COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Town of Chicog

ABSTRACT

The Town of Chicog, nestled in Northwest Washburn County, encompasses a portion of the Northwest Sands ecological landscape. This landscape is considered at the highest risk of catastrophic wildfires in the state of Wisconsin. Town officials worked collaboratively with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Washburn County, and the National Park Service to create a plan to address mitigating this risk within their jurisdiction. This document is the result of that planning process.

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Introduction

Wildland fire is a fundamental ecological component of many landscapes across America. Fire's impacts to lives and property, coupled with an increasing number of homes and development in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and rapidly growing costs of fire management has created the need to improve community preparedness and resiliency, by becoming "fire-adapted." Key elements of becoming a "fire-adapted community" involve recognizing fire's natural role in the ecosystem and taking a variety of proactive approaches to protecting the community against the devastating impacts of wildfires. This Community Wildfire Protection Plan will serve as the blueprint for improving community preparedness in northern Washburn County and will enable communities to implement strategic measures to reduce fire risks in one of Wisconsin's most fire-prone landscapes.

Purpose

The Town of Chicog Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a planning document designed to coordinate local wildfire mitigation efforts, enhance community preparedness and resiliency, and improve wildfire response capabilities. The creation of this CWPP is the direct result of a collaborative effort between the Town of Chicog in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and local stakeholder groups. While WDNR has taken the lead in coordinating pre- planning efforts and engaging the partners, the individual communities take real ownership of plan content and responsibility for implementation.

Enabling Federal Legislation

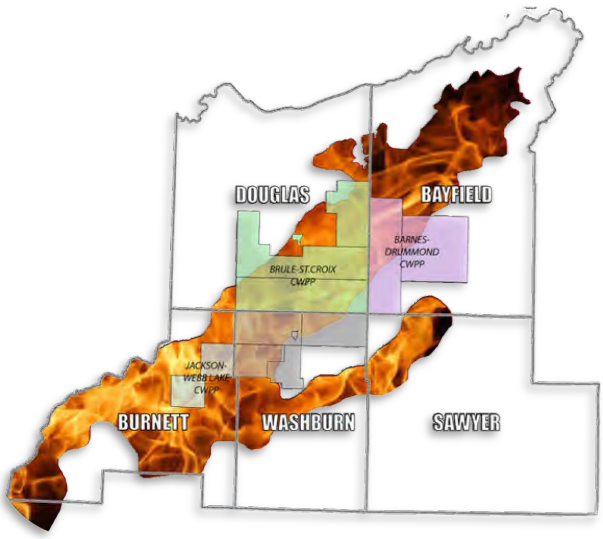
Community Wildfire Protection Plans are authorized and defined in Title I of the **Healthy Forests Restoration Act** (HFRA) passed by Congress on November 21, 2003 and signed into law by President Bush on December 3, 2003. The Act places renewed emphasis on community planning by extending benefits to communities who develop a plan that meets the minimum standards of the Act. Key among these benefits is the option of establishing a localized definition and boundary for the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and the opportunity to help shape local hazardous fuels treatment priorities. The Act establishes three minimum requirements for a CWPP. Under the Act, a CWPP must:

- Be developed collaboratively.
- Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuels reduction treatments and recommend types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and critical infrastructure.
- Recommend measures which private landowners and communities can utilize to reduce the ignitability of structures within the planning area.

The Act also establishes that the contents of the final plan must be mutually agreed upon by the participating local units of government, the local fire departments, and the state agency responsible for forest management (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources).

CWPP's in Wisconsin

Wisconsin's first CWPP was developed in 2006 for the towns of Barnes and Drummond in Bayfield County. Since that time 15 plans have been developed for high-priority areas across the state. While there is no CWPP- specific language in State Statues or Administrative Rules, a CWPP is required for certain types of hazardous fuels reduction and educational projects funded under Wisconsin's Hazard Mitigation Program, which is administered through WDNR-Forestry.



In March of 2010, WDNR completed an assessment of the state's wildland fire management program, which divided the state into 16 management zones, or *fire landscapes*, based on vegetation, ecology, soils, development, and forest sizes. The zones are used to help guide and prioritize resources and mitigation efforts. In 2008, the DNR-Division of Forestry created a detailed statewide GIS-based risk assessment model as part of the *Communities-at-Risk (CAR) project*. The fire landscapes and the CAR assessment provide the basis for prioritizing CWPP development in Wisconsin.

Collaboration

Development of the Town of Chicog CWPP was guided by a project steering committee comprised of local elected officials and fire department personnel, in cooperation with local stakeholder groups. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff served as technical advisors during the process.

Project Steering Committee

Brian Berg	Town of Chicog Supervisor/Town of Chicog Fire Department
Scott Pahos	Town of Chicog Chairman
Brad Harrison	Town of Chicog Fire Department
Terri Corrie	Town of Chicog, ESG Board Co-Leader/Chicog Acres FWS
Glenys Thorsen	Twin Lakes Preservation Association/Chicog Acres FWS
Dave Thorsen	Chicog Acres FWS
Nicholas Shope	St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Chief Ranger (NPS)
Ben Garrett	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, WUI Specialist

Other Contributors

Mike Peterson	Washburn County Forest Administrator
Carol Buck	Washburn County Emergency Manager

Planning Process

In 2014, following several months of extensive pre-planning and WDNR-led community engagement, the concept of a CWPP for northern Washburn County was realized. Plan development occurred over a 6-month period from July to December of 2014, during which the steering committee convened at six meetings held at different locations across the project area. The Wild and Scenic Rivers CWPP was completed in December of 2014 and formally approved by the participating entities in February of 2015. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources approved the plan in April of 2015.

After repeated attempts to set up meeting for the plan update, it was decided by members representing Town of Chicog to go forward and develop the plan just for Town of Chicog, so as not to let the plan expire. In February of 2025, the steering committee from Town of Chicog met to begin drafting a Community Wildfire Protection Plan within the boundaries of Town of Chicog.

A Shared Vision for Wildland Fire Management Goal & Objectives

The overarching goal of the Town of Chicog CWPP is to provide the broad visioning framework which will guide plan development. Supporting objectives are the measurable ends towards achieving the plan's goal.

Overarching Goal

Reduce the risk to life and property, increase fire fighter and public safety and improve preparedness.

Objectives

Partnership and Collaboration

Provide opportunities for meaningful discussions among community members and local and state government representatives regarding their priorities for local fire protection and forest management.

Fuels Reduction

Identify and evaluate hazardous fuel conditions with an emphasis near communities adjacent to forest lands, prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, and recommend the types and methods of treatment to protect the communities.

Recommend additional strategies for private, county and state lands to reduce hazardous fuel conditions and lessen the life safety and property damage risks from wildfires.

Structural Vulnerability Reduction

Address structural ignitability and recommend measures that homeowners and communities cantake to reduce the ignitability of structures.

Preparedness/Response

Improve fire agency awareness of wildland fire threats, vulnerabilities, and mitigationopportunities and options.

Improve county and local fire agency eligibility for funding assistance to reduce wildfire hazards, prepare residents for wildfire situations, and enhance fire agency response capabilities.

Education and Outreach

Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.

Better inform residents and landowners of best practices to prepare themselves and their property for a wildfire situation.

2015-2025 Accomplishments

After the original adoption of the Wild and Scenic Rivers CWPP in 2015, numerous projects were completed that will have lasting impacts in the project area.

Town of Chicog has implemented Emergency Evacuation Planning, Numerous educational events, a Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessment program, and a curbside fuel reduction pick-up program.

In addition, the Chicog Acres Firewise USA Site has been approved and maintained status since 2016. Chicog Acres has completed fuels reduction activities around homes owned by community members that lack the capacity using volunteer workdays. They hold annual educational events and draft newsletters to keep property owners informed of upcoming events and wildfire mitigation practices.

Town of Minong undertook clearing out heavy fuels from road rights-of-way along key corridors within the township. This undertaking created approximately 30 miles of shaded fuel breaks across the Jackpine areas of the town. Additionally, the Minong Fire Department conducted 1,100 HIZ assessments within their jurisdiction. Roughly 10% of these HIZ assessments included a “Follow-Up” visit to see items that were completed by homeowners after receiving the initial assessment.

Town of Frog Creek completed 35 miles of Right-of-Way fuels reduction projects in this same timeframe.

Washburn County installed new two-sided fire number signs at all existing residences. Multiple fire number signs on dead end drives and cul-de-sacs were also installed.

Community-Identified Concerns

Planning area concerns are intended to represent the most significant wildland fire-related threats and challenges within the project area. These concerns provided a context for group discussions and served as the precursor to the development of strategy ideas.

Lack of escape routes.

Threat of entrapment as developed areas may have only one way in or out in the event of a wildland fire. Escape routes need to be identified, and in some cases developed to establish a basic level of connectivity given various fire behavior situations. Existing escape routes are unsigned and cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Dead end roads.

Dead end roads oftentimes do not provide adequate turnaround space for large fire equipment or may be narrow and difficult to access. This situation is compounded by the presence of loose, sandy soils.

Driveway access.

Private driveways that have limited ingress and egress.

Private driveways in subdivisions.

Some privately constructed driveways and private roads within subdivisions are not built to specifications and present problems for emergency vehicle access.

Seasonal population influx.

The project area is subject to a large seasonal influx of visitors from outside of the area, many of whom may not be familiar with the fire risks associated with this fire landscape. Additionally, there are a significant number of seasonal homes and cabins located on lakes within the heart of barrens landscape.

Property owners not following Firewise concepts, no defensible space.

Few homes have defensible space or Firewise landscaping. Ladder fuels and accumulation of surface fuels on privately owned residences is a concern. Many permanent and seasonal structures located in high-risk vegetation types.

Narrow roads.

Areas where it is difficult or impossible to access with emergency response vehicles.

Fireworks, as an ignition source.

The personal use of fireworks has become increasingly commonplace, especially within the lake districts. Fireworks use, legal or otherwise, can be a source of fire ignition, especially during dry periods. Lack of compliance with existing rules is also a problem.

ATV's (access to remote areas)

Motorized recreation is popular within the project area. Wisconsin law requires that machines must be always equipped with a functional spark arrester, however there are concerns about compliance.

Additionally, ATVs provide a means to access remote locations where there was previously little human use or activity.

Firefighter retention and recruitment.

Local fire departments have difficulty in retaining existing and attracting new firefighters. The regions' population is aging, with few young people to fill open positions.

Unpredictable firefighter turnout (at incidents)

When a call comes into the local fire department, the number of firefighters reporting for duty is unpredictable.

Communication coverage concerns (gaps, cellular coverage)

The project area is rural and remote. Cellular phone coverage is limited and varies by carrier. Some locations are not served by cellular coverage and radio communication is impeded by local "dead spots."

New technologies affecting response capability (impeding).

Upgrading of communications technology radios affects interoperability.

Difficult Communications with Land Management Agencies

Communities don't have significant input on management of lands within the Riverway corridor. These lands are managed to meet NPS objectives, not necessarily local objectives and communities along the corridor. Increased communication from land management agencies could create opportunities for mor local input into management activities.

Inaccessible campsites within the National Scenic Riverway

There are dispersed, remote campsites located within the Riverway corridor. Communities are concerned that campfires could be a potential ignition source and that fires could escape and spread to adjoining properties. Additionally, a lack of fuels management has resulted in heavy fuel loads within areas of the Riverway corridor.

Scenic easements limit wildfire mitigation within Riverway corridor.

Scenic easements along Riverway corridor limit vegetation removal, making fuels reduction and fire management more challenging.

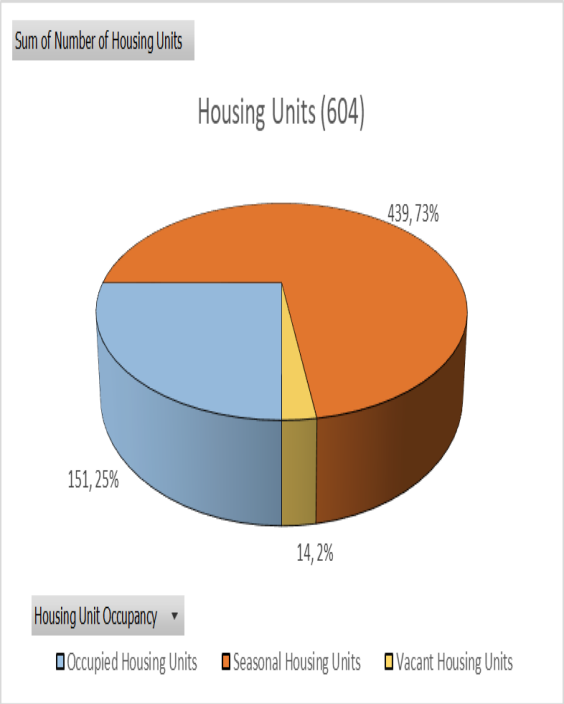
Need for additional water access/dry hydrants.

