

# Correspondence



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



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

### **Rabbit Creek Community Council Support for the Proposed Potter Marsh Watershed Park**

The Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) has reviewed, discussed, and enthusiastically voted to endorse the proposal to create a 300-acre Potter Marsh Watershed Park within our boundaries in southeast Anchorage. The following Resolution was approved by a vote of 27 ayes, zero nays, and 2 abstentions at our November 9, 2023, meeting:

Rabbit Creek Community Council supports the efforts of Great Land Trust and the Municipality to create Potter Marsh Watershed Park encompassing 300 acres of undeveloped land stretching from south Potter Marsh uphill to Golden View Drive. We are excited to engage in this effort which would involve public participation to create a Park Master Plan to determine trails, parking, management policies, and other Park features.

RCCC has a decades-long history of promoting the conservation and recreation values of Potter Marsh and the adjacent watershed as described in the Attachment. We have also considered potential other uses for the involved properties, but believe that the highest and best use, not only for our residents, but for all of Anchorage and its visitors, is for this area to become a park under the management of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department.

A sloping tract with wetlands and many small streams, the area delivers 75 percent of the water to the south part of Potter Marsh, a State Critical Habitat and part of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge. In addition to its watershed importance, this land is the only large undeveloped habitat in Anchorage that connects the coast to the mid-Hillside where large lots and undeveloped tracts continue uphill to alpine zones. This is the most intact habitat connectivity from coastal to alpine in the Anchorage Bowl.

The 100-acre Heritage Land Bank (HLB) portion of this area was recommended for permanent conservation and open space in the Potter Valley Land Use Analysis (1999), endorsed by RCCC and subsequently adopted by an Assembly ordinance (AO 99-144). The 200 acres of private land proposed for purchase and conservation have been considered over the years for several types of development. These proposals were broadly opposed by neighbors and in letters from RCCC. None came to fruition as the parcel has too many cost-prohibitive development constraints. In large part because of the heavy impacts to the hydrology and upland habitat that supports Potter Marsh.

RCCC is grateful to the Great Land Trust with their proven record of combining conservation and recreation values across southcentral Alaska, for persistently and strongly pursuing multiple federal grants and local donations to purchase the 200 private acres. We are also grateful for GLT's work with Municipal leaders toward combining the 100 acres of HLB lands with the future purchased lands to create Potter Marsh Watershed Park. Our Council is excited that public recreation can become available without delays or major initial investments, owing to existing trails across these tracts, and existing paved parking in two locations. We concur with the vision for a Park Master Plan to be developed with robust community participation to determine the long-term features of the park, such as the final design and alignment of trails, parking, and management policies.