



LAND BANK

San Juan County Land Bank
PROPOSED

Third Amended 2021 Expenditure and Acquisition Plan

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No Proposed Amended 2021 Stewardship & Management Fund Budget

II. Project Descriptions for Acquisition Proposals

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III. Management Plan included in the Expenditure and Acquisition plan

A. None at this time

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I.A. Conservation Area Fund 1021				
2021 Revised Budget and	12/8/2020	5/4/2021	Proposed	Proposed
Proposed Amended 2021 Budget	Revised	2nd Amended	Amendments	3rd Amended
	2021 Budget	2021 Budget	2021 Budget	2021 Budget
Revenue				
Beginning Operating Cash	5,123,968	5,322,617		5,322,617
Property Tax Revenue	329,563	329,563		329,563
1% RE Excise Tax (gross)	3,000,000	3,000,000		3,000,000
Land Bank 1% REET to General Fund	(30,000)	(30,000)		(30,000)
Federal Grants				-
State Grants	250,000	916,673		916,673
Payment In-Lieu of Property Tax (DNR)	200			-
Investment Interest	16,000	16,000		16,000
Donations from Private Sources	2,500	252,500		252,500
Miscellaneous revenue & refunds				-
Sale of Land		847,977		847,977
Interfund Loan from LB Stewardship	131,873			-
Total Revenue	8,824,104	10,655,330	-	19,479,434
Revenue net of Reserves & Loan Proceeds	3,700,136	5,332,713		5,332,713
				-
Expenditures				
Restricted Acquisition Reserves	3,900,014	3,681,279	(1,585,000)	2,096,279
Administrative Expenses	284,132	287,798		287,798
IT Services	14,144	14,144		14,144
GIS Services	6,935	6,935		6,935
Acquisition Costs	1,378,076	3,241,659	1,585,000	4,826,659
Stew Loan & Bond Repayment	1,111,663	1,302,202		1,302,202
Interest on Interfund Loans fr LB Stew	15,750	6,450	-	6,450
Transfers to Stewardship	2,113,389	2,114,863		2,114,863
Total Expenditures	8,824,104	10,655,330	-	19,479,434
Expenditures net of Reserves	4,924,089			8,559,051
Admin percentage of net revenue	8.25%			5.79%
Amendments to Revenue reflect:	No changes			
Amendments to Expenditures reflect:	Add expenditures for new acquisition			
	Include adjustment in ending cash balance			

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I. B. Conservation Area Fund Detail of Acquisition Projects	Approved in prior Budgets	12/8/2020 Revised 2021 Budget	5/4/2021 Adopted 2nd Amemnded	Proposed Amendments	Proposed Amended 2021 Budget
District One					
Cady Mountain Preserve Addition					
Purchase Price & Closing Costs (approved 2019 Budget, then removed in 2020)	1,611,000		1,715,000		1,715,000
Barker (Connector trail to Beaverton Marsh Preserve)					
Value of Donation			250,000		250,000
District Two					
Coho Preserve acquisition of water right					
purchase price		250,000	250,000		250,000
District Three					
RR Bar Ranch Conservation Easement					
Purchase Price & Closing Costs over 3 years (approved 2016 Budget)	600,000	200,000	150,000		150,000
Lopez Hill Addition Smith 70 Acres					
Purchase Price		630,000	728,000		728,000
Davis Bay Farm (Richardson Marsh)*					
Purchase Price & Closing costs		80,000			80,000
Higgins (Watmough Bay)					
Purchase Price & Closing costs				1,585,000	1,585,000
Sub-total Acquisition Costs		1,160,000		1,585,000	4,758,000
Other Acquisition Costs		68,076	68,659		68,659
Total Acquisition Costs		1,228,076		1,585,000	4,826,659

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PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT TITLE: HIGGINS PROPERTY (WATMOUGH BAY)

PROPOSED ACQUISITION: ACQUISITION OF FEE TITLE INTEREST

OWNER: ESTATE OF GENE AND CAROL HIGGINS

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Location: Watmough Bay, Lopez Island

General Description: This roughly 11.5-acre property is at the mouth of Watmough Bay with shoreline extending to the Rosario Strait. It is directly across from Boulder Island, part of the San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

CONSERVATION VALUES OF THE PROPERTY

The Higgins tract features roughly 1/3 mile of shoreline, including two pocket beaches. It is adjacent to conservation easement-protected property on both sides and connected to the Land Bank's existing Watmough Bay (Meng parcel). This is the last remaining unprotected property on the shore of Watmough Bay.

The shoreline is within a high priority area for salmon recovery, and it is the last remaining link of a 1.67-mile protected shoreline stretching from the north side of Watmough Bay to the Rosario Strait.

The upland area has significant cultural resources, including aboriginal shell midden and one of the first homesteads of European Americans. The existing house is the oldest on Lopez, constructed in the early 1870s, and a portion of the original orchard and other feature are still intact.

The property is also accessible from the Watmough Bay trailhead within the San Juan Islands National Monument. This proximity to conserved land, low bank waterfront, and sensational views of the Bay to the west and Mt. Baker and the mainland to the east make this property extremely attractive for public access.

PARTNERS

The Land Bank would partner with the San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) on the proposed purchase, with each paying 50% and the Trust retaining a conservation easement on the property. However, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has also expressed interest in purchasing the property to add to the National Monument, but does not have acquisition funding for 2021. It is possible the Conservation Fund might assume the contract, make the initial purchase, and resell to the BLM when they have funding available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund in

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2022. If the Land Bank/SJPT purchase proceeds, the Land Bank Commission would want to retain the ability to resell the property to BLM if that opportunity arose as well.

COSTS

A. Acquisition Costs: The purchase price for this acquisition will be \$2,500,000 as supported by appraisal. The Land Bank has agreed to pay \$1.5 million at closing with SJPT reimbursing the County in 2022. An additional \$50,000 in transaction, appraisal and escrow fees is also likely to be incurred at closing.

