



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

**March 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 February '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**
- 8. ACFL Trail Committee**
- 9. Staff Reports**
- 10. Parks Commission Update**
- 11. Other Business**

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: February 2, 2023

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, Barbara Cooper

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:03PM

Minutes: January minutes were unanimously approved with the addition of the MOU/MOA to be created with Friends of the Forest.

Public Comments:

Barbara joined the meeting to see what the status of the Little Cranberry boat launch is and was wondering if there will be an opportunity for public comment. Bob responded that the project is only in concept form at this time. There will be a formal public process once the biologist report is complete. This project is a long way from any formal proposition.

2023 Budget Discussion:

Issue on hold as Jonn Lunsford is out sick.

ACFL Plan Update:

The discussion was started last month about the update of the Forest Plan. Bob and Kit brought a draft outline of a timeline to break up the plan into manageable sections for review and public comment. There is plenty of time for the process but breaking it up this way allows for the Board to discuss other topics that come up. There was some discussion about the timing and the June hike and July break. The basic schedule was updated and approved by the Board.

ACFL Dams Update:

Bob has reached out to the engineers that did the inspection. They are very apologetic about the delay and hope to have the report to Bob by late February or early March. The grant is moving along, but is a very long process.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa was in attendance to give the Friends of the Forest update. Their school programs continue to run and they have started an after school program. They are hosting community hikes. The youth education will expand with a camp in mid-February during the school half days. They are also hosting a spring break day camp. A Naturalist club is being started. This will allow for more in depth study about maps, navigation, natural history and geology. This will be held every other Thursday with a fieldtrip on the following Saturday.

Wetlands Monitoring

Bob shared that he and Jonn had met with Ellie from Friends of the Forest. There were some big challenges in the previous project so Ellie requested that she be allowed to take water samples back to the office/lab for more detailed and accurate reporting. The Forest Plan states that the Parks Director and the Board must approve of this. Jonn has expressed support for this program. There was discussion about the need for a MOU/MOA

as this is a Friends program separate from Transition Fidalgo. Bob and Asa will work up an agreement and bring it back to the Board for approval.

Parks Commission Report:

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

Bob, Tabb and herself met with Geri to speak about a replacement for the equestrian trail representative.

There was an article in the paper about the Trestle. Work continues and is going well, everything remains on schedule.

The skate park 100% construction drawings have been received and it is looking like construction of both the skate park and the pump track will happen at the same time.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

Bob, Tabb and JoAnn had a good meeting with Geri about the equestrian trail representative. Bob will reach out to the people suggested and see if they have any interest in volunteering. It was verified that the current forest plan does not specify if the member must reside on Fidalgo island. Discussion was had about what would be preferred.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his written report. Tabb asked about the utility vehicle at Heart Lake. Steve shared that the police are aware of this vehicle as well as one at the top of Mt Erie. Nathan asked about the motorcycle group and if there has been any contact with them. Bob and Steve answered that they are in contact with John Meehan who is the representative on the trail committee for this group. He works very hard to communicate and try to keep their group following the rules.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

Other Business:

Brian asked about the SHIP trail and the storm damage done there. Bob responded that staff are observing a brand new environment developing and there is no way to predict the changes that are going on. Staff is trying to just keep people out of the area.

Adjourn at 7:35pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

February 2023 Report from the Assistant Director's Desk

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

1/27 FoF Community Programs Coordinator Ellie Kravets and I spent much of the morning touring the "A" Ave landfill and the routes in and around Big and Little Beaver Ponds. She is determining some new sample sights.

FOREST PLAN UPDATE

1/27 Good meeting with FAB Chair Kit Gerwels, working on Plan review proposal for the Forest Advisory Board.

WASHINGTON PARK RR PROJECT

2ND Finalized the scope of work with HLN Engineering, re: site prep. Contract request has been submitted.

21st Contract with HLN for the civil work officially executed. Survey work will begin on site Fri 24th.

FOREST ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

2nd Good discussion regarding the ACFL Plan update. A formal schedule of calendar goals will be submitted to the FAB at its March meeting.

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK AND PUMP TRACK PROJECT

7th Jonn and I continue to work with all the fundraisers involved. Good meeting today with Sheri Muntean and Rachel Muntean-Salazar. They are seeing some very positive results to their hard work.

Also, work continues with Engineering and Legal on moving forward with bid specs. Doing some in house fine tuning now.

13th J. Symonds from Engineering, Parks Tottenham and I met on site to begin planning for the demolition of the existing parking lot. This is something we are going to do in house. We will be setting up the job as close to the contractor breaking ground as is possible. So, nothing eminent yet.

LITTLE CRANBERRY LAKE BOAT LAUNCH

14th City Parks and Planning Staff met with WDFW staffer on site to review the concept of shoreline conservation via a more focused boat launch area. Really good discussion. We are still waiting for biology report. Will share information with Forest Board when we have it.

We also went out to SHIP to discuss the latest hydrological activity out there. We will continue to monitor the situation. The ferry line customers are only going to increase from here forward.

PARKS COMMISSION MEETING

14th Good budget discussion. The Commission will work with staff on Department priorities and the future of the City's spending priorities.

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST EDUCATION PROGRAM

16th Jonn and I met with Asa and Youth Education Coordinator Hannah to go over her plans for the upcoming year. Good discussion. The City and the Friends continue to work together providing access to incredible education opportunities in the ACFL.

SKAGIT COMMONS AREA EASEMENT CONNECTOR TRAIL

21st This new non-motorized public pathway from Down Jones Way to "D" Ave is mostly established and getting use. Neighbors have some concerns about the motorized activity they are seeing. Parks and Public Works staff are working on some options to hopefully slow this issue down.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

1/26 Attended monthly ABPAC meeting. More good non-motorized planning. Positive reviews on the W. 2nd connector...

