



ANACORTES COMMUNITY FOREST LANDS

Management Plan
October 2008
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"Game management and forestry grow natural species in an environment not greatly altered for the purpose in hand, relying on partial control of a few factors to enhance the yield above what unguided nature would produce. Their controls are barely visible; an observer, unless he were an expert, would see no difference between managed and unmanaged terrain. Hence their success depends more on the exercise of skill in the selection of the right factors, than on heavy investments of labor or materials."

Aldo Leopold

Game Management, 1947

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE
ANACORTES COMMUNITY FOREST LANDS

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A Conservation Plan and a Forest Inventory Plan were created in 1980 and were part of the 1991 Anacortes Community Forest Lands Management Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Anacortes owns over 2,800 acres of designated forest lands within the City limits. This area includes Mt. Erie, Whistle Lake, Little Cranberry Lake, 80 acres north of Heart Lake and the former State Park lands. These community forest lands contain some of the most unique and complex living environments in the Puget Sound Region. Few cities are so fortunate to have such a resource, coupled with the broad-based desire of its citizens to conserve and responsibly use these resources.

This management plan was developed with input taken from public meetings in the spring of 2007, a telephone survey done over the summer of 2007 and subsequent public meetings in 2008. Input was also given via written correspondence from the public. The Forest Advisory Board and subsequent committees under its auspices were also involved in revising drafts of this document.

The goal of this process was to develop a plan that works to conserve and enhance the unique environment and habitats within the Anacortes Community Forest Lands (ACFL) while maintaining recreational opportunities for local residents.

Since the last Forest Lands Plan was approved in 1991 much has changed in Anacortes. The population has increased from approximately 11,500 to nearly 16,000 people. Much of the land adjacent to the community forest lands around Little Cranberry Lake has experienced dramatic residential development. Use in the ACFL from local and regional residents has increased as people seek out its natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

In 1998 the Conservation Easement Program (CEP) was initiated to protect the community forest lands from logging, mining and development while raising money to pay for management and stewardship of the ACFL. It was created when City Council passed Resolution #1492 on December 21, 1998. The program places one acre of land under conservation easement for every \$1,000 donated. City Council reviews and approves each round of acreage that is protected. The Skagit Land Trust and Friends of the ACFL are partners with the City in this project. The Skagit Land Trust Holds the easements and places them on file with the County Auditor and the Friends of the ACFL help promote the project in the community.

The easement program was conceived of as means to replace revenue which was lost when logging was discontinued in the ACFL in late 1980's. The money donated goes into the Forest Endowment Fund. The principal of this fund cannot be spent; however interest revenue can be used for the forest lands. In August of 2007, the fund surpassed the initial goal of \$1.5 million dollars, 11 years ahead of schedule. The CEP will continue as long as there is land to conserve in the community forest lands and people willing to contribute to its protection.

The Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands have provided a wide variety of community forest education programs and naturalist consultation in service to the ACFL since 1988. These services are in partnership with the City and School District, with additional financial support from grants, businesses, private donors, and membership. Over the course of twenty years of local forest education, thousands of citizens of all ages have grown in knowledge and appreciation for the ACFL leading to many tangible benefits. These include and are not limited to: an increase in nature literacy, an increase in enjoyment of the woods, a burgeoning conservation ethic in the community, tremendous support for the creation of the Conservation Easement Program and broad financial generosity to see it through, steady stewardship participation in work parties and committees, and a demonstrated sense of respect and care for the woods among most local youth.

This plan reflects new policies and practices in the management and stewardship of the ACFL to address changes that have occurred since 1991. Our goal is to update this plan every five years to review what is

and is not working to maintain the ACFL as a healthy forest, wildlife habitat and local recreational venue.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of recommendations for management of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands (ACFL). The complete recommendation for each section will be found in the body of this report.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

A) Little Cranberry Lake Area

Current Conditions: Use has increased as neighborhoods around this area have developed.

Projected Use: Local resident park use for low-impact recreational activities. Increased use by hikers, dog walkers and mountain bikers. Little Cranberry continues to be a popular place to swim.

Recommendations: Eliminate individual trails built by homeowners and develop neighborhood trail heads with public input. Build restroom facility at Little Cranberry Lake parking lot. Consider paving access road from Georgia Avenue to the lake. Open trail #105 to horse and mountain bike use.

B) South Cranberry Area

Current Conditions: Area is used by all groups year round. Trails need regular maintenance to keep up with heavy user demands.

Projected Use: Use will continue to increase as neighborhoods around this area fill in.

Recommendations: Improve and rehabilitate trails. Maintain trail #10 as fire/emergency access road. Finish closure of old city dump and re-vegetate according to plan. Close trail #116 and #117 to motorcycles.

C) Whistle Lake/Fidalgo Ridge Area

Current Conditions: Use by all groups has increased in this area, especially year round mountain biking and dog walkers. Heavy use by swimmers in summer months.

Projected Use: Manage watershed/forest land and low-impact recreational use.

Recommendations: Repair damage to trails and lakeshore. Design all forest management activities to protect water quality. Prohibit vehicular access. Continue successful summer patrols by Anacortes Police Department of popular recreational areas. Open trail #204 near the shore of Whistle Lake to trail #203 to horses. Trail #246 will become a hiker only trail. Close trail #233 to motorcycles. Close trail #202 between trail #21 and #231 to motorcycles.

D) Heart Lake Area

Current Conditions: Intensive recreation area on shores of Heart Lake, adjacent to Heart Lake Road.

Projected Use: To be developed in conjunction with Heart Lake Management Plan.

Recommendations: Follow recommendations provided in the Heart Lake Management Plan.

E) South Heart Lake Road/Ray Auld Drive Area

Current Conditions: This area is already intensively used as a multiple-use park. The Heart Lake Road and drive to Mt Erie summit are regional attractions.

Projected Use: The drive through this area will continue to be a regional tourist attraction.

Recommendations: Continue program to diminish illegal dumping in the area by limiting vehicle pullouts and working with law enforcement. Improve sanitary services at summit of Mt. Erie and Heart Lake. Close trails #215, #225, #26 to motorcycles. Close #207 to motorcycles between trails #230 and #26.

F) Mt. Erie Conservancy/Forest Study Area

Current Use: The area currently has limited multiple use trail access.

Projected Use: Low-intensity dispersed recreation. Conservancy/study area.

Recommendations: Restrict high-intensity use.

G) Mt. Erie Summit, South and West Faces

Current Use: Tourist attraction mainly at the summit. Other locations are recreational climbing area used by local mountain climbers and regional groups for basic climbing and search and rescue instruction.

Projected Use: Continued use as tourist attraction and climbing area.

Recommendations: Work with climbers to improve sanitation, trash removal, group dispersal and parking on the summit. Instructional groups shall contact City staff and provide proof of insurance, liability and use agreements prior to use. Group size shall be limited to diminish environmental impact on the mountain. Trails shall be limited to scramble trails approved by Forest Advisory Board. Placement of fixed anchors, opening new areas to climbing and scrambling, and work parties to maintain climbing routes, etc., shall be approved by the Forest Advisory Board and coordinated with staff. Climbers are asked to “leave no trace”.

FOREST LANDS STEWARDSHIP

- A) Forest Management: The Anacortes Community Forest Lands will be managed to conserve and enhance their unique environment and wildlife habitat while maintaining recreational opportunities for local residents. Tree removal will be done only when necessary to remove blow down where substantial hazard exists, and only where removal of wind thrown trees does not severely impact standing trees or other vegetation. Natural succession processes, except wildfire, will be encouraged. Roads, fire trails, and recreation trails will be kept open. Any revenue derived from blow down harvest will be deposited into the Forest Endowment Fund.
- B) Flora Management: No taking of trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers, fungi or other vegetation. Hand picking of berries and other edibles from the trails for consumption while in the forest is allowed. Picking for home consumption or for retail is prohibited.
- C) Wildlife: Anacortes Community Forest Lands shall be managed to enhance current populations of wildlife. Citizens shall be made aware of the diversity of this resource. No native wildlife shall be removed from the ACFL. Domestic species or wild animals shall not be placed in the forest lands without permission from the Forest Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Department.
- D) Water Resources: Every effort should be made to maintain and enhance the water quality of Little Cranberry, Heart Lake and Whistle Lake and their associated marshlands and

wetlands.

MANAGEMENT OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- A) Picnicking: Consider at least one walk-in picnic site, for local use.
- B) Trails: Trail users are asked to respect others and follow rules to help preserve the ACFL. Off trail use is prohibited. Create areas in the Forest Lands that can accommodate wheelchair accessible trails and view points. Sites near Heart Lake and at the top of Mt. Erie have potential for meeting this need as has been done with the viewing platform at Little Cranberry Lake.
- C) Trail Uses: Motorcycles will be prohibited on all ACFL trails from November 1st to March 31st due to seasonal closure. For specific trail uses see current Comprehensive Trail Plan.
- D) Motor Vehicles: No unauthorized motor vehicles (cars, trucks, and ATVs) will be allowed on ACFL roads. All access points shall be gated and/or bermed and ditched. Combustion engines are prohibited on all ACFL lakes.
- E) Fishing: In conjunction with the Department of Wildlife, the lakes in the ACFL should be managed for fishing. Develop a long-range sports fishing plan with that Department.
- F) Hunting and Trapping: Resolution No. 968, adopted December 7, 1987 and amending Resolution No. 663, prohibits hunting, trapping, and discharge of firearms on Anacortes Community Forest Lands.
- G) Possession or Consumption of Alcohol in the Forest Lands is prohibited; per Ordinance No. 2629 passed September 15, 2003.
- H) Education: ACFL should be made available to the Anacortes School system, non-profit environmental organizations and institutions of higher learning for environmental education and research. Continue to work with the Friends of the ACFL to support and promote educational activities. These lands are invaluable for instilling a conservation ethic in our community.

MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

- A) Management Authority: The five-member advisory committee known as the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board will provide technical advice, recommend policy guidelines, review procedures and act as a liaison with the community on all forest land matters.
- B) Conservation: The Conservation Easement Program (CEP) was enacted in 1998 to raise revenue from the forest in lieu of logging. Resolution No. 1492 set the terms of the program which conserves 1 acre of land per \$1,000 donated. Once conserved, the land is protected from logging, mining or development. The City does reserve some rights to place public utilities on the land and access needed to service them. The money donated to the Conservation Easement Program goes into the Forest Endowment Fund which was created by Ordinance No. 2141 in 1990 to receive donations to the Forest Lands. The principal of this fund cannot be spent, but the interest may be used “for support and enhancement of the forest land.” At the writing of this document over 1,500 acres of the ACFL have been protected via the CEP. The goal is to protect all available acres of the Forest Lands through the CEP.
- C) Funding: Funding for the Forest Lands staff and annual operating expenses currently comes

from the Parks and Recreation Department's budget. Interest revenues from the Conservation Easement Program and revenues from the Lakeside Quarry mining lease can be used to help pay for staff, materials, signage, construction projects, consultants, education and land acquisition as budgeted each year.

