



Banking on the Future

It's a great pleasure for me to present you with your Land Bank's 2018 annual report. Reading over the report always reminds me how lucky I feel to live here, and also to be part of the effort to preserve some of the best parts of the Islands as natural, public open space.

FROM THE CHAIR

As you'll see in the pages that follow, The Land Bank has had a very good year for land conservation, with major land purchases and preserve openings across the islands. We're also taking care of the land. Together with our friends at the San Juan Preservation Trust and with the Youth Conservation Corps and volunteer groups, we're working to improve Garry oak habitat, native plant populations, and salmon spawning streams.

With the economy looking up and our population growing, we're looking ahead toward our future. The County's Comprehensive Plan review is gauging how much growth we might expect to see over the next twenty years. To me, it's a comfort to know that for each lot bought, each new house built, each new family, there's also a one-time investment in the purchase and permanent protection of the places that make our home so special—the natural environment and open space we all share.

I invite you to join us in our work and celebration: visit us on our website (sjclandbank.org) or Facebook page, or attend one of our monthly public meetings.

Brian Wiese,
Land Bank
Commission Chair

brian_wiese@outlook.com

PLEASE TALK WITH ME OR
YOUR OTHER LAND BANK
COMMISSIONERS ABOUT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND
PROTECTION, JOIN VOLUNTEER
STEWARDS IN THE PRESERVES,
OR JUST GET OUT THERE AND
ENJOY YOUR PUBLIC LANDS. I
HOPE I'LL SEE YOU THERE!

Brian



Zylstra Lake, San Juan Island

In late 2015, the Land Bank and the non-profit San Juan Preservation Trust purchased Zylstra Lake, a 285-acre tract in San Juan Valley. Long coveted because of the large lake, expansive fields and proximity to existing conserved farmlands, the organizations made a big leap of faith, closing with \$2.7 million still owed to the seller.

The work began to secure grant funding, both from federal and state government sources for the purposes of conserving the wildlife and riparian areas and to provide a recreational opportunity to the County's residents. The partnership was successful on both counts and paid off the debt a year early in 2017. As with Mount Grant Preserve on San Juan Island and Turtleback Mountain Preserve on Orcas Island, Zylstra Lake Preserve will be owned and managed by the Land Bank, and the San Juan Preservation Trust will hold a conservation easement on it. Look for upcoming events as we begin our process to map out how the property will be managed both for nature and people.



Zylstra Lake outfall to False Bay Creek.

photo: christerenphotography.com

Mount Grant Preserve Addition, San Juan Island

The end of the year was busy with acquisitions. In December the Land Bank was able to secure an additional nearly 70 acres adjacent to Mount Grant, growing the Preserve to almost 250 acres. The 38-acre area acquired north of the Preserve provides access to the lower portion of Mount Grant, aiding in the ecological management and stewardship of the land. The three 10-acre parcels acquired to the west are within the Trout Lake watershed and will help protect the Town's water supply. This purchase will also preserve part of the stunning view from the summit to the west. Additionally, the Town of Friday Harbor donated a trail easement to provide an overlook of Trout Lake.

"Mount Grant is one of the most fascinating projects I have worked on since becoming a Land Bank Commissioner," said Amanda Azous. "The people and land connections forged by our community on behalf of Mount Grant have far exceeded our hopes. I relish that we have protected valuable native forests and wildflower meadows as well as incomparable views we can all enjoy."

Sun rising over San Juan Valley.



Misty mountain morning.



Sunset Acres, Lopez Island

The Land Bank kicked off 2017 with the acquisition of 800 feet of beach and tidelands located immediately south of the Land Bank's Tombolo Preserve and north of the County's Otis Perkins Day Park. Views from the property extend across the channel to San Juan and Turn Islands, over to Shaw and up to Turtleback Mountain. The Sunset Acres Owners Association sold the property to the Land Bank at a generously discounted price of \$2,000 because they believed that Otis and Eleanor Perkins, previous owners, would have wanted its beauty to be shared with the people of Lopez. Now a long, continuous stretch of accessible public beach is available to enjoy forever.



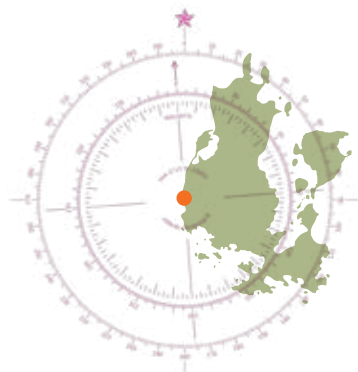
Springtime along the newest piece of the Tombolo Preserve.



