



# Mount Grant Preserve



## Stewardship and Management Plan July 20, 2018

San Juan County Land Bank  
350 Court Street No. 6  
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

Approved by SJC Land Bank Commission 09/21/2018  
Approved by SJC Council Ordinance 30-2018 12/04/2018

## Stewardship Goal

*The Land Bank's stewardship goal for its Mount Grant Preserve is to protect and maintain the Preserve's ecological and scenic qualities while providing opportunities for low-impact public, educational, and scientific access.*

# Mount Grant Preserve Stewardship and Management Plan

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## I. Introduction

Mount Grant Preserve is a joint project of the San Juan County Land Bank (Land Bank) and San Juan Preservation Trust (Preservation Trust). The property was acquired to protect its outstanding ecological, scenic, aesthetic, and low-intensity recreational values in addition to helping protect the quality and availability of potable water resources within the Town of Friday Harbor's Trout Lake watershed. The 250-acre property is located in the middle of San Juan Island and is accessed from West Valley Road (Figure 1). A major motivation for the acquisition was the vision of providing driving access to the stunning views from the summit for people of all abilities.

While this plan attempts to be as descriptive and specific as possible, stewardship is an adaptive process that must respond to changing

environmental and social conditions. This is reflected in the Land Bank's "adaptive management" approach to ecological resources where actions are evaluated and modified to reflect accrued knowledge and experience. Rising regional population and continuing development in the San Juan Islands will put new pressures on this Preserve over time. Through regular monitoring and internal review, the Land Bank will evaluate the effectiveness of our stewardship policies, and update or revise the plan as necessary.

Preserve management will focus on protecting the land's natural attributes, while enabling compatible low impact public use. This Stewardship and Management Plan provides guidelines for the Land Bank's oversight of existing holdings, as well as any potential future land acquisitions nearby. While this plan is intended to serve for years to come, it is anticipated that there will be a need for periodic revision as environmental and social conditions change over time, and the organization acquires new knowledge. Plans will be reviewed, and if appropriate revised, every ten years.

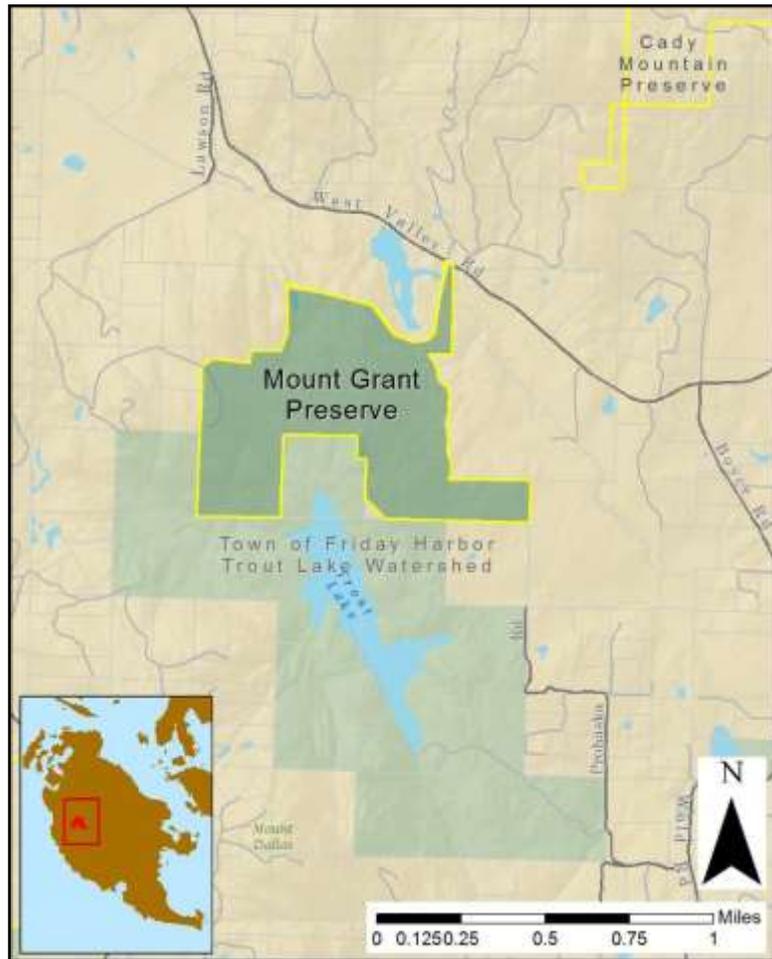


Figure 1 – Mount Grant Preserve Context

For organization and clarity, stewardship themes have been classified into three major categories: *Acquisition History & General Management*, *Ecological Resources*, and *Public Access*. Under each major category, sub-headings detail objectives, stewardship tasks, and monitoring protocols. Objectives describe the long-term vision for the resources and uses in each section, while Stewardship Tasks outline specific actions aimed at achieving objectives. Methods for measuring the success of these activities are outlined under Monitoring Protocols. Appendices to this plan include a list of priority species and habitats, a summary of public use rules, summary of special event policy, San Juan Islands Leave No Trace guidelines, and selected references.

## II. Acquisition History

### ACQUISITION HISTORY

Mount Grant has been assembled through four separate acquisitions with the core 141- acre piece acquired through joint effort of the Land Bank and Preservation Trust (Figure 2). The Preservation Trust lead a community fundraising campaign for half of the purchase price of the core portion, including raising an additional \$1.2million for legal fees, closing costs, and a long-term stewardship fund. The campaign was initiated in March 2015 and successfully concluded in December 2016 thanks to the strong community support for the project including 1,200 individual donations.

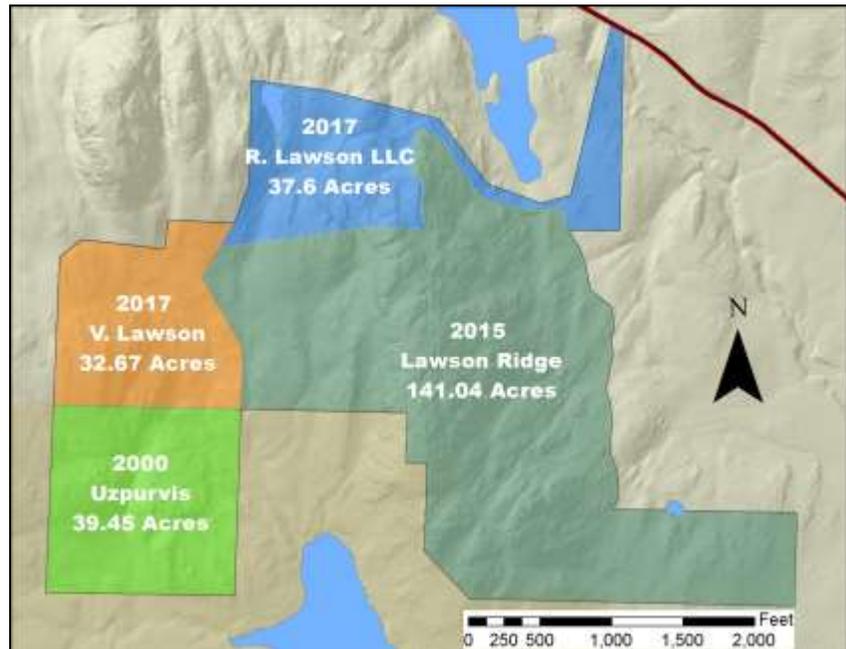


Figure 2 – Acquisition History

The Land Bank owns and manages the Preserve while the Preservation Trust holds a conservation easement over the bulk of the Preserve, which ensures that it remains protected and accessible to the public in perpetuity. The Preservation Trust also manages a stewardship fund to help provide for the recreational development, restoration, and ongoing maintenance and stewardship of the Preserve. The Land Bank will work closely with the Preservation Trust on stewardship and management decisions.

The main portion of the Mount Grant Preserve was acquired from members of the Lawson family, who owned it for several generations (Figure 2). Alfred Lawson (1868-1941) pieced together the Lawson family holdings in this area during the period 1891-1913. The land was primarily used for grazing and occasional timber harvest. In the 1990's Richard Lawson, with financial assistance from Lawson family interests, began the "Lawson Ridge" residential development project in earnest, creating twelve lots, constructing roads, and installing community water system and utilities. The properties were actively marketed for several years before the Land Bank and Preservation Trust formed a partnership to acquire the land, with the Preservation Trust launching the campaign in March 2015.

Prior to partnering with the Preservation Trust on the acquisition of Mount Grant, the Land Bank purchased a nearby forty-acre property from the Uzpurvis family in 2000. The property, located southwest of Mount Grant and just below Mount Dallas, was acquired to protect its unique

habitats and enhance protection of the Town of Friday Harbor's Trout Lake watershed. Reflecting this value, the Preserve was referred to internally as the "Trout Lake Preserve."

In fall of 2017 the Land Bank acquired two separate adjoining parcels. The 32-acre V. Lawson parcel provides connection and direct access opportunities from Mount Grant to the Uzpurvis parcel (Figure 2). It also provides habitat value and further protection of the Town of Friday Harbor's Trout Lake watershed within the basin west of the Mount Grant summit. The 39-acre Richard Lawson LLC parcel consolidated the ownership of the Preserve along Richard Lee Lane and adds further connectivity to the basin west of Mount Grant and protects wetlands, diverse forest, and a small pond (Figure 2).

In 2016, the Land Bank applied for a \$1 million grant to support acquisition of Mount Grant through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) in the local parks category. The project ranked well and is poised to receive full funding in 2018. State funding requires additional state monitored permanent protection of the Preserve including the assurance that it will remain publicly accessible in perpetuity. Additional requirements overseen by RCO include signage, monitoring, and project review.

Mount Grant Preserve derives its name from the 1875 General Land Office (GLO) cadastral survey of San Juan County. The name appears on the survey maps as well as in the surveyor's notes. The survey crew likely named it in honor of Civil War figure Ulysses S. Grant. "Mount Grant" is referenced again in Roy McClelland's 1927 "Geology of the San Juan Islands," and occasionally appears on maps through the 1970s. Locally, the peak had been referred to by several names, most recently marketed as the "Lawson Ridge" residential development. To avoid confusion with marketing associated with the planned development and the proposed Preserve, the historic name was chosen to represent the property.

The Preserve has no documented archaeological, historical, or other cultural resources. Given the prominence of the peak and proximity to Trout Lake's fresh water resources, it is likely to have been used by Native people for thousands of years. European settlers began grazing the open grasslands by in the mid-1800s, but no known remnants of this activity remain. Old signs found on trees near the southern border of the Preserve may be remnants from Joint Operation Sea Wall – a military exercise that took place in September 1961 on San Juan Island. Opportunities for further research and careful observation during construction activities may reveal clues regarding historical use.