- D) Enforcement: The City of Anacortes Police Department has enforcement powers in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands.
- E) Fire Protection: Maintain a comprehensive fire plan in conjunction with the Anacortes Fire Department and the Department of Natural Resources.
- F) Signs and Boundary Markers: The boundary of ACFL shall be clearly marked. All access and egress points should be posted. Private property lines should be posted with appropriate warnings.
- G) Cooperation with Adjacent Land Owners and Other Public Agencies: City subdivision ordinances should reflect the sensitive nature of these forest lands. The City should and review all future subdivision activity adjacent to these areas with this in mind. The City should develop cooperative agreements with adjacent owners, and other agencies such as DNR, Skagit County and State Park Department, to insure compatibility on land-use decisions.
- H) Future Acquisition Consideration: Priority should be given to acquiring land that is contiguous to the ACFL, provides critical habitat, is part of the drainage system of an ACFL lake or wetlands, helps connect or improve ACFL trail access, or is an important wildlife corridor.
- I) Invasive Non-native Plant Removal: Great effort has been expended by volunteers and ACFL staff to remove non-native invasive plants from the Forest Lands. This should be continued and expanded through volunteer work parties, available grant funds and other means to protect the unique environmental qualities of the ACFL. ACFL neighbors should be informed of the types of non-native plants which are invasive and encouraged to plant native alternatives.
- J) Group Use: Recreational groups over 25 participants shall apply for a permit from the Anacortes Parks and Recreation Department under the Special Events section of the Anacortes Municipal Code.

III MANAGEMENT AREAS

INTRODUCTION

These sections of the plan propose management areas, defined by topographical features and deed limitation, in order to simplify decision making. By identifying primary, secondary and prohibited uses in each unit, we hope to minimize present and future conflicts. Areas will be managed to conserve and enhance their unique environment and wildlife habitat while maintaining recreational opportunities for local residents. When applicable, management activities on lands proposed for acquisition are included.

The recommendations for management of these lands will be presented with the fewest possible restrictions on user groups and yet consistent with protection of the forest against damage, the observance of essential sanitary/safety measures and the prevention of actions by individuals or groups which unduly conflict with the enjoyment of the area by all citizens.

Most of the Community Forest Lands have multiple layers of protections upon them. Many acres were donated with restrictive deeds. The bulk of the former water department lands are now covered by protections afforded in the Conservation Easement Program (Resolution #1492).

MANAGEMENT AREAS

This section of the Management Plan is governed by the following statements in the City of Anacortes 2007 Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the Anacortes Community Forest Lands:

GOAL: Identify areas of environmental, educational, historic, cultural and/or biological significance, encourage their preservation, and regulate development which could cause significant deterioration of these qualities.

Policy: The Anacortes Community Forest Lands (ACFL) are critical areas having the designation as a Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area.

GOAL: Provide opportunities for residents to have access to undeveloped natural areas.

Policy: Whistle Lake, Heart Lake and Little Cranberry Lake watersheds should be managed to maintain their pristine and/or fragile environment and to preserve watersheds, wildlife habitats, wetlands, aesthetic values, and recreational uses with priority for residents.

GOAL: The City's parks and forest lands (ACFL) should be managed with the principal goals of maintaining and enhancing habitat, conservation, and recreational values.

Policy: The City of Anacortes will continue to support the Conservation Easement Program until all eligible acres have conservation easements.

LITTLE CRANBERRY LAKE AREA (Approx. 257 acres)

Boundaries:

Entire area dedicated as Little Cranberry Park (1964), John M. Morrison Natural Park and

associated wetlands including dedicated parkland buffers.

Restrictions:

The majority of this area is land dedicated for "public park purposes only". The Morrison Natural Park was given with the stipulation that "timber and land never be alienated." In addition, Cranberry Lake is still technically a back-up water supply for the City (see Acquisition section). Its dedication as Cranberry Park in 1964 and the need to maintain water quality argue for very sensitive and careful management.

The marshes which feed the lake provide an important habitat for waterfowl and other animal life. In addition, the presence of scattered old growth and mature second growth create a very rich and diverse biological zone.

Current Conditions:

Little Cranberry Lake is used extensively by walkers, runners, mountain bikers, and some horse back riders. Use is likely to increase now that neighborhoods around the lake have been developed and locals use the trails for recreation and dog walking. Fishing, from shore and small non-motorized boats, is also very popular. Swimming and picnicking are major activities in good weather. The majority of the users are local residents. Occasional late night drinking parties occur in the parking lot by the dam. The access, a gravel road from Georgia Avenue and West 4th, is open at all times. Maintenance is shared by the Parks and Recreation Department and volunteers working with the department. The Comprehensive Trail Plan prohibits motorcycle use in this unit, north of the old city dump, and this restriction is observed by most riders. The lake basin provides a variety of habitats for plants and animals, and wildlife is relatively plentiful. The rocky meadows on both sides of the lake are prime spring wildflower sites.

Projected Use:

The lake basin should be reserved primarily for local resident use. Current low impact uses include hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and fishing. Picnicking, nature observation and non-motorized boating and canoeing should also continue.

Recommendations:

The following measures should be instituted:

- 1) Post this area for no motorcycles north of the old 32nd Street right of way.
- 2) Provide restroom facility at or near Little Cranberry Lake parking lot.
- 3) Block or obliterate trails in areas which need to be re-vegetated and remove unauthorized trails from private property;
- 4) Continue removing non-native invasive plants and promote planting of native or non-invasive alternatives by landowners nearby.

SOUTH CRANBERRY AREA (Approx. 446 acres)

Boundaries:

All of Section 26 exclusive of those areas in the Little Cranberry Lake Unit, bounded by "A" Avenue on the east and south line of Section 26 on the south.

Restrictions:

This unit is comprised entirely of land purchased from the Washington Water Company in

1919. There are no restrictions attached to the original deeds but much of the land is now protected by the Conservation Easement Program and subject to its conditions. The major wetland in this area (in the southeast corner) drains south, towards Havekost Road and Alexander Beach. Most of this area is not in the Little Cranberry drainage basin.

Current Use:

This area, including the old City dump, is used extensively by motorcycles, horseback riders, mountain bikes and hikers.

Projected Use:

Current recreational uses will probably increase, and improvements which would enhance those and similar uses should be considered.

Recommendations:

- 1) Plans for closing and capping the old City dump should be finalized and implemented. Site could possibly be used as a fenced off-leash dog area.
- 2) Trails should be rehabilitated (and redesigned where necessary) to serve the ends of this plan.
- 3) Boundaries of adjacent private property ownerships should be posted.
- 4) There is a unique stand of trees at the property corner of 41st and "A". This is one of the stands of mature Cedar, Hemlock, White Fir and Douglas Fir in the forest lands and should be preserved.

WHISTLE LAKE/FIDALGO RIDGE AREA (Approx. 645 acres)

Boundaries:

This area includes the northern half of the Whistle Lake basin, and all ACFL property north of Whistle Lake in sections 6 & 31. The western boundary is west line of section 6.

Restrictions:

Whistle Lake is a former City reservoir, acquired when Douglas Allmond sold the Washington Water Company to the City in 1919. The lake was used as a storage reservoir for water pumped from the Skagit. In case of a future water emergency, it may become necessary to use this source again. Consequently, all efforts should be made to maintain the water quality and the wilderness quality of the basin. Parts of this area also visible from the summit of Mt. Erie and on the descent along Ray Auld Drive.

This area includes the major ridge seen when traveling west along Highway 20 into Anacortes. All forest practices should take visual impacts and watershed management impacts into account. The lake basin is an extraordinary echo chamber. As a result, noise, especially motorcycles, shatters an otherwise pristine quiet.

Current Use:

Use patterns at Whistle Lake are quite seasonal. In fall, winter, and spring, most trail riders and walkers are local residents, and use is light and relatively low-impact. The summer season is very different. Young people from Anacortes, Whidbey Island, and mid Skagit County come to the lake to swim, drink beer, and in the process litter and trample the sparse vegetation on the lake edges and on the island, where they jump off the cliffs into the lake. Local families also come out to swim and fish and picnic, and there are occasional conflicts. Campfires and cook fires are a problem, and littering is heavy and widespread. Most

motorcycle, bicycle, and horse riders comply with the restrictions in the Comprehensive Trail Plan. There are some traffic problems on Trail 20, where pedestrians share the road with horses, bikes, and motorcycles going to and from the lake, and to a lesser degree on #204. The lakeshore is rimmed with old-growth fir left from previous timber harvesting because of difficult access or by Council stipulation.

Projected Uses:

Whistle Lake should be reserved for low impact use. All efforts should be made to maintain water quality and the wildland as part of this area. Primarily, this unit should be managed for low density recreational use.

Recommendations:

- 1) All forest practices and recreational activities shall be designed to protect water quality.
- 2) Repair damage to existing areas of intensive use.
- 3) Encourage low impact recreational use by local residents.

HEART LAKE AREA (Approx 515 Acres)

Boundaries:

80-acre ACFL at the north end of Heart Lake and approximately 435 acres that were formerly Heart Lake State Park.

Restrictions:

The 80 acre parcel on the northern side of the lake was acquired by the City from the State of Washington to assure access to the outflow from Heart Lake for reservoir purposes. In the past, the City allowed this unit to be logged "except for 300 feet along the road to preserve the scenic beauty". Visually, this unit is the entry to the magnificent Heart Lake Road corridor. Almost all of this area is protected through conservation easements. The land and water that formerly made up Heart Lake State Park were transferred to the City in 2002 and contain many restrictions in the deed which are outlined in detail in the Heart Lake Management Plan adopted in 2004. The State required this land to be managed as a non-motorized area with areas to the west, south and east required to remain hiker only trails.

Current Use:

This area is popular for dog walkers, hikers, horse riders, mountain bikes and motorcycles. New nearby developments at Parkside and The Orchards have increased usage as these neighbors regularly recreate here.

Projected Uses:

Use will increase in this area as new neighborhoods in the vicinity develop. The lake itself is a popular recreational site for fishing, swimming, and kayaking.

Recommendation:

This area is a very important connecting corridor for both people and wildlife between the Little Cranberry area and the Whistle Lake area. Care must be taken to keep only approved trails open. New trail building and other off trail activity have increased

recently and need to be monitored. Because this area is an important corridor between Little Cranberry and Whistle Lake emphasis there needs to be a continued emphasis on trail maintenance in this section.

SOUTH HEART LAKE ROAD/RAY AULD DRIVE AREA (Approx. 465 acres)

Boundaries:

All City property adjacent to Heart Lake Road south of Heart Lake and all City property adjacent to Ray Auld Drive with the exception of 35 acres around the Mt. Erie summit and south and west faces.

Restrictions:

As with Heart Lake Area, parts of this area were logged in the past between 1940 and 1950 with the stipulation that a 300-foot buffer be left along Heart Lake Road. The 160 acres at the top of Mt. Erie was given to the City for "park purposes" by Gus Hensler and the Kiwanis Club. Mr. Hensler stipulated that his donated 120 acres be a "haven for birds and/or animals" (i.e., a wildlife sanctuary).

Current Use:

Heart Lake Road (formerly Lake Forest Road) is a scenic corridor. The thoughtful stipulations of past City Councils have preserved a feeling of passage through primeval forests.

Ray Auld Drive climbs to the summit of Mt. Erie which is already a multiple-use park. Hundreds of people drive to the parking lot for rock climbing, picnicking, sightseeing, photography, hiking and nature study.

Projected Use: Heart Lake Road and Ray Auld Drive will continue to be sightseeing destinations. Maintain trails and continue to enhance access for possible South Mt. Erie trail.

