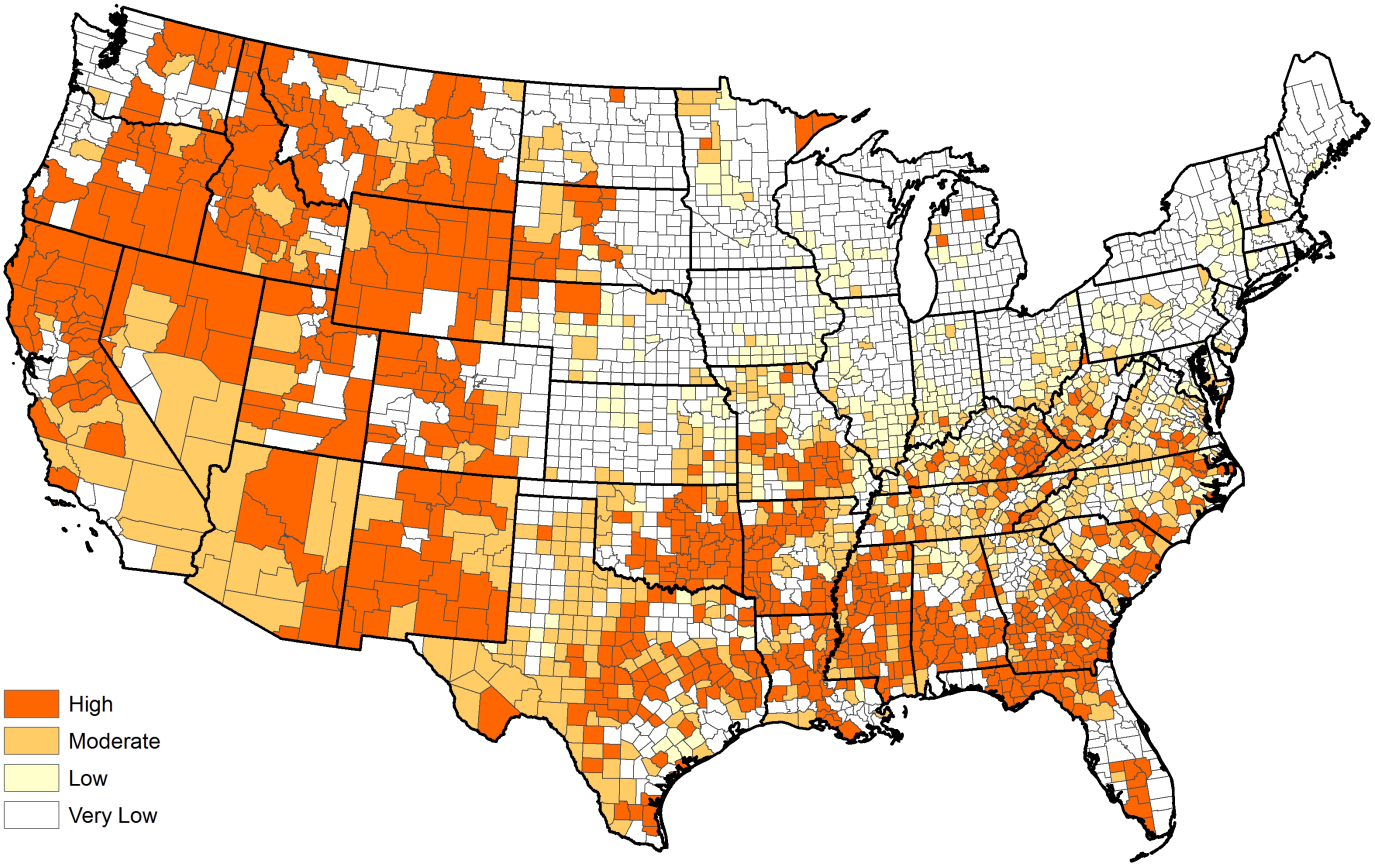
National Priority: Vegetation and Fuels



Vegetation and Fuels

National prioritization of areas for broad-scale fuels management (as distinct from hazard reduction in proximity to structures) suggests a primary emphasis in the West and Southeast. These included counties with the highest level of wildfire, fire-adapted native vegetation, and communities concentrated within a broader wildland landscape. Each location would utilize the mix of options most suitable for local conditions, as described in Options 1-4.

