



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

September 7, 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 August '23 Minutes
3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda*
4. ACFL Plan Update: confirm public meeting schedule.
 - a. October 3rd
November 7th
December 5th
All three meetings will be held at 6PM in the City Hall Council Chambers
5. ACFL Trail Committee
 - a. Motorbike Special Use Request
6. Friends of the Forest Update
7. Staff Reports /THANK YOU ACFL STEVE
8. Parks Commission Update
9. Other Business

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: August 3rd, 2023

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:06PM

Minutes: May minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

Mark Nihart asked about the location of the meeting minutes and dam reports on the website. Bob suggested that he call or come by the Parks office for Darby to show him where to find these documents.

Another citizen spoke about his enjoyment of the ACFL and expressed his thanks for being able to ride his motorbike on the trails.

Cole Mumper shared his concern about the culvert on the Little Cranberry trail being too low and feels it needs to be rebuilt.

Kit spoke about SeeClickFix, the City's new online reporting tool. Darby spoke about how it is being used in the forest lands and helping with staff time and response.

ACFL Plan Update

For context, earlier in the year, the board had a discussion on how to best update the Forest Plan. They outlined a plan to allow for lots of public comments while meeting the deadline of a draft by 2026. In the first couple of meetings it became clear that there was a need for dedicated meetings just for the Plan update. Kit proposed to the Board to have additional meetings for the Plan update and allow regular Board meetings for routine ACFL business. The proposal was for 3 meetings on the first Tuesday of October, November and December. There can be additional meetings scheduled if there is a need from the public. Kit made a motion to set the three additional meetings dedicated to the Plan update and public comments. Brian seconded the motion. All Board members voted in favor. It was clarified that all existing public and written comments would be included in the process going forward.

Transition Fidalgo Update:

Eric Shen shared the goals and study areas of the Transition Fidalgo group. Please see their full report at the end of these minutes.

The Board expressed thanks for all the hard work done by Transition Fidalgo and reminded the community that there are lots of ways for the public to help and volunteer.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

John Meehan was in attendance to revise his earlier proposal about a study of two-stroke engine motorbikes in the ACFL. He is now suggesting a shorter time frame of one month of documenting his interaction with hikers and other users.

Kit stated that the Board is guided by the Forest Plan which is decided by Council. He has concern about a self-reported trial. It is good to start this discussion as the Forest Plan is being reviewed. Bob suggested bringing this request to the Parks Council committee and discussing with the Parks Director and then returning to the Board with the feedback. There were a few public comments about the focus needing to be on riders and bike style instead of the exact type of bike. Kit made a motion that Bob will speak with the Parks Council committee. Tabb seconded this motion. All Board members voted in agreement.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa was in attendance to give the Friends of the Forest update. He shared that summer is quickly coming to a close for their programs. They held summer day camps for approximately 75 kids. They were able to offer more camps this year and all were very successful. Hannah is working with the summer school program for the Anacortes School District.

Their Trail Ambassador program was also very successful with volunteers out every weekend from Memorial Day through Labor Day. At the end of the season, they will debrief and then share collected data with the City.

Asa announced that he is leaving Friends of the Forest on August 16th. He is taking a position with Whatcom County Parks. This is closer to home and is a good step for he and his family. The Board and staff wished him well.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his report.

Bob expressed another thank you to Asa. He will be greatly missed. Bob also reported that blue-green algae may have returned to ACFL lakes due to the heat and shallow depths. Signs have been posted. Samples have been tested and the health department has deemed the levels ok to allow for recreation, advising to just exercise caution.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, stating that it was a record 17 minutes long and the notes are available online.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 7:39pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

August 2023

Highlights from the Assistant Director's Desk

July 27: Did some early morning recon on trails 201 and 20. Had a report of a possible homeless camper from the night before. I found no sign, and neither did Henry and Lucy who expanded the search area later in the morning.

We posted warning signs, re: cyanobacteria/toxic algae at Little Cranberry and Heart Lake. We have not received any reports of sick pets or people.

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK (BRSP) IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: Janicki continuing their good work on this project. Very close to completing the demolition phase.

July 28: OFF

July 29: ACFL Steve reports a major trail building incursion into the ACFL. He extensively documented with photos. I will continue the investigation next week.

WEEK OF JULY 31

Continue daily inspections on site at BRSP. Solid progress; timely and within budget. Excited to see Grindline project management on site Aug 1. They are beginning their mobilization.

New Environmental Planner Sara Williams and I visited the trail incursion site previously reported by Steve. She was able to document several code violations, not the least of which being no prior contact/permission requested with/from the COA. Next step will be a review with our Legal Department.