MT. ERIE SUMMIT SOUTH AND WEST FACES (Approx. 35 acres)

Boundaries:

Comprising the Southwest quarter of the summit including the steep slopes that are major rock climbing and scrambling areas on Mt. Erie.

Restrictions:

Some of this management area includes Kiwanian and Hensler donations and inherits the restrictions that accompany that land.

Current Use:

The summit of Mt. Erie is already a multi-use park. Hundreds of people visit for rock climbing, picnicking, sightseeing, photography, hiking, nature study and hang gliding.

Projected Use:

Mt. Erie will continue to be a regional attraction for sightseeing, mountain climbing and scrambling.

Recommendations:

- 1) Recreational groups of more than 25 people on Mt. Erie shall apply for a permit from

the Parks and Recreation Department. Instructional climbing groups of any size shall contact the Parks and Recreation Department to discuss plans and size of their group. They must sign the City's hold harmless agreement, and provide proof of liability insurance, participant waivers, date(s) of use, a dispersal plan for where they plan to climb on the mountain, and a sanitation plan. Proposed climbing dates should be submitted 3 months in advance to the Parks and Recreation Department. Instructional groups shall have all paperwork submitted one week prior to use on the mountain.

- 2) Post and sign key access points with appropriate notice of rules in effect.
- 3) Construct wheelchair accessible parking and routes to a lookout on Mt. Erie summit.
- 4) Placement of fixed anchors, opening new areas to climbing and scrambling, and work parties to maintain climbing routes, etc., shall be approved by the Forest Advisory Board and coordinated with staff. Climbers are asked to "leave no trace".
- 5) Construct permanent restroom facility at the summit.
- 6) Install interpretive signage to educate the public about the fragile and unique ecosystem in this area.

MT. ERIE CONSERVANCY AREA (Approx. 459 acres)

Boundaries:

This area is primarily defined by the southern boundary of City property on Mt. Erie, the south shore of Whistle Lake, and the east flanks of Mt. Erie.

Restrictions:

The marshes at the western and southern edges of the lake provide a relatively isolated habitat. Much of the area is without trails and has been intentionally kept that way due to difficult terrain or to maintain wildlife corridors. Most of this area is protected through conservation easements and is subject to their restrictions.

Current Use:

This is a relatively inaccessible area that has intentionally not received the same density of trails as other places in the community forest lands. It has an old logging road, trail #22 that runs through the northern portion of the area and off that run a couple of multi-use trails. The southern section may be able to accommodate a non-motorized trail that goes along the south face of Mt. Erie. This trail was built in 2001 but was subsequently closed as it crosses private property. If an easement or property for the trail can be acquired this trail could be reopened to the public.

Projected Use:

This area should be limited to low intensity use: hiking, nature observation, mountain biking and horseback riding of designated trails. Sensitive habitat, difficult access and steep rocky slopes are all reasons to place this unit in a Conservancy/Forest Study designation.

Recommendations:

- 1) Post signs and erect suitable barriers to restrict intensive use of this area.
- 2) Work to acquire trail easements or property to re-open a south Mt. Erie trail and provide a connecting route to the Heart Lake area.

- 3) Limit additional trail construction to increase habitat value.
- 4) Work with users to help them understand the reasons for these restrictions and direct recreational use to other areas.

IV
FOREST LANDS STEWARDSHIP

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Goal: The Anacortes Community Forest Lands should be managed and protected in perpetuity to insure the maximum benefit to sensitive habitats and wildlife and enjoyment to the citizens of Anacortes.

Policies:

- 1) The underlying policy must be one of minimum disturbance with respect to the forest, wildlife and low-density recreational opportunities. Important "by-products" will include clean air and water and the availability of a forestland setting for citizens' physical and psychological well being. For many people, the knowledge that this opportunity exists, whether they ever avail themselves of it or not, is a source of great satisfaction and relief. The increasing urbanization of this area will make this "relief valve" principle a priceless community resource in coming decades.
- 2) Any direct economic benefit realized in the management of this land should be reinvested to protect the resources.
- 3) All forest management activities will be conducted so as to minimize damage to native plant communities and wildlife. Natural processes of growth and succession, with the exception of wildfire, will be encouraged, and any replanting will use species native to that site.

FLORA MANAGEMENT

Goal To maintain, enhance and rehabilitate the native vegetation on City of Anacortes properties.

Policies:

- 1) Removing trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers or other vegetation from the ACFL is prohibited. Berries and other edibles may be picked from the trail for enjoyment while in the ACFL. Harvesting for home consumption or retail is prohibited. Mushroom harvesting is prohibited.
- 2 Encourage the use of City property for botanical research, field work and observation by local educational institutions.
- 3) Identify those areas of particular and/or unique plant species or colonies and restrict use to an appropriate level.
- 4) A list of plant species found on city land may be made available to the public.
- 5) Invasive non-native plants should be identified and managed for removal from the ACFL. Volunteers have been and are likely to be relied upon heavily for their work to help keep the forest lands free of these species. Whenever possible, invasive plants should be removed by the roots manually without the use of herbicides. It is prohibited to introduce any plant species into the ACFL without express written approval of the Parks and Recreation Director.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Goal: To preserve and enhance the present diversity of wildlife on City of Anacortes forest lands.

Policies:

- 1) No activity shall be permitted which will significantly alter the mixture of habitats that provide a varied and abundant wildlife population.

- 2) The City should be open to proposals by groups wishing to study these lands in order to provide baseline data on wildlife populations and species diversity.
- 3) A list of wildlife species found on City land may be made available to the public.
- 4) Encourage local school districts to use City land for nature study. This could include building and setting nesting boxes, passive observation of seasonal wildlife and development of some site-specific curricula.
- 5) Develop suitable wildlife observation sites in conjunction with recreational development. After a detailed study, observation boardwalks could be built in one or more of the marshes for the purposes of nature study and education.
- 6) No native wildlife shall be removed from the ACFL. Domestic species or wild animals shall not be placed in the forest lands without review by the Forest Advisory Board and written permission of the Parks and Recreation Department.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Goal: To maintain and enhance the water quality of lakes, marshes and wetlands in the Anacortes Community Forests.

Policies:

- 1) Locate trails away from lakeshores and marsh edges where necessary in order to minimize impacts on water quality. Identify areas where trails perpendicular to main trails can be built to shorelines with minimal impacts.
- 2) Improve existing trails to minimize erosion. Where necessary, obliterate trails which are causing undue resource damage.
- 3) Whistle Lake, Heart Lake, and Little Cranberry Lake are back-up supplies of water in case of an emergency. All management activities in the watersheds of these lakes must take this into account.
- 4) Work with other City departments and neighboring developments to eliminate run off of contaminants into ACFL watersheds.

V
MANAGEMENT OF RECREATIONAL
ACTIVITIES

PICNICKING

Goal: To allow picnicking at designated walk-in areas.

Policies:

- 1) Provide garbage, recycling and sanitary facilities where appropriate. Fires and barbeques are prohibited.
- 2) Prohibit camping throughout the ACFL.

TRAIL SYSTEM

Goal: Maintain an overall trail system in City forest lands.

Policies:

- 1) Make available at City Hall a map of existing main trails on City of Anacortes properties. This map should also summarize use policies outlined elsewhere in this plan.
- 2) Where necessary, rehabilitate trails where horses, motorcycles or mountain bikes have caused erosion or other problems. Seek involvement of user groups and community service organizations as much as possible.
- 3) Obtain easements for current-use trails where they cross onto private property. Work with adjacent owners to prohibit, control or allow current use. Minimize conflicts by working with user groups.
- 4) Post regulatory signs at all entry points and where trails cross onto private property.
- 5) No new trail accesses will be established into the ACFL from private property without review by the Forest Advisory Board and written permission from the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 6) Design and/or renovate existing trails to serve the recreational objectives of this plan with a minimum amount of maintenance. Sign trails to serve the needs of local residents. Design loop trails and loop options as much as possible. All improvements should harmonize with the natural setting.
- 7) Interpretive trails should be developed (in conjunction with the recreational trail system) with self-guiding brochures available either at the trail-head or at City Hall.
- 8) Work with Skagit County, the State of Washington, other City departments and other entities to establish linkages between the ACFL trail system and other trails to provide continuous recreational and non-motorized transportation options across Fidalgo Island.
- 9) Hours for use in the ACFL are 6am to 10pm.

Most use restrictions are obeyed. Overuse by all trail users is beginning to cause problems: erosion, compaction and trail spreading have increased trail maintenance needs. The publication of the trail maps and marking of trails with numbered signs has done a lot to popularize trail use and make it easier for people to get around the trail system. Trail maps should be updated and improved as new trails are identified and trail maintenance must be increased to accommodate the greater use.

TRAIL USES: For specific trail uses see current Comprehensive Trail Plan.

CLIMBING

Goal: Maintain and enhance climbing areas on Mt. Erie while conserving the unique environment and habitat on the summit and South and West faces.

Policies:

- 1) Climbing and scrambling shall be restricted to the Mt. Erie summit and South and West Face Management Area.
- 2) Establish a Mt. Erie Committee consisting of five members including: 3 members representing climbers and/or scramblers, 1 naturalist and 1 member of the Kiwanis Noon Club of Anacortes. Each representative shall be appointed by the Forest Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Director. The duties of the Mt. Erie Committee are:
 - a) Assist staff and the Forest Advisory Board with questions regarding Mt. Erie management including but not limited to climbing routes and scramble trails, regulation of fixed bolting, creation of new belay platforms, opening new climbing areas and other relevant issues.
 - b) Be available to represent their user group at Forest Advisory Board meetings when issues affecting climbing and scrambling arise.
 - c) Be available to organize volunteer work parties with this user group when needed on Mt. Erie. All maintenance projects must be approved in advance by the Parks and Recreation Director.
- 3) User restrictions and methods to appeal decisions should follow the outline and applicable guidelines discussed in Anacortes Community Forest Lands Comprehensive Trail Plan; Appendix #3.

MOTOR VEHICLES

Goal: Prohibit the use of motor vehicles in City forest lands and parks except on designated roads.

Policies:

- 1) All access points into City property shall be gated or blocked to prevent unauthorized vehicular access.
- 2) All entry points will be posted with this information and strict penalties will be invoked for non-compliance.

FISHING

Goal: Provide the opportunity for local residents to fish in Little Cranberry, Heart and Whistle Lakes.

Policies:

- 1) Develop or improve limited access points for fishing City-owned lakes.
- 2) Prohibit use of any combustion engines on Whistle Lake, Little Cranberry Lake and Heart Lake. Electric motors are allowed.
- 3) At the present time, Whistle Lake will not be enhanced for sport fishing.
- 4) Develop a long-range sport-fishing plan in conjunction with the State Game Department.
- 5) Monitor fish population in conjunction with water-quality monitoring program.

There are seven major lakes on Fidalgo Island. Each has particular recreational and fisheries value. Heart Lake is a well-known trout-fishing lake. Campbell Lake and Lake Erie both have boat-launch facilities and are managed for spiny-ray and trout. Pass Lake is a fly-fishing-only lake adjacent to Highway 20. Trafton Lake (Crater Lake) is surrounded by private property. Little Cranberry Lake is accessible by automobile and is actively used for fishing. Whistle Lake is the only lake not impacted by automobile access. Whistle Lake will be reserved for a more "primitive" recreational experience.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Goal: Hunting and trapping are not allowed on City land. Resolution No. 968, adopted December 7, 1987 and amending Resolution No. 663, prohibit all hunting, trapping, and discharge of firearms on Anacortes Community Forest Lands.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Goal: To use the Anacortes Community Forest Lands for dispersed low-intensity recreational activities.

