



Friends of the Forest

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

Volume 34 • Issue 3 • Summer 2021

Save the Date!

**The Friends of the Forest Annual Benefit
Friday, November 5th at 7:00 pm**



This year's featured art: "Summer Memories" by Cynthia Richardson

All year long we have been hoping beyond hope that this year would see the return of our classic fundraiser at the Transit Shed; an event that would welcome all of our friends back together to celebrate and dance, to eat and converse, to share all of the love that we've been saving up throughout the pandemic. Alas, with the recent wildfire spread of the Delta Variant of Covid-19 and the uncertainty (we've had to use that word way too much in the last year and a half!) of what the world will look like in November, we've decided to move our benefit into the virtual space once again.

However, it's not all doom and gloom! With one year of virtual fundraising behind us, we are stepping up our game to provide an experience as close to the real thing as possible. Instead of a week of mini-events like we had last year, we'll feature a single night with videos, a guest speaker, and raise the paddle. This year we will be staging a fully online silent auction the whole week of the event so everyone can participate in the fun. We'll be offering gift baskets of goodies delivered to your door so you can enjoy them the night of the benefit. And, best of all, we've got an incredible featured artist, Cynthia Richardson, and fascinating guest speaker, Amy Guilick (both featured in this newsletter), lined up as highlights of the fundraiser. Mark your calendars for Friday, November 5th at 7:00 pm and keep an eye out for complete details on our website, emails, and in our fall newsletter. See you there!

Annual Benefit Special Guests

Featured Artist: Cynthia Richardson

What an honor it is to be selected as the featured artist for the Friends of the Forest 2021 fundraiser auction! We have been attending this event nearly every year since we moved to Anacortes 25 years ago and often come home with a new treasure, knowing that our contribution supports one of the most remarkable natural wonders of this region.

Early on, I had a goal of walking every trail in the ACFL, highlighting each route I traveled on the pocket-size trail maps (which also kept me from getting lost many a time, thanks to the numbers on the trees). I never quite made it to every nook and cranny, but I still include a few trails in my regular walking routine.

Offering the pleasures of natural beauty and quiet solitude in all seasons to everyone, whatever their income or age or physical abilities, the Forestlands are a unique treasure. In my 12 years on the Anacortes City Council, I became very aware of how important the work of volunteer citizens and organizations like the Friends of the Forest is to augmenting the City's staff and funding. This public-private partnership has been key to creating and maintaining the ACFL as we know it today.

About 10 years ago I started painting again after a 40-year break for grad school, raising 3 kids, and a full time architectural career. My paintings are now in several local galleries, as well as public and private collections. For the past several years I have donated a painting each year to the Friends of the Forest auction as my way of supporting the important work that they do.

For this year's event I decided to create a new painting especially for the auction. I wanted to feature the lakes that are so special to all of us, but I couldn't decide which one. The view you'll see in the painting grew out of my memory and imagination, and isn't an exact image of a specific place. So if you are the lucky one who wins the bid in the auction, you can imagine that it is your very own special spot on the shore of your favorite lake – wherever that may be.



Featured Speaker: Amy Gulick

Join acclaimed photographer and author Amy Gulick on a journey to one of the rarest ecosystems on Earth – the Tongass rain forest of Alaska. Humpback whales, orcas, and sea lions cruise the forested shorelines. Wild salmon swim upstream into the forest, feeding some of the world's highest densities of grizzlies, black bears, and bald eagles. Native cultures and local communities benefit from the gifts of the forest and sea.

Amy Gulick is an award-winning nature photographer and writer, and a Fellow with the International League of Conservation Photographers. Her images and stories have been featured in Audubon, National Wildlife, Sierra, Outdoor Photographer and other publications.

Her work in Alaska has received numerous honors including the prestigious Daniel Housberg Wilderness Image Award from the Alaska Conservation Foundation, the Voice of the Wild Award from the Alaska Wilderness League, a Lowell Thomas Award from the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation, and a Philip Hyde Grant Award from the North American Nature Photography Association.

Friends of the Forest Scholarship Recipients

Each year, Friends of the forest provides a \$2,000 scholarship to three different seniors or alumni from Anacortes High School who are pursuing a path towards outdoor education, preservation, or conservation. These investments in the future are made possible by you, our members, so thank you!