Attended monthly Parks Crew Safety Meeting.

ACFL Steve and I visited three neighbors (two ACFL, 1 Wash Park), looking at some tree issues. Mostly publicly owned trees growing over the private property lines. Next step: Steve will do a formal hazard tree assessment at each site.

Forest Advisory Board: big news at the August meeting was Asa's announcement of his departure from the Friends of the Forest. It has been an absolute pleasure working with Asa, and his numerous accomplishments and FoF legacy will be enjoyed for years to come. We wish him all the best in his new role at Whatcom County Parks. Also, thanks to Kit and the Board for the updated public input schedule for the Forest Plan.

WEEK OF AUGUST 7

Aug 7: OFF

Daily visits to the BRSP Improvement Project continue. Janicki is doing the finishing touches on the site demo and prep. Should see significant Grindline team mobilization next week.

ACFL Steve and I reviewed some trees along #22 that would prevent emergency vehicle access. He will go ahead and take down the four or so trees crowding that forest road.

Attended our quarterly Council Parks Committee meeting. Good discussion of Capital Facilities Plan priorities.

Accompanied Officer Wilson to the trail incursion. She was able to investigate the site.

Director Lunsford and I toured a few possible park project sites with our RCO project manager, Allison. She particularly liked the potential for the West 6th & Minnesota property.

Fri 11th we bade Lucy farewell from her ACFL summer gig. She did a great job, and we thank her very much. We celebrated the traditional completion of the trimming of the trails a little late, but managed a nice staff luncheon a few hours before Lucy's departure.

On Sun 13th Henry completed his summer run, and we thank him as well. Super dependable, both of them. I helped out with some Whistle Lake trail patrol on this hot summer afternoon.

WEEK OF AUGUST 14

Jonn off through Wednesday, and Nicole out all week. Staff doing a great job of covering.

BRSP improvement project really taking shape. Pump track elevations done, and Grindline team arriving and beginning to build. Skate park forming work happening and working through lighting and other electrical specifics.

Attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting on Director Lunsford's behalf, discussing the potential loss of the Port's Transit Shed and what options our community might have going forward.

Enjoyed (well, not exactly enjoyed) a farewell lunch with FoF Asa. I look forward to having him on the Global Parks Team.

Joined a meeting of Mayer Miller and Rotarian Tom Decker, re: the proposed Cap Sante east view project. The next phase of the Summit Trail work. The concept has recently received unanimous support from the Parks Commission.

Spent a fair amount of time working through some Washington Park situations, including some on site visitor and staff contacts.

On Friday 18th we implemented a full Burn Ban at Washington Park. Spent much of the morning on site working with staff on signage.

WEEK OF AUGUST 21

Took the 21st off.

BRSP progress remains solid. Grindline team transforming the demo site into what will be a world class skate park. The ship beginning to take shape.

Darby off for a couple of days, so we on the admin team doing our best to cover the front.

Tuesday 22nd, 4:15P: only 6 vehicles in the Whistle Lake parking lot. As Steve is on vacation this week, this is great news. Small numbers late in the day Wed 23rd as well, especially Ray Auld Drive with only 1 vehicle shortly after 4P. Thursday pretty much the same all the way around.

Attended monthly ABPAC meeting, last one prior to Open Streets. All set and ready to launch. Special thanks to Steve Lange from COA Engineering for attending. His streets project updates were greatly appreciated.

And on Aug 27 Open Streets happened for the 10th Annual time and was a really enjoyable non-motorized community-based experience. Thanks to all, from merchants and buskers to the many volunteers staffing a variety of info booths. Great day. Lots of smiles on tiny faces, and grown-up ones as well.

WEEK OF AUGUST 28

BRSP Improvement Project progress still solid on a daily basis. The skate features are emerging, and optimism runs high. Rebar installation for shotcrete happening.

A true highlight of the week: Tracy Powell stopped in the office to say hi. Always an absolute pleasure catching up with my woods mentor.

Jonn off this week, spending time covering for him where needed.

ACFL Steve mentioned in his report the on-going theft of metal trail directional signage. We now have lost our 'Road Closed' sign from the gate at the bottom of the Mt. Erie Summit Road. I did make an official report to APD. Please keep an eye out for any sign tampering you might stumble onto.

**Faithfully Submitted,
Bob Vaux
August 31, 2023**

ACFL Maintenance Report AUGUST – 2023 by Steve Phillips

August 30, 2023

Maintenance Activities

Last month's report ended with the mention of algae at Little Cranberry Lake. Bits of turquoise-colored algal material resembling synthetic foam had been reported floating and growing on submerged vegetation near the islands at Little Cranberry Lake.

