

Marion County Community Wildfire Protection Plan



**Marion County
Emergency Management
692 NW 30th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471**



**Marion County
Fire Rescue
2631 SE Third Street
Ocala, FL 34471**



**Waccasassa Forestry Center
Florida Forest Service
5353 NE 39th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32609**



**Lake George Ranger District
Ocala National Forest
U. S. Forest Service
17147 E State Road 40
Silver Springs, FL 34488**

Executive Summary

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a unique opportunity to address the challenges of fire protection in the wildland urban interface through locally-supported solutions. CWPPs are authorized by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 and provide communities with a tremendous opportunity to influence: (1) where and how wildland fuel management projects are implemented on federally managed lands, and (2) how federal funds are distributed for fuel reduction projects on nonfederal lands. Having a CWPP gives the county priority status when applying for federal funding for wildfire mitigation projects.

The CWPP includes an assessment of the community's wildfire vulnerability, local organizations, and resources available to assist with wildfire mitigation and response, and an action plan for reducing wildfire vulnerability in the county. Recommended actions to reduce wildfire vulnerability have been collaboratively developed for the following mitigation categories: 1) wildland fuel management, 2) community outreach and education, 3) Firewise building retrofit and landscaping, 4) policy and regulation recommendations, and 5) wildland fire response improvements. Details for implementing the actions, such as responsible agencies and funding considerations are included in the Plan.

The CWPP meets the minimum requirements of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. The Plan was developed in a collaborative process with input from state and federal partners and other relevant stakeholders; it identifies and prioritizes areas for wildland fuel management, and includes actions that will inform residents of measures to reduce the ignitability of their homes and community. The CWPP also furthers the goals and mitigation strategies of the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) and is consistent with recommendations of the LMS Working Group.

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Plan Approval

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a cooperative effort to improve wildfire protection and response. The individuals listed below comprise the core decision-making team responsibilities for the development of this plan and mutually agree on the plan contents.

Local Government Representative

Preston Bowlin, Emergency Management Director
Marion County Emergency Management
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Signature: _____ Date: _____

Local Fire Services Representative

James Banta, Marion County Fire Chief
Marion County Fire Rescue
2631 SE Third Street
Ocala, FL 34471
James.Banta@marioncountyfl.org

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Local Florida Forest Service Representative

Ludie Bond, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist
Florida Forest Service, Waccasassa Forestry Center
5353 NE 39th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32609
Ludie.Bond@freshfromflorida.com

Signature: _____ Date: _____

U.S. Forest Service Representative

Michael Drayton, Fire Management Officer
Lake George Ranger District
Ocala National Forest
17147 E. State Road 40
Silver Springs, FL 34488
mdrayton@fs.fed.us

Signature: _____ Date: _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Community Background and Existing Situation	1
Description of Community.....	1
Demographics	1
Total Land Area	2
Land Use	2
Wildfire Problem Statement.....	2
2. Planning Process	3
Marion County CWPP Working Group Members	3
3. Vulnerability Assessment	5
Wildfire Vulnerability Overview.....	5
Estimated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Area	5
Communities at Risk	5
Critical Facilities Vulnerability.....	7
Predominant Wildland Fuel Types.....	7
Wildfire History	7
4. Local Capacity and Mutual Aid Agencies	9
Organizations.....	9
Resources and Apparatus Inventory	10
Wildland Fire Response Capabilities	18
Wildland Fuel Management Capabilities	18
CWPP Community Development Review	18
Provisions for Wildfire Hazard Assessment and Wildfire Mitigation In the Development Review Process	18
Landscape Regulations that Support or Impact Wildfire Mitigation	18
Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group	18
Firewise Communities	19
5. Goals and Objectives	19
6. Implementation and Plan Maintenance	20
Potential Funding Sources	20
Plan Maintenance and Evaluation	20
7. Action Plan	21
Wildland Fuel Management	21
Wildland Fuel Management Actions.....	21
Community Outreach and Education.....	21

Community Outreach and Education Actions	21
Policy and Regulation Recommendations	22
Policy and Regulations Actions	22
Wildland Fire Response Improvements.....	22
Wildland Fire Response Improvement Actions	22
APPENDIX A - Critical Facilities.....	23
APPENDIX B – Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Report (SouthWRAP).....	see attachment
Levels of Concern	
Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index	
Fire Occurrence Areas	
Fire Effects Index	
Surface Fuels	
Values Impacted Rating	
Suppression Difficulty Rating	

1. Community Background and Existing Situation

Description of Community

Marion County is located in northcentral Florida bisected by Interstate-75. The County is centrally located among three of the state's largest cities: Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa. Marion County is comprised of a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas and includes the majority of the Ocala National Forest, Florida's second largest national forest.

