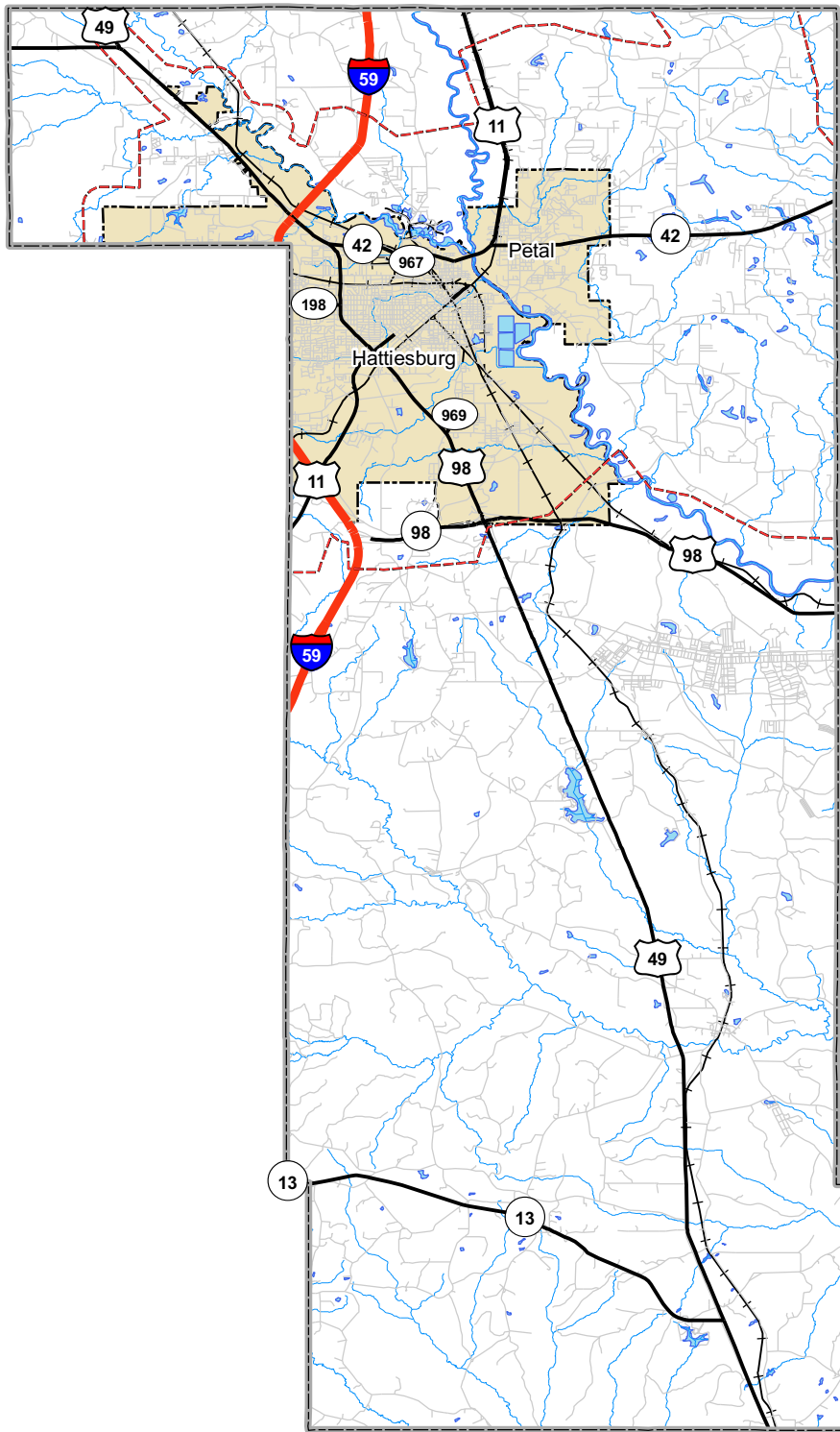


FORREST COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

COUNTY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN



OCTOBER 2008

PREPARED BY SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
WITH FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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Introduction

In late 2006, the Mississippi Forestry Commission and The Nature Conservancy commissioned the preparation of wildfire protection plans for a fifteen-county south Mississippi region. The plan is an effort to address changes to the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) brought about by Hurricane Katrina as well as from increased development in many parts of the region in recent years. While some downed timber was salvaged, an increased risk of future wildfire remains a threat because of residual debris.

The Wildland-Urban Interface, where structures and other developments merge with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels, can create one of the most dangerous and complex situations for firefighters. The WUI zone can pose a significant risk to communities in the event of a large-scale wildfire. In a proactive effort to address these increased risks and others, Forrest County has agreed to create a County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A CWPP can reduce the potential for loss in the event of a wildfire by identifying priorities for the protection of life, property and critical infrastructure within the WUI.

With 5 plans already completed by the end of 2007, SMPDD officials began gathering geographical data, historical fire information, etc. for Forrest County in early 2008. Planners then met with the local county fire coordinator to review the information and obtain input on the strengths and weaknesses of the county fire departments and their ability to fight wildfires. Later, a Steering Committee was formed through cooperation of local, state and federal agencies, and other interested parties. The Steering Committee included a subcommittee of members from the Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, the County Fire Coordinator, and Volunteer Fire Departments.

Over the next several months the Steering Committee, with the opportunity for public input, produced a County Wildfire Protection Plan. The Plan includes several components: Geographic Information System produced maps, a County Risk Assessment, a Mitigation Projects List, Structure Ignitability Recommendations and an Action Plan and Assessment Strategy. It is the intent of the Steering Committee that this plan will guide development and educate landowners, as well as address and then treat at-risk wildfire areas within the County.

This plan was developed with an effort toward consistency with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, the county's Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

Area Description

Forrest County is located in the southwest portion of the State of Mississippi. It is rural in context, except for the metropolitan area surrounding the City of Hattiesburg. The only other incorporated community in Forrest County is the City of Petal. Both cities benefit from the proximity of U.S. Highway 49 and U.S. Interstate 59, both of which provide efficient transportation routes North and South. Interstate 59 provides access to vital urban centers such as New Orleans, Louisiana, and Birmingham, Alabama. U.S. Highway 49 connects Forrest County with the Mississippi Gulf Coast to the South and the City of Jackson, Mississippi's capitol, to the North.

The population of Forrest County in 2000 was 72,604, evidencing a 6.3% growth in residency since 1990. The U. S. Census Bureau estimates a 2007 population of 78,241, a 7.3% increase since 2000. The Census Bureau projection for Forrest County's population in 2010 is 87,263; this would be a 16.8% increase for the ten year period.

Forrest County contains 470 square miles, with land largely held by private landowners. Approximately 73% of the county land area is contained within commercial forests. Recreational activities in the area are served by two major parks; DeSoto National Forest and Paul B. Johnson State Park. The Long Leaf Trace, a converted track of rail road, offers residents a 37 mile nature trail for walking, biking, or horseback riding. Forrest County also has several sporting complexes that provide access to baseball fields, basketball and tennis courts, soccer fields, and swimming pools. The Hattiesburg Historic Neighborhood District, North Main Street Historic District, Saenger Theatre, and Old Hattiesburg High School are just a few of the sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

The climate of Forrest County is mild with the mean annual temperature in the mid 60's. Average winter temperatures range from 34 to 58 degrees Fahrenheit with summer temperatures ranging from 69 to 92 degrees Fahrenheit. Rainfall averages approximately 58 inches annually with the majority of accumulation from November to July. Because of high annual precipitation amounts, Forrest County is not usually prone to property damaging wildfires. Occasionally, however, drought-like conditions prompt fire service officials to issue bans against burning and encroachment of urban development into wildlands becomes more of a concern. County wind speeds are generally less than 10 miles per hour, but often increase during storms. Thunderstorms occur frequently and are sometimes accompanied by strong to severe winds, including tornadoes.