Policies:

- 1) Developed park sites in Anacortes allow the opportunity for group games and activities such as baseball, soccer, basketball, tennis and other sports. There is no need to develop these sorts of facilities on City Forest lands.
- 2) Deception Pass State Park and Washington Park offer an opportunity for overnight recreational camping. It is not appropriate to develop any facilities of this sort in the ACFL.

EDUCATION:

Goal: The ACFL shall continue to be made available for community forest education that encourages stewardship of our natural resources, a conservation ethic, and deeper understanding of our unique forest ecology. Support ongoing forest education programs aimed at educating residents and visitors with guided hikes, school programs, speakers, print and web materials, and other programs.

Policies:

- 1) Encourage joint cooperative arrangements with the Anacortes School District, local colleges and universities and local non-profit organizations to use these lands for

ongoing research projects by students and faculty. Botany, Biology, Outdoor Recreation, Planning, Forestry and other academic disciplines will all find fruitful opportunity in the watersheds of our lakes and the surrounding forest lands. These "experts-in-training" could supply useful baseline and monitoring information to the managing authority.

- 2) Teaching our young people about the recreational and natural values of their land will develop an attitude of possession and care which can translate into less vandalism and destruction of park and forest areas in the future.
- 3) Provide physical infrastructure as appropriate to support environmental education efforts.
- 4) Continue to support the education, outreach and stewardship efforts of the Friends of the Anacortes Community Forestlands as a civic partnership.

VI MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Goal: To provide efficient and effective management of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands in order to implement the goals and policies of this report.

Under Council form of government, the City Council has ultimate legal authority and sets policy direction for the City. The Mayor is charged with management responsibility for administration of all City assets under the direction of the City Council. The City Council must approve all contracts, asset sales, and use policies. Within the framework of these legal restrictions, it is recommended that the Advisory Board set use policies and effectively guide management of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands.

Policy:

- 1) Maintain the "Anacortes Community Forest Advisory Board".
 - a) The Board should consist of five members, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Membership should be one member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, one member of the Planning Commission, and three citizen members.
 - b) Terms of the Board members should be 5 years, with the initial terms staggered to provide for reappointment of one member each year.
 - c) At least four members should be residents of the City of Anacortes, with it being permissible for the fifth member to reside on Fidalgo Island.
- 2) The duties and responsibilities of the Anacortes Community Forest Advisory Board shall include the following:
 - a) Setting use policies and guidelines, under the terms outlined in this report, for the Anacortes Community Forest Lands as well as for Cranberry Lake Park, the summit of Mt. Erie, and the area that formerly comprised Heart Lake State Park. Use policies requiring legal enforcement authority shall be confirmed by the City Council. Use policies not requiring legal-penalty provisions shall be set by the Board.
 - b) Securing additional studies, trail plans and surveys as deemed necessary by the Board.
 - c) Recommending an annual budget to the Mayor and the City Council for management of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands.
 - d) Providing policy advice to the Mayor and City Council for the long range use, enhancement and conservation of the resource.
 - e) Conducting periodic reviews and recommendations for required changes in this plan and providing technical advice to the Mayor and City Council for its implementation.
 - f) Serving as a liaison with interested citizens, user groups, educational institutions and volunteer service organizations.
 - g) Maintaining a Trail Committee and Mt. Erie Committee for recommendations concerning trail use and climbing management.

FINANCE

Goal: Funding for ACFL Management will be provided by the annual Parks and Recreation

Department Budget.

Policy:

- 1) A Forest Land Management Fund has been created by ordinance. This ordinance specifies the uses for which these monies may be expended. The funds derived from the Conservation Easement Program and the lease of the AFCL for mining also have specifications and limitations regarding their use.
- 2) If necessary, special accounts may be set up within the Forest Land Management Fund.
- 3) Any revenues derived from the forest lands shall only be used for Forest Lands management, stewardship, land acquisition and education.
- 4) Continue coordinated planning and joint funding and maintenance of facilities among the various providers of park and recreation services (State, County, School, City, private entities).

ENFORCEMENT

Goal: The policies and regulations developed in this plan will be enforced by the appropriate authority.

Policies:

- 1) The Community Forest Lands will be patrolled by the City of Anacortes Police Department.
- 2) Continue community education to help people understand the cost of vandalism and illegal dumping in the Forest Lands and damage this can do to the environment.
- 3) Defensively plan facilities to minimize vandalism. Build and design rugged facilities to harmonize with surroundings.
- 4) Maintain facilities. Rundown areas promote vandalism and destructive behavior.

FIRE PROTECTION

Goal: To protect the City forest lands from damage or destruction by fire.

Policies:

- 1) In conjunction with other forest management activities, improve and map the existing road system to allow fire vehicle access.
- 2) Maintain existing fire plan in conjunction with the Anacortes Fire Department and Department of Natural Resources.
- 3) Prohibit fireworks, fires and barbeques in the community forest lands. Any open flame used for cooking or lighting is prohibited in the ACFL.
- 4) Levy stiff fines, in addition to suppression costs, for violations.
- 5) Smoking is prohibited within the Community Forest Lands.

ACCESS, SIGNS AND BOUNDARY MARKERS

Goal: The boundaries of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands shall be clearly marked to indicate that users are entering publicly owned property.

Policies:

- 1) Boundaries of areas likely to be impacted by recreational use or real estate development should be surveyed and posted as quickly as possible. In some cases, this should be done in cooperation with adjacent private owners.
- 2) All access roads and parking areas within the ACFL shall be maintained in a safe manner.
- 3) All access and egress points should be posted with notification that use of the City of Anacortes lands is governed by certain rules and regulations.
- 4) Access roads should be blocked by sturdy gate, ditch and berm or other suitable barriers to prevent unauthorized garbage dumping, timber harvesting and creation of mayhem on City lands. Unauthorized uses should be punishable by stiff fines.
- 5) A distinctive, visible boundary tag should be used to indicate Anacortes ownership.

COOPERATION WITH ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS AND PUBLIC AGENCIES

Goal: All land management decisions should be compatible with adjacent land owners within Anacortes and on Fidalgo Island.

Policies:

- 1) On land outside the City limits, efforts should be made to contact adjacent private property owners and inform them of the intended use of the City land. Every attempt should be made, as early as possible, to resolve present and potential conflicts arising from timber harvesting, trespass, garbage dumping, etc.
- 2) Development adjacent to City forested lands and/or watersheds should provide buffers, erosion and drainage control measures and access control. This should be part of the review by the Planning Commission and City Council.
- 3) Whenever necessary, reach agreement with adjacent land owners to create, by easement, purchase or donation, buffer areas between developments and public use lands and public trail access. This recommendation depends upon the specific characteristics of the site.
- 4) Work with neighboring jurisdictions, Skagit Land Trust and private landowners to acquire or protect in an undeveloped state wildlife corridors between the ACFL and other undeveloped and marine habitats on Fidalgo Island including Deception Pass State Park.

FUTURE ACQUISITION CONSIDERATIONS

Goal: Assure guaranteed public access to Anacortes Community Forest Lands. The parcels listed below would guarantee future access to areas important for conservation and recreation.

Policy:

- 1) Consider acquisition of a public access to the rock-climbing route to Mt. Erie. One of the primary recreational uses of Mt. Erie is by rock-climbing groups often numbering up to 100 people on any given day. Much of the route on the south face of the mountain crosses private property. The present trail follows a narrow, unbuildable parcel belonging to two private owners. The main concern is that this route does not become a motorcycle access point.

- 2) Prioritize acquisition of land adjacent to the forest lands and acquire or protect by other means all wetlands, streams and ponds that flow into forest lands lakes and wetlands.

VII APPENDICES

1. HISTORY
 - a. History of Land Acquisition
 - b. History of Logging Activities
 - c. Conservation Easement Program
2. MAP: Management Areas
3. COMPREHENSIVE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN
4. HEART LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN

HISTORY OF LAND ACQUISITION

Every land-use document prepared for Anacortes has a standard history of the City, its incorporation and growth. It is not necessary to repeat, once again, that scenario. There is, however, another history, more crucial to the responsible development of this management plan.

The first half of this century, especially the period before 1930, was a time of growing civic awareness of the scenic resources of this area. As a result, numerous individuals deeded land to the City for "public park purposes". What follows is a brief catalog of the major land parcels dealt with in this plan, the donor and the restrictions and covenants these donors placed on the deeds.

These donations are examples of what is called the "bequest motive", or the desire of people to leave estates for their heirs or the public. The dedication of private properties for public parks is exemplary of this desire. Douglas Allmond, John M. Morrison, Gus Hensler, Havekost, and others all donated substantial holdings to the people of Anacortes to assure that future generations would have natural environments to enjoy and grow with. As our population grows, these natural areas will increase in value and future utility. For many people, exploring these areas and using them for recreation is often secondary to the knowledge that they exist. This knowledge is a resource of personal satisfaction - that a part of the natural world still surrounds us, unpaved, unlit and unspoiled, in perpetuity.

Cranberry Park was created by City Council on January 7, 1964, by Ordinance No. 1358. These were Water Department lands which are to be used for public park purposes and managed by the Park Department. Cranberry Lake is approximately 25 acres and the park land is approximately 106 acres. "Said Park is created in order to preserve for public use and general welfare the natural beauty and recreational facilities of Little Cranberry Lake for such period of time as the said property is not required for actual use by the Water Department in the public interest"

John M. Morrison Natural Park. Douglas and Cora Allmond donated this park to the City on February 25, 1928, and on March 12, 1928. Other owners, including L. Farmer and W. Odlin and E. English, also donated substantial holding. This area includes the forested ridge seen from downtown Anacortes when looking west. The parcel donated on February 25th is in the Tuttle and Buckley Addition, including a portion of the large marsh which drains into Little Cranberry Lake. The parcel donated on March 12th (the ridge) is in the Northern Pacific Addition. Both areas are platted with streets and alleys.

Although Douglas Allmond stipulated that these lands "for all time be named John M. Morrison Natural Park", the City Council of Anacortes has never ordained these lands as Mr. Allmond wished. The Anacortes Chamber of Commerce advertisements from the 1935's state that "J.M. Morrison Natural Park is a recent gift to the City by public-spirited citizens. ...It is scenic and admirably adapted to park uses." Morrison was a former mayor of Anacortes at the beginning of the century who, with Allmond, "conceived of the idea of the peninsula forming the extreme northwesterly part of Fidalgo Island being secured to the City for park purposes. (Sunset Park/Washington Park)". Morrison was also the President of the Chamber of Commerce when that organization led the effort to make Deception Pass a State Park. In Allmond's words, "No man ever appreciated or loved the woods of Puget Sound more than Mr. Morrison." (Aug. 5, 1925)

Allmond donated these lands "with the absolute condition and proviso that said land and timber be never alienated by the grantee or used or permission given to use it for any other than strictly park purposes and that the park hereby created shall for all time be named John M. Morrison Natural Park." In the original deed "property" was the original language but was changed to read "land and timber". The City Attorney advises that this change, coupled with the naming of the park "Natural Park", are severely restrictive.

Another 60 acres of land was also donated to the City directly south of Little Cranberry with the same restrictions, but without the designation, "Morrison Park".