B. Ownership Costs: Roughly \$15,000 for site enhancement to allow public access and annual maintenance costs of \$10,000 - \$15,000, depending on the condition of the structure and potential uses.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

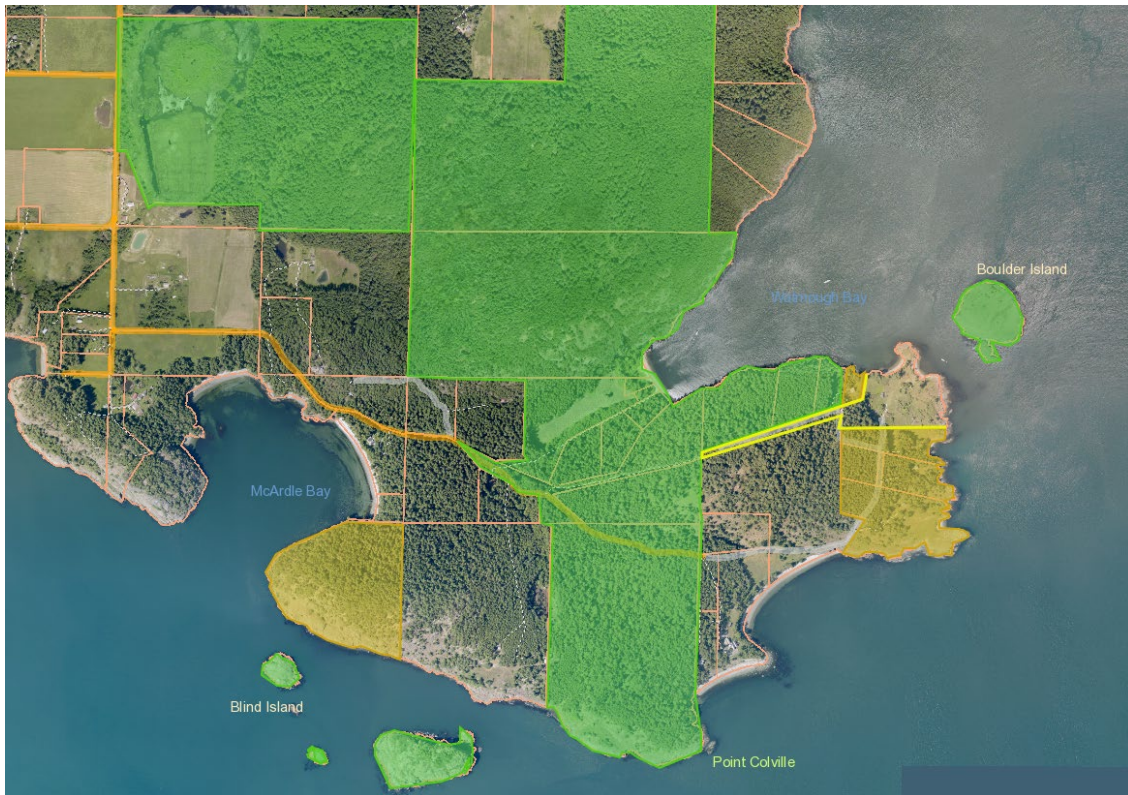
The Land Bank will initiate a management plan process in the first year of ownership. Given the level of interest in public access, an interim plan may be the best course, to allow some limited use while working through the details of the full plan.

AERIAL MAP OF THE HIGGINS PROPERTY



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CONTEXT MAP OF THE HIGGINS PROPERTY