On Wednesday 7/26, a paddleboarder whose friend had reported the algae obtained a sample for us. I brought it to Corrin Hamburg at the Anacortes Wastewater Treatment Plant, who photographed it under her microscope. We sent photos to the statewide authority for blue-green algae, but they asked that a sample be overnighted to them.

On 7/27, we took the ACFL boat out to obtain samples, then overnighted them to King County. By Wednesday, August 2 we learned from the laboratory staff that our samples were negative for cyanobacteria.

For more info, including historical data, see: <https://www.nwtoxicalgae.org/Data.aspx?SiteID=243>
Browse region-wide lakes here to see the lakes with significant issues:
<https://www.nwtoxicalgae.org/FindLakes.aspx>

7/27 - We posted "When in Doubt, Stay Out" signs at all three lakes. Despite the bright color of the algae at Little Cranberry Lake, it did not resemble scum covering the lake's surface typical during a bloom. Some guidelines for algae awareness (CDC.gov) include:

- Do not go into water that:
 - Smells bad
 - Looks discolored
 - Has foam, scum, mats, or paint-like streaks on the surface
 - Has dead fish or other animals washed up on its shore or beach

Most of the month's pursuits have been patrolling all of our lakes multiple times each day and litter picking when it's slow. All in all, it was not a terribly busy month due to relatively cool temperatures. The hot days have mostly been busy with family groups. We have had a few standout individuals who have been stubborn about smoking, drinking, and off-leash dogs. Police have visited Whistle Lake a handful of times this month.

Fast-moving aggressive motorbikes were witnessed on multiple days again this month. Aggressive moto riding was also reported on unauthorized trails north of Heart Lake mid-month.

Trail signs have been increasingly stolen this year. On August 1 I replaced the Trail 20 sign at the Whistle Lake gate, this time using rivets rather than nuts and bolts. I repositioned the 232 sign on 8/2. This one had not been stolen, but the tree on which it hung had fallen.

We searched for a yellowjacket/hornet nest on 215, but never found it. We located and sprayed ground nests on 102,

8/4 – Henry, Lucy, and Steve painted over some graffiti at the Cap Sante gazebo.

8/5 - The four of us (Devanne, Lucy, Henry, Steve) hauled logs and brush to block off an unauthorized trail cutting a switchback on 201. We also worked to cut trees and brush along 22 to make it more passable by emergency vehicles. The crew continued this work in my absence the following Sunday, between patrols. Henry, Lucy, and I returned on Wed 8/9 for more tree work on 22.

I have been filling water bags to keep young trees alive at the Skate Park/Tommy Thompson trail. There are a handful here that were planted in poor soil and really struggle during the dry season, especially in dry summers like this one. I'm hoping recent additions of compost and wood chips will help them weather dry periods as they grow.

8/10 -set up a second trail cam to monitor unauthorized activities. Steve and Asa did our final eMTB monitoring visits to all of our undisclosed locations. Henry and Lucy trimmed low branches the full length of Trail 10 for emergency vehicle clearance.

8/11 – Lucy's last day; 8/13 – Henry's last day.

8/12 – used brushcutter to cut teasel (*Dipsacus*) flower stalks before they drop seed near/inside the old City Dump (Trail 10).

8/16 – met with Bruce Rustad and friends on Trail 311 to discuss a repair at a specific location.

8/17 – graded and filled potholes with box blade/small tractor, Whistle Lake access road/parking lot.

7/27, 8/10, 24 – Fecal coliform sampling at all three lakes (results good)

8/21-24 – Steve on vacation (Devanne, Kody Hargett, and Bob picked up slack)

[Bittersweet News – Farewell!](#)



I didn't think this would happen after so few years in the ACFL, but I've decided to hang up my ACFL hat and go back to working with the crew in Anacortes Parks. This change will be effective after Labor Day, so this will be my final Maintenance Report to the Forest Advisory Board, as well as my last Forest Advisory Board meeting.

I'm making this change so that I can spend more time with my family. As you know, the summer usership of the ACFL necessitates that the ACFL staff person work evenings and weekends in the summer; the Anacortes Parks crew works Monday-Friday year-round.

This has been an extremely challenging and rewarding position for me. It has taught me many new things and allowed me to use and further develop my existing strengths. Most of all, it has connected me to fantastic community members through work parties, random encounters on the trails, and Forest Advisory Board meetings.

I wish to thank the members of the Forest Advisory Board for your dedication to advocating for and maintaining this treasure of a resource that Anacortes citizens possess. It has been informative and enjoyable for me to watch you work together. Best of luck in the challenges ahead of you!

