



Living along the wildland urban interface (WUI)

A discussion on property owner responsibility and steps to lower the impact of wildland fire on your home and the community

March 29th, 2025

Introduction to WUI

Wildland urban interface (WUI) is any zone where human-made improvements intermix with wildland fuels

There are three types of WUIs

1. Classic interface - these are more urban or city settings with large number of structures and intermittent encroaching wildland fuels
2. Mixed interface – these are rural settings with structures scattered throughout the wildland area with no clear demarcation of the two

This is us in Wayne County

3. Occluded interface – these are areas where structures surround an island of wildland fuels

General information

In the event of an incident, suppressing fires in the interface region is always complex and challenging. Recent California fires show us how wildland fires can rapidly decimate large urban settings and forest lands alike

When faced with a wildland fire incident, several jurisdictions play a role in the planning and execution of the response

There are responders with equipment and apparatuses from the Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Services and our local volunteers. It is a coordinated effort across these jurisdictions

The Wayne County responding volunteers are primarily trained structure firefighters, although we have also been trained in wildland/brush fire fighting

General information (contd.)

Our guiding principles when planning for engagement with wildland fires are as follows:

- Safety of firefighters and human lives is paramount
- Direct protection of improved properties will only be undertaken when it is safe to do so
- Firefighters will only engage in defending a structure if it is defensible based on factors like:
 - ❖ Location of the structure (topography, aspect, etc.)
 - ❖ Composition and the level of structure hardness
 - ❖ Established defensible space
 - ❖ Fuel types present and their density
 - ❖ Access and egress
 - ❖ Safety zones and staging areas
 - ❖ Weather conditions – wind in particular

Property owner responsibilities

As residents and property owners along the WUI, it is our individual responsibility to prepare our homes and surrounding areas to face an oncoming fire front to incur minimal damage

We must ourselves be prepared and do the following to ensure our homes are defensible at all times:

- Prevent starting fires on your property
- Follow the guidelines on subsequent slides to understand the home ignition zone and build a good defensible space around your dwelling/s
- Construct or remodel homes using fire-resistant construction materials
- Have clear access and egress for help to get to and from your property, and for you to leave when necessary or if you are asked to evacuate

Property owner responsibilities (contd..)

In the event of an actual incident, you must also do the following:

- Locate and utilize a safety zone to assemble in for further guidance
- Turn off your propane tanks and notify responders of any hazardous materials or flammable materials in and around your homes, garages and sheds
- Leave some lights on inside the home and shut but do not lock the doors and windows so firefighters can access the property if needed
- If you have or can establish stand-alone sprinklers to wet your structure and some land around, do so for as long as there is power
- Have your important documents/papers packed and ready to take with you
- Make sure you have adequate drinking water for all in your family
- Make sure your pets are safe and evacuated with you. CCAW in Torrey is working with the WCFD to establish a procedure to shelter displaced pets

Fire safety tips to harden your home and build defensible space

Fire Safety Tips

- Crush cigarette butts out
- Don't use fireworks in wildland urban interface areas
- Store hazard materials in a cool, dry place
- Obey fire restrictions regarding camp fires, outdoor cooking, target shooting and fireworks. Restrictions change seasonally; check with local fire department before any activity
- When using equipment that may produce sparks, work before 10:00 AM and avoid windy conditions
- Be sure spark arresters are installed and working properly on all portable equipment including mowers, chainsaws, weed-eaters, tractors, and harvesters
- Don't drive vehicles -including dirt bikes- on dry grass or brush. Remember that hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can ignite dry vegetation
- Check with local fire department and obtain permits before burning debris or fields
- Douse BBQ charcoal with water before disposing

www.utahfireinfo.gov

PREPARE THE ACCESS TO YOUR HOUSE:

Help emergency responders locate and access your home.

- Provide a reflective, noncombustible address sign with 4 inch high numbers that are visible and can be seen from the street.
- Remove flammable vegetation from sides (12') and above (13.5') your driveway for wildfire response equipment.
- If your driveway is more than 150' long, turnarounds or turnouts for emergency equipment may be needed.
- If you have a gate, provide a key box for emergency responders.
- Check bridges and culverts to see if fire-fighting equipment can reach your home.

DEVELOP OR MODIFY THE CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR HOUSE:

Limit ways fire can enter your house.

