



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most wildfires in Texas are preventable – more than 90% are caused by people

Most wildfires in Texas occur within 2 miles of a community

The Harris County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is the culmination of many months of work by many organizations and individuals. It represents the expertise of fire officials from local fire departments, Harris County, and the State. As part of a continuous, “evergreen” process, the Plan is designed to identify objectives for reducing the risks from wildland fire for the residents of Harris County.

Key findings include:

1. An increasing number of people and homes in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) of the County are at risk of damaging wildfires;
2. Overall, wildfire resources are adequate, but there is need for additional and improved wildfire protection especially during severe and extreme drought conditions;
3. Many residents have little understanding about their role in preparing for a potential WUI fire;
4. The cooperative involvement of many agencies and organizations is required to successfully implement this plan; and
5. The funding necessary to successfully address the issues has not been identified.

Recommendations are grouped into three primary categories:

1. Public education actions to involve property owners in efforts to improve their own protection;
2. Property development actions to increase awareness and mitigation of wildland fire risk; and
3. Activities to strengthen the wildfire suppression capabilities of the County’s fire departments.

Key actions include:

1. Begin a comprehensive program to better educate property owners about wildland fire risk, including use of *FireWise Communities*®, *Ready, Set, Go!*, and other programs through community groups such as the Harris County Citizen Corps – Fire Corps Program, the Harris County Fire Marshal’s Office, and the Texas Forest Service;
2. Improve tactical information through detailed community risk assessments, to include mapping of vegetation and fuel conditions, Fire Regimes and Condition Classes throughout the county;
3. Improve local fire department capabilities with need-based and appropriate recruitment, training, equipment, and pre-attack planning tools; and
4. Reduce structure ignitability through defensive space, use of fire-resistant materials, and fuel mitigation activities in priority neighborhoods based on wildfire risk assessment.

Communities at Risk of Wildland-Urban Interface Fire

The Texas Forest Service and The Texas A&M University System have developed a new, web-based tool to homeowners and communities determine wildfire risk and take measures to mitigate potential hazards. Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal, or TxWRAP, allows users to identify wildfire threats for a particular area based on landscape characteristics, historical fire occurrence, weather conditions, terrain and potential fire behavior. It also routes users to resources that can help them implement wildfire prevention practices. Access to the new tool is free by linking to www.texaswildfirerisk.com

Community leaders and local governments—such as civic planners, wildland fire managers, fire departments, and elected officials— can use the new tool to identify communities at greatest risk, define mitigation options, allocate resources, and prioritize programs that will better protect communities.

In Harris County, the communities with the greatest risk of wildland-urban interface fires are:

Bammel-N. Houston	Katy	The Woodlands
Cypress-Fairbanks	Klein	Tomball
Crosby	Rosehill	Waller
Hockley	Sheldon	
Huffman	Spring	

