



## DOES DEWEY-HUMBOLDT FIREWISE HAVE VALUE TO THE TOWN?

On May 7th, our Town council concluded that Dewey-Humboldt Firewise (D-HFW) might have **no** value to the Town. That leads to the obvious question – **should D-HFW continue?** But unlike the council, before you make that determination, you should be aware of what D-HFW has done and is doing for our Town. To start with, here's our mission statement:

**To promote awareness, preparedness, and solutions to fire dangers in our area by partnering with local, state, and federal resources to ensure our community can be fire wise.**

*Note: Dewey -Humboldt Firewise began in 2015 and became a 501(c)3 in March 2020. The Town border and the D-HFW site are the same.*

### **Volunteerism**

- Since 2019 (our records before that are not very good), well over 20,000 hours have been freely provided, by a volunteer group of no more than 10. At the 2023 value of a volunteer hour in Arizona of \$32.07, that equates to over \$641,000 of direct support to the Town of Dewey-Humboldt. ([https://independentsector.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/is-vovt-report-all-years\\_v2-1.pdf](https://independentsector.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/is-vovt-report-all-years_v2-1.pdf))

### **Insurance**

- Because the Town is a Firewise Site, homeowners insurance rates are likely lower and even exist. Without a Firewise site, communities within a wildland/urban interface (which Dewey-Humboldt is) are now being charged more or coverage is being denied.
- Insurers commonly use the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) to determine the risk of loss due to fire and to price fire insurance. This calculation includes **community risk reduction**, i.e., Firewise and a Town that supports it.
- For more information, see the Arizona Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions briefing on our website (<https://www.d-hfw.com/about> and then click on the **DIFI Insurance** button).

### **Grants**

- Since 2016, \$394,571 of state grant funds have been distributed throughout the Town to mitigate residents' wildfire danger. Prior to D-HFW's incorporation as a 501(c)3, the Town managed a rotating fund that allowed residents to obtain grant funds faster. Once D-HFW was incorporated, that fund was transferred to D-HFW for the same purpose and, to a penny, it continues to circulate throughout the community.
- \$43,080 of County grant funds have been distributed to mitigate wildfire danger specifically for lower income and functional needs residents.
- All State and County grant funds go directly to residents. None supports D-HFW.

### **Safety**

- At the request of our first-responders, D-HFW obtained a \$5,000 grant to purchase materials so that we could install 911-Address Signs. Within our Town, 842 signs have been installed with 618 of those being provided without a donation (free). To date, the component costs have exceeded \$11,000.
- Also at the request of our first-responders, D-HFW obtained another \$5,000 grant to install street signs on private roads. Component costs for 25 intersections were just over \$5,000.
- All sign installation costs have been funded by D-HFW volunteers.



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- Within the County's emergency plans (<https://www.yavapaiready.gov/Resilience/Plans>), our Town's entry to the FEMA required **2023 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan** has tasked wildfire mitigation requirements to D-HFW (Page 113), and the **Community Wildfire Protection Plan** has Firewise as a focal resource for mitigation. To respond with disaster relief, FEMA requires every community to have a mitigation plan for all probable disasters.
- Through D-HFW efforts, four eight-thousand-gallon water tanks have been installed in the Blue Hills for use in firefighting – a roughly \$250,000 investment in the community's safety.
- We always respond to residents' requests to evaluate their property and provide guidance and specific recommendations for achieving a wildfire-survivable home.
- We arranged a free roadside chipping service for residents that do not have the ability to transport removed vegetation to a dump site. Our new incentive is to obtain a dump trailer that will be placed at a resident's location for them to fill and we'll then transport it to a landfill.
- Federal land, within Town limits, is finally being mitigated due to D-HFW successes and influences.
- Next week, D-HFW has been invited by our local state representatives, senator, and the Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) to discuss our recommendation for DFFM to enhance their support of all Firewise communities using state funding, with Dewey-Humboldt being the testbed. Of the nearly 200 Firewise Sites within the State, we'll be the only Firewise group there.