There are five incorporated municipalities within the County: Belleview, Dunnellon, McIntosh, Ocala, and Reddick. Florida State Parks/Department of Environmental Protection manages Silver Springs State Park, Rainbow Lakes State Park, and Marjorie Harris Carr Florida Greenways State Recreation and Conservation Area in Marion County. The U.S. Forest Service manages the Ocala National Forest located on the east side of the County.

The County is generally composed of rolling hills. Most of its trees consist of live oaks, pine, and palms. Marion County also has three large lakes within its borders. Lake Kerr is in the northeastern part of the County, near the town of Salt Springs, which is near the border with Putnam County. The northern part of Lake George, Florida's second largest lake, is also located in the northeast side of Marion County. Lake Weir is in the far southern region of the County near the border with Lake County.

Demographics

No significant population or demographic changes have occurred in Marion County since the 2010 Local Mitigation Strategy Report was adopted. Annual population growth in recent years has been around 1.5%. Marion County is experiencing a slow but steady increase in construction permitting in the post economic downturn period. Much of the construction is contained within existing platted subdivisions and other areas of infill development. During the 2010-2015-time period, permits issued for single family residential housing averaged 521 permits per year. By way of comparison, annual permitting for single family residential construction peaked at 6,026 permits in calendar year 2006.

Marion County Population As of April 1, 2017

PLACE	Census 2010	Estimate 2017
Unincorporated	267,805	281,812
Belleview	4,492	4,979
Dunnellon	1,733	1,805
McIntosh	452	457
Ocala	56,315	59,668
Reddick	506	546

Marion County 331,303 349,267
Source: University of Florida, BEBR, September 20, 2017.

Total Land Area

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the County has a total area of 1,663 square miles (4,310 km²), of which 1,585 square miles (4,110 km²) is land and 78 square miles (200 km²) (4.7%) is water.

Land Use

Approximately one-third of Marion County is U.S. Forest land located generally east of the Ocklawaha River. Large portions of the northwest area of the County are dedicated to agriculture uses including horse farms located within a Farmland Preservation Area. These agricultural areas are intermingled with populated areas as well as high-value property.

Wildfire Problem Statement

Florida's wildfire season is twelve months a year. The primary cause, frequency, and size is what changes. The time of year when the most wildfires occur with the largest number of acres typically extends from March through June. The potential for wildfires increases due to relatively dry months, combined with low humidity and high winds during spring and early summer. Most lightning caused fires occur in July, coinciding with the peak of the thunderstorm season. Central Florida is well known for the largest concentration of cloud-to-ground lightning strikes in the world. Dry weather and drought conditions are major contributing factors in the size and severity of a wildfire. Fuel load is a factor in fire intensity and speaks to the need for well managed forest lands.

Florida's natural environment is adapted to fire and most forest ecosystems need regular cycles of fire to be healthy. Efforts to eliminate fire from the natural environment has served to make these events much more severe when they do occur due to accumulated vegetative fuels. This severity impacts the health of the ecosystem and puts neighboring developments in danger. Residents in Florida vary in their understanding and acceptance of the use of prescribed fire and mechanical fuel management methods. Those from urban communities versus those from rural areas tend to have limited knowledge regarding the benefits of prescribed burning. The role of wildland fires and prescribed burning in the natural environment should be integrated into public education programs and planning for development within the wildland/urban interface.

Fuel load is another factor in fire intensity and speaks to the need for well managed forest lands. As stated previously, Marion County has a large rural population. Those people and facilities located in rural, wooded areas are particularly vulnerable to wildfire. Subdivisions

should be designed using Firewise principles. Homeowners need to create at least 30 feet of cleared area around their house for defensible space. This house-by-house mitigation strategy will be the most effective means to reduce the level of wildfire vulnerability in Marion County due to the large size of the County and the rural distribution of the unincorporated population.

