



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, September 15th
6:00PM
Trailhead #215 / Ray Auld Drive**

The September 2021 meeting of the Forest Advisory Board has been moved from September 2nd to September 15th.

The purpose of this special meeting is the annual hike with the Friends of the Forest Board.

There is no agenda for this meeting. It is an opportunity for both boards to informally discuss a variety of Anacortes Community Forest Lands items.

No public comments will be taken.

Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

Minutes of the Meeting: August 5, 2021

Board Members Present: Sandra Starbuck, Brian Wetcher, Nick Stowe

Staff Present: B. Vaux, S. Phillips

Meeting called to order: 6:00PM. Meeting location #10 Trailhead, "Old Dump" Gate.

Board and attendees walked to trail intersection #10x#108 to begin meeting.

June 2021 Meeting Minutes unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

Richard Mellon, a volunteer with the Washington Trails Association is looking forward to working with ACFL staff on yet to be determined trail improvement projects. Is hopeful that trail #132 will finally be commissioned.

Marlene Finley, President of Evergreen Islands introduced herself and talked about EI's mission.

Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller, Friends of the Forest Outreach and Development Coordinator introduced herself and updated the Board on FoF summer activities. The Trail Ambassador program is going very well. ACFL staff concur.

Staff Reports:

Vaux and Phillips spoke briefly regarding their submitted written reports.

The Summer '21 ACFL/FoF volunteer work party will Saturday, Sept 18th. The plan is to work on #215 surfacing from the Ray Auld Drive trailhead to the intersection with #320.

There is anecdotal evidence of an uptick in trailhead and park parking lot vehicle prowls. Visitors are asked to take proper measures, i.e., especially do not leave valuables in unattended vehicles.

There was some discussion amongst all attendees of the Adenovirus Hemorrhagic Disease (AHD), a fatal blow to any deer that come into contact with it. Thus far, WDFW has only confirmed one case in the City of Anacortes.

There was also some discussion of the Whistle Lake dam safety project. Vaux reported that there has been no new information nor have there been new developments since the site visit some months ago with GeoEngineers and Widener and Associates.

Site Visit: #10 Trail Repair, from last winter's flooding. All attendees hiked out to the repair site, and reviewed the approved planning documents, including a letter from Tess Cooper, former COA Senior Planner and a Best Management Practices plan from Bachman Environmental. These documents approved a work plan developed by ACFL Steve and Jeff Beltramini from COA Public Works. The site review complete, the group adjourned the meeting at 730PM, and hiked back out to the #10 trailhead via trail #113.

August 2021 Parks and ACFL Operations Administrative Report

Open Streets Fun

Special thanks to Bicycle/Pedestrian Czar Warren Tessler and the many volunteers that made the 7th Annual Open Streets so successful. It was truly a pleasure to be part of a day with so many smiling faces. It was hard not to feel the palpable joy watching the bicycle skills course set up by the Anacortes Mountain Bike Team. Tiny bicyclists having such fun. It really inspires one to try and make this a reality in our community.

Rotary Club Cap Sante Trail Project

Throughout August we have had a variety of site visits including GeoEngineers, hired by the Rotary Club to do the required biological report, as well as the Samish Nation to make sure we are not going to disturb any important historical sites. So far, feedback from all involved has been positive.

City Council Honors Eric Shjarback

City Engineer and Assistant Director of Public Works Eric Shjarback is retiring August 31. Eric has been a huge friend of Parks throughout his career, and is a fantastic creative problem solver. I will miss working with him very much, but am excited for the new lifestyle he is about to lead.

Washington Park Boat Launch Road

Parks Foreperson Brian Tottenham and I met with Streets Division Manager Brandon Lowry and his right hand Saben Williamson at the WP boat launch last week. We discussed a variety of options for asphalt repair and surface water management improvements. Big thank you to Brandon and Saben for coming up with some great low-cost solutions to some age-old challenges.

COA Meetings Returning to Virtual Format

While we did enjoy an in-person hike for our last Forest Board meeting, and an in person/virtual hybrid at last month's Parks Commission meeting, we are returning for now to virtual meetings. The Forest Board will be hiking with the Friends of the Forest Board for its September meeting.

Jon On Vacation

Director Lunsford took a well-deserved break the week of August 9th. I was able to cover a variety of meetings and activities for him.

Thank You Alli

The ACFL Trail Team bid farewell to Alli Schuh on Friday, August 13th. She was a fantastic worker and maintained a very positive demeanor throughout many ACFL summer challenges.

