

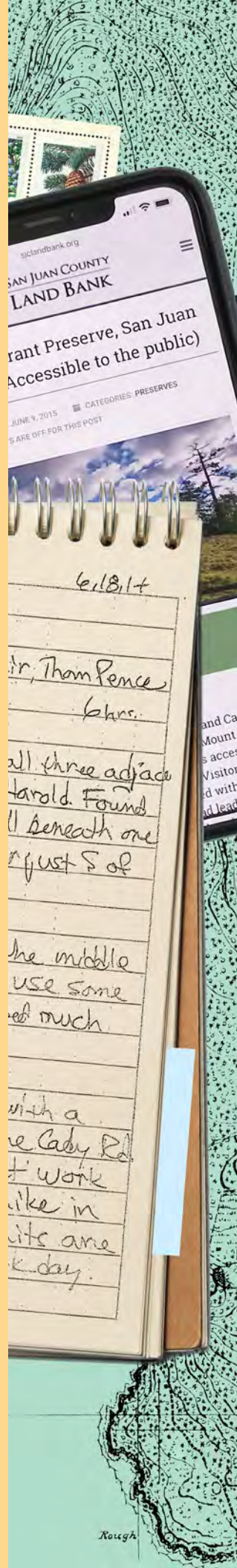
SAN JUAN COUNTY LAND BANK

The conservation and preservation work we do here at the Land Bank is never done in isolation. It's a process of many people—hearts and minds—working together to accomplish something as a group that each of us couldn't achieve on our own.

So what do we do exactly? Our process is often changing and sometimes challenging. What gives it momentum is working together with a common sense of purpose with the community. People who believe that not only what we do matters, but how we get there.

We've focused our Annual Report to share how your support—our community—helps us accomplish what we do.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018
OUR PROCESS



*HISTORIC DRIGGS HOUSE AND HOME
TO THE LAND BANK OFFICE*



**READ MORE ABOUT OUR
2018 ACQUISITIONS**

Lopez Hill Preserve, Lopez Island	pg. 5
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Driggs Historic House and Park, San Juan Island	pg. 10
Lester Property, San Juan Island	pg. 10

**FROM THE CHAIR
FACES OF STEWARDSHIP**

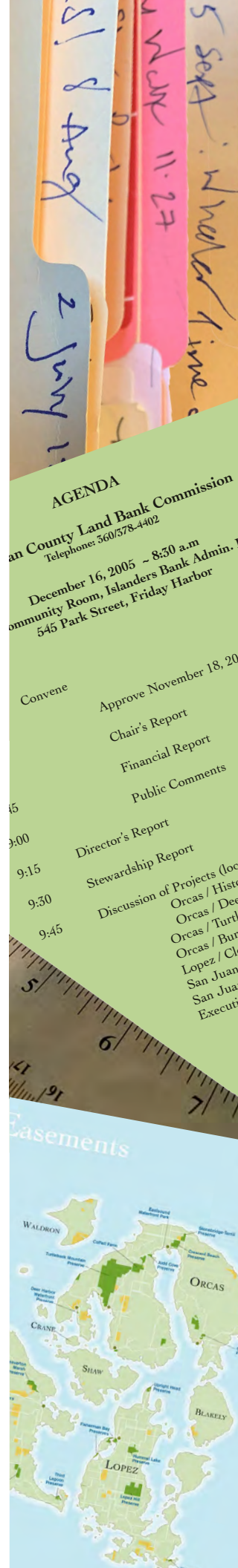
Along with several major new land acquisitions over the past year, two of our long-time stewards retired. Many thanks to Ruthie Dougherty on Orcas and Tim Clark on Lopez! And welcome to Peter Guillozet (Orcas) and Amanda Wedow (Lopez) who continue their good work.

With 35 preserves, 26 of which are open to the public, I have always been impressed that the Land Bank could do so much with just a handful of good stewards. The Commission continues to make stewardship a high priority, and to ensure there will be adequate resources into the future, the Commission is diverting more of our income from our Acquisition Fund into the Stewardship Fund.

Many people assume that once the Land Bank has acquired a property it takes care of itself. Not so. In fact, many of the properties we acquire need cleanup and restoration. To open a preserve, we complete resource inventories that provide a path to managing and improving those resources. Based on the inventories, a Preserve Management Plan is prepared with public input and review. Preserve Management Plans include stewardship activities such as restoring grassy savannah areas for Garry oak on Turtleback, clearing vegetation for waterfowl habitat at Deadman Bay Preserve, or enhancing False Bay Creek and Cascade Creek for Coho salmon spawning. In addition, our stewards are the public face of the Land Bank, building trails, clearing and repairing storm damage, and conducting interpretive programs.

