



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

**January 8th, 2025**

**5:30pm**

**In person and virtual meeting options.**

**In Person: City Hall Main Floor Conference Room**

**Zoom Meeting Link:**

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

### **Preliminary Agenda**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approve December '25 Minutes**
- 3. Nominations & Vote for 2026 Board Chair**
- 4. Anacortes Walk Fest**
- 5. Public Comments for any item not on the agenda**
- 6. Friends of the ACFL Update**
- 7. Staff Reports**
- 8. Parks Commission Update**
- 9. Other Business**

**Adjourn**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Public Comments:**

None

### **Nominations & vote for 2026 Board Chair**

Kit asked the Board to give this some thought. Brian asked if Kit was willing to serve another year, he likes the continuity. This will be decided next month.

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

Josie Henderson was in attendance and shared that their youth programs are rolling. The November 8<sup>th</sup> work party went well with the trails being defined and the access under the platform blocked. The Forest Discovery Center will celebrate the season with extended hours. Tomorrow's holly pull has been cancelled due to high wind.

### **Staff Reports:**

Jamie was not in attendance, Bob shared that it was his anniversary.

Bob shared that Jamie has been doing great getting to the downed trees as we transition to wet and windy weather.

Bob has submitted the second draft of the SEPA for the Forest Plan, hoping to get the Plan in front of Council in January.

There is no update on the Whistle Lake dam, but the annual inspection has been accepted.

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, focusing first on the shoreline.

Bob reported that even with the budget being cut, the parks seasonals have been funded in 2026.

### **Parks Commission Report:**

JoAnn reported that Bob presented a W 6<sup>th</sup> Park presentation. There has been \$75,000 allocated to the project in impact fees-highly restricted money that can only be spent on specific park projects. Staff are exploring community partnerships for funding, design and building as the entire project is estimated at \$500,000-600,000. The design could be split into three areas and phased in

over time. The presentation is available online with staff accepting comments until December 5<sup>th</sup>.

JoAnn also shared that it had been reported that Bradyn had been bitten twice at the Ace of Hearts dog park by the same dog. The dog and owner have been trespassed.

Staff are in the woods some weekends to help do some motorcycle enforcement, they are exploring options to curb this out of season activity.

### **Other Business:**

Bob proposed that the January meeting be moved to January 8<sup>th</sup> due to the New Year holiday, and that the meetings be moved back to City Hall. The Board was in support of this.

Bob expressed his thanks to the Board for their tireless work this past year.

### **Adjourned at 6:42pm**

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

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**DECEMBER 2025**  
**Assistant Director's Highlights**  
Submitted: December 23, 2025  
*Bob Vaux*

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

- Received a dozen or so written comments submitted mostly by neighbors. Have been told of social media discussions going on as well. Lots of general support for the project. It is important to note that the \$75K that has been committed to this project is from Park Impact Fees, a highly restricted funding source that may only be used for adding specific kinds of park facilities. These funds are not available for staffing.
- Director Lunsford and I continue to work with Nels Strandberg and his team on options to make this project go. Working with other City staff as well on regulatory issues.

### **2026 FOREST PLAN UPDATE**

- Submitted second draft of SEPA to PCED on 12/4.

### **ACFL**

- Jamie and I did some illegal car camping patrol a few days this month. We did make one Heart Lake Road contact, did our best to explain the ACFL, how the City does indeed have a campground and why the current situation isn't good for the woods. We also offered to put the fellow in touch with other organizations who could possibly help him out. We all shook hands and parted company. Just about the time I got back to city hall he called to complain about being harassed.
- Jamie and I had a great meeting with Friends of the ACFL staff, reviewing their gathering places for forest education. All the sites have traditionally served this role and are still working well.
- A two-year Rockridge resident called to talk about how much she and her husband love the ACFL. In fact, a big reason why they moved here. She also has a service dog, and they frequently walk together

on our trails. She explained that they are regularly approached by off leash dogs (whose owners are typically either running or mountain biking). I gave her some strategies to work with, and Jamie is double checking trailhead signage in that area.

