



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

**P.O. BOX 547, ANACORTES, WA 98221
(360) 293-1918**

Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

**February 2, 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 January '23 Minutes**
- 3. Public Comments** *for any item not on the agenda*
- 4. 2023 Budget Discussion w/ Director Lunsford**
- 5. ACFL Plan Update**
- 6. ACFL Dams Update**
- 7. Friends of the Forest Update**
 - a. 2023 Wetland Monitoring**
- 8. Parks Commission Report**
- 9. ACFL Trail Committee**
- 10. Staff Reports**
- 11. Other Business**

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: January 5, 2023

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Ellie Kravets, Steve Anderson, Dan Senour, Tom Glade, Marlene Finley

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:00PM

Minutes: December minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Board Chair Discussion:

Kit is the current Board Chair and Brian expressed support for the continuity of leadership and for Kit to continue. Kit agreed, all were in support.

Public Comments:

Marlene asked about the Forest Management Plan and where it was in the approval process. Bob stated that it was completed and approved in November of 2021 and is available online for public viewing.

Marlene also asked for an update on the Little Cranberry boat launch. Bob shared that Jonn Lunsford and Travis Anderson are working on this project, and that it is currently just a concept. GeoEngineers is currently working on a biologist's report. After it is received, the permitting and public comment process will be put together. This project was started by a citizen with a request and a donation in order to improve the existing boat launch and focus the use area in order to limit the destruction of the shoreline. There will be many opportunities for public comment as the process moves forward.

Steve Anderson suggested that the ACFL maps should have a number or letter for each of the bridges in the forest lands. He feels this will help when reporting issues to staff.

ACFL Plan Update:

The current plan was approved in November of 2021. The hope is to have it updated every 5 years and it is mandated to be updated every 10 years. In starting the process now, the goal is to have it done and fully approved by November 2026. On this timeline, the suggested plan would be through the Board and initial public comment by November of 2025, to the Planning Commission by December of 2025, and to Council by May of 2026. Marlene requested that there be a climate and habitat program as part of the new plan. Ellie shared that the Friends of the Forest are doing just that in cooperation with Transition Fidalgo. (see Ellie's report below)

It was decided that the Board will begin reviewing the current plan and at the next several meetings, start discussion on any changes and updates.

ACFL Dams Update:

No update at this time.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Ellie was in attendance to give the update for Asa. The Friends have lots going in the new year-hikes for all ages, a naturalist club meeting in March and April, summer camps and field trips with the Boys and Girls club.

Ellie also spoke about her monitoring project working with Transition Fidalgo and the difference between the two approaches. Transition Fidalgo is very science and skills based with lots of training and a long-term commitment. The Friends' project is aimed to be less intense and allow for access to the general public.

The program began with wetland and water quality observations and testing at 3 sites each month. This has proven to be very ambitious with volunteers and testing onsite. Ellie is proposing that the testing be done every 4-6 months and the macroinvertebrates study be done at the Depot instead of onsite. Bob will speak with Jonn about this and bring it back to the Board.

Parks Commission Report:

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

The Trestle fundraiser has already raised \$165,000 to repair the Trestle. All permits are complete with the exception of the additional piling removal. There is a citizen donor who has stepped up to cover the cost of lights and cameras out on the Trestle.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

There is no equestrian representative replacement yet.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his written report.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

A question was asked about the A Avenue crosswalk. This is a Public Works project creating a safety corridor on A Avenue, 37th Street and D Avenue. This crossing will have a crosswalk and flashing lights.

Other Business:

Steve Anderson asked about the Shannon Point area and access to Washington Park. He stated that it was a railroad right of way in the past and wanted to know if there were any plans to develop this area. At this point, there are no plans to develop that area.

Adjourn at 7:35pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

January 2023 Report from the Assistant Director's Desk

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK

12/22 Parks Crew Leadership Johnston and Tottenham met with me on site, reviewing proposed landscape and irrigation plan questions from Grindline design team. We were able to locate and communicate the answers.

12/27 Director Lunsford and I had a good fundraising update meeting with Rachel Muntean-Salazar and Seth Kiser. Both working hard on the search for continued funding for the skate park and pump track, respectively.

10th We received 100% CD's from Grindline. COA staff and volunteers currently reviewing.

18th We all meet to review same with Grindline and subs. A few minor tweaks, and we all form a power circle of approval. Next stop, move the plan to bid package. COA staff working on that now.

24th COA and Grindline staff meet to lay out the critical path to bid documents. Hoping to have them finalized in the next couple of weeks.

TREES

12/23 Met with Dan Olsen at W. 12th residence adjacent to the ACFL. Reviewed the plan to remove a couple of hazard trees (identified by the homeowner, confirmed by Arborist ACFL Steve) that are a bit beyond our comfort level, due to the proximity to the fence and home. He will take them down on the 27th.

12/27 Reports from Dan and the homeowners that trees are safely on the ground, and all is well.

FOREST ADVISORY BOARD

5TH Thanks to the FAB for another great meeting. Discussion focused mainly on updating the ACFL Plan, and the importance of including science as we go forward.

20th Tabb, JoAnn and I met with Geri Rubin, working on protocol to replace Geri as our long-time equestrian rep on the ACFL Trail Committee. We will have an update at the Feb. FAB meetings.

ACFL VANDALISM

6th Sometime over last night the Ray Auld Drive port-o and privacy screen were blown to bits. APD called. Curiously, no char.

PARKS COMMISSION

10th Good discussion in preparation of reviewing Department priorities.