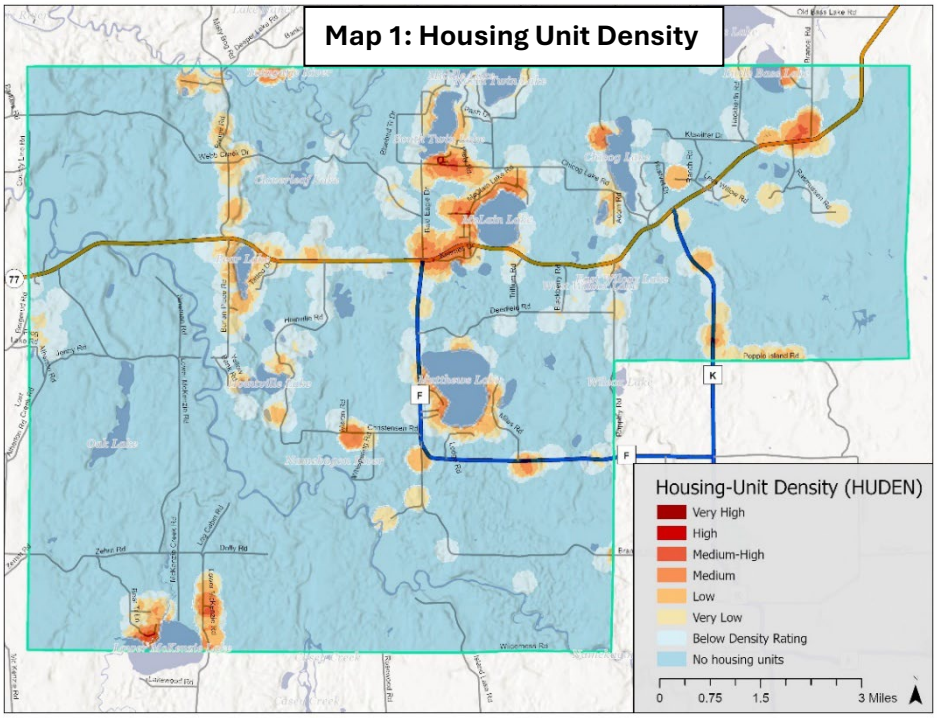
Dry hydrants make access to the water in ponds, lakes and streams quicker and safer than drafting (sucking water out of a pond, lake or stream). By installing a "Direct Connection" appliance such as a dry hydrant, crews no longer need to deploy long lengths of drafting hose and bulky strainers into the water source.

Project Area

The project area covers 42.8 square miles and includes the unincorporated civil town of Chicog in Washburn County, Wisconsin. The population is 295 equating to 6.9 people per square mile. This compares with a statewide average of 105 persons per square mile. According to the 2022 census data, the town has 604 housing units of which approximately 453 (75%) of the housing units are vacant or seasonal in nature.

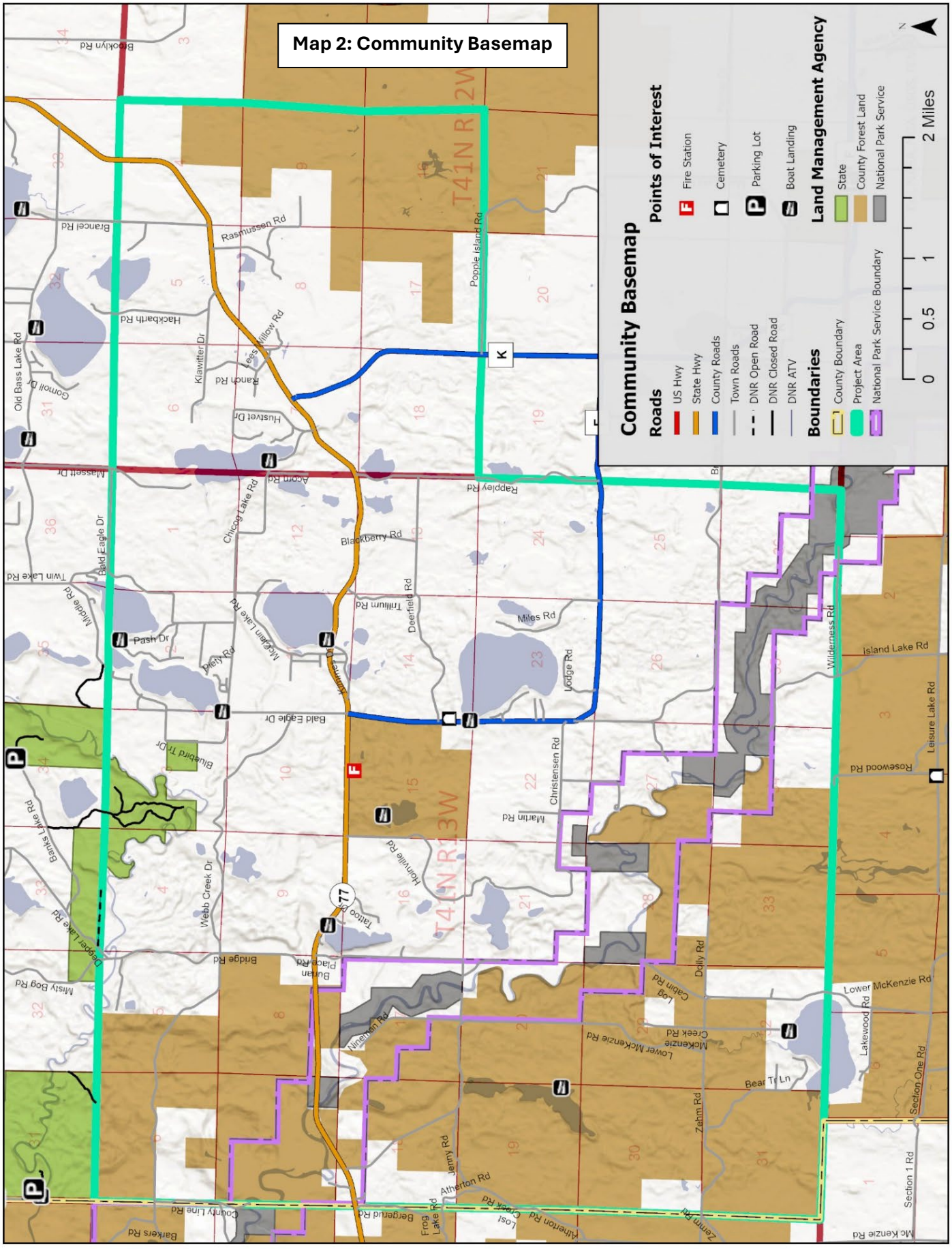
Outdoor recreation and tourism are economically important to the region, consequently there are a significant number of seasonally occupied homes and cabins concentrated along lakes and scattered throughout woodlands. During the summer months the area's population more than doubles and outdoor recreation on lakes, rivers and trails increases substantially. There are few platted rural subdivisions within project area.





Community Asset Mapping

The maps on the preceding pages depict community assets and resources within the project area. The *Base Map* represents a compilation of spatial data depicting the core elements of community infrastructure, roadways, inhabited areas, and areas of community importance. To supplement the community base map, the project steering committee identified the geographic locations of specific community assets which represent the key social, cultural, economic, recreational, aesthetic and emergency response elements within the project area. These elements were mapped at a project-level scale *(Community Assets)* to aid in risk assessment and analysis.


Map 2: Community Basemap
Community Basemap
Roads
US Hwy
State Hwy
County Roads
Town Roads
DNR Open Road
DNR Closed Road
DNR ATV
Boundaries
County Boundary
Project Area
National Park Service Boundary
Points of Interest
Fire Station
Cemetery
Parking Lot
Boat Landing
Land Management Agency
State
County Forest Land
National Park Service
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
T41N R12W
T41N R13W
Rasmussen Rd
Popple Island Rd
Rappley Rd
Blackberry Rd
Miles Rd
Island Lake Rd
Leisure Lake Rd
Rosewood Rd
Lower McKenzie Rd
Section One Rd
Section 1 Rd
Mc Kenzie Rd
Lakewood Rd
Wilderness Rd
Lodge Rd
Christensen Rd
Martin Rd
Deerfield Rd
Trillium Rd
Bald Eagle Dr
Pash Dr
Twin Lake Rd
Chicog Lake Rd
Acorn Rd
Hackbarth Rd
Branchel Rd
Old Bass Lake Rd
Klawitter Dr
Lees Willow Rd
Ranon Rd
Husvet Dr
Gomoll Dr
Massett Dr
Middle Rd
Bald Eagle Dr
Blackbird Tr Dr
Banks Lake Rd
Deeper Lake Rd
Misty Bog Rd
Webb Creek Dr
Bridge Rd
Burian Place Rd
Tattoo Dr
Hornville Rd
Ninemile Rd
Log Cabin Rd
Ddily Rd
Lower McKenzie Creek Rd
Bear Tr Ln
Zehm Rd
Jenny Rd
Atherton Rd
Frog Lake Rd
Bergerud Rd
County Line Rd
Barkers Rd
Brooklyn Rd
Hackbarth Rd
Gomoll Dr
Old Bass Lake Rd
Klawitter Dr
Lees Willow Rd
Ranon Rd
Husvet Dr
Massett Dr
Middle Rd
Twin Lake Rd
Bald Eagle Dr
Pash Dr
Chicog Lake Rd
Acorn Rd
Blackberry Rd
Trillium Rd
Deerfield Rd
Miles Rd
Lodge Rd
Wilderness Rd
Island Lake Rd
Leisure Lake Rd
Rosewood Rd
Christensen Rd
Martin Rd
Hornville Rd
Tattoo Dr
Webb Creek Dr
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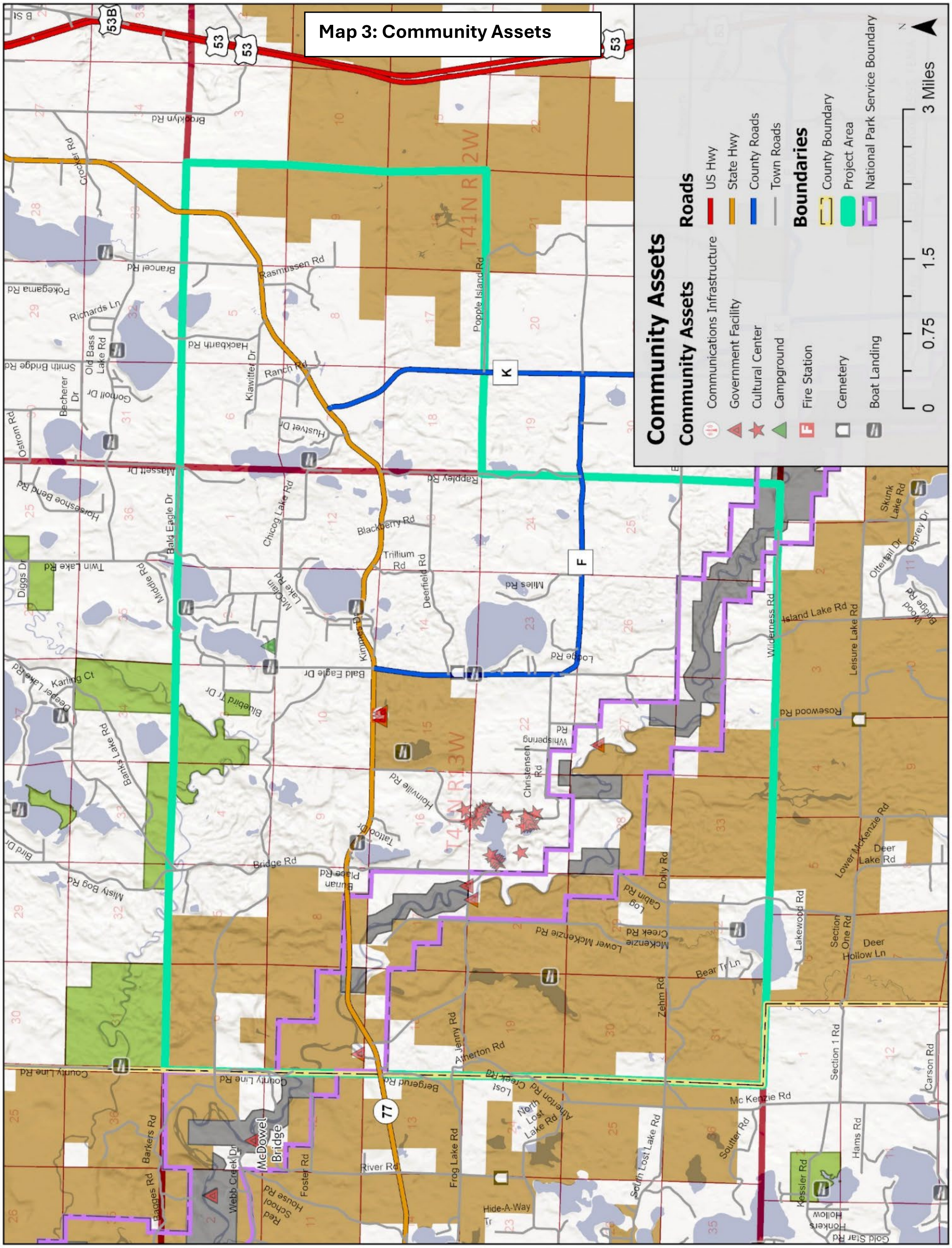
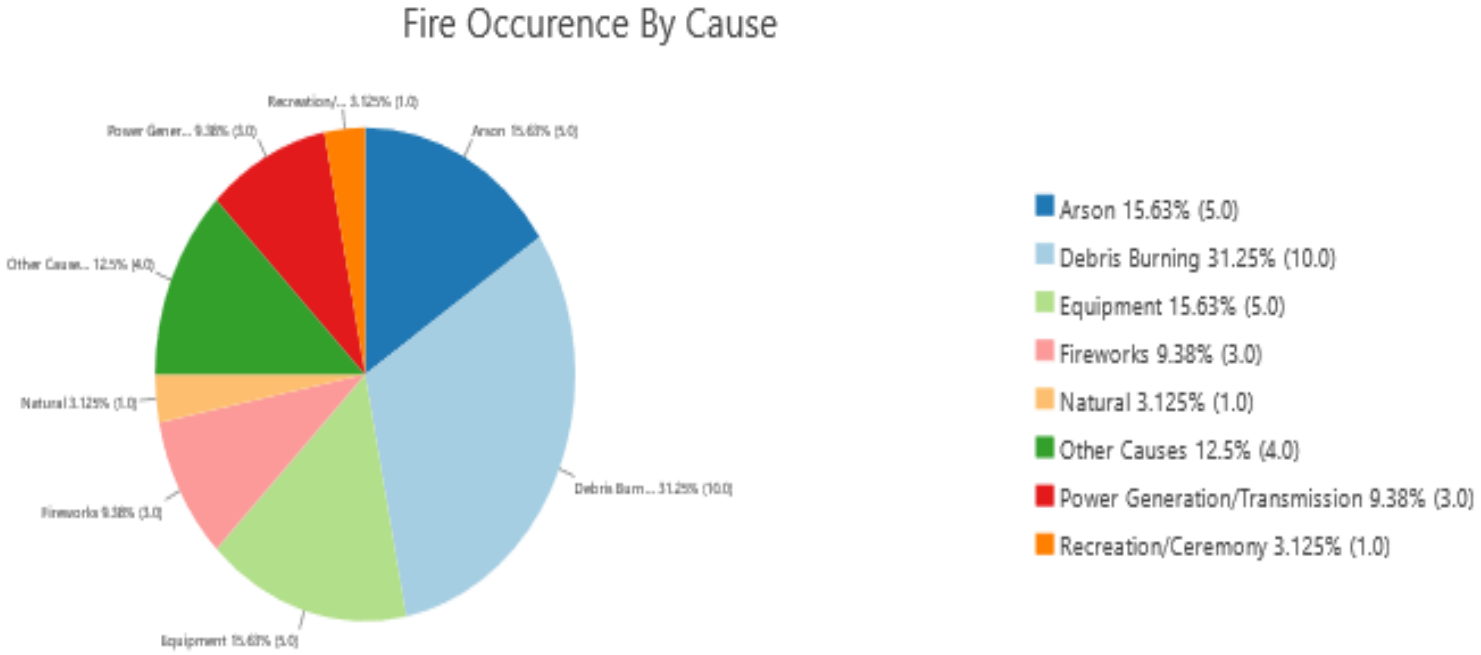
Misty Bog Rd
Deeper Lake Rd
Banks Lake Rd
Blackbird Tr Dr
Bald Eagle Dr
Log Cabin Rd
Ddily Rd
Lower McKenzie Creek Rd
Lakewood Rd
Section One Rd
Section 1 Rd
Mc Kenzie Rd
Zehm Rd
Jenny Rd
Atherton Rd
Frog Lake Rd
Bergerud Rd
County Line Rd
Barkers Rd
Ninemile Rd
Bear Tr Ln
Lower McKenzie Creek Rd
Lost Creek Rd
Zehm Rd
K
F
77