- Clean rain gutters and roof of leaves, needles and debris before fire season.
- Store firewood and other combustibles at least 30' from your home. Flammable outdoor furniture and cushions, dried flowers, and baskets can ignite structures so it is best to remove when wildfire threatens.
- Make sure chimney is screened with ½" or smaller wire mesh.
- Avoid wood roofs, use metal, tile or asphalt.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO TO ASSURE YOUR PROPERTY IS AS PREPARED AS IT CAN BE?

- If the home has combustible siding, consider stucco, brick, cement board, or stone.
- If necessary, consider covering underside of eaves with a soffit or "box in" eaves.
- Evaluate and modify windows if less than double pane or tempered glass. All vent openings need to be covered with 1/4 inch or smaller wire mesh.
- If you have a limited water supply you may need to add a cistern, pond or pool.
- Decks, balcony, outside stairs should be constructed of noncombustible material. Underside of decks should be enclosed or covered with ¼ inch wire mesh and kept free of combustible materials.
- Use fire resistant material to attach fences to house.

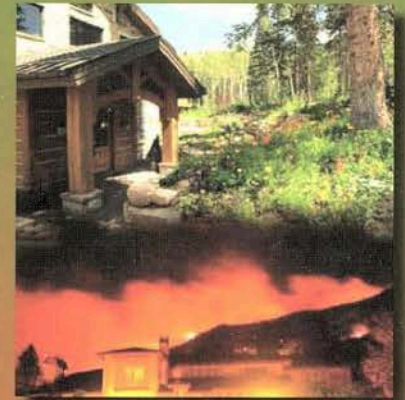
MAINTAIN ACCESS, DEFENSIBLE/ SURVIVABLE SPACE, AND CONSTRUCTION

Annual preparation is the only way to reduce wildfire threat.

Reevaluate and make sure that all Access, Defensible/Survivable Space and Construction activities are addressed before fire season.

HELP INFORM YOUR NEIGHBORS ABOUT WILDFIRE PREPARATION.

Prepare for Wildfire



What can you do?

Attend to:

Access

Construction

Defensible/Survivable Space

Maintenance



Fire safety tips (contd..)

Home Ignition Zone

By properly preparing the space around your home you can reduce the possibility of it catching fire. When preparing your house for wildfire, the area directly around the house is the most important. Many people call this area the Home Ignition Zone. By properly selecting, planting and maintaining vegetation in this area, you can increase the probability of your house surviving a wildfire. Make sure to consider detached garages, barns, or other structures as they can be strong fire ignition sources.

Near Area - Keep plantings within 3 to 5 feet of the structure to a minimum, especially if walls are flammable. Don't plant under windows, vents, decks or next to propane tanks. Decorative gravel, concrete, stone or other non-combustibles are best close to the house.

Near Area Vegetation

- Choose low growing, fire-resistant plants close to the house.
- Keep grasses watered and/or cut low.
- Trees in this area are considered part of the structure- the fewer the better.
- Choose deciduous trees over coniferous or fire-prone trees.
- Remove tree branches that overhang or touch the roof.
- Keep trees at least 10 feet between crowns. Crown separation is measured from the furthest branch of one tree to the nearest branch of the next tree.

NEAR AREA

Mid Area - this area is further away from your home, the continuity and arrangement of vegetation is modified to slow down and reduce the intensity of a wildfire.

MID AREA

Mid Area Vegetation

You can use other firewise plants further away from the structure. Emphasize low growing plants, up to 18". Plant firewise shrubs in small, irregular clusters or islands that are separated by at least 2 times their mature height. Although more trees are okay in this area, thinning and clumping is recommended. Choose deciduous trees over coniferous or fire-prone trees.