Lopez Channel Preserve, Lopez Island

In June, the Land Bank acquired roughly 9.5 acres fronting on San Juan Channel on the west side of the island. The purchase conserves the last two lots with good access to that part of the shore and hosts roughly 465 feet of sandy beach. While the Preserve is not yet open, the public eventually will be able to also access nearly 1.3 miles of existing public tidelands (below the mean high water line) currently only reachable by boat.

We are presently assessing the ecological attributes of the property's forest and bluff areas, and the extended shoreline, in order to craft an approach to managing the site that marries protection of the resource with allowing public use.



Peek-a-boo view of Turtleback Mountain Preserve through the trees at Lopez Channel Preserve.



Youth Conservation Corps Highlights:

Islanders created the Land Bank to ensure the rich and unique character of our islands endures into the future. As part of that commitment, your Land Bank participates in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) of the San Juan Islands, a local program that engages youth ages 12-18 in land stewardship and education. Last summer, 50 YCC participants assisted Land Bank stewards on Orcas, Lopez, and San Juan Island with diverse projects including forest inventory, trail work, and native seed collection. By introducing today's youth to natural resource management in their communities, we lay a path for the next generation to care for our islands' special places.

GROWING STEWARDSHIP

Lopez Island and Coast Salish Youth Conservation Corps taking water samples at Hummel Lake Preserve. These samples kick off a new program monitoring the health of the sphagnum bog, the largest in San Juan County.



Labrador Tea



Orcas Preserve Steward, Ruthie Dougherty shows the Orcas Island Youth Conservation Corps the now open corridors where dusky wing butterflies travel between oak trees to lay their eggs.

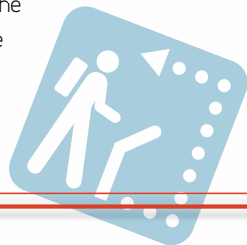


Along Mount Grant Preserve's summit, San Juan Island Youth Conservation Corps participants observe the Cinnabar moth larvae atop tansy ragwort. The grayish-black moths with red patches on the wings were introduced as a biological control of this noxious weed. photo: Erin Licata

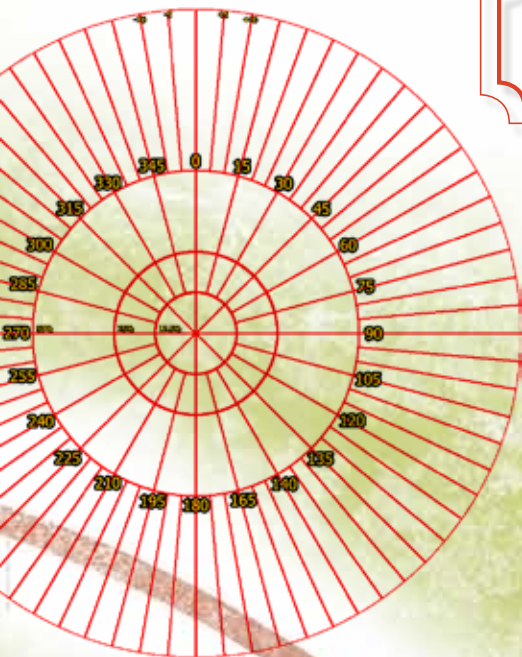


Land Bank Highlights

2017 was a busy and exciting year for your Land Bank, including many inaugural events. Here's a look back at some of the highlights of the year: places, people, and wildlife at the heart of our public lands.



LAND BANK PROJECTS



Orcas Middle School Farm to Classroom

In spring the Land Bank and Orcas Island Middle School sponsored a farm to classroom program which introduced middle schoolers to the activities at our Coffelt Farm Preserve. Students learned about wool, poultry, and pollinators as well as enjoyed some hands on experience!



San Juan Island Family Nature Club

The Land Bank partnered with the San Juan Island National Historical Park to host free monthly outdoor exploration events for families.



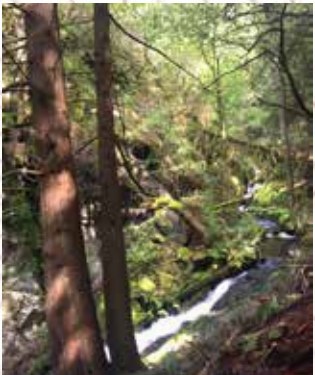
Orcas Off-Leash Area Opens

Working together, the San Juan County Land Bank, Orcas Island Park and Recreation District, and non-profit Orcas Off-Leash Area (OOLA) members created a 1.5 acre space for humans and furry friends to spend some quality time. The facility is on a corner of the Land Bank's Crescent Beach Preserve, adjacent to Mt. Baker Road and Buck Park.