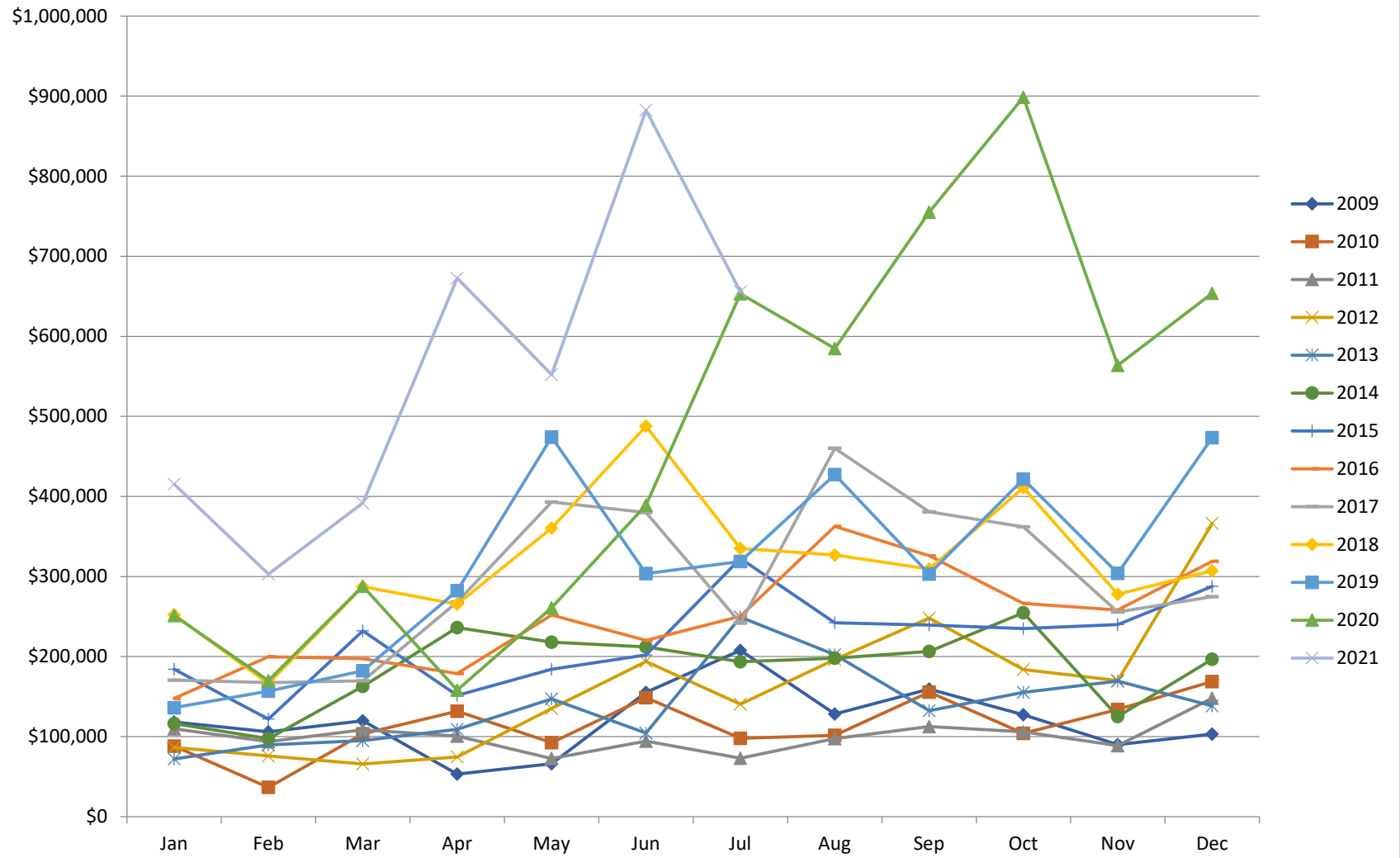
AERIAL PHOTO OF THE HIGGINS PROPERTY



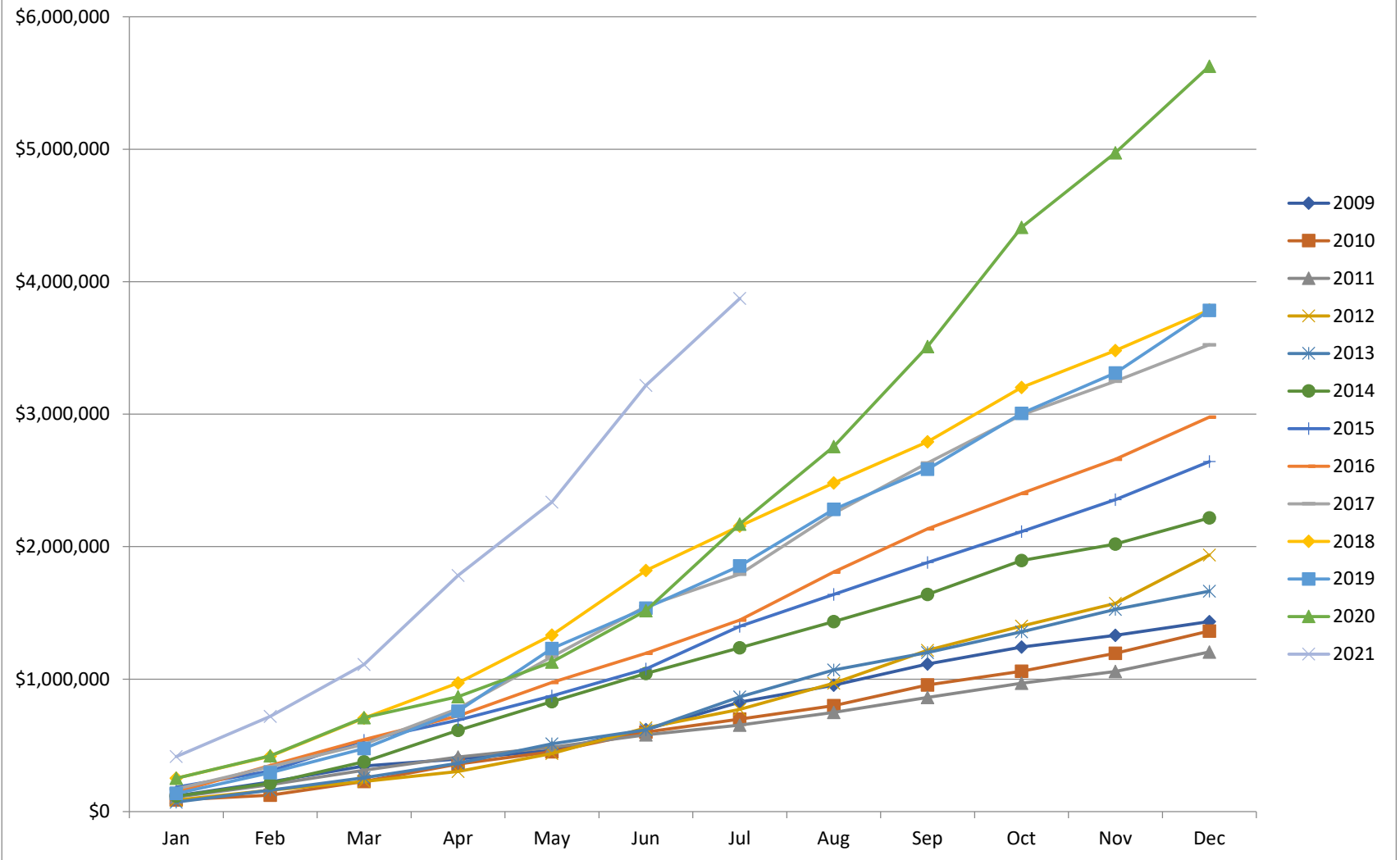
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1021.00.318 - Revenues													
Acct_Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2009	\$118,372	\$105,880	\$119,718	\$53,207	\$66,214	\$155,142	\$207,754	\$128,348	\$159,492	\$127,423	\$90,056	\$103,071	\$1,434,678
2010	\$88,143	\$36,539	\$103,506	\$131,590	\$92,665	\$148,524	\$97,972	\$101,730	\$155,569	\$104,191	\$134,046	\$168,904	\$1,363,380
2011	\$109,729	\$93,636	\$108,558	\$100,689	\$72,611	\$94,346	\$72,907	\$97,424	\$112,529	\$105,975	\$88,901	\$147,914	\$1,205,218
2012	\$86,547	\$75,746	\$65,834	\$74,531	\$135,260	\$193,882	\$140,610	\$196,444	\$248,152	\$183,896	\$170,092	\$366,337	\$1,937,333
2013	\$72,106	\$89,629	\$94,943	\$109,020	\$146,974	\$104,286	\$249,312	\$202,351	\$132,516	\$155,258	\$169,306	\$138,279	\$1,663,979
2014	\$116,307	\$97,403	\$162,759	\$236,076	\$218,046	\$211,937	\$193,491	\$197,924	\$206,334	\$254,695	\$125,044	\$196,812	\$2,216,829
2015	\$184,186	\$121,920	\$232,019	\$151,641	\$184,037	\$201,867	\$322,494	\$242,119	\$239,381	\$234,885	\$239,857	\$287,602	\$2,642,008
2016	\$147,780	\$199,709	\$197,208	\$178,799	\$251,916	\$220,177	\$250,453	\$362,646	\$326,094	\$266,216	\$258,039	\$319,005	\$2,978,044
2017	\$170,789	\$167,494	\$169,775	\$268,280	\$393,220	\$379,832	\$241,755	\$460,110	\$380,894	\$362,103	\$255,636	\$274,865	\$3,524,752
2018	\$252,155	\$166,287	\$287,448	\$265,414	\$360,538	\$487,738	\$335,172	\$326,847	\$309,460	\$410,876	\$277,932	\$307,045	\$3,786,910
2019	\$136,263	\$156,907	\$182,195	\$282,295	\$474,060	\$303,744	\$318,828	\$427,381	\$303,198	\$421,696	\$304,131	\$473,533	\$3,784,232
2020	\$251,391	\$169,933	\$288,018	\$158,176	\$260,943	\$389,402	\$653,337	\$584,765	\$755,057	\$898,677	\$563,691	\$653,695	\$5,627,084
2021	\$415,281	\$303,073	\$391,898	\$672,670	\$552,318	\$882,523	\$655,661						\$3,873,422
Budget 2021	\$2,970,000												
2009	8.25%	7.38%	8.34%	3.71%	4.62%	10.81%	14.48%	8.95%	11.12%	8.88%	6.28%	7.18%	
2010	6.47%	2.68%	7.59%	9.65%	6.80%	10.89%	7.19%	7.46%	11.41%	7.64%	9.83%	12.39%	
2011	9.10%	7.77%	9.01%	8.35%	6.02%	7.83%	6.05%	8.08%	9.34%	8.79%	7.38%	12.27%	
2012	4.47%	3.91%	3.40%	3.85%	6.98%	10.01%	7.26%	10.14%	12.81%	9.49%	8.78%	18.91%	
2013	4.33%	5.39%	5.71%	6.55%	8.83%	6.27%	14.98%	12.16%	7.96%	9.33%	10.17%	8.31%	
2014	5.25%	4.39%	7.34%	10.65%	9.84%	9.56%	8.73%	8.93%	9.31%	11.49%	5.64%	8.88%	
2015	6.97%	4.61%	8.78%	5.74%	6.97%	7.64%	12.21%	9.16%	9.06%	8.89%	9.08%	10.89%	
2016	4.96%	6.71%	6.62%	6.00%	8.46%	7.39%	8.41%	12.18%	10.95%	8.94%	8.66%	10.71%	
2017	4.85%	4.75%	4.82%	7.61%	11.16%	10.78%	6.86%	13.05%	10.81%	10.27%	7.25%	7.80%	
2018	6.66%	4.39%	7.59%	7.01%	9.52%	12.88%	8.85%	8.63%	8.17%	10.85%	7.34%	8.11%	
2019	3.60%	4.15%	4.81%	7.46%	12.53%	8.03%	8.43%	11.29%	8.01%	11.14%	8.04%	12.51%	
2020	4.47%	3.02%	5.12%	2.81%	4.64%	6.92%	11.61%	10.39%	13.42%	15.97%	10.02%	11.62%	
2021	13.98%	10.20%	13.20%	22.65%	18.60%	29.71%	22.08%						
Cumulative	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2009	\$118,372	\$224,252	\$343,970	\$397,177	\$463,391	\$618,534	\$826,288	\$954,636	\$1,114,128	\$1,241,550	\$1,331,607	\$1,434,678	
