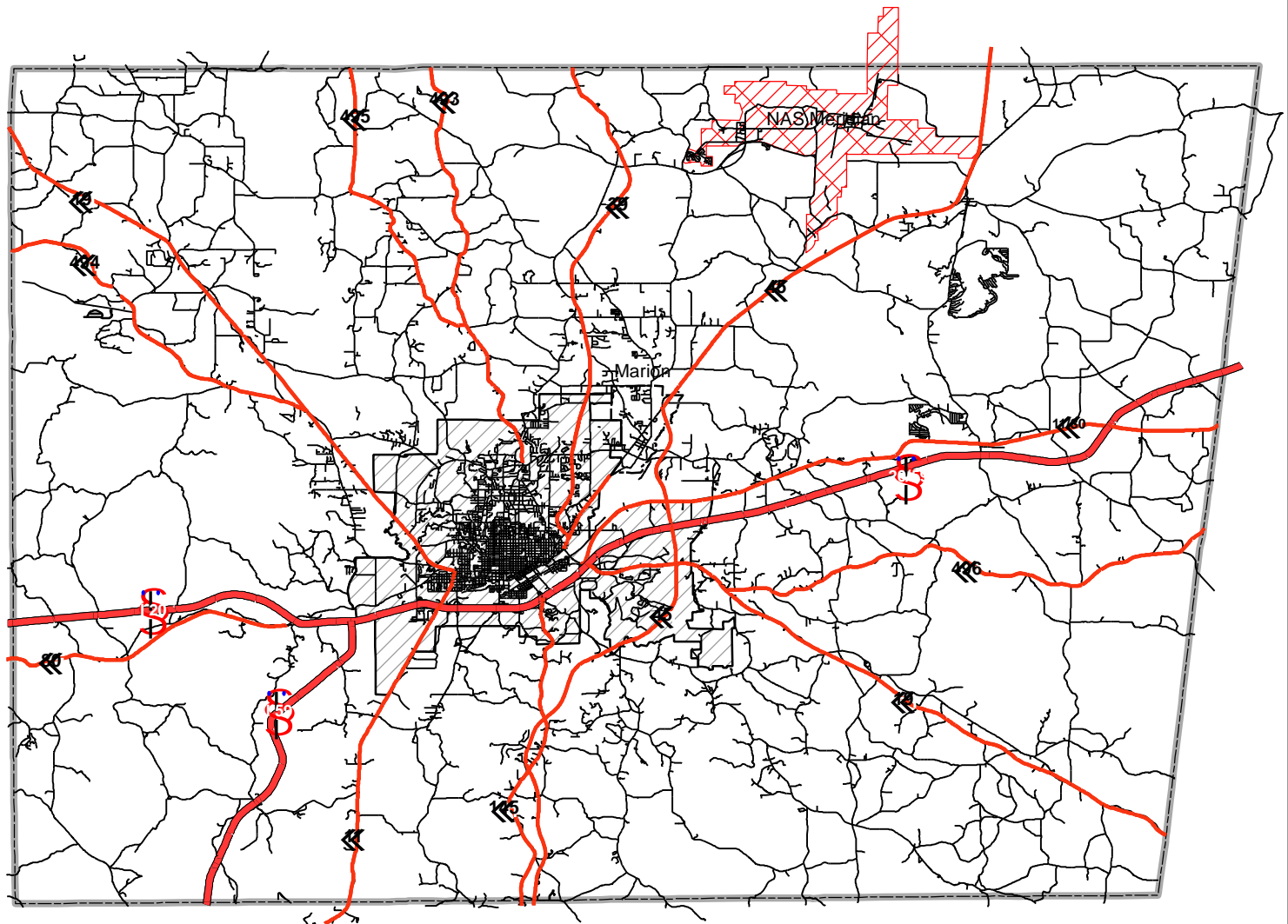


# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

## **County Wildfire Protection Plan**



**August 2008**

**Prepared by:  
East Central Planning & Development District  
for the  
Mississippi Forestry Commission**



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## **I. Introduction**

In 2007 the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC), commissioned the preparation of a Wildfire Protection Plan for Lauderdale County. The plan follows the CWPP template outlined in the National Fire Plan Standards and provided by the MFC. Urban Interface and other wildfire hazards are identified, mapped and prioritized and mitigation and treatment options are identified.

The Wild Land-Urban Interface (WUI), where structures and other developments merge with undeveloped wild land or vegetative fuels can create one of the most dangerous and complex situations for firefighters. The Wildfire Urban Interface zone can pose a significant risk to communities in the event of a large-scale wildfire. A County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) can reduce the potential for loss in the event of wildfire by identifying priorities for protection of life, property and critical infrastructure within the WUI.

The District staff began gathering geographical data, historical fire information and current fire data. Staff met with the County Volunteer Fire Chiefs and the County Emergency Management Coordinators (EMC) to review the information and obtain input on the strengths and weaknesses of the volunteer fire departments and their ability to fight wildfires. A Steering Committee was formed which included the fire departments representatives, state and federal agencies and other interested parties.

The Plan includes geographic information systems produced maps, a county risk assessment, a mitigation project list, structure ignitability recommendations and an action plan and assessment strategy. It is the intent of the Steering Committee that this Plan will be utilized to guide development and educate landowners as well as to address and then treat at risk wildfire areas within the County.

The Plan was developed with an effort to be consistent with the Lauderdale County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

## **II. Area Description**

Lauderdale County is located in east central Mississippi and consists of 704 square miles of land area and 12 square miles of water area. The County has two incorporated areas, Marion and Meridian. The total estimated 2006 estimated population is 77,100, an estimated decrease of 1,061 persons (-1.4%) compared to the 2000 population of 78,161. Of the County's total population, Marion (1305) and Meridian (39,968), fifty-four percent (54%) of the population is located in the community in incorporated areas of Lauderdale County. High concentrations of population are located in the communities of Collinsville, Meridian Naval Air Station, and Nellieburg. Other communities with high concentration of population are Bailey, Daleville, Kewanee, Lauderdale, Russell, Toomsuba and Whynot. The County has one private community, Dalewood Shore Resort that consists of planned housing development around a large lake.

Lauderdale County has a total land area of 704 square miles with 48.03 square miles located in the incorporated places, Meridian (45.12 sq. miles) and Marion (2.91 sq. miles). Lauderdale County as 12 square miles of water area. Meridian has 0.8% square miles and Marion has 0.0 square miles of water area.

Lauderdale County's major highway transportation system includes Interstate 20/59. U. S. Highways 11, 45, 80 and State Highways 19 and 39. The minor arterial roads are State and County maintained. Of the 920 miles of County roads that are maintained by Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, approximately 76% are paved and 24% unpaved. The majority of the unpaved roads are in the southern part of the County, which is also the location of the largest percentage of forestland. With reference to rail services, the County has freight rail lines that run north and south and east and west, and Amtrak passenger service goes to and from New Orleans and New York. The rail services pass through forestland areas.

Lauderdale County is the regional shopping area for the east central area and has an abundant of wild game and fish and is a major area for outdoor recreation. The County has a total of approximately 450,300 acres of land. Forestland represents 334,400 acres. It is estimated that 74% of the land in Lauderdale County is forestland. According to public record, the following represents forest ownership, forest acreage and type of ownership:

#### Forest Ownership\*

Owner	Acres (Thousands)	Percent
Public	5.5	1.7
Forest Industry	76.7	23.3
Private, Non-Industry	246.7	75.00

#### Forest Acreage\*

Forest Type	Acres (Thousands)	Percent
Pine	120.6	36
Oak-Pine	54.8	16.4
Hardwood	159.	47.6

Source: Handbook of Selected Data for Mississippi

According to Forestry Commission data, approximately 2% of the timberland was destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. The estimated loss of timber revenue was approximately \$6,919,727.34.

Lauderdale County has abundant and rich recreational resources. The County has an abundance of lakes, creeks and woodland that provides excellent fishing, deer and turkey hunting opportunities. Bonita Lakes (3,300 acres) features two lakes, nature trails, jogging and walking tracks, biking, horseback riding trails and fishing. Dunn's Falls is a 65-foot waterfall. The park is a natural wildlife refuge with picnic area, barbecue grills, gristmill pond, hiking and swimming areas. Dunn Falls also has primitive camping sites and cabins. Lake Okatibbee is a 3,800-acre lake that offers boating, fishing, swimming, water skiing, picnicking, hunting, hiking and camping. A waterslide, 25-room motel and cabins are also located on the Lake.

Recreational choices continued in Lauderdale County with Long Creek Reservoir and Lakeview Gulf Course. This public lake and golf course features fishing with a boat ramp and a 18-hole golf course. Lake Tom Bailey is a 234-acre fishing lake operated by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The boat ramp can accommodate boats of all sizes, and handicapped accessible fishing peers are available for fishing from the bank. Dalewood Shores Resort is a private resort community and offers fishing and boating with land available for development.

Winters are generally short with very few days of intense cold. The mean temperature for January is 57.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Summers are hot with high humidity. The mean temperature during July is 92.9 degrees. Precipitation tends to be an average of approximately 62 inches of rain per year. The driest and hottest months are July and August, and the wettest month is March. Wind often increases during thunderstorms, which occur frequently and are sometimes accompanied by strong to severe winds, including tornadoes.

Wildfires have been identified as a hazard due to large areas of pine plantations and hardwood plantations across Lauderdale County. Pine trees cover many large tracks of land in the area and many local residents rely on the timber industry for their livelihoods.

In the five-year span covered by Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC)'s database, approximately 245 wildfires were reported in Lauderdale County. Most of these fires occurred during the spring months and burned five acres or less. March was the month with the most wildfire activity. Burning debris caused most of the fires. The largest wildfire reported during this period occurred on April 9, 2004 and burned more than 150 acres.

While Lauderdale County has no National Parks but numerous State Parks, Dunn Falls, Lake Okatibbee, Lake Tom Bailey, the State has primary responsibility for wildfires in these areas. Lauderdale County Volunteer Fire Departments provide backup for these areas, as needed. What makes this more difficult is that many areas in the forest are only accessible by unpaved hunting and logging roads. Local fire departments have to train and plan on the best ways to access these areas and quickly extinguish fires.

