



Friends of the Forest

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

Volume 36 • Issue 3 • Summer 2023

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US AT OUR SPRING PARTY!

We had a fabulous time at the Depot Arts Center in May listening and dancing to The Enthusiasts, enjoying drinks from Bastion Brewery and snacks from Gere-A-Deli, getting our faces painted by Persona Facepaintings, learning about our Adult and Youth Education programs, and socializing all in support of Friends of the Forest!



More pictures can be found on our website!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete details are on the “Upcoming Events” page on our website at www.friendsoftheacfl.org/upcomingactivities. Or simply scan the QR code on the right to get there!



We use a registration system so that we can contact you if the hike needs to be cancelled or rescheduled. Walk-ins are always welcome but if you know your plans ahead of time, we do appreciate if you'd fill out the RSVP located on each event page.

August 11 **Community Science Wetlands Monitoring** - Easy - Location TBA - We'll be meeting on the second Friday of each month to monitor wetlands around Little Cranberry Lake and Big Beaver Pond. Wear weather-proof clothes and bring your curiosity! Location will be emailed to registered participants prior to the hike.
(Friday)
10:00 am
-12:00 pm

August 15 **August Senior Stroll**- Moderate - Whistle Lake Parking lot - Meet at the Whistle Lake parking lot, where we'll explore the areas around the ACFL's deepest lake! We'll keep the pace of this hike slow as the group's curiosity guides our learning, so feel free to bring your own field guides, binoculars/magnifiers, and whatever gear you'll need for walking on trails.
(Tuesday)
9:00 am
-11:00 am

August 19 **Summer Ethnobotany** - Moderate - A Avenue Trailhead - Ethnobotany is the study of people, plants, and the way in which the land provides people with what we need to survive - through food, medicine, tools, transportation, and shelter. Join this hike to learn more about the plants of the ACFL and to celebrate how plants can be used to enrich our own lives. Feel free to bring binoculars, notebooks, snacks, and water - but make sure to bring your curiosity!
(Saturday)
10:00 am
-1:00 pm

August 26 **Nature Photography in the ACFL** - Beginner - Heart Lake Parking Lot - With over 50 miles of trails and about 3000 acres to enjoy, the ACFL has long been an inspiration to local artists and enthusiasts alike. Join Friends of the Forest and local photographer Mark Gardner on a slow photo walk through some of the ACFL's scenic places, and practice taking your pictures to the next level! Come prepared for slow walking and stopping, and bring whatever photography equipment you'd like to get some practice with. (This can absolutely be your smart phone!) Make sure whatever device(s) you bring are fully charged.
(Saturday)
7:00am
-10:00 am

Save the Date
Annual Benefit Auction, Port of Anacortes
Saturday, November 4
Details in early fall!

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Do you love event planning? We would appreciate your assistance as we plan our Annual Benefit, held in November! From decorating to running errands to everything in between, we'd love to have you join us. Email ashleigh@friendsoftheacfl.org or call her at (360) 293-3725 to chat about how you can help. We've already started the planning process so it's not too early to come aboard!



*Friends of
the Forest*

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 a 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 of a loved one or special person.

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.

School Programs Year-End Wrap Up!

Spotlight on 7th grade:

The beginning of June in the ACFL was full of excitement and discoveries as Anacortes 7th graders (180 of them!) hit the trails to learn about the ACFL and collect data for their “Perfect Beast” project. Throughout June, 7th graders met with Hannah, our Youth Education Coordinator, for classroom visits about how different ecosystems in the ACFL were formed, and participated in field trips to learn about the biotic and abiotic factors (living and nonliving things) that make up each ecosystem. We saw lots of examples of selection pressures in the ACFL and how organisms have evolved adaptations to thrive in their specific ecosystems using these cool (and sometimes unusual) adaptations.

Each student used their collected data from the field trip to complete their class project, creating the “perfect beast” to live in one of the ACFL ecosystems. Seventh graders presented their beasts during the last week of school and fielded questions from their peers about their magnificent organisms, particularly how they would adapt to the local selective pressures of the ACFL. (See photos next page)!

We are so proud of all the enthusiasm and hard work our AMS 7th graders brought to this project and thankful to our Friends of the Forest members for their monetary support, which allows us to offer free programming, transportation, and accessible place-based learning to every student in our district!

Spotlight on 3rd grade:

Third grade classes hit the trails at Heart Lake in April and May to learn about the community of organisms that live in our forest. For these field trips, students “adopted” a forest animal, learning about its habitat requirements (food, water, shelter and space) and searched for these specific habitat components throughout the ACFL. We also looked at the web of life throughout our forest and played forest animal-themed games!

