



CULTIVATING CLARITY: DECODING WILDFIRE NARRATIVES AND DEBUNKING JUNIPER MYTHS

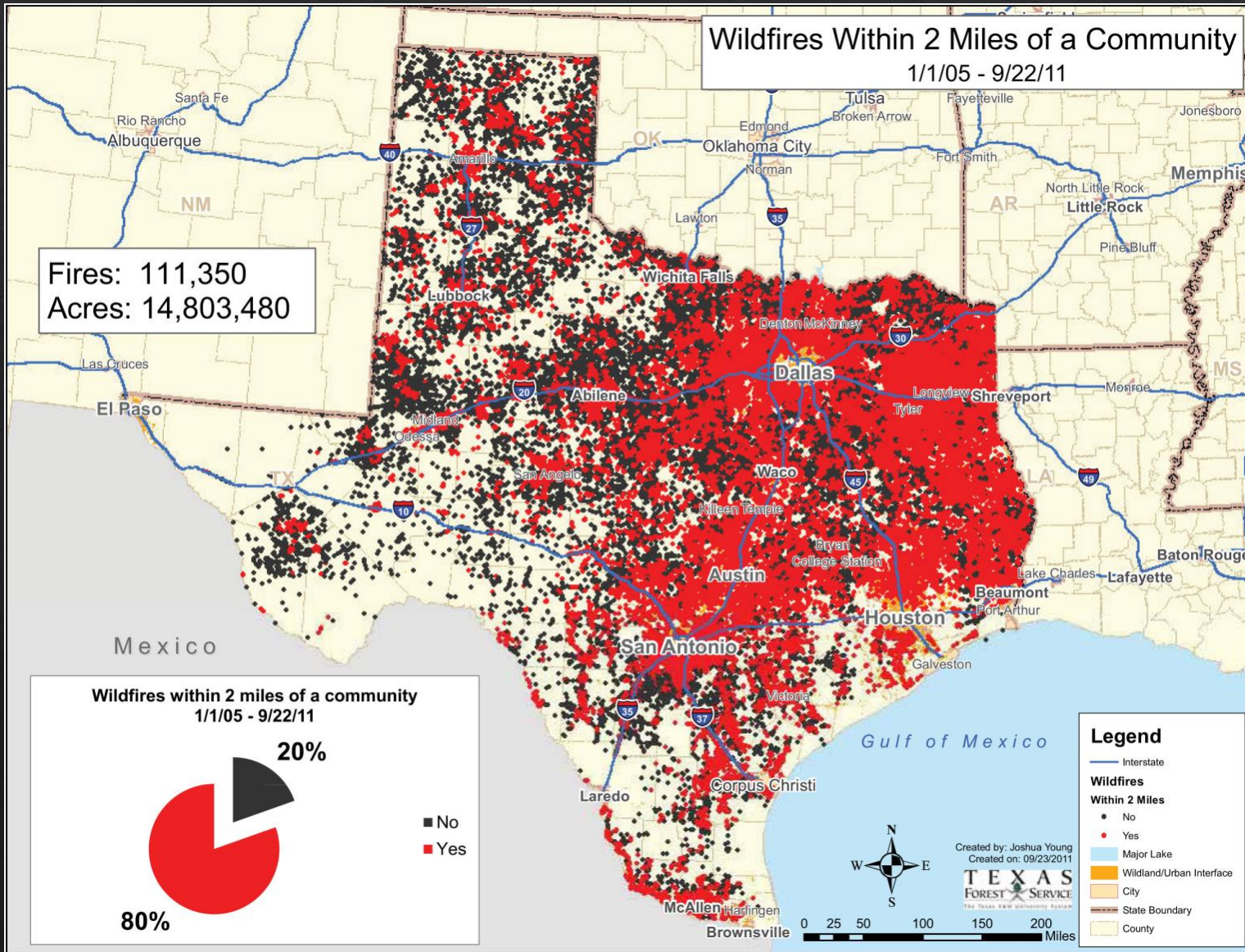
Presented by

Justice Jones

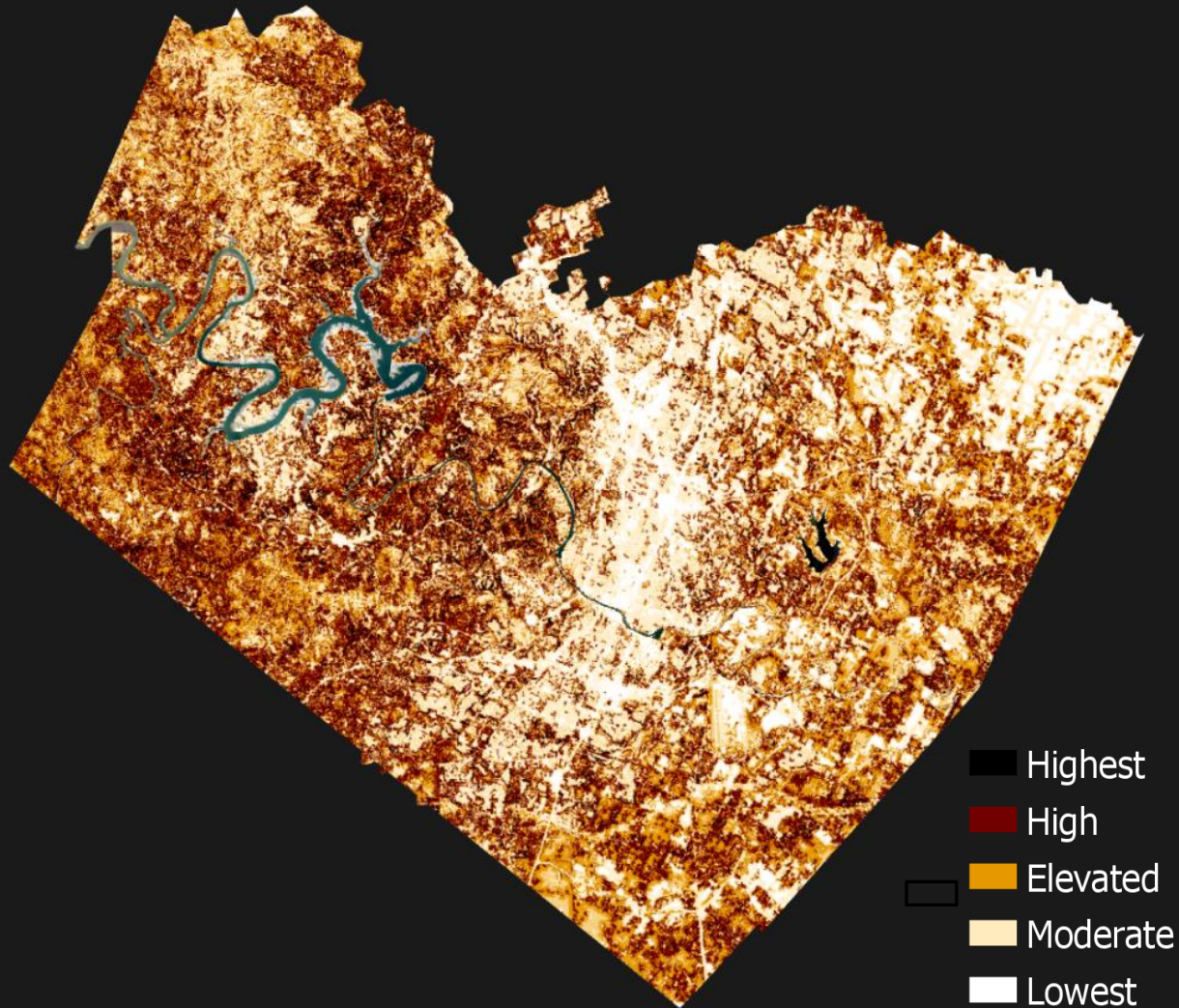
Austin Fire Department

Wildfire Mitigation Officer

More People=More Wildfire

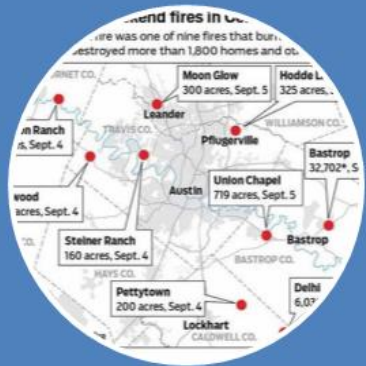


Austin's Wildfire Risk



Waking Up to Wildfire

2011 the Dawn of WUI Fires in Texas



Multiple simultaneous starts



Relatively small wildfires



Relatively large losses

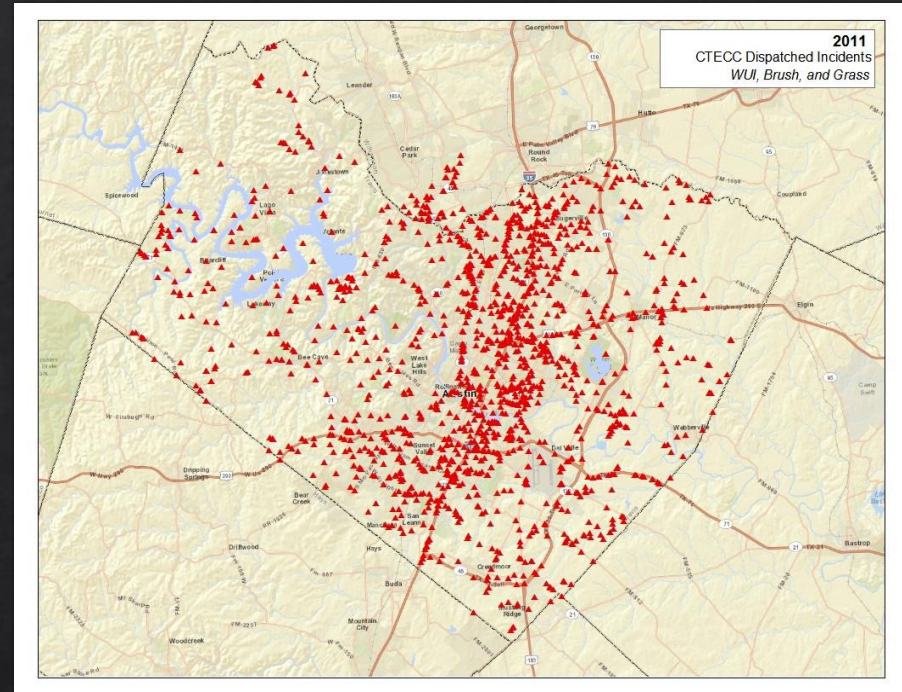


More exposures than available resources



Travis County Wildfire Occurrence

In the fire-adapted ecosystems of the South, the issue is not whether an area will burn, but when it will burn and at what intensity. (Andreu and Hermansen-Baez 2006)



