



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

January 7, 2021

MEETING CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19

December 23, 2020

It has been a rainy past 48 hours. The latest rain events have put us past the saturation point in all areas of the ACFL, as far as I can tell. At the end of the day yesterday, rain gave way to sleet, and soon snow. It was enough to leave a dusting on the ground on Mount Erie, but that quickly melted as more rain fell. Our improved, higher-capacity Beaver Deceiver at the outlet of 32nd Street Swamp is working at full capacity, but I still observed overland flow yesterday afternoon. I hope the dry weather today and tomorrow will give that system time to lower in time for the forecasted rain over the Christmas weekend. As with floods in larger river systems, a few dry days make a huge dry difference in the ability of our wetlands to absorb new precipitation. It's interesting to watch this on a landscape scale over time.

Violations

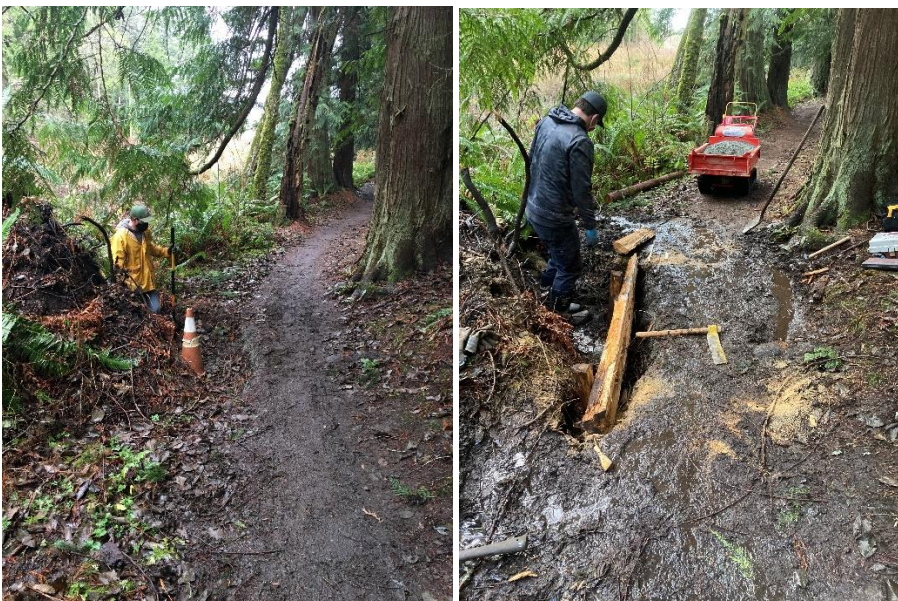
I have seen and heard of two separate motorbikers riding out of season. I also had a discussion with a gentleman on an electric bike. He claimed to be unaware that ebikes fall into the category of motorized bikes, and that they are not allowed this time of year. I later was able to show him the sign at the kiosk that he had ridden past that indicated the same policy.

Trails – Drainage, erosion, bridges, fallen trees

It was a big month for tree removals, owing to a few windstorms that passed through the region this month. My spreadsheet shows that I responded to 18 tree issues in the last month (down from 27 in November).

Parks coworker AJ Yost and I took a boat with electric trolling motor for a trash-cleaning sail on December 2. We didn't haul out quite as many lures and beer cans as we expected, but we did find at least one shoreline party spot that I hadn't really been aware of. We did remove a handful of fishing line snarls from branches overhanging the lake, which is satisfying.

Yesterday, AJ and I performed a fairly simple trail repair on a heavily used section of trail. You may have noticed a candlestick, and later a cone, in a hole adjacent to trail 108 just south of the western end of the 32nd Street Swamp. A large, living alder had tipped over, leaving a gaping hole where its root mass had been. The root mass was holding the trail in place prior to tipping, so we needed to build a small retaining wall to hold gravel on the trail. We backfilled the cedar wall with soil acquired from the root ball. The following photos capture the site before (12/16/20) and during/after (12/22/20).





We anticipate further trail maintenance projects in the coming year.