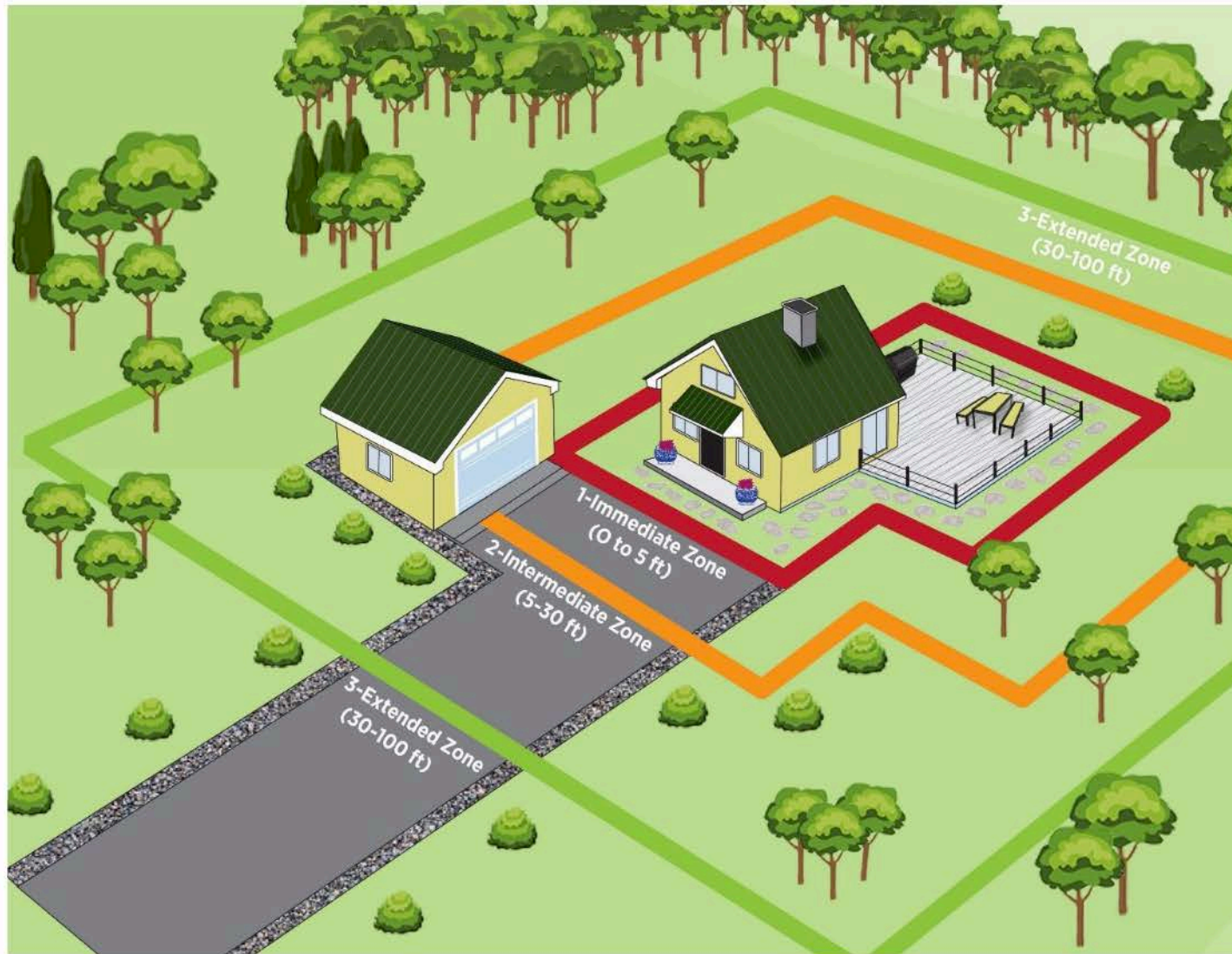
FAR AREA

Far Area

Many large properties may extend beyond the need for highly managed vegetation treatments. The area furthest from your house, or the Far Area, typically does not need the same level of care as the Near and Mid Areas. Transition to wildland by pruning and thinning trees and brush. Break up any "fire ladders." Prevent build up of dry brush.

As you consider the vegetation around your home, you will need to use different landscaping depending on how far the vegetation is from your house. The space around your house can be divided into three areas, Near Area, Mid Area and Far Area. The Near and Mid Areas make up the Home Ignition Zone. Larger properties will have a Far Area. Smaller properties may need to be treated totally within the Home Ignition Zone.

Establishing defensible space around your structures



Lot survey and property triage

As a service to the community and with the permission and request of the owners, the fire district volunteers will be happy to conduct a lot survey and a structure triage of your property to determine its defensibility

This will help the incident commander and responders to take appropriate actions with respect to your dwelling in the event of a wildfire threatening your property

To schedule a lot survey and structure triage of your property, email or call the operations chief Duane Dasse at wcfld0601@gmail.com or 435.558.5570