Pinnacle Fire Burn Scar

Ashe Juniper Wildfire Myths

- ◇ Junipers are Gasoline/Asbestos on a stick
- ◇ You can't have Juniper on your property and be safe from wildfires
- ◇ Juniper are more fire prone than other native species
- ◇ Forests dominated by Juniper should be thinned like western forests
- ◇ You can just burn it



Myth Busting

Myth # 1

It takes a big fire to cause major losses.



Steiner Ranch Fire

125 acres
35 homes lost





Pinnacle Fire



- ◆ 100 acres
- ◆ 10 homes lost
- ◆ 12 damaged







Myth #2

My trees are out to get me



Steiner Ranch



Myth #3

The Wolf can't blow my house down, I built it with brick



Myth #4

If its in the path of the fire it will burn







1. Embers are the main reason homes ignite!
2. Windows- non tempered, single pane, wooden or vinyl panes.
3. Landscape to Structure- minimal fuels, low intensity, backing fires.
4. Secondary Fuel Sources- firewood, door mats, patio furniture.
5. Structure to Structure - inadequate setbacks expose homes to high heat and ember production.
6. Direct flame impingement and radiation to combustible attachments.



Why Homes Really Burn



Ashe Juniper Realities

- ◆ Closed canopy Stands of Juniper Can be used to stop grass fires when fuel moisture is high
- ◆ Highly sensitive to fire, especially young, multi stemmed specimens
- ◆ Rebuilds soil increasing soil moisture thus increasing fuel moisture in vegetation
- ◆ When weather and topography and drought align Closed Canopy juniper stands can produce 150' flame lengths

