



# Friends of the Forest

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

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## From the Director:

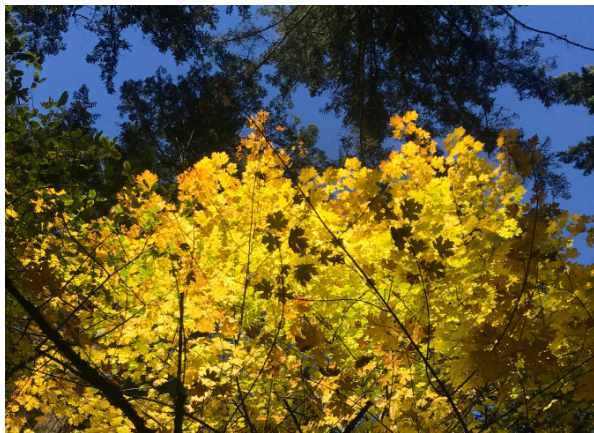
Hello Forest Friends,

**F**all is here, hear the yell / Back to school, ring the bell / Brand new shoes, walking blues / Climb the fence, books and pens / I can tell that we are going to be friends/ Yes I can tell that we are going to be friends”

-From “We are Going to be Friends” by the White Stripes

This should be the reality for kids right now. School shopping over, summer shenanigans fresh in the mind, feet callused, a heady mixture of sadness for the end of summer and excitement at starting something new. Six months ago it seemed like this could have been a normal beginning of school, the confusion and difficulty of the previous end to the school year in the rear view mirror after a spring of isolation and a summer of realignment to normalcy. However, as we now know, things have not gotten back to normal and kids across the country (not to mention their parents and families) are having to adapt to a new kind of normal. One where kids don’t ride buses and sit in class with their friends, but instead do their learning on a screen and only see people that are a part of their ‘bubble’ or a specialty ‘pod’ that is formed with a few other families.

The pandemic continues to upend the lives and plans of all of us. While we have certainly been affected at Friends of the Forest, we’ve also been able to pivot our work to address the needs of a world that seems to change constantly yet never change at all during this time that moves at light speed while somehow standing completely still. Though we couldn’t lead group hikes through the ACFL, we had our Forest Educator, Beck, set up tables to interact with the many new faces that have discovered the forest lands during the pandemic. We’ve put together



lesson plans that can be done in the ACFL or at home, taught by a parent or a classroom teacher or even an older sibling. We’ve created a whole host of videos for people to learn from, worked with the city to convey information to the public, and created tutorials and materials for flower presses and watershed models.

We’ve always believed in the importance of supporting our community and the power of bringing people together (in fact, we were

# From the Director (continued):

founded on those very ideals!) and as we enter this very different fall season, we know that this support is more important than ever. While our work may not look exactly like it has in the past, we are so grateful to be able to shift our resources to provide opportunities for kids and those working with kids to get outside, learn about nature, and spend time with each other. Here are a few things that we are working on:

- **School District Partnership:** our longstanding work with the Anacortes School District will continue, though in different forms than in the past. We have communicated directly with ASD and are working in tandem with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Anacortes Library to provide opportunities for kids to get off their screens and outside. Beyond our typical lessons surrounding the natural world, we'll be providing a space for the social-emotional learning and socializing with peers and teachers that are sorely needed but necessarily absent from students' current reality.



- **Family Center Partnership:** while our partnership with the Anacortes Family Center was supposed to kick off this summer with a dedicated summer camp, we're excited to instead start our collaboration with a pilot program that will already be under way by the time this newsletter is published. We'll be guiding small groups led by Family Center volunteers in outdoor activities with the goal of establishing monthly outings for kids and their families. This is the first step in what we envision to be a deep and meaningful relationship with the Family Center.

- **Trainings:** outside learning can be as effective as, if not more effective than, traditional classroom learning. Additionally, being outside is one of the safest places one can be aside from their own home in the time of Covid. We are working with the Fidalgo Nature School and parents of home-schooled children to provide training on how to safely navigate the outdoor classroom and implement effective, place-based, hands on learning. We hope to be able to make this training widely available for parents or educators looking for ways to get kids off the screen and outside. If you are interested in setting up a training, please get in touch with us at [info@friendsoftheacfl.org](mailto:info@friendsoftheacfl.org)

We're so excited to be able to provide this support to the community at a time when we are all struggling to balance our old normal with this new reality. We will continue to adapt, not only in regards to our education programs but with everything that we do. As you'll see later in this issue, even our annual benefit has evolved to a new format that is not limited by ticket sales or location. We will continue with optimism for the future and flexibility for the present. Together, we'll ensure that the ACFL meets the new challenges it faces and continues to provide a home to flora and fauna and refuge to humans that need it now more than ever. We're humbled and grateful for the incredible support that you continue to give us, and honored to be able to give it back to the community.

