



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

**September 1, 2022
6pm**

In person and virtual meeting options.

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 August 2022 Minutes
3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda*
4. ACFL Dams Update
5. Water Quality
6. Friends of the Forest Update
7. Parks Commission Report
8. ACFL Trail Committee Update
9. Staff Reports
10. Other Business

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: Aug 4, 2022

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Deane, Dr Reem Hajjar

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:06PM

Minutes: May minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Public Comments:

Asa spoke about the Little Cranberry Lake boat launch project. He has heard from the Friends of the Forest Board and they are in support. The suggestion they had was to increase the signage about sensitive areas on the lake.

Jonh Lunsford and Travis Anderson are taking lead on this project and it is in the beginning stages. They will attend a future meeting to discuss the project.

ACFL Dams Update:

Bob spoke about the Department of Ecology site visit in July. This visit was conducted by state engineers and accompanied by a consultant as well as Bob. They inspected both Little Cranberry and Whistle Lake dams. The LC dam has no stability issues but some of the wood in the spillway is soft. The DOE engineers mentioned cutting back some of the brush downstream. The Whistle dam consists of mostly vegetation, which if removed would eliminate the dam. The DOE discussed an option of a secondary dam structure. Bob suggests looking at the existing dam and finding a way to make it more stable. The DOE has a federally funded grant program and the City has submitted a letter of intent to receive some of these funds. We expect to hear back about this in November.

Water Quality:

Bob explained what has happened in Little Cranberry Lake with the closure and caution about lake use. Just prior to July 4th, there was a spike in the fecal coliform numbers. This required closure of the lake. The subsequent tests done weekly have shown significantly lower numbers allowing a switch to the caution notice. We are now seeing a slight increase in the Blue-Green algae in both Heart Lake and LC Lake. Signs are posted to use caution and to give information to lake users.

Skagit Systems Cooperative Seed Collection:

Bob sent the email chain out to the Board previously with the details of this request. The local tribes are hoping to ensure the health of the Skagit River Valley and the diversity of the native plants. The ACFL does not allow the public to harvest or take any samples. Questions raised by the Board were the protocol to be used, and how the groups would be identified and monitored. Brian requested that any data about the gathering points and type collected would be shared.

US Navy Run up Mt Erie:

There has been a request from NAS Whidbey to use the road up to Mt Erie for a run the morning of September 30th. There will be approximately 100 participants. This will require the road to be closed for several hours. The Board expressed support for this event.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa shared an update on the first annual Summer Celebration and Fundraiser. It went very well and hosted local community members as well as people from out of town. They are planning to make this an annual event. Asa also updated the Board on the Trail Ambassador program. There were more volunteers this year, allowing for more coverage at trail heads. They plan to have this program grow again next year which will allow for more weekends or more locations to be staffed. The fall fundraiser will be the first Saturday in November and will be an auction. They have hired a new staff member to be their Community Programs Coordinator and focus on hikes and science. Beck will be leaving the FoF program to run an outdoor preschool in Woodinville, and Hannah has been hired to take her place.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the June meeting of the Parks Commission. There is work being done on the final plans for the Skate Park. The Remote Control cars group has not met with staff yet. There was extensive damage done to the beaver dam at trails 104 and 106, with someone destroying them repeatedly. Staff put up a game camera and put word out on social media and in the newspaper. Since the extra attention, there has been no additional damage.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

There was no meeting.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his written report. He did express again a huge thanks to our seasonal staff. They were an absolutely amazing crew to work with this summer!

Bob had nothing to add to his written except to announce a date for the summer work party in partnership with the Friends of the Forest on September 10th.

Other Business:

Brian asked about the powdery mildew on the big leaf maples and if Steve is seeing any sign of die-off. Steve stated that he is noticing this statewide as he has traveled. Dr. Peterson with Transition Fidalgo has looked at various trees in our area and feels they will be ok.

Bob introduced Dr Reem Hajjar, a Forestry Professor with Oregon State University. She is doing a case study on a number of community forests across the nation. She is looking into how community owned forests work across the US and how they provide benefits to citizens. She will be interviewing various people on her visit to Anacortes on August 16th.

Brian spoke about a riparian improvement project involving Evergreen Islands and the City of Anacortes for the Happy Valley stream and wetlands. This is in the very beginning stages.

Adjourn at 7:15pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

WASHINGTON PARK

7/27: on site meeting with Josh Baldwin from Quantum Construction and COA Environmental Planner Nathan G. We are working on a site plan and bid package for a restroom. Location to be very close to where there are now two Group Picnic port-o-potties. Mr. Baldwin's expert consultation is greatly appreciated.

8/4: Parks Crew member Sky Guthrie took the lead on a hazard tree fall in site B20. The 100+ foot very dead white fur came down just where we needed it to. Thanks to DNR NW Region crew for coming over and lending an educational and clean up hand.

8/5: was notified of a fire call at the park. Went out there around 530PM and found a DNR crew and AFD Chief Bill Harris. They were happy to report that the smoke had come from a bbq/smoker at the Skyline Cabana.

