

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Jefferson County, Colorado is one of the highest risk counties in Colorado for wildfire risk and impacts. Fires impact residents through evacuations and property loss, and wildfires in this area can have severe effects on air quality, drinking water, recreation, and local businesses. This CWPP is the culmination of 18 months of public outreach and engagement, wildfire modelling and analysis, partner meetings, and review and feedback from both wildfire and forestry professionals and County residents. This plan delineates a holistic approach that the County and partners can take to build capacity and acquire funding to implement priority risk reduction projects.



Photo: West Metro Fire Rescue firefighters implementing a prescribed burn at Bear Creek Lake Park

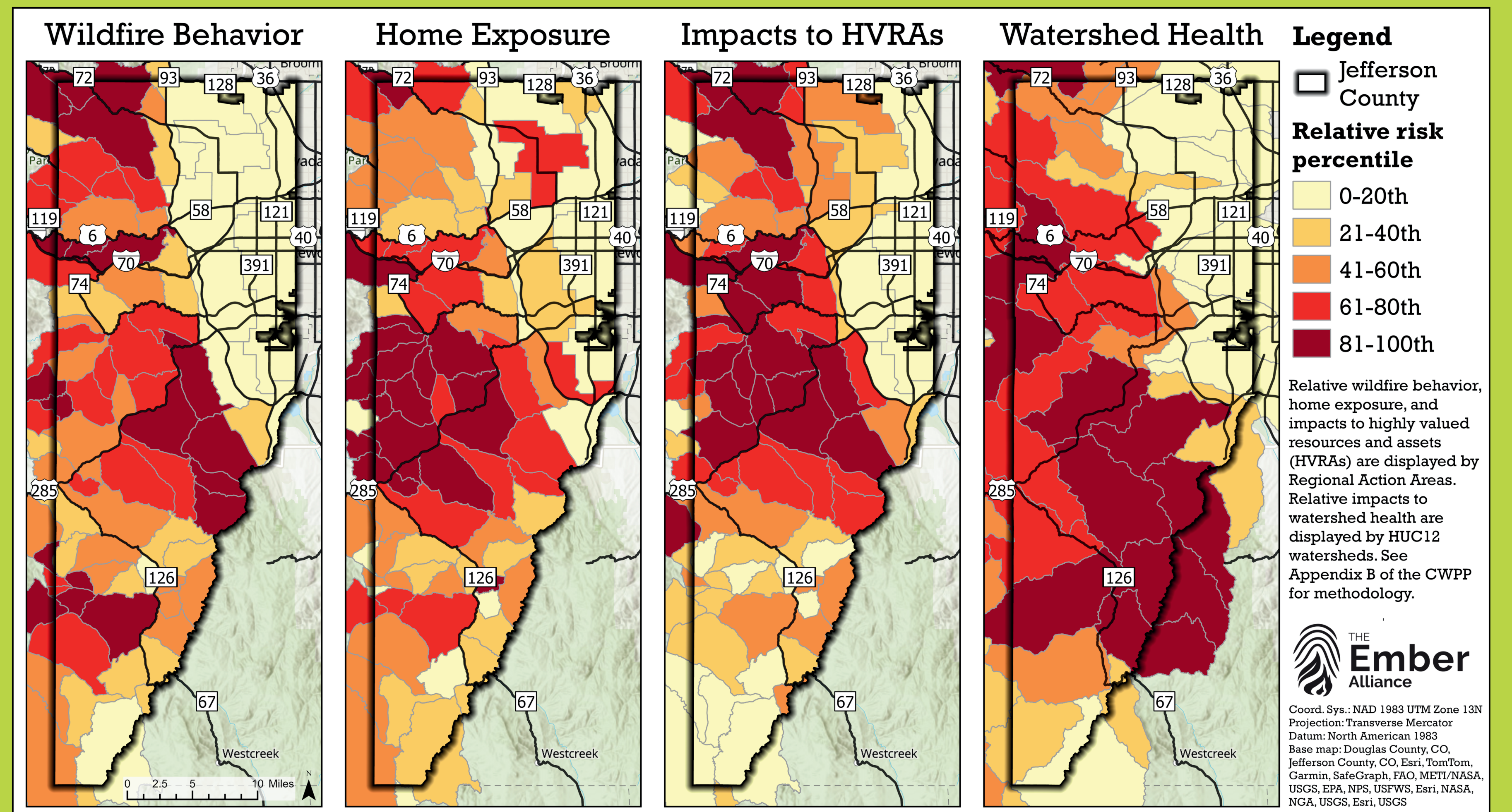
Risk Assessment

The northwestern portion of the county has very high relative burn probability and the potential for extreme fire behavior that could expose homes and critical infrastructure to wildfire impacts. The central portion of the county has numerous homes and critical infrastructure that could be damaged by wildfire.