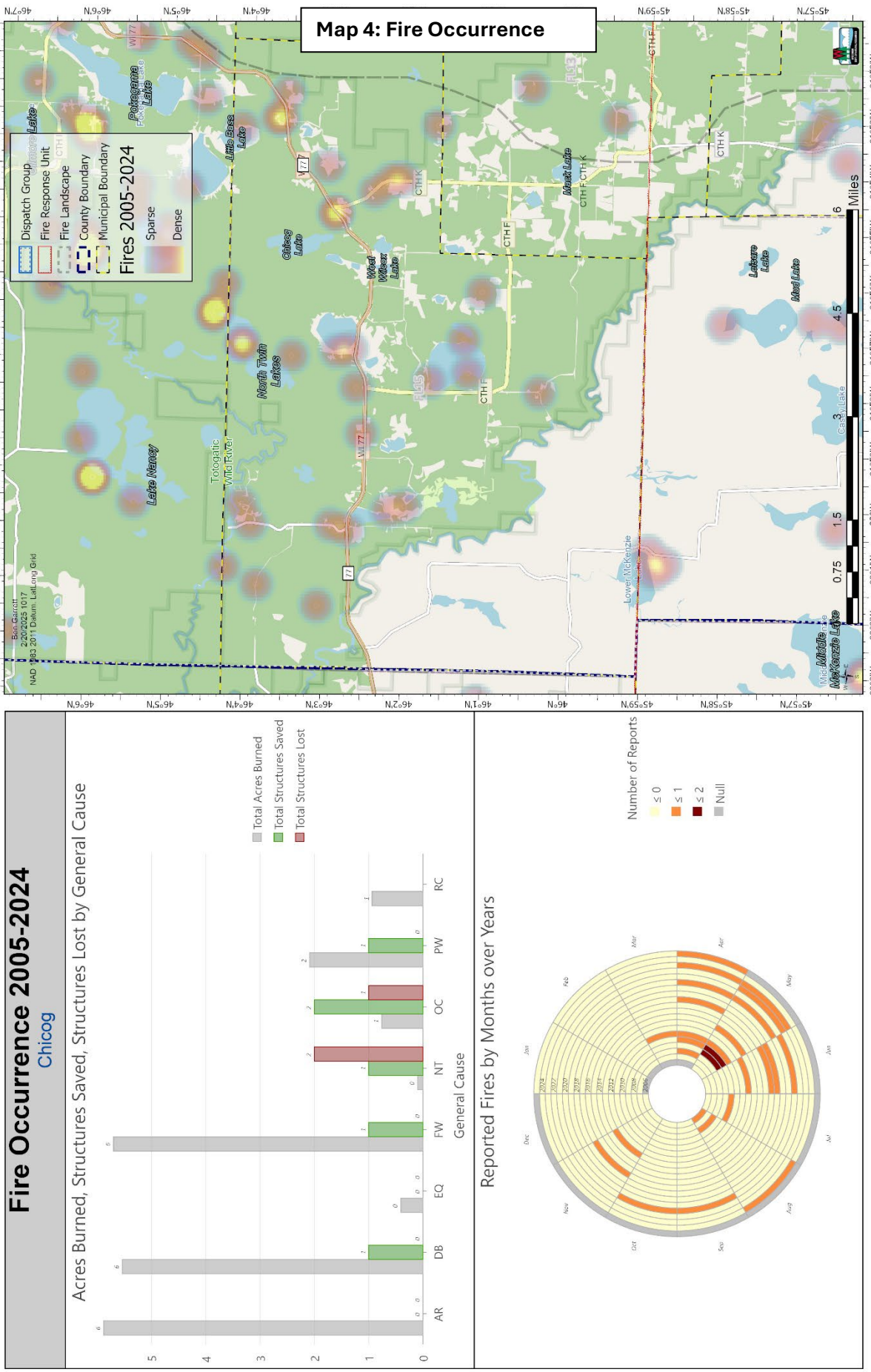

Map 3: Community Assets
Community Assets
Community Assets
Communications Infrastructure
Government Facility
Cultural Center
Campground
Fire Station
Cemetery
Boat Landing
Roads
US Hwy
State Hwy
County Roads
Town Roads
Boundaries
County Boundary
Project Area
National Park Service Boundary
0
0.75
1.5
3 Miles
N
T41N R12W
T41N R13W

Fire History

The project area lies within the Northwest Sands Ecological Landscape of northwestern Wisconsin. This region corresponds to the WDNR's fire landscape 15, the highest risk landscape for catastrophic wildfire. The sandy, rapidly draining soils favor dry site vegetation types such as jack pine, scrub oak and grasslands. Within this landscape, fire is an important component of the natural disturbance regime and region has experienced large stand-replacing wildfires in the modern era. In 1977, the Five Mile Tower Fire consumed over 13,000 acres in Washburn and Douglas Counties. This fire was to become one of the largest wildfires in Wisconsin history, requiring the efforts of over 1,600 citizen volunteers and firefighters to bring the conflagration under control. On April 21, 1980, the Ekdall Church Fire in western Burnett County consumed 4,600 acres along with 73 homes, cabins and outbuildings while 82 structures were saved. The following day in Washburn County, with fire resources stretched thin due to the Ekdall fire, the Oak Lake Fire consumed over 11,000 acres. While 159 homes, cabins & outbuildings were lost in the Oak Lake Fire, an estimated 254 were saved as a direct result of firefighter actions. These three major fires, and the level of rural structural involvement, changed the way fire managers deal with the complexities of a wildfire in the Wildland-Urban interface. A recent large-scale fire event has rekindled safety and preparedness concerns in the region. On the afternoon of May 14, 2013, the Germann Road Fire began in the Town of Gordon in Douglas County, burning into the Town of Highland and destroying 47 structures, including 17 homes. No injuries were reported as firefighters battled the largest forest fire to hit northern Wisconsin in more than 30 years.

The modern (2005-2024) fire occurrence history is depicted in the graphic below. Over the 20-year period there were a total of 32 wildland fires documented in the project area. Most wildland fires were human caused, either through debris burning, equipment use or other miscellaneous activities such as fireworks use, improper ash disposal or structure fires. Lightning-caused fires accounted for less than 6 percent of all wildland fires reported during this period. Embedded within the "miscellaneous" fire causes are power line fires, which accounted for one out of every ten reported fires. High-voltage lines can start fires when they cross, touch tree branches or hit the ground, causing the electrical current to arc in explosions ofsparks.

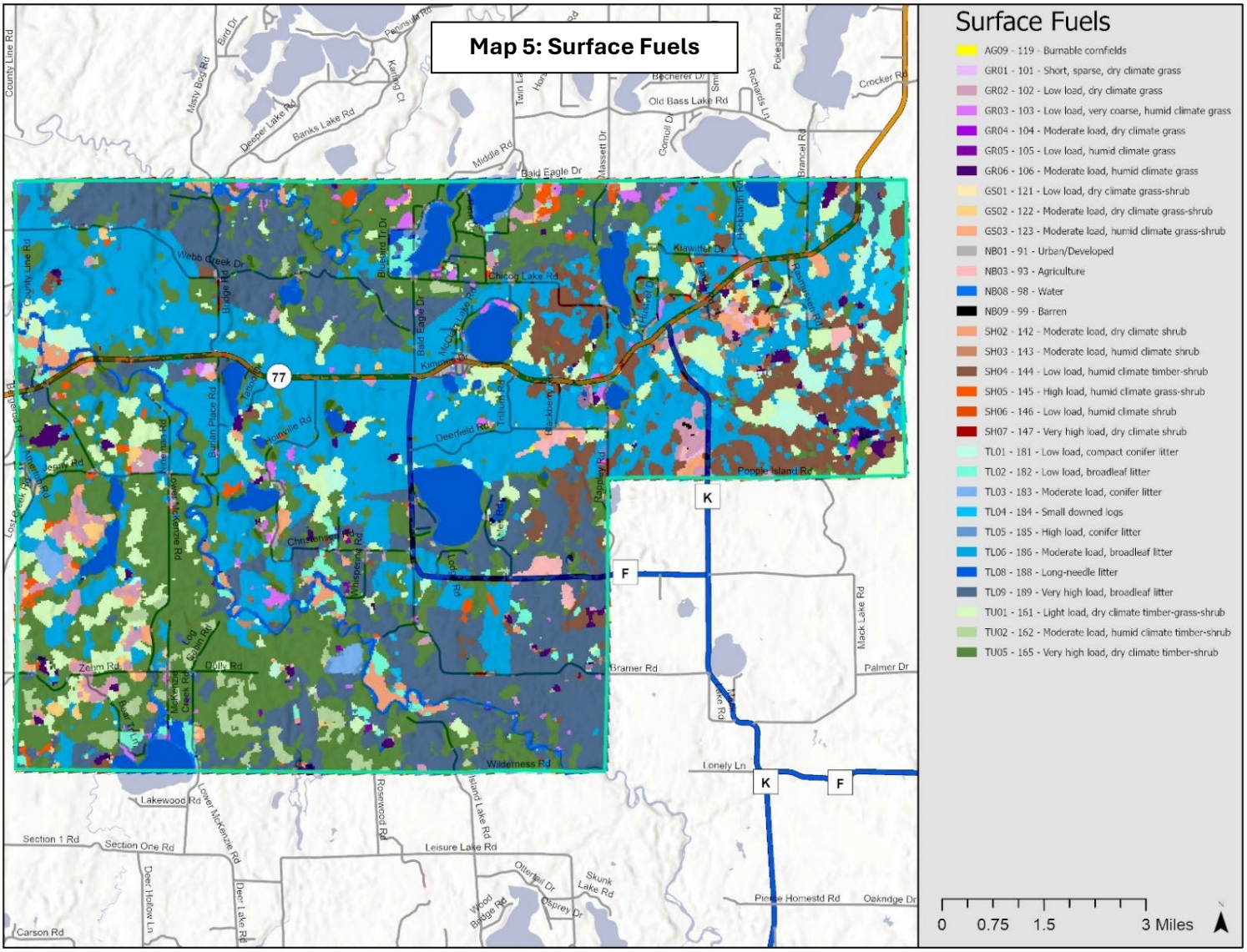



Map 4: Fire Occurrence
Dispatch Group
Fire Response Unit
Fire Landscape
County Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Fires 2005-2024
Sparse
Dense
Miles
Fire Occurrence 2005-2024
Chicog
Acres Burned, Structures Saved, Structures Lost by General Cause
Total Acres Burned
Total Structures Saved
Total Structures Lost
AR
DB
EQ
FW
NT
OC
PW
RC
General Cause
Reported Fires by Months over Years
Number of Reports
≤ 0
≤ 1
≤ 2
Null

Most wildland fires reported occurred during the spring months before vegetation “green-up”, with the statistical peak number of fires occurring during the second to third week of April. The average size of reported fires was 0.92 acres with 97 percent of all fires being less than 5.0 acres in size. The largest reported fire during the period was 5.5 acres in size and occurred on April 13, 2005.

