



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

**May 4, 2023
6pm**

**In person and virtual meeting options.
In Person: City Hall, Council Chambers
Zoom Meeting Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88308344363>

Preliminary Agenda

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approve April '23 Minutes**
- 3. Public Comments** *for any item not on the agenda*
- 4. ACFL Plan Update**
 - **Board Study Session: Chapters 1 & 2**
- 5. ACFL Dams Update**
- 6. Friends of the Forest Update**
 - a. Summer Education Program**
- 7. ACFL Trail Committee**
 - a. Motorbike Special Use Request**
- 8. Staff Reports**
- 9. Parks Commission Update**
- 10. Other Business**
 - a. June Hike with Friends of the Forest Board**

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: April 7, 2023

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Deane

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

Minutes: March minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

Barbara Cooper expressed concern about the general direction of the ACFL.

Tom Glade stated that he had submitted a letter on behalf of Evergreen Islands opposing the Little Cranberry boat chute project. He asked about the permitting for critical areas and wanted to know if this would require a shoreline permit. Tom shared that he believes any development in the ACFL is not appropriate and people have other opportunities such as Heart Lake, Whistle Lake and Washington park for boat recreation.

Bob Vaux shared that there is no finalized plan at this time and this project is currently waiting for a biologist report. He reported that a community member saw the dispersed use of the area and existing boat launch at Little Cranberry Lake and wanted to streamline use and protect the shoreline.

Tom responded that he had concerns that an individual could direct a project based on their own agenda.

Sara Roberts spoke about her concern that the City has spent funds on a project that has not gone through the public process.

Bob Jepperson stated that he felt this was being handled like the bike park project with no large public announcement until long after the planning was started. He feels that an idea should be tested with public comment instead of spending money first.

ACFL Plan Update

- Public Comment on Chapters 1 & 2

Bob gave an overview of the process and current plan. He stated that the Board had adopted this schedule of review and updating to allow public comment at each step of the process. He shared that the Board and staff know there are typos and formatting errors in the current plan that will be corrected as part of the update. He stated that the working Draft Plan will be available online throughout the process.

Brian reminded everyone that the Forest Board is an advisory Board to the Council and Mayor. He shared that this is just the first of many opportunities for public comment. Comments can be submitted verbally or in writing and will be accepted not only at the Board level, but at the Council level as well.

Julie Kinder, resident of Anacortes, shared that she is a member of the Friends of the Forest and helps with trail maintenance. She is interested in a good outcome and is happy to be part of the process.

Sara Holahan, citizen of Anacortes, stated that she is interested in the update. She asked if a Forest Plan could be made available without photos. She is concerned with the structure of the plan as it starts with management areas then discusses stewardship. She feels that it should start with goals and then go into the area details. She asked for clarification on page 7, under the Policy of the Management Areas that it state the “fish and wildlife habitat” be noted that it is a State of Washington designation. She also asked about the “priority given to local residents” throughout the document and how that was going to be put in place.

Tom Glade, citizen of Anacortes, and current president of Evergreen Islands shared that he is an environmentalist. He told a story as to what helped shape his beliefs growing up. He feels that the ACFL should not be overused. He would like to minimize human development and physical structures. He would also like to see a shut down on Mt Erie to climbing when the peregrine falcons are nesting.

Asa Deane, Executive Director of Friends of the Forest, shared the letter and recommendations on Chapters 1 & 2 that he had previously sent to staff. The full letter can be found on the Parks website. He also stated that the letter and additional information will be available on the Friends’ website.

Barbara Cooper, citizen of Anacortes, stated that she is interested in the process and is thankful for the ACFL.

Annette McCartney, citizen of Anacortes and member of Evergreen Islands, stated she is in attendance as a watchdog of the ACFL.

Arlene Cook, citizen of Anacortes, shared that she is in attendance as an observer of the meeting. She enjoys the forest and is aware of the local ecosystem.