ACFL VOLUNTEER WORK PARTY

12th Steve, Sky and I met with the FoF team at the #109 NW Trailhead, planning for the 1/21 quarterly work party. Should be another great event.

ACFL MOTORIZED USE

We are seeing some unfortunate habitual motorized use of the trails this winter. This is of course in direct violation of our seasonal closure to motorcycles. We ask that when you do see this kind of thing, please call 911 immediately. In addition to being the right thing to do, it helps us document the need for fully commissioned law enforcement in the ACFL.

WASHINGTON PARK POLICY UPDATE

19th Our in-house team continued our work on wp policy review. Not ready to make formal recommendations yet but getting closer.

ROTARY CLUB VOLUNTEERS

19th Tom Decker and the Rotarians continue to up their volunteer game, joining me for another trail maintenance training. About 12 of us enjoyed some good weather and the sharing of thoughts on trail care.

W. 2ND CONNECTOR TRAIL

In-house construction of this raised trail began the week of the 16th. Looking good and sturdy, and a great level of protection for the adjacent wetland functions.

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST SCIENCE

20TH Director Lunsford and I met with FoF Community Programs Coordinator Ellie K, reviewing the updated wetlands monitoring plan. Ellie is looking to build upon the baseline data that has been previously collected. She asked for and received support to collect water samples and take them to the FoF office for further "lab" study. This will be confirmed at the February FAB meeting.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...12/26 Christmas Holiday...12/27 attended Anacortes Family Center coordinated Motel Voucher meeting. Always a good multi-agency/organization discussion of helping those in need of transitional shelter...12/28-1/4 vacation leave...6th attended special Council Parks Committee meeting with Director Lunsford. Discussion focused on the trestle repair and W. 5th and 6th COA properties...19th ACFL Steve, Denise Crowe and I enjoyed a sunshine Samish Nation / COA hike on the north end of the 300's hill. Found some fresh motorbike damage, but no riders to contact...24th FoF Asa and I kicked off the new year with a regular meeting. Excited about further developing and supporting the Friends' community-based science work, as well as the expanding educational opportunities...26th 3 years have passed since the last "windowing" at San Juan Passage, and it's time for another round. Parks Manager Johnston and I met with Planning staff to review protocol. They are working up some helpful new strategies, and will be working with us throughout...

Faithfully Submitted,
Bob Vaux
January 26, 2023

January 25, 2023

Maintenance Activities

Most of my time this month was spent cutting blowdowns out of trails, although as I write I know there are a handful of them still blocking trails.

I took a few measures to bolster the new Trail Closed signs on the west end of 132. They have been torn down and tossed a few times now. But I think, as of this report, signs are still standing on both ends of the decommissioned trail.

Asa Deane of the Friends of the Forest and I continue in our year of trail monitoring to assess the impacts of eBikes on our trails.

As is now customary during winter, I make regular stops at the various locations where beavers are known to create flooding issues for roads, homes, and trails. This month was light. Maybe it is a seasonal shift in beaver behavior. But also, the water table seems lower than in past years at this time, and our rain events have been relatively short-lived and low in production since the end of December.

Parks staff had a debrief meeting at City Hall to discuss the 2022 Wonderland Walk.

I installed a post at Rotary Park per the request of Tom Decker, who had an additional wayfinding sign to place. In the next month, we hope to install a gate at the base of Erie Mountain Drive. This will help us with road closures as needed. We had an old gate that has been laying around and just needed some sanding and painting. In preparation for this, the City fleet staff (mechanics) allowed me some space and a hydraulic lift in their heated shop. They also had some great anti-rust paint that I used. They are currently working on the sleeve that will go in the ground to support it.

I am in the midst of a collaborative project with COA Street Department at A avenue. You may have noticed the new curb cut, crosswalk, and flashers at this location. I had help adding new split-rail fence and landscape beds. Work will continue on this into next month, but most of the challenging work is now complete.

Preparation and planning for the ACFL work party on January 21 were worthwhile. We had a great turnout and accomplished all of our goals just as cold rain began to fall. Working at the trailhead to 129 off Pennsylvania Avenue, we built log steps; we beautified the entrance and stabilized a slope with transplanted ferns; and we removed large amounts of Scotch broom from the area. I'm always so impressed with the quantity and quality of work that our smiling, eager volunteers can safely accomplish! It was key to have leadership assistance from Ellie, Ashleigh, and Hannah of the Friends and Sky from COA Parks. Many thanks to all.

Violations

On Friday, January 6, we found the aftermath of an exploded porta-potty. The porta-potty and wooden enclosure that Parks created in Fall 2022 were obliterated by what must have been a very powerful blast. The lid to the unit ended up balancing on a branch approximately 20 feet above its location. Our in-house builder, Sky Guthrie, estimates it will cost \$500 and 4 hours to repair.

It's hard not to chuckle when one thinks about some kids blowing up a toilet, but this was not a harmless juvenile prank. This was an extremely violent explosion. It was also a puzzling one, in that no charring was apparent on any of the debris, and there was no burnt smell; also, the holding tank within the porta-potty did not itself explode -- although the door, four walls, and roof were blasted away.

Anacortes Police recorded all relevant information and assigned it Case# 23-A00128.

Out-of-season motorbike use continues to be a reported issue in the Forestlands. It is also being reported regularly on trails where not authorized. Damage can currently be seen midway up Trail 316.

Miscellaneous Good News

I met with Josh Gates of Fidalgo Trail Riders to discuss opportunities for his mountain bike group to participate in trail improvement projects. We identified at least one project that will work great for the group – we have yet to choose a date.