HB 48 Implications

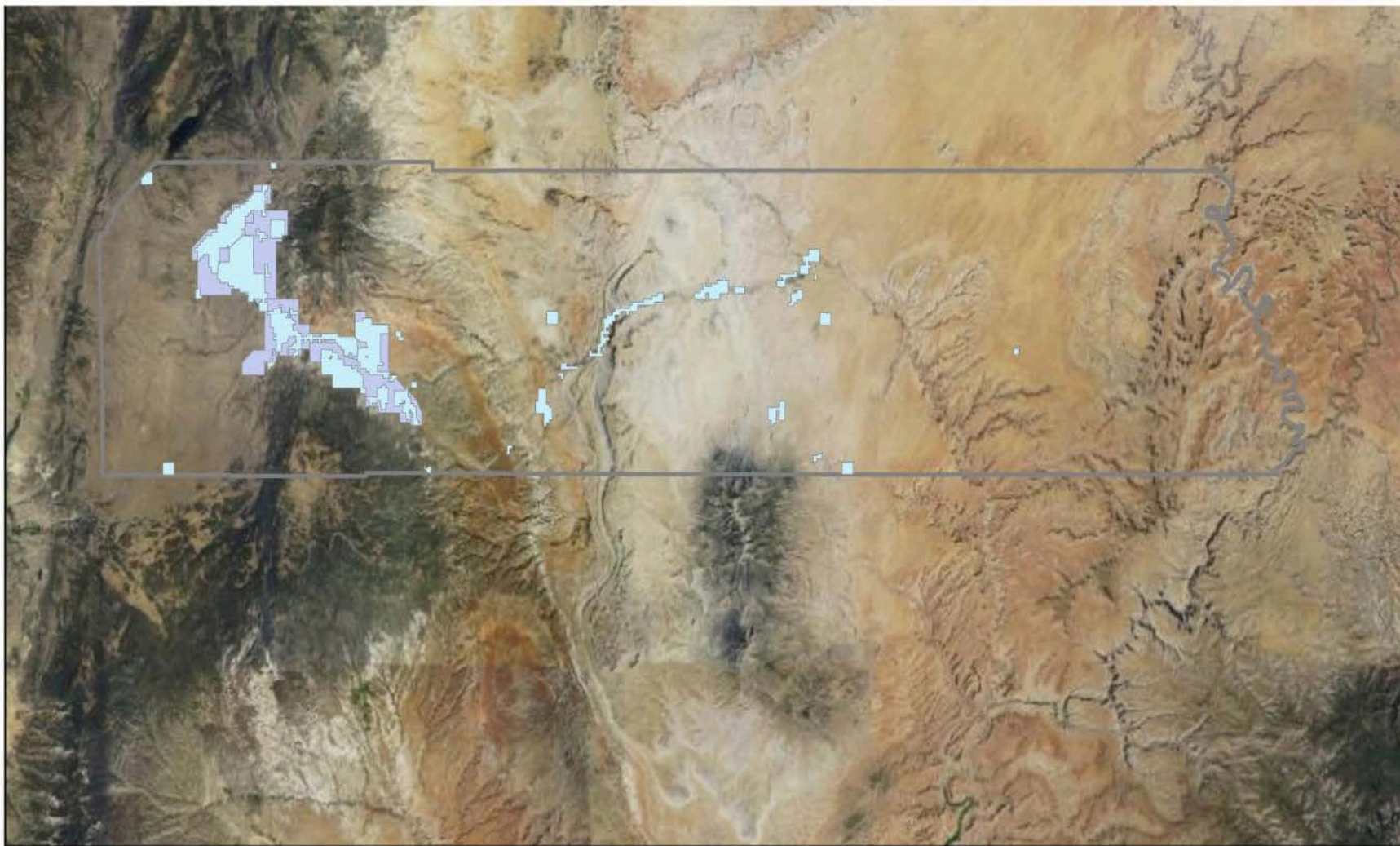
Preview

HB 48 creates new laws surrounding the Wildland Urban Interface that affect counties and municipalities:

- FFSL is tasked with creating a High Risk WUI boundary
- Properties with structures within the High Risk WUI boundary will pay a fee collected by the county
- Lot assessments performed within the boundary will use a triage scale to identify actions needed to prepare the property for wildfire
- Counties and municipalities to adopt the WUI code