Shawn Bell, citizen of Anacortes, stated that there are numerous typos and formatting errors. In the Introduction, there are some specific numbers and other general numbers, Shawn states that all should be specific and site where the information is from. Under the Management section, the term “unique environment” should be clarified and defined. He asked if there are critical areas other than the WDFW designation. He feels that sometimes the document reads formal and other times informal and this should be corrected to a formal document. Definitions were requested for a number of terms in the document such as user groups, critical areas, low impact, etc. Under the Little Cranberry recommendation section on page 8, #4 and 5 should be clarified. Also, on page 8 under the South Cranberry Lake area recommendations, #2 should be clarified. Shawn expressed concern about the discrepancy in the Whistle Lake section of high and low impact. He also believes that the Mt Erie policy on climbers and permits should be reviewed.

Jennifer McFarland, citizen of Anacortes, asked if the document currently has or will address the protocol of any changes and how the process occurs. She is concerned about keeping the ACFL pristine.

Mark Nihart, citizen of Anacortes, feels the Introduction should be switched and put the wildlife first and then recreation as that is how the ACFL has been managed. He shared that the user groups that are not represented are the flora and fauna. Mark stated that the property of the ACFL was bought for wildlife conservation and therefore should have nature first and appropriate recreation second. He also suggested that the management zones be narrowed and more specific, such as the back of Little Cranberry. He requested that the updated plan include recognition of the history and the people who made the changes to preserve the ACFL.

Bob Jepperson, citizen of Skagit County, expressed concern for the residents of the ACFL and that they are not mentioned in the document. He feels that the use and damage to the area is out of control and the worst he has ever seen. He stated that he would submit additional comments in writing.

Marlene Finley, citizen of Anacortes and member of Evergreen Islands, asked that the document start with a rapid assessment of change, looking at new laws, visitor numbers and use patterns, environmental, wildlife and water quality. The fuel load and firebreaks need to be examined both on the side of the ACFL as well as neighboring properties. She feels that there should be an emphasis on guiding regulations and protection standards.

Sarah Roberts, citizen of Anacortes, shared that she is a citizen scientist with Transition Fidalgo. She would like to examine the Whistle Lake management section and clarify the high and low impact activities. She also suggested that the plan look ahead to new impacts such as ebikes, electric motors and bikes.

Bill Kennedy, citizen of Anacortes, asks that the plan be clear in goals and vision for the long term. He feels that the ACFL should be a pristine forest without the impacts of man. Bill stated that when you have a gathering area such as a trailhead, it invites safety issues and vandalism.

Bob Jepperson, citizen of Skagit county, spoke again about the prior emphasis on recreation instead of the health of the ACFL. He feels that changes could be made to help habitats for native species. He asked for a detailed accounting of all money spent in the ACFL for human access and habitat help.

ACFL Dams Update:

Bob sent out the Whistle Lake DOE Periodic Inspection Report late this afternoon to the Board and Council. There are challenges with the Whistle Lake dam but the report did not contain any surprises to staff. DOE. Bob will have additional information after review with Public Works staff.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa was in attendance to give the Friends of the Forest update. The intended Spring Break camp did not get the registration needed to run, so they changed it to a Family drop in program and saw about 25 people enjoy some outdoor learning. They are preparing for Earth Day on April 22nd and the "Bio Blitz". Friends' staff will be at A Avenue trailhead to help with the app. Staff are getting ready for the Spring Party on May 7th at the Depot. Festivities begin at 2pm with music and activities for all ages.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

None

Staff Reports:

Steve reported that the Spring opening to motorbikes has resulted in less bikes on the trails than before the opening.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, sharing that the Parks Board had the same discussion about the Budget and they will be coming up with a priority list to present to Council.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 8:05pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

April 2023 Report from the Assistant Director's Desk

WASHINGTON PARK RESTROOM PROJECT

Reviewed project with Planning. We have cleared any critical area or shoreline review.

Also met with Jonn, Nicole, Brian and Sky to review specific choices for the CXT unit we are hoping to drop into place out there (4th)

Finalized the order with CXT for one of their Cortez units (13th). Time now to circle back to Project Civil Engineer HLN Engineering and put the bid specs together for install.

Also, working with COA Engineering and Waste Water Treatment folks on proper pump station plan for the unit.

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

We held the bid opening on the 13th, receiving three, all well above the submitted estimates for the project.

