

Hello Decatur Island Property Owners,

Fire safety has been an important issue for our island community for many decades. The yard debris fire on July 3, 2018 heightened our awareness of the issue. As a result, there have been many different views on how to best address personal and community risk; yet, there is a strong, common interest in bettering our community.

One solution, that was supported by many, was acquiring an additional pump truck to complement the two existing trucks and equipment intended for a fire response. The Decatur Island Community Emergency Resource Association (DICERA) raised \$30,000+ in donations in order to purchase such a truck in the fall of 2018. However, the truck was not acquired due to complications related to ownership and insurance.

New Equipment:

But there is great news! TWO ADDITIONAL pump trucks were purchased and outfitted for Decatur last summer. A team of consulting fire professionals, along with the support and involvement of Decatur Northwest (DNW) and Decatur Head community associations, developed the truck specifications. These trucks were acquired in early August and deployed on the island last fall with private funds. In partnership with DNW, DICERA has allocated a grant to cover the acquisition costs of both trucks. DICERA also has committed to providing additional funds for community training.

Concerns surrounding ownership and insurance have been solved. DNW supplied leadership by accepting ownership and agreeing to pay the insurance on the two trucks. The Loveless family has generously volunteered use of a covered storage facility for both trucks that is centrally located near the schoolhouse. This location additionally has 3,000 gallons of water storage that the trucks can access for central water refilling.

Learning from the success of the DNW trucks (that have evolved over decades), these two trucks were quickly designed and developed. The new trucks are interoperable with the existing DNW truck to ensure maximum versatility and simplicity in training and use. These trucks were developed for wildland firefighting use only - not for structural fires. Each truck can pump water from the ocean, ponds, and cisterns directly to the scene, and can rapidly refill their onboard tanks from any of these same common water sources.



Wildland Fire Training:

Training is the next key component. This will be conducted by professionals and executed in stages with all Decatur Islanders invited to participate.

Initially, 15 individuals will learn how to operate the trucks and basic wildland firefighting theory and techniques based on industry standards. A second training course, involving the same group, will emphasize incident management and command. These initial training sessions are focused on developing the skills of our full-time island residents, who are the most likely to respond.

A third round of regular training, consisting of two shorter courses (4 hours), will train (up to 30 additional) participants how to operate the trucks and equipment. These sessions will be open to a wider cross section of islanders. The intent is to involve a group of individuals who are often on island and are the next most likely tier to be able to respond. The core group of 15 will assist in the broader training sessions with our friends and neighbors that will become ongoing. Additionally, we have commitments from several mainland professional firefighters, that know our island and community well, to lead future volunteer training events.

We will communicate with all landowners and encourage participation as we progress. A list is being maintained of all individuals who complete the training. These

individuals will be educated on the use of the equipment and basic firefighting techniques.

COVID-19 Impacts:

Initial training was to occur earlier this Spring but, due to COVID-19, has been delayed. As first responders, the professional trainers have significant exposure to the coronavirus, and all live off island in larger cities. Risking exposure through close contact training of our island community was not an option and will be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Enhanced Readiness:

Currently, we have six full time islanders who have access and a working knowledge of the new trucks. These individuals are the “go to” group for the immediate future in the event that the trucks and equipment are necessary.

They are: Andy Wood, Mark Dupar, Dennis Jenkins, Shawn and Heather Breeding (Decatur Head Caretakers) and David Craggs (Decatur Northwest Manager).

Telephone numbers:

Andy:	360-375-6969 (Decatur landline)
Mark:	360-202-0846 (cell)
Dennis:	530-518-0416 (primary cell) 530-864-6351 (backup cell)
Shawn / Heather:	360-375-6010 (Decatur landline) 360-420-0997 (cell)
David:	360-375-6008 (Decatur landline)

Island Wide Communication:

An electronic mailing list for 97%+ of all property owners has been developed and tested. The remaining property owners can be informed by mailings and/or direct contact. This list facilitates efficient, equitable, and transparent communication with all parties who may be concerned.

We wish to thank all of the property owners who have engaged with us over the past months to make this possible. We want to emphasize that this has been an island wide effort. Support has come from individuals, families, the Decatur Northwest Community Association, the Decatur Head Beach Association, and DICERA. We also want to

thank those of you who have volunteered to donate funds to support these trucks while we worked with DICERA on funding. We will need your support for ongoing maintenance, training, and to continue to improve safety on the island.

Please look for additional communication in the coming months with more specifics on training and opportunities to be involved.

If you have questions, please email them to: decaturislandinfo@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Arlene Frank
Bill Frank
Alan Mizuta
Randy Stricker
Mark Wall
Andy Wood

Frequently Anticipated Questions:

Q: Has the Decatur Island Fire Committee (DIFC) been engaged?

A: Yes. The Board of DICERA includes Bob Taylor, who sits on the DIFC, and Leslie Tregillus, wife of Tom Jones, Chair of DIFC. So, it is safe to say the DIFC is aware of these steps and actions and have opportunity to engage.

Q: What is the structure of your group? Who is the leader?

A: The trucks are owned by Decatur Northwest. The individuals who have built and planned the training are not a legal entity. We are a small island and believe that an informal structure serves the island best. Our goal is to be all-inclusive. We have created a communication list of all island landowners. This was a significant endeavor and was not accomplished by earlier efforts for fire protection. We will communicate with all landowners and encourage participation.

Q: If an incident arises, how will the trained personal be informed of incident and respond?

A: As noted above, there are currently six individuals who have access to the trucks and should be contacted in case of emergency. The system of communication is under formation at this time. Leveraging the current radio system, emergency text response, and other channels of communication are important.

Q: Who is responsible to maintain these trucks and how will it be done?

A: A maintenance schedule has been created, including what maintenance will be performed, when it will be completed and by whom. Continued maintenance and training will be necessary. We will need to seek community support over time.