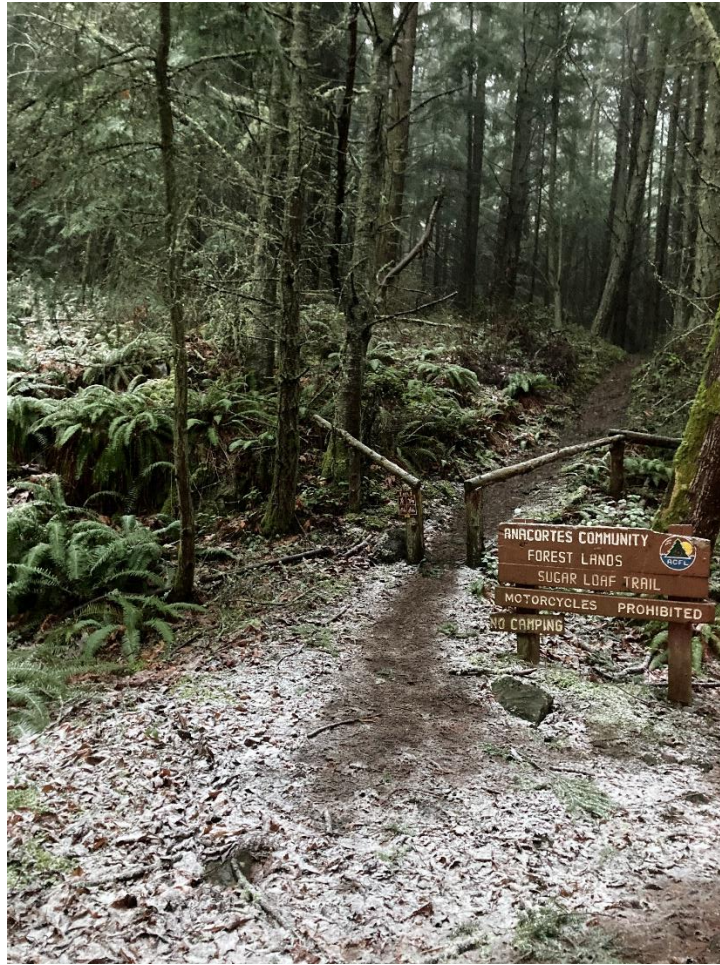
[Invasive Species](#)

It's a great time to find holly, ivy, and spurge laurel (you might say it's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year). For now, the best way is to notify us of the infestation, and we'll go after it. Some are still flagging infestations by tying forestry tape to a nearby trailside shrub. Thank you! While this is effective, with the ability allowed by smartphones to picture message and the ability to drop pins (GPS locations), there may be a way to leverage technology to help the battle.

We hope to coordinate volunteer events, as COVID-19 restrictions allow, to remove invasives. I will be spending some time today doing so. If I find an "outlier" or a lone individual, I generally remove it on the spot rather than hoping to return when it's more convenient. Sometimes there's "no time like the present".

[Miscellaneous Good News](#)

Thanks for those who have remained courteous COVID-19 trail stewards. It seems the word is really out about social distancing. It's now a regular sight to see hikers wearing masks and allowing others plenty of passing room. To take these measures outside seems absurd to some, who tell me so, but plenty also mention that they appreciate it. So many of us are in the mask habit now, whenever we anticipate encounters with strangers. It seems like there are many out there willing to go the distance.



Powdered Sugarloaf, Solstice, 12/21/20

ACFL Administrative Report for January 2021 Forest Advisory Board Meeting

Bob Vaux, Assistant Director, Anacortes Parks & Recreation

We were able to hold our first Parks Commission meeting since the onset of the pandemic last spring. Of course it was via Zoom, but great to get back online. We are hoping to do the same for the Forest Board. It will probably be February or March when we put this together. Thank you for your patience, and be sure to reach out to me whenever I might be able to answer questions, explain things, or generally be of help.

Steve and I spent a great afternoon with Libby and Tess from the COA Planning Department. We visited a variety of trail sites in need of work, discussing the permit requirements for each, and how to most efficiently take care of repairs. We know there are some long overdue maintenance needs on the trails, but we want to make sure we are working within a required guidelines. And as you have seen in Steve's report, the #108 project has already been taken care of. Thank you Planning! And great work Steve and AJ.

I spent most of Thanksgiving Eve day with Steve Phillips working on a couple of long term hazard trees at the intersection of trail #'s 10 x 106. Happy to report all went as planned. A side benefit of that project was the

number of familiar and new faces we were able to greet while at that jobsite. Seeing the joy the ACFL brings so many is always inspiring.

Phones were quiet over that TG weekend, most folks enjoying the woods as per winter protocols.

Had some good times with Friends of the Forest Asa and Beck over the last few weeks. In addition to a beautiful outing with Asa along #'s 201, 21, 204 and 20 (I forget how fantastic this route is in the "off" season...not a cliff jumper for miles in any direction), he and I are ramping up plans to invigorate our ACFL volunteer work parties for 2021. Of course we will be working within all appropriate pandemic guidelines, but there will be published volunteer opportunities in the New Year. I also had the good fortune to assist Beck with one of her youth hikes. It never stopped raining, and the kids were unphased. Joyful.

Thank you to the Samish Nation for our monthly ACFL staff hike with Denise Crowe. She highlighted this month's trip with a story about Sap, and Sap's beloved friend Doug Fir.

Tree evaluations throughout town were fairly quiet this last month. Steve has been plenty busy working to keep the trails open. We sure appreciate all the information from our trail users, helping us get to projects faster than we might on our own.

We had some public discussion regarding tree decorating in the parks and forest lands over the last few weeks. We came up with a plan for the Loop Road, and have held onto our no decorating policy in the ACFL. I have had a few phone calls regarding this, about 2 to 1 in favor of no decorations. This may be a future discussion item for the Forest Board.

2020 has been quite a ride. I want to thank all the Parks & Rec Dept staff for pitching in in the woods at various times, and express gratitude to all of our locals that have been forced to share on a much grander level than previously experienced. The ACFL is a treasure, a living, breathing life force that needs all of us. Thank you for your vigilance, and here is to 2021!

Faithfully Submitted,

Bv /December 24, 2020