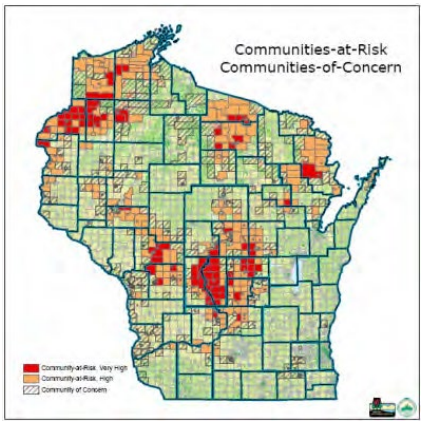
Vegetation

Historically, the dominant vegetation types within the barrens included grasses, shrubs, and forbs, with occasional scattered stands of trees, primarily jack pine. The vegetative composition of this landscape has changed since European settlement, due to logging, tree planting and fire suppression. The modern landscape is a mosaic of barrens-type vegetation, wetlands, oak, aspen and mixed hardwood and coniferous forest. Efforts are underway to restore native barrens habitat within the Namakagon Barrens Wildlife Area. A sharp contrast in vegetation types delineates the boundary between the barrens and the mesic hardwood forests to the south and east. These areas area dominated by a northern hardwood, aspen and wetlands and are notably less fire prone than the pine barrens.



Wildland Fire Risk Assessment

Assessing fire risk is more complex than simply examining ecosystem types and vegetative composition. Assessing true risk involves accounting for community vulnerabilities and assets which could be compromised in the event of a wildland fire. Furthermore, a local risk model may also assess the ability of to react and respond to an incident.



The Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with federal and tribal partners, completed a statewide assessment of Communities at Risk (CAR) in 2008. The geospatial model used incorporates hazard values based on vegetation types and historical fire conditions, values at risk and ignition probability to determine overall risk. In Wisconsin, Communities at Risk are defined at the minor civil division (MCD) or town level. Those MCD's determined to have a high or very high threat of wildfire in the CAR assessment were considered Communities-at- Risk. Towns that have concentrated portions of their land area in high wildfire risk areas but were not classified as CAR's due to lower overall fire danger were classified as a "Community of Concern." The Town of Chicog is identified as a Communities at Very High Risk.

The project area falls within fire landscape 15 (Northwest Sands), which is the highest risk landscape identified by the state. Landscape 15 extends from Burnett County northeasterly to the Bayfield Peninsula. Local fire history indicates that past fire activity has been heavily concentrated within the high structure density lake areas and adjoining wildlands in the western half of the project area. Here, the dominant vegetation types are characteristic of the barrens landscape (jack pine, red pine, pin oak, shrubs). Many seasonal and year-round homes have been constructed along the lakeshores and many cabins and hunting shacks dot the forested outlying areas. Like Wisconsin as a whole, human activities are the primary source of fire ignitions within the project area. The presence of people, structures, and hazardous fuels in the wildland- urban interface creates an array of potential fire risk factors and presents many fire suppression challenges.

Methodology

The wildland fire risk assessment for northern Washburn County is based on the State of Wisconsin CAR assessment. The model uses the same primary inputs used in the Wisconsin CAR model, although it has been modified with updated local structure and road data.

Hazard

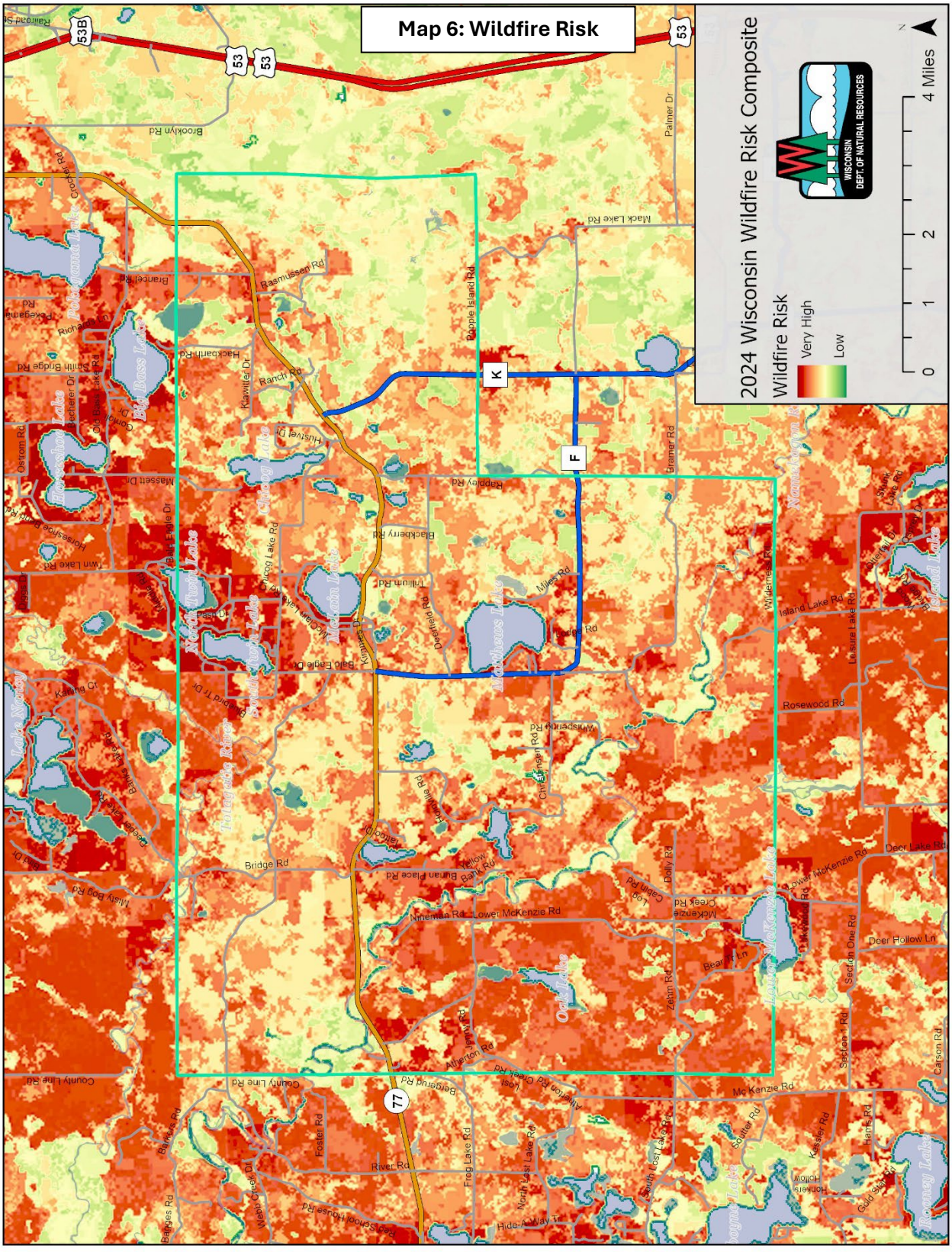
The relative likelihood that an ignited wildfire will achieve sufficient intensity to threaten life or property based on land cover type, and historic fire regime.

Wildland-Urban Interface

This element of the model is comprised of two primary inputs: Wildland-Urban Interface, and vegetation. WUI data based on the 2010 Census was obtained from the UW-Madison SILVIS lab, while the vegetation component comes from the WISCLAND2 land cover data set, which was derived from LANDFIRE Thematic Mapper satellite imagery from 2022.

Risk

Describes the relative likelihood of a wildfire ignition. The primary inputs are structure density, historic fire occurrence density and proximity to roads, rail lines and trails (potential ignition sources). The statewide CAR model used population density at the Census block level as a primary input. Due to the significant number of seasonal residents present in the project area, total housing density was used as an input rather than block-level population, which does not account for seasonal persons.



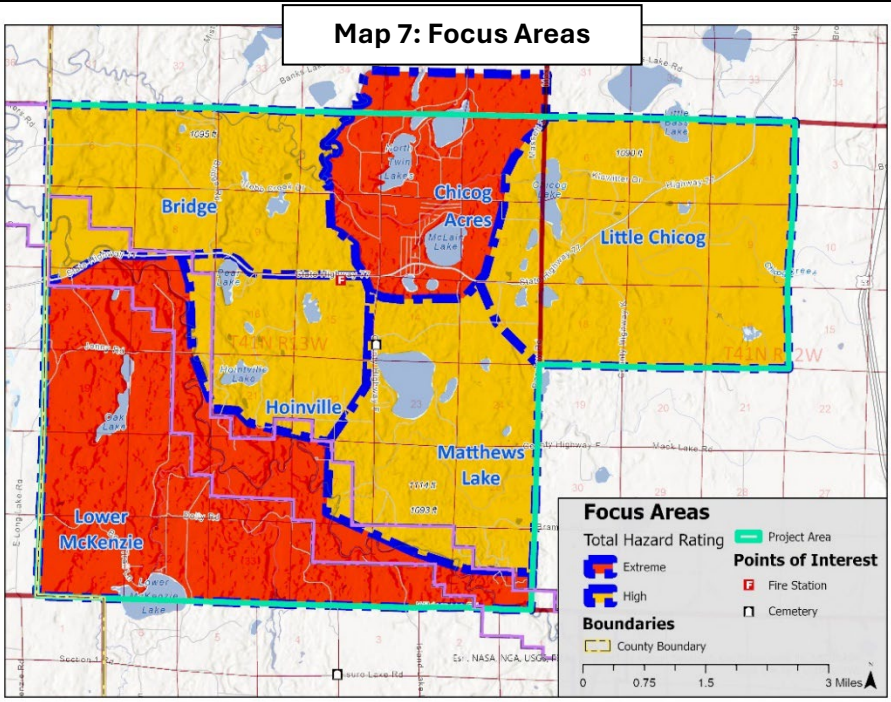
Project Focus Areas

The entire project area was analyzed, and then the CWPP Advisory Committee identified six "Focus Areas" with similar risk and cohesive social groups (See Map 7). These focus areas were then assessed by the Wisconsin DNR Wildland Urban Interface Specialist, using the Northeast-Midwest Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal Community Assessor tool. This process included site visits to gain an understanding of specific risk themes within each of the areas. This tool calculated overall hazard ratings for each area as well as scores for Suppression Hazards, Surrounding Environment Hazards, and Structure Hazards. The overall hazard computed a numeric score and adjective ratings in categories from low to extreme.

Table 1: Project Area Risk Assessment

Name	Total Hazard Score	Total Hazard Rating	Suppression Hazard Rating	Surrounding Environment Hazard Rating	Structures hazard Rating	Number of Structures
Lower McKenzie	209	Extreme	High	Extreme	High	87
Chicog Acres	189	Extreme	Moderate	Extreme	High	263
Bridge	175	High	High	Extreme	High	56
Hoinville	158	High	High	Extreme	High	76
Matthews Lake	135	High	Moderate	High	High	91
Little Chicog	115	High	Low	Moderate	High	93

Map 7: Focus Areas



Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is the area where structures and human development intermingle with undeveloped wildlands. It is within these areas where wildfire poses the greatest risk to human lives and property. Because fuels reduction projects usually occur in the WUI, a localized definition can assist communities in meeting local objectives. **With both seasonal and permanent housing development widely distributed across the landscape, the participating communities identified the entire project area as wildland-urban interface.**

Fire Management

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The state agency responsible for initial attack on all wildfires within the project area is the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. WDNR can also issue emergency burning restrictions or institute fire bans. WDNR has several property holdings within the project area, including Fishery Areas, Wildlife Areas and a State Natural Area.

Chapter 26.11(1), Wisconsin State Statutes, gives the WDNR authority for statewide forest fire protection; however, the agency doesn't exercise that authority across the entire state. Wildfire management involves the prevention, detection, control, containment, and suppression of a forest fire. Wildfire managers prioritize the protection of lives, property, and resources – in that order. The challenge of every manager is to minimize the damage done by wildfire, while at the same time ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

Wisconsin's Forest Fire Protection Program identifies three types of fire protection areas: *intensive*, *extensive* and *cooperative*. The project area lies entirely within the intensive protection area, which encompasses the most heavily forested and highest fire hazards/risk in the state.

The project area is within the Spooner Fire Control Dispatch Group. A Dispatch Group is a collection of Fire Response Units (FRU), or ranger stations that are directed by a single Area Forestry Leader and dispatched out of a common location. The project area is within the Minong FRU. Fire suppression activities are coordinated through the local WDNR ranger stations in Minong and Spooner. WDNR, working in conjunction with local fire departments also serves a regional lead on wildfire prevention, education, and coordination efforts.