### III. General Management

#### Easements, Covenants, and Restrictions

The easements, covenants, and restrictions listed below are presented to document their existence and potential influence on management of Mount Grant Preserve. Summaries below are not intended to be comprehensive. Original documents should be reviewed prior to undertaking any action which might have bearing upon them.

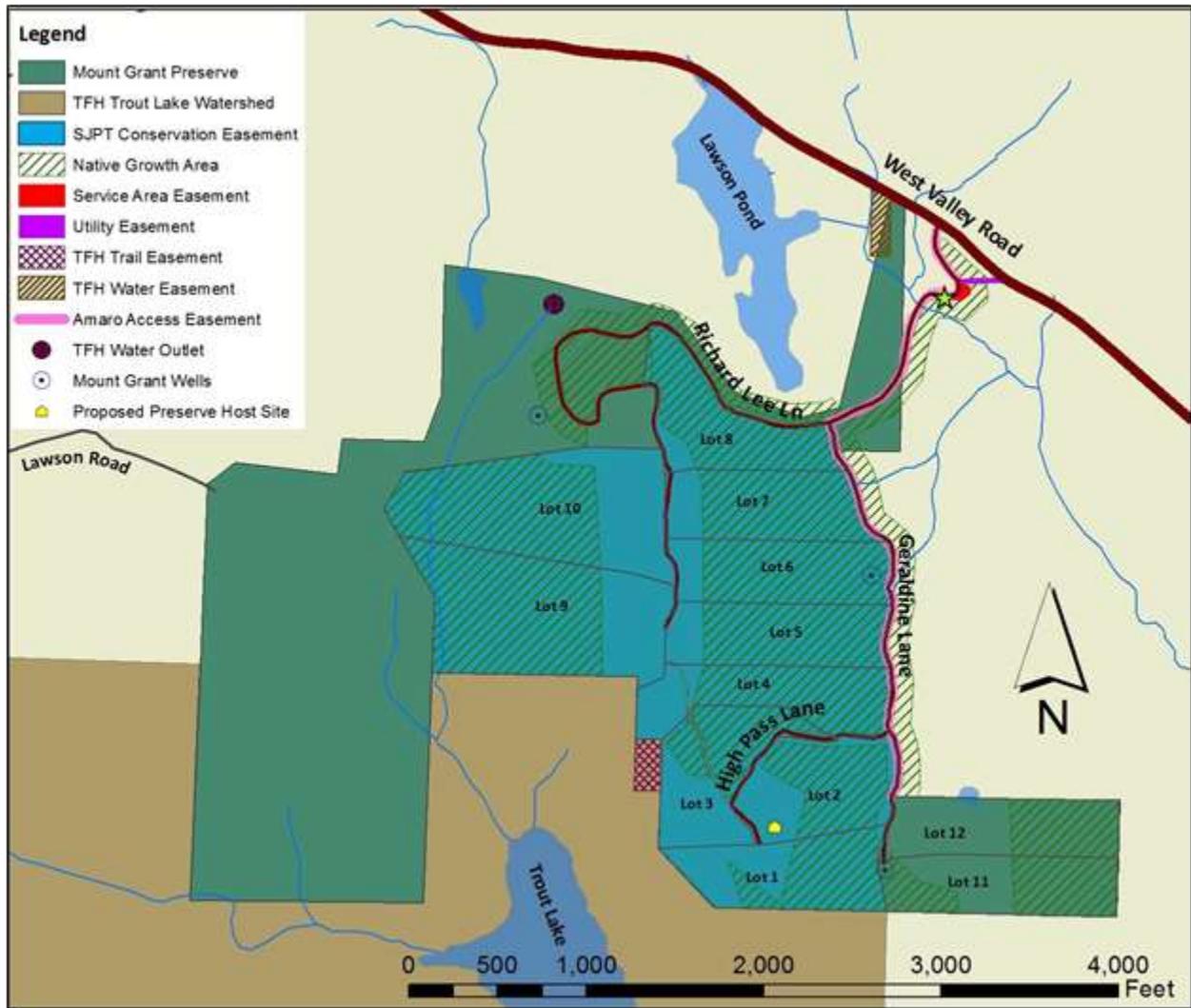


Figure 3 – Easements, Covenants, and Restrictions

#### *Conservation Easement (AFN 2015-0309005)*

A conservation easement held The San Juan Preservation Trust was executed at the time of acquisition of the Lawson Ridge parcels. The conservation easement was placed only over lots 1-10 of the original twelve-lot Lawson Ridge plat, or 121 acres of the Mount Grant Preserve. Lots 11 and 12 were not encumbered with the easement due to potential for trade or resale should it be necessary to support the Mount Grant acquisition. The Land Bank and Preservation

Trust currently share ownership in lots 11 and 12. Due to the purchases being separate acquisitions undertaken solely by the Land Bank and at different times, the Uzpurvis, Victor Lawson, and Richard Lawson LLC parcels are not currently subject to a conservation easement but remain protected through the Land Bank's enabling legislation. These parcels may be included in a second conservation easement at some point in the future.

The stated purpose of the conservation easement over the Lawson Ridge parcels is to protect the following conservation resources: undeveloped open space, public access, ecological, forest, meadow, rocky bald, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas of Mount Grant, natural ridgeline, and utility for forestry purposes. The easement limits public access to low-intensity activities and prohibits commercial use and other activities on the portion of the Preserve governed by the easement. It requires prior review and approval by the Preservation Trust of activities such as management plans, recreational development, restoration work or other substantial activities. The easement specified approval of a management plan by September 9, 2017. This requirement was satisfied by an interim management plan adopted by the Land Bank Commission in 2015.

#### *Primary Access and Utility Easements (AFN 2012-0628010)*

The primary access to the Preserve is from West Valley Road (Figure 3). A private road, Richard Lee Lane, provides access and utilities through privately owned land for one fifth of a mile before reaching the Preserve and continuing for close to a mile to the summit parking. On the east side of the Preserve, the first 170 feet of Geraldine Lane are through Land Bank ownership. The approximate centerline of the road becomes the shared boundary with the neighboring land owner. An access and utility easement benefits the neighbor through the Land Bank's ownership on Richard Lee Lane to the intersection with Geraldine Lane. The easement continues along Geraldine Lane up to the NW corner of Lot 12 (Figure 3). The adjacent land owner is allotted two access points to their lands from the Geraldine Lane. All utilities are required to be located underground.

Power, phone, and fiber-optic utilities were installed for the Lawson Ridge site development. Excepting transformers, phone pedestals, and other such surface utilities as will be desired for Preserve management, all unused above ground utilities infrastructure will be removed and all below ground will be left in ground.

#### *Secondary Access and Utility Easements (AFN 1965-60868, 30053, 80940)*

Legal access to the V. Lawson and Uzpurvis parcels is afforded by way of Lawson Road (Figure 3). Access will be limited to maintenance and stewardship activities with no public recreational driving access permitted via this route.

#### *Road Maintenance Agreement*

A road maintenance agreement was established as part of the Lawson Ridge short plat. It sets out the terms for shared maintenance responsibilities with adjacent owners within the road network originating off West Valley Road. The Land Bank is identified as the "Road Manager" and is also primarily responsible for maintenance of the road including setting and posting speed limits. The easement further assigns responsibility to the Land Bank to maintain a locked gate (if desired) on the access easement road at or near its current location, provided that adjacent private property owner(s) with access rights are provided with keys or key codes.

### *Service Area Easement*

A special easement over adjacent private property provides a non-exclusive easement for “ingress, egress, utilities, parking, mailboxes, call box, storage and caretaker’s structure.” This service area, located approximately 125 yards from West Valley Road, has been in use as the parking area and trailhead for Mount Grant (Figure 3). A utility easement benefiting the Land Bank runs from West Valley Road along the northern side of the Service Area easement.

### *Native Growth Area Covenant*

A native growth area covenant was enacted as part of storm water planning during the plat process (Figure 3). It specifies that certain areas within the Preserve and adjacent private land will be kept in a forested or native condition. The covenant allows for low-intensity recreational access, non-mechanized forest management activities, and specifies the number of vehicular access points to adjacent properties. Neighboring property owners to the east are allotted two access points from Richard Lee Lane and/or Geraldine Lane. The Land Bank benefits from ability to have two vehicular access points from Richard Lee Lane into the property acquired from Richard Lawson LLC.

### *Wells and Water System*

Three developed wells serve the Preserve’s water system (Figure 3). A sanitary setback limits construction and other activities within 100 feet of wells. Each well is served by an individual electric transformer and meter. The system was designed to pump well water to a 50,000 gallon cast-in-place concrete cistern located at the summit, operated by an additional transformer and meter. Included in the water system are four hydrants for residential fire protection – one at each of the three cul-du-sacs and a third on the west side of Richard Lee Lane approximately 0.15 mile below the summit.

The water system was developed as a Class B water system and requires operation by a third-party contractor if put into residential use. Use of the water system for other purposes, including public potable water source, would need review and approval by San Juan Health and Community Services.

### *Town of Friday Harbor Trail Easement*

The Town of Friday Harbor donated a trail easement on the south shoulder of Mount Grant (Figure 3). An existing trail traverses this area as it provides the most sustainable and possibly most desirable route to the summit. The easement was written for a twenty-year period and will need to be reviewed and updated at that time. Additionally, the Land Bank agreed to fence the trail in this section using low, stacked split rail fencing and provide a viewing zone with opportunity for interpretation on the importance of the Trout Lake Watershed in providing potable water to the Town of Friday Harbor and directing visitors not to trespass into this resource conservation area.

### *Town of Friday Harbor Water Easement*

The Town of Friday Harbor has easement over two portions of Mount Grant Preserve for the purpose of supplementing natural water level of the Trout Lake Reservoir (Figure 3). An easement for a pump station and related equipment extends onto the Land Bank’s ownership

fronting West Valley Road. Seasonal overflow water from Lawson Pond reservoir is pumped from this facility in pipes through the pond and to the high point of a saddle between Mount Grant and Sugarloaf where it is then allowed to drain naturally to Trout Lake. The outlet for this waterline is located on the Preserve. Pumping is intended to occur primarily during the rainy season from overflow following the natural filling of Lawson Pond. The easement contains additional obligations should a reservoir be constructed in the drainage basin of the current outflow. The Land Bank has no intention of creating a reservoir in this location.

### **Commercial Use**

Commercial use of the Preserve, beyond de minimus activities, is not permitted without joint permission of the Land Bank and Preservation Trust. This includes commercial tours, events, photography, and videography/cinematography. See Appendix D, Preserve Rules and Restrictions for complete list of rules and restrictions.