2010	\$88,143	\$124,682	\$228,188	\$359,778	\$452,443	\$600,967	\$698,939	\$800,669	\$956,238	\$1,060,429	\$1,194,476	\$1,363,380	
2011	\$109,729	\$203,365	\$311,923	\$412,613	\$485,224	\$579,570	\$652,476	\$749,900	\$862,429	\$968,404	\$1,057,304	\$1,205,218	
2012	\$86,547	\$162,293	\$228,127	\$302,659	\$437,919	\$631,801	\$772,411	\$968,855	\$1,217,008	\$1,400,904	\$1,570,995	\$1,937,333	
2013	\$72,106	\$161,734	\$256,678	\$365,698	\$512,672	\$616,957	\$866,269	\$1,068,620	\$1,201,136	\$1,356,394	\$1,525,700	\$1,663,979	
2014	\$116,307	\$213,711	\$376,470	\$612,546	\$830,592	\$1,042,530	\$1,236,020	\$1,433,945	\$1,640,278	\$1,894,973	\$2,020,017	\$2,216,829	
2015	\$184,186	\$306,105	\$538,125	\$689,766	\$873,803	\$1,075,669	\$1,398,164	\$1,640,283	\$1,879,664	\$2,114,549	\$2,354,406	\$2,642,008	
2016	\$147,780	\$347,489	\$544,696	\$723,496	\$975,412	\$1,195,589	\$1,446,043	\$1,808,689	\$2,134,784	\$2,401,000	\$2,659,039	\$2,978,044	
2017	\$170,789	\$338,283	\$508,057	\$776,338	\$1,169,558	\$1,549,390	\$1,791,144	\$2,251,254	\$2,632,147	\$2,994,251	\$3,249,887	\$3,524,752	
2018	\$252,155	\$418,441	\$705,890	\$971,304	\$1,331,842	\$1,819,580	\$2,154,751	\$2,481,598	\$2,791,057	\$3,201,933	\$3,479,865	\$3,786,910	
2019	\$136,263	\$293,170	\$475,365	\$757,660	\$1,231,720	\$1,535,464	\$1,854,293	\$2,281,674	\$2,584,872	\$3,006,568	\$3,310,699	\$3,784,232	
2020	\$251,391	\$421,324	\$709,342	\$867,518	\$1,128,461	\$1,517,863	\$2,171,200	\$2,755,964	\$3,511,021	\$4,409,698	\$4,973,389	\$5,627,084	
2021	\$415,281	\$718,353	\$1,110,251	\$1,782,921	\$2,335,239	\$3,217,761	\$3,873,422						
Cumulative %													
2009	8.25%	15.63%	23.98%	27.68%	32.30%	43.11%	57.59%	66.54%	77.66%	86.54%	92.82%	100.00%	
2010	6.47%	9.15%	16.74%	26.39%	33.19%	44.08%	51.27%	58.73%	70.14%	77.78%	87.61%	100.00%	
2011	9.10%	16.87%	25.88%	34.24%	40.26%	48.09%	54.14%	62.22%	71.56%	80.35%	87.73%	100.00%	
2012	4.47%	8.38%	11.78%	15.62%	22.60%	32.61%	39.87%	50.01%	62.82%	72.31%	81.09%	100.00%	
2013	4.33%	9.72%	15.43%	21.98%	30.81%	37.08%	52.06%	64.22%	72.18%	81.52%	91.69%	100.00%	
2014	5.25%	9.64%	16.98%	27.63%	37.47%	47.03%	55.76%	64.68%	73.99%	85.48%	91.12%	100.00%	
2015	6.97%	11.59%	20.37%	26.11%	33.07%	40.71%	52.92%	62.08%	71.15%	80.04%	89.11%	100.00%	
2016	4.96%	11.67%	18.29%	24.29%	32.75%	40.15%	48.56%	60.73%	71.68%	80.62%	89.29%	100.00%	
2017	4.85%	9.60%	14.41%	22.03%	33.18%	43.96%	50.82%	63.87%	74.68%	84.95%	92.20%	100.00%	
2018	6.66%	11.05%	18.64%	25.65%	35.17%	48.05%	56.90%	65.53%	73.70%	84.55%	91.89%	100.00%	
2019	3.60%	7.75%	12.56%	20.02%	32.55%	40.58%	49.00%	60.29%	68.31%	79.45%	87.49%	100.00%	
2020	4.47%	7.49%	12.61%	15.42%	20.05%	26.97%	38.58%	48.98%	62.40%	78.37%	88.38%	100.00%	
2021	13.98%	24.19%	37.38%	60.03%	78.63%	108.34%	130.42%						
Avg % Recvd	5.78%	10.71%	17.30%	23.92%	31.95%	41.03%	50.62%	60.66%	70.85%	81.00%	89.20%	100.00%	
Projections													
Min	\$4,561,270	\$4,257,234	\$4,289,818	\$5,207,811	\$5,800,357	\$6,691,353	\$6,725,394						
Max	\$11,532,989	\$9,594,115	\$9,428,613	\$11,564,765	\$11,644,693	\$11,929,018	\$10,038,723						
Average	\$7,183,374	\$6,707,159	\$6,415,875	\$7,453,313	\$7,308,901	\$7,841,589	\$7,651,688						
Budget Amt	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	\$2,970,000	
YE Budget Proj(%)	241.86%	225.83%	216.02%	250.95%	246.09%	264.03%	257.63%						