By Asa Deane, Executive Director

# Message From Anacortes Parks & Recreation:

## By Bob Vaux, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director

In May of 1992 upon the inspiration of Tracy Powell, I shifted my career from the Recreation side to the Parks side. New Director Gary Robinson replaced Tracy with me as Forest Lands Manager, and life was never to be the same. It quickly became apparent that my relationship with trail volunteers was critical, and I came to know several of them, many of whom worked as Engineers on March's Point. When not at work, their preferred activity was mountain biking, and whenever I needed them they would show up in force. Fixing trails, moving trails, building trails and generally helping me keep an eye on the place while I learned how to do my new job. We didn't always agree on policy, but we all shared a commitment to ACFL stewardship.

Many wonderful people have come and gone in the ensuing years, and our woods have expanded in size, and have been largely protected by the Conservation Easement Program. I still see a lot of those mountain bikers riding the trails, their relationship with the ACFL having only intensified over the decades. I see them welcoming new generations of riders to our woods. I see them sharing the skills and etiquette necessary for the protection and enjoyment of this unique and wonderful space.

I am reaching out to the present day mountain biking community to ask for help keeping dogs on leash. Many of the recent off leash contacts I have made on the trails have been with bicyclists. Based upon pandemic user numbers going way up on all public lands, I have no doubt that some of these folks are first time visitors, but some are not. Please help us make the trails safe for all users by following the few simple rules we have in place. One of them is dogs must be leashed.

The City of Anacortes and the Friends of the Forest are long time partners in the protection and enjoyment of the ACFL. We plan on this continuing, and we commend Asa on his recent blog piece explaining why it is important to keep your dog on leash. It is simply one more way to show respect for the land, and thoughtful consideration of other users.

Bob Vaux, Anacortes Parks & Recreation  
bobv@cityofanacortes.org  
360-588-8233

## Ways to Give

Our work depends on a healthy mix of funding sources. All contributions to our group are tax deductible. Please consider the following options for financial contribution to our organization! You may contact our office at 360-293-3725 to discuss any of these options.

### **1** Active Membership

Dues are due in January! There are different categories of membership to suit your preference. See our membership form on the back page.

### **2** Individual Contributions

You are welcome to make this in honor or in memory. Contact us for more information.

### **3** Endowment Fund

We have an endowment fund established with the Skagit Community Foundation. This is an excellent option for sizable donations.

### **4** Planned Giving

One of the best ways you can continue supporting the work of the Friends is through a legacy gift.



# The Seasonal Scoop

The other day I was at a meeting on Zoom and someone asked me how I got to be so awesome. I don't know what came over me, possibly the high of "social interaction" is to blame; instead of accepting the compliment graciously and saying "thank you!" with a smile, I found myself snapping in a Z-shape, declaring, "they can't make me, honey!" We were having a fun meeting. In truth though, a "Beck" isn't too hard to make, you just need a bit of time. Start a base-broth of Childhood with romping through wood and farm and creek. Preferably free-range, Massachusetts-raised. Bring to a simmer. On the side, mix Recent Influences together in a separate bowl. Add in nature preschool directorship, behavioral therapy for children with autism, middle-school environmental education on Bainbridge Island, and a teaching residency at a child-centered independent school in Seattle. Let sit. Into the fully simmering broth add a master's degree in education with a focus in science curriculum and instruction, a bachelor's of science in biology, a minor in environmental studies. Stir in spice-mix of interests in: human beings' cultural and biological connection to the earth, neurological connection to landscapes, social equity, gardening, camping, and artistic hobbies. Add bowl of Recent Influences mix from before, and cook. Drain and dress with sauce of volunteer event management on a multi-international forest restoration crew, and a pinch of wildlife rehab and bird banding expeditions to season. Klar til å servere! Pairs nicely with the Anacortes Community Forest Lands; both are a 1987 vintage.

I've now been with Friends of the Forest for a few months, and I am thrilled to be part of this special organization with such deep roots in community engagement and partnership. Plus, learning about the forestlands has meant that I've needed to take hikes, kayak, explore, bird watch, meet new people, and find peace in the ACFL. It's been a lovely way to start a new job, and certainly the forest is the best office to have.

