

Correspondence



RABBIT CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RCCC) A Forum for Respectful Communication & Community Relations



1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 / Anchorage, AK 99503

Dr. Ralph Townsend, PhD
Director, Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska Anchorage

August 25, 2021

Dear Dr. Townsend:

The Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC), located in south Anchorage, is a Municipality of Anchorage (MoA) chartered community council that involves citizens in issues affecting the community at large as well as our local area. A critical issue for our community has been the risk of wildfires at our boundaries with Chugach State Park as well as large tracks of undeveloped land within our and adjacent to Hillside communities. All are generally covered with higher fire risk vegetation such as white, black and now, beetle killed spruce. After the disastrous 2018 Paradise "Camp" Fire in California, followed by the November 2018 Anchorage area earthquake, the RCCC organized a Resilience Committee to investigate hazards that could affect our area including wildfires, power outages, earthquakes, windstorms, and, more recently, a pandemic. While primarily focused on wildfire risks, we seek to increase overall community resilience for all hazards through education and coordination with MoA agencies.

Dr. Jennifer Schmidt has been an early and active member of and participant in the Committee for the past 2 years as we investigated fire risk and mitigation strategies (e.g., Firewise program). She has also worked with us on future goals, policies and projects beneficial to reducing the risk and severity of fire and fire damage. Dr. Schmidt's work helps us access and understand the data. Mapping it on the Hillside and our RCCC area has been valuable, allowing us to inform the community and MoA Assembly members. Her continued work on the risks and changes to the risk of wildfires is being used in our current communications and project planning with State representatives, essential for receiving state mitigation funding. We hope to assist with future funding for her and students to provide data, analysis and maps to RCCC and other Hillside community councils, and with the insight from her work, older developed areas now facing higher risks.

Dr. Schmidt's work has been a valuable and respected contribution to our community. She is an enthusiastic participant. We welcome her initiative finding students to assist with projects such as past-treatment impact assessment and preparation of community training materials. We greatly appreciate the engagement and service she has been able to provide to the community and thank her, as well as the UAA ISER program, and its Fire and ICE work.

Sincerely,

Ann Rappoport, Co-Chair
Rabbit Creek Community Council

Carl Johnson, Co-Chair
Rabbit Creek Community Council

Attachment
cc: Jennifer Schmidt
Rabbit Creek Community Council (8-25-2021)