Director Lunsford and I are reaching out to the Anacortes Skate Park Improvement Project and Fidalgo Trail Riders, making them aware of the situation, and exploring possible funding options. Everyone working on this project remains optimistic we can achieve fundraising goals without eliminating elements from the plan.

HEART LAKE OPENING DAY

Thanks to ACFL Steve, along with Braydn and Myles from our Parks Team, for covering HL on opening weekend. The quieting trend we have seen over the years continues. Happy to see folks enjoying the lake and family.

EARTH DAY AT WHISTLE LAKE

Very special thanks to Anacortes Diving and Supply for bringing out about 20 volunteers to dive WL at the family beach and the cliffs. They recovered quite the haul of trash, and sadly found many more Earth Days' worth to get after in the future. Also thank you to Parks Tottenham for managing this effort.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS TRAINING

Lots of FEMA staff in town 24th-27th for COA EOC training. This essential planning work does take a lot of time, but very valuable for the entire community.



2023 SEASONAL STAFF

Parks Manager Johnston and I interviewed a handful of applicants on the 14th. Met some nice young men who are interested in coming to work for us. Nicole following up with references and in some cases offers. We are still looking to fill out the roster. Still no applicants for the ACFL jobs.

TRAIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Had my first in a series of one-on-one meetings with the ACFL Trail Committee. Motorcycle Rep John Meehan and I had a very real talk about the current state and future of motorized recreation. John is working hard to educate his user group, including the website he has created:

<http://acflmotoriders.org/>

He is very aware of the challenges facing motorized recreation, including our efforts to find what appear to be a couple of small groups of young locals...

ACFL MOTORCYCLE COMPLAINTS

Steve and I continue to spend extra time on the 300's, attempting to catch up with the small group of local riders ignoring our trail policies. I made contact with two lost riders from Snohomish on the 13th and had a very constructive conversation. Asked them to continue their own education on local rider protocol, and to help us get the message out that those ignoring the ACFL trail plan will eventually end up being excluded from it.

It is of course important that all ACFL user groups reach out to their own as no group is without unnecessary impact on our woods.

JIM RICE CIVIC PARK

Director Lunsford, Museum Director Lunsford, Parks Manager Johnston and I met on site to discuss and move plans forward to spruce up the Altair Americus memorial, and improve park flow from west to east, and perhaps even north. We will work on getting some concepts on paper for various necessary points of review (3rd)

DOE PERIODIC DAM INSPECTION REPORTS

Distributed the Whistle Lake report to the Council Parks Committee and the Forest Advisory Board. Will get the Little Cranberry report out soon. Will also get them posted on the COA website soon. Parks and Engineering staff will be meeting to review and discuss. Will update the FAB as appropriate (6th)

DALLAS KLOKE ANNUAL MT. EIRE CLEAN UP

Thanks again to the local climbing community and beyond, along with a Boy Scout Troop, for making the annual trip up and down the Summit Road as well as the south walls access trails for safety, vegetation and litter projects. Always a nice shot in the arm to meet on site with these folks and thank them in person. Special thanks to Jim Thompson for keeping the communication flowing, and for updates to City staff (15th)

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

- Reupped First Aid/CPR/BBP credentials (3/31)
- Attended Parks Crew tailgate safety meeting (6th)
- Got the Forest Plan update process kicked off at the April Forest Advisory Board meeting. About 30 citizens contributed their thoughts on chapters I & II (6th)
- Good capital project prioritization discussion at the April Parks Commission meeting. Looks like a top 5 is emerging (11th)
- Met with Council Member Moulton at her request. Good discussion of Forest Plan update and motorized recreation (18th)
- Thank you Transition Fidalgo for Roger Fuller's global economy presentation: "The Truffle, the Millipede and the Moth." Very timely and important information (18th)
- Off on the 21st
- Good monthly meeting with FoF Asa. Education programs doing great (25th)

Faithfully Submitted,
Bob Vaux
April 27, 2023

ACFL Maintenance Report APRIL – 2023 April 27, 2023

by Steve Phillips

Maintenance Activities

Late winter activities throughout the month: I continued to patrol our boundaries to check for violations. Found populations of holly and scotch broom but also pockets of intact plant biodiversity including an unusual fern; located two probable old marijuana grows in remote places. Another wind event brought another series of blowdowns, which I worked into my schedule. Unusual garbage (boat, two RV axles) showed up and required extra help/equipment to remove.