While the entire county is at risk for wildfire, pasture and oak hammock fires in Dunnellon and Reddick, timber and deep muck fires in Ft. McCoy and Orange Springs, and cogongrass fires in Silver Springs Shores are at the highest risk for potentially damaged jurisdictions. Areas with lower amounts of vegetation such as urban areas, which include, the City of Ocala, Belleview and portions of unincorporated County near the urban core which are densely developed have a low vulnerability to wildfire.

The Ocala National Forest is considered the area of greatest vulnerability in Marion County. The boundaries of the western edge of the Forest are not defined by a clear line of ownership but are scattered with out-parcels of residential use. There are pockets and corridors of significant populations located within and throughout the Forest boundaries. These populations and the critical facilities located in or near the Ocala National Forest are vulnerable to wildfires. Appropriate mitigation can come in the form of enhanced warning systems and the establishment of defensible spaces around all structures.

2. Planning Process

The CWPP planning process is a collaborative effort among local, regional, state, and federal government agencies that have a role in protecting the communities and residents from wildfire. This plan was produced through a project led by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The following individuals participated in the planning process and provided input in the preparation of this CWPP.

Marion County CWPP Working Group Members

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Ocala National Forest
U.S. Forest Service
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Rodney Sieg
Marion County Parks and Recreation
352-239-1120
rodney.sieg@marioncountyfl.org

3. Vulnerability Assessment

Wildfire Vulnerability Overview

The Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary Report (SouthWRAP) is a detailed summary report of wildfire risk by county throughout Florida. SouthWRAP provides a spatial analysis of wildfire vulnerability across the state. The summary includes Levels of Concern, a Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index, Fire Occurrence Areas, a Fire Effects Index, Surface Fuels, a Values Impacted Rating, and a Suppression Difficulty Rating. This report for Marion County can be found in **Appendix B**.

Estimated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Area

The wildland/urban interface (WUI) is defined in the National Fire Plan as the area where houses and wildland vegetation coincide. There are three types of WUI:

- 1) Boundary – areas where development is adjacent to public or private wildlands
- 2) Intermix – structures are scattered and interspersed among wildland areas
- 3) Island or occluded – area of wildland surrounded by development, i.e. a subdivision preserve

Communities at Risk

The Communities at Risk (CARs) that are covered by the CWPP are listed and ranked below. Communities at Risk are determined using a wildfire risk/hazard assessment method that includes but is not limited to wildfire occurrence, wildfire cause, values at risk, hazardous vegetative fuel loads, and wildfire suppression and initial attack resources. For further explanation of the ranking and prioritizing process, see the National Association of State Foresters publication, Identifying Communities as Risk and Prioritizing Risk-Reduction Projects.

Marion County Communities at Risk

Location	Rank
Anthony	Medium
Bahia Oaks	Low
Bay Lake	High
Belleview	Low
Belleview Heights	Low
Big Scrub (subdivision)	Medium
Boardman	Low
Bruceville	Low
Burbank	Low
Candler	Medium
Citra	Low
Cotton Plant	Low
Dunnellon	Medium
East Lake Weir	Medium
Electra	Medium

Eureka	Medium
Fairfield	Low
Fellowship	Low
Flemington	Low
Florida Highlands	High
Forest Lakes Park	Low
Fort McCoy	Medium
Golden Hills	Low
Grahamsville	Low
Hog Valley	Medium
Irvine	Low
Kendrick	Low
Kerr City	Low
Lacota	Medium
Lake Tropicana	High
Lowell	Low
Lynne	Medium
Marion Oaks	High
Martel	Low
Martin	Low
McIntosh	Low
Moss Bluff	Medium
Oak	Low
Oak Run	Low
Ocala	Low
Ocala Highlands Estates	Medium
Ocala Park Ranch	Medium
Ocala Waterway	High
Ocklawaha	Medium
On Top of the World	Low
Orange Blossom Hills	Low
Orange Springs	High
Pedro	Medium
Pine Run	Low
Rainbow Lakes Estates	Medium
Reddick	Low
Rolling Hills	Medium
Rolling Ranches	Medium
Romeo	Medium
Salt Springs	Medium
Santos	Low
Scrambletown	Medium
Shady	Low
Silver Springs	Low

Silver Springs Shores	High
Sparr	Medium
Summerfield	Low
Sunset Harbor	Low
The Villages	Low
Tobacco Patch Landing	Low
Weirsdale	Low
Westwood Acres	High
Woods and Lakes	Medium
Zuber	Low

Critical Facilities Vulnerability

Information about critical facilities vulnerability is on file with Marion County Emergency Management in the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS). The LMS includes an extensive list of critical facilities by type and address, such as medical facilities, schools, police and fire stations, military facilities, airport facilities, infrastructure, and utilities. A list of Critical Facilities can be found in **Appendix A**.