Wildfires can occur any time of the year, but are more prevalent during the dry, hot summer months. The lack of rain, coupled with temperatures approaching 100 degrees during the middle of the day, turn these wooded areas into tinderboxes. One careless spark from a passing motorist's cigarette or from the lightening associated with strong summer thunderstorms, can cause a fire that damages hundreds of acres and threatens the lives and properties of the residents living in or near these areas. During times of extreme dry weather, local municipalities and the County have often issued "No Burn" orders to prevent local residents from causing a wildfire by letting a small fire get out of hand.

There were approximately 33,796 structures within the County as of 2002 with a mean value of \$67,600 each. Of these structures, approximately 15,266 or 45 % are at risk from wildfires. The approximate value of these at risk structures is \$1,031,981,600.

The County has 17 volunteer fire departments: Alamucha-Toomsuba\*, Bailey\*, Southeast (CVW)\*, Clarkdale, Collinsville, Lauderdale, Long Creek, Lost Gap, Marion, Martin, Meehan, Northeast, Russell, Sam Dale, South (Valley) and Suqualena.  
See table below.

**Lauderdale County Volunteer Fire Status**

<b>Fire Rating Area</b>	<b>Sq Miles</b>	<b>VFD Station</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b># of Vol's</b>
Bailey 1,2, 3	56.2	Bailey # 1	9022 Hwy 493, Meridian, MS 39305	30
		Bailey # 2	8005 Pines Springs Rd	*
		Bailey # 3	10116 Hwy 495	*
Center Ridge	17.7	Center Ridge	5146 York Rd,	18
			Lauderdale, MS 39335	
Clarkdale 1, 2	28.6	Clarkdale # 1	5412 Hwy 145, Meridian, MS 39301	19
		Clarkdale # 2	Hwy 145	*
Collinsville	34.8	Collinsville	11710 Nancy Dr.	36
			Collinsville, MS 39325	
Lauderdale	29.5	Lauderdale	9275 Lauderdale Toomsuba Rd.	28
			Lauderdale, MS 39335	
Long Creek	22.9	Long Creek	4892 Zero Rd. Meridian, MS 39301	20
			87 North Lakeland Dr.	
Lost Gap	23.4	Lost Gap	Meridian, MS 39307	11
			6021-A Dale Dr.	
Marion **	3.4	Marion	Meridian, MS 39301	**
			11677 Newton Cty-Martin Rd. Collinsville, MS	
Martin	20.9	Martin	39325	24
			12195 Old Hwy 80 W,	
Meehan Junction	35	Meehan Junction	Chunky, MS 39323	12
			396 Briarwood, Meridian, MS 39305	
Northeast	28.8	Northeast	1722 Marion Russell	24
			Meridian, MS 39301	
Russell	26.8	Russell	11037 Hwy 39, Meridian, MS 39301	22
			10432 Hwy 494 Meridian, MS 39301	
Sam Dale	19.9	Sam Dale	51 Will Garrett Rd,	15
			Toomsuba, MS 39364	
Suqualena	37.1	Suqualena	4803 Hwy 496,	25
			Toomsuba, MS 39364	
Toomsuba-Alamucha	83	Toomsuba	4849 Valley Rd Meridian, MS 39301	25
		Alamucha		*
Valley South	22.1	Valley South		20
Vimville-Whynot-Causeyville	82.7	Vimville	2348 Long Creek Rd. Meridian, MS 39301	40
		Whynot	4602 Old Hwy 19 SE, Meridian, MS 39301	*
		Causeyville	6137 Causeyville Rd. Meridian, MS 39301	*

\*\* Marion is an incorporated municipality.

\* These stations are consolidated and the volunteers are reported once.



### **III. Strategic Goals of the County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP):**

At the beginning of the planning process, the Lauderdale County Wildfire Protection Plan Steering Committee identified several goals. These goals were set to provide a common vision during the process and to identify specific results to be obtained upon completion of the final document.

- 1) Make recommendation to improve the resources of the Volunteer Fire Department.
  - a. Develop volunteer retention and recruitment programs
  - b. Develop training for volunteer fire department members provided by the Forestry Commission
- 2) Develop a communication network between the Volunteer Fire Departments and the Forestry Commission.
- 3) Seek funding for purchase of Rapid Response Brush Trucks and/or ATV's with skid mounted pump units and trailers to transport.
- 4) Seek funding for equipment purchase to improve firefighting capacity for Volunteer fire Departments such as wild-land turnout suits, backpack, flaps, etc.
- 5) Improve the transportation system in the forest areas, where possible.
- 6) Seek funds to clear debris as a result of Hurricane Katrina.
- 7) Seek funding to identify location and methods of elimination of vegetation with high ignitability.
- 8) Better marking for rural fire hydrants and refill ponds.

## **IV. Mapping**

### **Map # 1, Response Areas**

This map depicts the VFD response areas within the county. The white areas are not assigned to a VFD, but are serviced by the surrounding VFD stations. The locations of the stations are shown as white circles with a black dot in the center.

### **Map # 2, Wildfires by Response Areas**

This map depicts the locations of wildfires in the county for the MFC-FY period of 2002-2007.

### **Map # 3, Arson Fires for MFC-FY's 2002-2007**

This map depicts the locations of wildfires caused by arson for the MFC-FY period of 2002-2007. The Wildland Urban Interface is shown as the purple-hatched areas on the map.

### **Map # 4, Fire Data by MFC-FY 2002-2007**

This map depicts the locations of wildfires as obtained from the MFC database. The fires are color coded by FY. Also shown on this map are the locations of major oil and gas and electric transmission lines.

### **Map # 5, High Occurrence Wildfire Areas**

This map depicts the locations of areas that have a high occurrence of wildfires for the MFC-FY period of 2002-2007.

### **Map # 6, Risk Assessment Ratings**

This map depicts the location of facilities at risk from wildfires throughout the county. The facilities are color coded as to the risk from wildfires.

### **Map # 7, Base Map**

This map depicts the location of the facilities of concern within the county. Also shown are the Wildland Urban Interface and High Occurrence Wildfire areas.

### **Map # 8, Cogon Grass Locations**

This map depicts the location of Cogon Grass within the county. The Natural Resource Conservation Service, Lauderdale County service center, provided the cogon grass locations. The locations have been reported to the Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors for eradication.

### **Map # 9, Population Density-Communities at Risk**

This map depicts the population locations based on census block data and communities at risk of wildfires. The Volunteer Fire Departments designated the community locations. The population data was obtained from the Bureau of the Census, 2000.

### **Map # 10, Wildlife Management Area and Public Recreation Lakes**

This map depicts the location of Okatibbee Wildlife Management Area, Okatibbee Lake and Tom Bailey Lake. Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks manage the WMA and Tom Bailey Lake and the Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks and Pat Harrison Waterway District manage Okatibbee Lake.

## **V. County Risk Assessment**

Through the County Risk Assessment fuel hazards, frequency of wildfire occurrence, vulnerability of development and infrastructure, and emergency preparedness were all considered in compiling the following list of county areas at risk from wildfires.

The Steering Committee attempted to identify large facilities that may be at risk due to their location, function or potential impact to the community if damaged or lost to wildfire. Once identified, these at-risk areas were prioritized to focus available financial and human resources on specific mitigation projects in the future.


For the purpose of this exercise, these areas were rated from low to high. Areas receiving the highest rating pose an increased risk due to their function, amount of nearby fuel load or their potential to cause significant community impact in the event of damage or loss due to wildfire. Removal or reduction in fuel load may be suggested for some areas, with public awareness campaign suggested for others.

Wildfires can occur anytime of the year but are more prevalent during the dry, hot summer months. The lack of rain, coupled with temperatures approaching 100 degrees during the middle of the day, turn these wooded areas into tinderboxes. One careless spark from a passing motorist's cigarette or from the lightening associated with strong summer thunderstorms, can cause a fire that damages hundreds of acres and threatens the lives and properties of the residents living in or near these areas. During times of extreme dry weather, local municipalities and the county have often issued "No Burn" orders to prevent local residents from causing a wildfire by letting a small fire get out of hand.

### **Rating Key**

 Low

 Medium

 Medium High

 High

## **Critical Infrastructure**

### **Volunteer Fire Department** - All Volunteer Fire Departments

The Volunteer Fire Departments are located throughout the county and are of critical importance, especially in the event of wildfires. The fire departments have little risk of fire or smoke. All stations are ranked as low.

### **Emergency Communication Towers (Cellular Towers)**

Emergency communication Towers are located off Interstate 20/59 at KOA Campground Road, Highway 19 on Old Highway 19SE, Highway 19 at Linton Road, Highway 45 at Sandflat Road, off Interstate 20/59 at Sweet Gum Bottom Road, Highway 145 and Highway 45, off Interstate 59 on Pauldin Road, Peavy County Road off I-20, Highway 19 North at Hitt Road, off Highway 80 West, on Martin-Center Hill Road (2), on Mt. Carmel Road, on Highway 495, on Windsor Road, on Chapel Road, on Highway 45 North at Lauderdale, and on Sam Hurt Road. There is a good buffer at all of the emergency communication sites listed above. There is nominal smoke or “fire risk”. The towers are rated low.

### **Power Substations:**

Power substations are located on Sweet Gum Bottom Road, Highway 19 South, at Arundel Road, on Highway 19 North, on Windsor Road, on Briarwood Road (2), and on Butt Road. The power substations are rated low risk. The areas around the power substations are well maintained with good buffers.

## **Vulnerable Facilities:**

### **Schools:**

Clarksdale Schools, West Lauderdale Schools, Northeast Lauderdale Schools and Southeast Schools all are low risk and have buffers around them to protect them from wildfires. The schools have slight smoke risk, but no fire risk.

### **Water Utility Sites:**

Water utility sites are located in almost every volunteer fire district area. Three sites are located in the Whynot, Causeyville, Vimville area, six sites are located in Long Creek District, six sites are located in the Valley South and Clarksdale VFD; six sites are located in Meehan Junction, two in Lost Gap, three in Collinsville VFD, two in Bailey, three in the Northeast site, three in Marion VFD, one in Lauderdale County VFD and four in the Toomsba VFD. These water utility sites are located in low risk areas and the water wells and tanks are considered to be low risk. All have been constructed with buffers around them.