Third graders ended their year of forest education at each school with an all-classes field day in May to learn about food chains, population dynamics, and balance in the forest ecosystem. Thanks to all the 3rd graders and their teachers at all three schools for their energy and curiosity all year long!

Spotlight on Kindergarten:

Kindergartners finished their year of forest learning with an all-classes field day at each school that focused on working together to survive as a tree. Each team worked together in our “tree-lay” race where students shuffled water and sunlight up the tree and returned with sugars to eat and store for winter. Our year-round kindergarten program covers topics like deciduous and evergreen trees, photosynthesis, observations, the role of trees in the forest, and comparing and contrasting parts of trees and their function. Thanks to all the kindergartners for their energy and sense of wonder and to their teachers for helping them get out and explore!

Thanks to the support of the community, we offered close to 3,000 hours of Forest Education* school programs to students across ASD this school year! Thank you to all of our members for believing in providing accessible, hand-on and place-based learning to all of our ASD students; we truly live in a remarkable, unique place, full of people who care about our forests and our students: past, present, and future.

*Forest Education is defined as each hour each student spends learning about the forest. For example, a class of 15 students participating in a one-hour lesson equals 15 Forest Education hours.

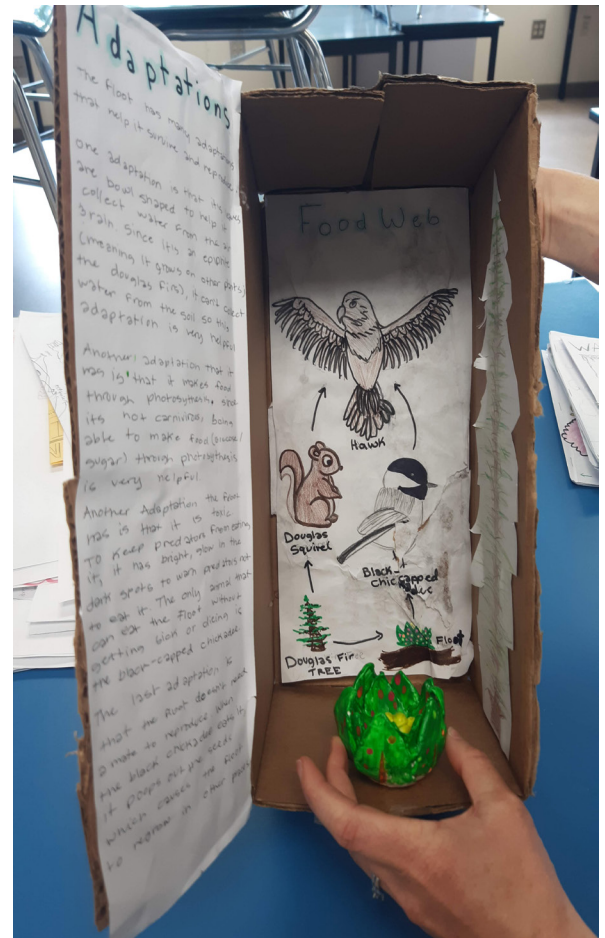
(see more pictures on page 11)!



The incredible creature above was designed by a student in Mrs. McCartney's class. More about the Wertle:

- A. They have webbed, textured, wide paws that lack paw pads to help them with many things. One, the webs help them be faster in water. Two, texture soles help grasp fish, a wertle's favorite food. Three, wide paws help balance out some of the wertle's weight so that it is more stable on the floating bogs.
- B. The wertle has short but sharp retractable claws that help it not only defend itself from predators, but are ridged so that they can grasp fish.
- C. They have a venomous spine on their tail that injects Tetrodotoxin, solely for use against potential predators.
- D. Wertle have a lure at the end of their tails which mimics a bug, small fish, or other enticing object to whatever is being hunted.
- E. Like beavers, they have valves in their nose and ears but also in their gills, which (for the nose and ears) helps them stop from getting water in their lungs, and (for the gills) helps them switch breathing styles on land, where gills aren't useful.
- F. Wertle lay clutches of between 4 and 8 eggs every other year, and build nests out of pondweed, wet grass, and mud. They usually situate them on the swampy edges of the floating bogs, hidden in the grass.

To the right, a project by another middle school student.



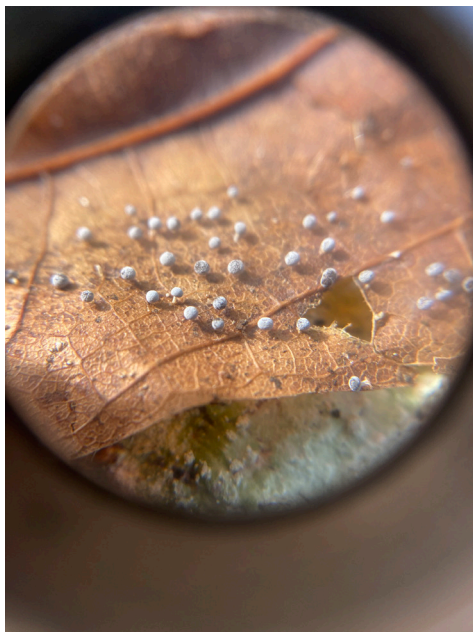
Reimagining The Naturalist Club: A Big Success!