Predominant Wildland Fuel Types

According to the Marion County SouthWRAP report, the predominant wildland fuel types are Fuel Model 2- Timber (grass and understory) and Fuel Model 9 – Hardwood (long-needle pine) litter. More information on the wildland fuel types can be found in Marion County SouthWRAP in **Appendix A**.

Wildfire History

A 10-year history of wildfires by cause that FFS responded to are listed in the following table:

Fires by Causes

Waccasassa Forestry Center
01/01/2007 through 12/31/2017

Marion

Cause	Fires	Percent	Acres	Percent
Campfire	12	1.80	25.7	0.50
Children	26	3.90	66.2	1.28
Debris Burn*	0	0	0.0	0
Debris Burn--Auth--Broadcast/Acreage	7	1.05	145.8	2.82
Debris Burn--Auth--Piles	42	6.31	226.2	4.37
Debris Burn--Auth--Yard Trash	17	2.55	106.9	2.07
Debris Burn--Nonauth--Broadcast/Acreage	6	0.90	40.0	0.77
Debris Burn--Nonauth--Piles	81	12.16	593.3	11.46
Debris Burn--Nonauth--Yard Trash	46	6.91	324.6	6.27
Equipment use*	0	0	0.0	0
Equipment--Agriculture	25	3.75	279.10	5.39
Equipment--Logging	3	0.45	3.4	0.07
Equipment--Recreation	5	0.75	169.3	3.27
Equipment--Transportation	15	2.25	51.4	0.99
Incendiary	88	13.21	264.7	5.11
Lightning	118	17.72	1,491.3	28.81
Miscellaneous --Breakout	7	1.05	228.3	4.41
Miscellaneous --Electric Fence	0	0	0.0	0
Miscellaneous --Fireworks	4	0.60	12.5	0.24
Miscellaneous --Power Lines	23	3.45	36.1	0.70
Miscellaneous --Structure	5	0.75	11.1	0.21
Miscellaneous--Other	28	4.20	268.6	5.19
Railroad	0	0	0.0	0
Smoking	5	0.75	7.5	0.14
Unknown	103	15.47	823.6	15.91
Total	666	5,175.6	5,787.6	

4. Local Capacity and Mutual Aid Agencies

Organizations

Federal:

U.S. Forest Service – Ocala National Forest

State:

Florida Department of Transportation

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Florida Forest Service

Florida Highway Patrol

Florida State Parks/Department of Environmental Protection

Districts:

Southwest Florida Water Management District

St. Johns River Water Management District

County:

Marion County Emergency Management

Marion County Fire Rescue

Marion County Health Department

Marion County Parks and Recreation

Marion County Public Safety Communications

Marion County Road Department

Marion County School Board

Marion County Sheriff's Office

Municipal:

Ocala Fire Rescue

Volunteer Fire Departments:

Rainbow Lakes Estates

Resources and Apparatus Inventory

Federal:

Ocala National Forest

Lake George Ranger Station 17147 East State Road 40 Silver Springs, FL 34488 352-434-1021	Mike Drayton 352-434-1021	2- type 6 engines	1- type 3 tractor plow 1- type 2 tractor plow
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State:

Florida Department of Transportation

627 NW 30th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34475
352-732-1338

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Northeast Region
Shannon Wright, Regional Director
1239 SW 10th Street
Ocala, FL 34471
352-732-1225

Florida Forest Service

Waccasassa Forestry Center 5353 NE 39 th Ave Gainesville, FL 32609	352-395-4951	2- dozer/transport units 1-John Deere 850 heavy dozer/ low boy	1- brush truck 1 - 6x6 brush truck 1 - 4x4 ATV 1 - 4x4 UTV w water tank
Indian Lake Work Center 6675 NE 40 th Ave Road Ocala, FL 34479	352-732-1201	4 – dozer/transport units	1 – brush truck 2 - ATVs
Candler Forestry Tower 10451 County Road 25 Bellevue, FL 34420	352-288-0400	1- dozer/transport unit	