### **Gas Lines:**

Gas lines transverse from the south to the north to the south on the west side of the County and across the lower portion of the County on the southeast. These gas lines are rated medium risk, but there is a buffer that is well maintained around these lines.



### **Railroads:**

The right-of-ways are cleared regularly along the rail lines. While the possibility of fire on the rail is not probable, the potential for severe damage exists for that reason. The railroads are medium-high risk.

**Wildfire Management Area:**

Lake Okatibbee woodlands are maintained by the State Forestry Commission.

The forest area is rated a medium risk area.

**Naval Air Station, Meridian:**

NAS Meridian is located in the northeast part of the county. The station is a naval flight training facility. The base has its own fire department that services the airfield, operations and housing areas of the base. The base is surrounded by woodlands, which are managed on site by base personnel. The forest area of the base is rated a low risk.

**Fuel Hazards:**

Cogon Grass – Cogon grass is located throughout the County. Map # 8 depicts the location of Cogon grass.

Lauderdale County has several fuel hazards that make it more susceptible to wildfire. These include many heavily wooded areas, both on private and commercial forestland. Also, the presence of tree limbs, leaf litter and other debris in these areas make wildfires more likely. Finally, the spread of Cogon grass, highly flammable, invasive species has further increased the fuel load in these wooded areas. Cogon grass is located throughout the County.

## **VI. Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency preparedness for each of the county volunteer fire departments is continually reviewed and assessed by the Lauderdale County Fire Service. This assessment involves factors such as equipment availability and age, public protection classification, and manpower. Mutual aid agreements exist amount all of the fire departments within the county, and many grants have been used over the years to obtain needed equipment.

Fire District and municipalities in the State of Mississippi receive a public protection classification through the Mississippi State Rating Bureau (MSRB). This classification is the basis for determining the fire insurance rating for each district. The Fire Districts within Lauderdale County are listed below with the corresponding MSRB classification.

Mississippi State Rating Bureau Public Protection Classification List

<b><u>District</u></b>	<b><u>Class</u></b>
Alamucha-Toomsuba*	8
Bailey*	8
Southeast (CVW)*	8
Center Ridge	9
Clarkdale	8
Collinsville	8
Lauderdale	8
Long Creek	8
Lost Gap	9
Marion	8
Martin	8
Meehan	9
Northeast	8
Russell	8
Sam Dale	9
South (Valley)	8
Suqualena	8

\* These VFD areas are comprised of several stations.

In general, each station is well equipped and able to respond to the needs of the areas it serves. However, Steering Committee members did identify improvements that could be made to provide better service within the districts.

The Steering Committee identified manpower concerns. Recruiting and retaining the volunteers is an issue. New firefighters are often issued worn-out, old gear or have to purchase their own. It is recommended that grants be sought or fundraisers implemented to provide new gear as needed.

Additional recruitment techniques should also be implemented. One recruitment suggestion is for the creation and maintenance of an on-going recruitment program that identifies the current manpower needs as well as those over the next five years. Creating recruitment kits to keep on-hand for prospective candidates, as well as enlisting the local community through newspaper inserts and recruitment flyers placed at local restaurants and other businesses may be successful.

In addition to the MSRB Rating and manpower issues, equipment is an important factor in emergency preparedness. A current inventory of large equipment with description, age, and location is provided below. Currently, the departments utilize a variety of large firefighting equipment with no immediate needs. However, smaller firefighting equipment has been identified as an action item later in this plan. Small, rapid response brush trucks are also needed to better fight wildland fires.

#### **Lauderdale County Fire District Equipment List**

Department	Year	Make/Model	Type	Owner
<b><u>Alamucha*</u></b>	2005	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
<b>Bailey*</b>	2006	Pierce	Pumper 1000 gallon	Leased to County
<b>Bailey #1*</b>	1991	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County



	1989	Ford	Rescue Van	County
<b>Bailey #2*</b>	2001	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	2001	Sea-Doo	Personal Watercraft	Department
	2001	Sea-Doo	Personal Watercraft	Department
<b>Bailey #3*</b>	2001	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1982	GMC	Tanker 3000 gallon	Forestry Commission
<b>Causeyville*</b>	1995	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1990	International	Tanker 3500 gallon	County
	2002	Dodge	Rescue Van	County
<b>Center Ridge</b>	1991	Ford	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1991	International	Tanker 3750 gallon	County
	1991	Chevrolet	Rescue Van	County
<b>Clarkdale</b>	2004	Ford	Brush Truck 200 gallon	Department
	1995	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1982	Mack	Tanker 5500 gallon	Forestry Commission
<b>Collinsville</b>	2005	Ford	Brush Truck 200 gallon	Department
	2001	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1990	International	Tanker 3500 gallon	County
<b>Lauderdale</b>	2006	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1984	Peterbilt	Tanker 5500 gallon	Forestry Commission
	1978	Ford	Rescue Van	County
	1990	GMC	Rescue Pumper 1000 gallon	County
<b>Long Creek</b>	1997	Dodge	Brush Truck 200 gallon	Department
	1995	International	Pumper	County

			1000 gallon	
	2007	Ford	Rescue with Foam Unit	Department
	1991	International	Tanker 3750 gallon	County
<b>Lost Gap</b>	1999	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
<b>Martin</b>	1991	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1992	International	Tanker 3500 gallon	County
	2006	Pierce	Pumper 1000 gallon	Leased to County
	1975	Ford	Brush Truck 500 gallon	County
<b>Meehan</b>	1997	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	1991	Chevrolet	Rescue Van	Forestry Commission
<b>Northeast</b>	1991	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1994	Dodge	Rescue	Leased to County
	1990	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	2006	Pierce	Pumper 1000 gallon	Leased to County
	1984	Chevrolet	Brush Truck 200 gallon	Forestry Commission
<b>Russell</b>	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	1992	International	Pumper/Rescue 1000 gallon	County
	2006	Pierce	Pumper 1000 gallon	Leased to County
<b>Sam Dale</b>	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	1999	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
<b>South (Valley)</b>	1990	GMC	Rescue Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1991	International	Tanker	County

			2750 gallon	
	1995	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
<b>Suqualena</b>	2006	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	1980	International	Brush Truck	Department
<b>Toomsuba*</b>	2004	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1980	Simon Duplex	Pumper 1000 gallon	Department
	1990	International	Tanker 3500	County
	2006	Pierce	Pumper 1000 gallon	Leased to County
	1980	Ford	Rescue Van	Department
<b>Vimville*</b>	1995	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	2005	Ford	Brush/Rescue 200 gallon	Department
<b>Whynot*</b>	1997	International	Pumper 1000 gallon	County
	1989	International	Tanker 3000 gallon	County
	1984	Chevrolet	Rescue Truck	Forestry Commission
	2000	Chevrolet	Brush Truck 2000 gallon	Department

\* For MSRB purposes, Lauderdale County combines several volunteer fire departments in order to receive a lower fire rating. Alamucha and Toomsuba are combined into one fire response area, all of the Bailey stations are combined into one fire response area, and Causeyville, Vimville, and Whynot are combined into one fire response area (Southeast).

## **VII. Mitigation Projects and Structure Ignitability Recommendations**

Through the Community Risk Assessment several areas for improvement were identified. Mitigation projects for the at-risk areas may involve the removal or reduction in fuel load for some, a public awareness campaign for others, or a combination approach.

No specific treatment projects for Critical Infrastructure sites were identified or found to be necessary at this time. These sites are generally well maintained and have moderate to low ignitability potential.

The sites identified as Vulnerable Facilities involve the use or transport of ignitable or hazardous materials. There is an increased potential for wildfire at or near these sites due to the natural characteristics of these operations.

### **COUNTY**

- Develop a homeowner education program
- Encourage developments to become Firewise USA Communities
- Implement a maintenance program to eradicate/control Cogon grass
- Ensure that road signs are easy to read so emergency responders can locate addresses quickly
- Ensure that rural fire hydrants are clearly marked so emergency responders can locate them quickly

## **LANDOWNERS**

- Provide a clearing of at least 30 feet around structure for firefighting equipment access
- Remove “ladder fuels” that can link grasses to tree tops
- Prune trees so the lowest is between 6’ – 10’ from the ground
- Remove leaf clutter from roof and yard
- Mow regularly
- Remove dead and overhanging branches
- Store firewood away from the house
- Don’t keep combustible materials under decks or elevated porches
- Use construction materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible when possible
- Ensure house numbers are clearly visible from the road so emergency responders can locate addresses quickly

## **VIII. Action Plan and Assessment Strategy**

The action plan and assessment strategy portion of the County Wildfire Protection Plan serves to identify roles and responsibilities, determine funding needs, set timetables for carrying out identified activities, and measure the plan's effectiveness.

### **1. Seek funding for purchase of Brush/Quick Attack Trucks**

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments

Funding: Potential grant opportunities

Timetable for Completion: Spring 2010

Expected Outcome: Improved firefighting capabilities, especially for wildland firefighting

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

### **2. Seek funding for purchase of wildland firefighting equipment, including NFPA-approved wildland PPE, ATV's with water tanks and spray capability, additional fire rakes, flaps, and pumps, and folding portable water tanks**

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments

Funding: Potential grant opportunities

Timetable for Completion: Spring 2010

Expected Outcome: Improved firefighting capabilities, especially for wildland firefighting

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

3. Seek funding to purchase additional communication equipment, including radios and more repeaters

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments

Funding: Potential grant opportunities

Timetable for Completion: Spring 2010

Expected Outcome: Improved communication among firefighters and between firefighters and county dispatch during wildland fire calls

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

4. Work with Mississippi Forestry Commission to provide wildland training for volunteer firefighters, including basic wildland firefighting techniques, wildland fire behavior, and wildland survival and safety skills

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: Mississippi Forestry Commission

Timetable for Completion: Summer 2010

Expected Outcome: Improved wildland firefighting capabilities and safety of firefighters

Assessment Timetable: Winter 2010

5. Develop strategies to recruit additional volunteer firefighters and to retain existing volunteer firefighters

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Volunteer Fire Departments

Funding: Volunteer Fire Departments, grants, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Timetable for Completion: 1-2 years

Expected Outcome: Increase the number of new volunteer fire fighters in the county; maintain the number of existing volunteer firefighters in the county