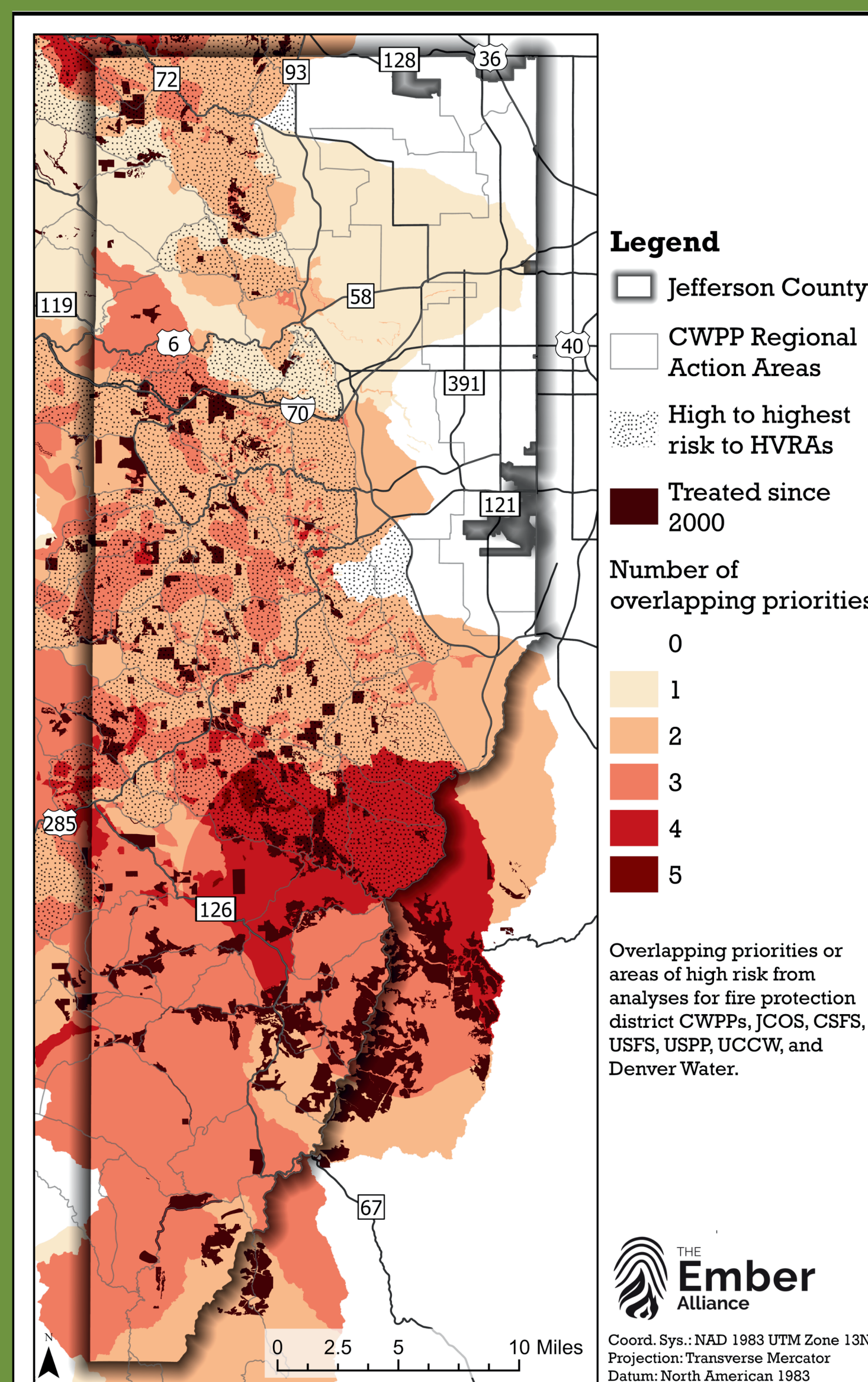
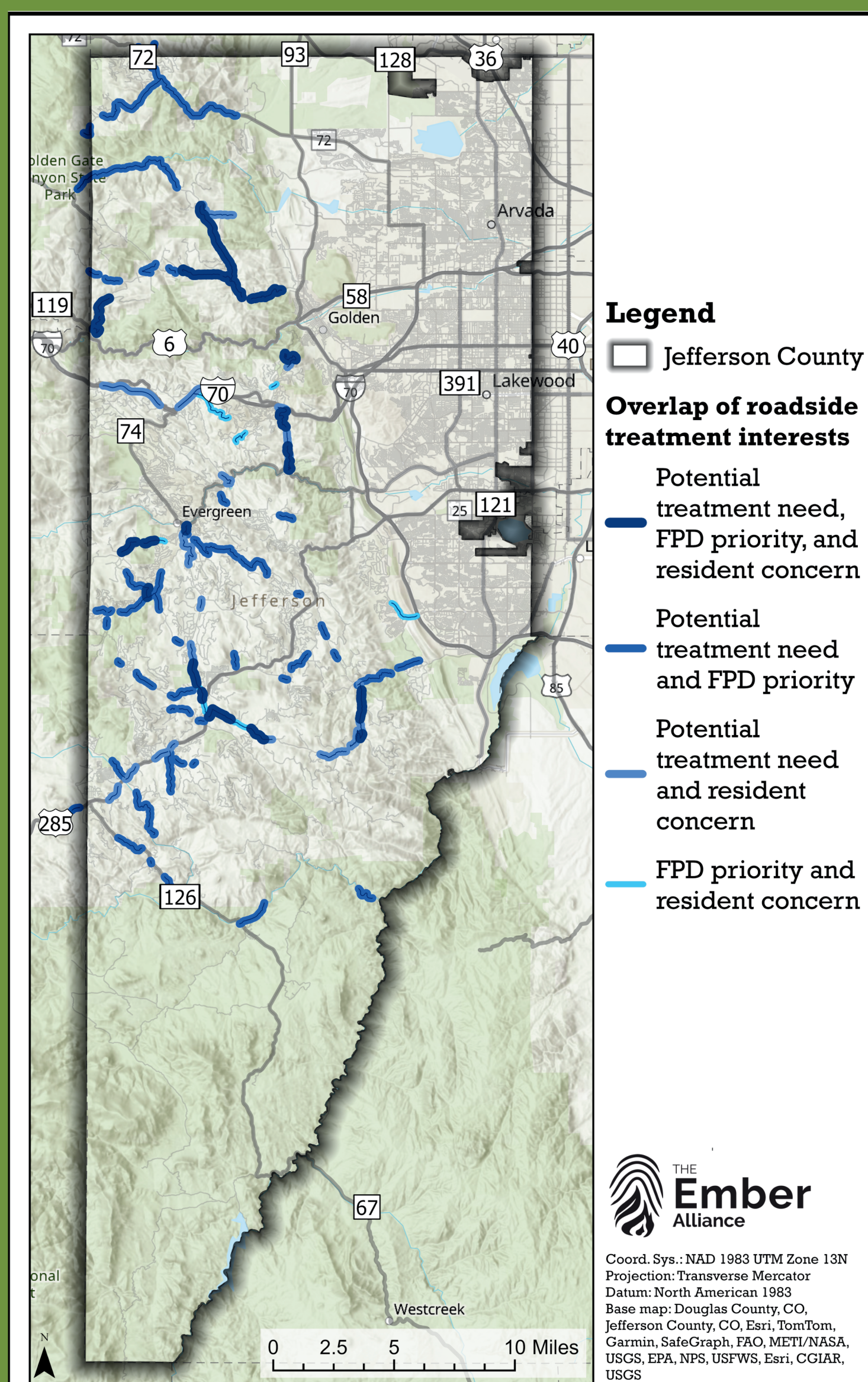
Home exposure to wildfire is extremely high in the central portion of Jefferson County, in the northern portion of the county that includes Wondervu and Crescent Village, and western Golden. Home exposure is also high in eastern parts of the county due to the potential for fire to move rapidly through grasslands and shrublands and to spread from home to home in neighborhoods.