Water Department Lands. The major portion of these extensive holdings, including most of Section 26 (south of Cranberry Lake), the Whistle Lake basin, and both sides of Heart Lake Road, were obtained by the City on August 2, 1919, when Anacortes bought Douglas Allmond's Washington Power, Light and Water Company for \$135,000. The assets included all equipment and these extensive land holdings. The 80 acres at the north end of Heart Lake was acquired from the State in order to control the outflow of the lake for public water purposes. The City still has the right to drain the lake or raise its level by 4 feet.

On November 26, 1952, F.E. and Eva Foss donated 80 acres located adjacent to the Hensler/Kiwanis donation on Mt. Erie for \$1.00.

There are no restrictions on use or sale of Water Department Lands attached to the original deeds. Since 1999 and the creation of the Conservation Easement Plan, most of these former lands have been placed under conservation easement and are subject to the restrictions of that program.

Mt. Erie Park. Gus Hensler donated 120 acres around the summit of Mt. Erie to the City on January 12, 1934. His will states the following: "Said property to be deeded by my executors to the City of Anacortes for park purposes, it being my wish that same be a haven of safety for birds and/or animal."

On March 30, 1951, the Kiwanis Club, by way of Dr. Pinson, deeded the City the 40 acre summit of Mt. Erie. "The property herein conveyed shall be used for public park purposes only, and any other use by the Grantee shall render this instrument void and cause title to revert to the Grantor, his successors and assigns. The Grantor hereby reserves the right to place, upon a prominent part of the property herein conveyed, a suitable plaque to inform the public that the land was donated by the Anacortes Kiwanis Club."

In December of 1996, Floyd and Mary Willette donated 20 acres to the Anacortes Community Forest Lands with a deed restriction stating "for park purposes only."

In 2001 the City of Anacortes purchased approximately 16 acres south of Whistle Lake from the McIntyre family.

On March 29, 2002, The State of Washington transferred 436 acres that formerly made up Heart Lake State Park to the City of Anacortes. The land came with a number of restrictions in place that were incorporated in a subsequent management plan.

In 2003 Bill Welch and Nels Strandberg donated 15 acres of wetlands and upland forest east of Mitten Pond to the City of Anacortes.

In 2006 Barbara Wells donated approximately .5 acre of forested land adjacent to 29th Street in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. The land was donated to be used strictly for park purposes with the condition that the "land and timber never be alienated by the grantee."

HISTORY OF LOGGING ON CITY OF ANACORTES PROPERTIES

During the time Bob Powell was the City Forester, he compiled, by way of City Council minutes and associated documents, a chronology of forest-related activities on City land from 1942 until 1975.

The record reveals that during the decade 1942-1952, eight separate logging contracts were signed by the City Council. These sales, mostly to local businesses, including Anacortes Veneer and a local shipbuilding firm, encompassed most of the City forest lands.

All of Section 26, south of Little Cranberry, except the John M. Morrison Natural Park area, was cut over during the late 1940's. During the same period, the timber at the north end of Heart Lake was cut. F.E. Foss and Sons logged much of the timber at the north and south end of Whistle Lake and the east side of Mt. Eric. Also, during this period, the right-of-way for the Mt. Erie Road was cleared and the south face of Sugarloaf was logged.

In addition, many contracts for wood cutting and salvage logging were let by Council. All of these requests were granted "provided contractors stay 300 feet from the lake shore" or "provided a 300 foot strip be left along lake and road (Heart Lake Road) to preserve scenic beauty."

The record makes clear that at no point in the past has the City had any long range management plan for these lands. It is most likely that much of this land had been previously logged, by horses or oxen, sometime around the turn of the century. In short, except for buffer strips expressly left in the past for scenic and aesthetic reasons, most of the City forest land has been logged at least once, perhaps twice; either clear-cut or high-graded. There was no conscious effort to reforest and as a result many areas grew up in brush and undesirable species. Forest fires have swept across much of this area. Past practice has left inferior or defective trees for seed sources.

In addition, over the past 20 years, the City has allowed certain parties to work on City land salvaging dead and dying timber. A memorandum from Bob Powell indicates the kind of problems that can result from unsupervised forest practices when the City supposedly "knows" what is going on. The potential loss of resources and revenues through unsupervised activities does not need to be elaborated upon (See Forest Land files).

Any residual large trees, not along visible road corridors or lake shores, remain because they were deemed unmerchantable or inaccessible when surrounding timber was cut.

In 1984, 1985 and 1986, partial cuts were contracted by the ACFL Board in the South Cranberry and Whistle Lake units, covering about 50 acres each year. These contracts removed over 500,000 board feet, but because they did not turn a profit, selective cutting was abandoned in 1987 in favor of clear cutting. That year 20 acres were cut in 2 units northwest of Whistle Lake. Over 400,000 board foot was harvested, but the road building cost half of the City's share of the revenue, so that job also did not cover the ACFL expenses that year. In 1988, four parcels totaling 20 acres, were clear cut northeast of Whistle Lake, removing 400,000 board foot of timber and producing enough revenue to cover the ACFL budget and a small surplus which was carried over to 1989. In that year another 20 acre clear cut in one parcel southwest of Heart Lake, harvested another 400,000 board foot of timber and generated revenue sufficient to pay the ACFL budget for 1989 and 1990. At this point two things happened to stop the logging activity: the Board and ACFL staff began to doubt the capacity of the forest lands to sustain this level of harvesting; and, the citizens of Anacortes, led by the Friends of the Forest organization, began to voice their opposition to logging on the ACFL. In 1989, an ad hoc committee was appointed by the Forest Advisory Board to study the problem, and their recommendation was that timber harvesting as a source of revenue be stopped. A petition circulated by the Friends of the Forest demanded that all logging on the ACFL be stopped and alternative funding be found. A survey conducted by the Board through the Parks & Recreation Department's quarterly newsletter indicated that the majority of residents of Anacortes and Fidalgo Island

did not want the City to harvest timber on the ACFL. Another survey, randomly distributed throughout the city and statistically valid, showed that Anacortes citizens did not want logging to occur on City forest lands, nor do they want any revenue facilities built on these lands, but they do expect the City to manage them for current uses and protect them from fire, vandalism, and trespass. In response to these statements of citizen concern, the Forest Advisory Board has stopped all logging activity and is pursuing other methods of funding the ACFL management program.

In 1990 the Forest Endowment Fund was authorized by Council, and the ACFL Board and Friends of the Forest began soliciting donations. When the fund reaches \$50,000, interest from it can be used for ACFL management. Early in 1991, donations had exceeded \$10,000, indicating public support for the Endowment; and the State law banning export of timber from public lands went into effect. Both of these events convinced the Planning Commission and Forest Board to recommend deletion of revenue logging from the revised Forest Plan and the City Comprehensive Plan. On April 15, 1991, City Council voted to remove all references to logging, with the exception of limited salvage of blow down and hazard trees.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM

In 1998 the Conservation Easement Program (CEP) was initiated to protect the community forest lands from logging, mining and development while raising money to pay for management and stewardship of the ACFL. It was created when City Council passed Resolution #1492 on December 21, 1998. The program places one acre of land under conservation easement for every \$1,000 donated. City Council reviews and approves each round of acreage that is protected. The Skagit Land Trust and Friends of the ACFL are partners with the City in this project. The Skagit Land Trust Holds the easements and places them on file with the Skagit County Auditor and the Friends of the ACFL help promote the project in the community.

The easement program was conceived of as means to replace lost logging revenue which was discontinued in the ACFL in late 1980's. The money donated goes into the Forest Endowment Fund. The principal of this fund cannot be spent; however interest revenue can be used for the forest lands. In August of 2007, the fund surpassed the initial goal of \$1.5 million dollars, 11 years ahead of schedule. The CEP will continue as long as there is land to conserve in the community forest lands and people willing to contribute to its protection.

ANACORTES COMMUNITY FOREST LANDS

COMPREHENSIVE TRAIL PLAN

TRAIL USE PLAN OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. The Trail Plan

- A. Trail Plan Limitations
 - 1. Environmental Limitations
 - 2. Safety Limitations
 - 3. Fire Hazard Limitations
 - 4. Natural Hazard Trail Construction Limitations
 - 5. Seasonal Trail Closures
 - 6. Provision for Trail Plan Amendment
- B. The Cranberry Area
 - 1. Rationale for Trail Designations
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- C. The Whistle Lake Area
 - 1. Rationale for Trail Designations
 - 2. Trail Designations
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 - 1. Rationale for Trail Designations
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III Implementation for the Trail Plan

- A. Enforcement and Education
 - 1. Trail User Rules and Regulations
 - 2. Signage
 - 3. Enforcement
 - 4. Brochure
 - 5. ACFL Trail Committee
- B. Trail Maintenance
 - 1. Maintenance Standards
 - 2. New Trails
 - 3. Work Crews
 - 4. Yearly Trail Maintenance Record

1. Introduction

This comprehensive trail use plan builds upon the plan originally created for the 1991 Forest Lands Management Plan. It is designed with a sense of stewardship for native flora and fauna in the Community Forest Lands and the need to balance multi-use recreational activities. The goal of this plan is to ensure the protection of the ACFL and provide a range of recreational activities.

A. Trail Plan Limitations

1. Environmental Limitations

If wildlife, flora, or water quality are being adversely impacted at certain locations by trail users, the trail plan may be amended in those areas to protect environmental quality. The trail use plan must always ensure that these goals are not hindered.

The procedure for amending the trail plan due to environmental impacts is as follows:

- a. Environmental impact must be documented.
- b. Environmental impact documentation must be made available to the Parks and Recreation Director, the Forest Advisory Board, and interested citizens.
- c. Amendment to the trail plan must be passed by the Forest Advisory Board in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Director.
- d. User-group representatives must be notified of any potential trail plan changes and must have the chance to be present and make comment during the decision-making process.

2. Safety Limitations

Multiple use trails have the potential to create safety problems for all user groups. The trail user rules and regulations, if followed, should prevent safety problems; however, if it is found that the trail use plan must be changed to alleviate trail user collisions, or a number of near-collisions, the following procedure for amending the trail plan must be followed:

- a. The safety hazard must be documented.
- b. Safety hazard documentation must be made available to the Parks and Recreation Director, the Forest Advisory Board, and interested citizens.
- c. Amendment to the trail plan must be passed by the Forest Advisory Board in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Director.
- d. User-group representatives must be notified of any potential trail plan changes and must have the chance to be present and make comment during the decision-making process.

3. Fire Hazard Limitations

Seasonal dry periods may require temporary trail closures due to high fire danger. These closures do not require trail plan amendment. These trail closures can be mandated by the Department of Natural Resources or can be requested by the Parks and Recreation Director in consultation with the Forest Advisory Board.

4. Natural Hazard Trail Construction Limitations

There will be times when natural hazards may require temporary trail closures. Trails may be washed out, bridges may become unsafe, or a trail crew may be working on a portion of trail causing it to be temporarily unusable. In such circumstances, the trails involved can be closed temporarily without trail plan amendment. These trail closures will be imposed under the discretion of Parks and Recreation Director, and will be posted until the trail is repaired.

5. Seasonal Trail Closures

Motorcycles are prohibited on all ACFL trails from November 1st to March 31st. Staff shall have the authority to extend the seasonal closure if warranted with Forest Advisory Board approval.