### **Preserve Caretaker/Host**

Prior to the Land Bank's ownership, the property's remote location and outstanding views made it a popular location for undesirable and incompatible activities such as after-hours parties, impaired driving, off road vehicle use, recreational fires, dumping, and camping despite efforts by the previous owners to control these uses. Driving access to the summit will necessitate opening and closing of gate as well as regular interaction with visitors for natural history interpretation and rules education.

A Preserve Host position is proposed to assist with management of gate access, maintenance, monitoring public use, outreach, and education. The conservation easement took this use into consideration, but specified the location would be within the Service Area Easement which is no longer a desirable location. The host site would preferably be located at a site which has been disturbed during development of the Lawson Ridge plat, but is neither visible from West Valley Road nor substantially detracts from recreational experience. Semi-developed areas on lots 11 & 12 as well as sites along Geraldine Lane are under consideration for this purpose (Figure 3). Use of an area other than the Service Area may require the Preservation Trust and Land Bank to amend or modify the easement as necessary if this or other sites within the easement are mutually agreed upon as a preferred host site. If this location is deemed unsuitable, consideration will be given first to existing developed space on lots 11 & 12.

The host position would be modeled on similar programs at local State and National Parks. The position would be on a volunteer basis and include free use of an RV or tiny home site including utilities. No permanent structures will be permitted. Volunteers would be responsible for providing their own RV or tiny home. The volunteer host may be a seasonal or year-round position. Specific responsibilities would include monitoring public use, light maintenance (litter clean-up, weed control, etc), and primary responsibility for opening/closing gate access. The position description will be developed in collaboration with the Preservation Trust and adapted to reflect the changing needs of the Preserve over time. An annual contract outlining the roles and responsibilities of the host and the Land Bank will be developed in collaboration with the person(s) selected for the role.

### **Volunteer, Conservation Corps Campsite**

This section is added for consideration in the management plan as a concept. Land managers in the San Juan Islands, including the Land Bank and Preservation Trust, are increasingly relying on conservation corps and volunteer groups to assist with maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of public lands. There are limited opportunities for housing these groups, especially during the summer season when campgrounds fill with visitors. San Juan Island in particular lacks opportunity for camping with San Juan County Parks Department being the sole provider of group campsites at San Juan Park and the Fairgrounds. Portions of lots 11 & 12 have been cleared and graded in addition to development of access for logging and/or residential development. Utilities have also been brought part way into the property from the western property line at the terminus of Geraldine Lane.

This section of the Preserve is not a major recreational destination for visitors and is not included in the Preservation Trust's conservation easement. The development of a modest camp area in this area could provide significant benefit to the Land Bank and other public land management agencies in the islands. Limitations on group size, length of occupancy, and maximum number of days per year will help ensure the character of the Preserve and surrounding properties is maintained. Groups which the Land Bank has worked with in recent years that could benefit include:

- Washington Conservation Corps
- Student Conservation Association
- Northwest Youth Corps
- San Juan Islands Conservation Corps
- Coast Salish Conservation Corps
- American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations
- Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program

### III. A. Objectives for General Management

1. *Maintain, steward, and otherwise care for the Preserves in accordance with Land Bank policies and any other legal requirements.*
2. *Maintain accurate records of the history, natural history, management, and maintenance of the Preserves.*

### III. B. Stewardship Tasks for General Preserve Management

#### 1. *Management Plan*

Stewardship and management plans provide the foundation for the maintenance and care of Land Bank Preserves. Specific tasks related to management plans include:

- Reviewing this plan prior to annual monitoring visit.
- Reviewing this plan while planning and prior to any significant maintenance or site enhancement projects to ensure compatibility with policies and restrictions.
- Review and revision of management plan every ten years to update information as more knowledge is acquired and to reflect potential changes in stewardship practices.

## 2. *Work Plan*

Development of an annual work plan for the Land Bank program including each Preserve is an important part of achieving short and long-term stewardship goals. The annual work plan should be developed and informed by information gathered during annual monitoring. Specific tasks related to an annual work plan include:

- Reviewing the management plan and conducting annual monitoring prior to development of annual work plan
- Developing a budget associated with maintenance, monitoring, site enhancement, and administrative tasks
- Developing a proposed timeline for each activity.
- Recover and maintain surveyed property boundary monuments as part of annual monitoring efforts

## 3. *Maintain communication with neighboring property owners to collaborate on shared management topics such as control of invasive species and trespass.*

## 4. *Utilities*

Underground utilities (power, phone, fiber-optic, and water.) previously installed to serve residential development will be left in place. The above ground portions of utilities will be removed to the extent practicable. Well #3 and/or well #2 will be maintained and enhanced to provide potable water to the Preserve host site and conservation corps/volunteer camp in the event either are implemented. Utilities, including electric, phone, septic and water, will be maintained or installed for the Preserve host site. Water and limited utilities may be developed in the future for a volunteer/group campsite.

The cistern and water distribution system at the summit present challenges for long term stewardship. Considerable effort was expended to develop the water system for residential use, but the Land Bank has no need for a large-scale potable water system. Local fire managers have indicated the system would not be useful for fire-fighting efforts as it represents a false sense of security. Additionally, there is a low probability of sending firefighters onto the mountain since there are no structures and a single exit/entry point.

The cistern also has problems with design and construction. Expansion and contraction caused by seasonal temperature variation in combination with a lack of sealant has caused the cistern to leak at a rate of +/-300 gallons/day. A hole bored for mechanical controls was placed below the level of the system overflow, causing electrical hazard and water damage to the control room. Repair and upgrade of the system is estimated between \$18 -22,000.

Despite the water system serving no obvious purpose and requiring expensive repairs and maintenance, there has been considerable public input in favor of retaining the water system. Given uncertainty regarding the usefulness of the system, including the success of repair measures the plan at this time is to mothball the system while taking measures to improve the safety and aesthetics of the site. Further consideration will be given to the ultimate disposition of the water system as the Land Bank gains experience managing the site.

- Research steps needed to mothball non-critical portions of water system, leaving underground plumbing in place for any potential future uses and reducing any public health and safety hazards
- Research steps to necessary to develop and maintain water system for host and campsite purposes
- Work with San Juan County Fire Department and Fire Marshal to identify opportunities for fire risk reduction and research potential use of water system for fire suppression purposes
- Work with OPALCO for removal of unnecessary above ground utilities including fiber optic loops and transformers
- Develop a plan for providing utilities to host site including necessary permission from the Preservation Trust

#### 5. *Preserve Caretaker/Host Program*

Development of a Preserve Caretaker/Host program will be instrumental for the ongoing and long-term stewardship of Mount Grant Preserve. The following tasks will be used to develop the program:

- Develop a position description in collaboration with Preservation Trust and San Juan County Human Resources
- Work with Preservation Trust to determine location of Preserve host site and determine acceptable infrastructure requirements and restrictions
- Ensure preserve host site, and any light emanating from the site, is not visible, from West Valley Road
- Research and apply for relevant permits with San Juan County Community Development
- Advertise position with emphasis on candidates with background in natural resource management, environmental education, and strong interpersonal communication skills

#### 6. *Road Maintenance*

Maintenance of the Mount Grant road system is expected to be challenging as the Land Bank lacks resources and experience to maintain and repair the road infrastructure internally, contracting is expected to be a significant long-term expense and will require collaboration with adjacent land owners. As specified in the road easement and maintenance agreement, the Land Bank will bear the burden for road maintenance on Richard Lee Lane and Pass Heights Lane. The Land Bank will be responsible for a significant portion of Geraldine Lane's maintenance costs, as the maintenance agreement apportions the responsibility to the number of lots served. Currently is one adjacent

parcel to Geraldine but the neighbors could potentially create several parcels served by the road..

Maintenance tasks of the roads falls into these categories:

a. Regular light maintenance

The Land Bank will use staff, volunteers, and assistance from neighboring property owners to conduct the bulk of this work. Specific tasks include

- Maintaining communication with neighboring property owner(s) in regards to road condition and planning maintenance activities
- Trimming shrubs and trees to maintain visibility and drivability of road corridor
- Mowing road shoulders
- Controlling noxious weeds
- Maintaining ditches including removal of debris, trimming and removal of vegetation, maintaining check dams, keeping culverts clear of debris
- Removing storm debris including limbs and fallen trees
- Sweeping road 2-4 times annually
- Maintaining, repairing, and replacing of road accessories including gates and signage

b. Major maintenance, repair, resurfacing, & reconstruction

The Land Bank will primarily use contractors, including San Juan County Public Works, to conduct major maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of the roads. The most significant anticipated cost is road surface replacement. Most of the roads were originally installed using asphalt paving. The Land Bank contracted with Public Works to complete road surfacing to the summit using chip sealing. It is anticipated the road will require additional chip seal coats every 10-15 years depending on use and weathering. Specific tasks include:

- Annual assessment of road condition as part of annual Preserve monitoring
- Annual meeting with neighboring property owner to discuss road condition and desired maintenance and repairs
- Soliciting estimates for resurfacing at least a year in advance of replacement including both asphalt and chip seal options from private contractors as well as Public Works

c. Emergency maintenance and repairs

Occasionally the road might require emergency repairs, in particular if residences are developed off of Geraldine Road. Emergency repairs may be due to flooding, freezing, sink holes, or other unanticipated or uncontrollable events. The Land Bank or neighboring property owners may need to conduct emergency repairs to prevent more extensive damage to road, recreational infrastructure, ecological resources, or to Preserve accessibility and/or ensure safety. The following protocols will be used for emergency repairs:

- Attempting to contact neighboring property owner(s) to inform of emergency and discuss appropriate response

- Attempting to contact at least two private contractors and/or Public Works for estimates
- Closing road and/or public access as necessary to ensure safety of public and workers

#### 7. *Town of Friday Harbor Water Easement*

The town's easement for water is complimentary to the Land Bank's mandate to protect existing and future sources of potable water. The following tasks will be undertaken to ensure compliance with this easement:

- Working with the Town to better understand their usage and needs for water management
- Regular communication with Town to ensure their access to facilities
- Investigating the use of signage, fencing, or other means to ensure their facilities and access are not hindered or damaged by public access

#### 8. *Conservation Corps and Volunteer Group Campsite*

Development of a full plan for a group camp area is beyond the scope of this management plan and thus solely the concept is presented here. The following tasks and concepts will be used to further research and develop a plan:

- Investigate permitting requirements with San Juan County Community Development
- Work with landscape architect, civil engineer, or other qualified professionals to identify areas suitable for camp and create budget for site development including development of water and power utilities
- Group size would serve a maximum of twelve people.
- No fires permitted May 15 – September 15, or as conditions dictate including burn bans
- Youth would be supervised by adults at a ratio of no less than one adult over age of 25 for each five participants under age of 18
- Group site may be made available for day-use educational events with schools, non-profits, or partner organizations
- Maximum permitted stay in camp = 10 days
- Maximum camp occupancy four weeks per year.

