

# Edelweiss Firewise Committee

Report to the EMC Board of Directors  
in preparation for February 17, 2026 Board Meeting  
*Sent: February 12, 2026*  
*Sharon Cupp, Firewise Committee Chair*

***Firewise Committee Meeting, held online and in person on  
Monday, February 2, 2026, reporting on Firewise Committee action:***

## **Impacts of Christmas 2025 Storm Tree Damage:**

Hundreds of trees in our HOA were lost due to the high moisture in the soils from the unseasonable and extremely wet storms in early December, and warm temperatures that did not give evergreen trees the needed time to freeze their trunks (freezing provides stronger structure, being more resilient to winds ... this usually occurs in November or early December); and the Christmas storm that cut power to the upper Methow (including Edelweiss).

The neighborhoods closer to Mazama and up Lost River Road had the most tree damage in the upper Methow Valley – thousands of trees were lost. These forests now look like a disaster zone.

Given all the Edelweiss tree damage this winter, the Firewise Committee is placing **all** of our available resources and energy to offer unlimited spring chipping (no commercial thinning or construction site preparation) to property owners. Our intention is to support and encourage a HUGE spring clean-up push, to ensure our HOA is best prepared for the upcoming wildfire season. Given the current low snow levels, we are most concerned about the higher wildfire risk danger this year.

Note to Roads Committee and/or EMC Staff: an assessment (aka: drive around) our roads is recommended to identify hazard trees (overhanging or soon to fall) onto roads and EMC buildings.

## **2026 Firewise Committee Projects, reviewed and discussed (not in order of priority):**

- Spring and Fall Chipping
- Spring and Fall Yard Waste Dumpsters at campground
- EMC owned properties, Firewised and Capital improvements suggested to Board
- Education to community – EMC newsletters
- Seek grant funding
- Assist with Exit/Evacuation signage, Roads Committee lead
- Revise FW Architectural Guidelines
- New FW Committee Chair and transition
- Neighborhood Coordinator program supported
- Revise FW Website, easier to navigate
- Encourage Roads Committee to establish more vehicle turnouts

- Blue 911 house signs – repost from 2024

### **Updates of Current Projects:**

1. **Spring chipping and yard waste dumpsters** date planning and details are in motion with our experienced FW committee volunteers. To our delight (and surprise), the Okanogan Conservation District has presented an opportunity to provide “some” grant funding for our spring chipping and yard waste dumpsters. OCD is very motivated to provide financial support, knowing the high amount of damaged trees in the upper Methow Valley. We will know more about the dates (aiming for the week of May 18) and shared costs in the coming 4-6 weeks, as we coordinate with OCD. EMC newsletter articles (March, April, May) will provide dates and information on how best to prepare for a successful spring clean-up.
  2. EMC **Firewise Website** “re-construction” is underway. The goal is to create a more user-friendly site, still loaded with current Firewise information and resources. The changes will be occurring over the course of this year, with four FW committee members working on this big project.
  3. Two Firewise committee members have joined members of the Roads Committee on the **Exit/Evacuation signage project**. This short term/ad hoc project is planning to apply for a DNR Micro-Grant to cover the cost of the signage materials.
  4. The **EMC Firewise Architectural Guidelines** (currently 5-page document housed in the ACC resources) is scheduled to be updated this year. Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is currently taking the lead on the creation of a Washington Wildfire Hazard and Risk Map that will have an impact on building codes for wildfire mitigation in high hazard areas – the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). A community meeting was held at the Winthrop Library on February 5<sup>th</sup> – three of our FW members attended and participated in giving input.
  5. **Lot #74 Demonstration Forest** has seen lots of usage during the winter months. The FW members are delighted to have created this new HOA asset in 2025 for all to enjoy. One tree fell from its rotting roots onto the loop trail in early November 2025 – it was removed by the Trails Committee.
- Upcoming **Firewise Committee meetings will be on March 2, April 6, May 4, and June 1, 2026.**