Dunnellon Forestry Tower 16291 SW Hwy 484 Dunnellon, FL 34434	352-489-8864	1- dozer/transport unit	1 – brush truck
Ft. McCoy Forestry Tower 6810 Hwy 316 Citra, FL 32113	352- 595-7478	1- dozer/transport unit	1 – 6 x 6 brush truck
Region 2 Wildfire Mitigation Team 5365 NE 39 th Avenue Gainesville, FL 32609	352-395-4951		
	Mowing Equipment:	2- John Deere 333d rubber tracked skid steers with Gyro-trac mulching heads	1 – John Deere 333d with fecon mulching head
	Roller Choppers:	2 – 30” drum roller choppers	
	Fire Equipment:	1 – 500 gallon type 6 Ford F-550	1 -John Deere 550g medium tractor with plow
		2- John Deere 650h/j series with plows	1 -Caterpillar D/6 heavy tractor/low boy
		1-UTV with 50-gallon water tank	2- ATV’s with burn tanks
		2- dozer/transport units	1 – Volvo road tractor

Florida Highway Patrol

Captain Greg LaMont

386-620-5503

Dispatch – 1-800-387-1290 ext. 8

Florida State Parks/Department of Environmental Protection

District 2 Jeff DiMaggio Fire Management Officer 352-257-0015 Jeffrey.DiMaggio@dep.state.fl.us	Rainbow Springs State Park Larry Steed, Park Manager Bob Dampman, Asst. Park Manager 352-465-8555	Currently covered with staff from Crystal River Preserve John Lakich Keith Morin 352-228-6028	1 – type 6 engine
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	19158 SW 81 st . Place Road Dunnellon, FL 34432		
District 3 Chris Matson Fire Management Officer 352-553-4371 Christopher.Matson@dep.state.fl.us	Silver Springs State Park Sally Lieb, Park Manager 353-236-7152 1425 NE 58 th Avenue Ocala, FL 34470	<u>Red card staff:</u> Rick Wilson Rayne Summers <u>Meet FPS fire standards:</u> Sally Lieb, Andy Natwick, Amber Hatcher, Kasey Fritz, Matthew Weaver, Samantha Wynne, Michael Good, Daniel Osborn	1 – type 6 engine 1 – wet UTV/trailer

Florida Greenways and Trails

Central Part - Kelly Conley Cell 352-427-0652 Office 386-236-7143 8282 SE Hwy 314 Ocala, FL 34470	Mickey Thomason Cell 352-427-0630 Office 352-236- 7143 East Side- John Dehoff Cell 386-937-3612 Office 386-329- 3576 West End – Chris Mckendree – Cell 352-427-0640 Office 352-447- 1720	8 personnel with wildfire standards 2 personnel with tractor plow standards	4 – type 6 brush trucks 1 – 650 dozer with plow 1 – 750 dozer with plow
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District:

Southwest Florida Water Management District

<p>Cyndi Gates Senior Land Management Specialist 352-556-7397 2379 Broad Street Brookesville, FL 34604 cyndi.gates@swfwmd.state.fl.us 352-796-7211, ext. 4461</p>	<p>Chris Reed Lead Land Management Specialist chris.reed@swfwmd.state.fl.us 352-796-7211, ext. 4466</p>	<p>No fire resources located in Marion County</p>	
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**St. Johns River Water Management District
North Central Region Office Locations**

<p>Sunnyhill Field Station 19561 SE Hwy 42 Umatilla, FL 32784 352-821-1043</p>	<p>R.H. Davis Land Manager 352-427-0929 rhodavis@sjrwmd.com Alex Auton Land Management Technician 386-937-1399 aauton@sjrwmd.com</p>	<p>1 – tractor plow 1 – type 6 engine 1 – Marsh Master</p>	<p>1 – type 2 water tender 1 – ATV fire capable 1 – UTV fire capable</p>
<p>Lake George Satellite Office 735 Joe Pittman Road Seville, FL 32190</p>	<p>Danny Mills Land Management Specialist 386-937-0492 dmills@sjrwmd.com Dean Gemeinhardt Land Management Specialist 386-983-1810 dgemeinhardt@sjrwmd.com</p>	<p>1 – type 6 engine 1 – ATV fire capable</p>	