Assessment Timetable: Annual review of recruitment and retention numbers

6. Improve transportation system in forest system where possible to improve access to wooded areas

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Timetable for Completion: 1-2 years

Expected Outcome: Improved access to wooded areas by increasing the number of fire access lanes in the forest system

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

7. Seek funding to remove debris, including Hurricane Katrina-related debris, which can serve as fuel for forest fires

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: Grants, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Timetable for Completion: 1-2 years

Expected Outcome: Reduction in forest fires from debris fuel

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

8. Continue Public Awareness Education on the dangers of wildland fires and how to prevent them

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: Possible grant funding

Timetable for Completion: Summer 2010



Expected Outcome: Increased public awareness of wildland fires and increased prevention efforts from local homeowners

Assessment Timetable: Winter 2010

9. Seek funding to purchase foam additive and to make modifications to existing equipment to allow for the use of the additive

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments

Funding: Potential grant opportunities

Timetable for Completion: 1-2 years

Expected Outcome: Additional resources for wildland firefighting

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

10. Seek funding to identify locations of vegetation with high ignitability

Responsibility: Lauderdale County Fire Service, Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, Natural Resource Conservation Service

Funding: Possible grant funding

Timetable for Completion: 1-2 years

Expected Outcome: Location of vegetation with high ignitability so that plans can be formulated to eradicate/control this vegetation

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010

## **IX Potential Funding Sources**

### **1. Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program**

Website: [www.firegrantsupport.com](http://www.firegrantsupport.com)

Application Deadline: Spring 2009

Program Description: Funding for training, equipment, vehicles, firefighter health and safety program and operations

### **2. Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program**

Website: [www.firegrantsupport.com](http://www.firegrantsupport.com)

Application Deadline: Fall 2009

Program Description: Outreach to high-risk target groups including children, seniors and firefighters. Monitor website for further information on eligible activities.

### **3. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program**

Website: [www.firegrantsupport.com](http://www.firegrantsupport.com)

Application Deadline: Summer 2009

Program Description: Funding for the hiring of fire personnel and incentives for volunteer recruitment and retention.

### **4. USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Grant Program**

Website: [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)

Application Deadline: Contact local USDA Representative

Program Description: Funding for assistance in developing an essential community facility. Funds can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety and community and public safety.

5. Grants Office

Website: [www.firegrants.info](http://www.firegrants.info) and [www.grantsoffice.com](http://www.grantsoffice.com)

Program Description: Provides info, tool and tips to help fire departments be more successful at obtaining funds from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.

6. Hazard Mitigation

Website: [www.mitigationms.org](http://www.mitigationms.org)

Application Deadline: Varies – contact Mississippi Emergency Management Agency

Program Description: Provides grant funds for hazard mitigation projects, including emergency generators, warning sirens and mitigation planning.

7. Grants Office: Mississippi Development Authority CAP Loan

Website: [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org)

Application Deadline: Ongoing

Program Description: Funding assistance for fire protection. Funds can be used to purchase fire trucks and brush trucks.

## **X. References:**

Data sources used in preparation of this plan, include:

Mississippi Forestry Commission

U.S. Bureau of the Census

Lauderdale County Hazard Mitigation Plan, prepared by East Central Planning & Development District

East Central Planning & Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS 2007)

Handbook of Selected Data for Mississippi

Firewise

Around Your Home Brochure, [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

USDA Forest Service

Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, March 2004

USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Invasive Species (Cogon Grass)

Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, "Bureau of Plant Industry",  
[http://www.mdac.state.ms.us/n\\_library/departments/bpi/bpi\\_pesticide.html](http://www.mdac.state.ms.us/n_library/departments/bpi/bpi_pesticide.html)

James P. Shepard, Ph.D.  
Professor and Head  
Department of Forestry  
Mississippi State University  
Box 9681  
Mississippi State, MS 39762  
(662) 325-2781  
(662) 325-8726 Fax  
[jshepard@cfr.msstate.edu](mailto:jshepard@cfr.msstate.edu) <http://www.cfr.msstate.edu/forestry/index.htm>

Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory (MIFI)  
Wayne Tucker, Director (601) 359-2803  
Patrick Glass, Operations Manager (601) 359-2808

## **XI. Project Contact Information**

East Central Planning & Development District  
Post Office Box 499  
280 Commercial Drive  
Newton, MS 39345  
601-683-2007

Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts  
Post Office Box 4935  
Jackson, MS 39216  
601-981-1511

Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks  
Paul Windham, District 4 Wildlife Supervisor  
4025 Hatchery Drive  
Meridian, MS 39307  
601-692-2776  
(Okatibbee Wildlife Management Area and Lake Tom Bailey)

Lauderdale County Emergency Management (LEMA)  
David Sharp, Director  
2525 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Meridian, MS 39301  
601-482-9852

Lauderdale County Fire Coordinator  
Clarence Butler  
2525 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Meridian, MS 39301  
601-482-9856

Lauderdale County Assistant Fire Coordinator, Allen Dover, 601-482-9852

Dinah Farmer, Administrative Officer, LEMA, 601-482-9852

Lauderdale County Volunteer Fire Department participants

Stanley Lucky, Bailey VFD Chief  
William Hagwood, Causeyville VFD Chief  
Curtis Jones, Center Ridge VFD Chief  
Terry Arnsdorff, Clarkdale VFD Chief  
Jeff Little, Collinsville VFD Chief  
Jubal Ryan, Lauderdale VFD Chief

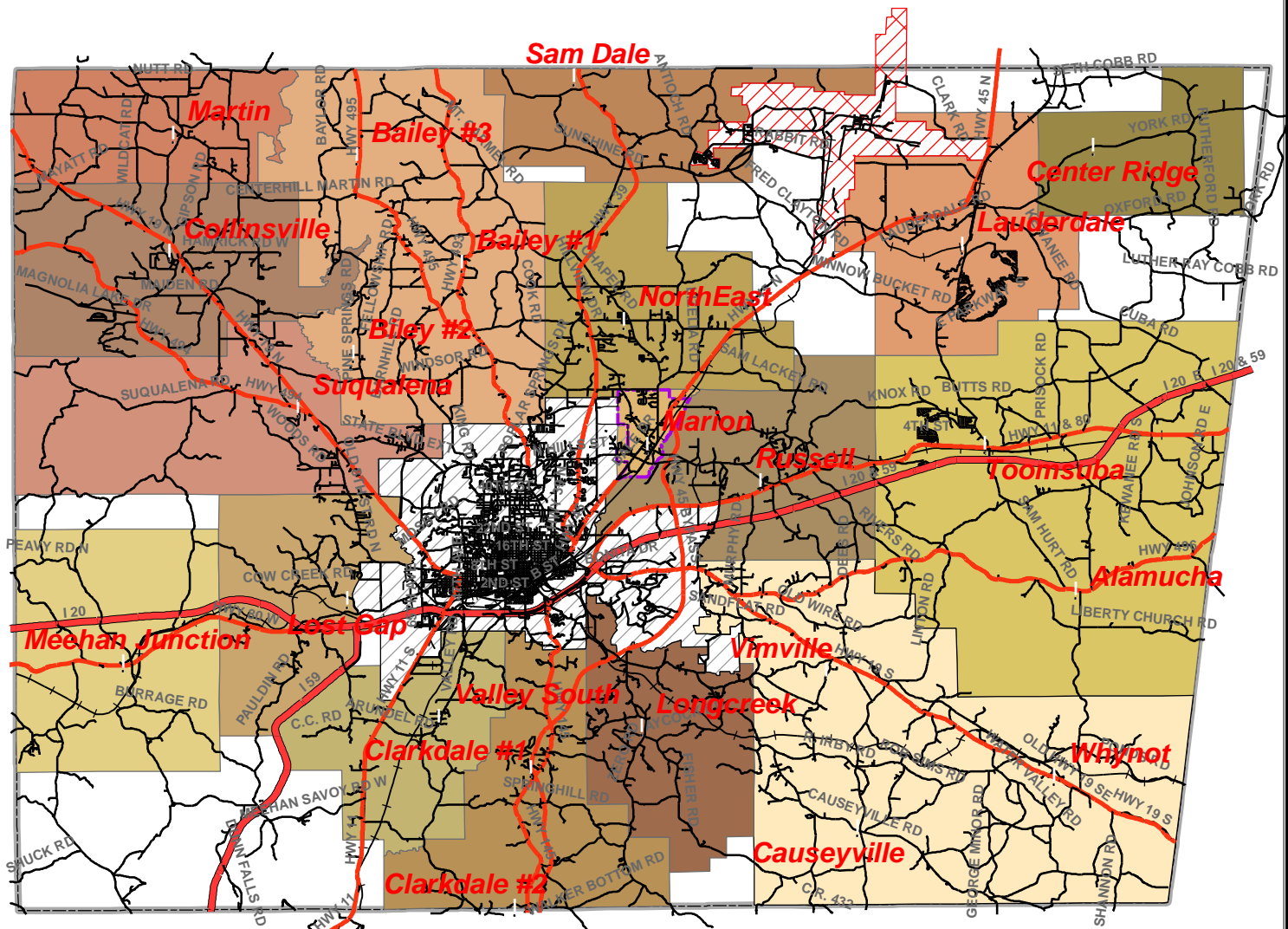
Keith Doggett, Long Creek VFD Chief  
Dale Weir, Lost Gap VFD Chief  
Scott Stokes, Marion VFD Chief  
Frank Gill, Martin VFD Chief  
Wayne Robinson, Meehan VFD Chief  
Mike Marlow, Northeast VFD Chief  
Gary Newell, Russell VFD Chief  
Jeff Sevier, Sam Dale VFD Chief  
Farrar Grisham, South VFD Chief  
Tom Jones, Suqualena VFD Chief  
Billy Stuckey, Toomsuba VFD Chief  
Glen Stephens, Vimville VFD Chief  
Glen Buckalew, Whynot VFD Chief  
Mike Vance, South VFD Member  
George Metrolis, Collinsville VFD Member  
Robert Neal, Vimville VFD Member