As I write it is late August and out in the ACFL we're seeing the signs that summer is beginning to come to a close and let autumn in. I recently learned from a local expert that summer 'teenage' barred owls will beg their parents to feed them, but their parents decline—a little (developmentally appropriate) tough love that ultimately preps the owls for their adult life. Now the young owls have had the whole summer to get the skills practice they need for self-sufficiency, but the younglings may still be in the habit of dependence. A good place to hunker down and quietly wait for owls to watch will be around the 32nd street swamp in the Little Cranberry Lake corridor. Listen for hissing coming from what look like fully-grown owls. I'm sure they'll get their capstone practice hunting this fall, with all the small forest creatures running about, beginning to stock their winter caches.

For plants, autumn is also a time of preparation, a time to invest in the future. Plants are getting ready to disperse seeds all around the forest, and many have already started. While walking in the ACFL, see if you can find differently adapted seeds from different plants. Plants use different techniques for seed dispersal depending on things like climate, landscape, and the plant's habit (how its body structure grows). Seeds can be poppers (like the pod seeds of many legumes that 'explode' when disturbed; one of many techniques that lend Scotch broom its invasive success), droppers (like the seed from a Douglas fir cone), floaters (coconut is a famous example, but locally we have some willow whose fluffy seeds float), fliers (like dandelion and other tufted seeds, and don't forget maple samaras!), grabbers (like bedstraw, or, as many children call it, velcro-plant; these seeds catch onto

the fur or clothing of passersby to travel distances) and passers (sweet fruits with seeds inside that pass through an animal's digestive tract before being 'deposited,' like berries). While out walking in the ACFL, how many different plants can you find that use the same technique of seed dispersal? How many different examples of seed dispersal adaptations can you find in the forest? Reporting from here at home, my cats are doing their part distributing many kinds of grabber seeds for next year... right onto the couch.

Autumn is also a wonderful time to get to know your favorite corner of the forest even better. Start going to the same spot regularly, maybe even every day. Sit for 20 minutes to start, to let the activity of the forest resume to what we scientists call *PYL*-- Pre-You-Levels. Then for another half an hour or more, sit and observe. Use as many senses as you can. Through the year, you'll see the view from your spot turn from green to gold, to cold and gray (hopefully you bundled up warm), with just the deep green of the salal, sword fern, and Oregon grape remaining. Don't be afraid to take notes and write down your observations and thoughts and feelings, or to draw. You'll get to know the critters who call this spot home, you might see a snag that's been leaning finally fall over, you'll get to learn from the forest itself. And autumn is the most beautiful time to start, so why not start your sit spot this fall?

I'm beyond thrilled to learn more about this beautiful forest and the community that supports and enjoys its health. I hope to see all you Forest Friends on the trails!

Beck Pittman, Forest Educator



# Friends of the Forest Virtual Benefit:

October 20-23, 2020

The last six months have upended every facet of our lives and presented challenges none of us expected to face. Through it all, our community has banded together like never before and worked to ensure that we still have plenty to be grateful for. We at Friends of the Forest have shifted our focus and programs in order to provide support to the people and places that need it the most. Help us to celebrate and ensure that we can continue to provide learners of all ages with high-quality, environmental education in and about our precious forest lands!

Even though we are unable to be together in person for our annual benefit, we can still honor the ACFL and all of the work that Friends of the Forest does to ensure its preservation. Just as our programs have shifted during the pandemic, our fundraiser is taking on a new look and is more accessible than ever before. Join us October 20-23 to learn, play, and raise some money for the Friends of the Forest in a virtual celebration of the power of education, outreach, and stewardship. Schedule of events:

## Tuesday, October 20 @ 5:00 pm- Webinar

### **Allison Cusick**

Antarctic Gold- Searching for Treasure in an Invisible Forest



Allison Cusick was first exposed to the “invisible forest,” otherwise known as plankton, growing up along the Puget Sound in her hometown of Seattle. After graduating from the University of Washington she spent 10 years as a research technician in various disciplines including oceanography, neurobiology, immunology, biofuel genetics and field ecology studying birds and squirrels in Washington, big cats and wild dogs in Africa, and parrots and macaws in Mexico and the Peruvian Amazon. Her fascination with polar oceanography started in 2013, when she was sent on a research icebreaker for a 53- day expedition in Antarctica’s Ross Sea.

This experience inspired her to pursue a career in Biological Oceanography and focus on microscopic life – the invisible forest hiding in the ocean that makes the living world go round. In 2016, she started a Masters program at Scripps Institution of Oceanography focused on marine biodiversity and conservation and designed the citizen science project FjordPhyto which engages Antarctic tour ships and travelers in polar science while they visit the Antarctic Peninsula. Join her as she takes us on a journey from her childhood home to her current studies surrounding glacial melt’s effects on the ‘Invisible Forest,’ and her many adventures in between.

