



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

June 6, 2024
6pm

The annual hike shared with the Friends of the Forest Board will take the place of the June regular meeting.

The Board will gather at the Little Cranberry parking lot and focus the outing on trail #101. While no regular business will be conducted the public is welcome to attend.

Minutes of the Meeting: May 2nd, 2024

Board members present: Brian Wetcher, JoAnn York-Gilmore, Kit Gerwels

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Jamie Burroughs, Darby Jordan

Guest present: Robbie Andrus

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:04PM

Minutes: April minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments: None

ACFL Forest Canopy Assessment Grant:

Robbie Andrus, a post-doctoral researcher at WSU, was in attendance to share his research on the Western Red Cedar dieback and its causes. His research indicates that there are a number of causes as to this dieback, beyond the normal and seasonal mortality. One area they have looked at are the core samplings and examining the rings of the tree. These give an indication of climate and growth, as well as the last ring gives clues to how and why the tree died. These trees are typically showing slowed growth for 4-5 years prior to dying. Climate plays a large part as warmer and drier springs (May and June) lead to slower growth. The years 2015, 2017 and 2018 had climate conditions that contributed to dieback.

Robbie spoke about the grant that was awarded to study the ACFL and monitor the tree crowns. The grant came from DNR and will allow for further research on forest health. This research will use high resolution scans to study individual tree crowns, bring together various monitoring programs and build a public access database. The goal of this project is to study how the ACFL has changed over time.

Brian asked about noting the old growth vs the 2nd growth trees in this study and does that make a difference in this study.

Kit expressed thanks to Robbie and Transition Fidalgo. He asked about the grant timeframe. Robbie shared that Transition Fidalgo has long term goals for monitoring but this specific grant allows for one year for the aerial monitoring and to set up the project and protocols. There are opportunities for additional funding in the future.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Katie shared that the Friends have moved locations and are now at 4th and Commercial. They are setting up their offices as well as a space for an interpretive center and classroom. This will give information on the history of the ACFL. They are working with the Samish and the Museum on this project. Katie invited the community to be Trail Ambassadors this summer. The program runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year.

Their summer camps are full at this time, always popular.

The next work party will be on National Trails Day-June 1st and will be continuing to remove invasives at trails 103 and 133.

Staff Reports:

Bob shared how to access information on the A Ave Landfill via the DOE website. The best information is online but staff is always happy to answer questions.

The June Forest Board meeting will be the annual hike with the Friends of the Forest Board, with no business taking place. The public is welcome to join the hike, location to be determined.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, sharing that the most up to date information is in the packet.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 6:56pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

May 2024
Assistant Director's Highlights
Submitted: May 30, 2024
Bob Vaux

COMMUNITY FOREST LANDS

Whistle Lake Dam: DOE tells us grant funding for dam structural study is very close. Working with our consultant to make sure we have our various subs in place and ready for action.

Met with the City Engineer. We are working on a plan to install DOE mandated water level gauges at both dams.

Trail Committee: working on a replacement for long time equestrian rep Geri Ruben. Geri has given a lot of time to ACFL trails and has been our main line to communicating with that user group.

On May 16 lifelong local Trisha Sutton agreed to be our new equestrian rep. Trisha and her family grew up on our trails as active members of all four user groups. I couldn't be more delighted to have her join the team. She and Geri go back a long way, and Trisha will do an excellent job filling the significant void created by Geri's departure.

#108 Bridge: we had to close this to equestrian use on April 23rd, due to an aged bridge. We are working on material sourcing now for our in-house new bridge project.

2026 Forest Plan Draft: staff is working on this daily. Had a good meeting with AFD Chief Bill Harris. We will work with him to clarify our wildland fire response plan language and will be featuring him as future guest speaker at a Forest Advisory Board meeting.

Samish / COA Hike: Jamie and I enjoyed another outing with Denise Crowe, focusing on trail #101 and the Big Rock meadow. Beautiful abundance of wildflowers. Made contact with some off leash dog owners plus one too far away on trail #102.

