



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

November 7, 2024
6pm

In person and virtual meeting options.

In Person: **Anacortes Library Community Meeting Room**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88308344363>

Preliminary Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approve October '24 Minutes
3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda*
4. Friends of the Forest Update
5. Staff Reports
6. Parks Commission Update
7. Other Business

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: October 3, 2024

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Jamie Burroughs, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests present: Asa Deane

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:01PM

Minutes: September minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

None

ACFL Ebike Impact Study Presentation:

Asa and Steve presented their findings from the year long study of various spots in the forest lands, testing and monitoring to see if there was additional wear and tear on the trails due to increased bike and ebike use. At the conclusion of the study, it was determined that there was no noticeable difference between the bike trail wear and the control trail (hiker only) wear. The Board recommended that the current policy of class 1 (pedal assist) ebikes be classified as bicycles on the allowed trails and class 2 & 3 (throttle) ebikes be classified as motor vehicles and only allowed during the open season on motor bike trails. This follows the guidelines of other local municipalities as well as state and federal guidelines. There will be a section in the updated Forest Plan to reflect this policy.

Friends of the Forest Update-Wetlands Monitoring Update:

Katie was in attendance and reported their benefit gala held last Saturday at Whisteria Gardens. It was a huge success with about \$95,000 being raised to support the Friends' programing. November 2nd will be the official opening of the Forest Discovery Center storefront on Commercial Ave. This showcases exhibits, history of the forest lands, ecology and stewardship. Also, on the 2nd of November there will be the joint Friends and City work party, the location to be determined.

Staff Reports:

Bob reported that Jamie's summer work is complete and now for the projects that have been on hold during the busy summer season. Activity will be starting at Whistle Lake dam with the survey work being started on Oct 18th, looking at the science and how to probe the dam. The DOE will be the ones to decide how to proceed on this project.

The Forest Plan Update work continues.

The grant for the Heart Lake Master plan scored at #8 and staff is pleased with that placement. The next step is the approval from the legislature for funding. JoAnn will be at the January meeting to discuss this topic. If the funding is approved through the state, it will need a match of funds from the City. Staff is waiting on a bid to have the hardware and climbing spikes removed from an old growth tree. This was an act of vandalism, and the police are aware. The permit to demo the Whistle Lake pit toilet has been approved and staff will begin that project soon.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, sharing that the most up to date information is in the packet. There will be a meeting on November 14th to discuss pickleball with players and neighbors invited to come and share.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 7:05pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

October 2024 Assistant Director's Highlights Submitted: October 31, 2024

Bob Vaux

ACFL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

On 10/7 the Mayor and City Council bestowed this first ever award upon Bruce Rustad. Included here is the text of the presentation. It was a fun night and well-deserved recognition...

In the late 1980's Bruce Rustad decided to turn his sites on, and point his mountain bike toward, the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. Over the next three and a half decades, Bruce, along with many hard-working cohorts, would transform our beloved trail system and the way folks would be able to enjoy it.



While the cast of volunteer helpers has been many, special mention must be made of Dick Kohler. Bruce and Dick have never been short on advice for me, and many a parks staffer has benefitted from this wisdom over the years.

Bruce's first decade in the woods culminated in working with city staff on a new edition of the ACFL trails map. That first edition of the new map has not changed much to this day. Bruce's drafting skills and first-hand knowledge of the trails added a lot of value to the maps, as well as making them more user friendly.

In 2001 Bruce joined the ACFL trail committee as the mountain bike representative. In those days the committee was meeting fairly regularly as adjacent development forced a lot of use and access decisions. If there was a question about a trail, Bruce was ready for a site visit, and typically very ready to share his opinion on whatever the situation might be.

Parks & Recreation Director Jonn Lunsford says of Bruce, "When I took over for Bob in the woods, he mentioned the importance of reaching out to Bruce Rustad. Both as an avid volunteer, and to keep an eye on him." Bruce has never shied away from a trail project. Much of his work stands strong to this day, used happily by bikers, hikers, horses and motorbikes. Bruce may still be found logging mile after mile in the ACFL, still clearing down trees, fixing surface issues and sharing observations with Parks staff. He is the definition of a local trail user, and on behalf of the City of Anacortes staff, residents, and countless visitors, I congratulate Bruce Rustad on receiving the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Lifetime Achievement Award....

MT ERIE SUMMIT ROAD

Working with Brandon Lowry and his Streets Crew on some improved safety signage for pedestrians along one of our busiest tourist routes.

GRANDVIEW CEMETERY EAST HAZARD TREES

Job prep continues. Working with Dan Rawls/Precision Tree Service on an affordable and still safe plan. Finding more aspects of the job we can do in house to cut costs. With 14 trees identified as hazardous, it's a bigger job than usual.

Parks Crew was able to touch up an old access that comes down COA property from near the Whistle Lake Road water tank. This will allow for Precision's bucket truck to get on site.

On 10/8 Dan and Crew got in there and put all 14 hazard trees on the ground. Careful work with their bucket truck, tree climbing and cabling made for a very safe, efficient and successful job.

HEART LAKE PARKING LOT RESTROOM DEMOLITION

We have received the permit to demo the north unit, which was essentially blown-up last summer. Met on site 10/8 with Stormwater Aaron. Minimal impacts expected as we will take appropriate measures with straw.