Coho Preserve Opened

In April over 20 people were treated to Red-tailed hawk calls, and gorgeous mosses and ferns at the inaugural celebration of Orcas Island's newest preserve, located in Olga.



Inaugural Salish Seeds Project Seed Packet

Our own San Juan County Bee Blend—a mix of 9 local, native wildflower species—debuted at the San Juan County Fair this summer!



Fisherman Bay Shoreline Enhancement Project

The shoreline along The Spit Preserve at Fisherman Bay on Lopez was regraded to more closely match its historical gradient. Thanks to partners Friends of the San Juans, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Rose Foundation for the Environment for help completing this two year project.



Kellett Bluff Preserve Opens

Our first outer island Preserve, Kellett Bluff Preserve straddles the southwest peninsula of Henry Island. Non-motorized daytime public access is now available from a small beach on the eastern side of the preserve.



SALISH SEEDS PROJECT

The Salish Seeds Project produces plants, bulbs, and seeds of native island wildflowers and grasses for Land Bank preserves and other local restoration projects. Managed by the Land Bank, the project is centered on a nursery located at the San Juan Preservation Trust's Red Mill Farm in San Juan Valley.

Plant production increased 5-fold this year in order to meet the needs of other organizations. Grasses and wildflowers from the Salish Seeds Project helped stabilize disturbed soil at the Cattle Point Lighthouse on San Juan Island; enhanced habitat for the rare Island Marble Butterfly (*Euchloe ausonides insularis*) at several sites, and found homes with island residents through the Master Gardeners' annual native plant sale.

Over 5 pounds of seed was produced, representing 20 different plant species. Seeds were used in

Garry oak habitat restoration on the Land Bank's Turtleback Mountain, Cady Mountain, and Mount Ben Preserves. Surplus seed even found its way into limited edition local wildflower mixes for the County Fair and the San Juan Preservation Trust.

To learn more, contact nursery manager Eliza Habegger at (360) 378-4402, or join us at one of our monthly work parties.

A shade cloth protects 25,000 young plant plugs from summer heat.



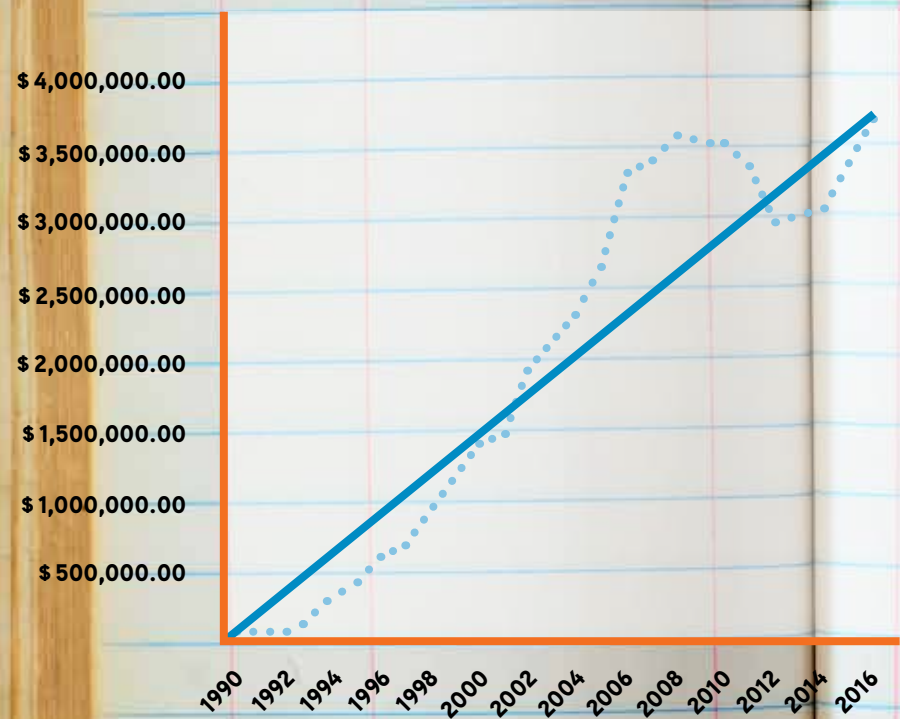
Our Mandate

To preserve in perpetuity areas in the county that have environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historic, scenic or low-intensity recreational value and to protect existing and future sources of potable water.