Wildfire detection involves citizen reporting, WDNR aircraft. Aircraft report fires to the dispatchers in the dispatch groups spread across the state.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources owns and manages 278 acres of multi-use lands within the project area.

Washburn County

Washburn County owns and manages over 9,400 acres of multi-use lands within the project area. County Forest lands are managed in accordance with the Washburn County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The fire management program on the County Forest includes the option to use of prescribed fire for vegetation and wildlife habitat management. While the County Forest generally does not engage in vegetative treatments specific to fuels reduction or the creation of fuel breaks, it does have the ability to integrate fuels reduction into the timber harvest and vegetation management program. The county also may impose access restrictions during times of high fire hazard. County ordinances prohibit or limit the use of open fires or campingon

County Forest lands. Dispersed camping is also prohibited in Casey, Chicog, Springbrook or Minong during the peak fire risk months of April and May.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is responsible for prevention, detection, and suppression of wildland fires within the Washburn County Forest. The forestry department operates under a cooperative MOU with DNR Fire Control that commits the county to assist with wildfire suppression on County Forest lands and on other private lands at the request of DNR.

Municipalities

The project area is served by Chicog Volunteer Fire Department. Local volunteer fire departments are responsible for structural fire suppression and emergency services and are important partners in Wisconsin's Forest Fire Program. In the event of a wildfire, the WDNR serves as incident commander under a unified command structure, although the local fire department(s) is often the first fire suppression entity to arrive at the scene. Chicog Volunteer Fire Department is party to written mutual aid agreements with the state. Based on need, these agreements are activated by the WDNR so that local fire departments, forestry offices, highway departments, and other such qualified entities provide support. The Town of Chicog has a locally adopted a Municipal Emergency Operations Plan (M-EOP) which outlines the standard operating procedures for the community in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Chicog Fire Department

The Town of Chicog Fire Department provides structural fire protect and wildland fire support to the Town of Chicog. The service area covers by the Department covers approximately 45.5 square miles.

Fire Department Concerns Relative to Wildfire

1. Challenge of notification of residents in case of large (project) fire.
2. Evacuation of residents and guests (evacuation routes in area of many dead ends). There is currently no signage to identify primary escape routes.
3. The Town provides home ignition zone assessments to property owners who request this service. There has been a lack of response by residents to offers of assessments and Firewise message.
4. Many driveways are not up to code and cannot support large equipment.
5. Need for a dry hydrant at the Heartwood Resort.
6. Radio and cell phone communication are spotty in many parts of the community. The town has discussed the possibility of a local fire radio repeater, but currently the cost is prohibitive. Town has a reserved location for town use on the Verizon tower being built on the Town/Fire Hall site. Concerned that the next wave of radio changes will result have more problems in the county and town with lost signals.
7. Aging of equipment will result in more and more problems and cost.
8. Town has only two mobile GPS units and no GPS software.

An education and outreach-based focus is needed to raise awareness and to help private landowners develop defensible spaces around structures. Improving access to water sources and hazardous fuels reduction are also needed, along with enhanced firefighter recruitment and retention efforts. The town uses an education-based approach on efforts to reduce structural ignitability, including publishing an annual newsletter that includes Firewise and community preparedness information. The Chicog Fire Department offers educational materials to the public and provides home ignition zone assessments to property owners upon request. The town also encourages property owners to have assessments completed and to contact insurance providers to determine if the property is eligible for premium discounts.

Besides residences, fuels reduction efforts in Chicog should focus on protecting wildlife habitat and/or natural areas, developed recreation areas and critical infrastructure. Chicog has a brush disposal site (closed dump), where residents can drop off yard waste. The town also has a chipper and holds 1 or 2 brush pickup days for the public each year, although public response has been lower than expected.

In terms of improving preparedness in the Town of Chicog, several issues have been identified. There is a need for fast communication which is integrated into the ESG zone phone calling network. The town must also keep updated records on the location of special needs populations within the community. There is also a significant need to promote the awareness of escape routes to citizens and visitors to the area. The town has identified escape routes, but signage is not posted.

The Town is actively working to improve road safety and access, by widening, shaping and leaning ditches, even in the face of resident resistance in some cases. Dahlberg Electric has used a grant to clear their right of ways, greatly improving power line security and increasing clearance along many roads. Chicog has numerous sand roads, many highly populated dead ends and roads that will need improvement in the future. Many driveways are not accessible for structural or wildfire purposes. Driveway permits are issued by both the town and county and initial inspections are done by the Washburn County Fire Association. There is a lack of enforcement of driveway requirement and follow-up on compliance. In terms of response capability, the town has many designated water points, however several are of limited value and some areas of the town need additional sites developed to improve coverage.

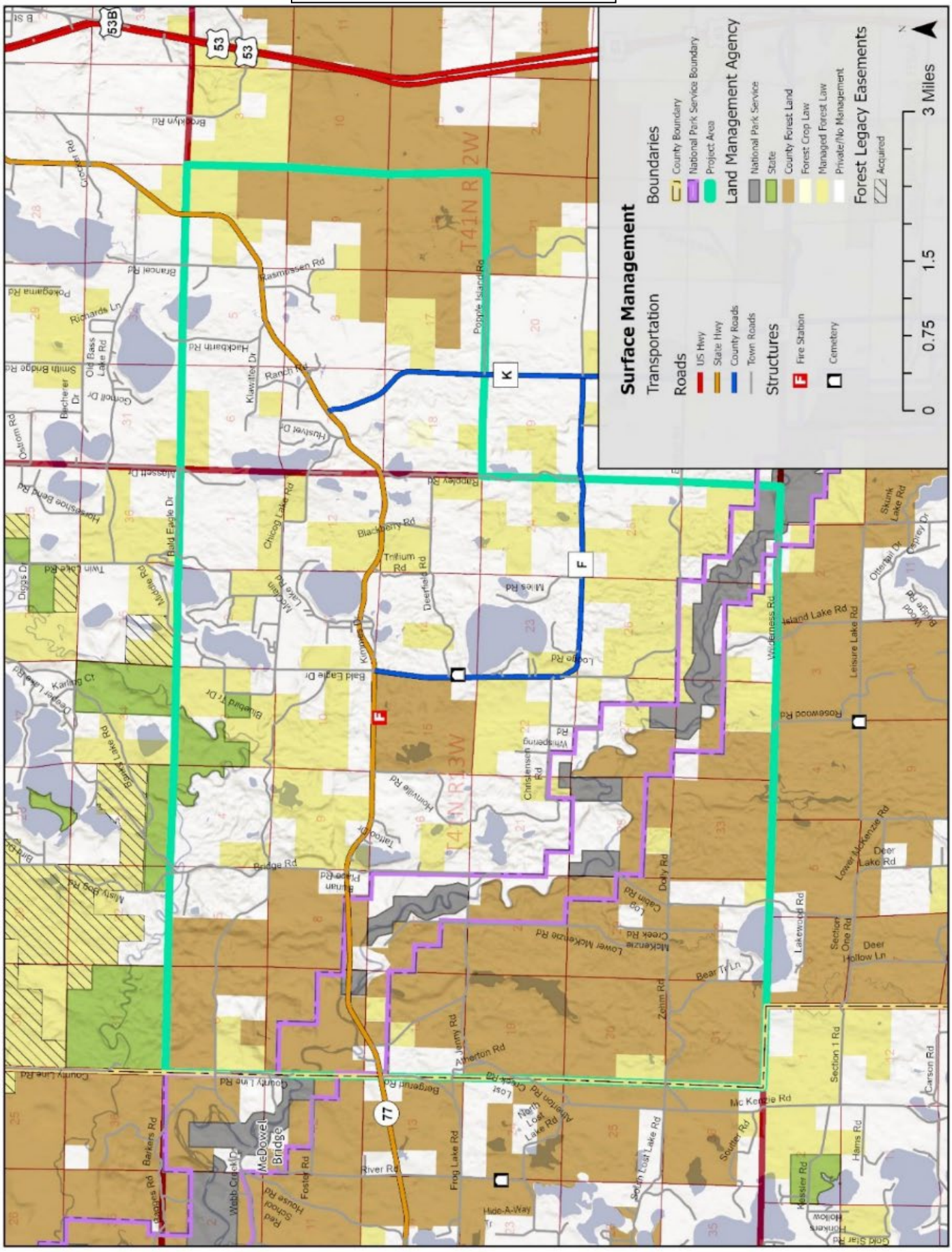
National Park Service, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

The Namekagon River is a federally designated National Scenic Riverway, which is managed by the National Park Service (NPS). NPS policy requires any National Park System unit administered by the National Park Service (NPS) with vegetation capable of supporting a wildland fire develop a Fire Management Plan (FMP). The FMP for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway outlines the programs and actions to meet fire management goals within the river corridor. Current NPS policy dictates *complete suppression of all wildfires using appropriate management response.* A prescribed fire program is used within the Riverway corridor to accomplish resource management objectives, control invasive species and hazardous fuels reduction. While allowed in certain circumstances[1], non-fire treatments for hazardous fuels reduction and mitigation are typically not utilized. Cooperative fire management is outlined in the 2018 MASTER COOPERATIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AND STAFFORD ACT RESPONSE AGREEMENT between the NPS and WDNR. Under this agreement, both parties are responsible for preventing, detecting and suppressing wildfires within the Riverway corridor. As the Park Service does not have fire control resources in the vicinity of the area covered by this CWPP, primary fire suppression responsibility lies with the WDNR.

Private Lands

While the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for fire suppression on privately-owned holdings, the responsibility for fuels management lies with property owners. There are several large private industrial forest holdings within the project area. Roughly 6,000 acres of privately owned lands in the project area are enrolled in Managed Forest Law, and 40 acres are enrolled in Forest Crop Law. The Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and the Forest Crop Law are landowner incentive programs that encourage sustainable forestry on private woodland. In exchange for following sound forest management and/or public hunting and fishing use, the landowner pays reduced property taxes.

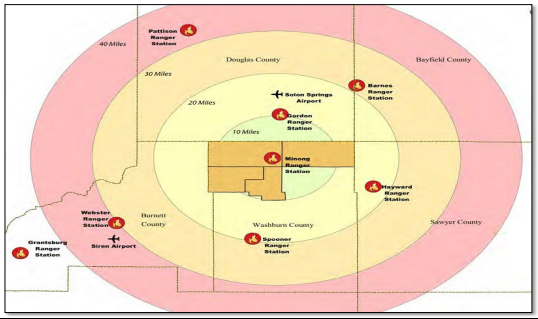
Map 8: Surface Management



Fire Response Resources

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Table 2: WDNR Wildfire Suppression Resources (1 hour response window)



Station	Distance (Miles)*	Personnel	Apparatus
Webster RS	44	4	2 Type 4 engine / Tractor plow 1 Type 6 engine 1 Type 7 engine
Spooner RS	28	6	2 Type 6 engines 2 Type 4 engines / Tractor plow 2 Type 7 engine 1 UTV w/ slip on
Minong RS	0	4	2 Type 4 engines / Tractor plow 1Type 6 engine 1 Heavy dozer
Gordon RS	15	5	2 Type 4 engines / Tractor plow 2 Type 7 engines 1 Type 6 engine
Grantsburg RS	68	6	2 Type 4 engines / Tractor plow 1 Type 6 engine 2 Type 7 engines 1 Low ground unit
Hayward RS	25	3	2 Type 4 engines / Tractor plow 1 Type 6 engine
Pattison RS	49	2	1 Type 4 engine / Tractor plow 1 Type 6 engine
Barnes RS	31	4	2 Type 4 engines / Tractor plow 1 Type 6 engine 1 Type 7 engine
Siren Airport	21	2	2 patrol/air attack plane 2 SEAT (air tanker) contracted

Chicog Volunteer Fire Department Resources

The Town of Chicog Fire Department's primary serve area is the Town of Chicog, although the Department does respond to mutual aid calls in adjoining jurisdictions. The town has established an Emergency Support Group (ESG) to address community-level preparedness issues, along with a communications plan and protocol to inform and communicate with residents in the event of a disaster. The Town has also developed a Municipal Emergency Operations Plan (M-EOP) to provide standard operating procedures when responding to disasters or emergency situations within the community. The Department provides home ignition zone assessments (HIZ) to property owners who request them and plays a lead role in community outreach on wildfire safety and preparedness.