About 73 percent of the land in Forrest County is use-classified as timber, open, or agriculture, creating an enhanced risk to the county of wildfires. Streams and drainage basins create natural barriers that help reduce this risk. Woodlands fires are controlled by rural firefighting departments and/or forestry service personnel. Based on historical occurrences, wildfires can be expected annually in the less urbanized parts of the county. It is the threat of a spread of rural wildfires to the urban fringe that poses the greatest concern. Mitigation measures such as prescribed burns, training and equipping firefighters, and public education on fire protection and Firewise strategies all help to control the risk to life and property.

While climate conditions and debris can cause ignitability, certain industrial operations and facilities can also raise the threat of fire. Major transportation arteries through Forrest County such as U. S. Highways 11, 49 and 98; MS Highways 13 and 42 and Interstate 59 are used daily to transport flammable, toxic and/or explosive materials, thus exposing the county to potential transportation incidents involving hazardous and/or flammable materials. Several facilities located within Forrest County use, store, or process flammable, toxic, and/or explosive materials. In addition, there are several wells and pipelines spanning the County which contain crude oil, natural gas, carbon dioxide, propane, and other substances. Volunteer fire departments within the county serve as first responders if an incident involving hazardous materials occurs.

Forrest County is divided into nine (9) rural fire response areas covering the unincorporated portions of the county. There are two city fire departments (Hattiesburg and Petal) in the county, for a total of 11 districts/response areas. The nine (9) rural fire response areas are: Brooklyn, Carnes, Dixie, Macedonia, Maxie, McLaurin, North Forrest, Rawls Springs, and Sunrise. All Fire Response Areas within the county, including Station Locations, are listed below.

Fire Response Area	Fire Department	Station Location(s)	Total Number of Volunteers
Brooklyn	Brooklyn VFD	35 Old Hwy 49 East	14
Carnes	Carnes VFD #1	268 John Morris Rd.	15
Maxie	Carnes VFD #2	105 Moffett Rd.	*
Dixie	Dixie VFD	19 Dixie Barn Rd.	17
Macedonia	Macedonia #1 VFD	711 Leeville Rd.	38
Macedonia	Macedonia #2 VFD	610 Macedonia Rd.	*
McLaurin	McLaurin VFD	310 Carter Rd.	22
McLaurin	Dantzler VFD	764 Churchwell Rd.	*
North Forrest	North Forrest VFD #1	2315 Glendale Ave.	22
North Forrest	North Forrest VFD #2	1133 Eatonville Rd.	*
Rawls Springs	Rawls Springs VFD	41 Archie Smith Rd.	21
Sunrise	Sunrise VFD #1	1071 Luther Carter Rd.	14
Sunrise	Sunrise VFD #2	177 Myers Rd.	*
City of Hattiesburg (PAID)	Hattiesburg Fire Dept.	(Main) 810 Main St.	XXXXXXXXXXXX
City of Petal (PAID)	Petal Fire Dept.	(Main) 102 Fairchild Dr.	XXXXXXXXXXXX

*Fire Departments with two or more stations have the number of volunteers listed under station #1. They are not broken down into individual substations.

Strategic Goals of the County Wildfire Protection Plan

At the beginning of the planning process, the Forrest County CWPP 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. Define the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) for Forrest County.
2. Identify and prioritize high-risk areas within the WUI.
3. Identify treatment methods for prioritized high risk areas.
4. Make recommendations to reduce structure ignitability.
5. Purchase additional brush trucks.
6. Work with the county Board of Supervisors on the possibility of levying additional mills for fire protection.
7. Identify strategies to encourage collaboration and increase communication between Forrest County and the Mississippi Forestry Commission.
8. Identify additional funding for firefighter training.
9. Identify additional funding for equipment.
10. Increase the water supply in Brooklyn, especially near the high school.
11. Construct new stations in Carnes at Red Creek and in Brooklyn.

Mapping

The Forrest County Wildfire Protection Plan contains seven maps created by the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District (SMPDD) Geographic Information System Department. These maps were created for planning purposes to aid in the assessment of county wildfire occurrence and emergency preparedness. The maps include the Forrest County Base Map, Forrest County Risk Assessment Ratings, Forrest County Fire Data 2001-2007, High Occurrence Wildfire Areas, Arson Fires 2001-2007, Forrest County Fire Response Area, and Wildfires by Fire Response Area.

The county-wide base map provides a graphic baseline of infrastructure, roadways, inhabited areas, areas of community importance and a WUI designation. Initially, the WUI was set at ½-mile from existing municipal boundaries in accordance with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The Steering Committee then edited this line to include area developments within the county but not adjacent to municipalities. It was noted by the Steering Committee that the county has many areas where wildland meets development. For this reason, the Forrest County WUI will identify areas where the highest amount of development occurs and aid in identifying specific risk factors and treatment projects that have the potential to reduce the risk to life, property and critical infrastructure.

In addition to the WUI, the Steering Committee identified several areas of critical infrastructure including roadways for evacuation, water towers, utilities and the communication towers. The Base Map has become a visual representation of the core elements of county protection as identified for the CWPP.

The Risk Assessment Map graphically reflects the results of the risk assessment portion of the county wildfire protection plan process. The risk assessment process is explained in detail below. The resulting map reflects the infrastructure, roadways, municipalities and areas of community importance found on the base map. The Steering Committee assigned a risk rating to each of these attributes by considering available fuel load, frequency of wildfire occurrence, vulnerability of development and infrastructure, and emergency preparedness. These ratings were then displayed in map form to better enable review and assessment of the entire county.

Several fire occurrence maps were created from data collected from the Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC). The data reflect both wildfires and controlled burns, and several different causes of fires. Fire causes include lightning, campfire, smoking, debris burning, arson, and equipment use. Mississippi Forestry Commission data for Forrest County shows a total of 15 fires in the year 2001, 30 fires in 2002, 27 fires in 2003, 46 fires in 2004, 65 fires in 2005, 96 fires in 2006, and 29 fires in 2007. The fire occurrence maps were utilized in the Risk Assessment portion of the CWPP and as a valuable reference during the process of formulating mitigation projects and action items.

Through the use of the SMPDD Geographic Information System, all fires and all causes, tracked for years 2001-2007 by the MFC, are reflected on the Forrest County Wildfires 2001-2007 map. When these data are mapped, it becomes apparent that there are specific geographic areas where there is a high occurrence of wildfire.

The High Occurrence Wildfire Areas are based on a computer calculation used to determine density and distribution by comparing each fire occurrence to its surrounding neighbors. The resulting calculation was then separated into nine classes to isolate areas with higher density. The lowest six classes were eliminated, and the remaining three classes were converted to single polygons to represent the five regions displayed as high occurrence areas. The regions were then manually edited to exclude fringe incidents leading to distinct and cohesive boundaries. Area 1 is geographically located in the north-west portion of the county from the Lamar county line north of Hattiesburg to the vicinity of Highway 11 at the northern Forrest county boundary. Area 2 is geographically located from the northeast Petal city limit to the northeast Forrest county boundary. Area 3 is located south of Hattiesburg from the west county boundary east to the Camp Shelby vicinity. Area 4 is located along the east county boundary south of Highway 42 and north of Camp Shelby. Area 5 is located along the southwest county boundary east to the vicinity of the Carnes community.

A majority of the fires within Forrest County, approximately 44%, are attributed to arson. According to Forestry Commission wildfire data, 137 out of 308 fires tracked from 2001-2007 were attributed to arson. The map of Arson Fires by Year reflects the geographic distribution of these fires throughout the county.

