

LIVING ON THE EDGE - RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk describes the probability and severity of damage due to contact with a hazard, such as wildfire. Although many of us have seen news coverage of wildland/urban interface disasters, we typically don't consider OUR wildfire risk.

People will continue to build homes in the solitude and natural surroundings of our forests and wildland. However, they should know there is an assumed risk when homes are built in fire-prone ecosystems. If wildland-fire threatens homes, homeowners may be on their own. They cannot and should not expect to be rescued by the fire protection agencies.

An option for interface residents involves planning to help manage the wildland fire risk. Risk management requires:

- ➔ *Accurately assessing the level of fire protection services;*
- ➔ *Determining an acceptable level of risk; and*
- ➔ *Balancing acceptable risk with an acceptable cost.*

To be successful, planning for wildland fire protection should include representatives from throughout the community. The planning team should consult with the local fire department or fire district and the Florida Division of Forestry to find out what emergency response can be expected during a wildland fire disaster.

The next section explains the characteristics of a subdivision or neighborhood that make it either safe from or vulnerable to a wildland fire. Continue on to learn how to rate your communities' wildland fire hazard risk and balance an acceptable risk with an acceptable cost.