- Jamie and his family were impacted by the Skagit flooding so I filled in for him for a couple of days, focusing mostly on the beaver dam rounds. Did manage 3 off leash dog contacts near the old dump in less than an hour on one of the outings. Thanks to Foreperson Nichola for helping out with LC dam spillway clearing.
- Despite the flood challenges, Jamie doing a great job keeping up with reported trees down. Saturated ground and gusty winds.
- **HEART LAKE PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** Director Lunsford and I reviewing scopes of work proposed by permitting and engineering consultants. Also working with other City departments on preliminary contract and regulatory issues.

#### **GRANDVIEW CEMETERY EAST HAZARD TREES FELLED**

- Dan Rawls and Precision Tree crew did another fantastic job of getting some troubling alder and maple on the ground, protecting the adjacent homes. Always amazing to watch these guys climb, cut, clean up and go home in one piece.

#### **WONDERLAND WALK**

- Joined the parking team for yet another year. Numbers were solid and the vast majority of the guests were cooperative and holiday happy.

**James Burroughs**

**ACFL Maintenance technician**

**December 22nd, 2025**

### **ACFL Maintenance Report: December 2025**

#### ***Trail and Hazard Tree Maintenance***

Throughout December, I focused on clearing storm-related blowdown and addressing hazardous trees to maintain safe public access across the forest lands. Blowdown trees and hazards were removed from the following trails and locations:

- Trails 10, 12, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28
- Trails 204, 207, 210, 224, 241, 300, 306, 200, 219, 120, 137, 129, 115, 103, 208, 126
- Cap Sante Trail
- Areas along Heart Lake Road
- Mount Erie Summit Road

Work included cutting and removing fallen trees, clearing limbs from trail corridors, and addressing hazard trees impacting trail safety.

### ***Beaver Activity and Water Flow Monitoring***

Beaver rounds and known water control locations were checked throughout the forest lands. Increased rainfall over the past several weeks resulted in elevated water levels and increased flow in multiple systems.

- Ace of Hearts Creek resumed flowing on December 8, 2025
- Little Cranberry spillway began flowing during the same week
- Additional monitored locations included:
  - Mitten Pond
  - 108 Bridge
  - Whistle Lake outflow
  - 32nd Street Swamp

All sites showed increased water movement and higher than normal seasonal levels.

### ***Trail Drainage Monitoring***

Trail drainage systems were monitored throughout December due to increased rainfall and elevated water levels across the forest lands. I inspected trail drainage features including culverts, ditches, and natural drainages to ensure they were functioning properly and to identify areas of pooling or erosion.

Drainage monitoring occurred along multiple trail corridors, with particular attention given to low-lying sections and areas affected by recent storms. Increased water flow was observed, consistent with seasonal conditions, and continued monitoring will be needed as winter precipitation continues.

### ***ACFL Sanitation***

Routine sanitation duties were completed across the forest lands, including:

- Garbage collection
- Restroom cleaning and servicing

### ***Road and Storm Debris Removal***

Storm debris was cleared from roads to maintain safe vehicle travel and emergency access:

- Little Cranberry Road
- Mount Erie Summit Road
- Heart Lake Road

### ***Bridge Inventory***

Work continued on the bridge inventory log, including verification and documentation of existing bridge structures within ACFL.

### ***Specialized Tree Work Coordination***

Met with a professional tree climber to discuss climbing hardware and access considerations for the climbing hardware in the old-growth tree at Heart Lake area. Discussion focused on equipment needs and safety considerations for future work.

### ***In-Town Support Work***

In addition to ACFL duties, I assisted with several in-town projects during December:

- Support for Winter Wonderland Walk
- Leaf blowing at the cemetery
- Assistance with concrete pour for columbarium at the cemetery
  - In-town garbage collection
  - Repaired Boards and wire rope on Tommy Thompson Trestle