The Forrest County Fire Response Areas map reflects the county fire station response areas with respective boundaries and each volunteer fire station location. Also included is a map reflecting all wildfires from 2001-2007, as well as all fire district boundaries and the department locations. Wildfires 2001-2007 by Fire Response Area will aid in the assessment of numbers of fires and their general location within each district.

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

The Steering Committee attempted to identify facilities that may be at risk from wildfire 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 may cause significant community impact in the event of damage or loss due to a wildfire. Mitigation projects for the at-risk areas include a wide array of activities. Removal or reduction in fuel load may be suggested for some areas, with a public awareness campaign suggested for others. It should be noted that the ratings are consistent with those in the Forrest County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Rating Key

- Low
- Medium
- Medium-High
- High

Critical Infrastructure:

- Pearl River Valley EPA substation on Hwy. 49, Hattiesburg

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

- Brooklyn Utility Association at 210 Old Hwy. 49, Brooklyn

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

- Carnes Volunteer Fire Department at 268 John Morris Rd., Lumberton

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

- Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department at 35 Old Hwy. 49 E, Brooklyn

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

■ McLaurin Volunteer Fire Department at 310 Carter Rd., Hattiesburg

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

■ Dixie Volunteer Fire Department at 19 Dixie Barn Rd., Hattiesburg

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

■ Carnes Volunteer Fire Department (Maxie Station) at 105 Moffett Rd.

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

■ North Forrest Volunteer Fire Department (Station 2) at 1133 Eatonville Rd.

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

■ McLaurin Volunteer Fire Department (Dantzer Station) at 764 Churchwell

The effect on the local community if the substation was damaged is substantial. However, this facility is well maintained and not in close proximity to large wooded areas.

This risk rating is low.

■ Railroads

Illinois Central Railroad, Kansas City Southern and Norfolk Southern Railways have service running through Forrest County. The damage could be detrimental if an accident occurred but the likelihood is limited.

The risk rating is low.

■ Highway 49, Highway 98, Interstate 59

These roads are all major thoroughfares and evacuation routes. Smoke is the biggest issue.

This risk rating is low.

Vulnerable Facilities

- Pipeline Station– Wilmut Gas Company – Natural Gas
- Pipeline Station – ENTEX – Natural Gas
- Big Pop Fireworks – Explosive Materials and within ½ mile of propane facility
- Camp Shelby – Military Training Base (has own fire department)
- Oil/Gas Storage wells throughout the County
- FEMA Trailer Storage Area – highly ignitable
- Railroads
- Salt Domes in the Macedonia Area at Chevis Lee Road

All of the above facilities pose some risk due to function and impact to the community and beyond if damaged or destroyed. However, it is noted that the companies that operate the facilities take adequate fire precautions and the overall ratings range from low to high.

Areas of Community Importance

- North Forrest County High School at 693 Eatonville Rd., Hattiesburg
- North Forrest County Elementary at 702 Eatonville Rd., Hattiesburg
- Dixie Attendance Center at 790 Elks Lake Rd., Hattiesburg
- South Forrest Attendance Center at 8 Burborne St., Brooklyn
- Forrest County Agricultural High School at 215 Old Hwy. 49 E, Brooklyn
- Paul B. Johnson State Park

The facilities listed above are important to the quality of life of the residents of Forrest County. There is not, however, a substantial smoke or fire risk. All of the facilities are ranked low.

Areas of Concern

- Any areas in the county that continue to have a heavy fuel load, in the form of downed timber, especially since Hurricane Katrina.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness for each of the county volunteer fire departments is continually reviewed and assessed by Forrest County. This assessment involves factors such as equipment availability and age, public protection classification, and manpower.

There are informal mutual aid agreements in and outside of the county, but it is recommended that formal written agreements be established with the neighboring counties.

Fire Districts 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 Forrest County are listed below, with the corresponding MSRB classification. Forrest County has made substantial improvements in the ratings over the last year.

Mississippi State Rating Bureau Public Protection Classification List

District	Class
Brooklyn	9
Carnes	8
Dixie	8
Macedonia	8
McLaurin	8
North Forrest	7
Rawls Springs	8
Sunrise	8

In general, the departments are well-equipped and able to respond to the needs of the areas they serve. However, Steering Committee members did identify improvements that could be made to provide better service within the districts.

Often times, the local firefighters work side-by-side with the Mississippi Forestry Commission. Generally, there is a good relationship between the two agencies. However, it is suggested that biannual meetings be established to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each agency. These meetings would allow any other inter-agency concerns to be addressed as well as to provide training opportunities and project coordination. Two-way radio communication needs to be improve with MFC and all of the counties.

As with most volunteer firefighting forces, recruitment and retention is a constant issue. A community outreach and awareness program may help address some of the manpower issues. Several volunteer fire departments across the county are involved with the local Boy Scouts of America through the explorer program (www.scouting.org/). Many times, BSA can provide program direction, resources, and insurance to cover the department which allows for much more involvement by an explorer scout than a typical youth under 18.

An apprentice firefighter program working with local youth is also an option. While not allowed to fight fires, these youth may be able to gain training through department

exercises. The youth would support by providing drinks, supplies or other equipment that is needed on-site. Involvement in the program may then lead to a career as a volunteer firefighter.

Additionally, recruitment kits should be created and kept on-hand for prospective candidates. Recruitment messages can be posted in local newspaper inserts and by placing flyers at local restaurants and other businesses. Adding recruitment information to the county website and local cable service announcements may also be effective.

In addition to the MSRB Rating and manpower issues, equipment status is tracked and assessed. A current listing of large equipment with description and location is provided below. Ideally, the county would like to have a more brush trucks, especially in Carnes, Brooklyn, Rawls Springs and Dixie. More equipment needs are expected to arise as the existing equipment ages.

Forrest County Volunteer Fire Department Equipment List

Department	Year	Make/Model	Type
Brooklyn	1990	Chevy	Rescue Truck
	2000	Freightliner	Pumper
	1986	Am Gen	Tanker
Carnes	1974	Mack	Pumper
	2006	Freightliner	Pumper
	1982	Ward	Pumper
	1983	GMC	Tanker
	1983	Mack	Tanker
	2002	GMC	Pumper
Dixie	1979	GMC	Tanker
	2000	GMC	Tanker
	1992	Ford	Rescue Truck
	1987	Ford F 800	Pumper
	1983	GMC	Pumper
	2008	Ford	QRV Truck
	1984	Chevy	Brush Truck
1972	Ford	Pumper (1000 gallon)	
Macedonia	2007	Ford F 450	Brush Truck
	1979	Ford	Pumper
	1981	International	Tanker
	1981	Ford	Pumper
	1982	Mack	Tanker
	1984	Chevy	Brush Truck
1996	International	Pumper	
McLaurin	2000	GMC	Pumper
	1985	Chevy	Brush Truck
	1986	Chevy	Rescue Truck
	1989	GMC	Pumper
	2004	LaFrance	Pumper
	1991	Ford	Brush Truck
1987	Ford	Tanker	
North Forrest	2007	Freightliner	Fire Truck

Department	Year	Make/Model	Type
	1985	Ford	Pumper
	1993	International	Pumper
	1997	Ferrara	Pumper
	2002	Ford	Rescue
	2006	Ford	Brush Truck
	2008	Ford	F 450 Truck
Rawls Springs	2007	Sterling	Pumper
	1985	Ford	Pumper
	1982	Ford	Brush Truck
	2000	GMC	Pumper
	1977	Ford	Pumper
	1991	GMC	Pumper
Sunrise	2007	Ford F-450	Brush Truck
	2002	LaFrance	Pumper/Tanker
	1995	International	Pumper
	1969	Jeep	Tanker
	1989	GMC	Pumper

While the county water sources are adequate throughout most of the County, it needs to be improved in the Brooklyn area, specifically near the Forrest County Agricultural High School.

