



# Friends of the Forest

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

Volume 34 • Issue 1 • Winter 2021

## Seasonal Scoop: You Heard the Bird

By Beck Pittman

Deadlines are my friend, I am telling myself.

Today is the deadline for the draft of the newsletter that you now have in your hands-- and I have a blank page ahead of me. What was I waiting for? A knock on the door from nature, announcing what to write?

Well, it's my lucky day.

A Black-capped Chickadee's song, fee-bee, fee-bay, is coming through the cold windows as I write from home. It sparks recognition in me of the changing season. It might not be a knock on the door, but I'd rather a song through my window anyway.

**"I ask myself- could the birds' calendars be just so slightly different?"**

I haven't heard chickadees using that song in a long while. Even the other day, in mid-January, when I was walking around Whistle lake on trail 205. I got caught up in a bevy of birds-- a mixed flock of Black-capped Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Spotted Towhees. I observed that these birds of different niches were able to flock together because the sloped hillside, full of Salal, Pacific Madrone, Western Hemlock, and piles of sticks knocked down from that Big Windstorm we had on Tuesday. To my right, the tops of some tall trees growing down-slope were just about level with the shrubs growing uphill, to my left. This slope brought all these niches together.

In that crowd, as the Juncos bopped and foraged along the trunks of the trees and in the brush, they also took responsibility for administering the universal cross-species warning, chick, chick, chick-chick! The others would reply. I heard that cute whistle-whirr from the

Chickadees, foraging in the tips of the Western Hemlock slightly above my head. I heard leaves rustling on the forest floor, coming from a Towhee scratching and sifting leaf litter for food. And I heard its grating scree, which is not cute, but I guess that's not their fault.



A Black-capped Chickadee perches on a log, ready to sing in the change of seasons (one would suspect)

I stayed a while, caught more birds in my ears— Pileated Woodpecker, Raven, Red-breasted Nuthatch. The Juncos had calmed their alerts, but I was ready to go. I walked down trail 234 and under the big tree that spans the ravine, crossed the main trail, and followed the roller-coaster trail back to the parking lot.

I clocked my time as being in the forest for around  
**(continued on p.6)**

# ACFL Naturalist Club- in the Virtual Treehouse

By Beck Pittman



Around Solstice-time, Friends of the Forest began our new program ACFL Naturalist Club. The first group to sign up gathered in our ‘virtual treehouse,’ which looked eerily similar to the common grid of faces on a Zoom session, but hey, it felt like a treehouse of friends.

When the idea for ACFL Naturalist Club sparked, it was measured to the Friends’ mission—we wanted to be sure the ACFL Naturalist club was dedicated to the preservation of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands using education, outreach, and stewardship. Asa and I hoped to facilitate a learning space for

folks to get the tools they need to deepen their connections to nature. We wanted to cultivate opportunities for life-long learning in service of the ethic that learning more about nature is both an act of personal satisfaction and part of environmental stewardship. And we hoped that this group would grow organically too, pursuing interests and ideas that were relevant to our home community.

Our group gathered on Saturday mornings in December. To start the first class, we introduced the ACFL Naturalist Club’s core values (kindness, curiosity, community, and stewardship) and reviewed some light Constructivist learning theory. **(continued on following page...)**

## 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.

## (ACFL Naturalist Club cont. from previous page)

Over the course of three weeks in the virtual space from Calgary to Anacortes (some members join from afar, because love for the ACFL-- quite rightly-- does not diminish with distance!), we shared our observations about the changing season, chatted about what our spots of nature looked like that day, and asked questions. Within the series of weekly meetings we watched presentations and learned about keeping a nature journal, learned about identification keys and plant identification, how to navigate with a topo map and compass, and we had lots of inspiring and informative conversations. We also shared pictures and journal entries that we had been working on that week, since part of ACFL Naturalist Club's presentations include casual homework assignments called Woodswork.

Going forward and alongside our virtual treehouse classroom learning series-- which we plan to expand to include more topics-- ACFL Naturalist Club will hold semi-regular meetings a few times a year. Our first will be held mid-February. We envision inviting guest speakers to address topics the group is curious about, and, members of the group may present their own talks. Post-Covid, we will begin to safely meet in person, for hikes and projects.

Lately, I've been noticing some of the quirky parts of nature, like this hair frost--and I think, "oh, I've got to share this with the ACFL

Naturalist Club members and see what they think." Everyone notices the curiosities and quirks of nature, and we all like different bits. When we get together and share, our lives are just that much more enriched. -BP



**Feb  
17th**

### Naturalist Club Virtual Meeting

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

*via Zoom Meeting- register at [www.friendsoftheacfl.org](http://www.friendsoftheacfl.org)*

Join us for the first official meeting of the ACFL Naturalist Club! This new program is an opportunity for Friends of the Forest members to go deeper, learn more, and connect more consistently with other ACFL-lovers. While this program has started during Covid, it will continue forward with future meetings and classes in the ACFL itself. This first meeting will be an opportunity to connect, learn, and shape what the Naturalist Club is to become!