There's another very important part of stewardship—*You, the Volunteers!* Every year, the Land Bank benefits from over 1,000 hours of help from volunteers, helping to control invasive weeds, grow native plants with our Salish Seeds Project, trail construction, or by adopting and monitoring their local preserve. I invite you all to join us and become part of the Land Bank's team, stewarding your land.

Brian Wiese
Chair, 2018
brian_wiese@outlook.com





*THE “HEART OF LOPEZ”
IS NOW PERMANENTLY PROTECTED*

THE LONG ROAD TO PROTECTION LOPEZ HILL PRESERVE: A CASE STUDY

Twelve years ago, when the state announced its intention to sell Lopez Hill for development, Friends of Lopez Hill (FOLH) and your Land Bank were able to secure, at no cost to county residents, a 50-year lease on the 400-acres from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It has always been the goal of the Lopez community to buy the underlying fee and protect the property permanently. On the first of May 2018, that goal became a reality when the Land Bank negotiated a purchase agreement with DNR and finalized the transaction in July.

While the method of acquiring Lopez Hill is unique to the Land Bank’s history—50-year lease to purchase and sale agreement—the process was not. It is a great example of how the desire of community members to conserve a special island place comes to fruition.

As the old saying goes, nothing moves quickly in government, and FOLH was a fantastic partner through the long process. They orchestrated a successful letter writing campaign as well as a pivotal meeting with DNR officials and (then) WA State Commissioner of Public Lands, Doug Sutherland. Through persistence, creative thinking, and community support the Land Bank was able to work with local and state legislators to keep Lopez Hill in public domain permanently.

As stated by Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz, “This is a win-win for San Juan County and Washington State...San Juan County gains ownership of a popular recreation spot while the state gets funds to buy property elsewhere that will generate more long-term revenue for public school construction.”





WE KNOW THE MARK WE MAKE ON THE LAND IS WHAT MOST PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCES THE LEGACY WE LEAVE FUTURE GENERATIONS.

LOCAL TRAILS: A COMMUNITY ASSET

Community involvement is vital to the success of the Land Bank’s conservation efforts. In 2018, 25 volunteer “Trail Blazers” invested over 700 hours helping staff construct new public trails, viewing areas, and benches at Mount Grant Preserve and Westside Preserve.

“The layout and design took into consideration sustainability for horseback riders, mountain bikes, and hikers, while sitting as lightly on the land as possible,” said Preserve Steward, Doug McCutchen. “The trail interacts with the natural beauty and diversity of the mountain to create a living story.”



Volunteer Trail Blazer, Jim Goetz, along the Goldenback Trail

Trail design is equal parts art and science. Stewardship staff consider public input as well as the needs of the landscape when creating a trail. This year’s new trails celebrate native wildflowers, mossy knolls, and expansive vistas. Thanks to the hands-on involvement of a committed crew of construction volunteers, these delightful discoveries are available to all, 365 days a year.





photo: Jodi Rock

285-ACRE ZYLSTRA LAKE PRESERVE IN SAN JUAN VALLEY WAS ACQUIRED BY THE LAND BANK IN 2017. THE SAN JUAN PRESERVATION TRUST WAS A KEY PARTNER IN FACILITATING THE PURCHASE AND OBTAINING GRANT FUNDING.

THE PATH TO PUBLIC ACCESS ZYLSTRA LAKE PRESERVE, SAN JUAN ISLAND

With Zylstra Lake Preserve newly acquired in 2017, but not yet developed for public access, the Land Bank offered a number of ways for people to satisfy their curiosity to see this scenic Preserve. Opportunities included a summer and fall open house, and a guided bird walk.

Behind the scenes, expert consultants began assessing key features of the lake and surrounding lands. Some of the questions they were asked to study included: Are there sensitive areas of the Preserve for breeding birds and wintering waterfowl? What kinds of fish are present, and could habitat be enhanced to support native trout or salmon? In considering potential uses such as swimming, are there water quality, safety, or permitting questions to be addressed? What are some options for managing the farm fields?

These and many more questions will be answered as resource assessments are concluded in 2019. Public input will additionally inform the creation of a final management plan, culminating in an anticipated Preserve opening in spring of 2020.