Areas in the northwestern and central portions of the county have the highest potential for negative impacts to highly valued resources and assets, which include critical infrastructure (e.g., government buildings, schools, utilities, communication sites), ecosystem health, and surface drinking water.

Wildfires could threaten the provisioning of clean surface drinking water in important watersheds in the southern portion of the county. Proactive land management can reduce potential fire severity and post-fire impacts.



Priority Action Items



- Action 1: Create a Wildland Fire Management Program:** to enable the County to better respond to wildfires and support local fire districts.
- Action 2: Stand-Scale Fuel Treatments and Ecological Restoration:** to reduce fuels (trees, shrubs, grasses) on the landscape so fires burn less severely or more slowly in strategic areas.
- Action 3: Increase the Judicious Use of Broadcast Prescribed Burning:** to bring back fire as a land management tool in a responsible and effective way.
- Action 4: Roadside Fuel Treatments:** to reduce fuels along roadways to increase evacuation safety, firefighter access and safety, visibility, and support future fire management strategies.
- Action 5: Jeffco Community Wildland Fire Program:** to create a unified program to support residents in mitigating wildfire risk on their properties and neighborhoods
- Action 6: Slash Management:** to enable residents and communities to easily dispose of slash (woody material) throughout the spring and summer.
- Action 7: County Evacuation Preparedness:** to work with communities to prepare for evacuations and increase resources for livestock evacuations.
- Action 8: Spatial Data Coordination:** to enable the sharing of and access to up-to-date geospatial data to effectively coordinate mitigation actions and emergency response.

Wildland-Urban Interface

During this process, the County redefined the wildland-urban interface (WUI), expanding it to include more lands within the foothills and grasslands. The updated WUI covers lands that have experienced wildfires in the past 15 years and includes areas that share many traits with other communities that have been significantly impacted by wildfire. It also includes areas with high importance for surface drinking water. If the redefined WUI is incorporated into building and land use regulations, it will become regulatory and impact land use decisions and building requirements.