### III. C. Monitoring Protocols for General Preserve Management

#### 1. *Regular Monitoring*

The Preserve will be regularly visited by Land Bank staff and volunteers to observe and track natural processes, public use patterns, compliance with policies, condition of Preserve infrastructure, and provide education and outreach to Preserve visitors.

#### 2. *Annual Monitoring*

Annual monitoring of Land Bank Preserves is critical to understanding the Preserve's natural resources, tracking changes, and protecting its conservation values. Staff will conduct an annual monitoring visit with the specific tasks of inspecting key ecological

features and recreational infrastructure, monitoring Preserve boundaries, public use trends and impacts, and conducting hazard analysis. Annual Preserve monitoring provides baseline information for development of the subsequent years work plan in concert with review of this management plan.

The Preservation Trust will also conduct annual monitoring visits of the portions of the Preserve encumbered by the conservation easement to ensure the terms of the easement are being upheld, document changing conditions, and update the ecological inventory.

3. *Photo Monitoring*

The use of repeatable photographs from designated locations within the Preserve will be used to track changes to land cover over time. Photo points will be established to best document Preserve conditions and will be re-photographed every ten years as part of the decadal management plan review and revision process.

The Preservation Trust also conducts photo monitoring of the conservation easement with photos updated every three years.

4. *Ecological Assessment*

An ecological assessment of the “Lawson Ridge” parcels was produced by Rainshadow Consulting in early 2017. An assessment of the “Uzpurvis” property was conducted by Land Bank Staff in February 2014. Additional inventories of plants and birds have been collected by Land Bank and Preservation Trust staff, the San Juan Nature Institute, and the San Juan Islands Chapter of the Washington State Native Plant Society. Assessments of the “Victor Lawson” and “Tom Lawson” parcels will be conducted in 2018.

These assessments provide a foundation for management decisions included in this plan. Updates and additional assessments will be considered to monitor changes over time and as new information is sought, especially as necessary with management plan updates.

5. *Historical and Cultural Resources Assessments*

Boyd Pratt produced an historical assessment of the Preserve in 2015. The Preserve itself is not known to have significant cultural or historical resources. The views from the summit do, however, provide views over historic landscapes particularly relevant to early homesteading and agricultural endeavors. The report provides a foundation for historical resources associated with the Preserve. Additional assessments will be considered as opportunity arises or new information is sought, especially to support management plan updates.

6. *Access and Utilities Assessment*

Actions proposed in this management plan will influence the nature and scope of the utilities and access required to meet management goals. Once the management plan is finalized, an assessment of the utilities and access should be conducted and decisions made of how best to develop, maintain, abandon, or decommission utilities and roads formerly intended to serve the proposed subdivision.

## IV. Ecological Resources

Several assessments have been conducted which provide the foundation for this section. In 2017, Samantha Martin of Rainshadow Consulting prepared an “Ecological Assessment of Mount Grant Preserve,” report for the Land Bank which covers the “Lawson Ridge” parcels. Land Steward Eliza Habegger completed an ecological assessment for the 40 acre “Uzpurvis” parcel in 2014. Additional supporting documentation includes “Geology of Mount Grant Preserve” by Orcas Island based geologist Julia Turney, as well as plant, bird, and wildlife lists and observations collected by San Juan Nature Institute, San Juan Island Chapter of Washington Native Plant Society, San Juan Islands Audubon, and numerous volunteers from the San Juan Preservation Trust and Land Bank. Additional assessments will be conducted for the “V. Lawson” and “T. Lawson” parcels.

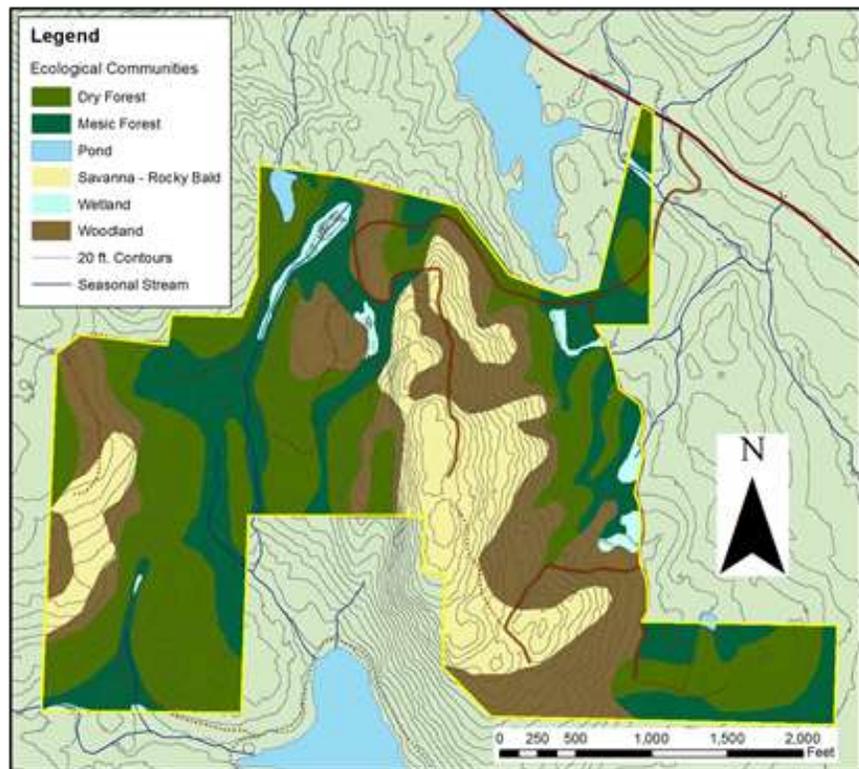


Figure 4 – Ecological Management Communities

The underlying geology of the steep, glacially carved faces define Mount Grant Preserve’s ecological resources. Mount Grant belongs to the Constitution Formation, a terrane which was formed remotely, rafted, and accreted to the North American plate. The dense metamorphic bedrock was formed by underwater landslides of volcanic materials which were subjected to extreme pressures. Periods of glaciation further shaped these lands, with glacial action exploiting weaknesses, giving shape to the dramatic ridges, escarpments, and rock outcrops of Mount Grant in addition to leaving behind pockets of glacially scoured and transported materials.

A natural gradient exists between the moister, more forested base of the Preserve and the drier balds, grasslands, and savanna of the summit. Terrain is steep and rocky with thin soils in all but the lowest areas. Three drainage basins were identified within the Lawson Ridge Long Plat Storm Water Drainage Plan. The southern and western sides of the preserve flow into the Town of Friday Harbor’s Trout Lake Reservoir – the Town’s potable water source. The eastern flanks drain either directly into Lawson Pond or the stream which flows from it. This stream ultimately ties into the False Bay watershed. A very small portion of the northwestern corner of the

Preserve drains towards the northwest, ultimately feeding a seasonal stream which enters Andrews Bay on the south side of Sunset Point.

For the purpose of describing management activities, the grouping of habitat types has been revised from the categories identified in the ecological assessment. General ecological communities identified within this plan include savanna - rocky balds, woodland, dry forest, mesic forest, and wetlands (Table 1 and Figure 4). While the composition of species within these habitat types might change over time, the underlying foundational characteristics, especially soil type, are expected to exhibit much slower change. The criteria for differentiating between forests, woodlands, and savanna/rocky bald types is by estimate of percent canopy coverage (Table 1). In the case of clear cut areas, observations of soil conditions and historic aeriels have been used to define ecological community management goals. Dry and mesic forests are further distinguished based on the plant communities which are an expression of the underlying soil conditions and, to a lesser degree, slope aspect.

<b>Mount Grant Ecological Communities</b>			
<i>Community</i>	<i>Percent Canopy</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Dry Forest	>60%	87	34.5%
Mesic Forest	>60%	56	22.2%
Woodland	25-60%	58	23.0%
Savanna - Rocky Bald	0-25%	45	17.9%
Wetland	N/A	6	2.4%
Total:		252	100.0%

*Table 1 – Mt. Grant Ecological Communities*

The communities described in Table 1 and shown Figure 4 represent approximate boundaries of ecological communities grouped by primary management objective. Actual ecological communities have more gradual transitions and variability exists within the dominant ecological community types. Other notable ecological resources found within Mount Grant Preserve include seasonal streams, cliffs, pocket seeps and wetlands, and a solitary mature Garry oak tree. In summer of 2017, San Juan Island Youth Conservation Corps crews documented over 250 old growth Douglas-fir trees along the eastern slopes of the Preserve and more are found throughout other portions of the Preserve. Lawson family members have recounted previous generations’ particular care and stewardship of these old growth trees.

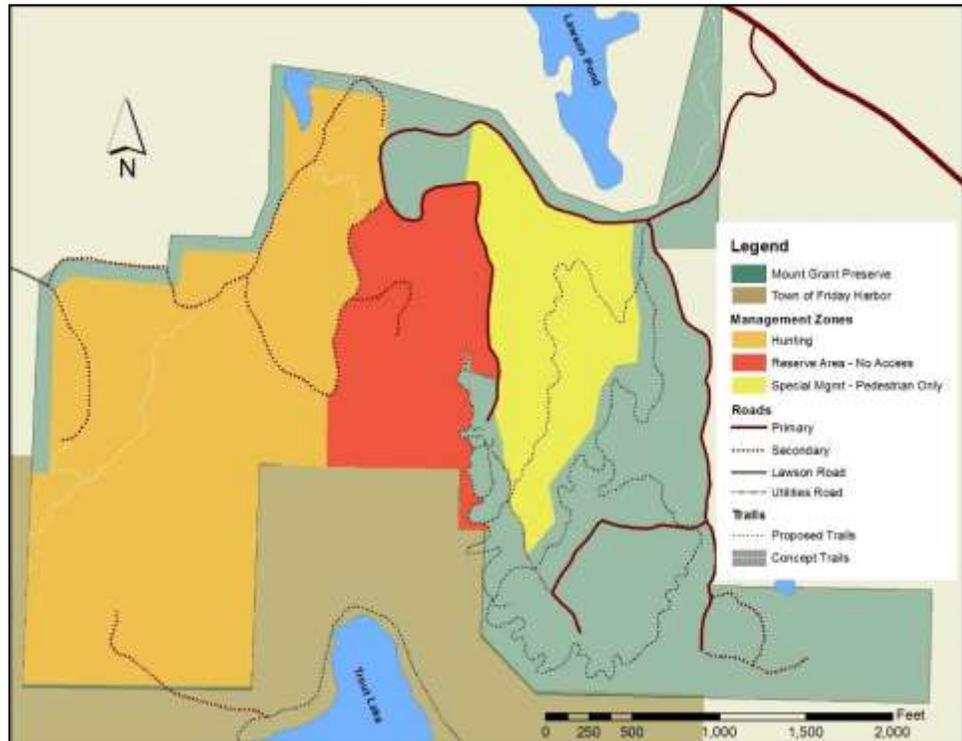
Soil types, remnant understory plants, historic aerial photographs, maps, survey notes, and other written descriptions support the assumption that significant portions of the Preserve had a woodland-savanna habitat structure until very recently. The historic map and aerial photographs in Appendix C demonstrate this change in land cover over time. Much of the formerly open areas have been colonized by young, dense, homogenous stands of Douglas fir punctuated with large old growth specimens every few hundred feet. Many of these veteran fir trees, in particular along the middle to upper portions of the Preserve have significant fire scars and are short in stature with large, twisted and gnarled branches - characteristics consistent of establishment and extended time growing in a more open setting.