The Land Bank appreciates everyone’s patience and thoughtful input throughout this process. For those who haven’t yet had a chance to experience Zylstra Lake, keep a lookout for upcoming special events at the Preserve in summer 2019.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR ZYLSTRA LAKE PRESERVE OPENING

NOVEMBER 2019:

- Resource assessments completed and presented to the public.
- Public input is solicited on future management.

FEBRUARY 2020:

- A draft management plan is written and presented to the public.
- Public input is solicited on future management.

MAY 2020:

- A final management plan is approved.
- The Preserve is open to the public.



OPEN SPACE IN THE TOWN OF FRIDAY HARBOR DRIGGS HISTORIC HOUSE AND PARK, FRIDAY HARBOR, SAN JUAN ISLAND

After 13 years of tenancy, the Land Bank purchased the historic Driggs House and greenspace on the corner of Caines and Argyle. This acquisition will protect in perpetuity the notable two-story farmhouse, constructed around 1895 for the local merchant and fruit grower G.B. Driggs, along with its two adjoining lots. The lot on Argyle, Driggs Historic Park, has been open to the public since 2011 when the Land Bank secured a recreational license from the previous owner. One of only a few protected open spaces in the town, this property is now conserved in perpetuity. Over the next year, the Land Bank will be preparing a management plan and inviting public opinion. In the meantime, we hope you will walk to the park with a friend or family member, rest at a picnic table and relax in the shade offered by the property’s heritage apple and pear trees.

CONNECTIVITY LESTER ACQUISITION, SAN JUAN ISLAND

One guiding principle in the Land Bank’s approach to protecting land is connectivity; and we look for opportunities to expand existing conservation areas, particularly when an addition would buffer key features, such as old growth forest, encompass new ecological communities, or facilitate public access.

In April, the Land Bank was able to do just that when it acquired a 155-acre parcel adjacent to Cady Mountain Preserve. The addition, known as the “Lester Property,” has outstanding features like open balds teaming with wildflowers, extensive wetlands ringing with frog song and ancient trees. Also key to our decision in acquiring this property was that it offers the chance to fulfill the long-desired goal for public access to our Cady Mountain Preserve. The Lester parcel straddles a county road and will easily accommodate a parking area and trailhead.

While the Preserve is not currently open, by this time next year we anticipate being in the throes of our public process—asking you for your participation—and working out the details that will enable you to explore what is now 285 acres on Cady Mountain, and admire its legacy stands of oak and fir.



ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION
COHO PRESERVE, ORCAS ISLAND

Flowing from the slopes of Mount Constitution to Buck Bay, Orcas Island’s Cascade Creek may be the most important salmon bearing stream in the San Juan Islands. Although natural barriers limit spawning to less than 0.2 miles of habitat near the mouth, the stream’s largely protected watershed and perennial flow make it a vital resource for native fish. In light of its high ecological value, the Land Bank stepped in to purchase 24 acres along lower Cascade Creek in 2016. Coho Preserve now protects this essential habitat while also providing opportunities for the public to enjoy it.

But for the native Coho salmon and coastal cutthroat that rely on Cascade Creek, protected land is only part of the story. Like communities across the West, San Juan County is struggling with the over-appropriation of water. Our many demands on rivers and streams for drinking water, agriculture and hydro-power, can leave little behind for wild flora and fauna. An analysis by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife indicates that low flows in Cascade Creek are the primary limiting factor for native salmonids. Moreover, flow monitoring has shown that at key periods in recent years there has been insufficient water in the creek for successful spawning and rearing.



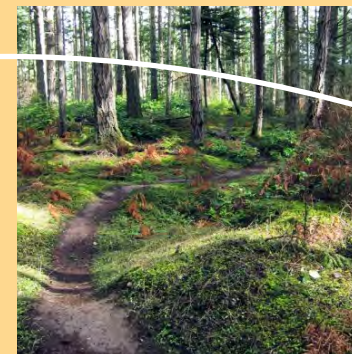
Our hope is that in the fall months, Coho Preserve will become a gathering place, both for salmon to spawn, and for people to witness and welcome their return.

Although some believe that our little island waterways have never supported much life and therefore aren’t that important from an ecological standpoint, the opposite is true. Our waterways are precious because they are few, and the aquatic life that they support—amphibians, fish, invertebrates—is critical to our archipelago’s biodiversity and food webs. As just one of several agencies and nonprofits seeking to protect the aquatic resources of Cascade Creek and other streams throughout the county, the Land Bank welcomes opportunities to collaborate with water users to identify innovative approaches to balancing human requisites with the need for more in-stream flow for fish, especially between April and December.