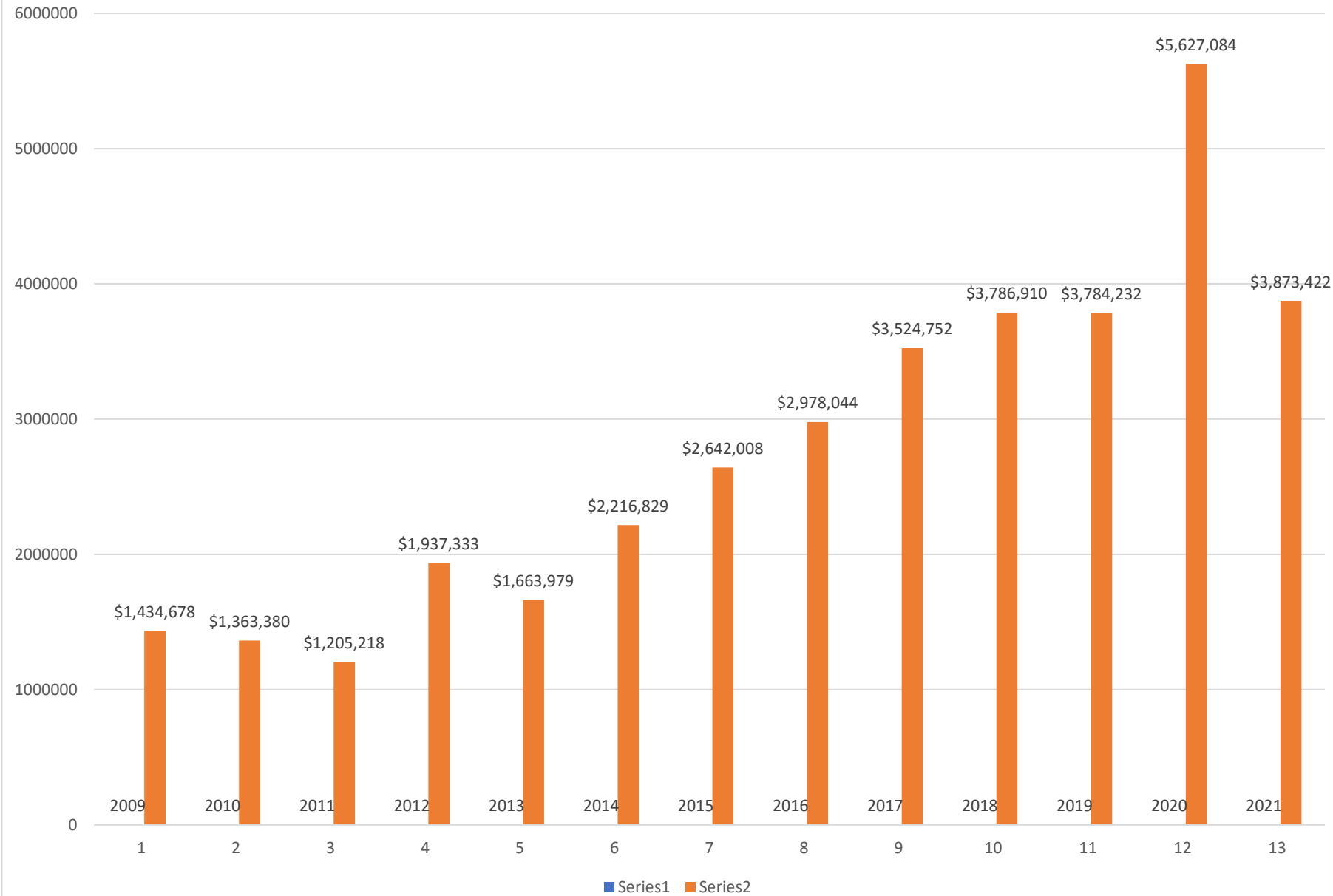
REET by Month



REET By Year



REET by Year Column



STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

AUGUST 2021

OVERVIEW

Land Bank staff provided 60 hours of experience to Skagit Valley Community College intern, Skyler Reynolds. He traveled across the County to learn and work, and his activities included: controlling meadow knapweed on Lopez, building trail and monitoring conversation easements on San Juan, and surveying a stream on Orcas. He also helped at the nursery, prepared outreach materials, and joined in on JEDI training (Photo 1).

The National Historical Park brought speaker Wayne Hare from the [Civil Conservations Project](#) to the islands, and he guided conversations about race and racism in America with a variety of land managers (Photo 2). The Land Bank's JEDI committee hosted a session and Council members Christine Minney and Cindy Wolf attended and enriched the discussion. The JEDI committee completed translating directions to preserves into Spanish, and they are currently reviewing a report that came through the TMG wire that focuses on [modern recreation, its impact to wildlife, and the implications for Treaty Tribes](#).

Signs of wildlife were on high display during this month's easement monitoring (Photo 3-5). The wilted leaves of oceanspray revealed a hummingbird nest; a stand of dying cedars were drilled up by pileated woodpeckers; and low tide provided a good look at some gooseneck barnacles that remained healthy despite the recent heat. This cause for celebration even overshadowed the homemade blackberry pie offered by a landowner, because [a recent story](#) in The Atlantic estimated that billions of intertidal species succumbed to June's heatwave. At the end of the article, marine biologist Enric Sala, shares his view about our interconnectedness with nature and climate. He states: "Every morsel of food, every sip of water, the air we breathe is the result of work done by other species. Nature gives us everything we need to survive. Without them, there is no us."

In addition to the Atlantic piece, staff read and exchanged articles this past month on Canada's \$25M investment to conserve and restore [wetlands and grasslands for carbon storage](#), the Puget Sound's \$50M budget to [improve water quality, protect shorelines, and enhance fish habitat](#), and yet another good 'ol call to action to [plant trees for carbon sequestration](#) as this exists as one of the most effective strategies for mitigating climate change.

OUTREACH

Staff: Tanja Williamson

The community-wide online survey closed at the end of July, the annual report was delivered in early August, and several updates have been made to the website in advance of upcoming events like *Lettuce Entertain Ewe*, hunting season and the fall plant sale. Huzzah!

