



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

**January 5, 2023
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 December 2022 Minutes**
- 3. Board Chair Discussion**
- 4. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda***
- 5. ACFL Plan Update**
- 6. ACFL Dams Update**
- 7. Friends of the Forest Update**
- 8. Parks Commission Report**
- 9. ACFL Trail Committee**
- 10. Staff Reports**
- 11. Other Business**

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: December 1, 2022

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Dean, Ellie Kravets, Eric Shen

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:02PM

Minutes: November minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Transition Fidalgo Update:

Eric Shen was in attendance to give a year end report and update on Transition Fidalgo. The slides from the presentation are attached at the end of these minutes for reference.

Public Comments:

None

ACFL Dams Update:

The Whistle Lake dam DOE grant has been submitted, and funding is highly likely. Bob continues to work with COA Engineering on this project.

Steve and Bob completed the required annual inspections of the Whistle and Little Cranberry lake dams. Both still holding strong.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa shared that their annual benefit and fundraiser is done and it was a huge success. He said the team is looking ahead at the planning of 2023 programs such as hikes, school programs, water quality monitoring and having a high school intern again.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, sharing the following:

The City is estimating it will cost approximately \$250,000 to repair the damage to the trestle. The Parks Foundation is handling the fundraising. The permits are in process with local, state and federal agencies. Materials are being ordered and there are not many delays at this time.

The City owns 2 pieces of property near Anacopper and Little Cranberry. The previous plan for these lots was to sell one in order to finance the building of a park on the other lot. There has been some interest from Habitat for Humanity in the land in order to build homes. The discussion will continue at a future Council meeting.

Grindline is working on completing the construction drawings for the skate park and staff is hoping to get this out to bid after the first of the year.

Pickleball continues to be popular in town and the players are looking for more places to play. Neighbors near the current courts are concerned about the noise and traffic.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

Long time equestrian rep Geri Rubin has expressed an interest to step down from the committee, but still maintain her fantastic role as a communications coordinator for ACFL staff and the horse riding community. Tabb and JoAnn volunteered to work with Geri and Bob on finding a replacement for her.

Staff Reports:

Steve shared that the Cranberry Lake shoreline project planting sketches are complete, and the proposal will be going to engineering next for final plans. This is an area for kids and dogs.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 7:20pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

Transition Fidalgo Report:

ACFL Forest Monitoring Program

Eric Shen
Transition Fidalgo
12/1/22

Progress To Date



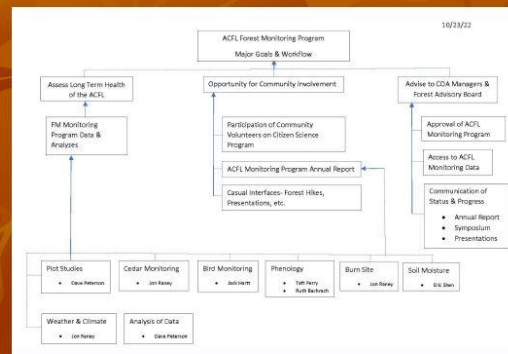
- Last met in March 2018
- Signed MOU with City 8/2018
- Forest Monitoring Program started 2019
- 2022 transitioning to sustainable, long term program

Project Objectives

- Understand how forests are changing through time
 - Sound monitoring practices
- Opportunity to engage/educate community through citizen science
 - Volunteers gain hands on understanding of forest eco-systems
- Provide scientists, forest managers, City with data and projections of forest health



Project Framework



Project Status



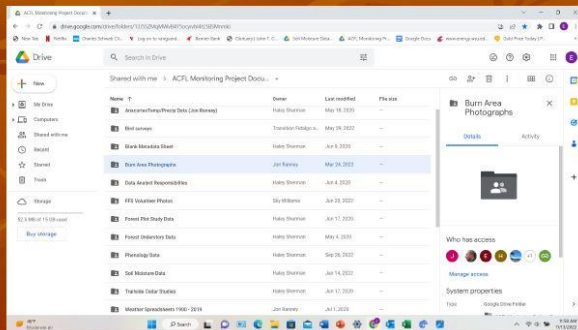
- 7 Forest Monitoring Projects
 - Cedar Monitoring
 - Plot Studies
 - Bird Monitoring
 - Phenology Studies
 - Weather/Climate
 - Soil Moisture
 - Little Cranberry Burn Site
- Data Management System
- Support from the Friends of the Forest

How Did We Do

- 7 Citizen Science Projects staffed by 53 volunteers
- Transitioned to make each project more autonomous and self reliant
- Program management team established
- Early observations producing results