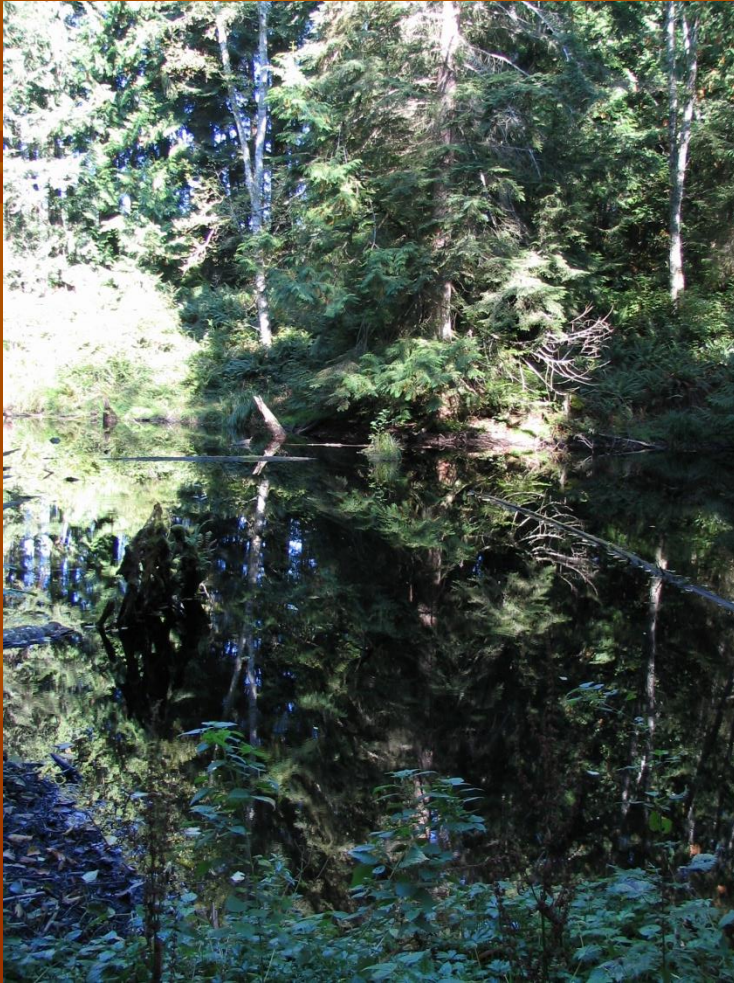
ACFL Forest Monitoring Program

Eric Shen

Transition Fidalgo

8/6/23

Progress To Date



- Last update 12/22
- Started 5th year of monitoring
- All 7 projects completed 2022 surveys
- 2022 transitioned to sustainable, long term program
- 2nd Annual Report Issued

