



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

October 7, 2021

6pm

No in person meeting. Virtual meeting only.

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82827381204>

Preliminary Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approve August 2021 Minutes
3. Public Comments
4. Staff Reports
5. ACFL Management Plan update
6. Conservation Easement Program update
7. Other Business

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.

ACFL Maintenance Report SEPTEMBER – 2021 by Steve Phillips

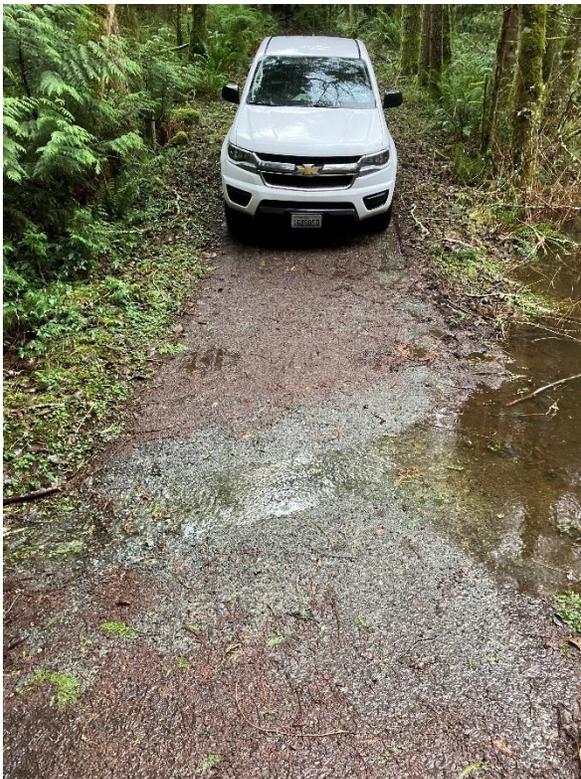
SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

At the end of August, signs of drought continued to express themselves in terms of low water levels in the lakes. By mid-September, many Western red cedar growing in town, and on Fidalgo Island in general, had begun to show “cedar flagging”. This is still visible. If you haven’t noticed, look for a checkerboard pattern of brown on an otherwise green cedar. A normal phenomenon, this is the result of the tree shedding its old leaves. The fresher leaves, near the tips of each branch, remain green. This phenomenon seemed far more pronounced this year, probably because of the dry summer.

When winds picked up on Friday the 17th, needles resembling drizzle were falling from the treetops. The trails and roads in the Forest Lands took on a golden-brown hue. It rained that night, making our assignments more clear for the work party on Saturday the 18th. We were able to patch sections of Trail 215 where it goes through a low-lying area near the Ray Auld Drive parking area. The combination of needles/rain left clear imprints where puddles had been. We had a terrific work party, moving about 4 cubic yards of gravel by wheelbarrow and installing 7 turnpikes where the old ones had settled into the muck and become ineffective. We also dug out a derelict culvert. I was so impressed with the amount of work that 8 volunteers could accomplish in three hours. We were joined by an exchange student from Indonesia and two Friends staffers – Beck; and Asa in a knee brace no less.

Please hike 215 to enjoy dry feet in this section of trail, and thank the volunteers as you go.

Insert photo here... I’m sorry to say that I didn’t take a single photo that day, but I believe Beck did. Earlier today, Parks was all-hands-on-deck in the ACFL. The team joined me in making the necessary repair on Trail 10 where we all hiked for August’s FAB meeting. We installed a repair that will allow the wetland to retain its high water level while still making the road passable in this location. Rather than a culvert under the road surface, we installed what one could call a “rock burrito” – quarry spalls enveloped in geotextile and capped with gravel. The result is an elevated road surface for roughly a 25-foot section that will allow water to gently pass from one side to the other.



January 8, 2021

September 29, 2021

A few trees have been blocking trails this month, but not as many as expected with at least two gale warning windstorms to date. As always, we appreciate picture messages, emails, or phone calls with locations and tree size when trail blockages happen due to blowdowns.

Numbers of swimmers and lake visitors plummeted this month with cooler weather and school starting.

On August 31, I repaired the turnstile at the 226/238 trail junction. I also added a few more 226 trail signs where I thought they were needed at this junction and the next one eastward.

On September 2, I finished the last of the "Green Mile", the metal overlook railings on the summit of Mt. Erie.

September 2 our Heart Lake vault toilets received a pumping. Ready for fall!

On September 4, Gabe Apple and I installed a culvert on Trail 113 just above Big Beaver Pond. This was the completion of a project we initiated in August with the help of Alli Schuh.

I watered the Arborvitae at the pickleball courts at Clearidge for the last time before winter on September 4.

I have been involved with tree surveys and consultations citywide, sometimes assisting the Street crew with tree questions in their rights of way.

I spent the better part of the week of September 13 assembling materials (cedar logs, gravel), tuning up our wheelbarrows, and formulating a plan for the work party on September 18.

I worked a productive day with the rest of Parks at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on the 15th. The rest of the month was mostly preparation for today's project on Trail 10.

There were also reports of yellowjacket nests that Gabe and I took care of with a combination of Ortho spray and digging out with a McLeod, then dashing away, then returning the next day to repeat this process.

Gabe's last day was September 19. Thanks Gabe, for all your hard work and accomplishments!

I'm headed up 215 after I write this to do some repair work on the turnstiles with Braydn from the Parks crew. Wish us luck!

