



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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**Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory
Board**

February 4, 2021

MEETING CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19

January 2021 Parks and ACFL Operations Administrative Report

This month I am combining my usually separate reports for the Parks Commission and Forest Advisory Board into one. If this does not work for the membership of either, please let me know. Otherwise, I will use this format going forward.

We are happy to be gearing up for our second virtual Parks Commission meeting, to be held Tuesday, February 9th. We will be holding our first virtual Forest Advisory Board meeting on Thursday, March 4th. Meetings will commence at their usual 6PM timeslots. We will work with both groups to determine future meeting schedules.

We did have a fairly quiet holiday season to wrap up 2020, a year that plenty has been spoken of and written about. Our staff was able to take some time off, while coordinating leave schedules to make sure we had office and field coverage each day. I would especially like to thank Washington Park Caretaker Chris Schmaus for his holiday coverage efforts.

The New Year always starts with staff project planning and priority meetings. Our big three projects remain the cemetery expansion, the Washington Park 'A' Loop utility upgrades and the Depot restroom project. All three are currently moving forward in a timely and on budget schedule manner. Updates will be provided in other staff reports. Here is the latest from Washington Park:

Parks Foreperson Brian Tottenham has been working with Jesse/VECA Electrical on planning/executing the trenching for the electrical conduit. We learned in C section that the water lines are fine, and can be left in place. Because of this, we are able to do the water delivery improvements above ground as needed. We are focusing on the electrical work now to better manage the timeline. There will be some pedestal relocation, so it is more timely to work on the water hook ups after conduit and new pedestals are in place. Brian is communicating this to Jim Rains (former Parks maintenance crew member, now with Wastewater Treatment. Our in house welder), and will plan work with him as we figure out just how much will be required. We are able to add some 50 amp service. Because of permitting limitations and the amount of power required, we can't do this at every pedestal, but maybe 2/3 of them. Once we have this confirmed, we will update our campground maps to reflect the 50 amp service available in both C and A.

It is looking like we will need to upgrade at least one of the large breakers in the utility vault next to the B4 pay station.

Once trenching is completed along with conduit in place, Jesse/VECA pulls the new wire and does the actual electrical hook up.

Trenching is going well, and we were surprised at how soon the conduit will be arriving.

After enjoying a relatively quiet December, the mid January wind event arrived and presented all of us with several challenges; power outages, roads closed, trails damaged and various parks and the cemetery subjected to significant tree loss, and some infrastructure damage. Our team has been doing a great job cleaning up and getting our parks and trails accessible. I have spent a fair amount of time in the ACFL supporting Steve Phillips' over the past couple of weeks. We are very close to having all of the trails at least passable. We will need to fine tune as time permits.

As the City owns and manages two dams within the ACFL, the Department of Ecology has safety protocol required for each. You may remember the work done at the Little Cranberry dam in the mid 90's. This included tree and vegetation removal, the construction of a spillway and installation of a log boom. We do an annual inspection and send that to DOE.

The earthen dam at Whistle Lake has not been upgraded to these standards, and DOE has reached out to us to explore options for necessary safety upgrades. The dam, just north of Toot Swamp is crossed by trail #205 and is rarely noticed by most forest visitors. We are currently working with a consultant on some options going forward, and may have these ready for discussion at the March Forest Board meeting. It should be noted that Whistle Lake is still the backup water supply for the City.

A variety of City departments, including Parks & Recreation, continue work with the Anacortes Family Center and other generous community support groups on the issues surrounding homelessness. The embedded social worker discussion throughout the City Council's 2021 budget deliberations have given us some options we have not previously had. We continue to currently work together delivering services to those in need, while working on updated community protocol. We look forward to having some options to present to Council in the next few weeks.

We did have some minor storm damage on the Guemes Channel Trail as a result of the recent west wind event. We were able to do all repair work in house, and within the parameters of our maintenance permits.

I am reconnecting with the Pacific Northwest Trail Association Western Washington Regional Coordinator, Sterling Collins-Hill. He attended one of our "recent" in person Forest Board meetings asking about signage options. He and I are working on some informational signage at #248 and #100 trailheads (off of west end of 23rd Street). He has some grant funding available.

Friends of the Forest Executive Director Asa Deane and I continue our regular meetings every two weeks. We are excited to be putting together an ACFL volunteer project for the end of February. Due to pandemic protocol, pre-registration to limit numbers will be required. Specifics for this will be distributed by Parks & Rec Communications Czar Victoria Wong soon.

Thank you again to the Samish Indian Nation for our monthly connection and ACFL hike with Denise Crowe. Our January trip through the Little Cranberry burn zone was an exciting treasure hunt of native plant renewal power. Denise' sharing of Samish tradition and her years of ACFL presence greatly enriches our approach to ACFL management with every trip.

ACFL Steve and I continue to work with Planning staff on trail repair projects. The wind storm has been a bit of a setback. We will get back on that schedule soon.

Our Parks Impact Fee draft plan will be discussed next at the Feb 8 Council meeting. Washington Park proposed fee increases will also be on the agenda.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bob Vaux, Assistant Director
January 29, 2021

ACFL Maintenance Report JANUARY – 2021 by Steve Phillips

January 28, 2021

It was a fairly normal January until the severe windstorm that struck in the early morning of January 13. Since then our work has been prioritizing and clearing trails of fallen trees and broken limbs. And this will continue for at least another week, from the looks of it.

The strong west wind wreaked havoc in NW Washington not only because of high wind speed out of the west (high enough to topple a semi truck on Deception Pass Bridge), but also because of saturated soil conditions leading up to the event.

Many of the trees that were uprooted and downed are otherwise healthy trees, as you can see from a walk in the woods. When one comes upon one of these trees and takes a minute to study the soil depth, surrounding hydrology, and local topography, these conditions can help explain the aftermath. Sometimes we remain puzzled. But it is a fun thinking exercise to think not only about the trees that succumb to massive wind events, and also note those that carry on. How many windstorms like this have our old giants endured?

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It had seemed, as we approached the New Year, that we had already experienced a fairly windy winter, even leading up to this storm.

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I have had some help from the Parks crew on the tree mess. A few of my days have also been spent helping the rest of the team deal with windstorm aftermath at Grandview Cemetery. Wind did significant tree damage there as well as at Washington Park.

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Leading up to the wind event, the 32nd Street beaver deceiver went from being overtopped early in the month (January 4) to having caught up and only at about 75% capacity on January 12. For as wet a month as December was, we have gotten a rain reprieve in January.

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We have approval from our planning department to begin some trail repair work on trails 304 and 113. Stay tuned on those; after we catch up clearing trails, we hope to do these small projects in February.