Table 3: Town of Chicog Fire Department Resource Inventory

Type	**Current Status** (Type and quantity)	**Inventory Needed**
Fire Station(s)	1	1
Number of firefighters Number with Wildland Certification	14	
Uniforms/Clothing/PPE		
Training	All members are required to take Structural Firefighter A and B training	
Radios	9 – PR400 Portables 5 – P1225 Portables 10- CM300 Mobile Radios (1 is Base Station Unit) 1-Kenwood Backup Mobile/Base Radio	
Pumps and hose lay	Have a full inventory of pumps and hoses to meet both structural and wildfire	
Other		

Resource	**Capacity, Type, Etc.**
Engine 1	750 GPM, 1450 GAL, Foam and CAFS System
Tender 1	350 GPM, 2000 GAL, Foam
Tender 2	High volume low pressure pto pump for boom spray, 4000 GAL
Brush Truck 1	16 HP Darley 450 GPM, 230 GAL, Foam
Brush Truck 2	250 GPM, 250 GAL, Foam (also pulls pump wagon)
Brush Truck 3	Ex Mil 6x6, 250 GPM, 700 GAL, Foam
Water Point Truck	Unit 41
Trailer Pump	2 – 350 GPM pumps setup for both dry hydrant and water sites in which we can use float or a separate 150 GPM powered float
Boat	Hovercraft
Ambulance	No
ATV/UTV	No
Other	

Minong Area Fire Department Resources

Table 4: Minong Area Fire Department Resource Inventory

Type	Current Status (Type and quantity)	Inventory Needed
Fire Station(s)	123 5th Ave E, Village of Minong	1
Number of firefighters Number with Wildland Certification	24	28
Uniforms/Clothing/PPE	Adequate – 1 per FF, several spare	
Training	Annual refresher with WDNR	Localized training is needed, eliminating the need to travel.
Radios	20 portables – Kenwood 12 Trucks 1 Base	Limited Use of our repeater tower issues
Pumps and hose lay		The ability to purchase 1 ½ hose and couplings from DNR "they allow only 1"
Other		

Resource	Capacity, Type, Etc.
Engine 1 (Unit 11)	1500 GPM, 1500 GAL, Foam
Engine 2 (Unit 12)	500 GPM, 3500 GAL, Foam
Tender 1 (Unit 21)	500 GPM, 3500 GAL, Foam
Tender 2 (Unit 22)	500 GPM, 3500 GAL, Foam
Brush Truck 1 (Unit 41)	150 GAL, Foam – also our waterpoint truck with 2 – 500 GPM pumps
Brush Truck 2 (Unit 42)	200 GAL, Foam
Brush Truck 3 (Wildland Unit)	Ex Mil 6x6
Rescue Truck (Unit 31)	Jaws and portable tools, misc.
Ambulance 1	117 call sign
Ambulance 2	118 call sign
ATV/UTV	Yes, snowmobile and rescue sled
Other	6x6 1 1000 GAL (Wildland Unit 51) 6x6 2 850 GAL (Wildland Unit 52) 6x6 3 850 GAL (Wildland Unit 53)

Washburn County Response Resources

Five forestry staff members have received wildland fire suppression training. County wildfire equipment consists of a 550H Dozer with water tanks and PPE, Hester fire plow, semi and trailer with 800 gallon water tank mounted on trailer, two ATV's with water tank inserts, three slip on water tanks for 4 x 4 pickups, JD 6410and PosiTrack 2810 available for other needs, two water pumps in addition to the pumps on the slip on units, pickups equipped with radios programmed with all necessary emergency frequencies, and portable radios.

Response Capability

Rapid and efficient response to emergency situations, including wildfires, can be affected by numerous local variables. The relative geographic isolation of the region means that fire response resources, while strategically located as possible, are widely scattered across the landscape. Long travel distances for fire suppression resources can also result in increased response times. The highly variable road conditions within the project area also play an important role in emergency response and getting resources to where they are needed.

Unsurfaced roads, sand roads and low maintenance level seasonal roads can slow emergency response. Dead- end roads and other areas with inadequate vehicular turn-around areas may be inaccessible to emergency vehicles. Developed areas served by a single access road may further complicate response as bottlenecks are created by emergency response traffic moving in while evacuation traffic is moving out.

One of the greatest challenges of modern rural emergency management is ensuring adequate staffing for local fire departments. Like many rural areas, this region of Wisconsin has experienced a notable out-migration of young people, and few young citizens are moving in. The median age in the region is in the upper 50’s, which compares to a statewide average of about 39. Difficulties attracting and retaining young people mean that local fire departments, with an aging firefighting force, are challenged in finding new recruits. The ability of emergency responders to communicate effectively also impacts local response capability. In the event of an emergency, good communication is essential for all entities involved. Gaps in both radio and cellular communications services exist within the project area.

The development pattern and local development regulations also play a role in response capability. Historically, local codes and ordinances regarding rural development have given little, if any, consideration as to Firewise principals such as defensible space and property maintenance in the home ignition zone. On a broader scale, local zoning codes have permitted developments in high fire danger areas. Pockets of isolated structures, both seasonal and permanent, exist within many of the high-risk areas in these communities. The spatial development pattern in northern Washburn County closely mirrors that which existed in the area burned by the 2013 Germann Road Fire, in which 47 structures were destroyed.

Finally, property owner actions can significantly affect the ability of their homes to survive a wildfire. In fire situation, firefighters often must make crucial decisions about whether a home can be defended, and ultimately saved. The choices made by the property owner regarding defensible space, ingress and egress all play into that decision-making process. Structures in dangerous areas and those without defensible space or adequate emergency vehicle access, represent potential hazards to firefighter safety and may not be defended.

Wildfire Mitigation

Historically, wildfires have been a critical component of the barrens ecosystem of northwestern Wisconsin. This area has seen many large, stand-replacing fires, including several modern-era fires like the Five Mile Tower fire in 1977, the Oak Lake and Ekdall Church fires in 1980 and the Germann Road fire in 2013.

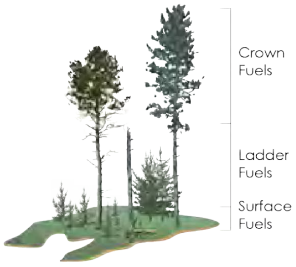
Human activities on the landscape have played an important role in setting the stage for large, potentially devastating wildfires. Prior to human settlement, periodic wildfires maintained the mosaic of forestlands and open prairies of the barrens landscape. Periodic wildfires reduced fuel loads, controlled invasive species and maintained fire-adapted and fire- dependent vegetative communities. Human settlement and fire suppression vastly altered the composition of forests and caused some native species to dominate the landscape to a greater degree than in the past. The absence of fire allowed forest fuels to accumulate, and human activities introduced non-native plant species, which aggressively compete with and displace native species.

In the fire-suppressed forest, accumulated surface fuels provide a means for fire to move quickly through brush and woody debris.

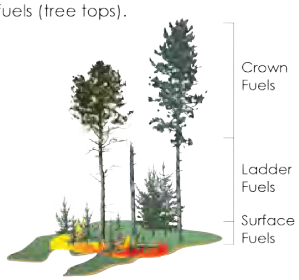
Ladder fuels provide a vector to transfer fire from the surface into the forest canopy and crown fuels. Crown fires consume these aerial fuels and burn hotter and more intensely than other types of wildfires. In sustained crown fires, and even some surface fires, lofted embers, or "firebrands" can cause spot fires (spotting) downwind of the main fire, complicating firefighting efforts.

The 2013 Germann Road fire provides a perspective on modern fire interaction within the barrens landscape. The outcomes and lessons learned[2] provide a basis for strengthening community resiliency and improving preparedness across this landscape.

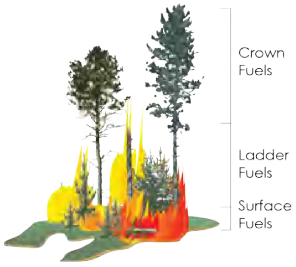
Fire Suppressed Forest



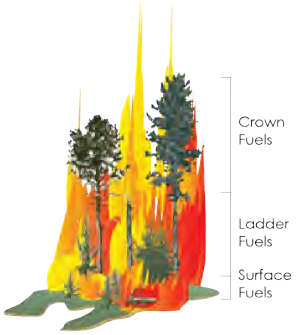
In a forest where fires rarely occur, fuels accumulate. There are surface fuels (logs, brush and debris), ladder fuels (small trees, limbs and snags) and crown fuels (tree tops).



On ignited, surface fires spread quickly through brush, woody debris. gasses and small trees.

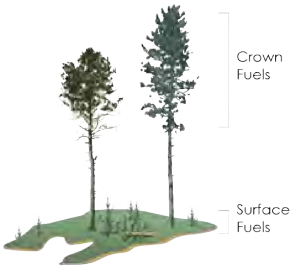


Ladder fuels allow the fire to spread vertically to the canopy of the trees.

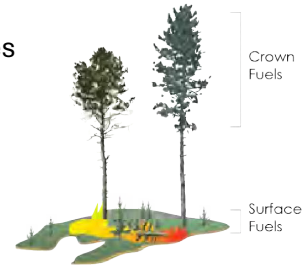


Crown fires consume the aerial fuels and burn with extreme heat and intensity. These fires are extremely dangerous and difficult to control.

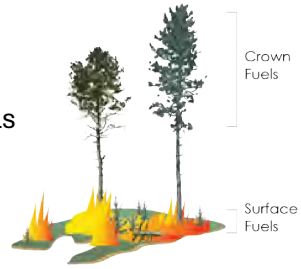
Fire Adapted Forest



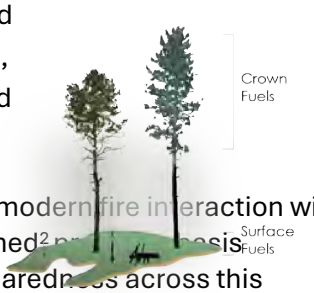
In a forest where fires occur periodically there is less continuity between the fuels on the surface and the crowns of the trees.



Periodic fires burn through the surface fuels.



Without ladder fuels, low-intensity surface fires cannot reach the tops of the trees.



The fire consumes surface vegetation and debris. Large trees have scorched bark and likely will survive.

[2] http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestFire/documents/GermannRoad/GermannRoadFireReport.pdf

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

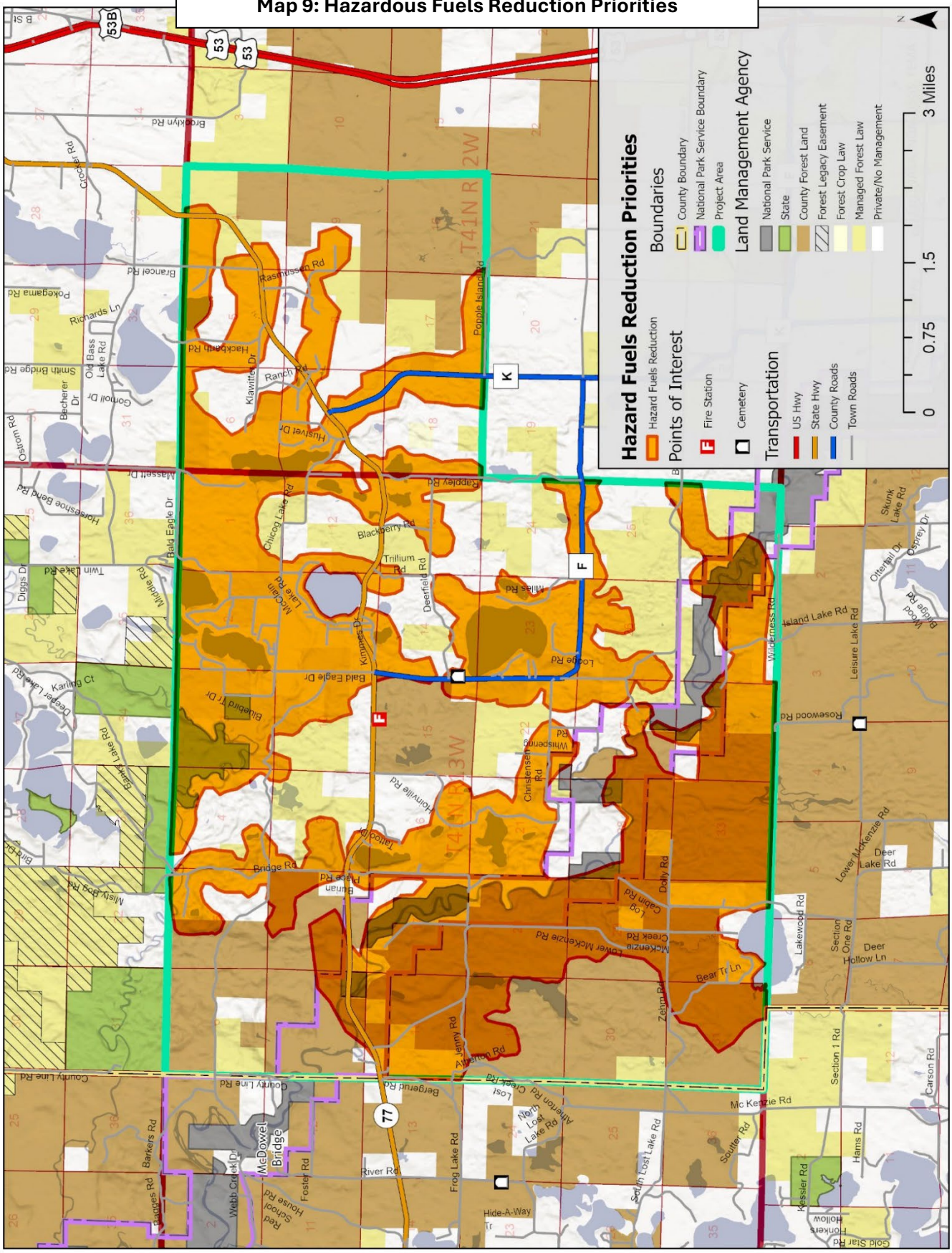
The minimum requirements of a CWPP, as defined in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, include the prioritization of areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommendations of types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.

Hazardous fuels reduction can be defined as the manipulation, burning or removal of hazardous fuels to reduce the likelihood of unplanned ignitions and/or to lessen potential damage and resistance to wildland fire control efforts. Hazardous fuels reduction activities may include hand or mechanical equipment treatment of vegetation, chemical treatments and/or prescribed fire.

