

Wildfire Implementation Needs

Proposed letter to Mayor LaFrance, AFD Chief Schrage, DNR Ops Manager McDonald:

RCCC requests implementing the Community Wildfire Protection Plan before the 2026 fire season with three essential protection, prevention, and response elements:

- 1) Evacuation Notification Systems
- 2) Community Evacuation Training
- 3) Fire Detection and Alert Systems

Concerns about crucial deficits in State DOF Aerial Fire Suppression capacity include:

- 1) Limited Fixed-Wing Craft
- 2) Low Numbers of Contracted Rotary Craft
- 3) DOF Funding for Muni-Dedicated Rotary is currently not available
- 4) Drone Systems for Early Fire Suppression are not included in wildfire prevention packages or the CWPP

A needed response issue is ensuring adequate water for ground-based fire suppression – hydrants are inadequate or lacking; water sources are often remote.

Hydrant Inadequacy: first step - review the adequacy of hydrant supply lines.

Remote Area Water Inadequacy: The CWPP calls for “water tenders” in areas lacking water hydrants. Problems with this approach alone:

- a. Time-consuming set-up.
- b. Insufficient tender-supplied water, hydrants too far away for resupplies, or limited above ground water storage supplies.
- c. Lack of adequate water pressure.
- d. Remote areas and narrow, steep, serpentine roads may preclude adequate, safe deployment; equipment may block emergency egress for residents.

There are liability risks to State and Muni governments and local utilities if known deficits are not corrected before the 2026 wildfire season.

Immediate and effective detection and dedicated aerial suppression support is critical to prevent a catastrophic wildfire event and avoid the massive impacts and costs of any fire that could “go wild.”

Requests:

*RCCC recognizes how limited Muni and State budgets are to satisfy Anchorage's critical needs in the areas of wildfire prevention, protection, and response.

*In addition to relief Muni and State budgets and activities can provide for our requests, we are asking our local and state governments to work with our Alaska Congressional Delegation to provide needed funding and resources for these requests, and reduce their liability.

- 1) Evacuation Notification Systems: Address/correct deficits in early and effective evacuation, education, and notice procedures, with preseason drills led by OEM and AFD, for both:
 - a. Multi-Agency Coordinated Tabletop Evacuation Drills, and
 - b. Agency Led On-Site "Practice" Drills engaging involved communities.
- 2) Muni-wide Early Fire Detection, and Alert Systems: Put into place effective Muni-wide early fire detection and alert systems which will dispatch AFD and DOF ground and aerial suppression forces directly to fire sites.
- 3) DOF Wildfire-Fighting Aircraft including immediate:
 - a. Funding to replace DOF fixed wing aerial support equipment.
 - b. Procurement of dedicated aerial suppression equipment for 2026 use.
- 4) Inadequate Water for Ground-Based Fire Fighting: Initiate a review of water supplies to identify and construct new, or augment existing, water supply locations and storage systems. Include both areas where there are hydrants and where hydrants are lacking and tenders and other water sources would be used. Consider extending water lines to supply new hydrants. This could compliment a CAPSIS request to the Legislature.
- 5) Institute rigorous training in set-up and use of tenders and other options for uninterrupted water supply systems in areas lacking hydrants.

Recommendation 3), above, would require extensive funding, the others should be more readily available for implementation now.