Corresponding with the diversity of habitats, Mount Grant also supports a variety of animal species. A highly visible population of rough skinned newts delights visitors during their seasonal migrations. Four bat species have been identified during surveys by a University of Washington researcher. Seven raptors species have been documented and are commonly seen

hunting along the ridges along with conspiracy of ravens. Other notable bird species include pileated wood peckers, band-tailed pigeons, and nighthawks. Nighthawks are commonly seen and heard foraging along the ridgelines at twilight during the summer months and are presumed to nest on the Preserve's more isolated rocky balds.

To aid in the protection of habitats and species, two special management zones have been established (Figure 5). Thirty acres has been designated as a no public access zone. This area includes

representative portions of each habitat type found on Mount Grant. While no public access is to be permitted in this zone, Land Bank staff, volunteers, and contractors may access this area to perform stewardship activities including habitat restoration and monitoring. An additional thirty acres on the east facing slopes has been identified for



limited public access development. This zone was identified as important and sensitive grassland-rocky bald habitat in the ecological assessment. A pedestrian trail has been aligned to carefully travel through this zone following a forested bench with relatively deeper soils.

Lacking pressure of natural predators and abundant forage from managed landscapes, Columbia black-tail deer are arguably over-abundant in the islands. In addition to lack of natural predators, the ability to hunt deer has diminished over time as development has reduced the amount of suitable and available private and public lands. Over-population can have impacts on the biological diversity, vigor, and health of ecosystems.<sup>1,2</sup> As one of the larger and more undeveloped blocks of land in the San Juan Islands, hunting has persisted as an activity on these lands up to the Land Bank's ownership. While the eastern and summit portions of the preserve are likely to have recreational activities that may be incompatible with hunting, the remote nature of the western portion of the preserve might provide opportunity to continue the recreational and cultural tradition of hunting while simultaneously providing ecological benefits (Figure 5).

<sup>1</sup> Martin, T. G., Arcese, P. & Scheerder, N. (2011) *Browsing down our natural heritage: Deer impacts vegetation structure and songbird assemblages across an island archipelago*. *Biological Conservation*. 144:459-469

<sup>2</sup> Gonzales, E.K., P. Arcese. (2008). *Herbivory, more than competition, limits early and established life stages of native plants in an invaded oak meadow*. *Ecology* 89, 3282-3289.

Exploration of the design and development of hunting program as an ecological management tool will be pursued in collaboration with local hunters, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, researchers, and other interested parties. A 100-foot buffer between adjacent private lands and the proposed hunting area will be included. Hunting will be managed allowing for changes or cessation of the activity to meet overall goals for Preserve management.

Building sites, roads, and other infrastructure were created as part of the Lawson Ridge development. Site enhancements for recreational access will take advantage of some of this infrastructure, but other areas are being assessed for rehabilitation. The goal of rehabilitation will be to improve the habitat diversity and improve aesthetic by deconstructing and reshaping the flattened areas to a more natural gradient, and by spreading a thin layer of soil to enable revegetation with site-appropriate native plants. Restoration of the building sites to a pre-development physical or vegetative structure is an unreasonable goal. Ecological restoration efforts will be prioritized for maintaining and enhancing for high quality and less disturbed natural areas.

The impacts from climate change present significant challenges in planning and caring for the ecological resources of Land Bank Preserves. While there is broad consensus among the scientific community regarding our warming climate, there is a considerable uncertainty regarding many of the specific long-term impacts, in particular changes in volume and seasonality of precipitation. In our region, average temperatures are expected to rise 4.2° – 5.5°F by 2050. Increases in average warmth may induce changes in composition of plant and animal species, increase the risk and severity of wildfires, provide vectors for invasive plants, animals, and pathogens, and effect hydrologic cycles.<sup>3</sup>

While it is not possible to prevent or forecast the impacts associated with climate change with certainty, protecting and maintaining the biodiversity of the Preserve can strengthen resilience to impacts from climate change. Careful observation and consideration of adaptation measures when making management decisions for recreational development, restoration activities, and general vegetation management can also provide opportunity to enhance ecosystem resilience. As a discreet mountaintop, Mount Grant provides a unique opportunity for long term monitoring and adaptation. The inherent structural diversity created by range of elevations and aspects within the Preserve provides opportunity for the vertical and horizontal movement of plants and animals adapting to impacts from climate change.

The Land Bank holds protection of conservation values, including ecological resources, as the overarching goal of its stewardship program. Maintaining an area's ecological health can also contribute to the preservation of scenic and open space characteristics. Public access and other activities are designed to minimize impacts, with the knowledge that they may have to be restricted or discontinued if impacts cannot be controlled.

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<sup>3</sup> Mauger, G.S., J.H. Casola, H.A. Morgan, R.L. Strauch, B. Jones, B. Curry, T.M. Busch Isaksen, L. Whitely Binder, M.B. Krosby, and A.K. Snover. (2015). *State of Knowledge: Climate Change in Puget Sound*. Report prepared for the Puget Sound Partnership and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Climate Impacts Group, University of Washington, Seattle, WA <https://cig.uw.edu/resources/specialVreports/psVsok/>

## IV. A. Objectives for Ecological Resources

In managing lands for their ecological resources, the Land Bank typically strives to conserve, and sometimes enhance, their ecological value. Ecological value encompasses both biological diversity and the ability of the ecosystem to function, withstand stress, and evolve over time. Management at Mount Grant will focus on maintaining the existing biodiversity, while simultaneously enhancing diversity in select areas where it has been diminished by factors such as elimination of wildfire or invasion by non-natives. The desired result will be an array of dynamic, resilient, and diverse habitats composed of native flora and fauna.

1. *Maintain and enhance the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the preserve.*
2. *Support a greater understanding of the preserve's species, habitats, and natural processes.*

## IV. B. Stewardship Tasks for Ecological Resources

### 1. *Protection of priority habitats and species*

A complete list of the property's priority habitats and species, as defined by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), is found in Appendix A. Additional noteworthy features, such as seasonal streams, and protected or uncommon species, may also be afforded the following special protections and guidance:

- Signage denoting use restrictions or areas closed for habitat protection and restoration.
- Directing public use away from sensitive areas.
- Use of plant protectors, cages, and/or fencing to provide protection from trampling and predation.
- Careful evaluation of potential negative impacts on priority habitats and species prior to and during restoration, site enhancement, and maintenance activities.
- Careful selection of soil and native plant species for building site rehabilitation that is ecologically compatible with the site.
- Identification of special management zones:  
The thin soils and rare habitat of the east facing mosaic of rocky balds are particularly sensitive to impacts associated with public use. This has been identified as a special management zone (Figure 5) with the aim of allowing limited pedestrian-only recreational access to minimize impacts on these sensitive areas. Additional management techniques such as signage and low split-rail fencing will be implemented to discourage travel off trail through these sensitive zones. 34 acres along the northern ridgeline and western cliffs and basin have been set aside as natural areas with no public access as a measure to protect wildlife habitat and natural features.

## 2. *Control of invasive species*

Invasive species pose a serious threat to native species and habitats. Baseline inventory of noxious weeds on the property has already been conducted. Noxious weeds that may dominate habitats are of particular concern. Control efforts will be focused in areas of greatest ecological priority and vulnerability, and where methods have the greatest chance of success. Manual and mechanical control will be the preferred methods, with biological controls and herbicide use carefully considered on a case by case basis. Less is known about invasive pests and disease, but monitoring for occurrence of unknown or unusual species and/or conditions will help detect early occurrences and develop potential responses.

Specific actions will include:

- Cooperation with the County Noxious Weed Board and other agencies to monitor and control priority weeds.
- Manual removal of invasive plants including, Scot's broom, spurge laurel, tansy ragwort, Himalayan and evergreen blackberry, hairy cat's ear, herb Robert, bull thistle, and Canada thistle.
- Control of English hawthorn and holly by cutting, removal, and painted application of herbicide to cut stem.
- Regular observation and including surveys for new infestations as part of annual Preserve monitoring program.

## 3. *Maintenance and enhancement of savanna and rocky bald ecological communities*

Grassland and savannah habitats are generally regarded as one of the most imperiled terrestrial habitats in our region. Much of the historic extent of prairie and savannah within the Preserve is undergoing conversion to woodland and/or coniferous forest. Stewardship tasks will focus on maintenance of the existing extent of grassland and protection and enhancement of habitat surrounding individual specimens of old growth Douglas fir, big-leaf maple and Garry oak.

Specific tasks may include:

- Professional assessment and prioritization of activities promoting protection and enhancement of grassland and savanna habitats.
- Annual monitoring and/or survey of native grassland plant communities.
- Control and manual removal of Douglas fir, shrubs and other woody plants threatening conversion of grassland areas and/or crowding out individual old growth Douglas fir, Garry oak, or other significant trees or shrubs.
- Use of prescribed fire to help maintain the health, diversity, and structure of the savanna and rocky bald communities as well as reduce risks of catastrophic wildfire.
- Restoration of native wildflowers and grasses.
- Exploring use of deer hunting in collaboration with WDFW, Preservation Trust, researchers, and other interested parties to help reduce impacts of herbivory and enhance the health and vigor of deer populations.

## 4. *Maintain woodland health*

Soil structure, plant communities, veteran Douglas fir structure, and slope aspect indicate much of the preserve that is currently forested area once had a more open character. Infill from colonizing young Douglas fir has resulted in a more closed canopy and loss of plant diversity. It is unlikely and perhaps undesirable that the entirety of these former woodland areas be restored to prior conditions but the overall health, diversity, and resilience of woodland areas can be improved through limbing, thinning, and removal of trees accompanied by the protection and outplanting of native plants species in an effort to promote structural and biological diversity. Prescribed fire may provide additional benefits in conjunction with these activities.

