



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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## **Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board**

**October 2nd, 2025**

**6pm**

**In person and virtual meeting options.**

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

**Zoom Meeting Link:**

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

### **Preliminary Agenda**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approve September '25 Minutes**
- 3. Public Comments for any item not on the agenda**
- 4. Friends of the ACFL Update**
- 5. Staff Reports**
- 6. Parks Commission Update**
- 7. Other Business**

**Adjourn**

## **Minutes of the Meeting: September 4, 2025**

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

**Staff present:** Bob Vaux, Darby Jordan

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

**Minutes:** August minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Public Comments:**

None

### **Forest Plan Board Review**

Kit reviewed last month's actions, with the Plan being distributed to the Board and posted online for public viewing. The Board was to come prepared to this meeting with their thoughts and guidance.

JoAnn stated that she thought it was a great publication and looks very professional.

Brian shared that he has reviewed the Plan with Marlene Finley and they are both impressed with the format. Brian would like to see the first two paragraphs from the Executive Summary transferred into the City Comprehensive Plan. He feels the land use and comp plan should reference this Forest Plan and will be lacking if nothing is transferred from the Forest Plan. Bob shared that Planning is working on the Comp plan but he will pass along this request.

Kit echoed JoAnn that the effort and time put into this Plan shows the culmination of several years of work. His only note was a letter missing on page 15.

Brian suggested that under the "Key Objective" in the Executive Summary, the word "minimal" should be substituted for "sustainable". He also requested that "Little Cranberry" be used in all references in order to not be confused with the Cranberry Lake at Deception Pass. He brought up the issue of fire protection and it was decided to reference page 54 on page 25 to bring together all of the fire language.

JoAnn brought up that page 30 referenced low-intensity vs page 2's sustainable. Discussion ensued and it was decided to change page 30 to sustainable.

Tabb spoke about the transformation of the document and felt that it was good. His concern was regarding page 38 and the motorcycle language. He requested that the goals be moved to the policies and the goal for e-bikes be copied to the motorcycle page. He also asked that the word "prohibit" be changed to "limit". Brian made a motion to make the changes suggested by the Board, adopt the document and send it along to Council, JoAnn seconded and the Board was in unanimous favor.

Public comment will be taken at the Council level.

Bob expressed thanks for the Board's years of work and attention to the process. He reminded everyone that public comment will be taken at the Council next and that the SEPA process will run at the same time.

Brian made a motion to put the first two paragraphs of the Executive Summary in the City Comprehensive Plan. Kit seconded and the Board approved in full.

### **Friends of the Forest Update:**

Josie Henderson was in attendance and shared that she has seen many examples of legislation and she expressed thanks to the Board and staff for the smooth process. She announced they are preparing for their annual benefit fundraiser. This will be on Sept 27<sup>th</sup>.

The Discovery Center will be closed for the season after hosting 700 visitors over the summer. They learned over the season that community events bring in more and going forward will be open during downtown events.

They are starting to offer more programs and there is a survey out now to see what the public would like to have offered.

School field trips are in full swing. Trail Ambassadors are done for the season, counting over 2000 trail users from 26 cities and 18 states.

### **Staff Reports:**

Bob reported that it has been Jamie's second summer with us and he has done a fantastic job. There have been two rotations of seasonals and all four have done a wonderful job. There have been minimal issues in the ACFL, just the usual level of alcohol and cigarette consumption. There have been no campers found in the ACFL this season.

Bob also shared that the team has been down 1 for quite some time and then we lost one more person in May. So the team has been down all season but has continued to work hard. Staff are hiring, receiving 64 applications with 7 interviews tomorrow. Hoping to get someone on board by October.

There is nothing new to report at the Whistle Lake dam or the Dump.

Jon and Bob met with a design firm at Heart Lake to walk the initial plan.

This firm is the same as the designers of Rotary Park lookout. There will be a proposal coming soon. Estimates are about 1 million worth of work and a \$470,000 grant. Staff is going through the RCO process for the construction to begin in 2027.

Lastly, Bob shared that an invasive species survey was done and a report coming. Treatment is expected to happen next year.

### **Parks Commission Report:**

JoAnn reported that there is lots going on in Parks. The biggest issue is pickleball with the last meeting hosting a very lively discussion with much input from the public.

Haunted Forest tickets are on sale and staff are looking for scarers.

She shared that the community center fundraising is having a slow go and there is concern that the funds will not come together.

### **Other Business:**

Bob spoke about the Little Cranberry platform and repairs that are needed to it as well as the surrounding trails. Staff will start by emphasizing the proper routes to the platform, narrowing the routes. Then there will be a replanting effort.

