

Anacortes Forest Advisory Board

ACFL Plan Update

Public Comment Meeting-October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Board Members Present: Brian Wetcher, Kit Gerwels, JoAnn York-Gilmore, Tabb Stringer

Staff Present: Bob Vaux, Darby Jordan

**Mark Nihart-Anacortes resident**

Mark asked a question about the process. He stated that it is a large amount of data and information to add and process through. He asked if any thought has been given to utilizing volunteers who would like to help. He stated that there are qualified people who want to help. Mark also shared that he is in support of Marlene Finley's submission in April, as well as the Friends of the Forest comments. He requested that there be an investment plan along with the forest plan to ensure implementation of the plan. His concerns included climate changes, user increases and enforcement.

**Marlene Finley-Anacortes resident and Evergreen Island member**

Marlene asked what the Board would like at this stage. She also spoke about volunteers providing the content analysis. She suggested a training session with the Planning department at the City then the volunteers could organize and sort the comments into tables. Marlene also suggested taking the draft outline and plan changes, and tasking out chapters and areas to the volunteers.

Mark Nihart spoke again about the topic of motorcycles in the ACFL. He states that there needs to be a definition just as has been done with e-bikes. He suggests only dual sport bikes be allowed. This will require that they are street legal with all the safety precautions as well as registration, insurance and license. At one time hydroplane races were allowed on Heart Lake and now they are not allowed. He feels the same will eventually happen to motorcycles as they don't mesh well with other user groups.

Mark requests that definitions be consistent with federal, state and local entities, he gave the example of "nature".

Mark spoke about Heart Lake and that this should be the human recreation spot in the ACFL. He suggested that the Board and City narrow usage to only one lake or area and concentrate on where it can be managed better. The infrastructure is already in place with a parking lot, restrooms and garbage.

Mark shared that enforcement needs to be considered, considering what is reasonable for Parks staff. He suggested that the annual Friends of the Forest Trail Ambassadors and the Anacortes Police Auxiliary Patrol be utilized to provide some type of enforcement.

As changes happen in the ACFL, Mark suggested that donations or grants be looked at to fund the need.

Mark then stated that 5 years is too long to go between reviews. He feels that the ACFL plan should be revised annually.

**Howard Fox-Anacortes resident**

Howard had no specific comments on the Plan, but stated he likes Marlene's idea of an outline and more organized approach to the plan.

**Josh Gates-Anacortes Resident and member of the Fidalgo Trail Riders**

Josh expressed thanks for the time and effort of reviewing the Plan. He also likes the approach of an outline and the possibility of volunteers helping to review but requests that all user groups be represented. Josh also requested that a concrete plan for educating user groups be put in place.