September 2021 Parks and ACFL Operations Administrative Report

ACFL Management Plan Update

We are excited to be moving forward on the long and winding road of the 2014 ACFL Management Plan update. I did a broad-brush stroke presentation for the City Council on Sept. 13, asking for their preference on a direction forward. As the Planning Commission recommended the 2014 draft update to the City Council on March 27, 2019, Council is comfortable moving forward with their own public hearing and update process. Written comments may be submitted to me any time, and the Council Public Hearing for the plan is scheduled for October 18.

Friends of the Forest Trail Ambassadors

The Friends invited ACFL Steve and I to join their thank you pizza party for their first ever summer Trail Ambassador program. The volunteers, who set up informational tables at various trailheads throughout summer weekends, were very well received by both visitors and ACFL staff. Their observations, guest assistance and general feedback/updates were a great addition to our busy summer. We look forward to this program's future expansion, and say Thank You, FoF!

Rotary Club Cap Sante Centennial Project

Over the last couple of months I have been able to tour the proposed project site with two members of the Samish Nation staff, including Denise Crowe. Steve and I moved our monthly ACFL outing with Denise to the Cap Sante project site. Another great outing and exchange of ideas and insights.

As Rotary Club Project Lead Tom Decker continues his work on grant applications for signage and other fronts, we had a very productive pre-application meeting with City staff. We will begin permit work shortly for the trail phase of the project, and will be reviewing same at the October Parks Commission meeting.

Welcome Mike Sullivan

Director Lunsford, Parks Manager Johnston and I were able to welcome new Anacortes School District Executive Director of Finance and Operations Mike Sullivan to town. Along with some of his maintenance team, we toured the Volunteer Park and Smiley's Bottom area, talking about the long history of cooperation between the ASD and the COA. I look forward to working with Mike.

Trail #126 Bridge Replacement

Steve and Gabe removed the existing bridge from #126. The structure was long past due for replacement, and had become a particular hazard for the equestrian community. We are working with Planning and Permitting on next steps, and conducted a site visit with Sr. Planner Emily Morgan prior to doing any work at all. She approved the demolition of the existing bridge, and will be getting us a list of the appropriate permits for the work needed to move forward.

Joint Board Hike

In addition to this year's joint Forest Advisory Board / Friends of the Forest Board hike, Asa Deane and I continue our every other week meeting schedule. The joint hike was a beautiful Sept 15 stroll through the south Heart Lake old growth. Great discussions and catching up. Thank you to both boards for making yourselves available.

Heart Lake Survey Schedule Change

Aquatechnex, the company we have worked with previously on chemical milfoil application on Heart Lake, was unable to get to the survey work we had contracted with them to do before the weather change made any type of vegetation control ineffective. Like the rest of the world, they were impacted by staff health challenges. We have been able to move the contract to 2022, and are planning on a spring survey of the lake. This will allow staff the chance to bring any invasive vegetation control plans forward to the Forest Advisory Board for discussion next spring/early summer.

Forest Ridge Buffer Windowing

ACFL Steve and I met with the leaders of the Forest Ridge HOA, to review and approve the plan for eastern view windowing in the Native Growth Protection Area. This is called out in the original conditions for the development as approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. Very little work will be done, and Steve will be meeting on site with Eager Beaver prior to work commencing. Eager Beaver has worked on this site under Director Lunsford in years passed.

Labor Day Horse Rescue

Received a call early Labor Day morning about a horse that had gotten itself stuck on a down tree along trail #211, just north of Heart Lake. Something spooked the horse near the parking lot, prior to the rider getting in the saddle. It took off and ended up with two legs on one side of the tree and two on the other. Anacortes Fire Department, along with a local volunteer, were able to fashion some stairs out of dimensional lumber that the horse was able to climb with its hind legs. I have heard second hand that the horse and rider were both a bit banged up, but recovering.

Butte Falls, Oregon Reaches Out

Via an old friend of Asa Deane's, I met with the Mayor and other community leaders of the small southern Oregon town of Butte Falls. The town recently purchased several hundred acres of forest land, and are very interested in the history of the ACFL. They are indeed pursuing trail access, educational and cultural history opportunities. It was a real pleasure speaking with these folks.

Trail #10 Repair

As I write this report, ACFL Steve and several members of our Parks Crew are wrapping up this much needed repair work, just in time for the rainy season to commence.

Miscellaneous:

- >9/1: attended Washington Park staff meeting. Nicole Johnston doing a great job running things out there, and the staff has already welcomed, assisted and said farewell to a record number of campers.
- >doing a deep dive into WP campground policies and procedures with several of our full-time staff. Once we have some clear priorities, we will present them to the Parks Commission.
- >public tree risk assessment continues.
- >have entered into a planning discussion with local Washington Trails Association folks, re: ACFL trail repair and maintenance projects. We are currently looking at #119 trailhead.
- >the local disc golf advocates are hoping to host a tourney at the Cap Sante course this fall. We are working with them on their plans, and are anticipating a successful event.
- >Director Lunsford and I found ourselves stepping in for Rec staff on a recent beautiful Wednesday afternoon Pee Wee soccer session. It was tons o' fun, and the kids didn't seem to mind a little Olde Tyme Rec.
- >attended another quality "Tailgate Safety Meeting" with the Parks Division on Sept. 17. These are always poignant discussions amongst a group of people deeply committed to their public work, and each other.
- >thanks to Jonn and Nicole for covering for me as I took vacation leave Sept 18-27. Also, thanks to ACFL Steve for managing the Summer ACFL work party on Sept 18.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux, Assistant Director
September 29, 2021