## **XII. CWPP Maps**

# Lauderdale County, MS

## County Wildfire Protection Plan

### Response Areas



0 1 2 4 6 8 10  
Miles

Prepared by:  
East Central Planning  
&  
Development District

Legend		
<span style="color: black;">•</span> VFD Stations	<b>Response Areas</b>	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Lost Gap
<span style="color: black;">—</span> Roads & Streets	<span style="background-color: #f0e68c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> A-T	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Marion
<span style="color: red;">—</span> Highways	<span style="background-color: #f0e68c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Bailey	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Martin
<span style="color: red;">—</span> Interstates	<span style="background-color: #f0e68c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> C-W-V	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Meehan Junction
<span style="color: black;">+</span> Railroads	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Center Ridge	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Northeast
<span style="color: red;">X</span> NAS Meridian	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Clarkdale	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Russell
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Marion	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Collinsville	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Sam Dale
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> Meridian	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Lauderdale	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Suqualena
<span style="color: purple;">—</span> County Boundary	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Longcreek	<span style="background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid black;"> </span> Valley South

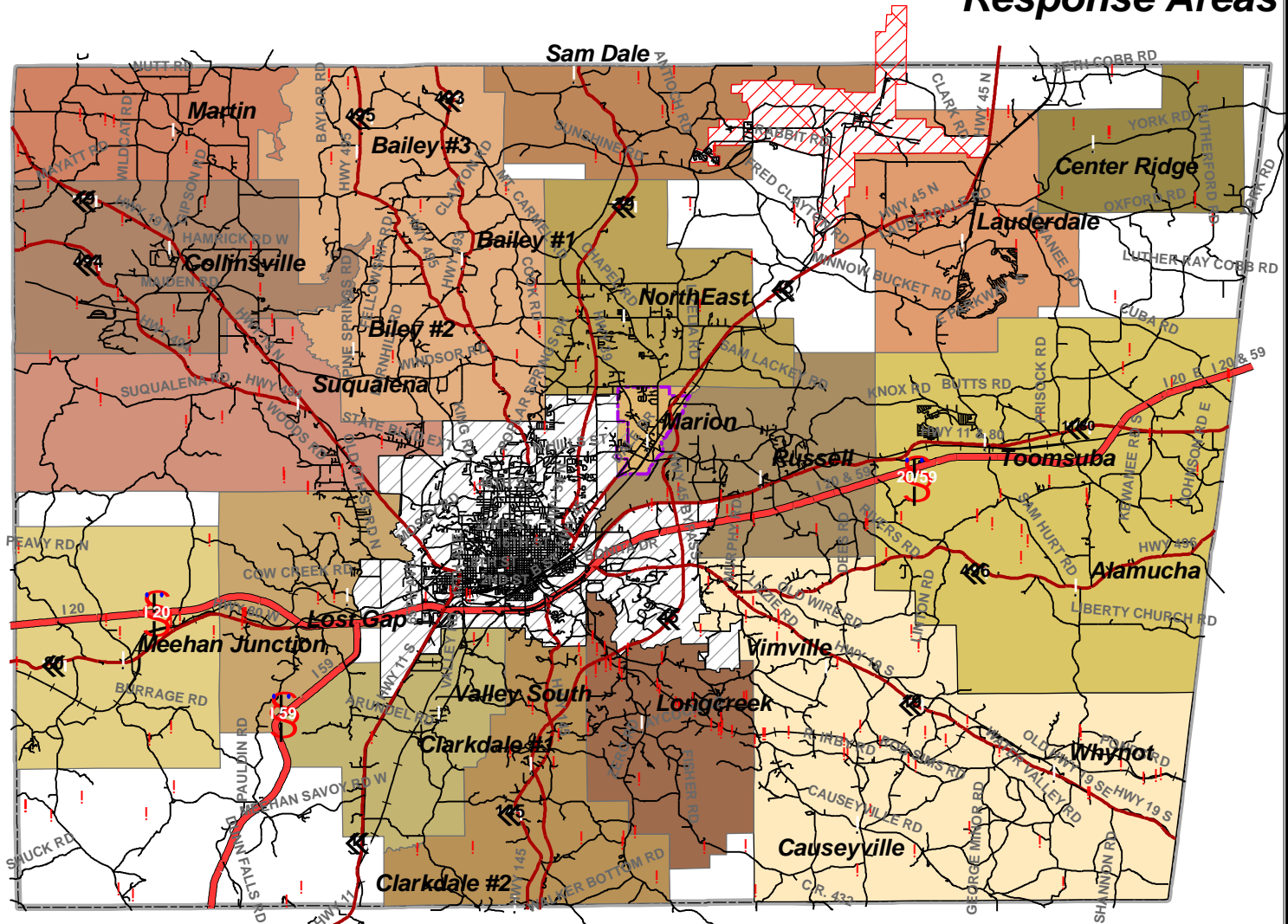




# Lauderdale County, MS

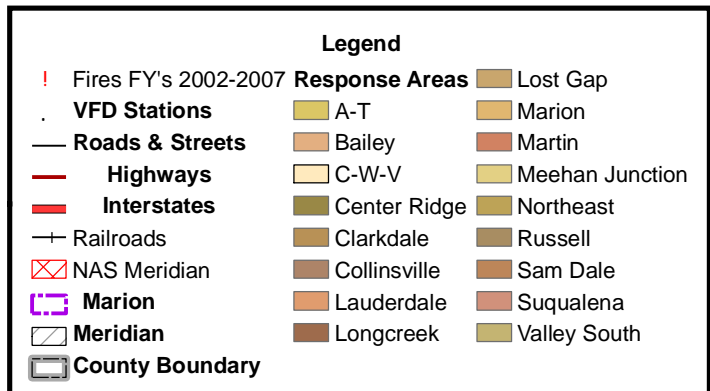
## County Wildfire Protection Plan

### Wildfires by Response Areas



0 1 2 4 6 8 10  
Miles

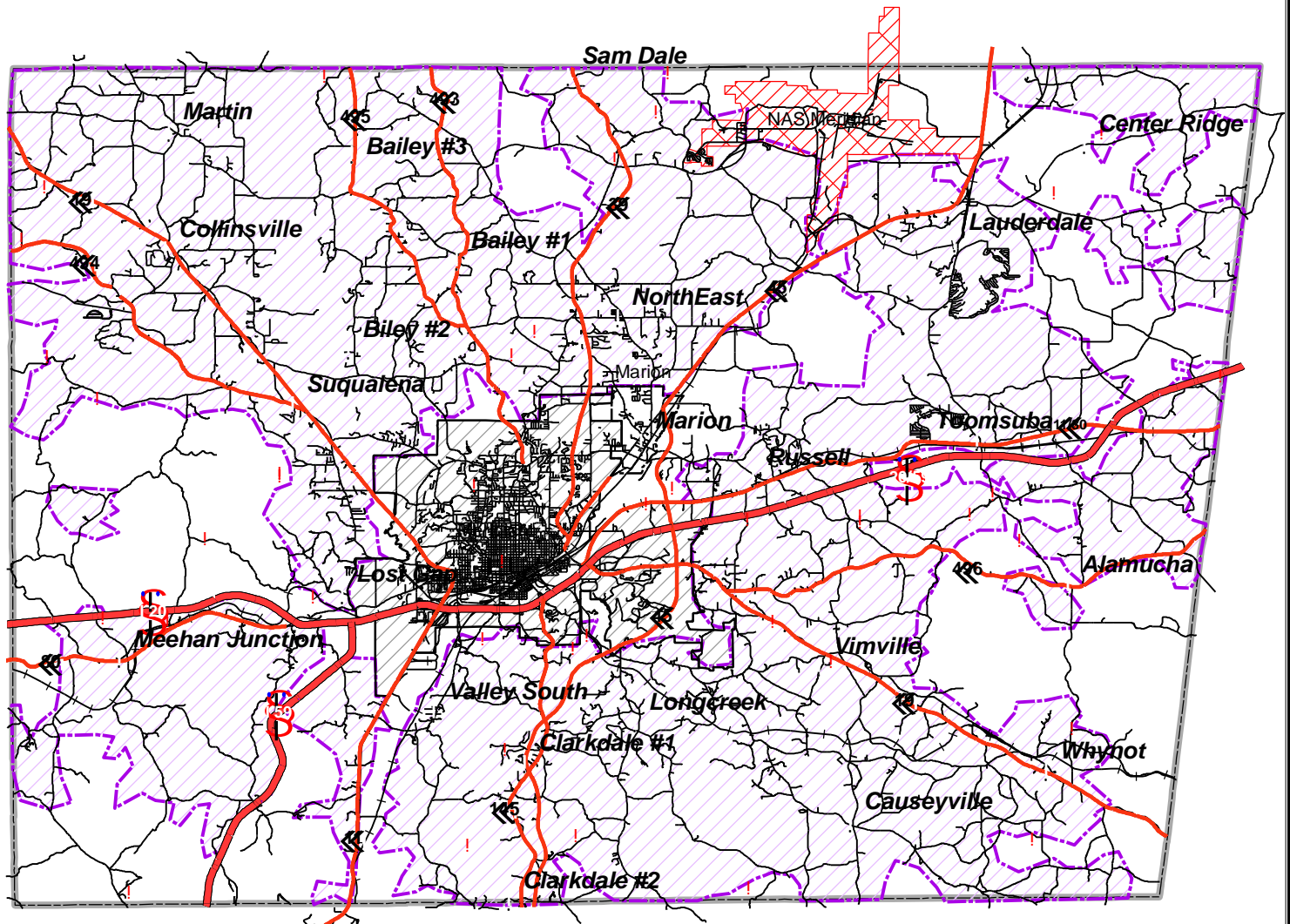
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&  
Development District



# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

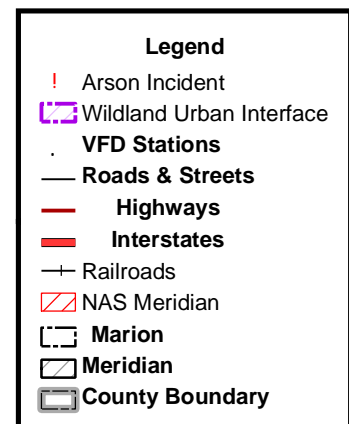
## County Wildfire Protection Plan

**Arson Fires  
FY's 2002-2007**



0 1 2 4 6 8 10  
Miles

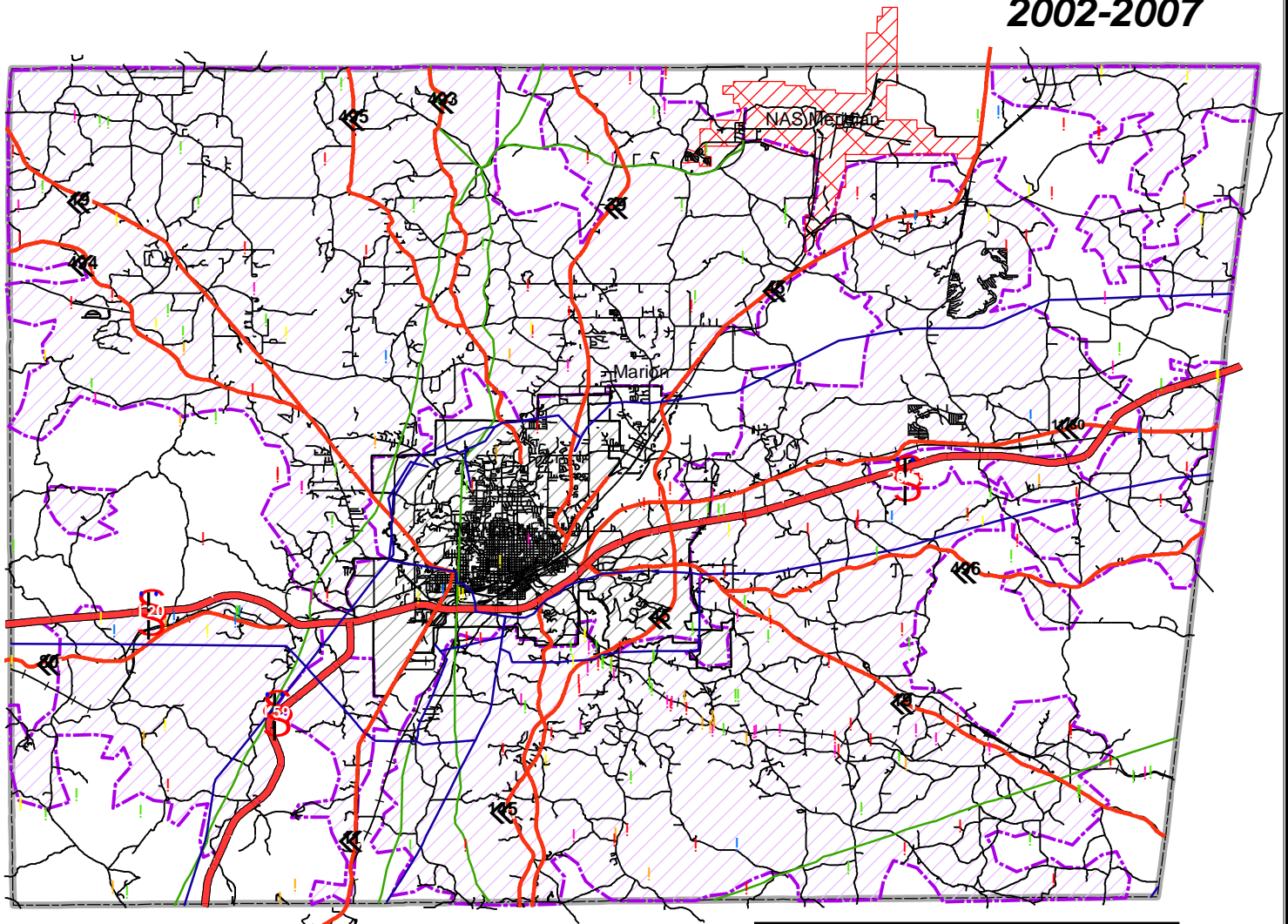
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Development District



# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

## County Wildfire Protection Plan

**Fire Data  
by MFC FY  
2002-2007**



0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

**Prepared by:  
East Central Planning  
&  
Development District**

### Legend

Oil or Gas Pipeline	<b>MFC FY Fires</b>
Electric Trans. Lines	2002
Wildland Urban Interface	2003
Roads & Streets	2004
Highways	2005
Interstates	2006
Railroads	2007
Marion	
Meridian	
NAS Meridian	
County Boundary	

