



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

**P.O. BOX 547, ANACORTES, WA 98221
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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

June 2, 2022

6pm

This month's meeting will be the annual joint hike with the Friends of the Forest Board of Directors. The hike is open to the public, but there will be no formal meeting, and no action taken on any issues.

The hike will start at the #10 Trailhead Parking Area, also known as the old dump.

Information Contact:

Bob Vaux

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Minutes of the Meeting: May 5, 2022

Board members present: Brian Wetcher, Tabb Stringer, JoAnn York-Gilmore, Kit Gerwels, Nick Stowe

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Deane, Dan Senour, Richard Mellon

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:05PM

Welcome to the newest member, Tabb Stringer. Tabb is the non-city resident member of the Board. He has been a local resident since 1995. He shared that he uses the ACFL to hike, run, bike and ride horses. His interest in serving on the board grew after hearing about the ebike discussion and he is happy to learn more about all user groups and the issues facing the ACFL.

Minutes: April minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Public Comments: None

Trail #248: Bob has heard from a number of neighbors about the parking and congestion near the “powerline trail”. The neighbors have brought up the issues of parking, camping, drug use and theft. Bob has encouraged the neighbors to call the police if they see something illegal or concerning. This will allow both the City and County to have a record of the issues and gather data. This area is a challenge with City owned property, a County road and an access gate that is privately owned. Bob wanted the Board to be aware that neighbors have contacted both the City and the County with their concerns. Bob has met with Brian Adams from the County. If the parked cars are on public roads and not over the fog line, the county has no issue with it. If the neighbors pushed and had “no parking” signs posted, then there is the issue of enforcement. The Anacortes Police Department does not have the resources to dedicate to parking enforcement. The City has posted a few new signs with hours that the trails are open, alternate parking on Ray Auld drive and a No Camping sign. With the seasonal staff starting soon, there will be an increased presence in the ACFL. Bob has also been spreading the word with local climbing groups about being a good neighbor. The Board asked that Bob keep them informed to determine if further action is needed.

Remote Control Toys: Bob brought this user group to the attention of the Board. The Parks team has seen an increase in the number of events and participants in these events. The concern is that these vehicles are designed to go “off trail” and that is clearly breaking rules in the ACFL. The two areas they use the most are Cap Sante and Mt Erie. Both of these places have limited parking and Cap Sante is a small area that sees a large number of visitors.

Complaints have been made by community members that the noise of these vehicles disturbs them. The Parks Department has previously reached out to these groups and there was no response. Darby will do some research on Facebook to see if we can find the groups, leaders and contact information. It was suggested that the Board review this at the next revision of the Forest Plan.

Friends of the Forest Update: Asa and Bob suggested that there be a combined hike with the Forest Board and Friends of the Forest in June. The Board was agreeable and asked that Bob and Asa pick the date. This is an event open to the public. The annual hike allows the two groups to reflect on their purpose and enjoy time out in the forest they care for.

Asa shared that they are nearly done with the hiring process and will offer the job by the end of next week. All four of the final candidates are locals and all are excellent options to join the team.

All of the summer camps offered by the Friends are full and there is a lot of excitement in both the staff and the kids attending. The Trail Ambassador program will be starting again soon for the summer season. There are 17 volunteers signed up and they will have two days of training with Parks and the Friends staff. The Trail Steward program is a new venture but is coming together well. Asa also spoke about the National Trails Day on June 4th. There will be a volunteer work party and everyone is welcome!

ACFL Trail Committee Report: The Trail Committee met on trail #311 with the Friends and City Planning staff. It was determined that a biological report would need to be completed prior to any work being done. This is a cost of \$5,000-\$20,000. It was suggested that if Bob sees an area of concern, he will then reach out to the Trail Committee for help.

Staff Reports:

Steve reported that John Meehan had spoken to him about the signage for trails #300 and #302. The placement of the signs has led to confusion as to where motorcycles are allowed. Steve visited the site and determined that the sign was partially covered by brush. He has moved it now to a post and hopes that will help.

Bob reported that Parks team members Steve and Sky participated in training with the Department of Natural Resources and the Anacortes Fire Department, strengthening our partnerships with each. Bob also shared that Skagit county staff and City staff toured the Predators of the Heart facility last week. The property and business are currently undergoing review by the county and the public comment period is open now. Parks staff provided feedback to the City attorney and a letter will be submitted to Skagit County.

Bob also spoke about the June 4th volunteer work party on trail #107. This project will include a turnpike for the muddy area as well as landscaping to

discourage off-trail use. The Fidalgo Trail Riders are also doing a project for National Trails Day on June 4th, focusing on north Heart Lake.

Other Business:

Brian asked if Bob had heard anything about the old dump area or the dam. Bob stated there has been no movement on either project from the DOE.

JoAnn gave an update from the parks Board, sharing that Bob's written report on both the Skate Park and Rotary trail gave all the details.

Kit inquired about the City Community Center that was proposed at the Council meeting. Bob acknowledged that there is excitement and support about the project but there are many questions that need answers before the project moves forward.

Adjourn at 7:31pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

May 2022 Report from the Assistant Director's Desk

ROTARY PARK CAP SANTE TRAIL PROJECT

- 4/27: spent the afternoon assisting Public Works' Tim and GIS Rob survey the trail. This will lead to an accurate mapping project.
- ACFL Steve, Tom Decker and all kinds of Rotary volunteers and APRD staff keep working on the trail and the trailhead. Really looking good.
- I keep making cameo appearances; helping with decisions, locations and such.
- The June 11th ribbon cutting approaches, and everything is gelling nicely.

