



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX 547, ANACORTES, WA 98221
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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board
August 4, 2022
6pm

In Person: City Hall, Main Floor Conference Room
Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88308344363>

Preliminary Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approve May 2022 Minutes
3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda*
4. ACFL Dams Update
5. Water Quality
6. Skagit Systems Cooperative Seed Collection
7. US Navy Run Up Mt. Erie
8. Friends of the Forest Update
9. Parks Commission Report
10. ACFL Trail Committee Update
11. Staff Reports
12. Other Business

Adjourn

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

July 2022 Report from the Assistant Director's Desk

SMASH AND GRABS

On July 24 and 25 we had one trailhead car prowler each day: #248 and #20. APD responded to both. Please remember to never leave valuables in your vehicle.

SK8 PRK

7/18: The design team from Grindline came up to our Senior Activity Center and lead a pump track design charrette. Anacortes Skate Park Improvement Project President, Rachel Muntean-Salazar, did a great job of working with representatives from local mountain bike club Fidalgo Trail Riders on the potential added phase to the project. Director Lunsford and I were in attendance as well. FTR volunteers are currently fine-tuning design ideas, while I work with COA Public Works staff on sidewalk and parking options. We are looking to get the pump track info to Grindline the first week of August.

DOE VISITS WL AND LC DAMS

Spent the morning of 7/7 with two engineers from DOE Dam Safety Office inspecting our two sites. Their reports should be coming soon.

GEESE FACTOR

We did have to temporarily close Little Cranberry to all forms of in and on water recreation, very likely due to the increase in goose poop. We continue to work with the Skagit County Health Department on safe use protocol. As of 7/8 we are back open under a caution flag.

HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Spent a few hours each morning on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th, doing fireworks and camping patrol in the ACFL. The weather was our best possible enforcement tool. There were a few vanlife and car campers that needed to be nudged along. Devanne, Jillian and Steve did a great job. We did find the remnants of fireworks at Heart Lake parking lot the morning of the 5th. May have to close that gate next year.

EBIKE IMPACT TRAIL STUDY

7/14: FoF Asa and I began to fine tune our top-secret selected monitoring sites.

WHISTLE LAKE CROWD

It's been the usual scene this summer; most folks enjoying themselves with family and friends. Some continue to pretend there are no rules, and some are resorting to harassing our seasonal staff. There is one group of young men in particular we are working to track down.

REGULAR MEETINGS

6/30: great monthly COA/Samish hike with Denise Crowe. South Cranberry beaver habitat inspection. All looking good.

6/30: ACFL Steve and I met with FoF Asa, working on our routine, partnership and future plans.

7/7: Parks Crew Tailgate Safety meeting.

7/25: Denise Crowe and I conducted our monthly Samish / COA ACFL hike. We combined the trip with a Whistle Lake patrol of 20/204. A beautiful and thankfully quiet trip.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

6/30: Finance Staff kicked off 2023 budget season with a Capital Facilities Plan meeting.

Leave taken: 7/1 vacation day, 7/8 sick day, due to covid+ proximity, 7/11-13 vacation days

7/5: assisted some WWU biology students with their local lake water sampling.

7/5, 7/14: did some more FoF Trail Ambassador training with Ashleigh and new volunteers.
7/6: I assisted Skagit Co Health Dept look for a unique algae in Little Cranberry. It was reported by a citizen. We found some. Samples were taken. The species was identified as a cyanobacteria, however the tested level of toxin was well below the recreational guidance values.
7/18: pitched in on some lower Cap Sante residential tree questions. Really appreciate it when folks reach out before the tree falls.
7/20: did some dead street tree recon for Streets. They will remove one from 7th and "R".
7/22: met with staff at WP campground site B20. Looks like we have an old white fir snag that is losing a limb or two. We are working on a plan to drop it.
7/25-29: Director Lunsford, Parks Foreperson Tottenham and ACFL Steve all happened to be off this week. Special thanks to Parks Manager Nicole and our Seasonal ACFL Team for the extra attention and effort regarding ACFL Sunshine Patrol. Numbers pretty solid during this sunshine streak. Also, thanks to APD for some OT shifts doing same. Whistle was pretty family friendly on July 26th.
7/25: City Council Meeting. Open Streets approved as well as \$100K REET transfer to SK8 PRK.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux
July 27, 2022

ACFL Maintenance Report July – 2022 by Steve Phillips
July 20, 2022

Maintenance Activities

June 30 – I took monthly samples from lakes to test for fecal coliform. Results at Little Cranberry were alarmingly high, causing the County Department of Health to close the lake. I retested on July 1, and again on July 6 and July 14. All three lakes will get tested tomorrow. On Friday, July 8 we changed the status from “closed” to “use at your own risk”.

June 30, July 7, July 12- we took our dinghy to the island on Whistle Lake for litter pick-up.

July 2 – I needed to extract a garbage bag from one of the toilets at Heart Lake.

July 4 – we had coverage from 12:30pm until Midnight. Town was quiet.

July 5 – aftermath at Heart Lake from explosives (fishing line collection tube) and fireworks. Devanne encountered a group with fireworks at the Whistle Lake cliffs. Police were called.

July 7 – Rainbow Septic pumped the Whistle Lake and Heart Lake vault toilets.

July 9 – The three of us hung our two Asian Giant Hornet traps for the year. I trained Devanne and Jillian in monitoring and servicing them (this happens weekly).

July 10, 15 – Anacortes Police Department officers worked shifts to assist with patrols at Whistle Lake. The scene was quiet on both days due to cool weather.

July 14 – cleaned up more explosives aftermath at Whistle Lake, where the fishing line collection tube had also been destroyed with explosives.

July 15 – Jillian found the scene in the photo when she arrived at Heart Lake – someone had detonated a powerful firework or explosive in the vault toilet. As the picture shows, the ceiling was covered with waste. She deserves a medal for cleaning the ceiling while standing on a bucket. July 15 – we finished trimming the last of the trails in the entire system. Some (especially north of Heart Lake) needed to be trimmed a second time due to the cool, wet spring.

July 17 – Jillian got stuck with another mess to clean up, this time horse excrement dumped on Heart Lake Road.

July 18 – Little Cranberry Lake dam spillway and 32nd Street beaver deceiver are STILL flowing.

I cut a few blowdowns out of trails this month. One more awaits, that I will likely cut today.

Yesterday, in response to a report from a mountain biker, I found not one, but two abandoned campsites in the ACFL. I spent half of my day bagging up and hauling out the garbage from one, and preparing the other for garbage haul-out.



Fireworks Damage

Miscellaneous Good News

It has been great to see the return of the Friends' Trail Ambassadors this year.

The vandal of the beaver dam at the 106/104 intersection described in last month's report has seemingly not been active since June 15.

Yesterday, I dropped by our fern transplant site from June 4 (pictured below). I'm happy to say the ferns are looking great! We can give some credit to the cool, wet weather that we have experienced since then, but they would not have stood a chance without FoF Beck's helpful guidance that day.

