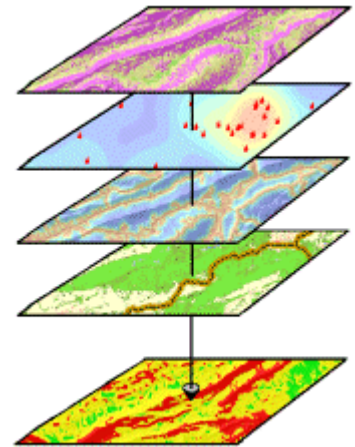


National Fire Plan WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT Virginia - 2003

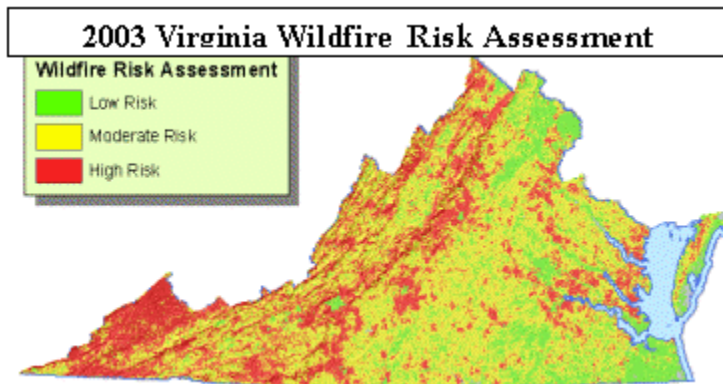


Thanks to funding from the National Fire Plan, the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) developed the Virginia Wildfire Risk Assessment - a GIS model to evaluate the levels of wildfire potential. This model identifies areas that are more susceptible to wildfire occurrence, greater wildfire intensity, and faster wildfire advancement. The main goals of the Risk Assessment project are to:

- **Target public outreach** hazard mitigation efforts toward woodland homes communities in high-risk wildland/urban interface areas and determine cost-share eligibility levels for communities
- **Improve response preparedness** by examining the spatial relationship of relatively high risk zones and wildfire suppression resources such as personnel, fire-fighting vehicles and hydrants



In 1998, VDOF attempted to map varying levels of wildfire risk. This involved a subjective interpretation by field foresters assigned to given work areas. This analysis was adequate for some VDOF planning purposes, but the need to produce a more objective risk assessment was made evident by inconsistencies and disagreements along county boundaries.



In 2001, National Fire Plan funding presented an opportunity to revisit this analysis using a more objective methodology, as well as an opportunity to develop importing supporting information, such as GIS map layers of woodland homes communities and dry hydrants across Virginia, to be used in conjunction with the final Risk Assessment. VDOF determined that historical fire incidents, land cover (as a fuels surrogate),

topographic characteristics, including slope and aspect, population density and road density, and distance to roads were critical variables in a wildfire risk analysis.

DOF created or gathered these data layers and used them in a raster-based weighted aggregate GIS model. In the future, VDOF and others can use the statewide risk assessment for improved community planning, targeted public outreach, and better resource allocation.

For more information please visit the VDOF web site at <http://www.dof.virginia.gov> or contact John Miller – Chief of Forest Protection. Phone: 434.977.6555 Email: brownm@dof.state.va.us