



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

**April 6, 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 March '23 Minutes**
- 3. Public Comments** *for any item not on the agenda*
- 4. ACFL Plan Update**
 - **Public Comment: Chapters 1 & 2**
- 5. ACFL Dams Update**
- 6. Friends of the Forest Update**
- 7. ACFL Trail Committee**
- 8. Staff Reports**
- 9. Parks Commission Update**
- 10. Other Business**

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: March 3, 2023

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Jonn Lunsford, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Dean

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

Minutes: February minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments: None

2023 Budget Discussion:

Jonn was in attendance to give a budget overview. There are several funds under the Parks & recreation Department, including the ACFL Endowment. This fund receives revenue from the quarry lease and the Conservation Easement Program. These funds are used for the maintenance of the forest lands, to purchase additional land, support the partnership with Transition Fidalgo and the Friends of the Forest, and other ACFL expenses and projects. Currently the City is funding other Public Works capital projects so Parks needed to use reserve funds to cover staffing costs. This will most likely happen in 2024 as well. This means major parks projects are on hold unless they are donor funded, such as the Trestle and Skate Park.

Discussion ensued about how projects are selected. Jonn suggested that the Forest Board discuss their priorities and what projects they would like to see happen.

Discussion continued about the history of the "A" Avenue dumpsite.

Jonn shared that the Parks Foundation has received a donation for the Little Cranberry boat launch and shoreline improvement. The first step is to get a report from a biologist and then there will be an opportunity for public comment. The goal of this project is to protect the shoreline and contain the users to certain areas. Jennifer, public in attendance, expressed concern that there is not a permanent restroom in the area.

Mark, public in attendance, asked about how the Parks department and the City are managing the forest lands and the possibility of fire. Jonn informed the group that the fire department just acquired a brush truck, the parks staff is going through training to be of assistance in the event of a fire, and the city is working with neighbors to minimize the risk of homes near the forest lands. The City also pays the Department of Natural Resources an annual "fire tax" that gives us a priority status with the DNR in the case of any wildfire.

ACFL Plan Update:

Bob presented the corrected schedule of public input and study sessions for the forest plan update. Dividing up the plan in this way will allow time to get it completely reviewed by the Board and provide time for public comment. It will also give time for other business that the Board needs to discuss at regular meetings. A vote was taken with all three Board members present voting yes (Tabb, Brian & JoAnn).

ACFL Dams Update: No update**Friends of the Forest Update:**

Asa was in attendance to give the Friends of the Forest update. The half-day day camp last month was a success and they will be offering a day camp for middle schoolers during Spring Break. They have started a Naturalist Club allowing for deeper study on various subjects in the forest lands. Earth Day will bring a "Bio-Blitz" utilizing the app called "inaturalist". The goal is to get more people outside on their own schedule and not all in the same place. The annual meeting will be next Thursday at the Depot, and a joint work party will be this weekend, the 4th at Heart Lake.

The MOU between the City and the Friends is in draft form, copies were provided to the Board for review.

Parks Commission Report:

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

The conversation about the budget was also had with the Parks Commission. These commissioners have also been asked to come up with a list of priorities and projects they want to see completed.

The Trestle is back open and is seeing lots of happy users.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

Bob reported that he and Steve had met with mountain climber Jim Thompson who is quite involved with the climbing community. As a whole, the group is good with self-policing and ensuring safety of their groups and equipment. The annual Dallas Kloke clean-up will be on April 15th.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his written report. He did share the new flyer for plant identification of Pipsissewa vs Spurge Laurel. This will be posted at various trailheads.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

Other Business: None**Adjourn at 7:35pm**

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

March 2023 Report from the Assistant Director's Desk

MT. ERIE ROCK CLIMBING

Feb 22nd ACFL Steve and I met with local climbing expert and author, Jim Thompson. Acknowledging the unique circumstances of this user group, we do our best to stay in touch and make sure we are not missing anything too obvious. Local climbers do an excellent job of keeping an eye on the routes and the condition of the south side of the mountain in general. The Forest Advisory Board will be working on updating the job description of the Climbing Committee over the next year's Forest Plan Update.

WASHINGTON PARK CARETAKER RESIDENCE

Feb 22nd Caretaker Chris (since 2017!) and I conducted the annual residence inspection. Overall, the structure is sound and Chris continues to be a happy resident. The issues that need attention are not new, i.e., one leaky roof area where the carport meets the pitched roof of the home, natural gas heat thermostat, kitchen vinyl and a couple of other smallish matters. I will review with facilities.

WASHINGTON PARK RESTROOM PROJECT

Feb 24th Survey crew on the ground this morning, getting the baseline topography for the project. Look forward to meeting with Heike Nelson, our Civil Engineer, next week to begin to "flush" out the details of this eventual CXT Unit drop in.

14th Heike and I spend some time with the survey data and visited the site to answer a few questions. She will have a preliminary drawing to me in the next few days.