Spring this year brought a re-imagined iteration of the ACFL Naturalist Club, a COVID-era program that hoped to build community and connection with the natural worlds of Fidalgo Island. With such an ambitious goal laid out for this group, we were so excited to be able to convert the Naturalist Club to a fully in-person program this year!

Beginning in March, twelve Naturalist Club members met for 10 weeks of immersive learning in and around the Anacortes Community Forest Lands, starting from (literally!) the ground up. We held classes and field programs on a huge variety of topics, from the complex geologic history of Fidalgo Island to the (equally complex) human history of the land that became the ACFL. We explored the flora and fauna that call Fidalgo Island home, and got some practice using field guides, dichotomous keys, and even some apps to help us learn more about the world around us. We concluded our multi-week series by examining how we—as community members and trail users—could help ensure the continued health and rigor of the forest lands that so inspire us.

That’s the pie-in-the-sky out of the way, but what did we actually see out on the trail this spring? Far too much to cover in a newsletter article! Check out the pictures below for a brief taste of our time together, but be sure to ask the Naturalist Club members themselves if you meet them out on trail!

Naturalist Club members who completed this spring’s series will continue to meet on a monthly basis throughout 2023, so this isn’t the last you’ll hear from our intrepid group. And don’t worry, the next Naturalist Club 10-week series is already in the works! Keep an eye out for registration opening up again in early 2024 for our next group—we’d love to have you join us!



Our first field program of the year was alive with slime molds, from the smallest fruiting bodies (left) to a creeping, orange plasmodium (which our Naturalist Club folks are admiring, right).

By Ellie Kravets, Community Programs Coordinator

Spring had sprung in earnest by the time we completed our botany field trip. On the left, Naturalist Club members stop to admire a choice example of a native cottonwood. Knowing their association with cottonwoods in this area, we were thrilled to spot a nice patch of morels a few steps further down the trail (right.) (And to those culinary-minded among you, a gentle reminder that there is no foraging permitted in the ACFL.)



We didn't spend all of our time in the woods! Pictured left, Naturalist Club members are in deep debate over the identity of certain local skulls. (And putting their sleuthing skills to the test!)

Volunteer/Board Member Spotlight: Jessica Redman

Going forward, we will spotlight a Friends volunteer each quarter. This month, we're starting with our newest Board member, Jessica Redman! *If you'd like to nominate a member volunteer to be featured here, please email info@friendsoftheacfl.org with their name and contact info. We're also looking for additional Board members to join us soon! Email board@friendsoftheacfl.org for more information.*

What drew you to joining the Friends of the Forest Board?

My husband and I moved here in 2020, during the first year of the pandemic. We had been to Anacortes a few times before, "passing through," as most people say. We had made a quick decision to move to Anacortes and the time frame of considering looking for a house to actually moving in, was all of 3 weeks. This was our first home purchase. I was scared of the quick change. However, everyday we welcomed a pleasant surprise. The biggest one, by far, was the ACFL. I've been up to Mt. Erie in the past but had no idea that it was part of a much larger network of city-owned conservation lands. Exploring the ACFL as a newbie was literally a breath of fresh air. I wanted to show my appreciation for my new community and help in the preservation of this amazing opportunity that I had been given. Volunteering was the first step, which is always a fun time, but with my professional background as a wetland ecologist, I thought I could be a good addition. Long story short, I just wanted to give back!



What are some of the skills you have that you hope will be an asset to the organization?

My educational background is in environmental science and environmental policy. I've worked as a professional ecologist within the Puget Sound region for the past 12 years and have been a certified Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS) for the past 5 years. In addition to wetland delineations, restoration, and mitigation design; I regularly work with federal, state, and local jurisdictions regarding critical areas permitting. I will bring a good mix of ecological and regulatory knowledge that could help Friends, the City, and the Skagit Land Trust conserve these lands for future generations. (continued on page 10)

Above, right: Jessica at Boundary Waters, Minnesota, 2020
Below, left: Mt. Baker Chain Lakes, October 2022

Anacortes Schools Foundation Scholarship Recipients

The Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands award three annual scholarships to current and former students in Anacortes. Friends of the Forest Scholarships are awarded to students who have enthusiasm for our natural environment and who support Friends of the Forest's mission and dedication to the preservation of Anacortes Community Forest Lands through education, outreach, and stewardship. Preference is given to students who plan to study areas related to the outdoors, environment, conservation or nature. This year's winners include two members of the Class of 2023, Brittany Brenner and Thomas Harris, and one graduate, Saville Feist.

