



# Wildfire Hazard



## What Causes Wildfires?

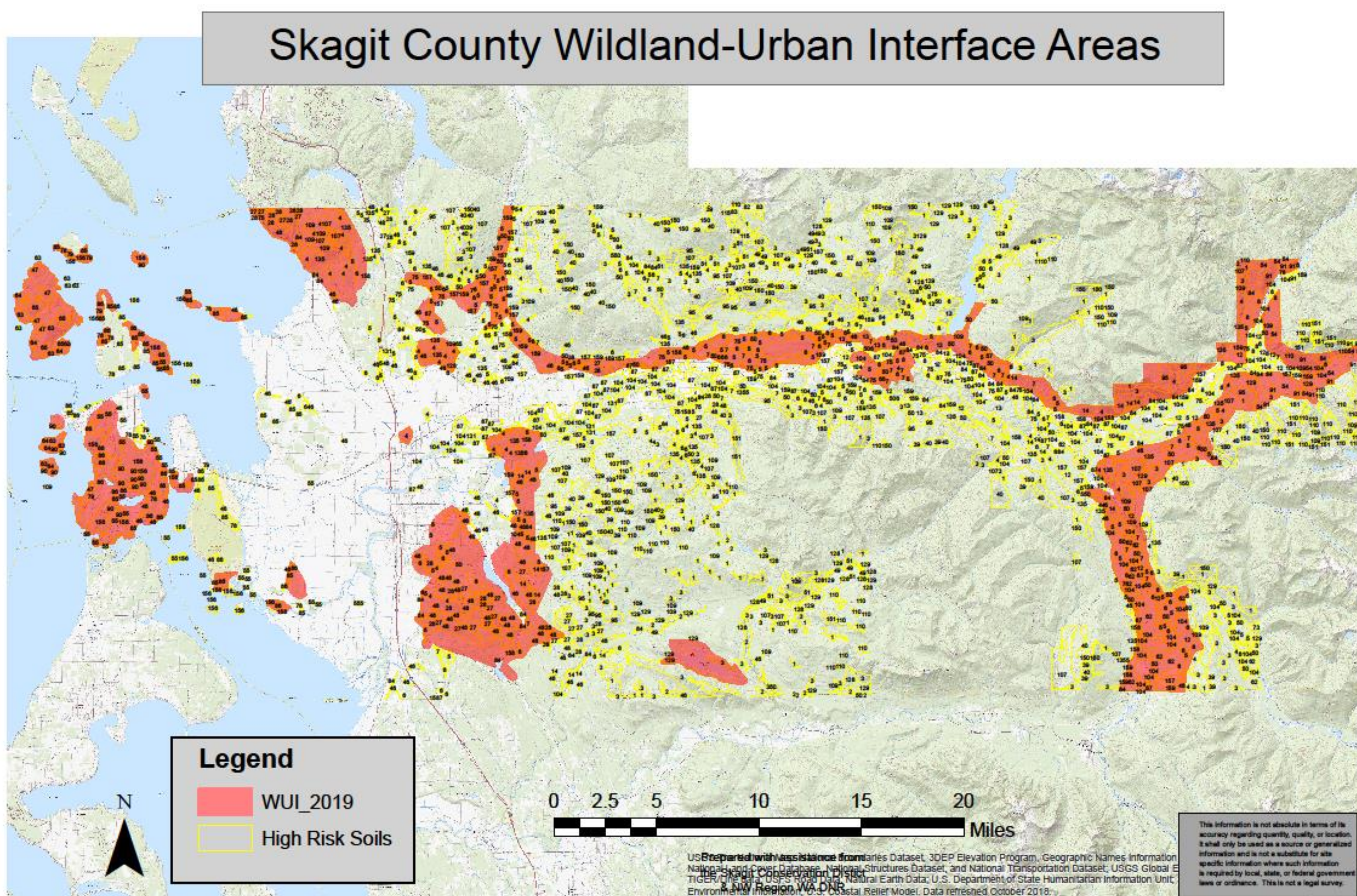
### Hazard Description

Wildland fires are uncontrolled fires in forests, woodlands, brush or grasslands. Most are caused by human error.

Wildland fires pose threats to people, pets, and livestock in areas where human development intermixes with, and is adjacent to wildland vegetation. This area is termed the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) – Map 1 below is the draft WUI map for Skagit County (2019).

Wildland fires also destroy valuable resource lands, wildlife habitat, powerlines, pipelines, communication and transportation infrastructure. Impacts of a major fire can be amplified by subsequent effects of landslides and flooding during heavy rains.

Map 1



### Wildland-Urban Interface Communities at Risk

The areas show in red on the map above represent areas where wildfire risk is a concern. Multiple layers of data were overlaid to determine wildfire risk areas in Skagit County. The data used in this risk map includes:

- Population
- Vegetation types
- Skagit County soil data
- Skagit County geology data
- Available Water Capacity based on soil type
- Slope
- Aspect

