



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

**December 4th, 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 November '25 Minutes**
- 3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda***
- 4. Nominations & Vote for 2026 Board Chair**
- 5. Friends of the ACFL Update**
- 6. Staff Reports**
- 7. Parks Commission Update**
- 8. Other Business**
  - a. January Meeting Date**

**Adjourn**

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

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

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

Meeting held in person and called to order at 6:00PM

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

### **Public Comments:**

None

### **Friends of the ACFL Update:**

Josie Henderson was in attendance and shared that their school programs are in full swing with all kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders getting out in the forest lands on field trips. The after-school program is also running. They hosted their volunteer thank you party for the trail ambassadors from this summer. Halloween saw a night hike as well as downtown trick or treating with about 600 kids visiting the Forest Discovery Center. The Center will also be open for the Elves Night Out on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Parks staff and the Friends will host the fall volunteer work party this Saturday from 9-noon, working on the Little Cranberry platform and area.

### **Staff Reports:**

Jamie shared that it is the season for clearing downed trees. He expressed thanks to trail users for letting us know about the location of the downed trees. Bob reported that dam inspections will be done tomorrow by himself and Jamie. There are no updates on the Whistle Lake dam report.

Bob shared that it has been a tough week for the City of Anacortes team. There were many layoffs across the City, predominantly hitting the library and museum. While the Parks team did not have anyone laid off, the position that has been frozen for two years has been eliminated. Thankfully, our newest team member, Michaela Chase, is still with us. The seasonal positions are also still intact, which are a critical part of the summer team.

There will be a new mayor on January 1<sup>st</sup>, which will open a Council member position, as well as a newly elected Council member.

The Forest Plan is in process with the SEPA application submitted. It is expected to go to Council in January.

There are still funds available for the Heart Lake project with the grant and matching funds. There will be a narrowing of the scope of work depending on fundraising.

Kit mentioned that it is off-season for motorcycles and asked if there is any way to prevent access. Bob responded that all groups are a challenge, off leash dogs for example, but any physical barriers that would limit motorcycles will

also limit horses. The only solution is a ranger. The police department is close to filling all their positions which will hopefully allow for more support to the parks and forest lands.

**Parks Commission Report:**

JoAnn reported that the next Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission meeting will be on November 18<sup>th</sup> due to the Veteran’s Day holiday. The October meeting discussed the signs at Mt Erie which are being created in partnership with Samish and funded by a donation. The W 6<sup>th</sup> Street park is in the planning process and will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Other Business:**

None

**Adjourned at 6:26pm**

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

**NOVEMBER 2025**  
**Assistant Director’s Highlights**  
Submitted: November 25, 2025  
*Bob Vaux*

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**TREES**

- Arborist Steve and I made another trip out to our Lake Erie neighbor. We put a plan together for some trees creeping over the line, and Steve worked on his annual agreed to tree assessment.
- Met with some Forest Ridge HOA representatives. They have requested a site visit to review their NGPE’s and discuss safe spaces and tree health. Will put this together soon.

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

- RCO has asked for some more info related to the Cultural Resources Survey conducted by the Samish Nation. This work was completed and sent to the COA on 11/7. It has been forwarded for RCO review.
- The good folks at Grindline finally paid us their overdue warranty visit. No struggle here, just took some time to arrange. Members of our maintenance team were able to join them for an educational opportunity. All praised the interaction, and we are even better equipped now to maintain this very popular park.

**2026 COA BUDGET**

- Attended the 11/3 Council discussion of the Parks & Rec budget. While our Maintenance Tech position that has been frozen for a couple of years has now been officially removed from the books, none of our current staff was laid off. Other departments took some big hits, especially the Museum and the Library.

### **HEART LAKE PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

- Director Lunsford and I met on site with another engineering firm on our quest to work within our budget. Lots of optimism on site. We are currently reviewing that proposal, with help from Public Works and Legal.
- Also working on putting together the necessary list of permits with our GeoEngineers permit specialist.

### **FOREST PLAN 2026 UPDATE**

- Received good feedback from Planning on my first draft of the related SEPA document. Working on draft #2 now.

### **ANNUAL DAM INSPECTIONS**

- On 11/7 ACFL Jamie and I conducted the annual dam inspections at Little Cranberry and Whistle Lakes required by the DOE Dam Safety Section. All conditions looked good. Reports were submitted and have been approved by DOE.