Station #10 The Villages	8220 SE 165 th Mulberry Lane The Villages, FL 32162	Yes	Yes	No
Station #11 North Marion	12250 NW Gainesville Road Reddick, FL 32686	Yes	Yes	No
Station #12 Meadowood Farms	120 NW 110 th Avenue Ocala, FL 34482	Yes	Yes	No
Station #13 Orange Springs	23520 NE Hwy 315 Ft. McCoy, FL 32134	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station #15 Salt Springs	14463 NE 250 th Avenue Salt Springs, FL 32134	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station #16 Shady	7151 S. Magnolia Avenue Ocala, FL 34476	Yes	Yes	No
Station #17 Silver Springs Shores	2122 Pine Road Ocala, FL 34472	Yes	Yes	No
Station #18 Bellevue	11941 SE 55 th Avenue Road Bellevue, FL 34420	Yes	Yes	No
Station #19 Sparr	13223 NE Jacksonville Road Citra, FL 32213	Yes	Yes	No
Station #20 Golden Ocala	3600 NW 70 th Avenue Road Ocala, FL 34482	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station #21 Friendship	7884 SW 90 th Street Ocala, FL 34476	Yes (quint)	Yes	No
Station #22 Rainbow Springs	19995 SW 86 th Street Suite 001 Dunnellon, FL 34431	Yes	Yes	No
Station #23 Pedro Volunteer Station	16500 S. Hwy 475 Summerfield, FL 34491	Yes (Type 2)	Yes	No
Station #24 Marion Oaks	102 Marion Oaks Lane Ocala, FL 34473	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station #25 Lake Tropicana Volunteer Station	17700 SW 36 th Lane Place Dunnellon, FL 34432	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station #26 Electra	5420 SE 180 th Avenue Road	Yes	Yes	Yes

Volunteer Station	Ocklawaha, FL 32784			
Station #27 Weirsdale	16355 S. Hwy 25 Weirsdale, FL 32195	Yes	Yes	Yes
Station #28 Rolling Greens	7089 Holyoke Court Ocala, FL 34472	Yes	Yes	No
Station #30 Spruce Creek	7900 SE 135 th Street Summerfield, FL 34491	Yes (quint)	Yes	Yes
Station #31 Ray Lloyd Jr.	11240 SW Hay 484 Dunnellon, FL 34432	Yes	Yes	No
Station #32 Liberty	11350 SW 49 th Avenue Ocala, FL 34476	Yes	Yes	No
Station #33 Operations/Training	3230 SE Maricamp Road Ocala, FL 34476	Yes	Yes	No

Marion County Health Department

15150 NW Gainesville Road
Reddick, FL 32686
352-591-2470

Marion County Parks and Recreation

111 SE 25th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471
352-671-8560

Greg Wiley Operations Director 352-817-2334	Rodney Sieg 352-239-1120 Lonny Haynes 352-239-3829 Clarke Allen 352-427-2920 Jason Maurer 352-454-6251	Deuce and a half (900 gallons)	Chainsaws Backfire pots
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Marion County Public Safety Communications

2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, FL 34470
352-671-8460

Marion County Road Maintenance

412 SE 25th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471
352- 671-8687

Marion County School Board

512 SE 3rd Street
Ocala, FL 34471
352-671-7700

Marion County Sheriff's Office

692 NW 30th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34475
352-732-8181

Municipal:

Ocala Fire Rescue

Chief Bradd Clark
3001 NE 21st Street
Ocala, FL

Station 1	235 NE Watula Avenue Ocala, FL 34470	1 Fire Engine 1 Rescue Unit 1 Tower Truck 1 Squad
Station 2	2701 SE 36 th Avenue Ocala, FL 34471	1 Fire Engine 1 Rescue Unit
Station 3	737 SW MLK Jr. Avenue Ocala, FL 34471	1 Fire Engine 1 Rescue Unit
Station 4	3300 SW 20 th Street Ocala, FL 34474	1 Fire Engine 1 Rescue Unit 1 ARFF Truck
Station 5	2340 NE 25 th Avenue Ocala, FL 34470	1 Fire Engine
Station 6	5220 SW 50 th Court Ocala, FL 34474	1 Fire Engine

Volunteer Fire Departments

Rainbow Lake Estates VFD

Chief Jeff Keiper Rainbow Lake Estate VFD C/O Marion County MSTU/Assessment	352-438-2650		
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2710 East Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34470			
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Wildland Fire Response Capabilities

Goals:

- To maintain Memorandums of Understanding
- To increase wildland firefighting training opportunities and accessibility
- To maintain a countywide wildland fire task force

Wildland Fuel Management Capabilities

Goals:

- Increase fuel reduction projects

Agencies and landowners currently involved in fuel reduction (mowing, chopping, prescribed burning, herbicide application) include Florida Forest Service, Florida State Parks/Department of Environmental Protection, St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Marion County Parks and Recreation, and others.