## Wednesday, October 21 5:00 pm- Webinar

### **Tony Angell**

A Vital and Healthy Nature- Finding Inspiration in the Natural World



Tony Angell has been creating nature-inspired art for over 40 years. From his childhood spent hunting and fishing along the river and skin diving and surfing in the ocean, to his time as an adult spent rehabilitating wild animals, Tony has spent his life immersed in nature. This immersion has provided the basis for his incredible artwork and is fundamental to not only his artistic but also his world view.

Best known for his stone and bronze sculptures of crows, ravens, and other corvids, his work has been commissioned by Seattle’s Woodland Park Zoo, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the City of Redmond, and Mount Baker Ski Area. He’ll speak about his main motivation- the significance of the presence of a vital and healthy nature as a source of ideas, possibilities and inspiration.





## Thursday, October 22 @ 7:00 pm Virtual Trivia Night

A (necessarily) modern twist on a classic favorite, our virtual trivia night will bring all of the fun of an evening at the pub right to your living room! Put together a team ahead of time or meet some new friends at the competition and come ready to use the brainium in your cranium for a night of fun forest trivia. Test your local and natural history knowledge and your pop-culture chops, and compete against rival teams for a variety of different prizes. A collaboration between Friends of the Forest and local Anacortes pubs, this is a unique event that you won't want to miss!



## Friday, October 23 @ 5:00 pm Raise the Paddle and Art Auction

Join us for our final day of celebration as we broadcast live directly to your living room. We'll take a deeper look at Friends of the Forest and what we do, and we'll hear from you about why the ACFL is such a significant place and why the Friends' work is so important. It will be the final chance to bid on this year's featured art piece, "Fidalglow" by Alfred Currier, and to 'raise the paddle' to contribute to our education programs, now more essential for our community than ever. We'll tell some stories, spend time with our friends, and give thanks for the beautiful forest land that has provided such important respite to the community.

Thank you so much for your support for the Friends of the Forest- you are the reason we have been able to protect the ACFL and provide high-quality environmental education to the community and our schools for all of these years. In a world where so much about the future is unknown, where families are shouldering more and more responsibility for their children's education, where schools are thinking outside the box to ensure our kids are able to progress in their education, we are stepping up to support families and teachers in any way we can. Your donation will create new lesson plans for families to do from their own homes, a local park, or the ACFL; it will bring kids outside, off their screens, to the ACFL for small-group hikes focusing on social-emotional health; it will provide personalized trainings for teachers and parents on how to safely lead and teach students in an outdoor classroom. You won't only be supporting the Friends of the Forest, you'll be supporting our whole community.

Head to our website, [www.friendsoftheacfl.org](http://www.friendsoftheacfl.org), for more details and to register for the above events. We're so grateful to be a part of this important work and to get to be among friends like you. Stay healthy and we'll see you on October 20!

### Friends of the Forest

Friends of the Forest Board Meetings are at 7pm the second Wednesday of every month. We are currently meeting virtually via zoom. Meetings are open to the public- please email us if you are interested in participating.

### How to reach us:

**Email:** [info@friendsoftheacfl.org](mailto:info@friendsoftheacfl.org)

**Office:** 611 R. Ave. Anacortes, WA

**Office Phone:** 360-293-3725

**Mail:** PO Box 2213 Anacortes, WA 98221

**Web:** [www.friendsoftheacfl.org](http://www.friendsoftheacfl.org)

### Forest Advisory Board

**Jonn Lunsford**  
Parks and Recreation Director  
360-299-1953

### Board Members

**Charlie Collins** | President | Jan. 2021  
**Jean Ford Andrich** | Vice President | Jan. 2022  
**Lin Nichols** | Treasurer | Jan. 2022  
**Lynne Jordan** | Secretary | Jan. 2021  
**Andy Stewart** | Past President | Jan. 2022  
**Ed Gastellum** | Board Member | Jan. 2021  
**Steve Williams** | Board Member | Jan. 2022  
**Bill Dietrich** | Board Member | Jan. 2022  
**Rob Skelton** | Board Member | Jan. 2021

**[board@friendsoftheacfl.org](mailto:board@friendsoftheacfl.org) 360-293-3725**

\*Emails sent to the board are received directly by the executive committee & are not seen by staff.

### Staff

**Asa Deane** | Executive Director | 360-399-6184  
**Beck Pittman** | Forest Educator | 971-248-6618



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## 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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     Steward \$1000     Major Donor \$5000 or More

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest \_\_\_\_\_ Topics for general meetings or newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail memberships/contributions to: Friends of the ACFL, PO Box 2213, Anacortes WA 98221  
 or visit us at 611 R Avenue, Anacortes WA

Thank you to all the friends who have renewed their dues and a reminder to those who haven't sent it 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!