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 removal or reduction in fuel load for some, a public awareness campaign for others, or a combination approach.

No fuel treatment projects for Critical Infrastructure, Vulnerable Facilities or Areas of Community Importance were identified or found to be necessary at this time. These sites are generally well maintained and have moderate to low ignitability potential. However, it is suggested that the county partner with the Mississippi Forestry Commission to work with large, private landowners to identify areas with dead trees, remove them and/or create fire breaks.

Structure ignitability recommendations should be addressed by the county and distributed to homeowners. These recommendations, as condensed from information found at www.firewise.org, are steps that property owners can take to improve the protection and survivability of a structure in the event of a wildfire. It was also recommended by the Steering Committee that a minimum distance between structures should be designated and included in county construction ordinances.

Structure Ignitability Recommendations

County

1. Develop a homeowner education program
2. Encourage new, large residential developments to become Firewise USA Communities
3. Home assessments to help residents identify ways to create defensible space
4. Partner with Mississippi Forestry Commission to work with large, private landowners to identify areas with standing dead trees, remove them and/or create fire breaks
5. Encourage the Board of Supervisors to adopt subdivision regulations and to replace all plastic culverts in subdivisions.

Homeowners

1. Provide a clearing of at least 30 feet around structures for firefighting equipment access
2. Provide a driveway at least 12 feet wide with 13 feet of vertical clearance
3. If home is gated, display a clearly visible address, provide a gate that swings inward and is at least 30 feet off of the main road.
4. Remove "ladder fuels" that can link grasses to tree tops

5. Maintain an irrigation system
6. Prune tree limbs so the lowest is between 6' - 10' from the ground
7. Remove leaf clutter from roof and yard
8. Mow regularly
9. Remove dead and overhanging branches
10. Store firewood away from the house
11. Don't keep combustible materials under decks or elevated porches
12. Make trellises of non-flammable metal
13. Prevent sparks from entering house by covering vents with wire mesh no larger than 1/8"
14. Use construction materials that are fire-resistant or non-combustible when possible
15. Prevent collection of leaf clutter or other combustible materials beneath mobile homes by installing proper skirting

County Ordinance

1. Maintain minimum distance between structures as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association
2. Maintain a minimum radii of outside edge at dead-end turnaround circle of 45 feet to provide for emergency vehicles on both surface ditch and curb/gutter roadways
3. Maintain minimum width standards for subdivision roads and access roads to individual homes per pending subdivision regulations

Min. width of surface ditch roadway with *local* designation: 28 ft.

Min. width of surface ditch roadway with *collector* designation: 34 ft.

Min. width of curb and gutter streets with *local* designation: 27 ft.

Min. width of curb and gutter streets with *collector* designation: 33 ft.

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.

The Action Plan is an outline of the work to be completed. The Assessment Strategy portion of the CWPP will ensure that Mitigation Projects and Action Plan items are accomplished in a timely manner and monitored to measure the project's success.

1. Staggered purchase of brush trucks for Brooklyn, Carnes, Dixie and Rawls Springs.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Volunteer Fire Departments, Board of Supervisors

Funding: \$150,000 each, possibly through Homeland Security or other grant funds

Timetable for Completion: Every 2 years or as grants become available

Expected Outcome: Better access and firefighting capability

Assessment Timetable: Review progress annually

2. Establish biannual meetings between the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the Forrest County Volunteer Fire Departments. Get information about prescribed burn areas from the Mississippi Forestry Commission, including maps of what areas have been burned and what areas are planned to be burned. Also relay information on grants through MFC.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: \$0

Timetable for Completion: Implement immediately

Expected Outcome: Improved communication and coordination in the areas of firefighting, training, safety and project management

Assessment Timetable: 2–5 years

3. Create community outreach and education program including mail-out and county website, listing specific fire concerns in the area and steps that

homeowners can take to reduce ignitability potential. Include steps that will improve response time such as proper house numbering, signage and access to locked gates at private residences.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency in coordination with Mississippi Forestry Commission and local Volunteer Fire Departments

Funding: Homeland Security Fire Safety Grant, possible coordination with local utility or county agency for inclusion in regular mail-out

Timetable for Completion: October 2009, possibly coordinate with Fire Prevention Awareness Month

Expected Outcome: Implementation of Firewise safety measures by homeowners, including an increase in properly assigned and visible residential addressing as well as a decrease in non-compliant residential burns

Assessment Timetable: Winter 2009

4. Community outreach program to educate citizens, specifically young adults (18 years of age and older), about the volunteer firefighter program and its importance. This program could include a high school component where students are made aware of the program so that they might consider serving at some point in the future. Program also to include National Fire Protection Association public service announcements.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Volunteer Fire Departments, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: Volunteer Fire Departments, grants, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Timetable for Completion: 1-2 times per year, before peak fire seasons.

Expected Outcome: Increased community awareness of the need for volunteer firefighters and increase in volunteer recruitment

Assessment Timetable: Annual review of recruitment efforts and numbers

5. Maintain and update the grants/funding resource list included in CWPP document in order to purchase more equipment and provide more training.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District

Funding: \$0

Timetable for Completion: Yearly

Expected Outcome: Additional grant applications resulting in an increase of grant funds for training and equipment

Assessment Timetable: Review applications v. funding annually

6. Maintain, update and redistribute the CWPP maps to all county departments, volunteer fire departments and other organizations utilizing the document.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency and Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District

Funding: \$0

Timetable for Completion: Yearly

Expected Outcome: Increased awareness of fire activity leading to implementation of action plan in an effort toward reduction of fire incidents

Assessment Timetable: Make any additions or changes to maps on an annual basis and interview other organizations to see if the maps make their role in wildfire prevention more effective

7. Identify and map water resources on private property to be accessed to fill up pumpers in the Brooklyn area until better water supply can be provided.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency

Funding: Grant

Timetable for Completion: Summer 2009

Expected Outcome: More access to water to fight wildfires

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2009 – update every 2 years

8. Research funding mechanism to improve water system that will provide more water in the Brooklyn Area.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Forrest County Board of Supervisors, Brooklyn Utility Association

Funding: Grant through USDA

Timetable for Completion: Summer 2010

Expected Outcome: More access to water to fight wildfires

Assessment Timetable: Summer 2010 and every year thereafter

9. Encourage Mississippi Insurance Commissioner to consider rebate program to allow for home assessments and homeowner mitigation projects (creating defensible space).

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Board of Supervisors, Volunteer Fire Departments, Mississippi Forestry Commission

Funding: \$0

Timetable for Completion: Spring 2009

Expected Outcome: More homeowners participating in mitigation activities, lower insurance premiums for homeowners and additional funds for volunteer fire departments

Assessment Timetable: Review progress in May 2009 after legislative session ends

10. Construct new stations in Carnes at Red Creek and in Brooklyn.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Volunteer Fire Departments, Board of Supervisors

Funding: Fire Grants, USDA, CDBG

Timetable for Completion: 2011

Expected Outcome: Better insurance ratings and ability to fight fires

Assessment Timetable: Annually after funding awards are announced.

11. Work with Board of Supervisors on the possibility of levying additional mills for fire protection. 1 mill is currently granted but 4 mills is allowed.

Responsibility: Forrest County Emergency Management Agency, Volunteer Fire Departments. Board of Supervisors

Funding: \$0

Timetable for Completion: October 2010

Expected Outcome: Increase in operating expenses for fire departments.

