

Friends of the Forest Dedicated to the preservation of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands through education, outreach & stewardship

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We came, we cut, we restored.

The cutting extended from the 19th Century through 1989, when city logging of up to 20 acres of its forestland each year prompted formation of Friends of the Forest and a turnabout in Anacortes forest stewardship.

The restoration is going on right now. By my rough calculation the forest adds an average of 684 cubic feet of wood a day (thank you photosynthesis), invasive species have been driven back, and trails and signage steadily improved.

Residents have contributed nearly \$2 million to put a permanent easement on approximately 2,000 acres to protect the forest forever.

The result is one of the highest ratios of forest to civic population in the United States, and one of the best-kept secrets of Western Washington. How we got here and where we're going was the theme of a talk I gave at the recent annual meeting, just a few minutes after joining the Friends board.

As the author of a book on Northwest logging controversy, I know pioneers regarded harvest as a necessary and even heroic act. Fidalgo Island was no different. Most of the Anacortes forestlands have been cut once, twice, or even three times, and the harvests were logical for that era.

But times change. Preserving the woods has become a way to attract newcomers and investments to the city. People love trees so much that a million people a year actually pay to visit Muir Woods near San Francisco.

Should we tell those people racing to catch the ferry that many of those lovely San Juan attributes are at this end of the dock as well?

The change in attitude here was evolutionary. Some of the island's lakes were acquired to harness for water and power - the bottom of today's Cranberry Lake was clearcut and its head dammed to create what seems "natural" today - and beginning in 1919, the city acquired this watershed land from the Allmond family through purchase and donations.

A steady stream of donations and purchases has followed in the century since, preserving the heart of the island. Anacortes stopped using Cranberry and Whistle Lakes for water and turned to the Skagit River. Intense recreational use created a spaghetti snarl of trails. The proximity of Deception Pass State Park has created a patchwork forest corridor running almost the length of the island. We're blessed by the foresight of generations before us.

So what will our legacy be? As a new board member, I'm learning that stewardship of the forestlands is as complicated as Balkan history.

Anacortes Parks and Recreation handles day-to-day management. The city's Forest Advisory Board oversees forest policy. The Skagit Land Trust holds the conservation easements protecting the acreage from future logging or



View of Anacortes from approximately 8th Street and I Avenue, looking eastward in 1890. WF007 - Courtesy of Anacortes Museum's Wallie Funk Collection

development. Friends of the Forest, which promotes education and conservation, has two part-time employees paid by our own fundraising and grants. Even some city council members get confused by who does what.

The city holds the approximate \$2 million donated to buy protection of the forest from city logging. Another \$500,000, roughly, has come in from payments by Lakeside Industries to expand its gravel mining into the forestlands through 2023, half of it earmarked to pay our own sewer department for giving up rights to some acreage.

Just what this money can and will be used for seems vague, to me at least. So Friends of the Forest board chairman Andy Stewart is leading our board in a discussion of creating a permanent endowment of considerable size to put forest education and promotion on a permanent and ambitious basis. The next step, and the next legacy, will be to create income for the centuries of stewardship ahead.

Expect to hear more about this in the near future. We need your help. Meanwhile, our forest continues to grow better. Next time you hike, look for the old stumps with the springboard slots where loggers balanced, and picture the size and glory of the island's original old growth. We're on our way to growing that green glory back, and making ecological magnificence part of the quality of life here.

Take a forest walk with Denise Crowe. She turns brush and rot into a wondrous ecological web, and can put a name to all those spring wildflowers.

Watch school kids explore what most students across the country can't even imagine. They grow up with a Shire and Sherwood, beaver and bald eagle.

Ponder the challenges of managing a forest in an increasingly crowded, fast-changing world. Global warming, disease, fire, urban encroachment, recreational conflicts and invasive species will all be likely challenges in decades ahead. Forest uses from ecological refuge to a place for teens to run off steam. How do we balance all our desires and threats?

I won't be around in 500 years to see the full potential, but I hope to help pass a vision on. We're lucky to live here. Now all we have to do is pay it forward, and Friends of the Forest is an ideal vehicle to do so.



Springtime Greetings!