### **ACFL EMPHASIS PATROLS**

- ACFL Jamie and I finding some time for both off leash and motorized trail use emphasis patrols.
- On Monday 11/24 I received a written report from one hiker and a phone call from another about the same motorized threesome using our trails over the weekend. One of these folks did make contact with the adult, and let's just say that this particular illegal rider was not interested in a logical conversation. He did have two teenage boys with him so setting any kind of a positive example is clearly not on his priority list. It is important that the public knows just how offensive this illegal activity is to staff as well as to the regular users and stewards of the ACFL. For now, Jamie and I will keep trying to make contact with the various rogue ACFL users. We will keep dreaming about a fully commissioned park ranger.

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

- Continue to work with Nels Strandberg on a possible partnership. Nels has been working with us on the plan, assisting with design and construction cost estimates.
- Conceptual plan and estimated high end budget numbers were presented at the November Parks Commission. Looking for community feedback over the next few weeks.  
We are getting some good written feedback from the neighbors.

### **COUNCIL PARKS COMMITTEE**

- Joined Parks & Rec Senior Staff along with Council Members McDougall and Hubik for our quarterly discussion of relevant programs, projects and budget challenges. We wish Amanda Hubik all the best as she moves on from her work here on the COA Council. It has been a pleasure.

**James Burroughs**

**ACFL Maintenance technician**

**November 20th, 2025**

**ACFL Maintenance Report: November 2025**

## ***Friends of the ACFL Work party***

On November 8<sup>th</sup> we had our work party with the Friends of the ACFL. It was a great turnout including 16 volunteers not including F.o.A staff. The work party was located at Little Cranberry Lake with an emphasis on redefining the trail going to the LC platform to minimize the impact we were seeing on the native vegetation. We were able to block off alternative routes that had been created outside of the original trail going to the platform and also on Trail 100. We laid gravel down on the Platform trail to help with wheelchair accessibility and to better define the trail. Thanks to all the helping hands we were even able to replace 9 boards on the platform. Special thanks to Friends of ACFL for helping put it all together and to all the volunteers that showed up and worked hard.



## ***Trees***

It has been a busy month chasing blowdowns in the ACFL. I have cleared blowdowns on trails, 20\*, 27\*, 28\*, 10\*, 22, 29, 100, 124\*, 117, 210\*, 229, 231, 302, 316\*, 314. (\*:multiple) Parks staff Steve Phillips and I had to cut down some hazardous trees this month one at the end of 32<sup>nd</sup> St. Swamp due to beaver damage. The other at an ACFL neighbors home bordering the South Heart Area.

## ***Beaver Rounds***

Busy beaver season! I've continued monitoring water levels for all our beaver spots and notching as needed. So far, 32<sup>nd</sup> St. Swamp and the 108 Bridge are the only spots where the water is to the point of needing periodic notching. Ace of Hearts creek, Little Cranberry spillway and Mitten Pond deceiver water levels have not yet reached high enough water levels for beaver activity.

## ***Signage***

Replaced fallen trail signs on Trails 202 and 317.

## ***Dam inspections***

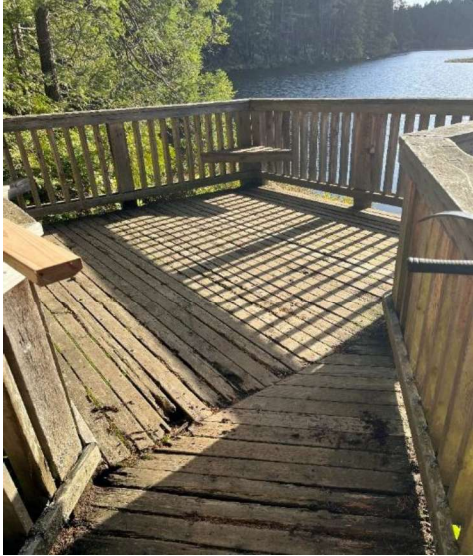
(ACFL) Bob and I completed our yearly Dam inspections of Little Cranberry Lake and Whistle Lake.

## ***ACFL rounds/ Sanitation***

Routine ACFL garbage and restroom duties completed as normal. During my traditional ACFL rounds I have tried to get in an Off-leash Dog patrol as this continues to be an everyday violation on our trails.

## ***Bridge Inventory***

I have been working on a document for all ACFL bridges, this includes a picture with the coordinates of the bridge. I have also tied this in with my bridge inspections, which will help keep a better idea on which bridges will need replacing sooner than later.



*Before*

*After*