WHISTLE LAKE PATROL

7/27: special thanks to ACFL seasonal Devanne for working a 6-hour OT shift today. With various vacations and other commitments, she was my last hope for help out there this afternoon. She did great at the lake while I managed parking.

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

7/27: working with Transition Fidalgo Lead Scientist David Peterson on some plans for large scale forest typing in the ACFL. A larger meeting is in the works.

8/3: Dave, ACFL Steve and two forestry students and I met to further discuss and plan this project. We were joined by GIS Hoxie. Steve is working on some notes for Dave, and we will review some more detailed maps shortly.

ABPAC/OPEN STREETS

7/28: attended regular meeting. Putting the finishing touches on this year's Open Streets event.

8/17: Open Streets meeting with Parks Manager Johnston and Public Works Tim. Road closure details coming together.

WATER QUALITY

7/29: posted additional blue green algae "When in doubt, stay out" signage at Little Cranberry after a frequent local swimmer complained of scummy water. Worked with Darby on social media messaging as well.

8/1: Skagit County Health Department (SCHD) samples Heart and Little Cranberry for blue green algae.

8/2: fecal coliform testing at Little Cranberry continues to show very low numbers, keeping water-based recreation safe.

8/3: Director Lunsford and I met with DOE lake treatment permit specialist. We cleared up our history of treatments in and on Heart Lake and received the green light to move forward with Aquatechnex on treatment for Eurasian milfoil. Still working on specifics but hope to have the work scheduled soon.

8/4: SCHD blue green algae sample results are well below safe recreational levels in both Little Cranberry and Heart Lake.

"HEAT WAVE"

7/30-31: we managed pretty well throughout the week, considering ACFL Steve and Director Lunsford both happened to be on vacation. Devanne and Jillian did great work, and Parks Manager Johnston was there earlier in the week for support as well. I focused on weekend parking detail, and the vast majority of our approximately 1200 weekend visitors at Whistle just wanted a beautiful place to cool down.

VEHICLE PROWLs

These are on the uptick, not just in the ACFL, but city-wide. We have posted a few more warnings and done the same on social media.

POWERLINES TRAILHEAD

7/30-31: I checked on #248 trailhead both days about noon. There were @ 15+ vehicles. Other than a couple blocking the private gate adjacent to COA property, all vehicles were parked legally.

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST

8/2: regular meeting with Asa. FoF summer party was a true success. I was unable to attend due to high volume of Whistle Lake visitors.

TREES

8/3: ACFL Steve and I responded to a hiker's concern about chainsaw-based tree work happening near #208x#221. A Parkside Neighborhood resident had hired a tree crew without first working with the COA. Steve and I had a good chat with the crew and were able to confirm the majority of the work is ok. There is a little left to talk about.

8/4: ACFL Steve and I worked through some hazard tree issues with a Fir Crest resident, adjacent to ACFL NGPE. All is well.

8/11: ACFL Steve and I meet with a "W" Ave couple, adjacent to Cap Sante park. We talked through some tree concerns. We will continue to monitor the site.

SEASONAL STAFF

Just when we got comfortable with a good summer staff, August came, and the young people started going back to school and the like. Nicole working hard to come up with stop gap measures (people willing to work for us for a month or so). She found one and may be verging on a second.

8/8: Jillian's farewell ACFL shift today. I finally took she and Devanne out for the annual thank you for trimming all the trails luncheon. Jillian really enjoyed her summer with us, and we certainly are the better for having had her on the team. Thankfully, Devanne is here into September.

TAILGATE SAFETY MEETING

8/4: good one with the Parks Crew. We take these seriously, and good discussions typically ensue.

AUGUST FOREST ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Managed a widely varied agenda in a very efficient manner. Well done Chair Gerwels.

CITY COUNCIL

Attended the 8/8 meeting, where the Council discussed getting our Parks and ACFL hours (5A-10P) formally into City Code. There was no objection. Formal approved achieved at 8/15 meeting.

PARKS COMMISSION

The August meeting featured a good discussion regarding establishing project priorities and engaging in the budget process to support funding these priorities.

HEART LAKE EURASION MILFOIL

Director Lunsford and I have been working with DOE and Aquatechnex on the need for about 9 acres of treatment for Eurasian milfoil. We are also adding the removal of Yellow Flag Iris. There are currently a few spotty patches along the western shore. We are hoping the treatment will happen by the end of August.

8/12: I posted herbicide application notices at six key spots around HL.

ROTARY TRAIL

Tom D and Jack D from the Rotary Club, Jackie Ferry from the Samish Nation staff, Museum Director Bret Lunsford and I spent a couple of hours reviewing each of the four new kiosks serving the new Rotary Trail. There is temporary signage in place now, and we are working toward permanent installations. It was a great discussion, and I am looking forward to the creative skills of all involved coming up with some helpful, educational and inspirational content.

BEN ROOT SK8 PRK REMODEL PROJECT

8/12: Director Lunsford and I Zoomed with the Grindline guys on some parking issues for the project. Discussed options for working with Community Center project.

ACFL CASE STUDY

As introduced at the August FAB meeting, I met with and was interviewed by Dr. Reem Hajar, from the Forestry School at Oregon State University. She is meeting with several ACFL types over the next days. Enjoyed the session.