CWPP Community Development Review

Marion County government performs planning, zoning, development plan review, building permit review, building inspections, code enforcement, grants administration, etc, which come under the departmental heading of community development review.

Provisions for Wildfire Hazard Assessment and Wildfire Mitigation in the Development Review Process

Marion County and its municipalities generally solicit information from Marion County Fire Rescue for informational purposes during review. Further inclusion of wildfire hazard assessment and mitigation review is ongoing during the community development review process.

Landscape Regulations that Support or Impact Wildfire Mitigation

The Marion County Comprehensive Plan has landscape regulations that directly reference wildfire mitigation. Education on plant selection for landscape architects and developers is a process that will be explored.

Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group

The Marion County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) working group includes representation from the Florida Forest Service. During the implementation of the CWPP, projects will be drafted and nominated for the LMS project list. These projects will be evaluated by the LMS working group and scored based upon the approved matrix. Any additional CWPP projects that are scored will be placed on the ranked projects list and may be made available for mitigation funds.

Firewise Communities

One goal of the CWPP is to determine potential Firewise communities, implement strategies within these communities, and gain support for mitigation and maintenance efforts to protect property within the county. This effort is voluntary on the part of the communities who wish to participate in the program. Though the Firewise Community recognition is voluntary, mitigation efforts are directed by the state, county and the various agencies who have authority to undertake such actions.

5. Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Increase fuel management capabilities and activities.

Objective 1.1: Complete hazardous fuel reduction projects (chopping, mowing, and prescribed burning) based upon annual treatment plans.

Objective 1.2: Increase interagency cooperation and communication through ongoing hazardous fuel management operations (chopping, mowing and prescribed burning).

Objective 1.3: Increase the number of hazardous fuel reduction projects (chopping, mowing, and prescribed burning) based upon annual treatment plans.

Goal 2: Engage in and maintain multi-county and multi-agency mutual aid agreements as it relates to wildfire suppression.

Objective 2.1: Enter into mutual aid agreements with surrounding federal, state, and county agencies to bolster wildfire suppression support in an effort to increase community resilience to the threats from wildfire.

Goal 3: Increase Firewise and Ready, Set, Go program awareness throughout the County

Objective 3.1: Increase education on how Firewise and Ready, Set, Go program principles can help mitigate risks associated with wildfire.

Objective 3.2: Plan and conduct awareness programs with focus on how careless burning can increase wildfire risk.

Objective 3.3: Conduct public outreach on outdoor burn laws engaging homeowners and large land holders.

Goal 4: Increase the practice of Firewise and Ready, Set, Go program principles in Marion County.

Objective 4.1: Encourage new and existing communities to come into compliance with Firewise and Ready, Set, Go principals through education and outreach.

Objective 4.2: Identify potential land development code changes which support the “Wildfire Mitigation in Florida” best management practices with the intent to reduce potential structure ignition from wildfire and enhance wildfire suppression capabilities for new and existing communities.

Goal 5: Maintain the multi-agency wildland fire task force.

Objective 5.1: Continue the coordination of personnel and equipment prior to and during times of high wildfire risk and occurrence.

Objective 5.2: Continue the coordination of public information regarding wildfire risk.

Objective 5.3: Make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding burn bans and other preventive county actions.

6. Implementation and Plan Maintenance

The CWPP is to be implemented as resources become available to incrementally mitigate community wildfire vulnerability. The CWPP Working Group has collaboratively developed an action plan to guide implementation efforts over the next 5 years. An action as listed in this plan is a strategy, project, or program that reduces wildfire vulnerability in the community. Interagency and public-private partnerships in CWPP implementation are encouraged.