ACFL CAMPERS

1st Acting on a tip from one of our mountain bikers, ACFL Steve and I went in search of a camper(s) in the 300's region. Steve spotted the camp, and we made contact as one of the two occupants was present. This is not our first contact with these folks, who choose to live in the woods. After a philosophical discussion about humans living in the ACFL, we issued a 24-hours to pack up and leave order. I later contacted APD, met with an Officer, and requested the two be trespasses from all COA parks, trails and the ACFL.

2nd ACFL Steve and Braydn confirm that the campsite is being cleaned up and vacated. APD notified of this as well.

WASHINGTON PARK POLICY REVIEW

2nd Our in-house Blue-Ribbon Panel completed its review of the WP Policy Manual. Darby will work on an updated draft for the Panel's review. Next stop; Director Lunsford, then on to the Parks Commission.

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

6TH City staff and Grindline Team meet to finalize bid specs after extensive COA review. Very efficient, smooth meeting. Grindline engineer has a few tasks to take care of and should be back in touch within a couple of days.

7th Fair amount of back and forth between COA staff and Grindline Team. All progress today.

16th Engineering Justin and Legal/Contract Specialist Tiffany confirm that our bid package is ready to hit the streets. It's big day! Bid will open March 22, and close April 13.

18th Attended the fundraiser for the project at the Depot, put on by Fidalgo Trail Riders and the Skate Park Improvement Project. Was able to shake a few hands and say a few words. These folks are working hard to realize this dream. Inspiring.

EARTH DAY VOLUNTEERS

6th Bob from Anacortes Diving and Supply has offered to put a group together to do some lake clean up. As Earth Day is most likely opening day at Heart Lake, we are going to return to Whistle with the volunteer clean up diving team. Really appreciate what they are able to do.

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST ANNUAL MEETING

9th Thank you to Asa Deane and the FoF for inviting me to be a part of their annual meeting. Had a great session with their board prior to the broader membership gathering. Enjoyed being able to share a few thoughts, and take in great presentations by Asa, former FoF Educator Beck and AFD Chief Bill Harris.

ACFL FOREST PLAN UPDATE

10th Getting the word out on the ACFL 2021 Forest Plan update process. Met with Briana Alzola from the 'Anacortes American'. Should be a quick story in the 3/29 edition.

DOE DAM PERIODIC INSPECTION REPORTS

14th We have received the Little Cranberry dam report, and have received a rating of "Fair": "...no existing dam safety deficiencies recognized for normal loading conditions..." We anticipated this rating and will continue to manage the LC dam as we have since the '94 safety upgrade. The Whistle Lake dam inspection report has not yet been completed.

28th The Whistle Lake Dam inspection report from DOE arrived yesterday. We've got some work to do, and the DOE grant will help us accomplish much of it. Will discuss further at the April FAB meeting.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...2/23: attended ABPAC meeting. Good review/discussion of local bike/ped map. John Pope has put a lot of work into this...2/23: met with some Forest Ridge residents regarding view windowing to the east. This is all spelled out in the plat information. Should be meeting with an arborist on site soon to finalize the plan...2/23: met with the Fidalgo Nature

School Executive Director regarding their planned field trips into the ACFL. They had previously been working with the FoF on these but will now handle them on their own. Good plan, good meeting, we will stay in touch...2/24: ACFL Steve, Denise Crowe and I enjoyed a beautiful afternoon north of Heart Lake for the monthly Samish/COA hike...2/28: as prescribed in the Forest Ridge plat, I met on site with HOA reps and a private arborist to review conditions for view windowing thru the woods east of the development. Once the plan is finalized between the HOA and the arborist, I will circle back for review...2/28: FoF Asa and I held our monthly 1:1, mostly discussing prep for March Forest Advisory Board and FoF annual meetings...1st: ACFL Steve and I took a look at some COA owned trees on Grand View Cemetery property adjacent to Blue Heron Circle. Two mature alder. We are working with the neighbor on a plan...2nd: attended Parks Crew Safety Meeting...2nd: much of March Forest Advisory Board meeting spent with Director Lunsford's budget update. FAB also confirmed schedule for Forest Plan Update...9th: back to Forest Ridge, met with Dan Olsen, local arborist hired to do the windowing previously mentioned. He is a good man doing good work. His plan is sound, and I approved on site. He hopes to get the work done in a week or two. He will keep me dialed in...10th: ACFL Steve and I recon'd a couple of social trails in the South Cranberry Unit. Had a good chat with a neighbor we had not previously met. No troubling discoveries...14th: Parks Commission meeting. Good continued discussion of project priorities, funding options and building the Parks Capital Facilities Plan. PC looking to reach out directly to Council...Heart Lake Opening Day is April 22 this year. We are putting our staffing plan together...on vacation March 19 - 27...28th: regular meeting with FoF Asa. Beautiful day for a walk 'n talk along 128 and 101...