Wayne County WUI Area



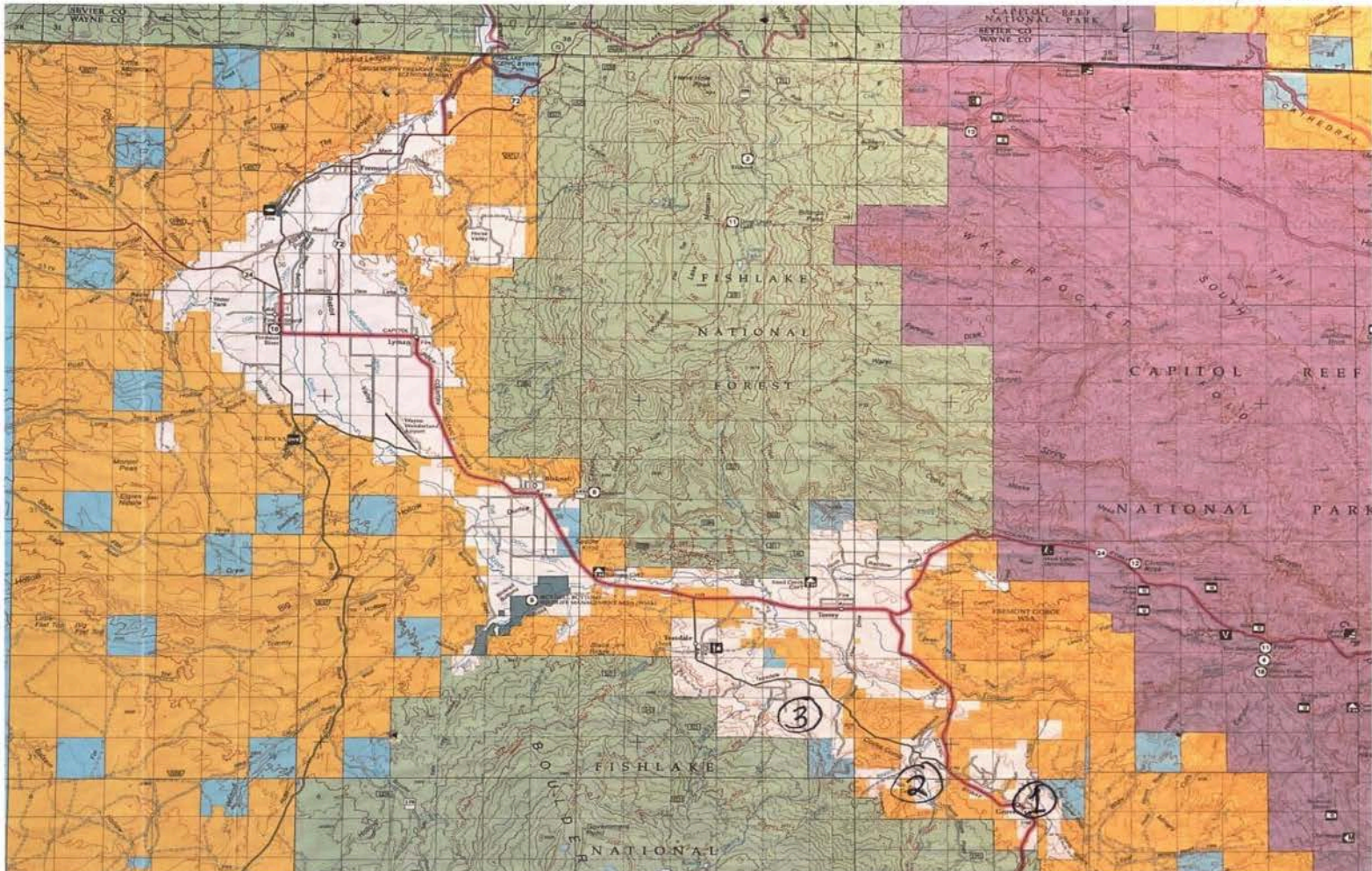
Legend



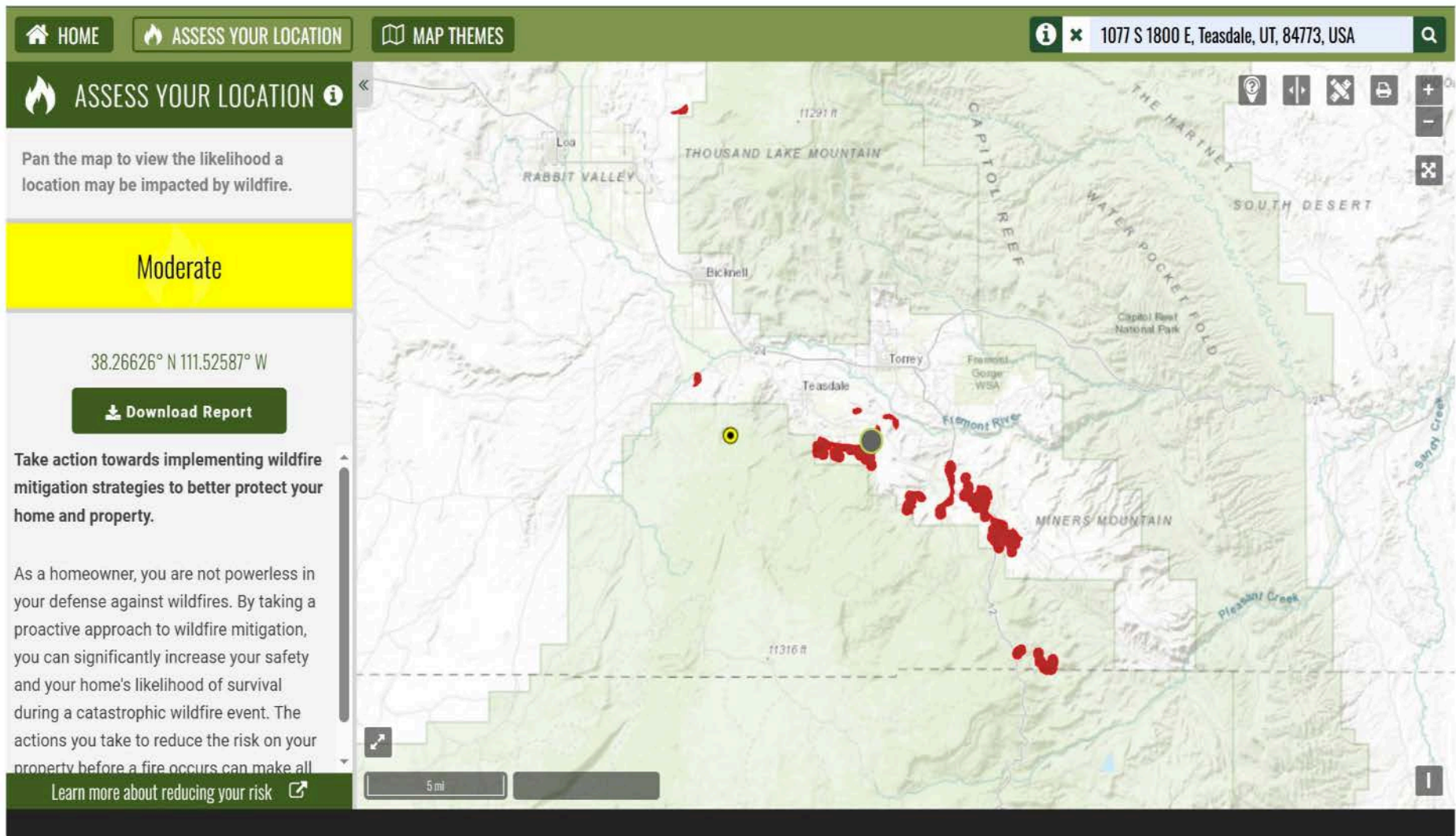
Wayne County WUI Treatment Area (AIM Grant)

Treatment Area
Wayne County, Utah

- ① Grover
- ② Fish Creek Cove
- ③ Donkey Flats



Wayne County WUI Treatment Area



County Implementation

- Collect the High-Risk WUI fee
- Potentially perform lot assessments
- Create a map boundary for the WUI
- Adopt and enforce the 2006 Utah WUI Code by *January 1, 2026*
- Adopt any subsequent updates to the Utah WUI Code with two years of update
- May provide resources to landowners to mitigate risk on their property



Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

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Municipal Implementation

- Create a map boundary for the WUI with counties.
- Adopt and enforce the 2006 Utah WUI Code by *January 1, 2026*
- Adopt any subsequent updates to the Utah WUI Code with two years of update
- Potentially perform lot assessments
- May provide resources to landowners to mitigate risk on their property



Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

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In conclusion

Wildfires are unpredictable and sporadic but they are becoming more frequent nowadays. It is very important to be aware of their impact and accordingly prepare ourselves to deal with it.

It is just good practice for us all to be fire wise and help become a fire-adapted community

Thank you