and wildland areas meet
- Adds complexity to wildfire response
- Places more people at risk
- Direct impacts (fire) and Indirect (smoke)



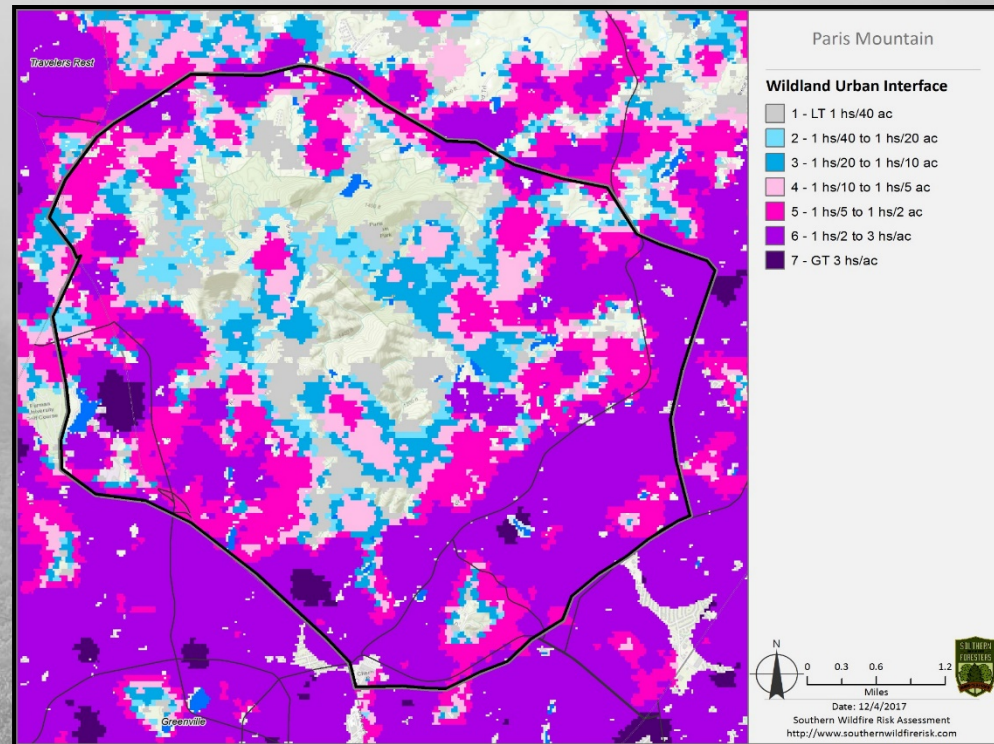
Paris Mountain Example

- Highly populated area
- Water supply and access issues
- Accumulation of fuels



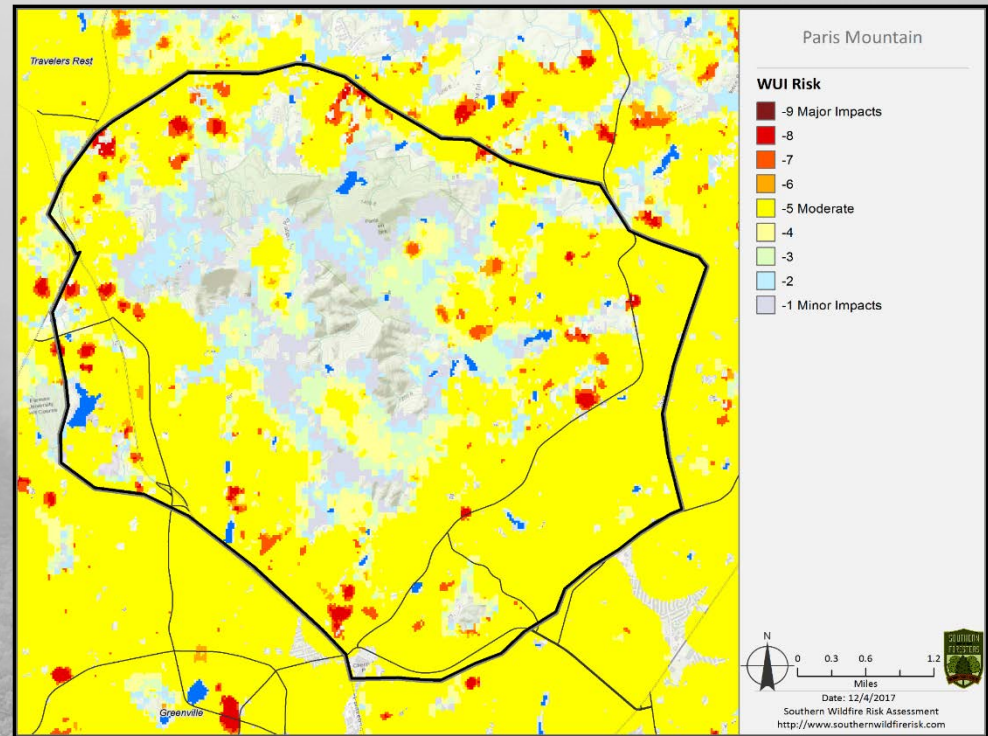
Wildland Urban Interface

- 98% of the population in this area live in the WUI (>16,000)
- Most are not aware of wildfire potential
- Many homes do not have defensible space



WUI Risk Index

- Rating of potential impact of a wildfire on homes
- Index derived from housing density, potential flame length, and response capability
- 68% of the area is at Moderate or higher wildfire risk