This CWPP identifies several general priority areas for future hazardous fuels reduction activities. The three general types of activities recommended include: **general fuels reduction** (biomass removal, thinning, pruning and harvest), **right-of-way maintenance** and **road connectivity** to provide a means of access and escape in the event of a wildfire.

	General Fuels Reduction	**Right-of-Way Maintenance**	**Road Connectivity**
Methods	Wide range of tactics to reduce hazardous fuels. Mechanical and non-mechanical methods, possibly prescribed fire where appropriate.	Brushing, road widening and right-of-way clearing to reduce biomass and promote ingress and egress for emergency response vehicles.	Connect existing dead-end roads.
Target Areas	• Washburn County Forest, Oak Lake Area • Trinity Conference Center and Retreat. • High structure density lake areas. • St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Namakagon River • Totogatic Wild River corridor • Brad & Kay's Campground	• Dead-end roads • Primary escape routes	• Middle Rd.& Tall Pines Lane

Map 9: Hazardous Fuels Reduction Priorities



Recommended Measures to Reduce Structural Ignitability

As defined in the HFRA, one of the requirements of a CWPP is that it must recommend measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community. The action plan of the Chicog CWPP places great emphasis on the public education component of reducing structural ignitability. Public education and outreach efforts recommended in this CWPP will generally focus on how homes ignite and ways that property owners can modify their homes and surrounding landscapes to reduce ignition potential.

FIREWISE Construction

FIREWISE construction involves the use of materials and systems in the design and construction of a building or structure to safeguard against the spread of fire within a building or structure and the spread of fire to or from buildings or structures to the wildland/urban interface area.

Key recommendations include:

1. If you are building a home, avoid siting the home in hazardous locations such as ridge tops. Site structure on level terrain, if possible.

2. Use fire-resistant or non-combustible construction materials, combined with design techniques to prevent or slow the penetration of fire beyond your home's exterior. Consider exterior materials such as brick, stone, fiber cement or stucco, as these materials are much more fire resistant than wood.

3. A building's foundation is the first part of the structure that typically encounters wildfire. Building foundations should be constructed of fire-resistant materials such as concrete block, cement walls, or other fire-resistant materials for building foundations.

4. Avoid flammable roofing materials such as wood, shake and shingle. Consider a fire-resistant Class A roof covering, such as fiberglass shingles, asphalt, slate, metal, clay or concrete tile.

5. Cover chimneys, vents and stovepipes with fire-resistant screen (spark arrester) to prevent embers from escaping and/or from entering your home.

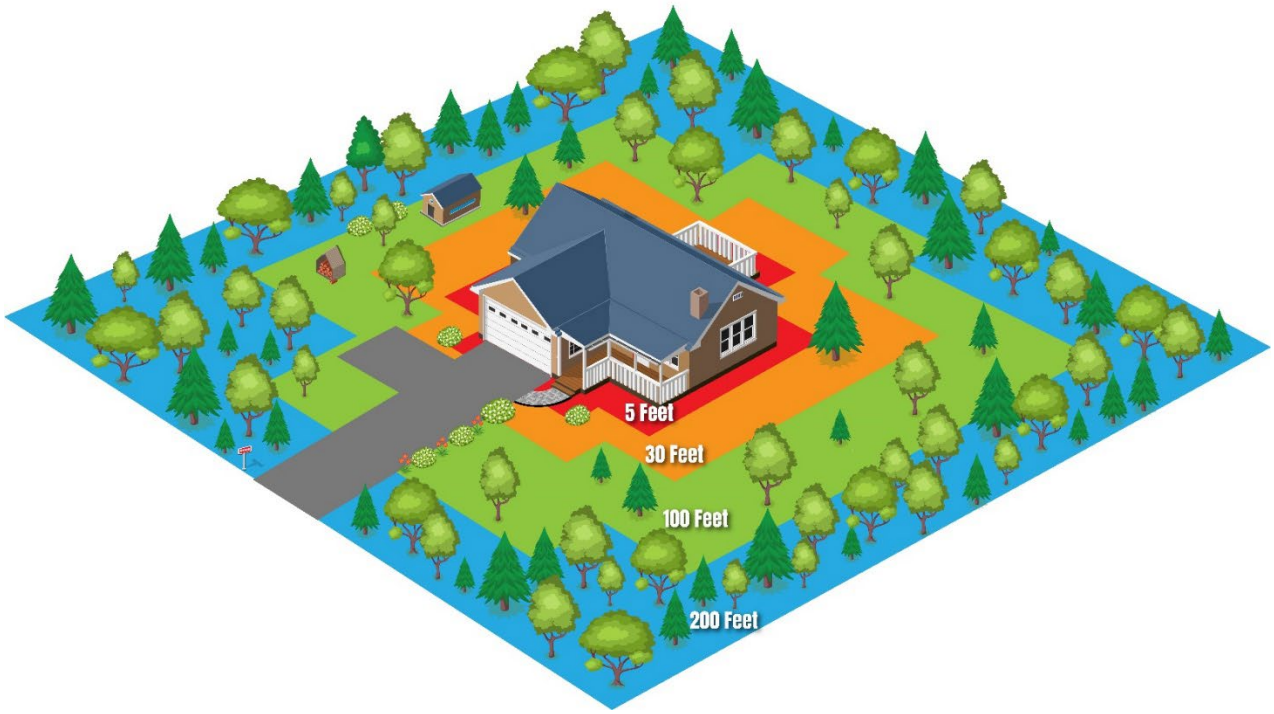
6. Consider the use of metal doors or doors constructed of other fire-resistant building materials such as fiberglass. Commercially produced doors are fire-tested and have a fire rating (minutes or hours door can withstand exposure).

7. Windows allow radiant heat to pass through and ignite materials on the other side. Homeowners should attempt to minimize the size and number of windows on the downhill side of the house or the side that would most likely be exposed to a wildfire. Multi-paned or tempered glass provides insulation from trapped air and gives more protection from radiant heat than single-paned glass.

8. Driveways need to meet the County Driveway Specs: Have a minimum vegetative clearance width of 20 feet, a minimum overhead vegetative clearance of 13 feet and for driveways exceeding 150 feet, a turnaround must be provided within 75 feet of the building that will allow a 30-foot-long fire truck to turn around. In addition, each driveway should be clearly identified with the address number of the dwelling it serves.

Defensible Space

One of the key recommendations of this CWPP is that property owners maintain "defensible space" around their homes. A zone of cleared vegetation around structures creates a buffer of defensible space which reduces ignition risk and allows firefighters to safely defend property. In practice, defensible space is defined as an area a minimum of 30 feet around a structure that is cleared of flammable brush or vegetation. In the event of a wildfire, the only vegetative fuel for the fire is sufficiently far enough away to reduce the risk of structural ignition.



Defensible Space Management Zone Recommendations

Zones	What you can do
0-5 Feet around the home	*Keep area free of anything that can burn. Remove all wood mulch, plants, fallen leaves, firewood and any flammable objects. If you do plant here, choose only low-growing or succulent plants and deciduous shrubs (those with leaves). Be sure to remove all dead and dying plant parts. These "fine fuels" can ignite easily.*
5-30 Feet around the home	*Keep this area clean and green by raking leaves and pine needles and keeping your yard mowed. Choose deciduous trees and shrubs over evergreens (those with needles). If there are evergreens in this zone, they should be limited in number and have their lower branch- es pruned up and away from the ground. If there are any other buildings in this zone, they should have a 30-foot managed area around them as well.*
30-100 Feet around the home	*Remove any dead trees or brush. Trees should be spaced to keep branches from touching. Favor deciduous trees and shrubs over evergreens. Create separation between trees and nearby grasses and shrubs to avoid a "ladder effect" where fire can climb into tree tops. In the fall, cut back grasses and wildflowers.*
100-200 Feet around the home	*Remove dead trees and brush that are standing or on the ground. Thin trees to create space between tree tops. Favor deciduous trees over evergreens. Managing this zone is especially important for properties at higher risk, such as those surrounded by pine forests or on steep slopes.*

Action Plan

The action plan identifies a series of action ideas designed to treat hazardous fuels, reduce structural ignitability and improve wildfire awareness and preparedness within the project area. Each action is tied directly to a specific issue or concern identified by the CWPP steering committee early in the planning process.

The actions listed below were framed around a concept or idea statement which relates back to the issues identified by the project steering committee early in the process. For each action statement the communities to which the action applies are denoted in brackets. A list of potential funding sources which could be explored to support the actions is identified under "potential funding sources." Additional possible funding sources are identified under **Implementation Programs** on page 36.

Mitigation Activities common to all project areas:

Suppression

- Keep community ingress/egress open and maintained (cleared of vegetation)
- Develop community plan for evacuation routes, safe zones, staging areas
- Ensure residents know their closest exit in case of emergency
- Keep shoulders of road clear for emergency vehicle use whenever possible
- Ensure that road maintenance plan is in place
- Maintain unobstructed access into cul-de-sacs
- Ensure cul-de-sacs are free of vehicles and/or other items
- Coordinate with emergency responders to test cul-de-sac turnaround with their emergency response vehicles
- Keep street signs visible and clear of vegetation and fine fuels
- Improve driveway accessibility where possible
- Ensure emergency responders are aware of driveway restrictions
- Work with community to become more proactive towards protecting your life and property against wildfires

Surrounding Environment

- Identify heavy fuels and consider removal or breaking them up
- Consider removal of ladder fuels that allow fire to climb from lower to higher vegetation
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from structures and other trees
- Leave 30 feet between clusters of two to three trees, or 20 feet between individual trees
- Prune trees 6-10 feet from the ground
- Be aware of the risks from falling embers in relation to nearby fuels and defensible space
- Mow lawns regularly
- Water grass, plants, trees and mulch regularly
- Create a spacing of 30 feet between tree crowns
- Create a 'fire-free' area within 5 feet of homes, using non-flammable landscaping materials
- Remove dead vegetation from under the decks and within 10 feet of the house

- Consider xeriscaping if you are affected by water restrictions
- Plant a mixture of deciduous trees (e.g. oak and maple) and coniferous trees (e.g. pine)
- Create fuel breaks like driveways and gravel walkways
- Remove smaller conifers that are growing between taller trees
- Remove heavy accumulations of woody debris
- Reduce the density of tall trees so canopies do not touch
- Work with neighbors to remove/prune vegetation between houses to mitigate structure-to-structure ignition risk
- Replace flammable roofs, siding, soffits, etc. with nonflammable when possible
- Develop awareness about local fire occurrence history and include education of community residents in a wildfire prevention plan
- When possible, install firebreaks and reduce fuel loads around community boundary to reduce risk from adjacent wildlands
- Maintain situational awareness of fire danger in your area, as local severe wind exposure can adversely affect wildland behavior
- Provide FIREWISE construction guidelines to developers / owners
- Consider developing covenant restrictions, if applicable

Structures

- Use fire-resistant roofing material such as metal, tile or Class A shingles
- Inspect for and address gaps in roofing that can expose roof decking or supports
- Place angle flashing over openings between the roof decking and fascia board
- Clear branch, leaf-litter and other debris from roof regularly
- Prune tree limbs away from roof
- Clean vents to keep them free of debris, allowing them to keep embers out while allowing air flow for ventilation
- Enclose or box-in eaves with non-combustible materials such as metal, cement board or stucco
- Install a 1/8-inch metal screen behind roof vents
- Keep landscaping materials and vegetation away from combustible siding
- Increase defensible space from combustible siding
- Replace with noncombustible siding when possible
- Remove combustible vegetation and leaf litter
- Spread gravel or other non-combustible material under the deck
- Screen in the bottom of the deck with metal 1/8-inch screening
- Separate wooden fences from the house with a stone or metal barrier
- Maintain debris-free decks (e.g. remove ignitable furniture, planters and covering propane grills, especially during high fire danger periods)

- Consider disconnecting fences from structures, or replacing materials directly attached to structures with fire resistant materials
- Be aware that wooden attachments can act as a fuse to the structure
- Keep gutters clear of fine fuels and debris
- Review suggested defensible space and vegetation management as pertains to building setback
- Use metal framing or aluminum coverings for wood or vinyl
- Use a fiberglass or metal screen
- Use drapes and shutters that are fire resistant to help reduce the likelihood of fire spread
- Place markers around gas utilities where possible
- Keep vegetation pruned to a minimal level near gas utilities
- When possible, place propane tanks 20' away from home and structures
- Keep vegetation pruned and mowed around electric cabinets
- Place non-flammable mulch (rock, stone) around base of electrical cabinets
- Plant fire resistant bushes and shrubs around electrical cabinets

Mitigation Activities Specific to Project Areas:

Project Area	Activity	Responsibility
Lower McKenzie	• Township wide Brush Collection Program • Look for opportunities to pursue Firewise USA Status • Continue structure ignition zone assessments • Pursue fuels reduction efforts along Lower McKenzie Rd on Washburn County Forest properties. Consider shaded fuel breaks and management to promote a fuel type change. • Pursue fuels reduction efforts along the Namekagon River corridor on National Park Service properties. Consider shaded fuel breaks and management to promote a fuel type change. • Consider targeted WUI messaging to residents	• Town of Chicog • WDNR/CWPP Board • Chicog VFD/WDNR • Washburn County Forestry/WDNR • National Park Service
Chicog Acres	• Township wide Brush Collection Program • Continue to provide Firewise messaging in newsletters every other year • Continue structure ignition zone assessments • Pursue alternate access for Bluebird Trail area • General Fire Prevention Messaging	• Town of Chicog • Chicog Acres Firewise Board • Chicog VFD/WDNR • Town of Chicog
Bridge	• Township wide Brush Collection Program • Continue structure ignition zone assessments • Pursue fuels reduction efforts along the Totogatic River corridor on State of Wisconsin properties. Consider shaded fuel breaks and management to promote a fuel type change • Pursue RX Fuels treatments on State Natural Area • General Fire Prevention Messaging	• Town of Chicog • Chicog VFD/WDNR • WDNR
Hoinville	• Township wide Brush Collection Program • Maintain relationship with Trinity Woods to ensure gate on southern access road can be opened in the event of an emergency • Continue structure ignition zone assessments • General Fire Prevention Messaging	• Town of Chicog • Chicog VFD/Town of Chicog • Chicog VFD/WDNR
Matthews Lake	• Township wide Brush Collection Program • Look for opportunity to pursue Firewise USA Status • Continue structure ignition zone assessments • General Fire Prevention Messaging	• Town of Chicog • WDNR/CWPP Board • Chicog VFD/WDNR
Little Chicog	• Township wide Brush Collection Program • Continue structure ignition zone assessments • General Fire Prevention Messaging	• Town of Chicog • Chicog VFD/WDNR

Implementation Programs

Firewise USA

Firewise USA is a nationwide initiative designed to encourage and recognize community action that minimizes home loss to wildfire. This program is of special interest to small communities and neighborhood associations that are willing to take action to mitigate against wildfire by adopting and implementing programs tailored to their needs.

