



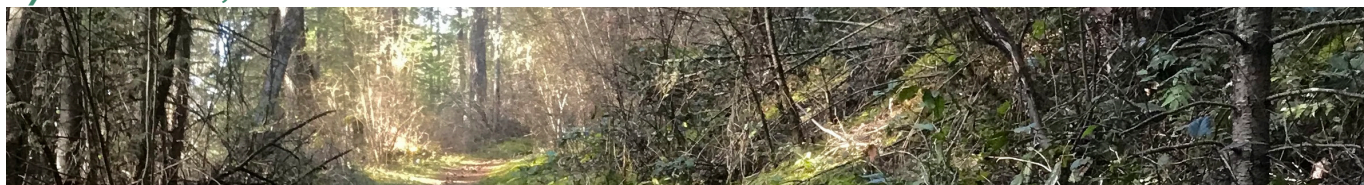
# Friends of the Forest

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

Volume 34 • Issue 2 • Spring 2021

## The Light Ahead

*By Asa Deane, Executive Director*



The world is full of metaphors. I've appreciated none as much as the shifting of the seasons bringing light back into our lives. Saying goodbye to the cold, dark days of winter and hello to the bright, warm days ahead. Goodbye to the things that have plagued us and hello to the joyous opportunities that await. Stepping out of the shadows and into the light.

I by no means hope to jinx us, but it seems as though the world is inching its way back toward normalcy, or at least whatever "normal" looks like after more than a year of battling a pandemic. That "normal" will not be the same as when this all began, nor should it- we've learned too much about ourselves, each other, and the world- but there will be similarities. It's up to us as to how things are different. How we take these lessons we've learned and apply them to shape the world as we would like it to be.

**“Here comes the sun,  
and I say, it's all right”  
-The Beatles**

Here at Friends of the Forest, we are walking a similar path. We are looking forward to many things getting back to the way they were- community hikes have begun anew, our Forest Discovery summer day camp is open for signups at our website, and Forest Educator Beck is starting in-person school visits again. We're also welcoming new people and programs to help us better protect and preserve the ACFL, especially as it has seen the most rapid increase in users at any point in its history. You'll meet our new Outreach and Development Coordinator, Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller, later in this issue- we're so excited to have her join us to help build up our communications and programming as our membership and organization grows.

We are also incredibly excited about the launch of our all new Trail Ambassador volunteer program. With so many people discovering the forest, many for the first time, the need for more regular and extensive outreach and education is clear. We've partnered up with the Anacortes Parks and Recreation department to train and place volunteers at various trailheads and parking lots throughout the summer. These ambassadors will be there to answer questions, provide guidance, remind folks of the rules, and ensure that they are safely and respectfully recreating in the ACFL.

Thank you for being a member, for supporting us in our mission, and for being a steward of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. If you are interested in becoming a Trail Ambassador, visit our website to learn more and sign up. Be safe, enjoy the beautiful days ahead, and we'll see you in the forest!

# Seasonal Scoop– Wildflowers in the ACFL!

By Beck Pittman, Forest Educator

The birds and bees are ‘talking’ about them. The humans certainly are as well. On the radio, in travel magazine articles, on social media: wildflowers! It seems we revisit our love of wildflowers every spring with as much enthusiasm as the last, and maybe, more.

While hiking out in the ACFL, you may find your own attention lofting amongst a spectrum of buds and blossoms, taking in moments of beauty that seem to wane and wax simultaneously. The forest has

decorated itself in a celebration for the sun. It’s no wonder wildflowers burst onto the scene as our planet reaches this point in its orbit, as the earth’s angle tilts the northern hemisphere into an angle of condensed sunlight. We now receive more than 14 hours of light a day and photosynthetic organisms are feasting. Making something new—like a flower, to make seed, to make a new plant...—takes a whole lot of energy. And they’re doing it fast! If you take a long hike, you could pass a bud on the way in, and walk past a blossom on the way out.

All over the ACFL, you’ll find an array of species living their best life, able to thrive in their suited habitat, because the human friends of this forest have decided to make sure their habitats are preserved. The children in the after-school Forest Discovery groups have hiked through these habitats, and observed many wonderful displays of wildflowers from lower-elevation shady forests and lake-side riparian zones, to rocky bluffs, and in meadows. We’ve decided to share our favorite species we’ve observed so far:

“The forest has decorated itself in a celebration for the sun.”



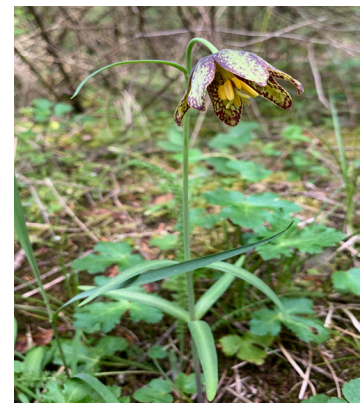
**White Fawn Lily**

This low-elevation lily was observed in April, growing alongside a wooded trail. At its base we noticed two leaves with patchy green patterns.



**False Lily of the Valley**

This tiny cluster, observed in April, will bloom with tiny white flowers in May. This plant’s glossy green heart-shaped leaves pop up in patches of shady forest.