That moment of coming upon first salmonberry bloom in early spring light never fails to amaze. Suspended like little magenta crepe fairy party hats, they beckon bumblebees and hummingbirds with sweet nectar. Petals quiver, the air resonates with buzz and hum. Indeed, this season's party has begun.

I know I am not alone in hoping for a little more temperate spring and summer than we had last year. The cold and gray had a real impact on garden plans and lake swimming. But there were surprises; wild berries thrived in size and sustained abundance, native shrubs grew extra tall and lush, and our forest programs and community hikes were fuller than ever. There were nearly 1,500 participants in our forest programs, and over 1,100 attendees at Friends of the Forest events.

The New Year has brought some changes already. Longtime friend and collaborator, Mary Sikkema, has left the board. We wish her happy times in retirement from a distinguished career in education. Mary and I shared years of forest field trips



Mary Sikkema with her third grade class in the forest, circa 2003.

with her classes. She is a wonderful teacher, and a valued mentor. Her recent years of service to our board have been steadily valued by all. Thank you for everything Mary! New board members, Bill Dietrich and Scott Gudmundsen, bring fresh skills and perspective to our group. Welcome!

The structure of our group and our programs has held steady, much like the structure of the seasons in the year. And within the structure of our programs there is change, growth, surprise. Every day is new, every hike is different, every student unique. There is always more to learn in our forest.

Hope to see you in the woods,



tes.

Save the Date! October 20th, 2012 for the Friends of the Forest Annual Benefit Event!

FOREST ADVISORY BOARD CITY OF ANACORTES ELECTED OFFICIALS Mayor, 4-year term, at large, salaried - 299-1950 The City Forest Advisory Board meets every first Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at Fidalgo Center and is open to the public. Council Members (7) 4-year terms - 3 from Wards, 4 at Large - 293-1900 PHONE TERM ENDS NAME E-MAIL **FOREST BOARD MEMBERS PARKS & FOREST LANDS MANAGER** Mayor Dean Maxwell 299-1950 12/31/13 Sandra Starbuck 901-9179 coa.mayor@cityofanacortes.org Jonn Lunsford 299-1953 W1 Ryan Walters www.ryanwalters.org 610-7770 12/31/15 Brian Wetcher 293-7624 W2 Brad Adams brada@citvofanacortes.org 293-3056 12/31/15 **Marty Laumbattus** 293-7940 W3 Eric Johnson www.anacorteseric.org 840-5415 12/31/15 P4 Brian E. Geer 12/31/13 briang@citvofanacortes.org 293-4791 Rick Boge 299-2692 P5 Cynthia Richardson cynthiar@cityofanacortes.org 299-9081 12/31/13

Marcia Hunt 293-0983		P6 Bill Turn P7 Erica Pio		billt@cityofanacortes.org ericap@cityofanacortes.org	293-9658 293-6264	12/31/13 12/31/13
	•	e 1st and 3rd Mondays, 7:30pm in Council Chambers. ions are 2nd Mondays, 7:30pm in Council Chambers.				
	FRIENDS OF	THE F	OREST			
OFFICERS President Andy Stewart 299-9406 Vice President Monica Ochs 293-6003 Secretary Jean Andrich 293-0124 Treasurer Karen Haynes 708-3910 EDUCATION AND OUTREACH DIRECTOR Denise Crowe 293-3725 ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR Jean Andrich 293-3725 WEBSITE ADDRESS www.friendsoftheacfl.org	Andy Stewart Jean Andrich Lin Nichols Monica Ochs Bill Dietrich Karen Haynes Denise Crowe Kara Fox Scott Gudmundsen	BOARD 299-9406 293-0124 293-3826 293-6003 588-0118 708-3910 293-8426 420-7372 293-1550	Jan. 2014 Jan. 2014 Jan. 2014 Jan. 2014 Jan. 2014 Jan. 2013 Jan 2013 Jan 2013 Jan 2013	akccstewart@earthlink.net jean@friendsoftheacfl.org lin.nichols@yahoo.com monica.ochs@gmail.com williamdietrich@comcast.net kak.haynes@yahoo.com denise@friendsoftheacfl.org kararfox@gmail.com robertgudmundsen@shell.com	Board I at 7pm Wednes month. room #3 floor in t Building mercial At Meeting the public	of the Fores Meetings are the second sday of each We meet in 31 on the 3rc the Keystone gg, 619 Com- ve., Anacorte s are open to Please colet involved.