SAVING FOR OUR FUTURES

Due to the foresight of our Land Bank Commission, contributions are made annually into our Stewardship Fund for long term funding of stewardship needs. The goal of the endowment is to increase steadily until 2026, with a projected balance of roughly \$9 million in that year.

Stewardship Fund Balance



There are so many great reasons to give your time to your Land Bank: the fun, the folks you meet, the skills you learn along the way. Our marvelous, hard-working volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours towards Land Bank stewardship and conservation efforts this year—from hauling rock to felling trees to pulling weeds—a couple of their stories are highlighted below. If you'd like to join in the fun and build some stories of your own, contact Tanja Williamson at (360) 378-4402 or tanjaw@sjclandbank.org.

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS



Fish Enthusiast Finds his Flow

Many thanks to volunteer steward Jerry Weatherman of Olga, who put in hundreds of hours assisting with flow monitoring, spawning surveys and habitat assessments at the Coho Preserve on Orcas. Here he is working with fisheries biologist, Jenny deGroot.



Local Hero—The Aruminator is Taking Back Lopez

Jim Falconer, and his wife Birte, are neighbors of the Land Bank's Fisherman Bay Preserve on Lopez Island and first noticed the noxious weed, *Arum italicum* (aka Italian arum) in their woods. Quickly realizing the threat this hearty invasive posed—which Jim says is harder to kill than the Terminator—he coined the term "aruminator." Jim made eradicating Italian arum his mission and has been enlisting recruits for this war of weeds and helping Lopez Preserve Steward, Tim Clark whenever he can.





UPCOMING SUMMER EVENTS

For more information on an event listed below, please contact Tanja Williamson at (360) 378-4402 or visit our events calendar online: sjclandbank.org/events.

- FARM TOUR** – Coffelt Farm Preserve, Orcas Island
- GOLDENBACK TRAIL OPENS** – Westside Scenic Preserve, San Juan Island
- HISTORIC LIME KILN TOUR** – President’s Channel Preserve, Orcas Island
- INTERTIDAL WALK** – Deadman Bay Preserve, San Juan Island
- NATIONAL TRAILS DAY HIKE** – Lopez Hill, Lopez Island
- NATIONAL GET OUTDOORS DAY OPEN HOUSE** – Zylstra Lake Preserve, San Juan Island
- SAN JUAN COUNTY FAIR** – San Juan County Fairgrounds, San Juan Island
- VOLUNTEER WORK PARTIES: OAK TEAM** – Cady Mountain Preserve, San Juan Island
- VOLUNTEER WORK PARTIES: SALISH SEEDS PROJECT** – Red Mill Farm Nursery, San Juan Island
- VOLUNTEER WORK PARTY: BEACH CLEAN UP** – Third Lagoon Preserve, San Juan Island
- VOLUNTEER WORK PARTY: TRAIL TIDYING** – Hummel Lake Preserve, Lopez Island
- VOLUNTEER WORK PARTY: WEEDING** – Mount Grant Preserve, San Juan Island
Zylstra Lake Preserve, San Juan Island

Briggs Lake Hike
photo: Theresa Simendinger



Solar eclipse viewing party (above)
Coffelt Farm bird walk (below)





SAN JUAN COUNTY

LAND BANK

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Commissioners 2017

- Amanda Azous, at large, position 6, Vice-Chair
- Christa Campbell, at large, position 7
- Maris Sandwith, District 2, position 2
- Jim Skoog, District 1, position 1
- Douglas Strandberg, at large, position 5
- Amanda Wedow, District 3, position 3, Finance Officer
- Brian Wiese, at large, position 4, Chair

Staff

- Lincoln Bormann, Director
- Tim Clark, Lopez Island Preserve Steward
- Judy Cumming, Program Coordinator
- Ruthie Dougherty, Orcas Island Preserve Steward
- Eliza Habegger, Land Steward
- Doug McCutchen, San Juan Island Preserve Steward
- Tanja Williamson, Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator
- Charlie Behnke, San Juan Island Field Assistant
- Alexander Cole, San Juan Island Seasonal Nursery Assistant
- Casey Hons, Orcas Island Seasonal Field Assistant

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