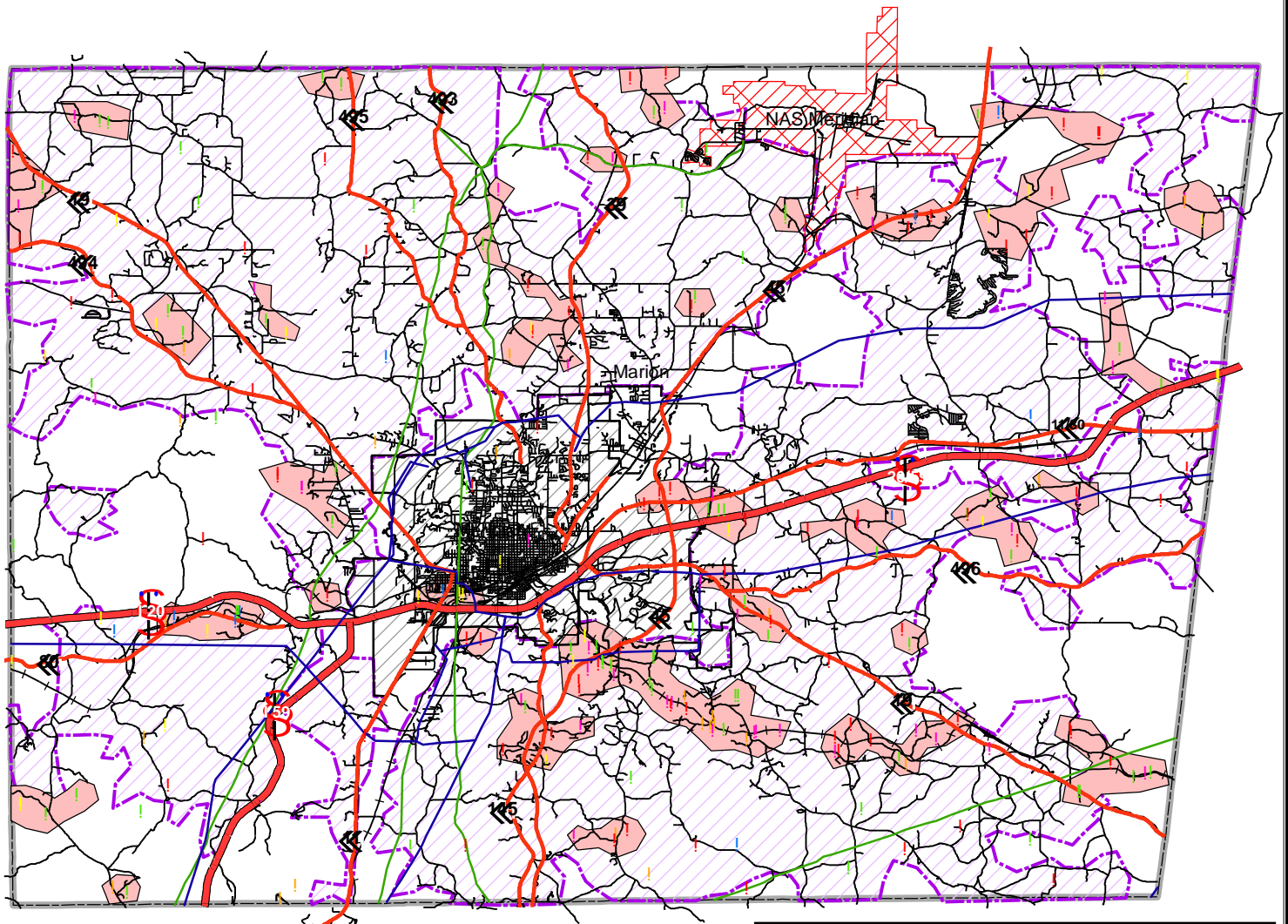




# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

## County Wildfire Protection Plan

### **High Occurrence Wildfire Areas**



0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

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&  
Development District



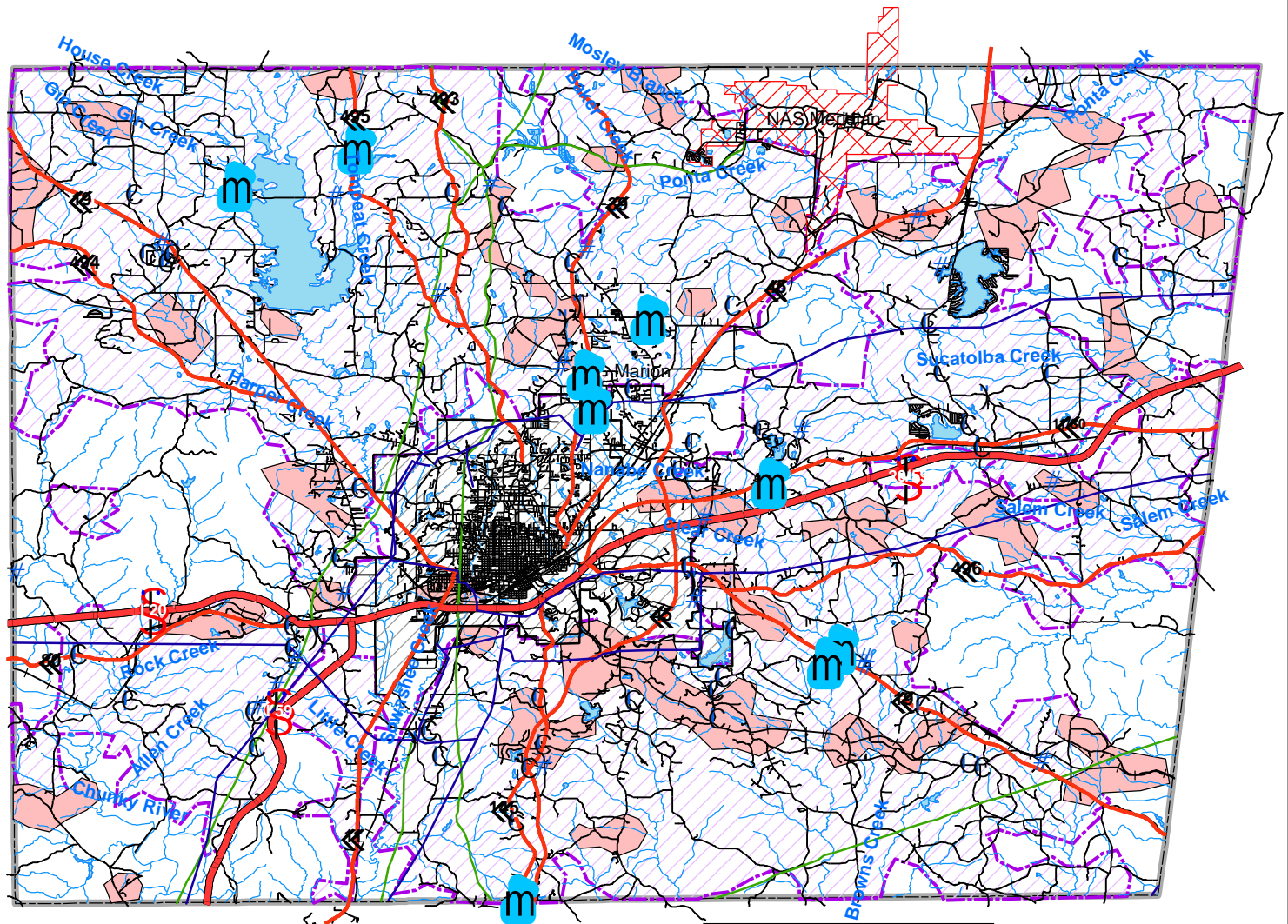
#### Legend

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| — Oil or Gas Pipeline      | <b>MFC FY Fires</b>  |
| — Electric Trans. Lines    | 2002                 |
| — Wildland Urban Interface | 2003                 |
| — Roads & Streets          | 2004                 |
| — Highways                 | 2005                 |
| — Interstates              | 2006                 |
| — Railroads                | 2007                 |
| — Marion                   |                      |
| — Meridian                 |                      |
| — NAS Meridian             |                      |
| — County Boundary          |                      |
|                            | High Fire Occurrence |

# Lauderdale County, Mississippi

## County Wildfire Protection Plan

### Risk Assessment Ratings



0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

#### Legend

- Electric Trans. Lines
- Oil or Gas Pipeline
- Roads & Streets
- Highways
- Interstates
- Railroads
- ▨ NAS Meridian
- ▨ Marion
- ▨ Meridian
- ▨ High Fire Occurrence
- ▨ Wildland Urban Interface
- Streams
- ▨ Ponds & Lakes
- ▨ County Boundary

Items are color coded as to risk level:  
 Blue = Low  
 Green = Medium  
 Yellow = Medium High  
 Red = High

- m** Schools
- s** Substations
- #** Cell Towers
- C** Water Utilities



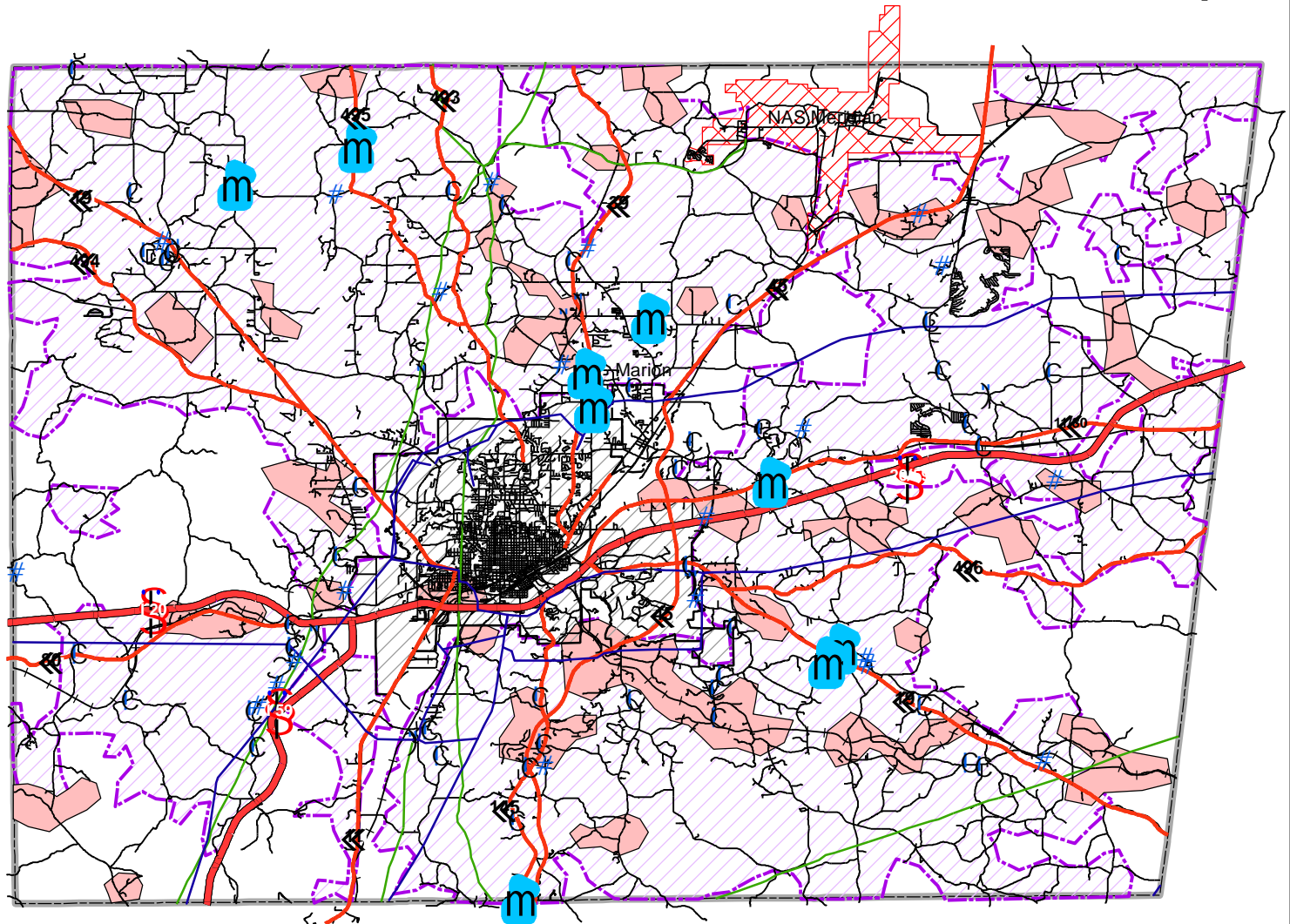
Prepared by:  
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 &  
 Development District



# Lauderdale County, Mississippi

## County Wildfire Protection Plan

**Base Map**



0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

### Legend

- Electric Trans. Lines
- Oil or Gas Pipeline
- Roads & Streets
- Highways
- Interstates
- Railroads
- ▨ NAS Meridian
- ▨ Marion
- ▨ Meridian
- ▨ High Fire Occurrence
- ▨ Wildland Urban Interface
- ▨ County Boundary

Items are color coded as to risk level:  
 Blue = Low  
 Green = Medium  
 Yellow = Medium High  
 Red = High

- m Schools
- ) Substations
- # Cell Towers
- C Water Utilities

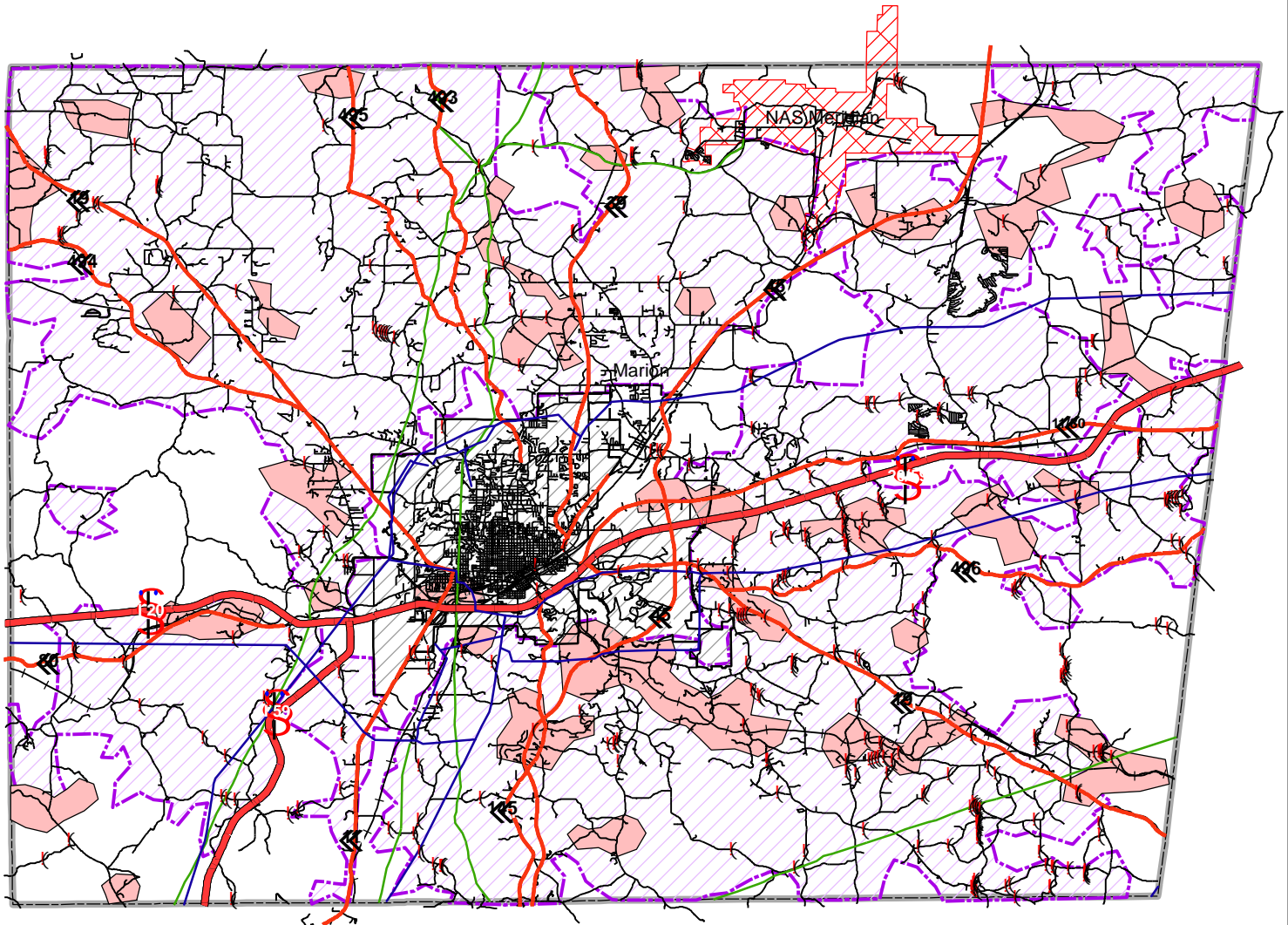


Prepared by:  
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 &  
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# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