Spring Street student, Kaj Litch, is currently analyzing the data from the community survey, reviewing patterns in the voting, and writing up results. He anticipates presenting his conclusions at the September commission meeting. SJI Land Bank supporter, Eileen Drath was quick to notice a misidentification in the annual report. The wildflowers pictured on page five are fawn lilies and not lady slippers! We appreciate Eileen's attention to detail, her naturalist knowledge, and her willingness to provide feedback.

In advance of the thousands of native plants and wildflowers that go up for sale next month, Tanja revamped the [Salish Seeds Project page](#) and added more content. She also designed the Land Bank's [2021 County Fair virtual vendor booth](#) which features Michael Noonan's recent video on Jenny DeGroot's stewardship of Cascade Creek: [Jenny and the Coho](#). Noonan also produced a PBS video that featured the [ants at Middlewood Preserve](#)! Tanja created a new webpage to share [general hunting access information](#) and initiated that a Google widget be has been installed that enables the website to be translated into over 100+ languages. Amongst all this, she detached from her keyboard, looked away from her screen and joined the annual monitoring visit to Mount Ben Preserve.

SALISH SEEDS NURSERY

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Over 2,000 plants, all started from seed and home-grown at the nursery, will be available for purchase at this fall's wildflower sale. Plant varieties and quantities can be reserved online from September 10th – 17th and then picked up on the ferry-served islands on Saturday, October 2nd. Now that everything is potted and prepared for the sale, nursery staff has shifted focus to harvesting and processing native seeds. Most restoration seedings are also scheduled for early fall, and there's always a bit of a late-summer rush to ready enough seed in time. Construction of the nursery shed is steaming along, even ahead of the official fundraising letters, which are due to go out later this month (Photo 6).

DISTRICT 1

Staff: Doug McCutchen, Charlie Behnke, Jacob Wagner, Shauna Barrows

Beaverton Marsh: Various assessments remain underway and include: a cultural resources survey, consultation with Tribes, and a soils analysis in the boardwalk area. The Shepherds, current lessees on the Preserve, intend to graze sheep in the fields adjacent to Roche Harbor Road and seasonal public access will be prohibited. Noxious weed work continues. A meeting with the Fox Hall community will be scheduled in September, and staff is collaborating on a trial mowing project, to promote open water for winter waterfowl, with the SJPT.

Cady Mountain: Doug has been working with committee members of the Old Military Road Trail (Photo 7). Decommissioning of the septic and well are scheduled for next week, and activities for a WCC Crew Leader project are being planned for September.

False Bay Creek: Noxious weed control across the Preserve is occurring, as cattle graze the western field of reed canary grass. The Land Bank provided replacement parts for the broken solar water pump, the lessee installed them, and the pump is now repaired.

Frazer Homestead: Noxious weed control and a cattle grazing are happening here too!

Kellett Bluff: The County landing craft we have used for boat access is no longer a viable option, and Doug is working on solutions. After two years, a permit for a mooring buoy has advanced from DNR to Army Corps.

King Sisters: Noxious weed control efforts continue, and sheep and cattle graze these fields.

Limekiln: Shauna located and vacated two sets of campers. Construction activities have resumed on the NW neighboring parcel. Last fall, these activities encroached onto the Preserve and a letter was issued. Although the landowner never responded, contractors currently onsite indicated they were aware of the official boundary.

Middlewood: Neighbors requested noxious weed control adjacent to their property line, and Charlie responded.

Mount Ben: Staff joined the SJPT for annual monitoring. Shauna labored aside the WCC crew to eradicate hawthorn here (and at Westside) and is working with neighbors and the SJPT to coordinate a cross-boundary control effort.

Mount Grant: Doug met with several partners included in DNR's Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant to further strategical planning. Jacob worked with a volunteer to source material, fabricate, and install safe cistern hatches. San Juan Island Fire responded to a small wildfire on the neighboring property, and it was quickly extinguished. Planning efforts for the fall hunting are also underway.

Westside: The return of Southern Resident killer whales brought enthusiasts to the Preserve and over forty vehicles were parked haphazardly along Westside Road. Staff discovered a felled tree and presume it was cut in order to improve views from an unsanctioned party site. Reports of car camping have likely led to the recent request by members of the public as well as the Sheriff's Department to post "No Camping" signs in the area.

Zylstra Lake: The eight-inch water siphon was successfully installed (Photo 8). It will be used to convey water downstream. The vendor, HD Fowler, generously donated materials for the project. Jacob led the SJI Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) for eight days, and together they accomplished a remarkable amount of trail work (Photo 9). Four hundred feet of rebar was installed, 150 juniper logs were placed, and during that hot process, the crew drank approximately ten gallons of water a day! Volunteers will be sought after for the additional work. The current lessee mulch-cut the fields that were not already harvested for hay, and a field trial is being conducted, in collaboration with the WSU, to explore methods for improving compacted pasture soils. The juvenile eagle has fledged and the trail nearby the nest was reopened.

DISTRICT 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Kayla Seaforth

Coffelt Farm: Peter initiated the 'Lease Rate and Reserve Study,' and has been supporting Fred Strickland and Associates in their process. Already they've measured and photographed all the buildings on the Preserve except for the Coffelt residence, as this building was not included in the study. The Kaleidoscope Forest School succeeded in purchasing a 7.4-acre parcel to use as a base for outdoor classes and, therefore, won't require space on the Preserve as was previously planned.

Coho: A summertime fish monitoring team assembled; Kayla, Skyler and Peter, volunteer Jerry Weatherman and biologist Jenny De Groot all participated in the recent stream survey (Photo 11). Volunteer filmmaker Michael Noonan also wrapped up footage of Jenny's work in Cascade Creek.

Representative Debra Lekanoff held an informal meeting at Olga Park to discuss further protections for native fish populations in Cascade Creek. Approximately 40 people attended. Residents of Olga and Doe Bay, Councilperson Cindy Wolf, SJC Salmon Recovery Coordinator

Sam Whitridge, Tulalip Tribal member Patti Gobil, and representatives of the Orcas Women's Coalition all joined Lekanoff for the discussion, and topics ranged from water conservation in the surrounding communities, the future of Rosario Resort and the ongoing efforts to secure more flow for fish during the summer and fall.

Deer Harbor: Kayla led the Orcas YCC crew for four days and they improved stretches of trail that become muddy during the wet season. The YCC hauled and spread around seven yards of gravel and developed a turnpike.

Turtleback Mountain: At Peter's request, Rainshadow Consulting removed a dead conifer leaning over the North Entrance parking lot. The Turtleback Mountain Preserve Forest Plan is complete, and Peter is incorporating forest management recommendations into the Stewardship and Management Plan. Planning discussions with DNR and their partners in the Landscape Scale Restoration grant continues, and the decision was made to delay implementation until early 2022.