Activities may include:

- Professional assessment and prioritization of activities promoting protection and enhancement of woodland habitats.
- Limbing and thinning dense stands of trees.
- Consideration of small scale, manual timber harvest to help offset costs and efficiently manage biomass.
- Seed collection of native plants.
- Propagation of native plants.
- Outplanting native plants to encourage diversity.
- Use of prescribed fire to help maintain the health, diversity, and structure of the woodland communities and reduce risks of catastrophic wildfire.
- Exploring use of deer hunting in collaboration with WDFW, Preservation Trust, researchers, and other interested parties to help reduce impacts of herbivory and enhance the health and vigor of deer populations.

##### 5. *Maintain forest health*

Forested areas within the Preserve have varied structure, primarily a result of past land use activities including logging and grazing. Some of the forested areas within the Preserve are characterized by dense, young stands of Douglas fir with little or no understory plants. Approximately 30 acres of the Preserve's forests were logged in the last quarter century. Encouraging stand diversity in these areas as they regenerate through protection and outplanting of native plants could provide increased resilience as a whole. The overall health, diversity, and resilience of forested areas can be improved through forestry management activities, possibly in conjunction with prescribed burning.

Activities may include:

- Professional assessment and prioritization of activities promoting protection and enhancement of forest habitats
- Limbing and thinning dense stands of trees
- Consideration of small scale, manual timber harvest to help offset costs and efficiently manage biomass
- Seed collection of native plants
- Propagation of native plants
- Outplanting native plants to encourage diversity
- Use of prescribed fire to help maintain the health, diversity, and structure of the forest communities and reduce risks of catastrophic wildfire

- Maintaining existing resource management road networks within forested areas in the SE and western portions of the Preserve to provide access for forestry management and creation of fuel breaks for fire control
- Exploring use of deer hunting in collaboration with WDFW, Preservation Trust, researchers, and other interested parties to help reduce impacts of herbivory and enhance the health and vigor of deer populations

#### 6. *Building resilience to impacts from climate change*

Uncertainty of how climate change impacts will unfold necessitates taking into consideration a range of potential future conditions. Careful monitoring, protection of native plants with an emphasis on biodiversity, reducing likelihood and impact of large scale disturbance such as catastrophic wildfire, and preparing response strategies for large scale disturbance are appropriate actions for management of ecological resources. The following specific actions will assist in building resilience to impacts from climate change.

- Create monitoring protocols to help evaluate changes in plant communities over time, including presence and expansion of invasive species (see monitoring below)
- Maintain and increase biodiversity of Preserve through protection and outplanting of diverse assemblages of native species
- Protection actions might include fencing or caging individual or groups of plants, thinning and/or outright removal of plants and trees, and control of invasive species
- Preserve local genetic diversity of plant populations by focusing seed collection, propagation, and planting of native species from regional stock as appropriate
- Work with partner agencies, organizations, and private landowners on an ecosystem level to further monitor changes over time and implement response and adaptation strategies which build ecosystem resilience
- Exploring use of deer hunting in collaboration with WDFW, Preservation Trust, researchers, and other interested parties to help reduce impacts of herbivory and enhance the health and vigor of deer populations

#### 7. *Education and research*

The Land Bank will encourage a better understanding of the Preserves' ecological resources through cooperation with the Preservation Trust, San Juan Islands Terrestrial Managers consortium, local schools, universities, scientists, and interest groups. Educational and research activities on the property will be conducted on a permission-only basis, and may be limited in size or duration.

Specific actions may include:

- Sponsoring, leading, or permitting small group guided natural history walks.
- Conservation and science-based education field trips
- Collaborating with researchers from private, local, state and federal agencies, local schools, universities, volunteers, and other researchers
- Interpretive signage on the Preserve's natural history and any habitat restoration activities

#### 8. *Restriction of uses*

See Appendix D, Preserve Rules and Restrictions of Use.

## IV. B. Monitoring Protocols for Ecological Resources

High priority ecological features on the Preserve may be monitored to help evaluate stewardship policies and resource health.

### 1. *Ecological Assessments*

Ecological assessments were completed for the “Lawson Ridge” portion of the Preserve in 2017 and the “Uzpurvis” property in 2014. The Land Bank, Preservation Trust, San Juan Islands Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society, San Juan Nature Institute, as well as independent and university researchers have contributed to biological inventories. The assessments will serve as a baseline against which to measure suspected changes or impacts on the natural features of the land. Updated, revised, or supplementary assessments will be conducted periodically or as specific needs arise.

### 2. *Restoration Monitoring*

Qualitative and quantitative monitoring protocols specific to restoration activities will be developed separately and will address specific needs related to restoration activities.

### 3. *Regular Monitoring*

Land Bank staff, volunteers, and partner organizations regularly visit the Preserves and inspect the condition of ecological resources as well as engage public in interpretation and conduct related to them. Special consideration will be given to trampling and collection of species in prairie, balds, and savanna habitats.

### 4. *Annual Preserve Monitoring*

Land Bank staff conducts a detailed annual monitoring of all Preserves to observe and document the condition of the Preserve infrastructure, boundaries, and conservation resources. Annual Preserve monitoring provides the baseline information for development of the subsequent yearly work plan in concert with review of this management plan.

### 5. *Photo-monitoring*

Photo-monitoring (landscape photographs shot from permanent, relocatable locations on the property) will be established to provide a visual record of trends and changes over time. More detailed photo-monitoring will document restoration activities.

Additional research will be encouraged and other monitoring developed as needs emerge.

## V. Public Access

Providing access and enjoyment to the beauty and diversity of the San Juan Islands is a priority for the Land Bank. Mount Grant is a unique and high profile project as it provides recreational opportunities that are otherwise unavailable on San Juan Island. Low-intensity recreational access for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians was a primary goal of acquisition in addition to providing driving access to the summit where accessible trails and facilities provide people of all abilities the opportunity to enjoy the Preserve's natural beauty and stunning vistas. Views from the summit across the forests, valleys, and farmlands of San Juan Island stretch to distant islands, mountain ranges, and waterways, providing context and sense of place unparalleled on the island.

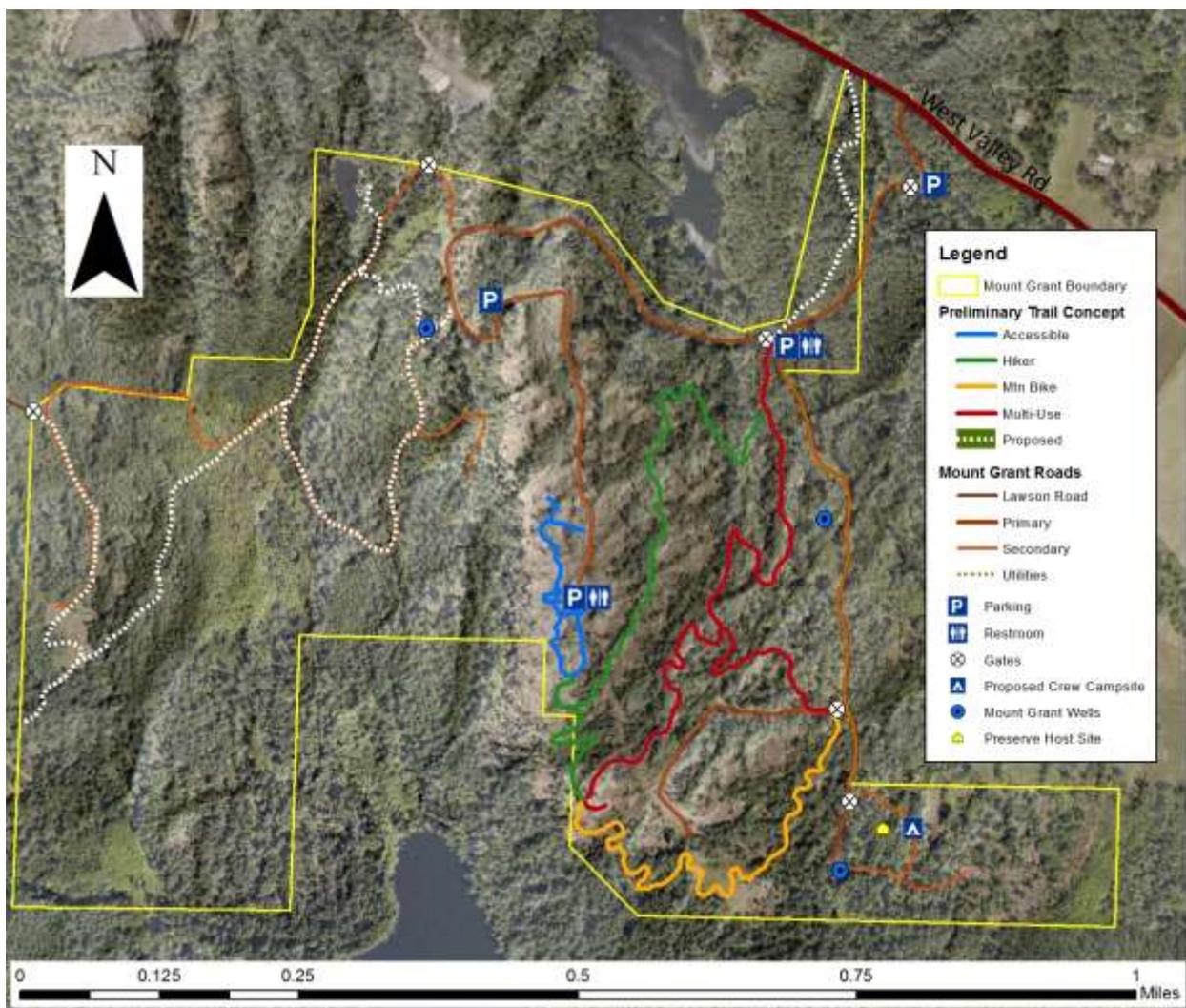


Figure 6 – Mount Grant Public Access Concept

As regional population is growing and tourism has become a more central part of the islands' economy, greater recreational pressure is being placed on public lands. Given the ease of access afforded by the driving access, it is anticipated the Preserve will have use levels comparatively

higher than most other Land Bank Preserves. While the Land Bank is committed to providing public access, we also remain committed to maintaining a more informal, rustic, and recreational experience with an emphasis on managing first for the protection of ecological resources. This is primarily achieved by keeping recreational development to a minimum, restricting size and location of parking areas, and careful consideration of allowed recreational uses including special events.

The Land Bank has worked with local trail enthusiasts including the San Juan Island Trails Committee to design a network of trails for Mount Grant (Figure 6). Trails will be developed to serve hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and people with disabilities. Formal trail development will be focused along the eastern flank of Mount Grant. Non-motorized access along an old roadbed on the west side which has been enjoyed by neighbors for generations will be continued.

Additional trails under consideration on the western side of the Preserve include access to the pond in the northwest corner and connection with an existing neighborhood trail system to the west (Figure 6). These and any other developments on the newer acquisitions will require completion of an ecological assessment prior to implementation. The Town of Friday Harbor has granted a short trail easement on the south shoulder of Mount Grant to provide a sustainable trail connection to the summit area.