Acquisitions
 Stewardship
 Trail Maintenance
 Conservation Easements
 Trail Blazers
 Habitat Restoration
 Public Programs
 The Oak Team
 Stewardship
 Family Nature Club
 Administration
 Citizen Science

School Programs
 Youth Conservation Corps
 Administration
 The Oak Team
 Youth Conservation Corps
 Public Preserves
 Shoreline Enhancement
 Stewardship



50.71
 miles of public trails

22,000
 plants produced for local
 habitat conservation projects

**OF EVERY INCOME DOLLAR GOES
 TOWARDS LAND ACQUISITION
 OR PRESERVE STEWARDSHIP**

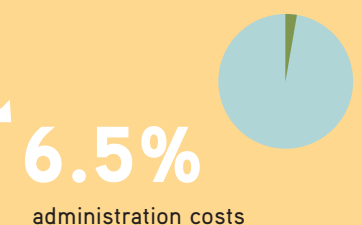


100%
 of Country residents benefit
 from Land Bank Preserves



48
 Youth Conservation Corp
 (YCC) participants completed
460
 stewardship hours
 caring for Lank Bank
 Preserves

26
 Preserves open to the public





Species List and	
ders for species with an asterisk should be	
9. Other species can be ordered by April	
ntific name	Common name
ea millefolium	yarrow
is grandiflora	agoseris
ernuum*	nodding onion
: margaritacea	pearly everlasting
ormosa*	western columbine
ichtlinii**	Great camas
rida*	rough paintbrush
ecta*	golden paintbrush
nse	field chickweed
rnica*	California
ersonii*	Hend



PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE SALISH SEEDS PROJECT UPDATE

Encouraged by local gardeners, landowners, and landscapers, the Salish Seeds Project held its first public plant sale in the fall of 2018. The native wildflowers offered included 4-inch pots of a variety of sun-loving perennials, seed packets of sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*) and bulbs of great camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*). The enthusiasm for this event has led to planning additional sales for 2019 on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez.

Another highlight of the year was a volunteer work day with the Coast Salish Youth Conservation Corps, an inter-tribal team of young adults. Their visit to the nursery was a reminder of the many roles of native plants. A wildflower is a thing of beauty to a gardener. Its pollen and nectar provides sustenance for native bumblebees. And, for the Coast Salish people, native plants serve as traditional food and medicine. At the nursery, tribal youth transplanted camas bulbs, a staple food, and sowed Indian celery (*Lomatium nudicaule*), a pungent plant used both for seasoning and medicinal purposes.

The Salish Seeds Project was launched in 2014 to produce native plant materials for habitat restoration activities around the county. Plants, bulbs, and seeds of local wildflowers are grown at a nursery at Red Mill Farm in San Juan Valley. A fruitful partnership, The San Juan Preservation Trust owns the land and the Land Bank operates the nursery. As the Salish Seeds Project grows and matures, it will strive to respond to the needs of conservation land managers and the general public alike. To learn more contact nursery manager Eliza Habegger at (360) 378-4402 or elizah@sjclandbank.org



photo: Erin Licata

SEA BLUSH (*PLECTRITIS CONGESTA*) IN FULL BLOOM (TOP);
COAST SALISH CREW AT RED MILL FARM NURSERY



SAN JUAN COUNTY

LAND BANK

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Commissioners 2018

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Amanda Azous, at large, position 6, Vice-Chair
Christa Campbell, at large, position 7
Marlis Sandwith/Sandi Friel, District 2, position 2
Jim Skoog, District 1, position 1
Douglas Strandberg, at large, position 5, Finance Officer
Amanda Wedow/Miles Becker, District 3, position 3

Staff

Lincoln Bormann, Director
Charlie Behnke, Field Steward
Carlton Burns, Field Steward, San Juan Island
Tim Clark/Amanda Wedow, Lopez Island Preserve Steward
Alexander Cole, San Juan Island Seasonal Nursery Assistant
Judy Cumming, Office Manager/Fiscal Clerk
Ruthie Dougherty/Peter Guillozet, Orcas Island Preserve Steward
Eliza Habegger, Land Steward
Erin Halcomb, Stewardship Coordinator
Casey Hons/Eric Nelson, Orcas Field Steward
Doug McCutchen, San Juan Island Preserve Steward
Kayla Seaforth, Field Steward
Tanja Williamson, Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator

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