Friends of the Forest: continue to prep for Trail Ambassadors (TA) and plan for National Trails Day event.

Joined a great TA training session at Heart Lake on the 18th. These volunteers are truly committed to the ACFL and a pleasure to work with.

Transition Fidalgo: working on Forest Plan inclusion strategy and ramping up for Forest Canopy DNR Grant work.

Forest Advisory Board: thanks again to Robbie Andrus for his presentation on Western Red Cedar dieback and the aforementioned grant.

New Police Personnel Training: Parks Mgr Johnston and I spent a half day or so with a new APD Officer, showing him the routes to and locations of our most pressing needs for help. This is a new element in the on-boarding of APD staff, and we are happy to be able to contribute.

Working with a Parkside neighborhood resident on some drainage questions; ground water flowing from private property into the ACFL. The COA Stormwater Manager is also reaching out.

Trail Patrol

Focusing more on this with Jamie as we get ever closer to the fun season. Had a solid session along 20/204/246/28/219/200 on 5/16.

The next day we enjoyed some more mid-May sunshine, spending most of our time at Little Cranberry and up on the Morrison Ridge. We met with a detachment from the Skagit Whatcom Island Trail Maintenance Organization (formerly the Pacific Northwest Trail crew). We've done some great projects with them over the years. They were hoping to join the COA and the Friends of the Forest for the June 1st National Trails Day project, but have been called away to a PNT project.

Jamie and I finished the day cruising the Heart Lake corridor. Found a couple of roosters running around the HL parking lot. They kept their distance. Sadly, another drop off.

AFD in the ACFL

The Fire Department has been conducting a series of trainings in the ACFL, including wildland fire response and rescue operations. We have been able to include some Parks staff as well. Lots of positive feedback.

SEASONAL STAFF

After our first round of interviews, Parks Mgr Johnston was able to fill 10 of our 12 positions. We are still looking for an ACFL & trim crew worker. We have a couple of interviews scheduled for early May.

Found our second ACFL staffer, while Nicole continues the search for one more trimmer. Hoping to get the ACFL seasonals started May 22/23.

We did in fact get our ACFL seasonals rolling on May 22. Jamie will get them trained up on trail trimming and the weather will dictate their progress.

BEN ROOT SKATE PARK

The Bell Family memorial that was a long-term element of the park was removed prior to the recent upgrade. Parks Tottenham and I are currently working with the family on a replacement plan.

GUEMES CHANNEL TRAIL

We had a one-day closure on May 9th for Planning Dept approved vegetation work on the San Juan Passage Overlook Park.

PARKS COMMISSION

Good discussions ranging from sand volleyball at Storvik to caterpillars everywhere.

ABPAC

Attended monthly meeting. Open Streets is coming together, along with a variety of non-motorized route updates. Glad to have new City Engineer Logan Lee in attendance.

LEAVE TAKEN

-April 24-26

-May 10

-May 23-29

James Burroughs

ACFL Maintenance technician

May 30th, 2024

ACFL Maintenance Report: May – 2024

Introduction

This month I got to welcome our new ACFL seasonals, Tenzin and Ruben. We have begun our trail trimming for the year which has been a fun challenge to come up with a strategy every day on how to start chipping away at the over 50-mile task. They have been doing great

these first couple weeks and continue to improve their skills and knowledge of the ACFL every day. Excited to have their help and looking forward to a great summer. We are also working on rounding up material for the 108 bridge project which should begin within the next couple of weeks. Eager to get started with it as it will be a fun project and a new experience for me. May the forest be with you!

Maintenance Activities

Trail trimming: North Heart lake and northeast Whistle lake

Trail clearing: 108*, 247, 10, 311 Multiple trees:*

ACFL Patrol: Patrol around lakes on nice days

ACFL Restroom and garbage rounds

Weed eating at Little cranberry dam

Closed off bicycle shortcut off trail 230

Removed wire fencing off trail 250

Repaired split rail fencing at Little cranberry trail 100

Checked potential camping spots for illegal campers

Material gathering for 108 Bridge

Helped Parks maintenance team with mowing around town