While equestrian use is a goal for this Preserve, there is uncertainty about the ability to develop trailhead parking suitable for trucks and trailers. Currently most equestrian use of the Preserve is by people who live and/or board horses nearby. Trail designs will take into consideration continuance of these access points and the Land Bank will look for opportunities for trailhead facilities suitable for equestrians.

Lingering to enjoy views at the summit encourages other low intensity pursuits such as picnicking and watching wildlife. Additional recreational development to support these activities and reduce impacts on surrounding natural areas includes picnic tables, benches, a shelter, and interpretive facilities. With the emphasis on accessibility provided by driving access to the summit, all of these elements should be designed, installed, and maintained to meet U.S. Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) to the extent practicable. Opportunities for interpretive facilities which have been identified are described in greater detail below. Other interpretive facilities will be considered as opportunities arise over time.

Building sites, roads, and other infrastructure were created as part of the Lawson Ridge development. Site enhancements for recreational access, including existing or proposed roads, trails, picnic shelter, and viewing areas, take advantage of portions of this infrastructure. Building sites and other areas impacted by development, within and outside the recreational use areas, will be rehabilitated to improve aesthetics of the site and ecological function.

A small pond located at the northwest corner of the Preserve has been enjoyed as swimming hole since its creation in the 1960s. Swimming will be permitted at users own risk. Access for swimming may be closed at the discretion of Land Bank staff for protection of natural resources or health and safety issues.

Lacking pressure of natural predators and an abundance of managed landscapes in the islands, Columbia black-tail deer are arguably over-abundant, which can have impacts on the biological diversity, vigor, and health of ecosystems. In addition, the ability to hunt deer has diminished over time due to development. The remote nature of the western portion of the preserve might provide opportunity for providing islanders with opportunity to continue the recreational and cultural tradition of hunting while simultaneously providing some ecological benefits. A 100-foot buffer between adjacent private lands and the proposed hunting area will be included. Hunting will be managed allowing for changes or cessation of the activity to meet overall goals for Preserve management.

#### V. A. Objectives for Public Access

1. *Maintain the capacity for safe, low-intensity access that does not detract from its outstanding aesthetic and natural characteristics, including opportunities for driving access to the summit, hiking mountain biking, equestrian, and accessible trails.*
2. *Create opportunities for accessible infrastructure including trails, viewpoints, restrooms, parking, and other facilities.*
3. *Maintain an appropriate level of use, protecting conservation resources and neighborhood character, and ensuring that each visitor has opportunity for a quality experience.*
4. *Maintain Preserve infrastructure, including roads, parking, trails, signage, restroom, benches, picnic tables, and shelter, in safe, attractive, and functional manner.*
5. *Explore alternatives for pedestrian access and connectivity with other Land Bank Preserves and other private and public lands.*
6. *Provide opportunity for foraging native plants and fungi for personal consumption.*
7. *Explore opportunity for ecologically managed deer hunting on western part of preserve.*

#### V. B. Stewardship Tasks for Public Access

##### 1. *Controlling level of use*

Maintaining an appropriate level of use will be essential to preserving special qualities of the Preserve. Because use levels are expected to be higher than other Land Bank Preserves. The following approaches will be used to moderate impacts associated with level of use

- Thoughtful design and construction of parking areas to convey appropriate expectations for the Preserve experience
- Limited facilities and level of development to discourage unwanted activities.
- Limiting driving access to summit to certain days of week (see “Driving Access” section below)
- Enforcement of special event policy

- Use of barriers (natural vegetation, split rail fencing, etc.) and signage to reduce trampling and focus recreational access
- Application of best management practices for trail design, construction, and maintenance to reduce current and future impacts associated with public access
- Discourage overexposure and promotion of the Preserve as a primary tourist destination

## 2. *Preserve Parking and Trailheads*

Three designated parking areas are envisioned for Mount Grant Preserve, referred to in this plan as base, mid-mountain, and summit. Two of the formal parking areas will have one ADA accessible parking space sited to provide easy access to trailhead and interpretive signage and restroom facilities.

The base parking area will be open to daytime public access on a daily basis. Initially this will be developed to provide parking for ten vehicles, but up to two additional spaces may be constructed if necessary.

The mid-mountain parking area is intended to be used when driving access to the summit is open, but may also be opened for daily use. Initially, mid-mountain parking will provide parking for up to eight vehicles, with the potential to add up to four parking spaces if necessary.

Initially, the summit parking will be enhanced to provide parking for up to 10 vehicles, with the potential to add up to five additional spaces if necessary. The accessible parking space at the summit will also be sited to provide landscape and wildlife viewing opportunities directly from a vehicle to benefit people with severe physical limitations.

Informal parking will be allowed for up to two oversize vehicles such as shuttle vans and multi-function school activity buses up to 30 feet in length at the end of High Pass Lane for special events (see Section 9, Special Events for details) on days when driving access is open to the summit. For days when driving access is not open, this option as well as summit parking will be available. Additional undeveloped roadside parking will provide for overflow parking. Critical passing zones will be signed “No Parking – Passing Zone” to prevent blocking traffic flow.

Tasks for the maintenance and enhancement of parking include:

- Consulting with landscape architect and/or civil engineering firm for parking and trailhead concept and/or design
- Identification of parking and trailhead locations able to accommodate designs compatible with U.S. Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines
- Identification of informal roadside parking opportunities as well as critical passing zones where parking should not be permitted
- Development of parking and trailhead in collaboration with County Public Works and/or private contractors
- Development of a road maintenance and repair schedule in collaboration with County Public Works and/or private consultant(s)
- Regular inspection of parking facilities for safety and hazards

- Annual inspection for maintenance and repair of parking and trailhead infrastructure
- Concept development, fabrication, and installation of trailhead interpretive and directional signage material
- Consideration of trash and recycling facilities if necessary

### 3. *Driving Access*

Providing driving access to the summit was one of the primary public access goals for the acquisition of Mount Grant. The suitability of driving access was reviewed by Boundary Water Engineering and San Juan County Public Works and determined to be sufficient for anticipated use levels. Identification and maintenance of road infrastructure will be important including:

- Storm water facilities including ditches, culverts, and shoulder drainage
- Posting traffic control and warning signage including speed limits, non-motorized uses, restrictions on oversize vehicles, and reflective markers along steep embankments
- Identifying and signing designated passing zones

During the acquisition campaign and subsequent scoping meeting, feedback was received to impose some limits to driving access to provide some opportunities for visitors to experience the Preserve without vehicular traffic. Limiting driving access may also have the side benefits of decreasing management obligations and helping decrease ecological impacts associated with numbers of visitors. The following policies will be used to manage driving access:

- Driving access will be permitted *up to* three days per week. The initial plan is to provide driving access two days per week during summer months and one day per week during the winter months. The third day would be reserved for potential of opening on holidays or to provide for an increase in frequency to better serve public interest
- Driving access may be open additional days to provide access during holidays or events
- Driving access will be permitted during daylight hours with specific open hours posted seasonally at the gate. Limited driving access may be permitted for special events during days or times that the road is otherwise not generally open, including evenings
- Driving access is contingent on road and weather conditions and is subject to closure at the discretion of the Land Bank staff members or appointees. This may include preemptive closure based on interpretation of weather forecasts
- Vehicles longer than 24 feet, over 7 feet in height, or towing trailers are prohibited. Shuttle vans or multi-function school activity buses may be granted permission in advance if associated with special events
- Special permission for driving access may be granted to individuals or groups at the discretion of the Land Bank or Preservation Trust
- Other rules governing driving access will be adopted as the Land Bank gains more experience in managing this activity

#### 4. *Trails Concept*

The Mount Grant trail concept makes provisions for four trail types: multi-use, hiking only, mountain biking only, and accessible trails. The hiking only route climbs steeply along a natural bench providing quick access to vistas as well as opportunities to enjoy a variety of habitats and diverse spring wildflower displays. This trail is located in a special management zone which emphasizes protection of natural resources, restricting use to pedestrians only (see Section III, Ecological Resources for more details).

A mountain bike specific trail is proposed along the southern portion of the property. The concept for this trail is to provide a descent-only route which is targeted towards intermediate-advanced cross-country mountain bikers. All electric bicycles are restricted to paved roadways only, but can be used on paved roadways when other motorized access is not permitted. The summit area has already benefited from initial trail improvements designed to improve accessibility, but will be expanded to approximately a quarter mile of trail meeting U.S. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG).

A trail designed to be shared by hikers, bikers, and equestrians climbs a longer and less steep route, playfully explores the mountain's rocky terrain before opening to vistas during the final climb to the summit.

At the time of publication, the Land Bank has had ownership of the land making up the northwestern part of the preserve for a short time. Existing roads will be maintained for resource management purposes and access will be permitted for pedestrians, equestrians, and mountain bikes. Forthcoming ecological assessments of these properties will be used to evaluate any trail or other proposed recreational developments in this area including the two conceptual trail alignments shown in Figure 6.

Specific tasks for trail development and maintenance include:

- Collaborating with San Juan Island Trails committee and other volunteers on design, layout, construction, maintenance, and enhancement of trails
- Layout, construction, and repair of trails according to sustainable trail design principles
- Annual clearing of organic material from trail surface
- Smoothing and grading to facilitate drainage and discourage erosion
- Trimming and brushing vegetation
- Evaluation and mitigation of hazards.
- Clearing downed trees, limbs, and other natural disturbances
- Reducing to the extent practicable the amount of water and wet area crossing features including puncheons, turnpikes, and bridges
- Annual evaluation of trail condition as part of annual Preserve monitoring
- Collaborating with the Town of Friday for continued access and maintenance needs on the trail easement on the south side of Mount Grant

## 5. *Restrooms*

Two ADA accessible single vault style restroom facilities are proposed for Mount Grant to be located at two of the three formal parking areas. Restrooms will be sited to be least intrusive within the natural landscape and screened with vegetation to the extent practicable.

Specific tasks related to development, operation, and maintenance of restroom include:

- Siting and design to meet accessibility requirements
- Regular monitoring, cleaning, and maintenance of restroom for health and safety  
This may include continuing contracting with private or public entities
- Soliciting contractors to pump vault annually or as necessary
- Physical maintenance of structure including painting, hardware maintenance, etc.

## 6. *Picnic Shelter and Viewing Areas*

The summit area is an obvious destination point for visitors to Mount Grant Preserve. Careful observation of use trends has revealed a tendency for people to seek shelter from sun, wind, and rain while resting and enjoying views. In addition to the picnic shelter, several natural viewing areas exist in the summit area. These might be further defined to enhance visitor experience with interpretive information and resting areas as well as protect ecological resources. Development of a shelter and these viewing areas would enhance recreational resources as well as mitigate impacts from people venturing off trail in search of natural shelter and viewing areas.