Assessment Timetable: Following every budget adoption period in September of each year

Potential Funding Sources

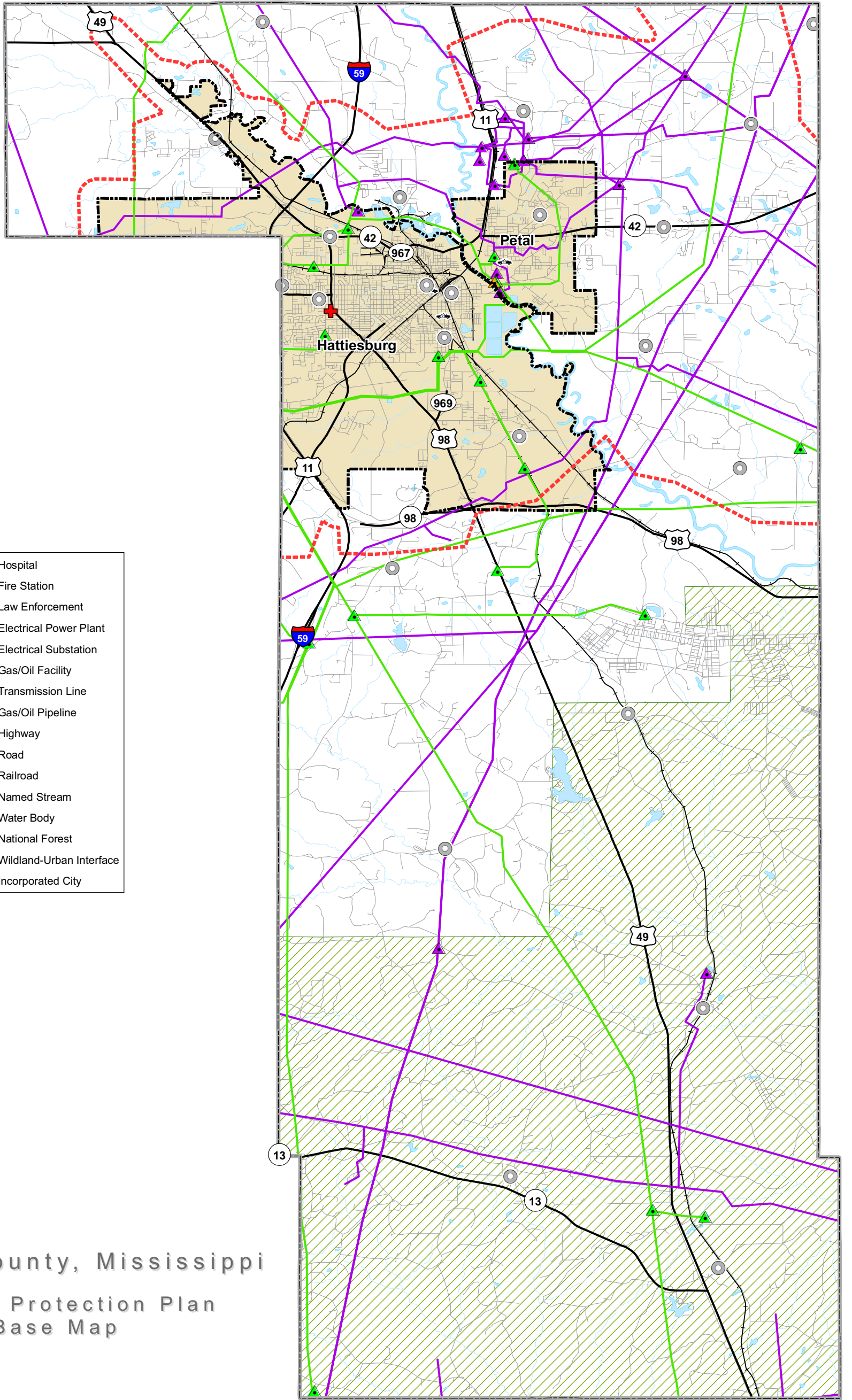
1. Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
Website: www.firegrantsupport.com
Application Period: Spring 2009
Program Description: Funding for training, equipment, vehicles, firefighter health and safety program and operations
2. Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program
Website: www.firegrantsupport.com
Application Period: Fall 2008
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
Application Period: 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
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 services.
5. U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company Polaris Ranger Donation Program
Website: www.ustinc.com
Application Period: October 2008
Program Description: Donation of Polaris Ranger 6X6 utility vehicles for firefighting, rescue, police, emergency medical service, and wildlife law enforcement organizations.
6. Responder Knowledge Base Website
Website: www.rkb.us/
Program Description: Website contains information on currently available products, standards, training and grants
7. Firegrantshelp.com Website
Website: www.firegrantshelp.com
Program Description: Website contains information on resources for Fire and EMS assistance

References

1. Forrest County Hazard Mitigation Plan (under review)
2. Forrest County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
3. Firewise
Around Your Home brochure
www.firewise.org
4. USDA Forest Service
Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan
March 2004

