



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

October 1, 2020

MEETING CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19

ACFL Administrative Report for October Forest Advisory Board Meeting

Bob Vaux, Assistant Director, Anacortes Parks & Recreation

As summer slowly transitions into fall, the already shorter days have helped reduce our large scale forest and lake crowds. Of course, the smoke coming from multiple states have slowed things down dramatically as well. Thank you to our many regular users for helping us keep an eye out during this high fire danger season. While the City does now have a comprehensive burn ban in place, including all campfire and beach fire pits at Washington Park, fires of any kind, including smoking and vaping are always banned in the ACFL.

I'd also like to thank volunteer ACFL stewards like Jim Thompson and Jack Hartt. Jim keeps us in touch with local and national climbing trends, and his ear to the ground especially along the Mt. Erie climbing routes. And Jack keeps us linked up with Transition Fidalgo, and the great work they are doing monitoring climate change and how our forest lands are being impacted by same.

Director Lunsford was able to secure the necessary permitting to replace the 32nd Street beaver deceiver. Work should begin on this project within the next week or so.

While the sun was certainly still shining over the Labor Day holiday weekend, ACFL visitors were mostly conscientious, simply enjoying the woods one more time before many of them began figuring out the many challenging layers of back to school during the pandemic. Thanks again to Director Lunsford and Parks Manager Johnston for helping monitor the holiday woods.

I continue to meet regularly with Asa and the Friends of the Forest, and our staff will be working with his on some children's adventures in the woods. We are each part of a larger partnership with the school district, working to bring some fun to a very challenging school year.

ACFL Steve and I had our monthly hike with Denise Crowe. Special thanks to the Samish Nation for making Denise and her decades of knowledge and experiences in our woods available to City staff.

I am submitting my report a bit early this month as I will be on vacation Sept 16 – Oct 1. Steve and I, along with Parks Maintenance staff, are working on our fall work plan. If the Forest Board has some thoughts on this front, I would be very happy to discuss.

Faithfully Submitted,

Bv /September 16, 2020

ACFL Maintenance Report SEPTEMBER – 2020 by Steve Phillips

September 24, 2020

Signs of the times: April 2020, disposed disposable wipes littered in parking lots; September 2020, disposed disposable masks in parking lots.

This month for a few days, we switched to KN95 masks to protect ourselves from the high levels of particulate matter in the air. Ominous smoke from California and Oregon wildfires settled over the region for several days, creating hazy conditions and triggering "Hazardous" Air Quality Index rating from the EPA.

We noticed an increase this month in ACFL visitors wearing masks, which was encouraging.

Violations

Drinking at lakes, especially Whistle Lake, dropped off dramatically as temperatures dropped toward the end of last month. Even Labor Day weekend was calmer than anticipated. The Monday morning garbage and recycle cans always tell the story that people are consuming alcohol in ACFL over the weekends, far more than we are able to prevent with our patrolling.

BBQs and smoking in parking lots as well as further in our forests during the period of hot, dry weather that hit us was strictly discouraged. We also scoured some of the usual places to discourage illegal camping, but came up empty.

Tree swing removal – We took down another rope tree swing this month, this one in a recurring location.

Graffiti appeared on the summit of Mt. Erie. We tried various methods to remove it, but resorted to using a wire brush to scour it off the face. We will leave it to lichens and moss to return the surface to its ancient patina.

Trails – Drainage, erosion, bridges, fallen trees

We removed a few more pieces of derelict rebar from turnpikes north of Heart Lake.

I repaired a section of 205, south of 29, where a path connecting the trail to water had been created by dogs and/or wildlife (possibly otters), causing a notch in the trail tread in an already narrow and challenging section of trail.

Trees fell... several were cut out. As always, these are reported by users who are kind enough to help us. The most helpful reports have location as well as the approximate diameter of the fallen trees. If pictures are taken, the best ones have a known object in the frame for scale.

Miscellaneous Good News

Over the summer, we watered trees that have been recently planted on Guemes Channel Trail and 32nd Street Wetland (planted this spring); and at the Ferry Terminal wetland mitigation upland buffer site (planted several years ago). Tree survival is looking good at all sites and the additional water over the summer seemed helpful. Many curious hikers on Guemes Channel asked about the green “Gator bags” that we used for a slow water release.