President Channel: SJPT staffers Rob Roy McGregor and Meghan Howard performed annual monitoring of the conservation easement. Peter joined the excursion and extended the invitation to a local, John Starke, who had inquired about visiting the kiln a few months earlier. John Starke's son came along too, and as if on cue, when the group paused to take in the view of the sea, a humpback passed by and added a bit of magic to the scene (Photo 12).

DISTRICT 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow

General: Amanda has been formatting properties and preserves into the Landscape Conservation software, which will be a new tool for all LB staff.

FB Spit: Amanda hosted the Lopez YCC. They collected Italian arum seed heads and constructed wire cages. The wire cages will be used to protect field mustard in plots set aside for the island marble butterfly. After the plots are planted with field mustard, more fencing will be installed. The aluminum ramp was promptly removed following last month's public auction and the last lingering remnant of the old dock, which is located out in the field, is scheduled for deconstruction this fall.

Tombo: The DNR shoreline crew filled up their boats with creosote logs that had drifted ashore. Intern Skyler assisted with follow-up weed control of meadow knapweed (Photo 13).

Lopez Hill: Neighbors reported that hikers were parking on the road and using an informal trail that neared their house. Amanda responded to this as well as to inquiries about hunting. She posted 'No Hunting' signs because, even though the State has made changes to hunting season

and allows hunting to begin on August 1st for those that acquired second deer tags, the season for Lopez Hill will remain limited to September 1st -October 31st.

Spencer Spit: Amanda installed a gate across Nickel Lane. She performed annual monitoring, assessed possible trail routes, and located and mapped the bald eagle nest, which is in a large, fire-scarred Douglas fir on the bluff (Photo 14).

Upright Head: The YCC helped here to thin and cage small trees, control noxious weeds and improve the trail.

Photos



Photo 1. Skyler, a summer intern from Skagit, admires a large madrona on property protected by a CE.



Photo 2. Wayne Hare poses with a few staff that participated in the Civil Conversations Project.



Photos 3-4. Cedars excavated by pileated woodpeckers on a conservation easement. From a wildlife perspective, cavity laden trees are some of the most valuable in the forest.



Photo 5. Gooseneck barnacles found along the shoreline of a conservation easement.



Photo 6. Salish Seeds Project nursery shed is under construction, with seashore lupine (*Lupinus littoralis*) and stonecrop (*Sedum lanceolatum*) plugs in the foreground.



Photo 7. Doug discusses geography, natural history and stewardship with OMRT Volunteer Tom Donnelly on Cady Mountain.



Photo 8. Jacob with the San Juan Island Youth Conservation Corps at Zylstra Lake Preserve



Photo 9. Eco Earthworks and Mainstay Marine midway into siphon installation at Zylstra



Photo 10. After two postponed projects, San Juan's crew cut out early and celebrated Jacob and Shauna's six-months and Charlie's five years with the Land Bank by catching spot prawns.



Photo 11. Michael Noonan captures more footage of the conservation efforts on Cascade Creek.



Photo 12. SJPT staff and the Starke's take in the sea view from President Channel Preserve.



Photo 13. Skyler's meadow knapweed control work at the Tombolo.



Photo 14. A menagerie of bones below the eagle roost at Spencer Spit.

Coffelt Farm

Questions for Lum Farm

June 2021

Financial:

The question has arisen, is it possible for a single tenant farmer to make a living wage on Coffelt Farm. In your opinion, is that possible, what does it take to make it happen, and what if any support from the Land Bank is required?

According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator for San Juan County, a home with two adults and two children requires a living wage of \$87,970 before taxes. Our income has increased since being at Coffelts, but we are not near this MIT suggested amount. That said, we are pleased with the growth of the farm and watching all of our hard work result in rising income. We see the potential of reaching a secure level for the farm.

The relationship between community and local food production has risen to the spotlight this year, and we have grown to meet demand. With this increased production level we have worked hard to find a balance between costs and efficiency of scale, creating value-added products, and marketing. We are continually reaching for a fair exchange of our (and our employee's) labors with the income gained from the farm.

The Land Bank can offer support in keeping clear and open lines of communication, working together to problem solve issues, and maintaining a positive outlook. Having a point person for communications has been very helpful. We have had a very positive experience working with Peter and Charlie on the myriad issues that arise here on the farm.

Please share all you are willing to share of your finances at CF during your tenure. A detailed financial summary (expenditures / gross & net income) covering the past year would be ideal.

We were able to secure funding from two different grants in 2020 (Farm Fund, \$30,394; EDC grant, \$3298), and one in 2021 (WSDA Agritourism Grant, \$15,000). These grants keep us above water. We are able to pay all our bills, pay our employees and meet our expenses, even with the rising cost of farm help, feed, supplies, and ferries.

The Farm Fund grant in particular gave us a boost to hire Mandy Troxel, who revamped our website and online ordering system. Additionally, she maintains communications with our

customers through social media and newsletters. She was able to put in place marketing systems that would sustain our growth even after the grant amount was reached. We are not making a big profit, but we are in the black, and are optimistic that with this momentum we can continue to grow.

Another lens through which to view our financial picture of the past two years is of course through this Pandemic.

When we took on the lease at Coffelt Farm, we were mainly thrilled to be able to manage our farm all on one site, rather than on a number of scattered sites, which was an inefficient circumstance costing time and money. Our priorities were consolidating our farm, and reassessing scale.

We considered the on-site farm stand a great asset in promoting our food and work. We continued to bring our goods to the farmers market. The goat dairy was a goal we had already been working toward, and we were focused on establishing the dairy as a large part of our farm income.

Then COVID hit, and it was a huge re-ordering of circumstances and priorities. Our farm was recognized as an essential service, and demand increased enormously. Due to pandemic-based hurdles, our dairy could not get licensed until mid July, months after we expected to start. Visitors to the farm were discouraged. Everything went virtual..... except for the animals and the work on the ground, and we were extremely short staffed. We lost a lot of income due to all these factors.

Fast forward one year, and we look back on a transformation that has been ultimately very positive. We took as many services as we could online, setting up a website and online ordering system with contactless pickup. We manage a growing email list that includes newsletters with pre-order forms and inventory news. Many of these services will not go away even after we are through the pandemic.

We have developed an incredible working partnership with the Orcas Food Bank, more than a dozen restaurants and the local grocery stores and co-op. The Food Bank in particular has been extremely successful in securing grants that extend support by purchasing from island farms. Programs such as One Canoe, SFMNP, Islands Grown Ebt cards and the food hub have made eating locally accessible to most islanders. We have orders coming in every day through the website. As visitors are welcomed back on site, we have offered tours of the farm, which provides increased income through the tourist trade.