### **Adjourned at 7:07pm**

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

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**SEPTEMBER 2025**  
Assistant Director's Highlights  
Submitted: September 25, 2025  
*Bob Vaux*

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#### **ACFL**

- ❖ The Forest Advisory Board unanimously passed the Forest Plan 2026 Update document at its 9/4 meeting, recommending it to the City Council. Thank you to the FAB and the community for all the work on this over the last few years. We will make sure to get the Council process publicized once it is established.
- ❖ Darby and I now working with Planning on next steps, the first being SEPA.
- ❖ 9/2: Bid farewell to Tenzin and Wolfgang. Both young men did a great job getting us through August and the Parks & Rec favorite holiday of the year, Labor Day.
- ❖ Thank you, Jamie, for your second summer in the ACFL. There is a special stress that comes with caring for the woods through the tourist high season, and Jamie did another fantastic job keeping the peace.
- ❖ Small fire on the Whistle Lake island Saturday night 9/6. AFD had a steep spot to deal with and handled it like the pros they are. Jamie and Steve went out first thing on the 8<sup>th</sup> and surveilled the area. All is well.
- ❖ **HEART LAKE PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** attended the RCO webinar for successful grant applicants, along with a follow-up meeting the next week with our RCO Project Manager. There are many bureaucratic check points along the way so want to make sure we have them all mapped out.
- ❖ Jamie and I began shoulder season motorized and dogs off leash emphasis patrols.

#### **PARKS MAINTENANCE TECH HIRING PROCECSS**

- ❖ Spent Fri 9/5 interviewing 7 finalists (along with Nicole, Nichola and HR Director Kendall) for one of our two vacant maint tech positions. We narrowed the field to 3, and those folks were invited to a meet'n'greet with our Parks Crew on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The job has been offered and accepted with our new staff member scheduled to start Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### **TREES**

- ❖ Working with a Rockridge resident on a small property line pruning job.

- ❖ Back to our neighbor on Lake Erie Way for annual inspection by Arborist Steve along with some hazard tree falling.

#### **W. 6<sup>TH</sup> PARK**

- ❖ There is now some interest from the private sector in moving this project forward. Exploring some design options now and hope to have an updated plan to present at the October Parks Commission meeting.

#### **BEN ROOT SKATE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PH II**

- ❖ Engineering Kristen and I maintaining contact with MacKay Sposito, working through some utility issues.
- ❖ Shout out to Megan in Finance for working with PSE to come up with the data MacKay Sposito needs for electrical plan.

#### **JONN ON VACATION**

- ❖ Doing my best to help cover for Director Lunsford as he enjoys a well-deserved vacation.

#### **SPECIAL THANKS TO PARKS MAINTENANCE TEAM**

- ❖ Our folks were recently tasked with exhuming remains at Grandview Cemetery. This unique and challenging work was handled with the utmost respect and professionalism. I am very proud of Nicole and her team.

**James Burroughs**

**ACFL Maintenance technician**

**September 23rd, 2025**

### **ACFL Maintenance Report: September 2025**

#### ***Hazardous/Downed Trees***

We have had quite a few trees come down this month, but all successfully cleared. Locations of these trees include trail 304, 113, 206, 22 and 313.

#### ***November Work Party Recon***

Met with (ACFL) Bob and members of the Friends of the Forest to discuss our upcoming work party plan. This work party will focus on creating more obvious trail boundaries for the LC platform entrance trail. We will also resurface the trail as it is technically supposed to be ADA accessible and this will also help define the trail as well.

#### ***Trail 210 (Hiker only) Bicycle barricade***

I was able to replace the old rotten bicycle barricade located at the entrance of Trail 210 that comes off Trail 212 in the southwest Heart Lake area. This was



the last project the summer staff was able to help me with before we said our goodbyes for the year. Special thanks to them!

### ***ACFL rounds***

Continuation of ACFL rounds, garbage collection, restrooms cleaning, monitoring potential overnight campers. I have also been keeping an eye on our “beaver rounds” as we get into the rainy season I will begin more frequent monitoring of these areas.

### ***Homeless Camp Clean up***

We were alerted to a homeless camp off Heart Lake Road near Trail 220. It was no longer active, but it was fresh. I cleaned up the area which ended up being about 7 large garbage bags worth of miscellaneous stuff and processed belongings accordingly. I have kept an eye on the spot in case they return.

### ***Off-leash dog emphasis patrols***

I have made an extra effort on getting in some off-leash dog patrols on Trail 10 and areas of Whistle Lake. I continue my efforts of educating trail users of ACFL rules.

### ***In-town parks work***

I have spent a lot of time helping the in-town crew out this month as we lose seasonal help, the need for extra hands grows. I have spent a few days mowing the cemetery and trimming markers. I have also helped with trimming the Highway 20 Trail, R ave. trimming and clearing down trees at Rotary Park.