An Idiot in the Forest

The big forest in the backyard of Anacortes is a magical place. It reminds me of one of my favorite movies, *Jurassic Park* - only there are no dinosaurs. Darn. My wife and I have trekked back and forth over every trail multiple times and each time we are amazed that we can walk out our back door and be in our own version of Jurassic Park with so many unusual and interesting plants, mushroooms, and trees.

There are many things in the forest to see that aren't necessarily obvious unless you look closely. Take the area in the middle of trail #249 that I call Chubby Checker Forest. There are several trees all close together that bend and swerve in all directions as if they were doing the twist together. For those of you under 40, the twist is a dance - very shocking in its day. I need to ask Denise why all those trees bend like that.....

We call my wife's favorite area of the forest The Avenue of



Giants because it has many very large old growth trees. Yes, I know, that name is already taken by some big trees in California. But it applies here as well. These are found in the area south of Heart Lake on trail #210. Most of the largest trees are Douglas Firs. I'm guessing that they are 500+ years old. That means that both these trees and my mother-in-law were born during the Renaissance. These trees are possibly close to 200 feet tall and it hurts my neck to look up and try to see the tops (I feel like I'm 500 years old too.) It is amazing that these trees could live that long and get that big.

On trail #244, there is a tree that we call the Double Elbow Tree. Depending upon how you look at it, that tree is either very decisive or very undecisive. It started by growing straight up, makes a sharp left turn, then two separate trunks make a sharp right turn. Very odd. I often wonder how many years occurred between each turn and what the tree was "thinking" when each turn was made

I've always had a mental model of what a forest is supposed to be and our forest sometimes violates that model. For example, trees are supposed to grow straight up from the bottom, right? Not in our forest. There is tree off of trail #220 that grows parallel to the ground. I call it the Confused Tree. Maybe it is I who am confused and the tree really knows what it is doing. It looks fine.

by Scott Gudmundsen

Our forest has a variety of mushrooms and funghi with many shapes, sizes and colors. We bought a small mushroom guide, went on a Mushroom Safari, and tried to identify each kind. Out of the 20 or so different mushrooms and fungus we've seen, I have been able to identify about 2. My naturalist skills are lacking... My favorite is the bright orange glob that sites on top of dead logs. It's not in the guidebook so I call it Jell-O Delight. Don't eat it.

Next time you are in the forest, look for the odd and unusual that make our forest lands so special and drop me a line about what you've seen to:

gudmundsenrobert@yahoo.com. By the way, I really love my mother-in-law and she isn't a day over 130.



Denise's Note:

I love the fresh perspective that someone new to the woods brings. His wonderings and wanderings are inspiring. I won't take on all his questions here, but for this: Scott's jello delight is an orange jelly fungus commonly known as witches' butter. I affirm his advice not to eat it.

Ethnobotany Field Seminar is FULL!

The Ethnobotany Field Seminar scheduled for Saturday, June 16th,10 am until 3 pm, has no more room for additional participants.

Please call or email Jean if you would like to be put on a waiting list or to sign up for our next session on September 29th.

This is for adults only. Registration is by phone or email. More information will be given upon registration.

Ethnobotany is the study of native plants and the traditional uses of the plants by people. You will learn about food, medicine, and materials derived from the vast array of native plants in our woods.



The Friends of the Forest is a not for profit, citizen organization dedicated to the preservation of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands through education, outreach and stewardship. We have a multi-layered education program that strives to meet the needs of all Fidalgo Island residents. Our education program includes K-12 guided school field trips, Adult/Senior hikes, All Ages hikes, Forest Discovery Day Camp, habitat restoration efforts, Ethnobotany field seminars, a quarterly newsletter and our two comprehensive school district programs: Growing Wild- native plants for all 3rd graders, and Middle School Watershed Discovery for all students in 7th grade. Our community hikes are FREE and no registration is required. Please join Naturalist Denise Crowe this spring as we continue to explore and learn more about the ACFL together. For more information about our group or these hikes, please contact Denise Crowe or Jean Andrich at 293-3725. You may also visit our website www.friendsoftheacfl.org or inquire by email at info@friendsoftheacfl.org. These hikes focus on wildlife and human experience, so we ask that you leave your four legged friends at home.