Due to trail conditions during the wet season or if unexpected situations arise throughout the year, seasonal closures may be used for other user groups to minimize trail damage. A trail or series of trails may be closed until the problems or conditions leading to the damage are corrected. These seasonal closures will be imposed under the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Director and be discussed at the next regularly scheduled Forest Advisory Board meeting to explain the reasons for the closure and take public input. Seasonal closures will be posted at trailheads and/or popular parking areas.

6. Provision for Trail Plan Amendment

Unforeseeable circumstances may create in the future the need for trail plan amendments other than those already provided for in the trail plan limitations. If such a situation arises, amendment to the plan must follow the procedures below.

- a. The public and user-group representatives must be notified of any amendments proposed by the Forest Advisory Board or the Parks and Recreation Director that have not been covered under other Trail Plan Limitations.
- b. The public and user-group representatives must be given the opportunity to make public comment. A public hearing must be held for those amendment proposals which elicit a large amount of public concern.
- c. After public comment, the Forest Advisory Board will make a recommendation and send the proposed amendment on to the Anacortes City Council for a final decision.
- d. As new trails are added to the ACFL system, permitted uses shall be determined by environmental considerations and what uses are allowed on connecting trails. In between comprehensive plan updates, new trail designations can be found on updated ACFL trail maps, and rationale for permitted usage will be available through ACFL Trail Committee minutes and/or Forest Advisory Board minutes.

II. The Trail Plan

B. The Cranberry Area

1. Rationale for Trail Designations

The Cranberry Lake Area of the ACFL includes a number of environmentally sensitive areas. There is one lake, three large beaver ponds, and numerous smaller wetland areas, which support diverse

wildlife populations. There are also a number of rocky bluffs covered by thin soils and small meadows of native wildflowers. To protect these sensitive environments, the trail plan for the Cranberry Unit directs the heaviest usage to the South ends. All terrain vehicles (ATV's) are prohibited on all Forest Lands Trails.

2. Trail Designations

a. Hikers

All the Cranberry Unit trails are open to pedestrian users. Those wishing to avoid other trail users may wish to use some of the pedestrian-only trails. On ACFL trail maps, trails open to hikers are designated with a "W". The hiker-only trails are as follows:

- 1) The #101, #102, #132 loop around the lake shore of Little Cranberry.
- 2) Trail #103, #133 the Morrison Forest Nature Trail.
- 3) Trail #122, the Mine Shaft Trails.
- 4) Trail #123, along the east shore of the Big Beaver Pond.
- 5) Trails #130 and #131 on the west side of Little Cranberry.
- 6) Trail #125 on the south shore of Big Beaver Pond.

Refer to the "Hiking Trails" map for the Cranberry Area.

b. Horses

Horses are allowed on most Cranberry Area trails. As with mountain bikes and motorcycles, horses are prohibited in some trails near shorelines and areas where the terrain does not accommodate horse access. On ACFL maps, trails open to horses are marked with an "H". Horses are permitted on the following trails:

- 1) Horses are permitted on Trails #100, #127, #128, #105 and #104 around Little Cranberry Lake.
- 2) Horses are permitted on Trails #106, #107, #108, #109, #110, #129, #10, #11, and #12 around the Big Beaver and Little Beaver Ponds.
- 3) Horses are currently permitted on most trails in the South Cranberry area south of the beaver ponds, this includes Trails #113, #114, #115, #117, #118, #120, #124, #126, #134, and #135.

Refer to the "Horse Trails" map for the Cranberry Area.

c. Mountain Bikes

Pedaled bicycle use is allowed on many trails throughout the Little Cranberry area. On ACFL trail maps, trails open to mountain bikes are marked with a "B". Mountain bikes are permitted on the following trails:

- 1) Mountain bikes are permitted on Trails #104, #105 #106, #107, #108, #109, #110, #119, #121, #129, #10, #11 and #12 near Little Cranberry Lake, the Big Beaver and Little Beaver Ponds.
- 2) Mountain bikes are currently permitted on most trails in the South Cranberry area south of the beaver ponds, this includes Trails #113, #114, #115, #116, #117, #118, #120, #124,

#126, #134, and #135.

Refer to the "Mountain Bike Trails" map for the Cranberry Area.

d. Motorcycles

Motorcycle use must remain in the South end of the Cranberry Area. Access is provided to the south end via 10 at the Old City Dump. Motorcycles are permitted on the following trails:

- 1) Motorcycles are permitted on many trails in the South Cranberry area south of the beaver ponds; this includes Trails #12, #111, #115, #120, #134.
- 2) Motorcycles are permitted on Trail #10, south of Trail #12. Motorcycles are also permitted on sections of Trail #113 and Trail #124. (Please see Trail Map for details).

Refer to "Motorcycle Trails" map for the Cranberry Area.

C. The Whistle Lake Area.

1. Rationale for Trail Designations

The Whistle Lake Area includes deep forest areas, a pristine lake, a swamp, mountainous bluffs with native wildflowers, and numerous trails. This relatively undisturbed area must be protected from over-use, thus our trail designations direct most non-pedestrian usage to wide forest trails and old skid roads. All terrain vehicles (ATV's) are prohibited on all Forest Lands Trails.

2. Trail Designations

a. Hikers

All Whistle Lake Area Trails are open to pedestrian users. Those hikers seeking to avoid other trail users may wish to use some of the pedestrian-only trails. On ACFL trail maps, trails open to hikers are designated with a "W". The pedestrian-only trails are as follows:

- 1) Trail #246 at the cliffs is hiker only.
- 2) Trail #205, along the East shore of Whistle Lake from the end of #20 to the intersection with Trail #29.
- 3) Trail #215, from its Southern access on Mt. Erie Road to the top of Sugarloaf.
- 4) Trail #214, the Ray Auld Trail. Trail #227, #228 and #238 near the Sugarloaf meadow, and Trail #216 which leads to the summit of Mt. Erie.

Refer to the "Hiking Trails" map for the Whistle Lake Area.

b. Horses

Horses are allowed on most Whistle Lake trails. As in other areas horses are prohibited near the shorelines and in sensitive meadow areas. Horse use is permitted on the following trails.

- 1) Horses are permitted on Trails #20, #21, #22, #26, #27, #28, #29, #201, #202, #203 #206, #207, #218, #219, #225, #226, #229, #231, #232, #234, #235, #237 and #245. Horses

are permitted on trail #233 where it is a double track trail. Horses are permitted on trail #204 along the West edge of Whistle Lake, to trail #203. Horses are permitted on trail #217 but must turn on trail #245 before heading west to Whistle Lake.

- 2) Horses are only permitted on trail #205 on the stretch of trail between #22 and trail #206.
- 3) Horses climbing Sugarloaf must access 215 from its north end at the base of Ray Auld Drive. Near the top of Sugarloaf, horses must be left in the marked wooded intersection on trail #226. Leaving horses at this intersection and walking out to the viewpoint will protect the meadows and native wildflowers.
- 4) Horses are prohibited on trail #217 on the stretch from #245 to #205.

Refer to the “Horse Trails” map for the Whistle Lake Area.

c. Mountain Bikes

Mountain bikes are allowed on most Whistle Lake Unit trails. Mountain bike use is permitted on the following trails:

- 1) Mountain Bikes are permitted on Trails #20, #21, #22, #26, #27, #28, #29, #201, #202, #203, #204, #206, #207, #217, #218, #219, #225, #226, #229, #231, #232, #233, #234, #235, #237, #245, #247 and #248. Mountain bikes are permitted on trail #205 except the section along the shore of Whistle Lake from Trail #20 to Trail #29.
- 2) Mountain bikes are prohibited on trail 215 from its southern access on Ray Auld Drive, to the top of Sugarloaf. Mountain bikes climbing Sugarloaf must access Trail #215 from its north end at the base of Ray Auld Drive. Near the top of Sugarloaf, mountain bikes must be left in the marked wooded intersection at Trail #226. Leaving bikes at this intersection and walking to the viewpoint will protect the meadows and native wildflowers.

Refer to the “Mountain Bike Trails” map for the Whistle Area.

d. Motorcycles

Motorcycles are allowed on a number of Whistle Lake Area trails. Motorcycles are permitted on the following trails:

- 1) Motorcycles are permitted on Trails #20, #21, #22, #27, #28, #29, #201, #206, #231, #232, #234, #235, #237 and #245.
- 2) There is no motorcycle access to the cliffs at Whistle Lake.
- 3) Motorcycles are prohibited on trail 207 except that portion between trails 230 and 21.
- 4) Motorcycles are prohibited on most of trail 205, except that portion of 205 between its intersection with trails 206 and 22. Motorcycles are prohibited on trail #202 (through the Sugar Cube meadow) except the section between trail #231 and #27.
- 5) Motorcycle use is prohibited on trail 215. Trail #226 is open to motorcycles approaching

Sugarloaf from the east until it intersects with Trail #238. Leaving motorcycles at this intersection and walking to the viewpoint will protect the meadows and native wildflowers.

Refer to the “Motorcycle Trails” map for the Whistle Area.

D. The Heart Lake Area

1. Rationale for Trail Designations

The area that made up the former Heart Lake State Park was transferred to the City of Anacortes in 2002. A management plan was developed shortly thereafter to make this area part of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands and is incorporated into this document. All trail designations conform to requirements passed along by the State of Washington at the time of the transfer or are the result of the subsequent management plan.

The State required that all the land transferred to the City be non-motorized. Therefore all trails in the former State Park are closed to motorcycles. This includes trails around the lake, south of the lake, and almost all trails east of Heart Lake road that were once part of the State Park. All terrain vehicles (ATV’s) are prohibited on all Forest Lands Trails.

2. Trail Designations

a. Hikers

All Heart Lake Area trails are open to pedestrian use. On ACFL trail maps, trails open to hikers are designated with a “W”. The following are pedestrian only trails:

- 1) Trails #213, #243 and #249 are hiker only.
- 2) Trail #210 from the Heart Lake parking lot to intersection of Trail #242 is hiker only. Trail #210 is also hiker only from the intersection of Trail #250 to Trail #212.
- 3) East of Heart Lake Road, in the former State Park lands, Trail #320 is hiker only.

b. Horses

Horses are allowed on most Heart Lake area trails. The following are open to horseback riding:

- 1) Trail #23, #25, #208, #209, #211, #212, #221, #222, #223, #224, #236, #240, #241, #242, #244 and #250.
- 2) Trail #210 is open to horses from the intersection with #242 to Trail #250.
- 3) East of Heart Lake Road, in the former State Park lands all trails in the #300 series, except trail #320, are open to horses.

c. Mountain Bikes

Mountain bikes are allowed on most Heart Lake area trails. The following are open to mountain bikes:

1) Trail #23, #25, #208, #209, #211, #212, #220, #221, #222, #223, #224, #236, #240, #241, #242, #244 and #250.

2) Trail #210 is open to mountain bikes from the intersection with #242 to Trail #250.

3) East of Heart Lake Road, in the former State Park lands all trails in the #300 series, except trail #320, are open to mountain bikes.

d. Motorcycles

Motorcycles are only allowed on a limited number of trails north of Heart Lake. The following trails are open to motorcycles:

1) Trail #23, #208, #209, #221, #222, #236, #240, and #244.

2) East of Heart Lake Road motorcycles are prohibited on all trails in the #300 series with the exception of Trail #300 from Trail #232 to Trail #21.

Refer to maps for the Whistle Lake - Heart Lake Area.