Data Management



What Have We Found



2016

- Data collected to date has modified/refined monitoring protocols

- Soil moisture-

- Changes to cedar monitoring project
- Addition of deeper soil moisture sensors



2019

- Looking for synergies between projects
- Linking phenology with weather data

- Cedar monitoring tied to drought duration and start of drought periods



2022

Into the Future

- Concerned about durability of Program
 - Working to start pipeline of new volunteers
 - Develop backup plans for lead positions
 - Need backup for program management & scientist
- Move into Phase 3- look outward
 - Continue developing long term partnerships
 - Expand use of data with other organizations
 - Develop more financial support
 - Reduction and analyses of long term data sets

WHISTLE LAKE DAM

Nov 21 Public Works Tim and I met with Widener and Associates and did some grant work, re: the DOE High Hazard qualification grant. Wideners should have a draft grant application completed shortly.
Nov 23 Grant submitted.
Nov 30 Steve and I conducted the DOE required annual inspection of the WL and Little Cranberry dams. Happy to report that both are doing fine work and remain in-tact.
Dec 5 COA grant team working with DOE on a few details of the grant. Funding looks very promising.

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK

Nov 30 We received the 90% Construction Drawings from Grindline. COA staff, along with Rachel Muntean-Salazar and Fidalgo Trail Riders are reviewing. Early reviews are very positive.
In related news, MJB developers are working with COA staff on moving the existing the TTPW RR south, so they would have access to their property directly from the 22nd/R Ave round-a-bout. The RR would end up adjacent to the sk8 park. I am the lead on the required conversion of the project at the Recreation and Conservation Office level. GIS Rob Hoxie taking the lead on all necessary map work. As always, we GREATLY appreciate his expertise.
Dec 9th 90% CD review with COA and Grindline staff. Working the details out, answering most all of the questions. Coordinating this project with the COA's "R" Avenue improvement project, that is also on the way.

BEAVER DAM/DECEIVER ROUNDS

It's that time of year when we pay close attention to the dams and culverts keeping the water moving; into Ace of Hearts Creek, Big Beaver Pond, out of Mitten Pond, into and out of the 32nd Street Swamp. I did one set of rounds on the 25th. ACFL Steve and Parks Tottenham doing most of the heavy lifting.

"A" AVENUE CROSSWALK

I was notified by Public Works on Nov 29 that the traffic safety committee has recommended a crosswalk to get folks across "A" Avenue at the old dump gate trailhead.
Dec 13 Nicole, ACFL Steve and I meet with PW staff to confirm the plan and figure out our support and participation. Should make it a bit safer out there.

WASHINGTON PARK POLICY REVIEW

Dec 1 The staff review team has not met in some time. We reconvened and got thru much of the existing policy manual. We are looking forward to completing this review, sharing our thoughts with Director Lunsford, then making our way to the Parks Commission.

WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION IS BACK

Dec 1 Johnston, Tottenham, Guthrie and I met on Washington Park trail #501, near the intersection with the Loop Exit gate. WTA will be here at the end of January to work on muddy section of trail that is very well used. We are able to offer free camping to any WTA volunteer seeking same.

DECEMBER FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

Dec 1 Enjoyed a great Transition Fidalgo annual report from Eric Shen. Local citizen scientists doing great work. Looking forward to their deeper partnership with the Friends of the Forrest.

PICKLEBALL

Dec 6 Nicole J and I meet with a couple of local pickleball enthusiasts, looking for some help with court etiquette signage – emphasizing one game at a time and rotating in and out in a courteous manner. In other words; don't be a court hog. We will bring some draft signage to the Parks Commission for discussion.

TRESTLE REPAIR FUNDRAISER

Dec 6 A big THANK YOU to the Anacortes Parks Foundation for spearheading this important work. It's fantastic to be \$150K in toward the goal of \$250K...at the fundraising kickoff event!
...later in the month I begin working with Engineering Project Manager Jeff Beltramini on the repair logistics. It is looking very promising that Culbertson Marine will begin demo work on Jan 3rd.

#108 BRIDGE

An ACFL regular has reported concerns about the status of our bridge over the stream connecting Big Beaver Pond to the 32nd Street Swamp. Steve and I checked it out on Dec 7th. We do not believe it is an emergency, but we are beginning the process for replacement.

YEAR IN REVIEW WITH FRIENDS OF THE FOREST

Dec 8 Jonn, Asa and I had a great discussion. We are looking forward to 2023 and continuing the good works we do together. Highlights include the continued expansion of educational offerings as well as the same for the Trail Ambassador program.