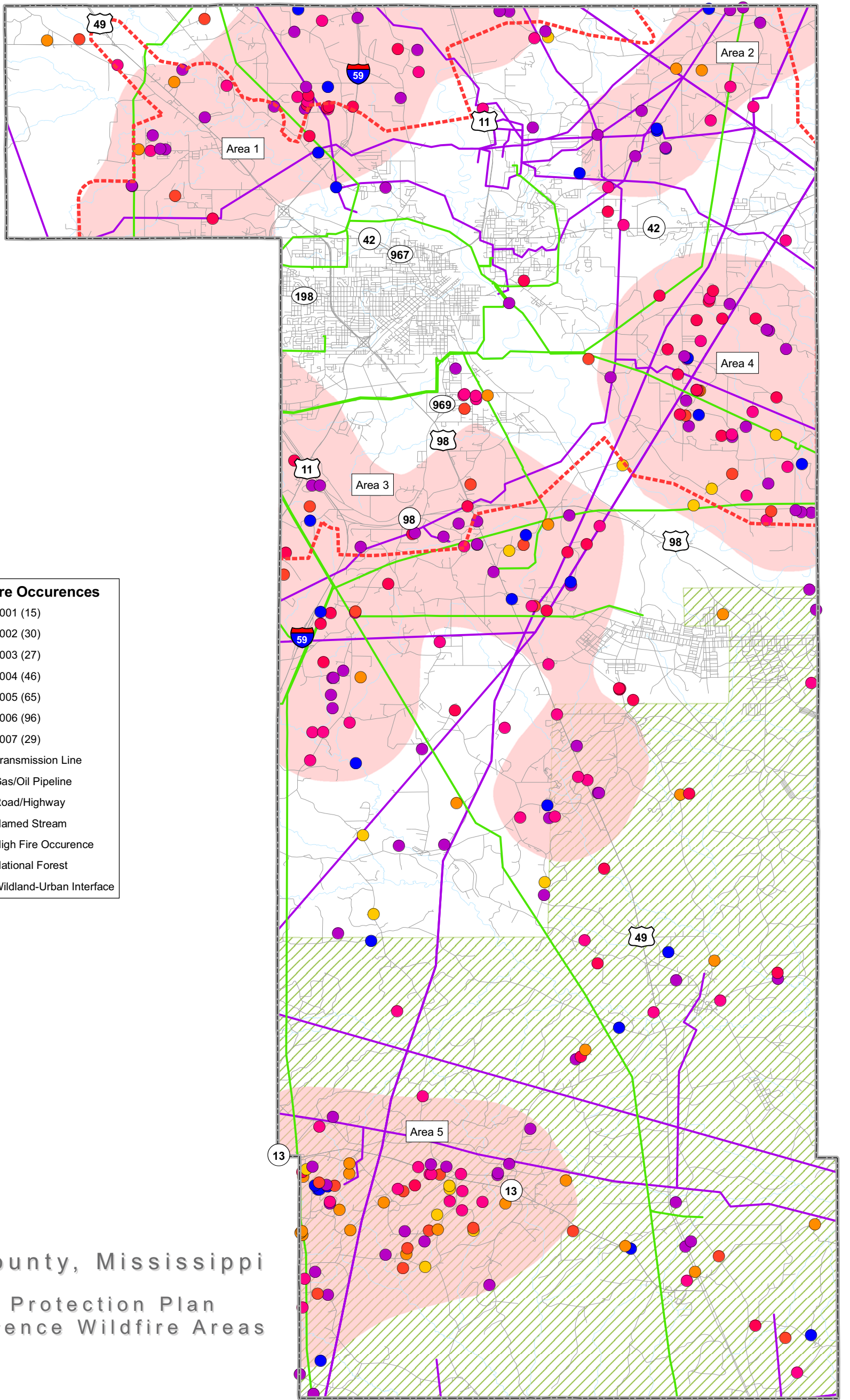
Project Contact Information

1. Forrest County Emergency Management Agency
Phone: (601) 544-5911
Fax: (601) 545-4516
2. Mississippi Forestry Commission
477 South Gate Road
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Phone: (601) 583-4240
Fax: (601) 583-2500
www.mfc.state.ms.us
3. Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District
9229 Highway 49
Gulfport, MS 39503
Phone: (228) 868-2311
Fax: (228) 868-7094
www.smpdd.com

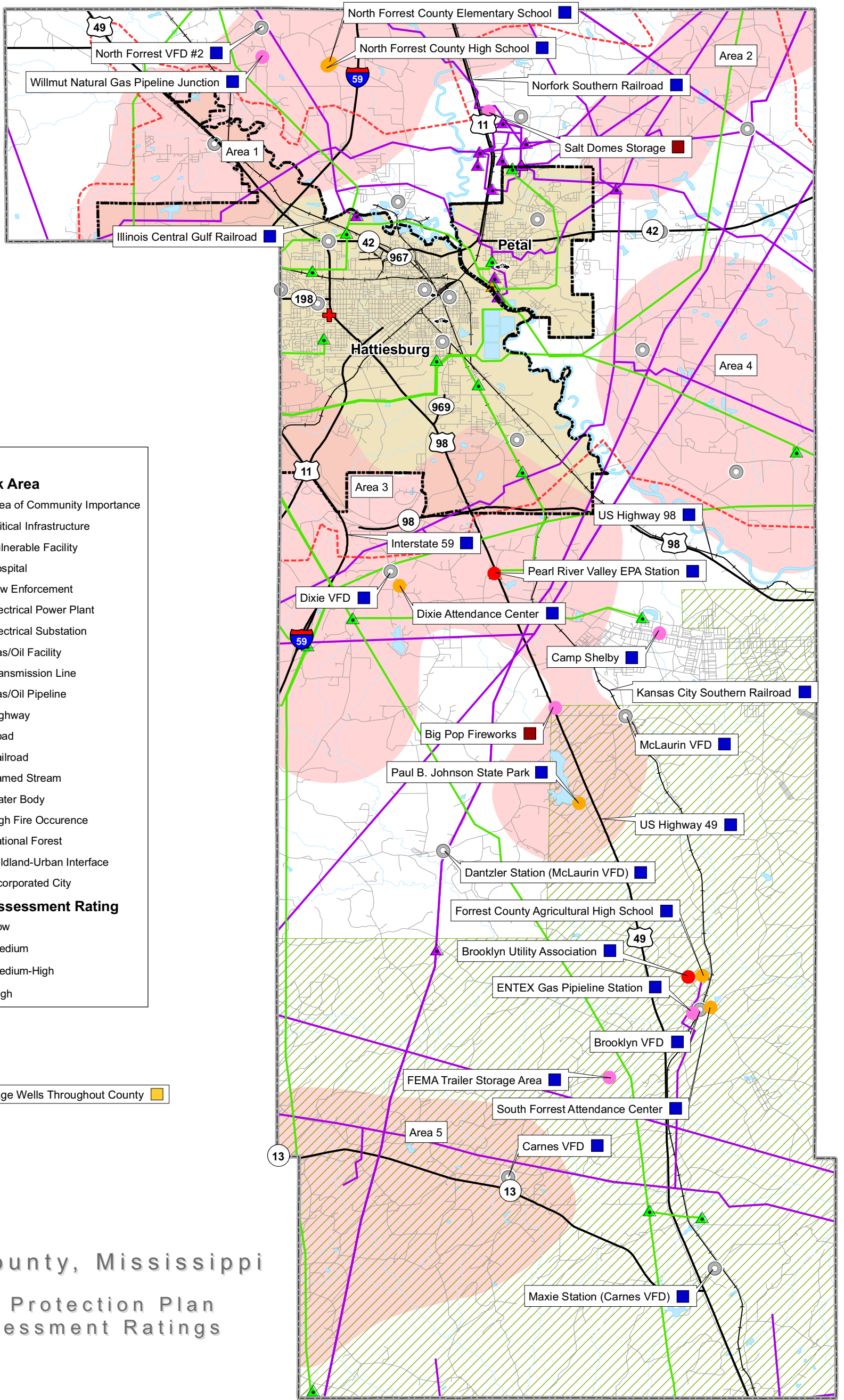


- + Hospital
- Fire Station
- Law Enforcement
- ▲ Electrical Power Plant
- ▲ Electrical Substation
- ▲ Gas/Oil Facility
- Transmission Line
- Gas/Oil Pipeline
- Highway
- Road
- Railroad
- Named Stream
- Water Body
- National Forest
- Wildland-Urban Interface
- Incorporated City