Hope to see you in the woods!

In the Woods with Ranger Dave

Spring has sprung around the Anacortes Community Forest Lands with the sights and sounds of new beginnings. As the flora and fauna prepare for the upcoming summer months, homeowners are also organizing for the welcoming of spring by cleaning out old flowerbeds, pruning trees and shrubs, and getting the yard ready for BBQs and relaxation. Some folks think that taking their yard waste and dumping it in the ACFL is a way of returning the nutrients of the waste back to nature, but unfortunately this is a misguided thought. Yard waste can contain non-native invasive plants that can easily spread, and it may contain pesticides and fertilizers that could be harmful to the flora and fauna in the ACFL. It also

by Dave Oicles

becomes an eyesore at the trailheads. Homeowners who live adjacent to the ACFL boundary need to be especially aware of their plantings and the activities they do along the boundary to prevent contamination into the ACFL. If you see anyone dumping yard waste or other debris in the ACFL, please call 911 and report this crime. Almost every month yard waste or debris is found dumped at a trailhead, along Heart Lake Road, and along ACFL boundaries. With your help we may be able to stop this from happening, and help protect the ACFL. Enjoy the trails and lakes this spring... take a hike!

UPCOMING WORK PARTIES

Below is a list of upcoming ACFL work parties. Work party updates can also be found at http://www.cityofanacortes. org/park.asp. Search the Parks and Recreation page for more info. Dress warmly, wear boots and gloves, and be prepared for fun! We'll supply the tools.

April 14th @ 9 am: Come celebrate Arbor Day by helping us remove a large grove of non-native invasive holly along trail 105 near Little Cranberry Lake. This in turn will help the native plants and trees grow strong and healthy. Let's meet at trailhead 104 at the west end of 29th Street and we'll hike in from there.

May 12th @ 9 am: Another round of non-native invasive holly and Ivy removal along Little Cranberry Lake Road is in store this day. We have had to hit this site numerous times and hopefully this will be the last. Let's meet at the Little Cranberry Lake parking lot off Georgia Ave.

ALL AGES HIKES

Great for families and folks of all ages, these are hearty hikes with forest lore suited to the day's participants.

Little Cranberry Lake Saturday, April 21st 10:00 am to noon

We'll start the spring season with a hike all the way around Little Cranberry Lake. The trail is rugged in places as it hugs the shore. Explore some of the richest habitat in our forest. This is the place where deep forest, swamp, rocky meadow, lake, and bog islands converge. Experience the spring awakening. Take Georgia south off Oakes and follow to the gravel road that leads to the Little Cranberry Lake parking lot.

Sugarloaf Wildflowers Saturday, May 5th

This is the ultimate wildflower hike of the year. We will savor the climb through alternating forest and rocky bald meadow, learning each flower as we go. From blue camas lily to red Indian paintbrush, come and see the bounty of color this little mountain has to offer. The views from the summit are not to be missed. Meet at the southern trailhead halfway up the Mount Erie view road. The trip up and back is one mile, and quite steep in places.

Big Beaver Pond Saturday, May 12th 10:00 am to noon

10:00 am to noon

Immerse yourself in the rich world of this yellow pond lily filled swamp. In May we see ducklings, wood duck families, kingfisher, swallows, great blue heron, raven, frogs, garter snakes and dragonflies galore. Learn about the community of beaver that created and maintain our network of wetlands in the Little Cranberry Lake watershed. Meet at the old city dump gate at 37th and A Ave.

Whistle Afternoon Saturday, June 9th 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Whistle Lake territory is worth the extra time it takes. We will hike all the way around the coldest, deepest jewel of the forest. Meet at the Whistle Lake parking lot.

SENIOR/ADULT HIKES

A little bit gentler, with an adult level flora and fauna focus.....