**Mar  
3rd**

### Annual Membership Meeting

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

*via Zoom Meeting- register at [www.friendsoftheacfl.org](http://www.friendsoftheacfl.org)*

Members and non-members alike are invited to attend our Annual Membership Meeting. Board elections and a brief review of the Annual Report will kick things off, followed by a presentation by Forest Technician and Forest Resources graduate student, Kayla Swerin. Kayla will talk about her experiences working and learning in the forest, tools of the trade, and the way forestry is practiced. Come with questions about the trees in your life!

# 2020 Friends of the Forest Members

We feel so much gratitude, both for individuals who may have recently joined us as members and for those who have supported our mission since day one. Our donors are the true heroes responsible for the work that is accomplished in the community and in the ACFL. It would not be possible without you! If you see your name listed, know that we appreciate your contribution and look forward to a new year of education, outreach, and stewardship. Annual membership dues are due in January. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2021, please consider making a gift today.

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## (Seasonal Scoop cont. from cover)



A male Dark-eyed Junco stands guard upon a dead branch, ready to warn the forest of coming danger with his alarm cries (one might surmise)

two hours. Part of the thrill in taking a walk through the woods is getting to hear who else is out there, what they're doing, and what they care about. I listened on my whole walk, and heard and observed many wonderful things. But I didn't hear a fee, not a bee, not a bay.

And just today, I heard it. Such a moment! Chickadees out my window are now singing, fee-bee, fee-bay; a mating song that proclaims, "here is your dream come true, Lady Birds! Pick me, I'm the best male Chickadee." We hear it when the birds are ready to pair, build a nest, and raise chicks. It means, spring will be here soon!

But I pause because, maybe this is just happening in my neck of the woods, on the mainland. I ask myself-

could the birds' calendars be just so slightly different? The Black-capped Chickadees in that mixed flock... what are they up to now? It's a question I want to ask my Friends of the Forest. What is the bird life like in your spot of nature? What messages about the season are you hearing?

I've been told by the Black-capped Chickadees, fee-bee, fee-bay, spring is on its way! -BP

## 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](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

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**Rob Skelton** | Board Member | Jan. 2021

**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

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

An enormous thank you to everyone that 'came out' or donated to our fall 'Give a Hoot' virtual fundraiser! Because of your support, we were able to raise over \$40,000 for Friends of the Forest, money that has set the foundation for our ambitious goals in 2021:

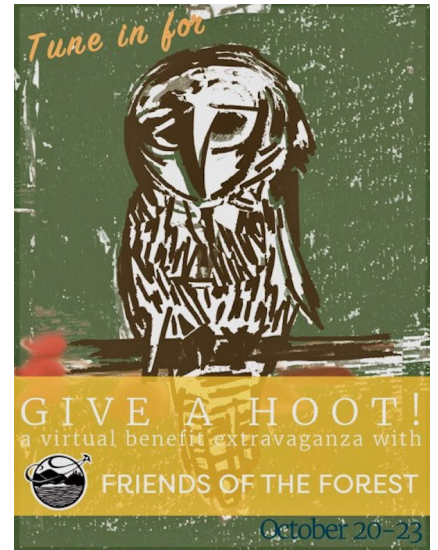
- Build a larger and more robust volunteer program in service to the ACFL. We'll not only focus on trail maintenance and invasive species removal, but a comprehensive 'Trail Ambassador' system to provide education and guidance to the many forest users during the busiest months of the year
- Partner with Transition Fidalgo and Friends in their Forest Monitoring project to expand the scope of data collection and bring high-school citizen scientists into the fold, inspiring and engaging the scientists of tomorrow
- Mentor high school students interested in entering the world of environmental education through a naturalist-in-training program that immerses them as a leader on trail amongst younger students
- Premier a brand new summer program, Fields to Forest, focused on bringing the children of Skagit Valley farmworkers into the ACFL for exploration and education
- Grow the new ACFL Naturalist club to a year-round program, offering in-depth trainings, regular meetings, and a community for those that want to go deeper and learn more

Of course, on top of these additions, we look forward to the return of all of our traditional community hikes and school programs. All free of charge to participants. All because of your support.

Thank you for being with us, for being a member, for caring about the ACFL and the community that protects it. Thank you for your generosity, for your support, and for preserving this forest that makes Fidalgo Island one of the most wonderful and unique places in the Pacific Northwest. If you haven't already, please renew your membership for 2021. Your support will put us on the path to success for one of our most ambitious years to date.

Be safe, get outside, and as always, we'll see you in the forest!

- Asa Deane, Executive Director



Thank you to all of our sponsors!



Photography by Mark Gardner



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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!