## **County Wildfire Protection Plan**

### **Cogon Grass Locations**



Data Source: NRCS, Lauderdale County

0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

**Prepared by:**  
**East Central Planning**  
**&**  
**Development District**

#### **Legend**

- (X) Cogon Locations
- Electric Trans. Lines
- Oil or Gas Pipeline
- Roads & Streets
- Highways
- Interstates
- + Railroads
- ▨ NAS Meridian
- ▨ Marion
- ▨ Meridian
- High Fire Occurrence
- ▭ Wildland Urban Interface
- ▭ County Boundary

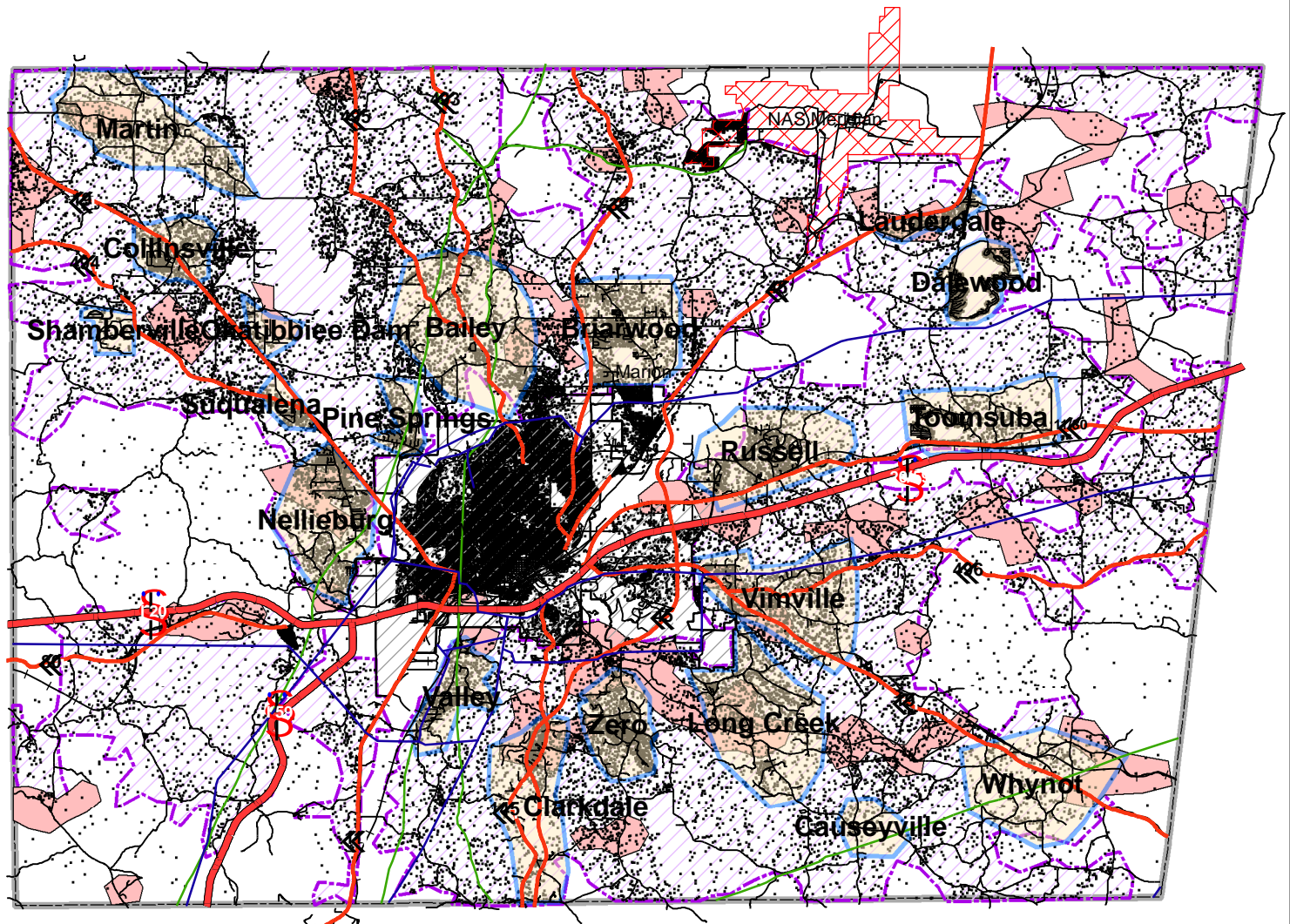




# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

## County Wildfire Protection Plan

### **Population Density Communities at Risk**



Data Source: Bureau of the Census 2000

0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

#### Legend

- Electric Trans. Lines
- Oil or Gas Pipeline
- Roads & Streets
- Highways
- Interstates
- + Railroads
- ▨ NAS Meridian
- - - Marion
- Meridian
- High Fire Occurrence
- ▤ Wildland Urban Interface
- ▭ County Boundary
- ▭ Communities

Each dot = 1 person

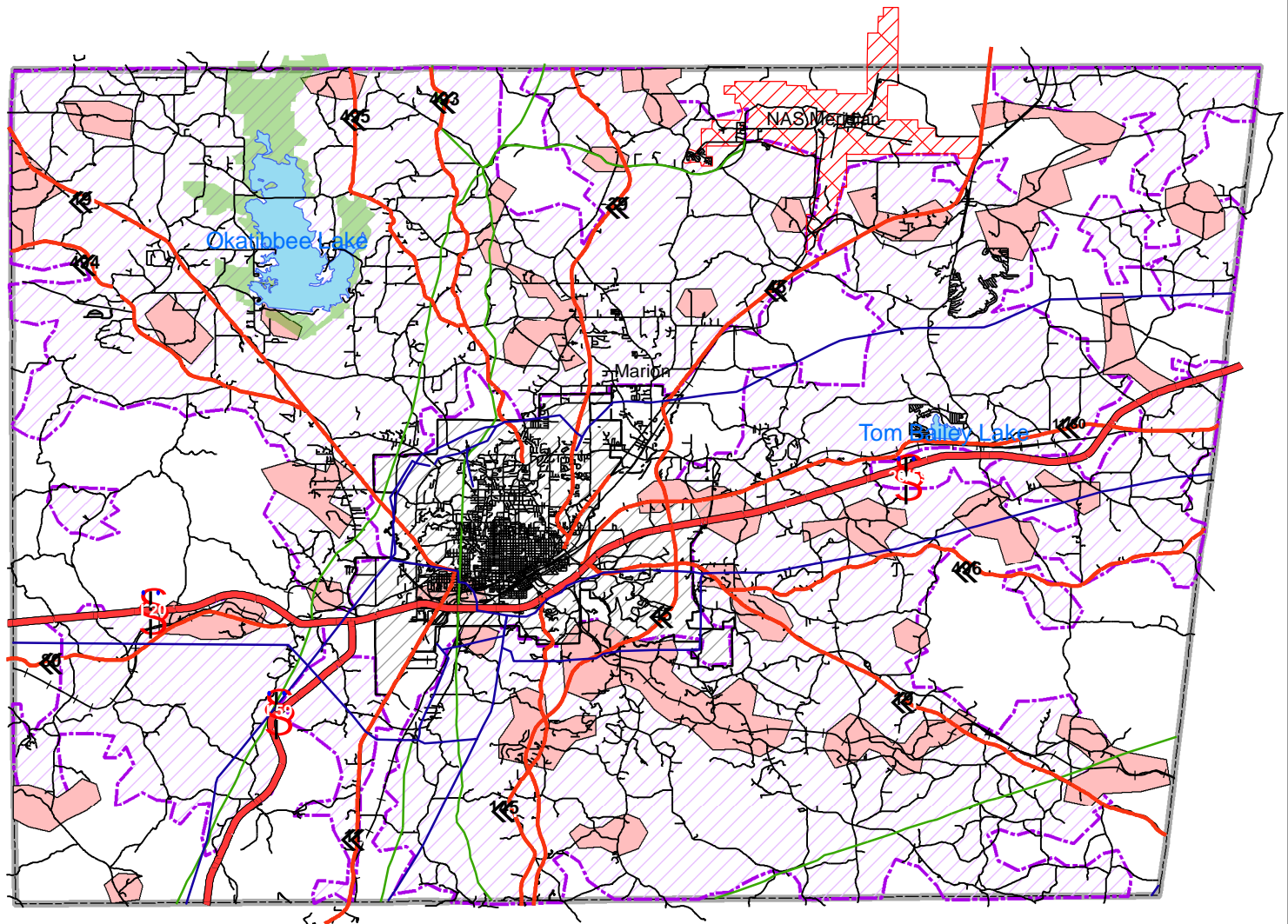
Prepared by:  
**East Central Planning  
&  
Development District**





# *Lauderdale County, Mississippi*

## **County Wildfire Protection Plan**



0 1 2 4 6 8 10  
Miles

### ***Wildlife Management Area & Public Recreation Lakes***

**Prepared by:  
East Central Planning  
&  
Development District**



#### **Legend**

- Wildlife Management Area
- Public Recreation Lakes
- Electric Trans. Lines
- Oil or Gas Pipeline
- Roads & Streets
- Highways
- Interstates
- + Railroads
- ▨ NAS Meridian
- ▨ Marion
- ▨ Meridian
- High Fire Occurrence
- - - Wildland Urban Interface
- ▭ County Boundary