Grow checklist: shovel, aquarium, potting soil, plant food, beer

This month's Highlights

3/30 – added a heavy Plexiglas cover to the rear side of the new mini-kiosk at Trail 10/A Avenue trailhead. This will protect the Friends of the Forest calendars that I have been posting there. Posted the April calendars at various locations.

3/31 – called dispatch with a report of a negative interaction with an off-leash dog walker at Little Cranberry Lake who had her own set of rules to follow.

4/4, 4/13 – with the help of Sky to operate the backhoe and Braydn to help guide/stabilize, we installed the 23'6" steel gate at the base of Mount Erie. This will help us with necessary closures, an improvement on the previous method. I added a Road Closed sign, DOT reflective tape for visibility, and touched up the paint. Later, I brought in a small amount of topsoil and grass seed to return the site to a natural-looking grade.



4/11 – Braydn and I applied more gravel to the West Second St. trail. Later, Asa and I completed our monthly eBike monitoring project.

4/12 – Hiked with Jim Thompson to discuss a few climbing-related things and to refamiliarize myself with trail access from 247.

4/14 – met with volunteer Todd Harris, who lives near Trail 208. He has been committed to the cause of completing the trail resurfacing work that we began last month in the north of Heart Lake area. He was there before our meeting time, already working away at moving gravel from the pile, over roots and rocks and up hills to patch muddy spots. I was with him for a few hours, running our power wheelbarrow to the worst spot on 208. After I left, he continued to work until the pile was gone. As we worked, many thanked us. I continue to receive praise for this work. If you are among the many who hike this area, thank Mr. Harris.



4/13-4/14 – covered graffiti at Cap Sante Gazebo. Replaced garbage enclosures on this trail with two new ones purchased and built by Rotary Club.

4/20 – continuing with finishing touches on new landscaping at Ray Auld Drive porta-potty enclosure. Also added a new garbage can. Goals are to focus traffic and keep garbage out of the porta-potty. One must keep the “encourage people to make good decisions” mindset at play.

4/17-4/19 – I spent three days in Tacoma at a training workshop to learn in detail about Tree Risk assessment. This was put on by the International Society of Arboriculture. The intensive workshop gave me greater insight into many things, including tree biology and structural integrity; but also connected me to a network of individuals in the field who have similar challenges to us, who working in a built environment with tall trees.

4/21-23 – Heart Lake Opening day for fishing took place. We made preparations and staffing adjustments and experienced a peaceful weekend. More anglers have been using the lake since the event, but it is nothing like what it once was as far as impact is concerned.

4/26 – making preparations for our Arbor Day tree planting event with Mayor Miller at Causland Park this coming Friday. Spending more time moving the trail camera around to continue the attempt of capturing illegal motorbike usage on our trails, which again remains a common violation and source of complaints in the ACFL.

April 19, 2023

Dear Forest Advisory Board Members,

Thank you all for serving our community as Board members. As you are aware, I represent the Motorcycle community out on the trails. This year, as we head into the Plan review, with intent to make changes, I feel it imperative to pass on to you a few of the prominent desires of the Moto community, then make one immediate request.

Over the years, as I've crossed paths with other riders, we end up discussing our access and the wonderful privilege we have to be able to ride in our ACFL. One of the repeated questions is: Why can't we ride our two-stroke motorcycles on the trails? I tell a story of past indiscretions and the necessary change made to the rules, at the time, to exclude this user group. However, time has passed, things have changed, and the rider group, as a whole, rides responsibly and carefully.

Modern two-stroke engine-powered motorcycles are fuel efficient, lighter, and much more quiet than the bikes from days of old (1996 and prior). Many of the members of our community are opting to purchase and ride these modern motorcycles because they are superior to similar sized four-stroke powered machines. Yet, they are currently excluded from accessing the trails under ACFL rules. I've been asked to seek change.