To earn recognition through the Firewise USA program, a community must complete the five following criteria.

1. Enlist a WDNR wildland/urban interface (WUI) specialist to complete a community assessmentand work together to create a plan that identifies agreed-upon achievable solutions to be implemented by the community.
2. Organize a multi-disciplined Firewise board/committee. The team should include homeowners and fire professionals. Participation by planners, land managers, urban foresters, and/or members of other interest groups is also encouraged.
3. Observe a Firewise USA Day each spring that is dedicated to a local Firewise project.
4. Invest a minimum of 1 hour per housing unit annually in local Firewise projects. The investment may be met through financial donations, state grants, or an equivalent amount of volunteer labor. Work by municipal employees or volunteers using municipal and other equipment can be included, as can state/federal grants dedicated to that purpose. A specialist can work with the community to identify and seek project implementation funds, should they be necessary.
5. Submit an annual report to Firewise USA that documents continuing compliance with the program

WDNR, Technical Assistance and Outreach

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has been instrumental in leading Firewise community outreach and education efforts within northwestern Wisconsin. WDNR staff provides technical assistance to communities and assist with local government with project development and implementation. While the participating communities will be responsible implementing this CWPP, WDNR will continue be an important partner in implementation.

Wisconsin Grant Programs

Forest Fire Protection Grants

Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grants provided through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are available to Wisconsin fire departments and county/area fire associations. Grant funding is intended to expand the use of local fire departments to augment and strengthen the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) overall initial attack fire suppression capabilities on forest fires. By May 1 of each year, Wisconsin fire departments and county/area fire associations statewide receive notification that the FFP application cycle is open. The FFP program is a 50/50 cost-share reimbursement grant program. Eligible items and activities under the FPP include:

- Personal protective equipment
- Training
- Fire prevention
- Fire suppression tools and equipment (now includes dry hydrant components & supplies for new installations only)

- Radio reprogramming and communications equipment for fire protection or suppression
- Dry hydrant installation
- Mapping and GIS
- Off-road all-wheel drive vehicles, all-terrain vehicles

More information about Forest Fire Protection Grants can be found online at http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/forestfireprotection.html

National Grant Programs

Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant (WRR)

The National Fire Plan Hazard Mitigation Grant monies pass through the State and Private Forestry branch of the Forest Service to the states to help achieve fire and fuel hazard reduction goals. Communities submit project proposals to the Wisconsin DNR, under the guidance of a local DNR wildland urban interface specialist or forest ranger. Proposals are evaluated at the state level for determination in awarding NFP funding.

Funding is limited and typically allocated for specific activities in the highest risk communities, statewide. Fundable activities may include community education and outreach, publications, planning, hazardous fuels reduction, brush disposal, and fire prevention signing. Capital expenditures, such as equipment purchases, are not considered. Application deadlines are determined annually but are typically late early fall/early winter. For information about National Fire Plan Hazard Mitigation Grants, contact the local Wisconsin DNR Wildland Urban Interface Specialist.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) provides financial assistance to help improve fire-fighting operations, services and to provide critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

Eligible applicants for AFG are limited to fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations. Fundable activities under this program include firefighter training, firefighting equipment, firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE), firefighter wellness and fitness and modifications to fire stations and facilities. Funding is available on a cost-share basis which ranges from 5 to 20 percent, depending upon the population of the served area. More information about the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program can be found online at http://www.fema.gov/welcome-assistance-firefighters-grant-program

Fire Prevention and Safety Grants (FP&S)

The purpose of these grants is to assist fire departments and state, regional, national or local organizations in addressing fire prevention and safety. Emphasis of the program is on prevention of fire-related injuries or death to high-risk populations. Examples of eligible projects include Smoke Alarms, Sprinkler Awareness, Public Education campaigns, Code Enforcement/Awareness, Firefighter Safety, Training, Wildfire Prevention/Awareness, Arson Prevention/Awareness, Risk Assessments, and General Prevention/Awareness. Funding is available on a cost-share basis which ranges from 5 to 20 percent, depending upon the population of the served area. More information about the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program can be found online at http://www.fema.gov/fire-prevention-safety-grants

Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grants (SAFER)

The SAFER grant program is intended to help address the significant staffing, equipment, training, health, safety needs and deployment capabilities of local fire departments. SAFER provides funding to help pay the costs associated with hiring personnel to maintain safe staffing levels. Fundable activities under the SAFER grant program include rehiring firefighters that have been laid off, retaining firefighters facing imminent layoffs, or filling of positions that were vacated through attrition. There are no caps, and no cost share match required by the municipality for these grants. More information about the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grant Program can be found online at http://www.fema.gov/staffing-adequate-fire- emergency-response-grants

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM)

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program provides funds to states, territories, Indian tribal governments, communities, and universities for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event. Federal wildfire mitigation policy (MRR-2-08-01) authorizes the use of PDM funding for defensible space, structural protection through the application of ignition-resistant construction, and limited hazardous fuels reduction to protect life and property. PDM grants are a nationwide competitive grant program and require a 25% local match - cash or in-kind - (10% for eligible small and impoverished communities as defined in 44CFR 201.2). More information about the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program can be found online at http://www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides grants to States and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. Federal wildfire policy (MRR-2-08-01) authorizes the use of HMGP funds for defensible space, structural protection through the application of ignition-resistant construction, and limited hazardous fuels reduction to protect life and property. FEMA can fund up to 75 percent of the eligible costs of HMGP each project. The state or grantee must provide a 25 percent match. More information about the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program can be found online at http://www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program

Community Facilities Grants

Communities Facilities Grants provided through USDA –Rural Development offer funding to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Grant funds can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and community and public services. Funds can also be used for the purchase of equipment required for a facility's operation. Maximum grant awards depend upon the median household income and the population in the community where the project is located. Funding awards cover 75 percent of total project costs. More information about Communities Facilities Grants can be found online at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/had-cf_grants.html

Implementation, Evaluation and Maintenance of the CWPP

The evaluation and maintenance section of this document outlines the formal process that will ensure that the Wild Rivers Community Wildfire Protection Plan remains an active and relevant document. This section provides the foundation for the formation of the CWPP Advisory Committee, hereby referred to as the Committee and outlines how the Committee will prioritize community wildfire protection projects. Finally, this section includes a schedule for maintaining and updating the plan. The plan's format allows the Committee to review and update sections as new data becomes available. Whether or not the goal of the protection of community and wildland values from wildfire will be achieved is dependent upon the implementation of the recommendations of this plan. Monitoring and evaluation of measures taken will assure achievement of that goal.

Implementing the CWPP

It is recommended that the partners establish a formal advisory committee to **implement**, **monitor progress**, **evaluate** the CWPP and update the document as necessary. The CWPP Advisory Committee should consist of elected and/or citizen representatives of participating towns. As key partners in plan development, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service should also be consulted and asked to participate in future Advisory Committee meetings. The CWPP Advisory Committee will be the lead in prioritization, execution and implementation of the CWPP's actions, seeking and applying for project grant funding and overall plan coordination and administration. The Committee should be formed immediately following plan adoption and should meet on a regular basis.

The CWPP Advisory Committee should dedicate at least one meeting annually to examine plan progress. The Committee should also be responsible for short-term updating and/or amending the CWPP in cases where unforeseen events create new fire-related challenges (i.e. storm damage) in the project area, which need to be addressed immediately.

Evaluating the CWPP

To monitor progress and to ensure that the plan is current, it will be necessary to periodically evaluate the CWPP. Evaluating the CWPP should involve detailed tracking of accomplishments, a periodic reassessment of the change in conditions from the original conditions, or some combination of the two. A plan evaluation should occur at least once annually. The CWPP Advisory Committee should be the entity responsible for evaluation of CWPP progress.

Updating the CWPP

The Wild Rivers Community Wildfire Protection Plan must be periodically updated to remain a relevant and useful document. There are three types of plan updates which could occur. Immediate updates would likely follow an unforeseen event, such as a major windstorm, where new fire-related challenges are created. Periodic plan updates should occur on an annual basis and major revisions should occur on five-year intervals.

1. Immediate Updates (after event)
2. Identify new recommendations/actions related to the event
3. Delineate the area affected on a map
4. Identify new hazardous fuels reduction activities related to the event
5. Prioritize fuels reduction activities

Immediate Update

Who is Responsible?

It is recommended that the CWPP Advisory Committee and the Town Board(s) of the affected community or communities coordinate on any immediate short-term update.

Approval Process

New language adopted under an immediate update should be approved by each of the plans' signatories. The document itself does not need to be revised or re-printed until a formal revision occurs. Approved revisions should be documented on pages attached to the original plan.

1. Short-term Annual Updates (annually)
2. Progress towards completion of plan recommendations
3. Continued relevance of goals and objectives
4. Effectiveness of implementation actions
5. Identify issues that may not have been identified when the plan was developed or new issues
6. Identify new recommendations and actions
7. Progress towards completion of hazardous fuels reduction projects
8. Identify new hazardous fuels reduction activities needed
9. Document changes needed in the risk assessment (for update)

Annual Update

Who is Responsible?

It is recommended that the CWPP Advisory Committee is responsible for annual updates. The Committee should collaborate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service and Washburn County on these updates.

Approval Process

New language adopted under a short-term update should be approved by each of the plan signatories. The document itself does not need to be revised or re-printed until a formal revision occurs. Approved revisions should be documented on pages attached to the original plan.

Major Update (every 5 years)

1. Review and update background and community profile information
2. Update statistics and fire occurrence data
3. Consider revision of the risk assessment
4. Update fire protection capability information
5. Update mapping and GIS
6. Identify issues that may not have been identified when the plan was developed or new issues
7. Identify new recommendations and actions
8. Identify progress towards completion of hazardous fuels reduction projects
9. Identify new hazardous fuels reduction activities
10. Reprioritize hazardous fuels reduction activities
11. Incorporate previous immediate and short-term revisions into document
12. Revise the document
13. Republish the document (digitally or print)

Who is Responsible?

The town board should formally appoint membership to a plan update steering committee (This could also be the CWPP Advisory Committee). The committee must collaborate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on the five-year revision.

Approval Process

New language adopted under a major update must be approved by each of the plans' signatories. The document must be revised and re-printed (digital or hard copy) and incorporate all revisions since the last major update.

Plan Distribution

Following a revision of the CWPP, copies (digital or print) should be submitted to the signatories. It is recommended that Town of Chicog post a digital copy of plan on their official town web pages for public viewing.

Notice of Declaration and Concurrence of the Chicog Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The following partners in the development of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan have reviewed and do agree or concur with its contents:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Scott Pahos — Date 8/13/25

Chair

Town of Chicog, Washburn County

Brian Berg — Date 8/13/25

Supervisor

Town of Chicog, Washburn County

Susan Kowarsch — Date 8/13/25

Supervisor

Town of Chicog, Washburn County

Fire Chief

James Fransheski — Date 8/14/25

Fire Chief

Chicog Volunteer Fire Department

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Rodney Fouks — Date 8/14/25

Spooner Area Forestry Leader

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Washburn County Forestry Department

8/14/2025

Mike Peterson — Date

Forest Administrator

Washburn County

Washburn County Emergency Management

Carol Buck — 18/08/2025

Carol Buck — Date

Emergency Management Coordinator

Washburn County

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Craig Hansen — 25/08/2025

Craig Hansen — Date

Superintendent

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

National Park Service

Signature: Carol Buck
Carol Buck (Aug 18, 2025 08:46:02 CDT)

Email: cbuck@co.washburn.wi.us

Signature: Craig Hansen
Craig Hansen (Aug 25, 2025 08:25:36 CDT)

Email: craig_hansen@nps.gov

Chicog Community Wildfire protection plan

Final Audit Report 2025-08-25

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