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

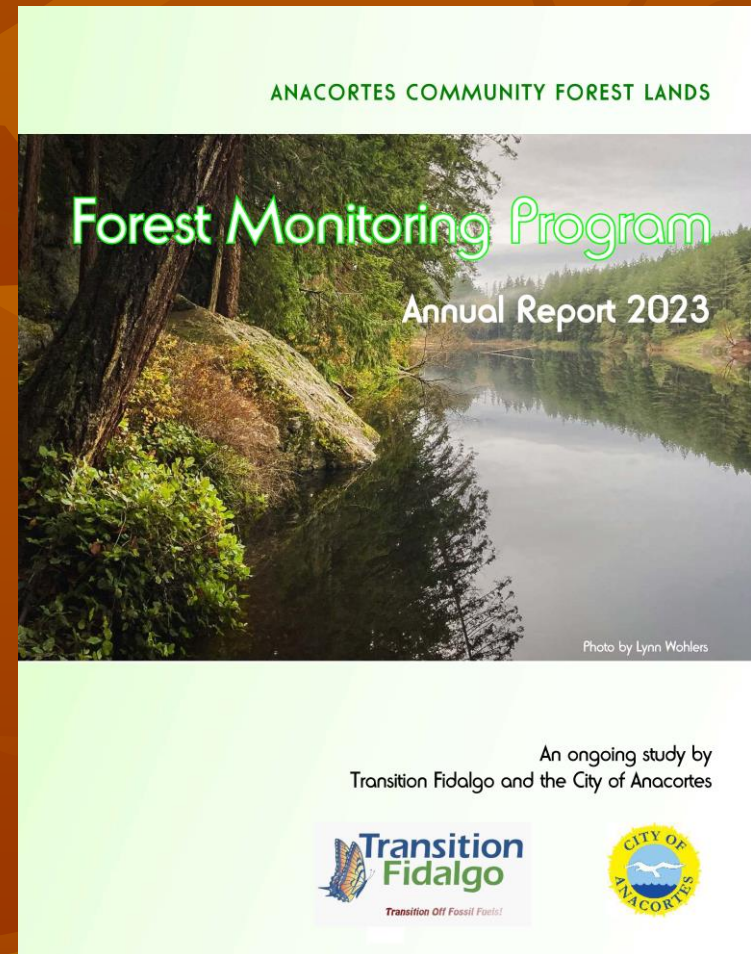


Project Elements

- 7 on-going projects
 - Forest Health & Dynamics- plot studies
 - Western Redcedar Mortality study
 - Fire Effects & Forest Dynamic- Little Cranberry Lk Burn Site Recovery
 - Plant Phenology- study of plant evolution throughout the year
 - Bird Monitoring- monthly bird species count
 - Soil Moisture
 - Weather and Climatology

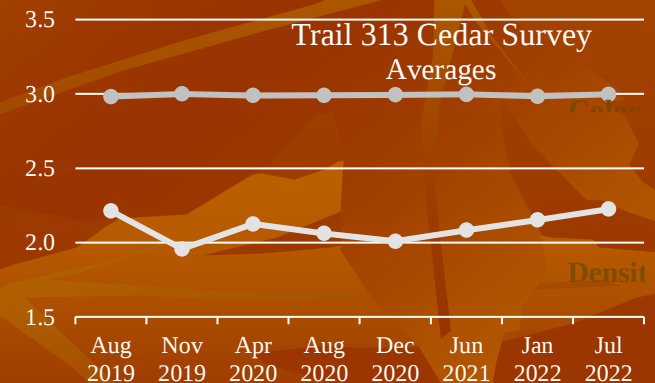
Project Status

- 2023 Forest Monitoring Program- Annual Report
 - Issued June 2023
- Discusses status the 7 project
- Early results beginning to answer questions
- Integration of data between projects



Key Finds

- 58 species identified at Little Cranberry burn sites vs 12 in unburned
- Soil moisture data suggests that seedlings more vulnerable- Cedar monitoring program modified
- ACFL Western Redcedar population stable
- Weather analysis indicates 2015/2016 extended drought/high temp may explain sudden tree die off



Data Management

ACFL Monitoring Project Documents

drive.google.com/drive/folders/13J5SZMqMWvB4Y5ocyivb4tL5BSMnmki

New Tab Netflix Charles Schwab Cli... Log on to vanguard... Banner Bank Obituary | John T. C... Soil Moisture Data... ACFL Monitoring Pr... Google Docs www.energy.wsu.ed... Gold Price Today | P...

Drive

Search in Drive

Shared with me > ACFL Monitoring Project Documents

Name	Owner	Last modified	File size
AnacortesTemp/Precip Data (Jon Ranney)	Haley Sherman	May 18, 2020	—
Bird surveys	Transition Fidalgo a...	May 29, 2022	—
Blank Metadata Sheet	Haley Sherman	Jun 9, 2020	—
Burn Area Photographs	Jon Ranney	Mar 24, 2022	—
Data Analyst Responsibilities	Haley Sherman	Jun 4, 2020	—
FFS Volunteer Photos	Sky Williams	Jun 20, 2022	—
Forest Plot Study Data	Haley Sherman	Jun 17, 2020	—
Forest Understory Data	Haley Sherman	May 4, 2020	—
Phenology Data	Haley Sherman	Sep 26, 2022	—
Soil Moisture Data	Haley Sherman	Jan 14, 2022	—
Trailside Cedar Studies	Haley Sherman	Jun 17, 2020	—
Weather Spreadsheets 1900 - 2019	Jon Ranney	Jul 1, 2020	—

Burn Area Photographs

Details Activity

Who has access

J E H +1

Manage access

System properties

Type Google Drive Folder

46°F Moderate air

11:58 AM 11/13/2022

Where to Next

- New data manager working to fill gaps in data base, upgrade security, develop public access
- New project kicking off to survey entire ACFL- establish ties to current projects
- Continue to tie together data between projects
 - Linking phenology with weather data
 - Cedar monitoring tied to drought duration and start of drought periods



Photo by Lynn Wohlers

Longer Term

- 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

Overall

- The ACFL Forest Monitoring Program is a success so far
 - Volunteers remain dedicated to their projects
 - Becoming the experts
 - Able to see early results and conclusions
 - Partnerships starting to form as interest intersect