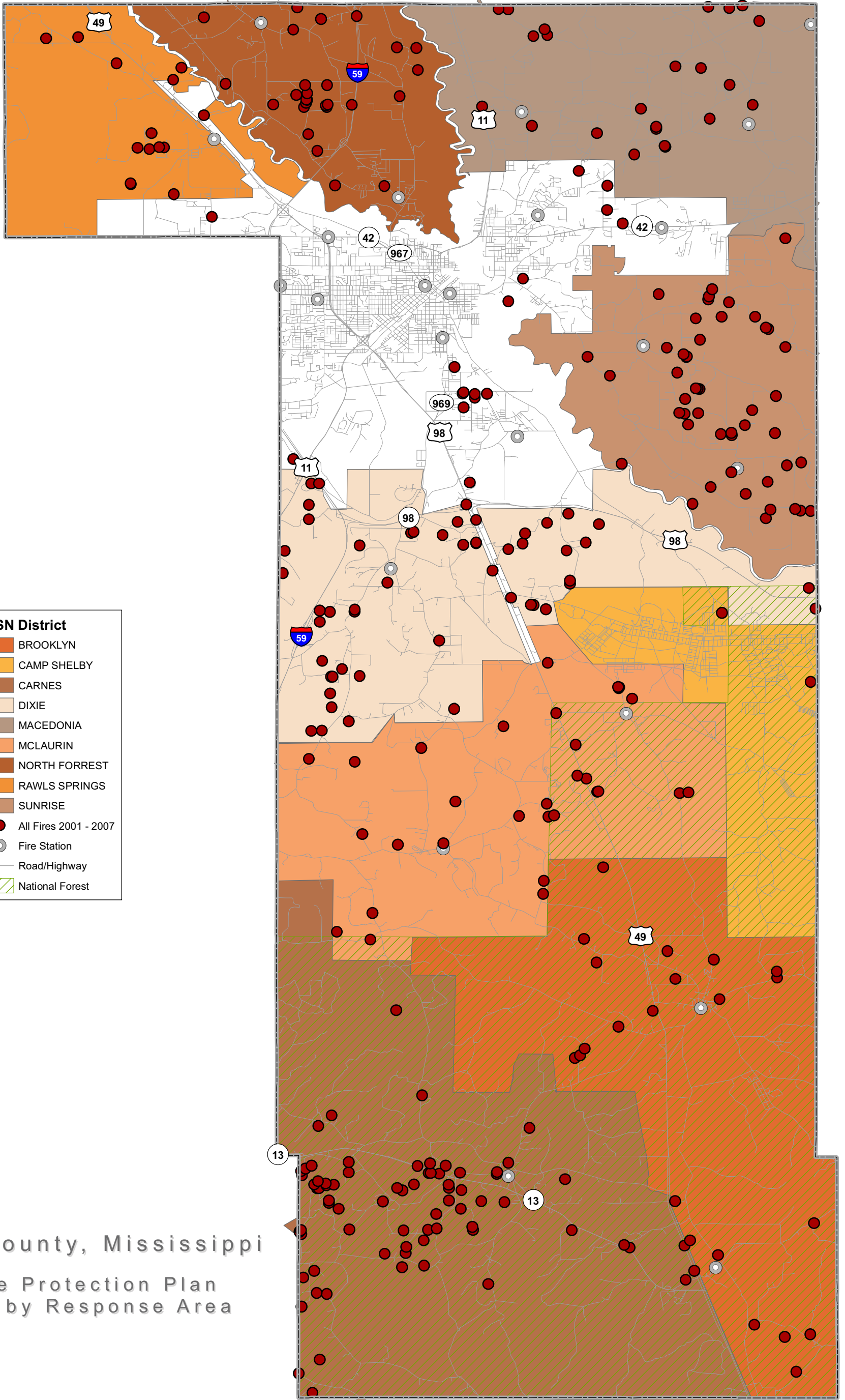
Forrest County, Mississippi
 Wildfire Protection Plan
 Base Map



Forrest County, Mississippi
 Wildfire Protection Plan
 High Occurrence Wildfire Areas

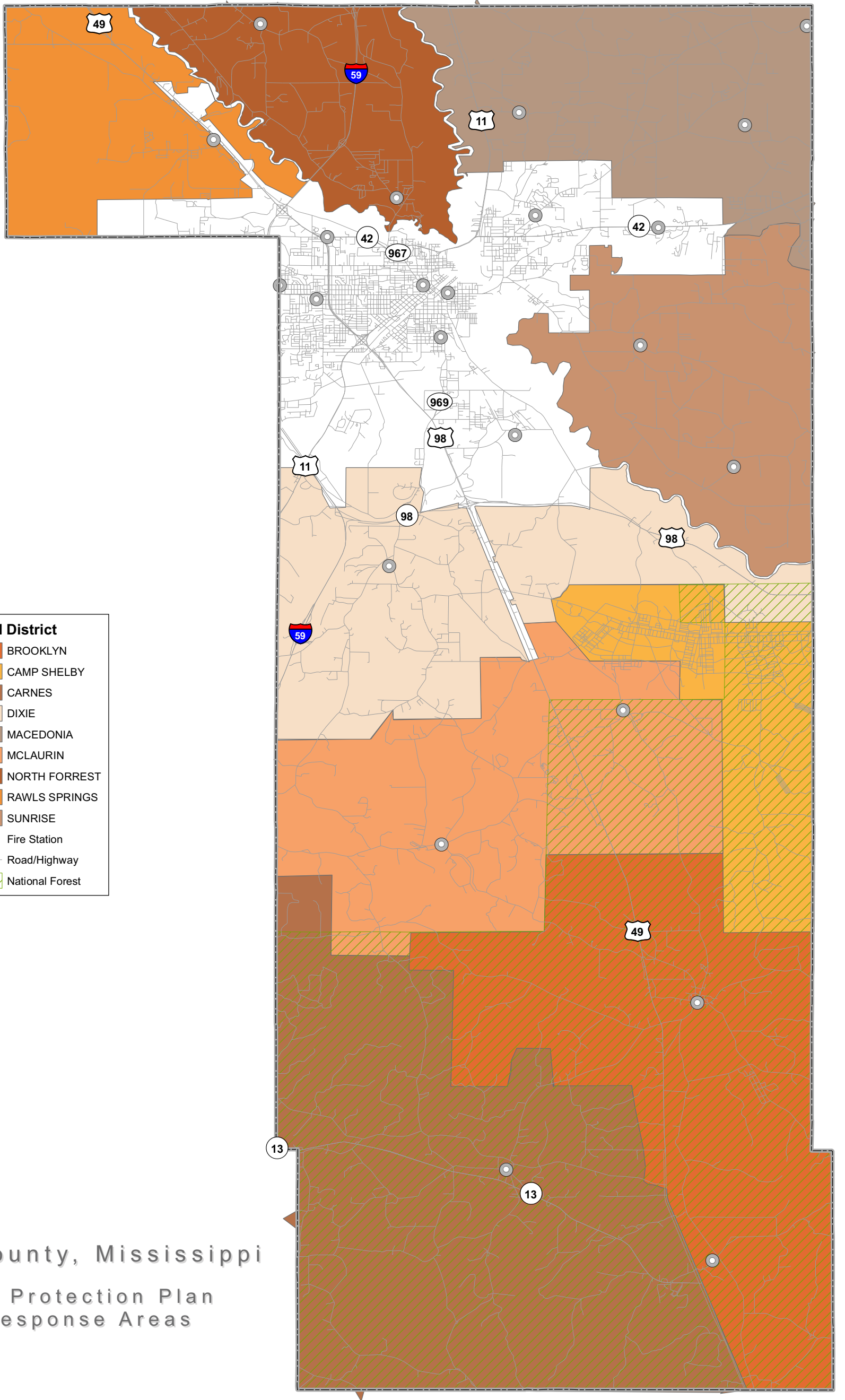


Forrest County, Mississippi
Wildfire Protection Plan
Risk Assessment Ratings



- ESN District**
- BROOKLYN
 - CAMP SHELBY
 - CARNES
 - DIXIE
 - MACEDONIA
 - MCLAURIN
 - NORTH FORREST
 - RAWLS SPRINGS
 - SUNRISE
 - All Fires 2001 - 2007
 - Fire Station
 - Road/Highway
 - National Forest

