



News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Fred Turck at 434.220.8040 or John Miller at 434.220.9023

July 9, 2014

VDOF 14-039

Wildfire risk assessment website now available for public use

Officials with the Virginia Department of Forestry have unveiled a new web portal that will help homeowners and communities determine their wildfire risk – and take measures to mitigate potential hazards.

The Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal, or SouthWRAP, enables users in Virginia and 12 other southern states to identify wildfire threats based on landscape characteristics, historical fire occurrence, weather conditions and terrain. It also routes users to resources that can help them implement wildfire prevention practices.

SouthWRAP is a web portal that grants public access to risk assessment data that previously hasn't been readily available, particularly in a user-friendly format. Accessible at www.southernwildfirerisk.com, the tools are free to use.

Professional users, such as civic planners, wildland fire managers and elected officials, can use SouthWRAP to generate a report packaging all the wildfire risk data for their community. Such a tool can be useful in defining mitigation options, allocating resources and prioritizing programs that will better protect communities.

John Miller, VDOF director of resource protection, said, "This can and should be a 'pivot point' for Virginians as they learn what their risks are and how to mitigate them. SouthWRAP is a tool that neighbor can pass on to neighbor – making every community in Virginia a safer place in which to live."

State Forester of Virginia Bettina Ring said, "My colleagues and I in the Southern Group of State Foresters are excited to open the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal to the public. This website will enable homeowners, civic leaders, community planners, elected officials and others to identify the risk wildfire poses to their communities. This tool empowers Southerners to be able to better protect their homes and property."

###