### Evacuation

- Four years ago, two, good alternate evacuation route options for the Blue Hills were identified and presented to the Town after the information was vetted and approved by the Jeep Posse (the volunteer organization that goes door-to-door for YCSO to physically announce evacuations). Then the Jeep Posse was escorted throughout our Town so that they would be ready to evacuate all residents from all areas of our Town.
- During a 2023 Town funded engineering review of evacuation options from the Blue Hills, D-HFW not only participated with hundreds of hours of free support, but they were the voice of reason.
- The Town has also been provided with viable options for alleviating the single evacuation route issues with E Kachina Place – another evacuation bottleneck.

### Education

- Lesson plans have been created and distributed to every school within the County to provide teachers with guidance and support information needed to teach students about wildfire safety. Why the County? Because those families may eventually realize that Dewey-Humboldt should be their home, and their children are the future.
- Numerous community meetings have been hosted by D-HFW to bring emergency responding and support agencies directly to the residents.
- For the past four years, our Wildfire Safety Events have been held in the Town so that residents can directly interact and learn from all responding and support emergency agencies. Donations from local businesses have come close to covering our direct costs for those events; however, if not for Mortimer Farms recognizing the community benefit of these events and freely allowing us to use their venue, we could not afford them.

### Other Community Support

- With each Town clean-up day, D-HFW provides hundreds of hours of support in managing the flow of participants and assisting residents in offloading what they bring.



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## Also

- D-HFW, within its website, social media, and its nearly 400 active email addresses, through a merger of available information sources, keeps residents steadily aware of nearby wildfires and evacuations from beginning to end.
- In 2022, we proposed a community problem dealing with water availability for firefighting. Using grants, ten-thousand-gallon tanks were going to be purchased and installed on homeowners' property with six-thousand of the gallons being reserved for firefighting. It was rejected by CAFMA but technology has improved and we will be reinitiating this objective.
- Of the nearly 50 Firewise sites within Yavapai County, D-HFW is recognized as one of the very best and most active.
- Since we began, well over \$1,000,000 of direct labor and funding have been disbursed through the community for the simple objective of increasing its safety.
- We are incredibly grateful for all the donations that allow us to continue the education and preparation of our Town related to our most probable disaster – wildfire. We are incredibly stingy with those funds and the preponderance of those donations go directly to supporting DH residents with only a meager amount going to required administrative costs.
- No D-HFW volunteer has personally received a dime for any of their services.

*During an earlier Town council meeting, after the council significantly increased budget support for the Little League, Historical Society, and 4H, we requested that D-HFW be added to the list. It was rejected, but funding is not our primary appeal. From all of the local experts, the council has been briefed that wildfire in Dewey-Humboldt is inevitable. **Before the disaster**, we would like to see the council embrace preparations for our Town's fire safety. We'd happily support that initiative, but without the Town's commitment to effectively protect all of our Town, no amount of D-HFW effort will accomplish **our primary focus – saving us from the most likely disaster that we face – a wildfire named for our Town.***

**Following a draft of this letter being sent to the town, an agenda item dealing with Wildfire Safety has been added to the May 21<sup>st</sup> Regular Town Council Meeting @ 6:30 PM. We welcome the plan and will provide a related presentation.**

We encourage your attendance at the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. However, **the question for you now is, does D-HFW have value for our Town and is its focus correct?** Whatever you think, do us a favor, give us a little bit of your time, and let us and the Town leadership know your answers.

**Town Phone Number: 928-632-7362**

Mayor	John Hughes	Mayor.Hughes@dhaz.gov	928-632-7362
Vice Mayor	Jeremiah Barron	CM.Barron@dhaz.gov	928-499-4850
Council Member	Matthew Fenn	CM.Fenn@dhaz.gov	602-809-4053
Council Member	Barry Thomas	CM.Thomas@dhaz.gov	928-237-0425
Council Member	Terry Nolan	CM.Nolan@dhaz.gov	602-618-5988
Council Member	Denise Rogers	CM.Rogers@dhaz.gov	928-632-7362
Council Member	Amy Lance	CM.Lance@dhaz.gov	480-296-9680
Town Manager	Dan Field	DanField@dhaz.gov	928-632-7362