Little Beaver Pond Friday, April 20th 10:00 am to noon

Calling all Skyline residents and anyone else who has wondered about the forest on the west side of town. We'll get you connected to Little Beaver Pond territory and the trail network. Meet at the corner of Clyde Way and Cedar Glen Way in Skyline.

Northwest Whistle Lake Friday, May 11th 10:00 am to noon

Lush spring growth will be at peak as we hike in to Whistle Lake surrounded by blooming native berry bushes. Do you know thimbleberry, huckleberry, salmonberry, elderberry. Oregon grape, salal? Do you know the difference between our native blackberry and Himalayan blackberry? The glimmer of the clearest lake on Fidalgo Island will be your lesson's reward. Bring a friend! Meet at the Whistle Lake parking lot at the end of Whistle Lake Road.

Friday, June 8th 10:00 am to noon

Heart Lake Old Growth Loop It's time for a visit with our elders on the south shore of Heart Lake. Orange trumpet honeysuckle and ocean spray will be bloooming as we slow to the ancient rhythm of our old growth forest. Meet at the base of Mount

Erie on Ray Auld Drive.

SPECIAL NEW OFFERING:

Adult Fitness Hike Friday, April 27th 1 pm to 4 pm

Join Board Members Jean and Monica for a fast paced work out adventure. Prepare to cover a good amount of trail on this three hour tour of Heart and Whistle terrain. If this is what you have been waiting for, take Friday afternoon off and meet at the Heart Lake parking lot. Bring water and a snack and plan to hike nearly 10 miles!



Morrison Hill calypso.

Thank you

to Friends of the Forest 2012 Members and Contributors!

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Evelyn & Gary Adams
Jackie & Bud Anderson
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In memory of Nick Petrish by TK and Louise Wegg

In memory of Al and Vivian Lemberg by Linda Lemberg

Please let us know if your name is missing, misspelled or if you prefer to be listed differently.

Membership Notes

- Welcome new Board Members, Bill Dietrich and Scott Gudmundsen. We hope you enjoy their contributions in this newsletter.
- We would like to thank Cindy Morton for helping with our mailings!
- January starts the new membership year, regardless of what month you joined or renewed. To save resources, we do not send out reminder postcards. *Please renew or join today!*
- * Confused about a hike location? Check out our website for links to driving directions to each location.
- We ask that you not bring dogs on organized hikes. We love your four legged friends but it is very difficult to have them on guided hikes we appreciate your understanding.
- Our regular office hours are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 am to 1 pm and other times by appointment.
- Need an ACFL trail map? We have them for sale in our office or visit our website for a complete list of local sources.
- We are now on Facebook! Visit us at: facebook.com/anacortes. friendsoftheforest.acfl or www.friendsoftheacfl.org.
- We are once again very grateful to artist Alfred Currier for his generosity to Friends of the Forest. His fundraiser, Art for the Heart, raised over \$4500.00 for our organization.
- We would also like to thank those who purchased a beautiful Al Currier painting and named Friends of the Forest as the recipient of their donation.



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Please join or renew today!

Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands **MEMBERSHIP FORM** The Friends of the Forest is a nonprofit, citizens organization dedicated to the preservation of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands through education, outreach and stewardship. Friends of the Forest is a not for profit 501 c3 organization. Tax ID # 501c3 91-1430220 PLEASE JOIN US! Membership and contributions are tax-deductible. Email Name Phone Address Membership Renewal **New Member** We offer many levels of annual membership dues. Please choose your level of support for this vital mission in our community. Annual dues: Individual \$25 Family \$40 Partner \$50 Supporter \$100 Sponsor \$250 Benefactor \$500 Major Donor \$5000 or more Steward \$1000 Other ___ ______ Topics for general meetings or newsletter _ Areas of Interest Please mail memberships and contributions to: Friends of the ACFL, 619 Commercial #32, Anacortes, WA 98221 Thank you to all friends who have renewed their dues and a reminder to those who haven't sent in this year - we need it! Keeping your dues

current with the Friends of the Forest is one of the best ways to Think Globally and Act Locally. On Fidalgo Island, thankfully we have the

ACFL, and it needs Friends to ensure its preservation. Our Education Program depends on your support. Thank you!