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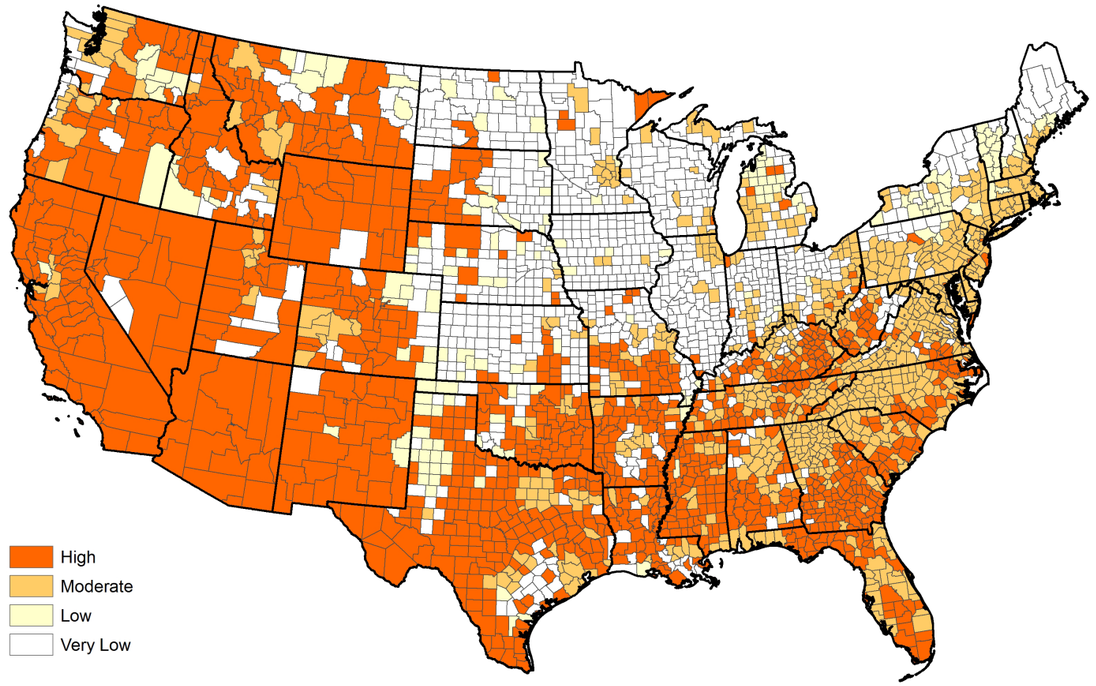
National Priority: Homes, Communities, and Values



Homes, Communities, and Values

Candidate counties for national prioritization of community and individual homeowner action would include those described above under Options 6.a and 6.b, tempered by features of each landscape class . Counties characterized by higher-than-average annual area burned, structures lost, and homes exposed within the WUI were assigned the highest priority for community action. More urban and suburban counties (especially in the East) were assigned the second-highest level of priority.

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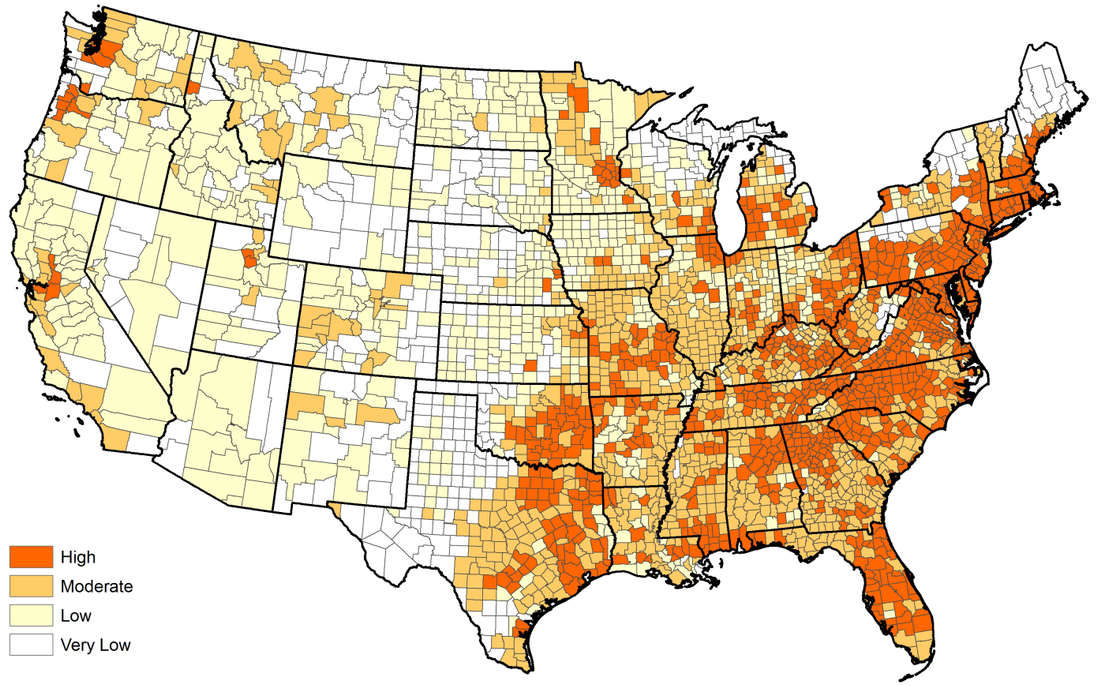
National Priority: Managing Human-Caused Ignitions



The available data on human ignitions and its consequences identifies counties where human ignitions dominate and lead to above-average area burned or buildings impacted by wildfires. These data suggest a prioritization that would target many eastern counties and populous western counties.