SAMISH NATION / COA HIKE

Steve, Denise and I had another great outing on 8/18. Highlighted by a powerful barred owl encounter on #28.

VACATION

I will be off Aug 21 – 29, so am submitting my report a little early this month.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux
August 19, 2022

ACFL Maintenance Report AUGUST – 2022 by Steve Phillips

August 24, 2022

Maintenance Activities

Routine restroom cleaning, garbage/recycling emptying, and litter pickup... ongoing summer duties.

We have also made weekly visits to the Whistle Lake island via boat.

Also, we have been keeping signage pertinent regarding fecal coliform, blue-green algae, fireworks, and alcohol.

7/21 – Water testing completed at all lakes with Jillian's help. 4 samples taken at Little Cranberry and the usual 1 each at Heart and Whistle Lakes.

7/21 – finished hauling out abandoned garbage from derelict campsite near the 29th Street water tank.

Late July – August - I have been keeping water bags full on trees planted within the last year (City Hall, 28th Street Playground, new roundabout at 32nd & M). This should help them endure the hot weather.

7/25 – 7/31 – Steve on vacation; hot weather (highs in the mid-80s on Tues, Fri, Sat, Sun).

7/28 – last check of 32nd street beaver deceiver: water has finally subsided below its level.

Sunday, 7/31 – Hot weather brought a high number of visitors.

8/2 – I sprayed one hornet, one yellowjacket nest on 123 and 108, respectively.

8/2 -8/12 - Cut trees on 310, 304, 311, 28, 312, 215.

8/3 - A helpful volunteer hand-pulled a patch of Vinca (periwinkle) that he has been eying on Mount Erie Road, near 215. I disposed of the pile that he left (this was prearranged).

8/4 – Jillian took four samples from Little Cranberry Lake to monitor fecal coliform. Numbers were low enough that we removed the warning signs on 8/5. Blue-green algae warning signs remain.

8/4 – Steve and Jillian took down a rope swing at Big Rock on Little Cranberry Lake.

8/5 – I removed some of the yellow flag iris near the western shore of Heart Lake.

Sadly, 8/8 was Jillian's last day! We will miss her.

8/19 - Devanne has begun a summer project for the "slow days." She has been using our powered pole pruner to trim the 2-track, drivable fire roads for vertical clearance. This becomes necessary every few years so that taller vehicles can pass unhindered.

8/23 – I patched up one of the popular hangout spots at the Whistle Lake Cliffs with a custom mix of soil and shale provided by long-time volunteer Kenny Oakes. He has identified another area in need and will provide more mix for me to do this, as time allows in the coming weeks. He once did this every few years, but no longer has the motorcycle and trailer that enabled him to do this. This will help protect trees at the Cliffs, whose roots become exposed from the high amount of traffic seen there in summer.

Violations

In this past month in particular, our seasonal workers experienced harassment from park visitors. For the sake of this report, details are not necessary; but it should be noted that this can happen when we are trying to enforce established rules.

7/25 – vehicle break-in at Whistle Lake parking lot. Devanne cleaned up the glass.

Wednesday 7/27 – Bob availed himself to help park cars at Whistle Lake parking lot. Excessive visitors due to hot weather.

8/3 (or so) – someone smashed the kiosk at the Heart Lake parking lot, apparently with the purpose of stealing the Plexiglas. I removed the broken door frame, and it remains exposed as of now.

8/3 – a hiker, seeing chainsaw use and log piles on the trail, reported what turned out to be illegal tree-topping activity in the Native Growth Protection Zone buffer area in the Parkside development adjacent to trail 208. I was able to respond in time to stop it, and Bob is following up.

8/16 - A group of college-age kids started a Tuesday-afternoon bonfire to cook weenies and burgers at the Cliffs. I missed seeing them early enough in the day to stop them. I was alone on shift that day, but Devanne, on her day off, happened to be there to witness it and call 911. By the time I arrived with APD and AFD, the fire was out (still with hot coals) and no alcohol was being consumed; although empty cans and a Twisted Tea “Bag in a Box” were onsite. AFD used a bucket to douse the firepit with water from the Lake.

Some members of the 7-person group had obviously been drinking, but no citations or trespass notices were issued. The group was asked to pick up their garbage and leave, and they did; they also received a stern lecture about fire and drunk driving. When I saw them last, they were waiting for a ride at the private road where gravel and pavement meet.

8/17 – I asked three adults to leave because they were smoking at a beach on the eastern side of the lake. I had already informed them in the parking lot that this was not allowed.

8/18 – I encountered two men in their 30s or 40s who were attempting to fasten a bundle of madrona branches to their hand truck at Family Beach. I told them this was illegal and asked them to redistribute the branches in the woods where they found them. They did so, but were not particularly apologetic. They left with their hand truck and rope.

8/20 – Notes from Devanne indicate that someone had a massive wedding at Whistle Lake, but permission had never been given. As of this writing, I don’t know the rest of the story.

[Miscellaneous Good News](#)

Summer is almost over! 😊 thanks for reading down this far!