ACFL Jamie and the excavator made short work of the demo project on 10/10. We will fly with one unit hoping the improved restroom facilities will come with the Heart Lake parking lot improvement grant in the next couple of years. Special thanks to COA Sanitation Division for their assistance.

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST INTERPRETIVE CENTER

>AFD Chief Harris and I met with FoF Ellie to fine tune the wildfire safety element of the new interpretive space being developed for the Friends' HQ. The AFD 'Preventing Wildland Fires in the ACFL' write up in the Spring/Summer 2024 A-Town Is Our Town publication is a very helpful resource.

SAN JUAN PASSAGE EROSION CONTROL

>The San Juan Passage HOA has been working with our Planning Dept. on erosion controls after their recent view windowing work above the Guemes Channel Trail. A rye-based hydro-seed (same mix previously used on a slide further east of SJP) was applied on 10/14. It should work as a quick stabilizer, then eventually give way to native plants and trees.

TRAIL IMPACT EDUCATION

>We recently found some young local mountain bikers doing some rogue trail building. We reached out to the families and were able to meet with the kids. They came to city hall and offered their sincere apologies for what they had done. We had a very constructive discussion about the various impacts of trails and their many users. I am confident that these local kids will emerge as trail etiquette leaders and inspire their friends to do good things.

ILLEGAL BURN

>ACFL Jamie found this at Heart Lake first thing 10/16. It has only been a couple of weeks since a similar burn was found on the Mt. Erie summit parking lot. We are keeping APD in the loop.



REGULAR MEETINGS ATTENDED

>monthly safety meeting with Parks Maintenance Team.

>monthly with FoF ED Katie Early. Working on plans for new HQ grand opening, and our joint quarterly work party.

>Asa Deane and Steve Phillips did a great job presenting our Ebike impact study at the Oct. FAB meeting.

>Oct. Parks Commission featured good discussions of fall parks projects and budget challenges.

AND...

>took personal leave 9/27-10/1, 10/21-25.

>asked Arborist Steve to evaluate a tree near the Rockridge Summit neighborhood. This stems from a neighbor's concern.

>continue tree surveillance for a neighbor on Lake Erie Way.

>attended 10/14 Council Public Hearing on the 2025 Capital Facilities Plan. Director Lunsford was able to answer several project budget-based questions.

>we are still working in-house on the 2026 Forest Plan update. Hoping to have a draft for the Forest Board by the end of the calendar year.

>filled in for Director Lunsford during his much-deserved Oct 15 – 18 vacation.

>Denise, Jamie and I conducted our monthly Samish Nation/COA ACFL visit on 10/18. We focused on the South Heart old growth and its mushroom glory. Also reviewed some future trail projects.

>enjoyed the annual VOLUNTEER THANK YOU dinner put on by the Friends of the Forest. It gives me a chance to pass along the sincere thank you from the City of Anacortes for all the FoF do for our woods and community throughout the year. Looking forward to the final report on last summer's Trail Ambassador Program.

James Burroughs
ACFL Maintenance technician
October 29th, 2024

ACFL Maintenance Report: October 2024

Introduction

Fall is in full effect! It's been a busy month in the ACFL. Thanks to some windy weather the last couple weeks I have been going trail to trail clearing blow downs. In other news Ace of Hearts creek is flowing and in turn has me back to the beaver rounds. They have been hard at work as always. Some other noteworthy events include our work party with the friends of the forest on November 2nd. It will be mainly a holly pull in the heart lake area. I have a meeting scheduled with Fidalgo trail riders Josh gates and his trail crew leads. We are working on getting teams of volunteer trail crews together to help work on trails on a more frequent basis. This will also serve as a huge resource for me in terms of getting eyes on more areas of our trails and fixing these areas quicker. This meeting will go over all the things we must abide by while working in the woods and on trails. I also participated in a webinar from the American Trail's Association and an urban forest invasive pest workshop put on by Department of Natural Resources.

Maintenance Activities

Downed/hazard trees removed: 103, 207, 22*, 10*, 244, 240, 21*, 22, 12*, 210*, 221, 249*, 302*, 312*, Marine heights way, 25th St. hazard tree by ACFL neighbor, Mt. Erie Rd. and Washington Park campground

Beaver rounds: Evaluating water level at all permitted beaver spots in ACFL and notching if required

ACFL sanitation: Garbage collection and Restroom cleaning

Gravel work: staged gravel at Trail 20 and Trail 23, used gravel on 20 and 21 puddle areas

104 railing: Prep work for 104 railing project

Demo: Demolished the blown up-side of Heart Lake restrooms

F.o.F kiosk: Finished making the Friends a kiosk for the interpretative center at their new office

Violations in the ACFL:

Illegal dumping at Little cranberry: Junk dumped at the back-in spot at Little Cranberry parking lot, got it cleaned up and if problem persists I will install a trail cam.

Fire pit: Found the evidence of a fire pit at Heart Lake parking lot, Anacortes Police department was made aware of it.

302 motorbike damage: Damage was caused to Little Round Top by motorbikes, I rehabbed what I could of the area. The issue of motorbikes up in the 300's section continues and we are still working on a solution to this problem.

Picture time

- Conjoined Hemlock that fell across Trail 12
- Friends of the Forest Kiosk