From a very young age, Brittany Brenner has been passionate about the environment. As a Green Club member and current officer, Brittany has worked on rain gardens, made reusable shopping bags, and helped plant and restore native plants. This fall, Brittany will head to Western Washington University to pursue a bachelor's degree in Geology. She then hopes to go on to graduate school to get her masters in paleontology.

Working for the past three years in a local real estate office, serving as ASB secretary, a member of Green Club, SABA, and the National Honor Society, participating in multiple sports and managing the girls volleyball team are just a few of the things Thomas Harris has been up to over the past 4 years. Thomas is described by teachers and coaches as kind, trustworthy, reliable, endlessly creative, and as a person of integrity and humility. Thomas heads to the University of Colorado this fall where he plans to study Environmental Design.

Saville Feist is studying Spanish and geographic information systems (GIS) at Portland State University. She loves being (and running) in nature and is also dedicated to conservation and reducing her carbon footprint.

Friends of the Forest is proud to support these three young people from our community, and we wish them good luck as they head out into the world to make our planet (and Anacortes, in turn) a better place!



Pictured above: Executive Director Asa Deane, Thomas Harris, Brittany Brenner
Pictured below: Saville Feist



Members of the military and veterans are an essential part of our Anacortes community, and we are grateful to count many of you as members of Friends of the Forest as well! Are you (or a family member) a current member of Friends of the Forest (or have you volunteered with us in the past year) and are also an active member of the military or a veteran? We'd like to feature a list of our veterans in the fall newsletter to coincide with Veterans Day. If you would like to be included (you are also welcome to name someone posthumously), please email info@friendsoftheacfl.org by 9/15 with your name, branch, and indicate active service or retired.

Thank you for your service and for being such an important part of this community.

Volunteer/Board Member Spotlight (continued)

What do you love about the ACFL?

It is such an amazing place! It is beautiful! Right in our City! No need to get on a highway to get your nature buzz in. We are spoiled! Cranberry Lake is my go to. I love a quiet morning hike there before I start my work day. However, I also like a busy Saturday summer day when you see families out swimming, paddleboarding, having a blast and enjoying the day. It's beautiful. If it gets too busy, there is always a less used trail to turn on and get back to solitude. Always more to explore. Its amazing that Anacortes has this resource. It's very rare.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to volunteer?

DO IT!!!! It's such a blast! You will meet so many like minded community members as well as Friends and City Parks staff. Work parties are always a fun time. It is absolutely amazing what a team can do in a few hours. The before/after is so impressive! While it seems like you've just been meeting new people and chit chatting, somehow a new set of stairs has been built or a trail has been repaired. It's the best! Total disclaimer: some days can include heavy lifting in the rain. Totally worth it! Still fun!

Learn more about Jessica and all our other staff and Board members on our website by clicking on "Who We Are" and "Staff/Board." And please consider joining us as a Board member!

Friends of the Forest

Friends of the Forest Board Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. We are currently meeting via Zoom. Meetings are open to the public - please email Director Asa Deane for more information on how to 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. 2025

Rob Skelton | Secretary | Jan. 2025

Steve Williams | Vice President | Jan. 2024

Lin Nichols | Treasurer | Jan. 2024

Andy Stewart | President Emeritus | Jan. 2024

Lynne Jordan | Board Member | Jan. 2025

Andrea Petrich | Board Member | Jan. 2024

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 | asa@friendsoftheacfl.org

Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller | Outreach and Development
Coordinator | ashleigh@friendsoftheacfl.org

Ellie Kravets | Community Programs Coordinator |
ellie@friendsoftheacfl.org

Hannah Katz | Youth Education Coordinator |
hannah@friendsoftheacfl.org

More photos from our school programs

Third graders (top and below left) and kindergartners (bottom right) exploring the forest this spring!





Friends of the ACFL
 P.O. Box 2213
 Anacortes, WA 98221

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 WA 98221



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 _____

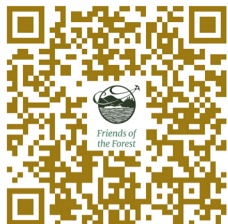
Address _____

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



<--Save a stamp-renew by scanning this QR code!

Other amount _____

_____ 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. Annual dues should be renewed each January.

Thank you to all the friends who have renewed their dues! Keeping your dues current with the Friends of the Forest is one of the best ways to Think Globally and Act Locally. Here on Fidalgo Island, the ACFL needs Friends to ensure its preservation. Our Education program depends on your support.

Thank you!