III. Implementation of the Trail Plan

A. Enforcement and Education

1. Trail Users Rules and Regulations

a. General Rules and Regulation

- 1) Trail users found or proven to be violating the ACFL trail users rules and regulations can be cited and/or fined.
- 2) All City, State, and Federal laws that apply within the city limits of Anacortes can be enforced within the ACFL, except where differences are specifically outlined in this trail plan, or other ACFL documents.
- 3) All trail users must remain on designated trails. Clearing new trails or traveling off-trail is prohibited.
- 4) Knowledge of trail designations is the responsibility of the user (barring sudden changes which have not been posted or announced). Traveling on trails not designated for the mode of transportation being used is prohibited. Trail use violators on unmarked trails where signs have been vandalized or removed can still be ticketed and fined.
- 5) Trail users must obey all seasonal trail closures.
- 6) Pets must be leashed at all times.
- 7) Littering is prohibited on ACFL property. All litter must be packed out.
- 8) Fireworks, fires or barbeques are prohibited. Smoking in the ACFL is prohibited.

- 9) The taking of trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers or other vegetation from the ACFL land is prohibited.
- 10) Hunting and trapping is prohibited on ACFL property.
- 11) The taking of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, or any other wildlife (with the exception of legal sports fishing) is prohibited.
- 12) Geocaching is permitted in the ACFL by permit only. Permits are available through the Parks and Recreation Department.

b. Hiker Rules and Regulations

- 1) Hikers must remain on trails designated for hiker use in the ACFL trail plan. Traveling off trail is prohibited.
- 2) Hikers must walk in such a way that they will have little or no impact. It is unlawful to cause the following impacts:
 - severe erosion
 - damage to vegetation along the trail
 - damage to vegetation in meadows and mossy outcrops
 - damage to trails such that trail use by other users is hindered
- 3) Upon meeting a horse, mountain bike, motorcycle or other hiker from the front, a hiker should slow down or stop and move to the right to allow safe passage to the other users. If you meet a horse, let the horse have the uphill edge of the trail. Say "Hi" as each rider in a string passes you, otherwise a green horse may spook when the thing seen as a stump suddenly moves.
- 4) Upon meeting a horse, mountain bike, motorcycle or other hiker from behind, a hiker should slow or stop, announce his/her presence and ask that the other user(s) move to the right (or uphill side in the case of a horse) to allow safe hiker passage. Only when the other user is safely out of the way may the hiker proceed.
- 5) When stopping along the trail, hikers should move over to the right or uphill trail edge to be out of the way of others. Ideally, a hiker should wait for a widening in the trail before stopping.

c. Horserider Rules and Regulations

- 1) Horses must remain on trails designated for horses in the ACFL Trail Plan. Traveling off-trail is prohibited. No horse shall be off tether.
- 2) Horses must be handled in such a way that they will have little or no adverse impact. It is unlawful to allow your horse to cause the following impacts:
 - severe erosion
 - damage to vegetation bordering the trail
 - damage to vegetation in meadows or mossy outcrops
 - damage to trails such that trail use by other users is hindered
- 3) When stopping for equipment adjustment or to view the scenery, horseriders should move over to the right or uphill trail edge to be out of the way of others.

Ideally, a rider should wait for a widening in the trail before stopping.

- 4) Upon meeting a hiker, mountain bike, motorcycle, or other horse from the front, a horse rider must slow or stop, move to the right, or uphill side, and allow safe passage to the other trail users(s). Keep the horse's head facing the trail to avoid kicking.
- 5) Upon meeting a hiker, mountain bike, motorcycle, or other horse from behind, a horserider should slow or stop, announce his/her presence, and ask that the other user move to the right or downhill side. Only when the other user is safely out of the way may the horse proceed. Keep the horse's head facing the trail to avoid kicking.
- 6) Maintain at least one horse length between horses when traveling in groups.
- 7) Horse riders must remove all manure left by their horses from parking areas and designated picnic areas. If no receptacle area or container is provided, take it out with you.
- 8) When tying up horses, be sure to tie them in such a way that damage to vegetation or trees will be minimal. Causing severe impact is unlawful.

d. Mountain Bike Rules and Regulations

- 1) Mountain bikes must remain on trails designated for mountain bikes in the ACFL Trail Plan.
- 2) Bikes must be handled in such a way that they will have little or no adverse impact. It is unlawful to cause the following impacts:
 - severe erosion
 - damage to vegetation bordering the trail
 - damage to vegetation in meadows or mossy outcrops
 - damage to trails such that trail use by other users is hindered
- 3) When stopping along the trail, bikers should move over to the right or uphill trail edge to be out of the way of others. Ideally, a biker should wait for a widening in the trail before stopping.
- 4) Upon meeting a hiker, horse, motorcycle or other mountain bike from the front, a biker must slow or stop, move to the right (unless meeting a horse when one should let the rider use the uphill side even if it is on the right), and allow passage to the other trail user(s).
- 5) Upon meeting a hiker, horse, motorcycle or other mountain bike from behind, a biker should slow or stop, announce his/her presence and ask that the other user move to the right (or uphill grade in the case of a horse). Only when the other trail user is safely out of the way may the mountain biker proceed.
- 6) Maintain at least one bicycle length between bikes when traveling in groups.
- 7) Mountain bikes cannot exceed 15mph on the trails designated for their use.

e. Motorcycle Rules and Regulations

- 1) A motorcycle is defined as a two-wheeled vehicle. Motorcycle engines over 250

cc are prohibited. Street legal dual sport motorcycles shall be exempt from the 250 cc size limitation. Only four cycle engines are allowed in the ACFL. Three and four-wheeled all terrain vehicles are prohibited on ACFL trails.

- 2) Motorcycles must have an adequate and operating muffler that limits exhaust noise to 105 decibels at 20 inches from the exhaust, to be trail legal in Washington State.
- 3) Motorcycles must have a USDA Forest Service approved spark arrester to be trail legal in Washington State.
- 4) Motorcycles must have lighted headlights and tail-lights at night or during poor visibility to be trail legal in Washington State.
- 5) Motorcycles must have brakes which work properly to be trail legal in Washington State.
- 6) Motorcycle riders must have a valid Washington State ORV permit or vehicle license to be trail legal in the State of Washington.
- 7) Motorcycles must remain on trails designated for motorcycle use in the ACFL Trail Plan. Off-trail riding is prohibited.
- 8) Motorcycles cannot exceed 15 mph on trails designated for motorcycle use.
- 9) Motorcycles must be handled with extreme caution. Riding unsafely in any way is strictly prohibited and will be enforced. Motorcycles must ensure that all other trail users they meet will be safe from collision or fear of collision. These trails are heavily traveled by pedestrians of all ages.
- 10) Motorcycles must be handled with extreme caution in environmentally sensitive areas. Wetland areas and erodable trails must be protected from impact. Trail plan amendment will be required if impact becomes great.
- 11) Upon meeting a hiker, horse, mountain bike, or other motorcycle from the front, a motorcycle must stop, move to the right (or downhill side in the case of meeting a horse) and allow safe passage to the other trail user(s).
- 12) Upon meeting a hiker, horse, mountain bike, or other motorcycle from behind, a motorcyclist must kill the engine, announce his/her presence and ask that the other user move safely to the right or uphill side to allow safe motorcycle passage. Only when the other user is safely out of the way may the motorcycle proceed.
- 13) Maintain at least two motorcycle lengths between riders when traveling in groups.
- 14) Motorcycles must be handled in such a way that they will have little or no adverse impact. It is unlawful to cause the following impacts:
 - severe erosion
 - damage to vegetation bordering the trail
 - damage to vegetation in meadows or mossy outcrops
 - damage to trails such that trail use by other users is hindered

- 15) The ACFL recommends that all motorcycle users obtain and read the Washington Off-Road Vehicle Guide from the Washington Department of Natural Resources. This guide provides information important to all motorcycle trail riders.
- 16) Motorcycle rules and regulations stated here shall be reviewed annually for effectiveness, with regard to safety, protecting habitat, minimizing trail damage and promoting compatibility with other user groups.

2. Signage

Enforcement of the Trail Plan requires proper signage. The following sign will be used to mark all access points, trail intersections, and where trail use could be confusing.

Trail Designation Sign Design

Example:



A number of other signs are also needed. Private property boundaries must be signed where ACFL trails run onto private land and signs are needed for those locations where trail users must leave bikes, horses, and motorcycles, and walk to view points or lakes.

Signs will be put up by staff with the help of volunteers from the different user-groups.

3. Enforcement

The entirety of the ACFL lies within the Anacortes city limits. Thus, all city, state, and federal laws that apply within the city limits of Anacortes can be enforced within the ACFL. Exception to this would occur only where differences from city laws are specified in this trail plan or other ACFL documents.

Enforcement of the law will be provided by Anacortes Police Department. Trail users found to be violating the Rules and Regulations specified in this plan or the laws of the City of Anacortes can be cited and fined.

4. Brochure

It is vital to the success of this trail plan to provide for the public a condensed version of this plan. These will be provided on the reverse side of all ACFL Trail maps and may contain the following:

- explanation of how the trails are signed
- rules and regulations
- trail designations
- suggestions for minimum environmental impact
- user group representatives listed as contact persons
- location of the Parks and Recreation Department/Forest Lands Manager

These brochures should be made available within all map sets sold from the Forest Lands office at City

Hall, User Group representatives, and at well-used trail heads.

5. ACFL Trail Committee

For each user-group (horse riders, hikers, mountain bikers, motorcyclists, and an ACFL naturalist), a volunteer representative shall be appointed by the Forest Board and Parks and Recreation Director to the ACFL Trail Committee. The job of the ACFL Trail Committee is to:

- a. assist ACFL Staff and the Forest Advisory Board with questions regarding new trails, trail re-routes, trail closure, trail signage, and review of the trail plan.
- b. be available to represent their user-group at Forest Board meetings when issues affecting the trail plan arise.
- c. be available to organize volunteer trail maintenance work parties with their user-group, when needed in the ACFL. All maintenance projects must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Director.

B. Trail Maintenance

1. Maintenance Standards

Trail maintenance shall follow standards for Recreation Trail Maintenance as shown in the booklet available from the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources or other recognized trail manuals and staff experience. Resources will be available at the Forest Lands Office.

2. New Trails

New trails may be built if such construction is deemed necessary by the Parks and Recreation Director in cooperation with the Forest Advisory Board. The Trail Committee should be involved and review trail location. Trail construction should be completed with all due care to native flora and fauna while providing a quality recreational experience. New trail construction can be completed by user-group volunteers or crews arranged and supervised by the Forest Lands Staff.

3. Work Crews

The ACFL encourages and depends upon volunteer help in maintaining trails. Volunteers wishing to help with trail work must contact the Forest Lands Manager prior to starting any projects. The Forest Lands Office will be able to supply a list of the areas needing work the most, and resources on trail maintenance. The Forest Lands Office may also be able to supply some of the equipment needed. Non volunteer trail maintenance is also done, by employees of the Forest Lands Office and contracted work crews such as the Washington Conservation Corps.

4. Yearly Trail Maintenance Record

To facilitate trail maintenance, a good record of those areas needing trail work or having had trail work completed will be kept by the Parks and Recreation Department. This record will provide information for volunteers and Parks and Recreation Department on the status of the trail system on a yearly basis. Such a record will show the continual trouble areas, which user-groups are causing the most damage, which user-groups are contributing the most volunteer trail maintenance, what types of trail maintenance is most successful, for example. The record shall be updated yearly.