WHISTLE LAKE DAM

- Our remote earthen dam has received some press in the last couple of weeks. As explained before, Parks has been working with Public Works on the upgrades deemed necessary by Department of Ecology. We are looking at a July site inspection from DOE at this time.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY: June 4th

- Our spring quarterly work party with the Friends of the Forest will be happening at the #107 trailhead on this day. We are also welcoming our old friends from SWITMO to the project. 9A-12P.

GUEMES CHANNEL TRAIL

- 5/2: spent a few hours documenting storm damage along the trail. Tim Hohmann from Public Works and I hosted teams from the Federal and State governments, along with our consultant.

SKATEPARK

- Work continues on the design front with Grindline.

LEGISLATIVE MEETING WITH SENATOR LOVELETT

- 5/10: Director Lunsford, Managers Johnston, South and I met with Sen. Lovelett at the skate park. We walked her through the current skate park redux process as well as the Community Center concepts recently laid out by Mayor Gere.

SEASONAL STAFF

- Parks Mgr Johnston and I are finding what are hopefully a few diamonds in the rough. The roster is close to filling out, but still calling out for job seekers.
- 5/20: happily welcomed Jillian and Devanne, our ACFL summer team. Looking forward to great things from them. We are still searching for at least three more seasonals for the cemetery, parks crew and Washington Park.

FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

- Mayor Miller has appointed Tabb Stringer to the Board. The appointment was unanimously approved by Council at the 5/2 meeting. FAB and staff were able to welcome Tabb aboard at the May meeting.

32ND STREET SWAMP CULVERT REMOVAL

- Since the end of 32nd Street was classified as an emergent wetland in 2019, we have been exploring the option of removing the culvert that connects that area with the property to the north. Public Works maintains the area north of 32nd in order to keep the ditch adjacent to private homes cleaned out. The culvert is often plugged by the neighborhood beaver, so PW is happy to have it removed. We would also do a better job protecting the emergent wetland with that old two track connector gone. Director Lunsford and I met on site with PW and Planning personnel on 5/13, and we are now pursuing the necessary permits to move forward with the project.

LITTLE CRANBERRY LAUNCH PROJECT

- As previously discussed with the Forest Advisory Board, GeoEngineers is going to start their research at the lake to support our permit applications for this project. There is no established timeline yet.

VOLUNTEERS

- 5/21: worked much of the day with our team and the Friends of the Forest staff on Stewardship and Ambassador training. Looking forward to the expansion of the already successful Ambassador program. This is the folks “tabling” at various trailhead parking lots. Good info sharing, additional sets of eyes, community reps.

TREES

- I had a very quiet month on the hazard tree front. A couple of phone calls and emails.

REGULAR MEETINGS

- 4/28: monthly ABPAC (bicycles and pedestrians) meeting. Our focus on Open Streets planning for August 28th. Should be another fun non-motorized event.
- 5/5: tailgate safety meeting with Parks Division. Always a good exchange, and important reminders.
- FoF Exec. Dir. Asa Deane and staff continue to be regular contacts and partners.
- 5/19: regular quarterly meeting of the Council Parks Committee. Always a good exchange of our plans and their feedback, questions, etc.
- Denise Crowe and I handled this month's COA/Samish exchange hike. An incredible journey thru the south facing meadows of Sugarloaf. Wildflowers abound!

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

- 4/28: toured the Predators of the Heart property with a variety of County and City officials. POH is working on a variety of permit applications to continue their captive management of a variety of exotic animals. Parks focus is the safety of ACFL trail users.
- Days off: Fri 4/29, Fri 5/6, Mon 5/23.
- We lost ACFL Steve to jury duty for a good chunk of May. Glad he's back.
- On-going special thanks to Tim Hohmann from Public Works. He is our go to guy on many fronts, and always finds time and grace to handle us with.
- Shout out to the Parks Crew... from Mother's Day to Veteran's plaque dedication at Causland, they continue to shine for not only special events, but all the regular needs in between.
- ACFL Steve, Parks Maintenance Myles and I were called out on 5/25 to help look for a presumed missing elderly gentleman. We were told to stand down after a couple of hours when Skagit County Search and Rescue arrived. They did not believe it was likely he was in the ACFL at that time.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux

May 26, 2022

ACFL Maintenance Report MAY – 2022 by Steve Phillips
May 25, 2022

I started the month with more work at Rotary Park, then helping the Parks crew trim grave markers at Grandview in preparation for Mother's Day.

I had some time on May 3 to cut a tree on 215 with Sky joining me as a spotter.

I kept up with "rounds" in the ACFL -- trash/toilets/litter – during this time.

I was one of 14 lucky Skagitonians to be accepted by the Superior Court for a week of fascinating Jury Duty, May 9 – 13. I think only "rounds" happened during my absence.

On Tuesday 17th, I began my Tuesday – Saturday summer schedule. I spent some time that day trimming branches near the 313 trailhead at Heart Lake Road to make the trailhead more visible to drivers. This trailhead is now (as of early 2022) called out to both north- and southbound Heart Lake Road drivers by signage.

By Friday of last week, I had the help of two Seasonal Park Maintenance workers for the ACFL. Jillian Johnson started on Thursday, and all three of us worked together on Fri/Sat, when Devanne Jager joined. Jillian and Devanne are now trained on all aspects of the Stihl FS 240 line trimmer, including fuel mixing, starting, line spooling, and general troubleshooting.

And they are trained on trimming our trails, which has now begun. We adopted Dave's method of using a highlighter on trail maps hung in the office to highlight what's been done. It's very satisfying to watch the maps change color as we complete our miles-long task.

That brings us today. I trimmed the rest of 304 today. Nichola and Myles joined me in cutting the top off of a hazard tree at 23rd St./ Trail 100. Nichola had to leave for an appointment, but Myles was able to stay late to help us patrol the Forestlands for a missing person, by request of the Anacortes Police Department. I am hoping he is found safe very soon, if not already.