**Chocolate Lily**

Notice the three lance-shaped leaves on the single stem flower. This flower was observed in late April. Its checkered pattern of yellow and brown make it a delight—and a challenge—to spot!



**Common camas**

Several flower buds are waiting behind this gorgeous deep purple blossom for their turn to bloom. Camas blooms from April to June and can be found in large meadows, and grows from a large bulb.



**Fairy-slipper**

A bright pink-purple flower grows on one stem. They have one leaf at their base and bloom from April to June.



**Fringecup**

This plant grows a tall stem of bell-shaped flowers with a hairy stem, and has scalloped leaves at its base. It blooms April through July and is a forest trail-side favorite.

Try hiking around Heart Lake, up trail 215 to Sugarloaf, and around Mt. Erie to see this sublime range of blossoming beauties!

## 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. Any contributions to our group above your membership level are greatly appreciated. See our membership form on the back page.

### **2** Individual Contributions

We greatly appreciate any contributions to help support our education and outreach program. You are welcome to make this in honor or in memory.

### **3** Endowment Fund

We have an endowment fund established with the Skagit Community Foundation. The purpose of this fund is to create an endowment that will eventually provide interest income to our organization. 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. If you are making estate plans, please consider including our organization.

## Meet our new Outreach and Development Coordinator: Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller!

Ashleigh brings over a dozen years of non-profit leadership experience to the role, serving in various capacities in organizations with a focus on outdoor education and preservation, as well as connecting youth from marginalized communities to educational resources and to the natural world.

After living in three corners of the country (Southeast, Southwest, and Northeast), Ashleigh and her family had the opportunity to experience the Northwest and jumped at the chance, moving from Georgia to Washington in August 2020.

Ashleigh grew up in the Carolinas, joyfully camping, hiking, backpacking, and rafting rivers in the lush mountains of North Carolina, and enjoying the shores of many South Carolina beaches (where the Atlantic is warm and brown)! For several summers during college, she served as a camp counselor, which gave her an opportunity to role model that awe and reverence for the natural world in a supportive, educational setting.

After college, Ashleigh lived in Arizona for several years, which gave her a totally different perspective on and appreciation of preserving natural beauty, responsible water usage, the blessing and curse of forest fires, and how culture is inextricably tied to land. After Arizona, Ashleigh and her husband, David, moved to the (literally) greener pastures of Vermont, where Ashleigh spent 10 years as Director of Camp DREAM, serving youth living in low-income neighborhoods across Vermont, metro Boston, and metro Philadelphia, giving them a fully subsidized wilderness camping experience.



In 2019, Ashleigh moved to Georgia, where she served as the Experience UGA Program Coordinator at the University of Georgia, bringing thousands of low-income, public school students to campus for unique, in-person field trips showcasing the resources available to them at a world-class university, and overseeing the creation of a virtual field trip website during the pandemic. In 2020, her spouse, David, was offered a position as Homeownership Director at Kulshan Community Land Trust in Bellingham, and they took the plunge. Ashleigh continued to telecommute to her job at UGA through April 2021.

Ashleigh attended college in North Carolina and holds Masters degrees from schools in South Carolina and Arizona. These days, you can find her running on the trails several days a week, or writing and reading books at home. She and David have one daughter, Rowan, who will be starting Kindergarten this fall. They love to hike (or “trail run” to keep up with Rowan’s fancy footwork) in the ACFL, explore the incredible tide pools, and do lots of art and baking projects at home.

Fun facts from Ashleigh:

- I am very good at facial recognition and have been a part of a research study conducted in the U.K. for several years (Masks are an additional challenge, though)
- I’ve hiked 400 miles of the Appalachian Trail and hope I finish it by age 100
- I have one brother, a Naval Aviator, who lived in Anacortes from 2007-2019 is moving back to Anacortes with his family in July
- I am mostly vegetarian but being from South Carolina, I could never give up seafood, and it is my personal goal to try every kind of fish and chips in town
- My favorite local restaurant so far is a tie between Greek Islands and Gere-A-Deli, but my favorite meal this year was from Paris Restaurant

“When I found out about the ACFL Naturalist Club back in December, I jumped at the chance to learn more about this incredible corner of the Pacific Northwest. Through the Friends’ informative and community-building course (even over Zoom), Beck and the rest of the participants helped deepen my appreciation of this incredible region and made me grateful to have joined this community.