Maintenance and management actions related to the shelter include:

- Work with landscape architect to site and design a structures appropriately scaled for the Preserve and meet federal FSORAG guidelines
- Shelter will be sited to blend in with surrounding environment, to the extent practicable, with careful attention that it not obstruct views
- Work with San Juan County Community Development to secure any necessary permits
- Work with volunteers and/or contractors to construct facility
- Inspection of structural integrity and need for repairs or upgrades as part of the annual monitoring
- Regular monitoring visits to inspect for hazards and maintenance needs

## 7. *Building Site Rehabilitation*

Rehabilitation activities under consideration include naturalizing twelve building sites, portions of driveways to serve the building sites, utilities, and identifying what water system infrastructure is needed to serve Preserve management activities. Rehabilitation will be prioritized for preserve infrastructure such as parking, viewing/interpretive areas, preserve host site, and other public access infrastructure. Highly visible and accessible recreational sites or any sites which represent an ongoing impact to ecological resources will be the second priority. Any remaining sites will be considered a lower priority. Tasks associated with site rehabilitation include:

- Identification and prioritization of rehabilitation sites

- Identifying rehabilitation activities for each site including grading, contouring, excavation, importing soil, rock work, selecting site appropriate native plants, seeding and/or outplanting selected plants
- Maintenance of rehabilitation zones may include fencing and signage to restrict access while plantings and soil stabilize
- Work may be conducted in-house, in conjunction with conservation corps crews, volunteers, contractors, or some hybrid of all methods

#### 8. *Fencing*

Fencing and/or gates at access points to adjacent privately-owned lands may be desirable. In particular private lands located north of the Preserve have industrial activities that the public should be discouraged from accessing. The Land Bank will work with adjacent private land owners to identify potential areas for fencings and/or gates, determine the type of fencing, and determine responsibility for fence construction and maintenance

Split rail fencing will also be employed at the summit and other areas to direct visitors away from sensitive habitat

Fencing line item in financial analysis is based on rough estimate of \$10/lineal foot of fencing including installation. Fencing associated with trails is shown separately from boundary fencing

#### 9. *Special Events*

In order to reduce impacts on ecological resources and provide a quality experience for all Preserve visitors, the Land Bank has restrictions on special events such as weddings or group outings with greater than fifteen people (Appendix E). Private special events are not permitted at Mount Grant Preserve. Special events with school groups, the senior center, non-profit organizations, or similar groups will be permitted with the following stipulations:

- Events allow minimal, portable infrastructure, with no electrification or sound amplification
- Maximum length of four hours, and a party size not to exceed fifty people
- No portion of the Preserve will be excluded or specially set aside for events as Preserves remain open to the public during special events
- If event occurs during open public driving access day only one summit parking space may be used. Parking at the top of High Pass Lane or use of commercial shuttle transportation may be permitted if prearranged (Figure 3)

Additional rules for special events, including the maximum number of events permitted per week/month will be developed over time as we gain more experience with managing this activity at this Preserve. The Land Bank reserves the possibility of discontinuing special events if the activities prove overburdening to visitors, ecological resources, or otherwise unmanageable.

See Appendix E for more details on Land Bank Special Event policies.

#### 10. *Foraging and Collection of Biological Material*

Foraging for plants and fungi has been a staple of island life from the first inhabitants through to today. In general the Land Bank has a policy prohibiting the collection of biological specimens. In practice modest amounts of mushrooms, berries, nettles, and other plants are collected by islanders in these Preserves. Rather than an outright ban on foraging, the following actions and policies will guide the sustainable collection of plant and fungi within the Preserves:

- Foraging is for personal consumption
- Commercial use, including gifting to commercial operations such as restaurants, is prohibited
- Only edible fruits, nuts, berries, nettles, and fruiting bodies of mushrooms may be collected using sustainable practices
- Collection of flowers, bulbs, tubers, or entirety of living plant is prohibited
- Maximum of three species of mushroom collected per day is permitted
- Maximum total limit per person is one quart per day and/or two quarts per week  
Limits do not apply to non-native weed species including Himalayan or evergreen blackberry and Mayweed chamomile
- Collection of biological material for any other purposes, including research, requires written permission from the Land Bank

### *11. Hunting*

The Land Bank is interested in exploring deer hunting on the more remote portions of the western part of the Preserve to continue a local recreational and cultural tradition, while simultaneously providing some ecological benefits. The following tasks will be used to explore, and if appropriate, implement this activity:

- Researching history of hunting in this area by previous land owners, neighbors, and other community members
- Conducting research on ecological role of deer including impacts from overpopulation
- Work with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Preservation Trust, researchers and local hunters to explore management options which would help provide for safe and sustainable hunting practices
- Consideration of restricting types of hunting, number of hunters, times or days of hunting, or length of season
- If hunting is permitted, providing appropriate notice to visitors by way of signage and other outreach regarding timing and duration of hunting activities
- Creating a 100' buffer between private lands and the proposed hunting zones
- Managing the activity adaptively including the ability to cease the activity if it proves unsafe, unmanageable, or causing undesirable ecological impacts.

### *12. Directional Signage*

The Land Bank relies on signage to inform visitors of rules and expectations for use as well as to provide orientation and guidance on trails, roads, and public use areas. For most Preserves a single sign greets visitors at trailheads or as they enter Preserves. These typically feature a map, a description of the Preserve and its conservation value, and a synopsis of rules and expectations. A County road sign for Richard Lee Lane has a small sign at the top directing visitors to Mount Grant. A larger, more visible sign may be desirable, but

placement within the county right-of-way and/or on adjacent private land will require collaboration with Public Works and adjoining property owners. Additional directional signage is used thoughtfully and sparingly within the Preserve to provide direction such as identifying hazards, closed areas, property boundaries or information on trails and other recreational resources.

Specific actions may include:

- Signing property boundaries, road junctions, or other key locations to direct users to appropriate areas and discourage trespass onto neighboring private lands
- Posting speed limits and other vehicular safety and information signage
- Design and installation of directional signs showing the location of trails, parking, boundaries, public use guidelines, and other features
- Collaborating with Public Works and/or neighboring land owners on entry/directional signage from West Valley Road

### *13. Outreach, Interpretation, and Education*

The Land Bank has a general policy of letting the Preserves wild and natural character remain untarnished. Signage is kept to a minimum, generally grouped together, and thoughtfully placed to fit into the landscape to the extent possible. The Land Bank lacks capacity to provide regular interpretive programs on its Preserves, but occasionally leads walks or lectures, alone or in collaboration with outside groups and/or experts.

Interpretive signage can be useful in helping connect people with the landscape and the Preserve's important conservation values, but is weighed carefully against ecological impacts, aesthetic impacts, and the costs associated with sign and content development, fabrication, installation, and maintenance.

Specific interpretive signs planned for Mount Grant Preserve include:

- a. Lawson Family history and early San Juan Islands homesteading
- b. Recognition of the individual donors and community fundraising effort led by the San Juan Preservation Trust and numerous volunteers
- c. Geographical context identifying significant landmarks visible from Mount Grant
- d. Significance of Trout Lake watershed in providing potable water for the Town of Friday Harbor
- e. Environmental interpretation and natural resource management signage may be developed over time to provide information on the ecological, geological, or historical resources and stewardship activities

Other actions for actions for outreach, education, and interpretation are:

- Collaborate with partner organizations including members of the Stewardship Network of the San Juans and the San Juan Islands Terrestrial Managers group to develop interpretive material for signage and other applications
- Collaborate with San Juan Terrestrial Managers group, San Juan Islands Stewardship Network, universities, schools, and non-profit groups to provide outreach, interpretation and educational programs within Land Bank Preserves

- Pursue grant funding to support development of interpretive and education materials including content, graphics, artwork, and fabrication

#### 14. *Maintenance*

Maintenance of the Preserve and infrastructure will be undertaken by Land Bank staff, volunteers, and contractors. These activities might include:

- Trail maintenance including trimming vegetation, installation of drainage features, rehabilitation of tread, and clearing downed trees
- Upkeep and replacement of signage
- Removal of litter
- Noxious weed removal
- Maintenance woody vegetation within the view easement area
- Other tasks as needed

#### 15. *Volunteer Preserve Stewards*

Volunteer stewards are an important component of the Land Bank’s stewardship. Stewards help the Land Bank meet its stewardship goals through regular visits to the property to observe its condition and level of use, and may also be involved in maintenance, visitor education, invasive species control, monitoring, and other stewardship activities.

#### 16. *Leave No Trace*

Leave No Trace is a set of outdoor ethics promoting conservation in the outdoors developed and promoted by the nonprofit group “Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.” The San Juan Islands Terrestrial Managers Group, a consortium of public and private land managers, worked with Leave No Trace to refine their seven principles for the unique environment of the San Juan archipelago. On April 26, 2016, the San Juan County Council become the first local government in the nation to formally adopt the following principles.

1. *Plan Ahead and Prepare*
2. *Stick to Trails and Camp Overnight Right*
3. *Trash Your Trash and Pick Up Poop*
4. *Leave It as You Find It*
5. *Be Careful with Fire*
6. *Keep Wildlife Wild*
7. *Be Considerate of Other Visitors*

See Appendix F, Leave No Trace for full text of principles.

#### 17. *Restriction of uses*

See Appendix D, Preserve Rules and Restrictions of Use.

### V. C. *Monitoring Protocols for Public Access*

The most important issues to monitor are the level of public use and any resultant impacts on Preserve infrastructure, access road and the conservation values of the Preserve. To help

determine appropriate use levels, the Land Bank will rely on feedback from volunteer stewards, interested citizens and neighbors, and information from ecological monitoring protocols. The following protocols will also be used:

1. *Car counters and trail monitors.*

These tools may be used to track the number of people accessing the Preserve over time.

2. *Use surveys.*

Volunteers or students may be solicited to conduct survey studies of use during specific and/or random periods to help determine level of use, user experience and expectations, and compliance with use guidelines.

3. *Photo-monitoring*

Photo-monitoring (landscape photographs shot from permanent, relocatable locations on the property) have been established to provide a visual record of trends and changes over time. More detailed photo-monitoring will document restoration activities. Photographs will be retaken once every ten years as part of the Land Bank's stewardship and management plan review and update process.

4. *Regular Monitoring*

Land Bank staff, volunteers, and partner organizations regularly visit the Preserves and inspect the condition of recreational resources and infrastructure, as well as engage public in interpretation and conduct related to them.

5. *Annual Preserve Monitoring*

Land Bank staff conducts a detailed annual monitoring of all Preserves to observe and document the condition of the Preserve infrastructure, boundaries, and conservation resources. Annual Preserve monitoring provides the baseline information for development of the subsequent years work plan in concert with review of this management plan.