Miscellaneous:

- Continue my regular meetings with Asa at the Friends of the Forest HQ.
- We did receive a citizen's report concerning vegetation clearing above the Guemes Channel Trail. I verified and documented the work, and have passed it along to Planning for further action to be taken.
- Have done my best to attend regular Washington Park staff meetings. Though I am not regularly on site any more, I remain actively involved in the park's management.
- Parks staff continues to be a first contact for a variety of homeless circumstances in the Parks and ACFL. Thank you so much to the Police Department and the Family Center for being ready to take over when necessary and offer advice when possible.
- ACFL Steve and I continue our monthly educational hikes with Denise Crowe of the Samish Nation staff.
- I did take vacation leave Aug 16 – 23. Special thanks to Parks Manager Nicole Johnston for covering.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux, Assistant Director
August 30, 2021

ACFL Maintenance Report AUGUST – 2021 by Steve Phillips
August 26, 2021

Looking back at my iPhone photos that I took over the month of August, I see one from Saturday, August 14 at 1:46pm of empty cliffs. I have a picture of a Northern Alligator Lizard from trail 204 on August 13, and several from the same day of desiccated vegetation.

It's been very dry and strangely lacking in visitors in the forest this month. Water in all the lakes is noticeably low.

The Green Mile project (repainting the handrails at the four lookouts on Mount Erie) continues. To date, only the small south-facing platform remains. Warm, sunny weather next week should permit completion.



July 29 I was on a slow, methodical hike in search of a ground nest for yellowjackets. It was a hot and very calm day, and I noticed I could actually *hear* the peeling of Madrona bark that day. It has been noticeable again several days since then.

August 4 I finally hung my traps (a few weeks late) to monitor for Asian Giant Hornets. Just last week a nest was eradicated in Blaine, about 2 miles from the nest located and eradicated in 2020. A suspicious looking hornet, though dead, was found near Marysville in June. Other than these, there have been no other confirmed 2021 sightings, but drawing a line between these two points puts us in range. So, it's worth monitoring! I check my two traps weekly. See agr.wa.gov for more info.

August 6 Taking advantage of cooler weather, Alli, Gabe, and I began work on Trail 113. There is a section near Big Beaver Pond that becomes squishy for months, and we think we can improve it with addition of puncheon and a drainage culvert.

To date, that project is partially complete, still needing the culvert. We all had some time using the power wheelbarrow, which is fun for about 25 seconds. But it is very helpful in moving material.

August 13 was seasonal worker Alli Schuh's last day. Thank you Alli and happy trails! The same day I noted an Air Quality Index reading of 122. We speculated that the smoky air that week may have been the reason that we lacked visitors despite such warm weather (daytime highs in the upper 70s – low 80s).

A persistent ground yellowjacket nest near the 17th street end of Trail 121 was eradicated after a few spray attempts (8/6, 8/18) and a digout/spray. Gabe finally dug it out on 8/22 (without getting stung), sprayed the combs, and declared victory.

August 15 I worked this Sunday and was happy to encounter tables with Friends of the Forest Trail Ambassadors at Cranberry and Whistle Lakes. They told me that visitors appreciated their presence – if nothing else, to act as a deterrent to vehicle break-ins. But also they reported that they were able to answer some questions about navigation and nature. Thanks FoF!

August 17 I joined two members of Rotary at Rotary Park/Cap Sante to flag a future trail corridor. The flagging was preparatory work for an ecologist coming the next day to survey. It will be fun and helpful to the community to define a formal trail here this fall.

August 18 I replaced two broken split rail fence posts at the Little Cranberry parking lot. One still awaits, but I hope to get there soon.

August 20-21 in my absence, Gabe litter picked Heart Lake Road, giving great attention to detail. He reported finding and removing **314 cigarette butts** in addition to the usual refuse. THANK YOU GABE.

August 24 Gabe and I tried to fell a partially fallen tree on 215, on the north side of Sugarloaf. We were unable to pull it down the entire distance the ground, but it is no longer connected to the stump and leaning favorably away from the trail.

Today I sampled the three lakes for water quality (fecal coliform analysis, done by the Anacortes Wastewater Treatment Plant). After that I spent some time with my superiors Brian and Nicole at the Clearidge Pickleball Courts, massaging the Arborvitae planting that we started last month. After this report is written, I will go back there to water them some more – today's light rain was not enough.



Dry Understory along Trail 235, August 2021