WONDERLAND WALK

Dec 9/10 Our annual all hands event has come and gone, and most folks enjoyed the festivities very much. It was my pleasure working the campfires with Parks Staffer Braydn Krueger.

DECEMBER PARKS COMMISSION

Dec 13 Staff joined 4 of 5 Commissioners, discussions focused mainly on the City Council work with Habitat for Humanity on W. 5th, as well as pickleball and its many ramifications.

SNOW

Dec 20 Enjoyed the chance to work alongside the Parks Crew in the big snow, securing access to various COA facilities. Always a pleasure to be reminded of just how skilled and committed our team is.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...congratulations to the FoF on this year's auction. While I have not yet heard final tallies, sounds like all went very well...COA staff working with a production company shooting an Audi commercial. They want to use Heart Lake Road for driving scenes. Will stage equipment at the Heart Lake parking lot for a few hours. Scheduled for Dec. 5th, weather permitting...enjoyed holiday leave on Nov 24/25...did a quick disc golf course walk thru on Nov 28. Found no negative impacts from the recent tournament hosted by the local DG club...working with ACFL Steve on an ACFL neighbor's concerns with a few NGPE trees on West 12th...reminder that I will be on leave Dec 28 – Jan 5, but will be in attendance at the FAB meeting on the 5th...HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux

ACFL Maintenance Report DECEMBER – 2022 by Steve Phillips

December 21, 2022

Maintenance Activities

- Blowdowns removed on 311, 316, 210, 10, 115, 111, 11, 109, 25.
- Beaver activity checks – 32nd St. Swamp, Trail 10 culverts, Heart Lake, Little Cranberry spillway.
- Helped with removal of hazard trees at Washington Park and Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- **November 21** filled some low spots on the summit of Mount Erie with gravel. Also used cold mix asphalt to patch a few potholes on the road.
- **November 21** I continued on Trail 132 decommission, removing spikes from bridge lumber.
- November 22 I removed a small colony of *Hypericum androsaemum*, also referred to as Tutsan, from the trailside on Trail 250. I did not recognize this plant, but from photos had ID help from Braydn Krueger (Park Maintenance coworker) and confirmation from Denise Crowe. I had never seen this plant before.
- **November 23** I replaced the split-rail fence at Trail 10, so that it surrounds the kiosk again. This had been destroyed in a car accident last summer.
- **November 29** – I nailed flagging tape to the side rails above the culvert openings above Big Beaver Pond (Trail 10) so that they will be easier to locate in snow cover.
- **December 8** – near 101 x 105, I noticed that a tree on our hazard tree watchlist fell, missing the trail.
- **December 14** - Recovered a discarded file cabinet and armchair from a gully on Mount Erie with the help of our Fleet Maintenance crew and the winch on the front of their truck.
- **December 16** I joined Ellie of the Friends of the Forest and representatives from the Phenology team of Transition Fidalgo's Forest Monitoring group. This will help inform my maintenance work so that it does not impact their studies.
- **December 19** we closed Mount Erie road to vehicles.
- **December 20** we closed Little Cranberry Lake road to vehicles.

Violations

- **November 21** called Dispatch to report the remnants of a bonfire and alcohol consumption in the Heart Lake parking lot.
- **November 21** found and removed a crayfish trap (that hadn't caught anything) from the northernmost tip of Whistle Lake, attached to a partly submerged log. I have found these on the east shore of Little Cranberry Lake as well in the past.

- **December 2** I noticed some whittling on young trees had been done on Trail 11. This senseless vandalism will probably kill one or both of these trees.



- **December 12** I had a conversation with two kids on a dirt bike who happened to be trying to enter Whistle Lake just as I was leaving. I reminded them of our seasonal motorbike closure from November 1st through March 31st, or longer dependent on conditions. They seemed somewhat unconcerned and claimed ignorance. I indicated to them where this is posted on the gate. I also reminded them that their user group is the one receiving the most complaints; and that when they operate outside of the regulations, they endanger access to all, even those who diligently follow our guidelines. They left.
- **December 13** I noticed dirt bikes had been jumping at the trailhead to 239. This unsafe and destructive activity is not new; it has happened in the past, and I have piled brush here as a deterrent. I decided to install a gate here this time for a more lasting solution.



- **December 14** we received another report of vandalism against the new trail closure at 132 and 105 – signs were bent over and pitched into the bushes.
- **December 21** I noticed ATV tracks in the snow leading up to the Whistle Lake gate... someone was trying to find a crack in the seams... but they needed to double back. Perhaps they read the “no ATVs” sign and left?