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux
March 29, 2023

ACFL Maintenance Report MARCH – 2023 by Steve Phillips
March 29, 2023

[Maintenance Activities](#)

Since my last report was published on 2/22, I get to kick off this one with a work party from February 25. Fidalgo Trail Riders brought over 30 volunteers on a drizzly and cold Saturday morning to replace two rotten turnpikes on Trail 220, improve drainage on 212, pick up litter on Heart Lake Road, and help remove a tricky blowdown tree that had become a low obstacle for equestrian users.



2/25/23: Fidalgo Trail Riders volunteers replacing one of two degraded turnpikes on Trail 220 and resurfacing the trail.

Following the event, Fidalgo Trail Riders generously donated 2 draw knives to assist in de-barking cedar. This is a common practice to ensure that it lasts longer when used for such projects.

We put the draw knives to use the following weekend for the Friends of the Forest quarterly work party, where we re-surfaced about 70 feet of trail along 224. This area, north of Heart Lake, has many areas begging for this type of work.

Braydn Krueger, fellow Park Maintenance Technician, helped me source and stage recently dead cedar for the 224 project in the week leading up to the event. 70 feet of trail means almost double the amount of cedar footage, so I really needed the help preparing for the work party.

We experienced every kind of nasty weather on the morning of March 4 – kudos to the 20+ volunteers whose dedication powered them through the rain, sleet, and snow that day.



3/4/23: Volunteers help Braydn Krueger to load the power wheelbarrow for resurfacing work on Trail 224; the final product.

3/3 – Steve and Jonn planted several (close to 100) native wetland plants at West Second street to complement the new boardwalk there. On March 9, Braydn and I added gravel to both ends of the corridor where puddles persisted.

On multiple days this month, I cleared our beaver plugs and cut blowdowns on trails. The additional rain revealed places where I needed to scrape to encourage drainage.

3/7 – I did similar trail resurfacing work at the 240/209 intersection, which had been a large mud puddle.

3/8 – Sky/Steve taught 11 City of Anacortes Street Department workers some chainsaw safety/use/maintenance tips. I added some larger gravel to potholes at the Heart Lake parking lot.

3/13 – I fixed motorbike damage on 302. This included adding a one-sided turnpike where the trail had caved in from a motorbike rut.

3/14 – Asa Deane (FoF) accompanied me to document our undisclosed eMTB monitoring locations. We are now 7 months in (had to skip December due to snow cover).

3/16-17 – I sprayed Evergreen Daphne at Cap Sante. This project has been phased, and will likely take a few years to accomplish because of the difficult weather/time window for this species.

3/21 – Spent some time studying our maps to help Rob Hoxie create a new revision for the next printing.

3/21 – Braydn Krueger and Sky Guthrie (Parks) built a new enclosure for the Ray Auld Drive porta-potty.

3/22 – installed replacement culvert in lowlands portion of Trail 302.

3/23 – The Street Department used their sewerjet/vac truck to dig 2 holes for us at Erie Mountain Road for the new gate at its base. This was monumentally helpful. The Ray Auld Drive porta-potty arrived while we were doing this. Braydn and I created a frame for the gate base concrete and prepped for concrete.

3/28 – Poured concrete for gate base at Ray Auld Drive / Erie Mountain Road.

Violations

In late February, a hiker reported seeing **blazes (ax marks) on trees** on Trail 217. I went to see if these signified any obvious additional trail creation or the like, but found nothing other than three damaged trees.

We spent more time than usual tracking down a particular **unauthorized camper** who has been a repeat offender for a few years in the ACFL and other parks in town. This camper has had the tendency to build elaborate hidden shelters, sometimes using screws and nails to secure objects to trees. Communication amongst the Parks Department staff and commitment to the task paid off, however, and the Police trespassed the individual on March 25. The trespass is effective for one year, meaning the individual (two individuals, in this case) are not allowed in Anacortes Parks or the ACFL for this time period.

Numerous **motorbike users** were reported in many places on multiple different occasions this month. This use remains unauthorized through March 31 (or later as warranted by trail conditions). The damage done on trails has been worse than I have seen in my few years in this role. I've seen evidence of more aggressive and egregious use – creating new trail up steep slopes (20); cutting switchbacks (201, 234); jumping stumps/rises next to trails (302, 218, 21); “donuts” mid-trail or at trail ends that go wider than the trail, tearing up vegetation and dislodging rocks (302, 304, 217); riding through a creek (304); and just burnouts in general from rapid acceleration (all of the above locations and more). Although most of these are concentrated near Whistle Lake, they have spanned all three of our maps. Darby can attest to the many calls that trail users have placed to the Parks Front Desk.

Miscellaneous Good News

We selected and purchased a tree to plant at Causland Park for this year's Arbor Day celebration in April. We will plant a Dawn Redwood, one of the few deciduous conifers available in our region.