Potential Funding Sources

Project funding and/or state and local agency staff time should be continually sought to implement the CWPP Action Plan. The CWPP Working Group should meet annually to discuss budget requests among the partner agencies and determine potential grant opportunities that can be applied for during the year. Descriptions of major federal and state funding sources applicable to wildfire mitigation and response improvements are available in the Florida State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Plan Maintenance and Evaluation

The CWPP should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure information is current, monitor progress of the Plan, and alter Plan content as necessary. Every 5 years the Plan should receive a major update in which the vulnerability assessment is updated and the action plan is evaluated for its effectiveness over the past 5 years and its suitability for the next 5 years. The 5-year update should ideally occur simultaneously with the 5-year update to the Local Mitigation Strategy. Only the 5-year update requires new plan approval signatures.

7. Action Plan

This section describes implementation strategies or actions that will advance the goals and objectives of this CWPP. The actions are organized by category: 1) wildland fuel management, 2) community outreach and education, 3) policy and regulation recommendations, and 4) wildfire response improvements

Wildland Fuel Management

Fuel management projects help reduce the size and intensity of wildfires and may also decrease the likelihood that a wildfire will start in an area. These actions can increase the safety of people and property while reducing response and suppression costs. Fuel management methods, which can be used alone or in combination with other methods to achieve site-specific benefits, include:

- Prescribed burning
- Mechanical treatment (e.g., mowing, mulching, disking, fireline plowing, and chopping)
- Chemical treatment (herbicide application)
- Biomass removal (e.g., pine straw harvesting, vegetation or tree thinning, and timber harvesting); and
- Biomass conversion (grazing).

Fuel management treatments designed to reduce wildfire risk are temporary and in most cases reduce the hazard in the treated area for three to five years. Periodic maintenance is required to maintain fuels at an acceptable level to reduce wildfire risk.

Wildland Fuel Management Actions

- Collaboratively draft an annual hazardous fuel management plan with projects prioritized and paired with available agency funding
- Continue fuel reduction in areas designated as ‘Communities at Risk’
- Increase the use of prescribed burning

Community Outreach and Education

Outreach and education initiatives are designed to raise awareness and improve community knowledge of wildfire risk and mitigation strategies. Examples of education programs are the Firewise Communities Program and the Ready, Set, Go Program. Education and outreach programs can influence attitudes and opinions and lead to behavioral changes, such as homeowner’s participation in fuel management strategies.

Community Outreach and Education Actions

- Identify which areas in the county are considered ‘Communities at Risk’ based on wildfire history, wildfire causes, available resources, and access to homes and property
- Fire response agencies support risk/assessment training
- Fire response agencies support door-to-door campaigns in ‘Communities at Risk’ in their response areas

- Fire response agencies and law enforcement agencies receive information on safe and legal outdoor burning practices
- Form a Joint Information Section (JIS) comprised of the Public Information Officers from the cooperating agencies involved in wildfire suppression

Policy and Regulation Recommendations

Updating local government plans, policies, and regulations is another effective way to advance wildfire mitigation goals. By modifying requirements for development, high risk wildfire zones can be avoided or new development can be proactively designed to reduce wildfire risk and therefore make living and working in these areas safer.

Policy and Regulation Actions

- Evaluate opportunities to include wildfire mitigation in the County Comprehensive Plan
- Produce a CWPP
- Develop wildfire mitigation projects to include in the LMS Project List

Wildland Fire Response Improvements

Opportunities to improve wildland fire response capabilities are critical to reducing the risk of wildfire damage to people and property. Improvements in response capabilities can include advanced training, increasing staff or volunteer fire fighting resources, and developing new procedures or protocols.

Wildland Fire Response Improvement Actions

- Continue the activities of the Marion County Multi-Agency Wildland Fire Task Force to:
 1. Coordinate and familiarize all agencies with joint wildfire/structure protection suppression tactics and combined operations practices
 2. Coordinate and familiarize all agencies with radio communications
 3. Coordinate and familiarize all agencies with available resources and their capabilities
 4. Coordinate training needs
 5. Coordinate and recommend countywide voluntary vs. mandatory burn bans
 6. Coordinate public information and wildfire prevention messages

Appendix A

Critical Facilities

The LMS was updated in 2015 and has critical facilities listed in the Appendix section. Refer to:

<http://www.marioncountyfl.org/departments-agencies/departments-a-n/growth-services/local-mitigation-strategy>

Appendix B

Marion County SouthWrap – see attachment