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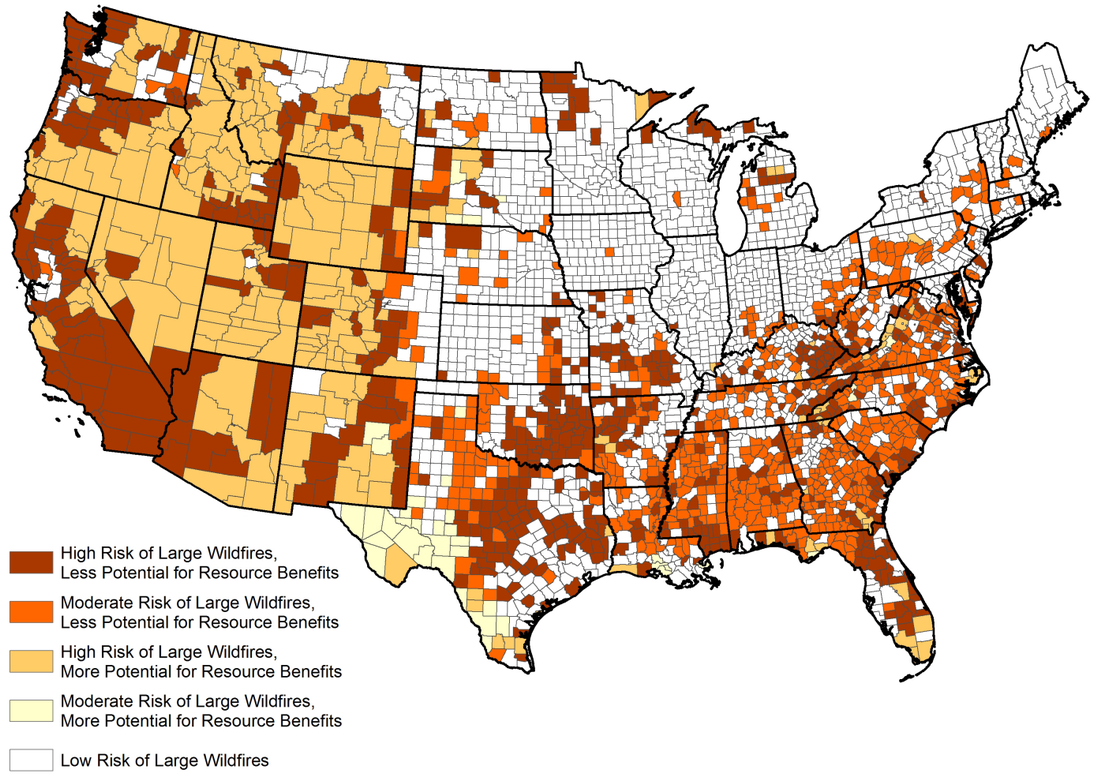
National Priority: Effective and Efficient Wildfire Response



Effective and Efficient Wildfire Response

A relatively simple first approximation to the ideal map can be obtained by overlaying the map of large wildfire potential (Option 9, Figure 3.16) with the opportunities map for managing wildfires for resource objectives (Option 2, Figure 3.4). To simplify interpretation, large wildfire potential was divided into three categories and overlain with the Option 2 map. The composite five-color map (Figure 4.5) indicates areas with relatively low likelihood of experiencing large fires (white areas on map), areas with moderate likelihood of large wildfires combined with beneficial use potential (Mod_Yes and Mod_No), in areas with high likelihood of large wildfires combined with beneficial use potential (High_Yes and High_No).

The purpose of the map is not to dictate the response or resource management objectives for all large or long-duration wildfires in these counties. All wildfires have to be managed in the specific context and locations in which they occur. Rather, the intent to suggest that there are significant areas where greater flexibility in the management of large wildfires might be employed. Conversely, there are broad areas where the resource benefits from large or long-duration wildfires are likely outweighed by other concerns. One key to being able to employ greater flexibility is the ability to anticipate or quickly assess the risk posed from an individual event. Ironically, our current suppression capacity in some areas is inversely proportional to the likelihood of a wildfire creating positive ecological benefits. That is, we are most effective at controlling wildfires that are likely to be beneficial, and least able to contain those wildfires that are likely to be most damaging. The net result is that we may be extinguishing many fires with the greatest potential for good. Enhanced, rapid risk assessment tools that help inform incident response decisions could be highly beneficial in this context.