Kathryn Kamp has always loved nature and hiking and is excited to attend a school, that being in touch with its surrounding environment, incorporates that into student learning. At Montana State University, Kathryn will study wildlife habitat ecology and management, which will help her attain her dream of becoming a park ranger.



You could find Jayden Zaharris helping with Christmas tree pick up, Kids R Best fest, or the Memorial Day flag pick-up. She was also a member of Fidalgo Youth Symphony, marching band and choir. When she gets to Marquette University next fall, she will study environmental engineering.



Katie Parker has volunteered extensively with Key Club, was a trail helper with Friends of the Forest, and volunteered to play piano at her church. She heads to Whitman College to pursue environmental studies. Eventually, she hopes to teach children about the importance of the environment and ways to protect it.

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.

Welcome to the Forest!

Trail Ambassadors Share Knowledge and Love of the Forest to Visitors

This summer, we piloted a new Community Engagement program: Friends of the Forest Trail Ambassadors! Over a dozen local volunteers served as stewards at trailheads at both Little Cranberry Lake and Whistle Lake on weekends throughout the summer, welcoming guests to the ACFL. Volunteers ranged in age from high school to retirees, and all have had the opportunity to both learn about and share their knowledge with others.

On a lovely Saturday in mid-May, Trail Ambassadors met in the ACFL to hear from Bob Vaux, Assistant Director of Anacortes Parks and Recreation, to learn about what some of their responsibilities would be while volunteering in the forestlands. And the following weekend, Forest Educator Beck took everyone on a hike to teach them about some of the native plants, including salal, huckleberry, and the last hurrah of the *Calypso bulbosa*, the fairy slipper!



Luanne Freer and Chris Jensen at Whistle Lake

One of the best things about being a Trail Ambassador is meeting all kinds of people from near and far, and especially other members of the team. Our crew includes those who have lived here for decades and those who are brand new to the community and are looking for ways to meet people and get involved. We have scientists, park rangers, teachers, veterans, students, and more! But you don't have to be an experienced naturalist to be a Trail Ambassador; the unifying thread is that they all love the forestlands and decided to take the next step in protecting them.

“The visitors that come up to our table have such great stories and it really helps me feel connected to this place.”

If you've been out and about on a weekend this summer, you may have spotted Trail Ambassador Sarah Bly's friendly smile. Sarah says, "I chose to volunteer because I was an outdoor educator for over a decade, and have been really missing the opportunity to

share my love of nature's magical moments with others, whether that be as simple as helping a visitor identify a new plant or to just share in the beauty of a sunset together."

While we ask Ambassadors to serve a minimum of 2-3 days total, Sarah has volunteered for multiple weekends over the course of the summer and has had the opportunity to meet a lot of people on the trails. About her first day volunteering at Whistle Lake, she tells us: "I noticed a group of guys in the parking lot getting suited up and revving their dirt bikes. [Then]

I noticed a small girl in the group, who must have been somewhere between 5 and 7 years old. She was all suited up, just like the men, and looking super confident and strong on her own dirt bike! She sped past me beaming a huge joyful smile!” Moments like these are yet another reminder that the forestlands has something to offer for everyone, and that you’re never too young (or too old) to recreate in nature a way that you enjoy and is respectful to others and to the forests themselves.



Andrea Cole and Sarah Bly Tabling at Little Cranberry Lake

As we know, there are those rare moments in the ACFL where a small few decide to forgo the rules, whether in regards to motorbikes (which are allowed on specific trails from April through October), cigarettes, alcohol, or, most often, picking up after their pooch and keeping animal friends on a leash. (Note: A special shout-out to the couple I saw a while back with their cat on a leash in the ACFL--thanks for setting an example and bringing a smile to my face)!

Trail Ambassadors have appreciated the support of Parks and Recreation personnel and the presence of an Anacortes Police Department officer on busy weekends this summer, and thus far, we’ve been fortunate that there have been no major issues while our Trail Ambassadors have been “on duty.” However, they are always happy to hand out doggie bags to those in need of them!

For those of you who might be considering volunteering next year, Trail Ambassador Chris Jensen says, “I’ve lived here for 27 years, and I chose to volunteer because I love nature so much. As a biologist, I just love to help people understand and appreciate what they are looking at so that we can keep these forestlands, and to get others involved in the conservation of it.”