1/30-2/1 Out on sick leave...

8th Met with a Campbell Lake resident, discussed Heart Lake treatment history...

9th Parks Mgr Johnston and I contacted a homeless camp on the east side of Cap Sante. Abandoned. Staff cleaning protocol ensues...

9th Received two calls re: possible beaver dam vandalism near the #106 bridge/Big Beaver flow into Little Cranberry. The same area where we had some issues some months ago. Checked it out. Beaver have made quick work of any repairs that may have been necessary...

17th Personal leave...

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux

February 22, 2023

ACFL Maintenance Report FEBRUARY – 2023 by Steve Phillips

February 22, 2023

Maintenance Activities

In the latter part of January, I finished the planter bed/pedestrian walkway enhancement project at the Trail 10 trailhead on A Avenue. I had help from the Street Department with labor and material procurement, since this was a joint Parks/Street project. Billy at Lakeside selected some more “attractive” boulders for the project. I found that Azusa Nursery in Mount Vernon had the best selection of locally available native plant stock. Chunk bark mulch for moisture retention and weed prevention came from Sunland. The cedar split-rail fence was already on hand from a disassembled fence elsewhere in the City, and the cedar landscape ties were ones that Dave Oicles had made before my time, probably for bridges. The planks behind the beds are ones that I milled for a different project but turned out working out better for this project.

Much of the month has been (and will continue to be) clearing trails of blowdowns. Just when they were all clear (222, 208, 206, 210, 247), another windstorm came through, and now the cutting work is cut out for me again.

The same was true for drainage. Before the rainy President’s Day weekend, things were wet, but not soaked. Trails and access roads are wet and muddy again, but the water levels of ponds and lakes and their watersheds are still responding to the influx and not saturated.

On 2/1, I did some work to further stabilize the steps and planting bed that we created at 129’s Pennsylvania Avenue trailhead. All of the plants in this bed were transplants from the nearby forest. I tried planting the root masses of some pearly everlasting growing on the road shoulder nearby. I sowed blue wildrye seed here as well, so I’m hoping to see that pop up this spring.

On 2/2, I hiked tools in to a spot on 247 that has been bothering me for over a year and repaired a one-sided turnpike that had rotted and begun to crumble.

‘Tis the season of sickness, and I have had to miss a few days. The Parks crew helped fill my absence by checking trash cans and restrooms.

A couple of abandoned-looking vehicles came and went from our parking lots and roadsides this month. We still have a regular customer on Mount Erie, but it is not illegal to park during the day with garbage bags piled up on your car.

I spent some time hiking near Heart Lake to identify project locations for our upcoming work party on March 4. I also staged materials for a work party this coming weekend on Trail 220 with the Fidalgo Trail Riders. All projects constitute maintenance of existing turnpikes that have worn down.

On 2/14 Asa Deane and I returned to our monthly eBike photo-monitoring locations.

I was disappointed to see that someone had uprooted what I consider to be a locally rare plant on 204. I have only observed pipsissewa growing in a handful of places in the ACFL. My thought is that a well-meaning hiker mistook it for Evergreen Daphne, and, trying to be helpful, pulled it. I worked with Bob, Asa, and Darby to create a flyer for kiosks and social media information to help distinguish the two plants. The good thing is that pipsissewa seems to grow in colonies; so, the one that was pulled was only broken from the rest of the patch underground – and the patch will rebound from this injury.

Name	Evergreen Daphne/Spurge Laurel (introduced)	Pipsissewa (indigenous) (pip-SIS-se-wa)
	<i>Daphne laureola</i>	<i>Chimaphela umbellata</i>
Family	Thymelaeaceae	Pyrolaceae (Wintergreen)
Preferred habitat	Part sun to heavy shade, especially damp soil or humid environments, more often in disturbed soil	Well-drained (dry) soil in open coniferous forest understory
Stature	Shrub growing to 5 feet	Typically no taller than 1 foot , but can grow to 2 feet
Leaves	Leaf arrangement: Opposite	Leaf arrangement: Whorled (leaves emerge from a single point around the stem)
	Leaves entire (no teeth along edges) 	Leaf margins toothed 
	Leaves evergreen, glossy	Leaves evergreen, matte
Flowers	Yellow and close to stem near top of plant in spring	Pink and growing in cluster at top of plant in summer

The week of 2/17, four chickens were likely dumped on Heart Lake Road, near the 312 gate. I contacted APD, but they didn't have anyone prepared to adopt them. Officer Nybo did come out and sprinkle some food for the hungry birds. One black chicken was still wandering around as of yesterday (2/21).

I was excited to encounter Hannah and Ellie from the FoF with a group of Young Explorers near the Heart Lake beaver dam on Friday the 17th. I happened to be on my rounds when they were enjoying a story under the forest canopy on the south end of Heart Lake. We took the opportunity to teach the children a bit about beaver ecology in the ACFL as I freed up the small dam that is continually built at the Ace of Hearts headwaters. In the week leading up to President's Day weekend, I applied patches of 1 ¼ " crushed gravel to the Whistle Lake parking lot and trail 20; also in various places along Trail 10. More is still need along 10, but it has been an improvement.

Violations

2/14/23 - For the second time in the same location along Trail 20 (Whistle Lake, near outhouse), I encountered tracks from motorbike riders ascending a steep hill, off-trail. The first time I saw this, a few months ago, I dragged brush to stop this, but they simply dragged it out of the way to repeat their actions. I will likely need to find logs and place them with a machine for a more permanent repair.