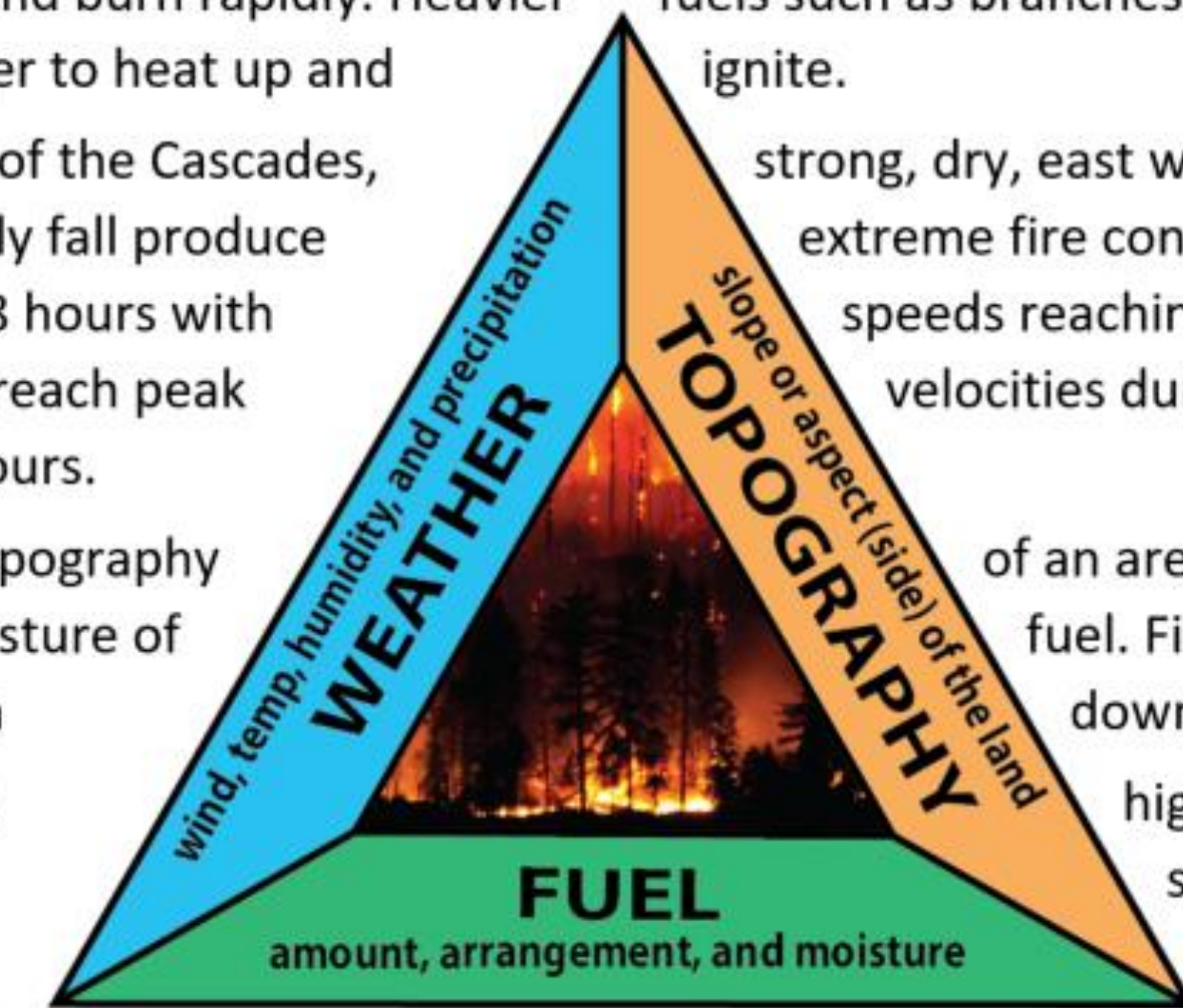
### Factors Contributing to Wildfires

**Fuel:** Lighter fuels such as grass, leaves, and needles (sometimes called litter) quickly expel moisture and burn rapidly. Heavier fuels such as branches, logs, and tree trunks take longer to heat up and ignite.

**Weather:** West of the Cascades, strong, dry, east winds in the late summer and early fall produce extreme fire conditions. East winds can last 48 hours with speeds reaching 60 mph; these winds generally reach peak velocities during the night and early morning hours.

**Topography:** Topography of an area influences the amount and moisture of fuel. Fires spread more easily uphill than downhill.

Barriers, such as highways and lakes, can affect the spread of fire. Limited road access to open spaces increases risk for larger wildland fires. Fewer roads delay response times for firefighters to make contact with the fire. In densely wooded areas, fires can burn for days without anyone knowing the fire exists.



**Fire Behavior Triangle**

### What can you do to reduce wildfire risk around your property?



Every year, wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people are living where wildfires are a real risk. But by working together, residents can make their own property — and their neighborhood — much safer from wildfire.

#### Action Items to Improve Your Home's Survivability:

- **REMOVE** leaves, pine needles, and other flammable material from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck to help prevent embers from igniting your home.
- **SCREEN** areas below decks and porches with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent material from accumulating underneath.
- **COVER** exterior attic and soffit vents with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent sparks from entering your home.
- **ENCLOSE** eaves to help prevent ember entry.
- **INSPECT** shingles or roof tiles. **REPLACE** missing shingles or tiles. **COVER** ends of tiles with bird stops or cement to help prevent ember penetration during a wildfire.

#### Tips for Landscaping Around Your Home

- **REMOVE** dead vegetation and other flammable materials, especially within the first 5 feet of the home.
- **KEEP** your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to help reduce fire intensity.
- **PRUNE** tree limbs so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet above the ground to help reduce the chance of fire getting into the crowns of the trees.
- **MOVE** construction material, trash, and woodpiles at least 30 feet away from the home and other outbuildings.
- **DISPOSE** of branches, weeds, leaves, pine needles, and grass clippings that you have cut to reduce fuel for fire.

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Increase your wildfire safety. Make simple low-cost changes to your home and landscape starting today.



Visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) for more information.



IT'S A BIG WORLD.  
LET'S PROTECT IT TOGETHER!