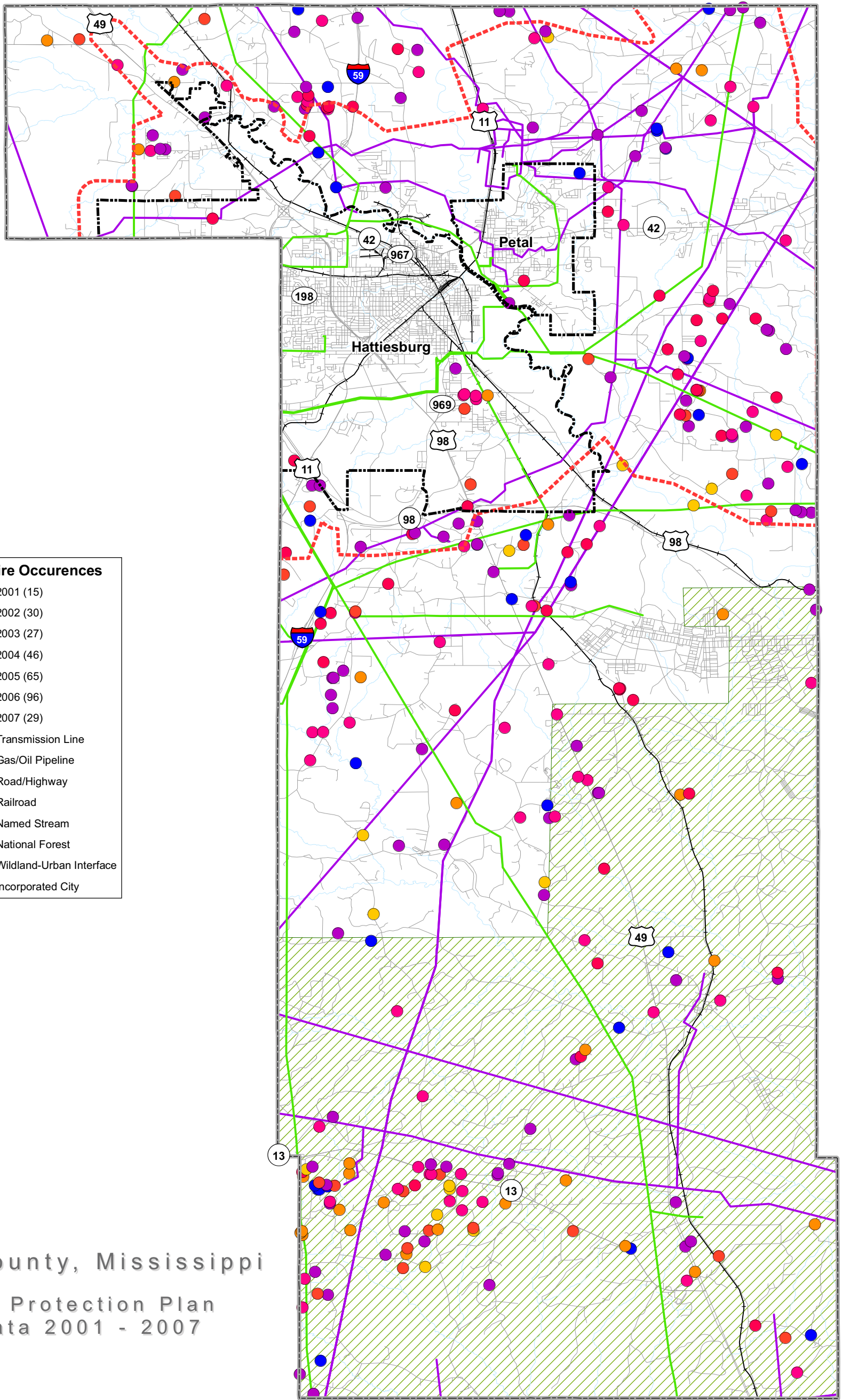
Forrest County, Mississippi
 Wildfire Protection Plan
 Wildfire by Response Area



ESN District

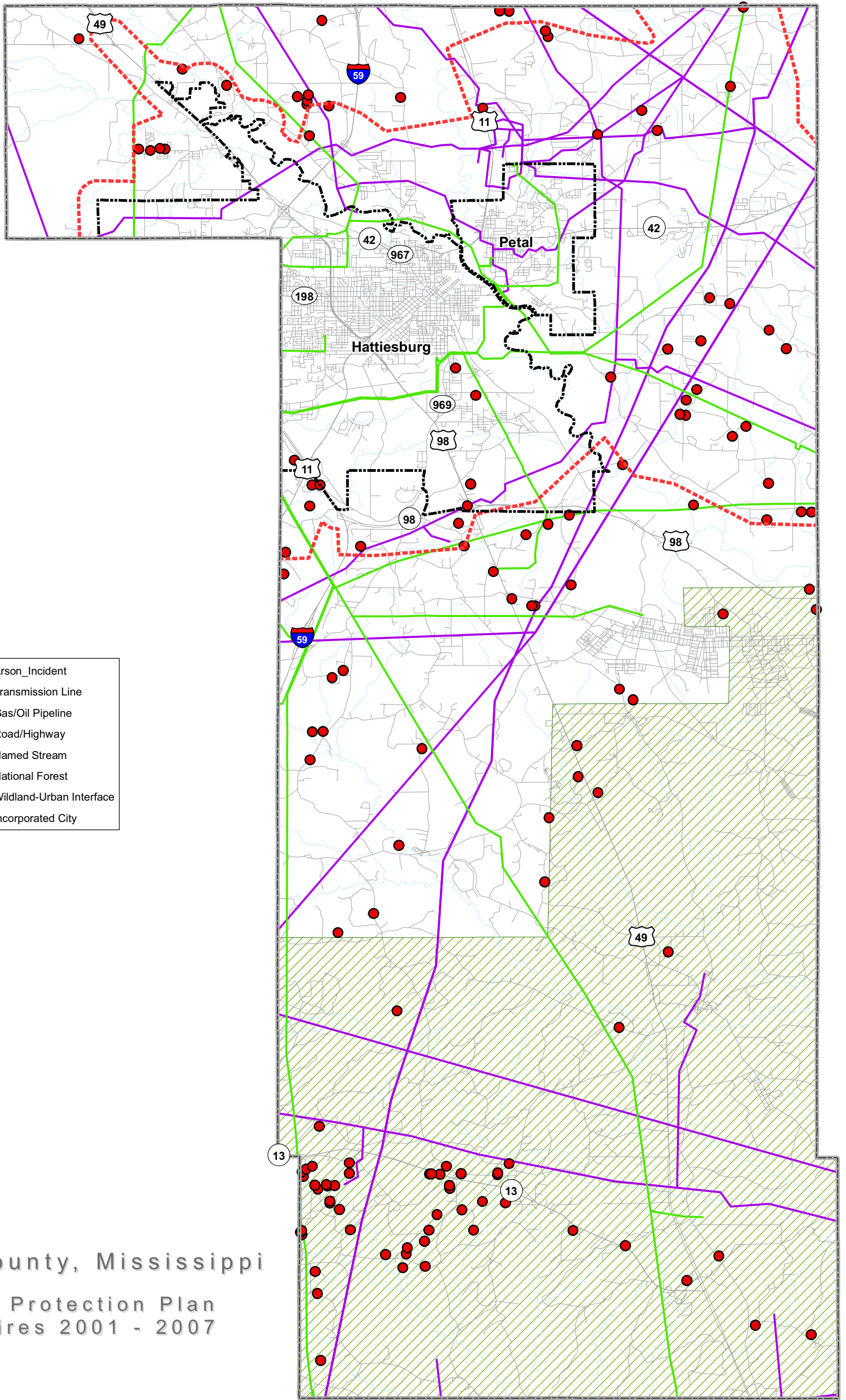
- BROOKLYN
- CAMP SHELBY
- CARNES
- DIXIE
- MACEDONIA
- MCLAURIN
- NORTH FORREST
- RAWLS SPRINGS
- SUNRISE
- Fire Station
- Road/Highway
- National Forest

Forrest County, Mississippi
 Wildfire Protection Plan
 Fire Response Areas



- Wildfire Occurrences**
- 2001 (15)
 - 2002 (30)
 - 2003 (27)
 - 2004 (46)
 - 2005 (65)
 - 2006 (96)
 - 2007 (29)
- Transmission Line
 - Gas/Oil Pipeline
 - Road/Highway
 - Railroad
 - Named Stream
 - ▨ National Forest
 - - - Wildland-Urban Interface
 - ▭ Incorporated City

Forrest County, Mississippi
 Wildfire Protection Plan
 Fire Data 2001 - 2007



- Arson_Incident
- Transmission Line
- Gas/Oil Pipeline
- Road/Highway
- Named Stream
- National Forest
- Wildland-Urban Interface
- Incorporated City

Forrest County, Mississippi

Wildfire Protection Plan
Arson Fires 2001 - 2007