In an effort to support the Motorcycle community's request for inclusion, I reached out to the Northwest Motorcycle Association (NMA) for some guidance, and ended up talking to Lori Taylor, one of the NMA's representatives for trail access concerns in our area. According to Lori, the biggest problems motorcycles present to other user groups are noise and speed, not engine type (two-stroke vs four-stroke).

I now have two motorcycles, one four-stroke, one two-stroke. My older (2009) four-stroke is approaching retirement age and I decided to purchase a new 2023 two-stroke this year to see why so many riders are making the change to this type of motorcycle. The claims are true, these new bikes are amazing and I understand why riders are making the change.

Additionally, I've been asked by our motorcycle community members if there is any way to connect the three trail networks via existing trails, and I've always answered "no," because of surrounding private land and current trail use rules. To that, I would like to address opening up Trail 21 from Heart Lake Rd to aid riders in the transition to the Whistle Lake trail network. Opening Trail 21 will give some aid to the group, make access safer than riding on the road all the way around, and mitigate some impact from all riders starting at the Whistle Lake parking lot. There are access issues that will have to be addressed at the State level, but bringing in this change will be beneficial to the community.

There are a few other things I'll address as the Plan Review unfolds, with respect to instituting a noise limit, and possibly group size limits that fall in line with what the NMA recommends. I'll brief you all later in the season with these positive changes to the rules. I'll also have the remainder of the season to talk to more riders about ideas for changes they would like me to bring to you all.

Here's my request for your immediate approval: I'd like to ask for permission, as a Beta test, like the eBike test currently in process, for me to operate my new 2023 two stroke in the ACFL, no more than three times per week, as a test run to see what feed-back, if any, is returned to you all via Steve Phillips, or phone calls from the public. I believe most folks will not be able to tell the difference, and it will allow me to interact with the public, as I always do, and educate them about modern two-stroke motorcycles. I'll do this by asking questions about how my bike sounds versus other bikes they've heard in the ACFL. I'll report back to Bob Vaux with the data so he can pass it on to you all.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Meehan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Meehan
ACFL Motorcycle Community Representative

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Form</u>	<u>Date</u>
General	Priority to local residents-clarify & define	Sara Holahan	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
		Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Concern of overuse of ACFL	Tom Glade	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
		Bob Jepperson	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests to minimize human development	Tom Glade	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests specific and detailed numbers	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests citations for information	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests definitions of terms	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests formal tone throughout document	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests protocol and process in document	Jennifer McFarland	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests document state managed for wildlife, then recreation	Mark Nihart	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Concern about flora & fauna not having a voice	Mark Nihart	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
		Bob Jepperson	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	States that property bought for conservation first, then rec	Mark Nihart	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
Introduction	Requests only rules that can be enforced	Bob Jepperson	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests to include long term goals	Bill Kennedy	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Requests to remove all manmade impacts	Bill Kennedy	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Include threats-growth & climate change	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
	Update Friends of the ACFL Role	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
	Include Indigenous Peoples role	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
Management Areas Intro	Include History and Important Roles	Mark Nihart	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	look ahead to new threats	Sarah Roberts	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Include assessment of change	Marlene Finely	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Start with stewardship, then management	Sara Holahan	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Designante Smaller Areas	Mark Nihart	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Clarify designations (ex. WDFW)	Sara Holahan	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
Management Areas-Little Cranberry	Educational Signs	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
	Remove invasive amphibians	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
	Clarify #4 recommendation	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Clarify #5 recommendation	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
Management Areas-S Little Cranberry	Clarify #2 recommendation	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
	Remove Dog Park Recommendation	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
Management Areas-Whistle Lake	Clarify low/high impact uses	Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023

		Sarah Roberts	Board Meeting	4/6/2023
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Management Areas-Heart Lake

Management Areas-S Heart Lake/RAD	Remove "Wildlife Sanctuary" designation	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
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Management Areas-Mt Erie S & W faces	Clarify Permit Process for Mt Erie Climing	Asa Dene	Board Meeting/Letter submission	4/6/2023
		Shawn Bell	Board Meeting	4/6/2023

Management Areas-Mt Erie Conservancy