Heart Lake Management Plan

Heart Lake Management Plan

Introduction

In 2002, the State of Washington deeded Heart Lake State Park to the City of Anacortes. 436 acres including the lake and land surrounding it was transferred to the City with a number of conditions regulating its use as a recreational area.

The State Parks and Recreation Commission divided the land at Heart Lake into three separate areas noted on the attached map:

Natural Forest Area: the land along the southwest portion of the lake, stretching along the southern edge including one area on the east side of Heart Lake Road.

Resource Recreation Area: the land along the northwest portion of the lake and most of the area east of Heart Lake Road except that area designated as Natural Forest or Recreation.

Recreation Area: the current parking lot at Heart Lake and the former overflow parking east of Heart Lake Road.

In their deliberations, the Heart Lake Management Plan Committee decided to treat the lake surface as a fourth and separate area for review. Management of the lake surface shall take into consideration the environmental sensitivity of the adjacent upland areas.

In December of 2003, the City began work on a management plan by seeking input from the community about use of Heart Lake and the surrounding land. The results of that input and numerous meetings by an eight member planning committee are contained within these pages.

State regulations for the former State Park listed a variety of permitted and conditional activities. The Committee spent significant time reviewing each of these to determine if they were appropriate. The State did mandate that all trails be non-motorized. The Committee agreed not to challenge the State regulations during the planning process.

This management plan is intended to become an amendment to the existing Anacortes Community Forest Lands Management Plan drafted in 1991, and to follow the same rules expressed in that document unless otherwise noted.

Committee members:

Doug Colglazier - Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Denise Crowe - ACFL Trail Committee
Marty Laumbattus - ACFL Trail Committee
Bart Lovric - Whidbey Island Roostertails Racing Club
Alan Mazonson - Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Geri Rubin - ACFL Trail Committee
Bruce Rustad - ACFL Trail Committee
Dan Senour - ACFL Trail Committee
Buzz Bannister - Whidbey Island Roostertails Racing Club (alternate)

History

Before becoming a State Park, Heart Lake was managed by the State Department of Natural Resources as school trust land. While long considered a back up water supply for the City of Anacortes, it was also a recreational resource used year round by Fidalgo Island residents and attracted large crowds from around the region for the opening day of fishing season.

Local citizens became concerned about the future of the lake when the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposed leasing the lakeshore for condominium development in 1977. This set off a flurry of local activity by community members to pressure lawmakers and State officials to preserve the lake and surrounding forests.

On Valentine's Day 1980, then Washington State Governor Dixie Lee Ray signed a bill permitting Heart Lake to become a State Park. It was not until over a year later that the price of \$2.5 million was agreed upon between the DNR and the State Parks and Recreation Commission for the transfer of the land into the park system.

In 2002, the City of Anacortes and State Parks and Recreation concluded their long-standing discussions regarding transfer of the land and the lake. Governor Gary Locke signed the deed transferring the Heart Lake State Park to the City on March 29, 2002. The deed contains a reversionary clause, which allows the State to retake control of the land if the City violates conditions of the transfer. The City formally took control of the former State Park on June 1, 2002.

Natural Forest Area

The Natural Forest Area is comprised of approximately 75 acres. It covers the old growth forest in the southwest area of the lake and extends across Heart Lake road to include a small grove of ancient forest just east of the road.

Trail Use: All trails in the Natural Forest Area are for use by hikers only. Horses, mountain bikes and motorcycles are prohibited. Off trail use is prohibited. No taking of trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers, fungi or other vegetation. Hand picking of berries and other edibles from the trails for consumption while in the forest is allowed. Picking for home consumption or for retail is prohibited. Cross-country skiing and snow shoeing on those trails are permitted winter recreation activities.

Conditional Uses: Interpretive Trails and signage; filming; special events; interpretive kiosks; and non-motorized paved trails for ADA access. Activities listed as “conditional uses” are those uses that need to be approved by the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board in advance.

Future Trail Plans: The existing loop around the lake could be made more explicit on ACFL maps, and maps at trailhead kiosks could also be improved to show a clear route. This could also include renumbering the loop route or giving it a “name” to assist trail users. The trail could have interpretive signage at the trailhead to educate hikers regarding the old growth forests in the area.

A future plan on both how to best cross Heart Lake road in this loop route, or to allow non-motorized users to safely transit the road corridor is encouraged. Side trails on this loop route should be reduced.

Management Authority: Under Council form of government, the City Council has the ultimate legal authority and sets policy direction for the City. The Mayor is charged with management responsibility for administration of all City assets under the direction of the Council. The City Council must approve all contracts, asset sales and use policies. Within this framework, it is recommended that the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board suggest use policies and effectively guide management of the Natural Forest Area. As an amendment to the existing Anacortes Community Forest Lands Management Plan drafted in 1991, this plan will follow the same rules expressed in that document unless otherwise noted.

Resource Recreation Area

The Resource Recreation area is comprised of approximately 292 acres. It includes the northwest corner of the former State Park, the road corridor, and the entire area east of Heart Lake Road except that zone previously noted as Natural Forest Area.

Trail Use: All trails in the Resource Recreation Area are open to hikers, horses, and mountain bikers. Motorcycles are prohibited. Off trail use is prohibited. No taking of trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers, fungi or other vegetation. Hand picking of berries and other edibles from the trails for consumption while in the forest is allowed. Picking for home consumption or for retail is prohibited. On trail cross-country skiing and snow shoeing are permitted winter recreation activities.

Picnicking is permitted; users are asked not to disturb native plants and pack their trash out. Picnic tables and picnic structures are not recommended for this area.

Conditional Uses: Filming; equestrian hitching posts; and paved non-motorized trails for ADA access. Activities listed as “conditional uses” are those uses that need to be presented to the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board prior to approval.

Future Trail Plans: Interpretive information and signage may be included in a future trail plan. Sanitary vault or composting toilets may be constructed in this area if needed.

Roads shall be limited to those already existing in the Resource Recreation area and parking would be limited to that which already exists along Heart Lake road.

Management Authority: Under Council form of government, the City Council has the ultimate legal authority and sets policy direction for the City. The Mayor is charged with management responsibility for administration of all City assets under the direction of the Council. The City Council must approve all contracts, asset sales and use policies. Within this framework, it is recommended that the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board suggest use policies and effectively guide management of the Resource Recreation Area. As an amendment to the existing Anacortes Community Forest Lands Management Plan drafted in 1991, this plan will follow the same rules expressed in that document unless otherwise noted.

Recreation Area

The Recreation Area is comprised of approximately 8 acres. It encompasses the existing parking lot and the former gravel parking lot and overflow parking area east of Heart Lake Road.

Trail Use: All trails are open to hikers, horses and mountain bikers. Motorcycles are prohibited. Off trail use is prohibited. No taking of trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers, fungi or other vegetation. Hand picking of berries and other edibles from the trails for consumption while in the forest is allowed. Picking for home consumption or for retail is prohibited.

Information/Education Facilities: A rustic type of amphitheater in the parking lot area that could seat up to 30 people and be used for environmental education was approved as a conditional use. It could be covered. The committee encourages any covered facility to have a multi-use function (i.e.: both picnic and interpretive/educational) and to be limited to the appropriate size and scale for the area.

Permitted Uses: Snow shoeing (on trail); wind surfing; swimming; sailing; hand launch areas; launch ramps; floating dock (instead of pier); Cross country skiing; kayaks and canoes; hiking; mountain biking; equestrian trails; interpretive signs, trails, or kiosks; vehicle parking; roads (review location concerning environmental issues); equestrian facilities (allow parking and hitching post); paved non-motorized trail for ADA purposes (review location concerning environmental issues); composting or vault toilets (review location and design concerning environmental issues).

The committee noted that they have heard from the public that they would like to recreate at the lake (fishing, swimming, picnicking, etc.). The committee encourages “rustic” facilities to accommodate these activities.

Conditional Uses: Organized non-profit group activity, interpretive centers; environmental learning center; filming; and special events. Activities listed as “conditional uses” are those uses that need to be approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission in advance. Harvesting of shellfish, fish, and algae will be coordinated with the State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

Children’s play area: It should be in keeping with the surrounding area and could incorporate a natural theme or could be an artistic piece that was designed to be suitable for children to play on.

Camping: The committee opposed developing camping at the lake without supervision by full-time staff. The committee decided that camping could occur in self-contained units, in the current parking lot area by

special permit only. Staff must be present during the event. The Committee did not wish to see the development of a special camping area with individual campsites.

Beach Use: The Committee would like to accommodate use by the public and separate this from vehicle traffic; this is raised out of a concern for safety of all users. They expressed a vision of a clean sand or grassy area for picnic blankets, etc. by the edge of the lake and an overall reduction of the current gravel parking lot. If grass is used, there was a desire to see that it not be fertilized or irrigated, etc. as to minimize impact on the lake's ecosystem from excess nitrogen.

Boat Launch: Consideration should be given to moving the current boat launch to the east – southeast side of the parking lot. The Committee received comment that the west shore of the parking area is shallow and preferable for wading. Relocating the boat launch would better separate boaters from other users at the shoreline.

Prohibited Uses (from list provided by the State): Wood debris collection; snowmobiling; mushing/sled dogs; off trail skiing; alpine skiing; white water boating; mooring buoys; jet skiing; Nordic track skiing; rock climbing; skiing facilities; sports fields; paragliding; off trail use; ocean beach driving; orienteering; metal detecting; indoor accommodations; haying; mushroom harvesting; grazing; farming or orchards.

Management Authority: Under Council form of government, the City Council has the ultimate legal authority and sets policy direction for the City. The Mayor is charged with management responsibility for administration of all City assets under the direction of the Council. The City Council must approve all contracts, asset sales and use policies. Within this framework, it is recommended that the ACFL Advisory Board suggest use policies and effectively guide management of the Recreation Area. As an amendment to the existing Anacortes Community Forest Lands Management Plan drafted in 1991, this plan will follow the same rules expressed in that document unless otherwise noted.

Lake Surface

Heart Lake is approximately 51 acres in size. It is bordered by Heart Lake Road to the east, has a large gravel parking lot on its northeastern shore, second growth forests to the north and northwest, and a significant grove of old growth trees to the south and southwest. Fidalgo Island residents have used it as a popular recreational destination for boating, fishing, swimming, mini-hydroplane racing, bird watching, and occasional ice-skating when the winter weather permits. Management of the lake surface shall take into consideration the environmental sensitivity of the adjacent upland areas.

Dock: A floating dock adjacent to the Recreation Area for non-commercial recreational use is approved provisionally with need for future discussion on location and style of dock. Consideration on the style of dock should be given to those having minimal environmental impact.

Motorized Use: The use of combustion engines is prohibited. The speed limit is 5 mph.

Management Authority: Under Council form of government, the City Council has the ultimate legal authority and sets policy direction for the City. The Mayor is charged with management responsibility for administration of all City assets under the direction of the Council. The City Council must approve all contracts, asset sales and use policies. Within this framework, it is recommended that the Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board suggest use policies and effectively guide management of the lake surface. As an amendment to the existing Anacortes Community Forest Lands Management Plan drafted in 1991, this plan will follow the same rules expressed in that document unless otherwise noted.