**“I possess a deep loyalty to all the places I’ve called home, and I am honored to continue my professional journey with Friends of the Forest. I feel very fortunate that in my role I will work to support the responsible stewardship, education, and protection of the ACFL and this special community on Fidalgo Island.”**



## UPCOMING EVENTS (complete details at website)

- May 19** **Watercolorful Wildflowers** -Intermediate-Meet at Whistle Lake Parking Lot - Woodland wildflowers delight just about everybody, and the ACFL is home to many beautiful species. Hike out with our group to learn more about the wildflowers that call the ACFL home, and come home with your own water-colored botanical study of a wildflower that delighted you.  
9:00 am-12:00 pm
- May 29** **Family Nature Walk** - Easy -Meet at Whistle Lake Parking Lot - Join our gentle family hike with Forest Educator Beck, who will have family friendly nature activities, games, and stories to share. We'll follow the kids' pace and let them guide the nature inquiry. All ages welcome.  
11:30 am-12:30 pm
- June 8** **Rocky Rest Loop** - Intermediate -Meet at Ray Auld Dr. Parking Lot - This group hike will lead us to a rocky vista overlooking Lake Erie and beyond. We'll examine examples of post-logging reforestation and glacial geology, inspiring conversations about how humans' perception of time influences how we think about the future and climate change.  
10:00 am-11:30 am
- June 22** **Fire Ecology in the ACFL** - Intermediate -Meet at 29th St & Trail 133- Back in 2016, we were lucky to have the forest fire in Little Cranberry Lake put out so quickly. Now, let's go take a look and see how the forest is regrowing! Certain species of plants thrive in post-fire conditions, which we'll learn more about. We'll also discuss the human impacts amplifying fire season in the West.  
10:00 am-12:00 pm

### Friends of the Forest

Friends of the Forest Board Meetings are at 7pm the second Wednesday of every month. We are temporarily meeting via Zoom. Meetings are open to the public- please email Director Asa Deane for more information on how you can join.

#### How to reach us:

##### Email

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

#### Forest Advisory Board

**Bob Vaux** | Parks and Recreation  
Asst. Director | 360-299-1918

### Board Members

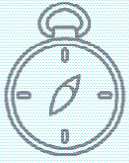
**Charlie Collins** | President | Jan. 2023  
**Jean Ford Andrich** | Vice President | Jan. 2022  
**Lin Nichols** | Treasurer | Jan. 2022  
**Lynne Jordan** | Secretary | Jan. 2023  
**Andy Stewart** | Past President | Jan. 2022  
**Steve Williams** | Board Member | Jan. 2022  
**Bill Dietrich** | Board Member | Jan. 2022  
**Rob Skelton** | Board Member | Jan. 2023

**board@friendsoftheacfl.org 360-293-3725**

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

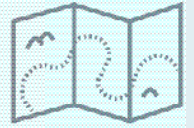
### Staff

**Asa Deane** | Executive Director | 360-399-6184  
**Beck Pittman** | Forest Educator | 971-248-6618  
**Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller** | Outreach and  
Development Coordinator | 928-607-2961



# From Anacortes Parks & Recreation:

*By Bob Vaux, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director*



Many of us have enjoyed years of hopeful pretending that our ancient wooded secret will never get out, and we will be able to enjoy the Anacortes Community Forest Lands trails all by ourselves for decades to come. While it is still possible to glimpse this kind of fantasy, our list of visitors is growing, and we need to raise our heads above the understory and prepare to greet those new to our amazingly unique and precious publicly owned forest.

I am excited about the decades-long collaboration between the Friends of the Forest and the City of Anacortes forming the core of this greeting party. And it should be stated that each one of us has a role in this. You don't have to fly the Friends' or the City's flag to have a positive effect on the droves coming to our town and woods. The way you carry yourself, the attention you pay to trail etiquette, the positive manner in which you address those you come upon, all lead to a healthy forest, and a positive experience for all.

Of course, because we are each human, and we are now discussing some of the challenges we share in creating, we know that it can get complicated in a hurry. Not everyone is interested in modifying their behavior for the greater good. This is a core challenge that after 31 years of public service I am still wrestling with, trying to find the most constructive route to folks working together.

The most effective behavioral modifications are those that come from within, i.e., groups "self-policing." A strong phrase to coin, but it gets to that level on occasion. Let's use the example of the dog owner. Off leash dogs is a growing and almost constant issue in the ACFL. I have had countless opportunities to ask dog owners to please leash. Many will once they have been spotted, and many still take great offense to being asked. Often, during these interactions it has been explained that the dog in question is very nice and stays close by.

Rather than the person with the City logo on asking for a City law to be followed, other dog owners with their dogs on leash making the same request are often going to produce better results. Removing the authority figure helps deaden the pain of a beloved pet being subjected to what are perceived to be cumbersome rules. It becomes a pact between understanding comrades to do the right thing. Ego damage is almost zero, and the woods are better protected each time a leash is dusted off and attached to both animal and owner.

Taking this example to the macro level, City staff and the Friends of the Forest are working together on the Friends' Trail Ambassador program. This will emphasize peers reaching out to one another with the goal of enhancing the ACFL visitor's experience, while adding a layer of protection to the woods themselves. The seeds of the program were planted last summer by Beck; setting up a table at a trailhead, standing behind it with a willingness to answer questions, remind folks of what is permitted and what isn't, and sharing great insights into the flora and fauna for those whose curiosity went beyond: "Where is the Sugarloaf lookout?"

While we have barely recovered from last summer's visitor numbers, we anticipate this year's going even higher. The pandemic has forced many to discover the wonder of the great outdoors, and we happen to be the stewards of some of Mother Nature's best work. We can do this. Thanks for being there.



Friends of the ACFL  
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 Anacortes, WA 98221

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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!