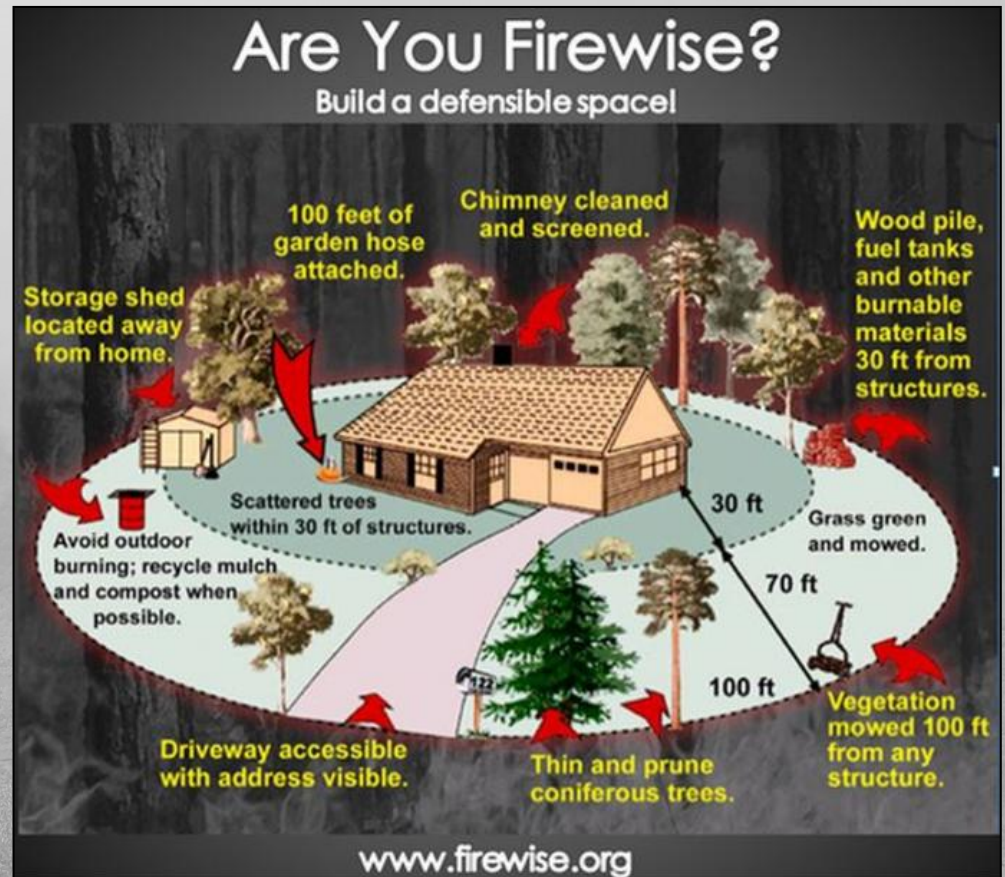
Firewise

- National program sponsored by National Fire Protection Association
- Focuses on public education and the prevention of destruction from wildfires.
- Sets standards and principals that can be used in all areas to minimize loss of life and property due to wildfire.



Why Do Homes Burn?

- Firewise utilizes data from research studies to answer this question
- Considers vulnerable areas and potential ignition sources around homes
- These principals can be applied to a community or individual structures to minimize the potential of damage from wildfire.

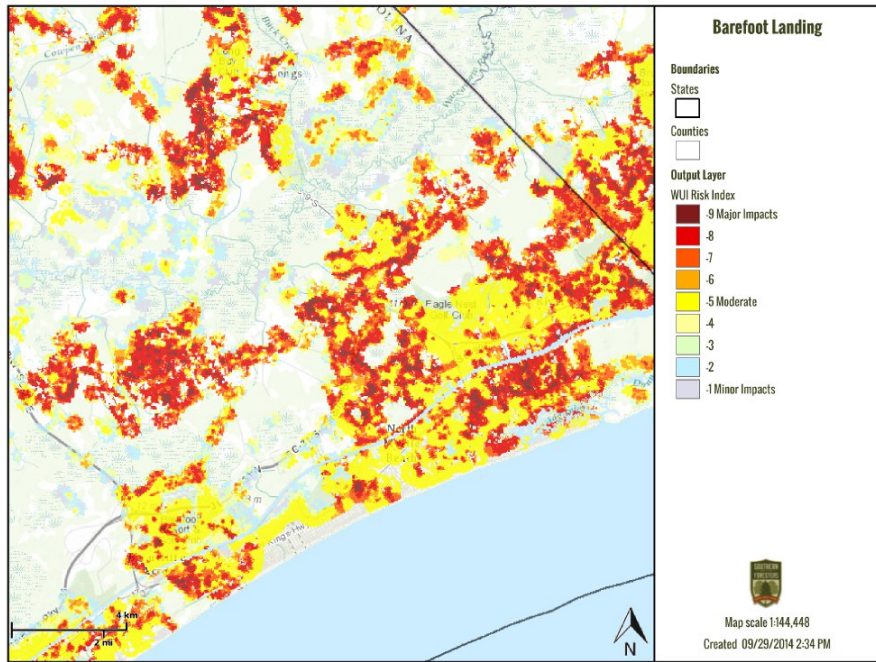


Firewise USA

- National Program that recognizes communities for their Firewise efforts
- Based on assessments by the SCFC and local fire departments, development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and community involvement
- Currently 36 Firewise USA communities in SC



Southern Wildfire Risk Portal



- Free online tool
- Allows you to search by street address
- Pro viewer requires registration
- Allows you to visualize wildfire risk to communities, print reports, and define areas of interest

www.southernwildfirerisk.com



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