While this Trail Ambassador season is winding down, be on the lookout next spring for a call to join us next summer in the ACFL! Whether you can serve for just a handful of weekends or want to get out there more, we’d love to have you!

And finally, Sarah shares this: “Volunteering with Friends of the Forest has been such a joy! I have met the most amazing volunteers and visitors alike from all walks of life while doing this work, all while brushing up on my bird and plant identification skills and trail navigation at the same time. The visitors that come up to our table have such great stories and it really helps me feel connected to this place. Especially in a time of restricted socializing, this opportunity to meet and greet people out in the fresh air is just so important and so nourishing. If you’re thinking about doing it, don’t be shy! You don’t need to be super knowledgeable about nature, just enthusiastic and willing to help! I hope to see you out on the trails soon!”

UPCOMING EVENTS (complete details at website)

Sep 8

10:00 am-
12:30 pm

Big Wetland Loop -Challenging-Meet at 29th St. Acces - Summer has dried out hefty parts of the landscape by now, but some areas in the ACFL are still saturated with water. We'll see how our watersheds have fared through the summer, search for species like beaver, great blue heron, and plant species that like to keep their feet wet.

Sep 21

9:00 am-
10:30 am

Old Growth in the ACFL - Easy -Meet at Ray Auld Dr. Parking Lot - With a long history of logging and regrowth in the ACFL, it's a wonder that some trees escaped the blade and remained to grow old. We'll wander among our wooden elders in the southern section of the Heart Lake corridor and learn about how forests recover from disruption and the role old growth trees play in the forest.

Oct 2

11:30 am-
1:00 pm

Family Nature Walk - Easy -Meet at Whistle Lake Parking Lot - Theme: Season of Autumn
Join our gentle family hike with Forest Educator Beck, who will have family friendly nature activities, games, and stories to share. Come prepared for the weather.

Oct 20

4:30 pm-
6:30 pm

Night Hike - Intermediate -Meet at A Ave. Access- Ecosystems don't stop just because the sun goes down. A bevy of species in the Pacific Northwest are crepuscular and nocturnal, or are active as the sun sets. We'll head out to search for barred owls, other nocturnal creatures, and safely experience what it feels like to walk in the dark with our own night vision.

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

Forest Discovery Day Camp By Forest Educator Beck

A year and a half into our pandemic, we've eagerly awaited the opportunity to get back to hosting one of Friends of the Forest's foundational programs, Forest Discovery Summer Day Camp. To celebrate its return, we decided to go big: Forest Discovery Summer Day Camp ran five days a week for three weeks, with four sessions of camp overall. Over the course of three weeks, older campers attended full day sessions and younger campers attended either a morning or afternoon session. It has been quite a success!



A typical full day of summer camp starts with a morning check-in, a hike, and a morning snack and story. We might stop to dissect an owl pellet dropped from the resident Barred Owls to discover what it consumed, or dip pH strips into one of the many lakes to measure its pH balance, play games on the trail that teach about predator and prey animal adaptations, or perhaps each kid will learn about a plant and later teach the rest of the group about it. At lunch, we sit spaced apart so we can safely fuel ourselves up for the afternoon, and listen to another story. Masks are worn throughout the day, and campers are encouraged to advocate for themselves for when they need a mask break. After lunch, we'll sit quietly for 30 minutes on the trail, listen to the sounds of the forest, and create sound maps. In the afternoon, we'll hike some more, play more trail games, and then wrap up the day with some free choice time: journaling, books, or playing. Finally, before its time to go, we reflect on our day together by looking to Nootka Rose as our teacher and explain our "rose, bud, thorn" for the day. (If you're more of the exacting botanist type, yes, technically roses have 'prickles', not 'thorns', but I digress.) Campers reflect on the rose blossom of their day, their favorite moment. We'll acknowledge the prickly things that did not go as well as hoped. And last, we'll set a goal for the next day—our bud.



You might have seen us roaming the trails of the ACFL this summer—from Whistle Lake to Mt. Erie, from Heart Lake and all around the beaver ponds to Little Cranberry Lake, Forest Discovery Summer Day Campers have hiked, played, and discovered in every corner of the ACFL, building their ecosystem knowledge and emotional connection with this special place. Forest Discovery Summer Day Camp has been one of the happiest and most fun times of the past year, with kids ready to explore, eager to play in the fresh air, amongst a forest preserved by a caring community. Nothing can stop you when you're friends with the forest.





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!