I will attach the profit and loss for our farm business for 2020 and the first half of 2021.

The cost of the lease is intended to be a balance between helping the LB recover its expenses for maintenance and upgrade with a reasonable cost that does not exceed the budget of the farmer. What do you consider to be a reasonable range of annual rent for Coffelt Farm?

It really depends on what the land bank is offering for maintenance, repair and upkeep. The Land Bank could have a high lease rate and offset it with a work trade/maintenance agreement.

Or, the lease rate could remain lower and the tenant would be responsible for upkeep and maintenance projects that arise. It should be noted that due to the economics of small farming, our farming model would not be viable if the net lease rate is raised very much.

Having a farmer lease the land saves the Land Bank a great amount of stewarding time and expense.

Lease Term:

What in your opinion is an ideal length of lease for the next Lessee of Coffelt Farm? Please explain.

Five years (at a minimum), with the option to extend in five year increments.

Farming is all about the long-view. A farm needs time to get established, work on systems and allow time to grow to its maximum potential. *We wouldn't wish a year to year lease on any farmer.* Not only is it an insecure position for a family, but farming is not a year-to-year venture. Planning for sustaining and restorative cycles for soil, pasture and animal management happens throughout the seasons and over the course of many years. A short term lease does not benefit the farmer or the land.

If we were to consider an initial lease term with a lessee for 5 years to take us through the Land Bank renewal, with subsequent leases in 12-year increments, in your opinion is a 5-yr lease term long enough to make it worth it for a single farmer?

Perhaps there could be a clause in there stipulating that the lessee could have the option of being considered first in line for the next lease if things are working well for SJCLB and the farmer. That way, a successful farm could continue and there would be an opt out if things were not satisfactory.

Leasing:

What if any areas of the interim lease have you found to be challenging or problematic?

A short term lease has been stressful for our farm and family. The uncertainty of our future has made it difficult to make decisions, as farming requires extended planning. There is always the underlying current of wondering if we will have to uproot our farm and move. We spend time weighing different alternative site options when frankly we would rather be investing that brainpower into where we are.

We have also found the process of infrastructure upkeep and upgrades cumbersome. (Examples would be installing gutters and lights on buildings, electrical issues and plumbing.) Projects that are beyond the scope of the stewards currently require bidding and a lengthy approval process. We are finding that any work requiring an outside contractor is slow, expensive and often of questionable quality.

What suggestions do you have for a long term lease agreement that is different from the interim lease?

The most helpful option on a long term lease agreement would be to enable the lessee to do basic maintenance and repairs that at this time are designated for the Land Bank to manage. Perhaps there is a way to track and manage projects, with the cost being deducted from the monthly lease amount. There could be an approval process in place enabling the Land Bank to have the final say about who does projects, or whether they are possible. The lessee could perform and bill for repairs and upgrades as approved by the Land Bank.

Ag community

As a lessee on CFP, do you consider yourselves in competition with other local farmers?

On one hand, the answer is yes. Farms are businesses, and therefore compete with each other. That being said, we are not motivated by competition, but have always enjoyed working with other farmers. Farmers support each other so that we can all offer the highest quality products possible. We share the same goals: feeding our families and community.

There is (and will always be) more demand for locally raised foods than a single farm can produce. It benefits all of us to have multiple farms growing and marketing their preferred products. Our one farm is not enough to meet demand for locally grown and processed meats. There are no other licensed dairies at this time on Orcas Island (though there is certainly a market for it). We set our prices to reflect the cost of production, and do not undercut or competitively price our products.

As a lessee on CFP, do you consider yourselves as having an advantage to other local farmers?

It is true that CFP is a wonderful location with existing infrastructure. The growth of our farm business today is augmented by this special place. However, a great venue does not always ensure success.

We were not given access to the previous customer database of Coffelt Farm Stewards. We work from our own established connections. Many of our customers, including wholesale clients, followed us to this new location, and would very likely follow us to another. We nurture our customers through hard work, education and generosity. We believe that our labor, ethics and outreach is why we are successful. This would be true no matter where we were located.

How could Coffelt Farm Preserve further benefit the broader Ag community?

Coffelt Farm Preserve holds great potential for agricultural opportunities. It is well suited for classes, research and more (as it has proven in the past).

CFP would be an ideal spot for the San Juan Islands Food Hub if ever needed. There is also potential for its use as a farm implement and tool library, though there would be a fair amount of logistics (such as admin and insurance) that would need to be addressed. It could provide the space for a swap meet between local farms (and become a well-loved community event).

During our tenure, we have enjoyed mutually beneficial partnerships with multiple island organizations, including farmers. For example, we have carried produce from Morningstar Farm, Alala farm, and other local growers. We have hosted a pop-up location for Matt's Fresh Fish (Friday Harbor), and been the pickup site for Fabled Flora's flower CSA. We are always on the look-out for additional partnerships such as these, and part of the reason is that we have enough space to share.

In a broader sense, CFP holds an immense opportunity to showcase the real difference that can be made when food is produced on the island. In this time of climate change, pandemic, and economic uncertainty, maintaining CFP as a food growing source for the islands seems imperative: environmentally, economically and educationally.

Viability:

What do you consider to be the biggest challenge/challenges for a successful farm operation on CF?

Farming is a venture susceptible to weather and other natural challenges, water availability, soil and pasture health. It is figuring out the water systems for irrigation, the input and labor costs (fencing, feed, equipment, etc) and having enough labor to support and sustain it. All of these are substantial challenges.

To successfully farm here (or anywhere), farmers have to look at the available resources and opportunities and be adaptable. Farmers need to look at their operation on a full year scale and

beyond, so that harvest schedules work with the constraints of infrastructure and nature. For us, it has been challenging to make a farm plan while not knowing how long our tenure here would last, as it takes months to years for our livestock to grow.

This summer, amidst the drought and limited water for irrigation, the garden is suffering. Until there is a guaranteed water supply for a market garden (and enough labor to cultivate it), this scenario is likely to continue.

If farm operations were to continue at the same/similar capacity as they have under your tenure, what would you expect the need to be for hired farm workers - i.e. how many ideally for a season would be needed – ideally and minimally?

At our current production level (which we plan to sustain), we need about 7 full time employees during spring/summer; during the fall/winter we need 4-5 full time employees.

We have managed our operations thus far with 4 full time employees (including ourselves) and a varied number of part time help. Much of this was because of financial strain due to Covid. We have just added one more full time employee, but are losing our summer help. As with any Orcas business, employment is a challenge.

If/when the irrigation water right permit is secured, what if any changes would you consider making to farm operations?

If/when the irrigation water right permit is secured, we would consider investing more time and attention to a market garden. This could include the hiring of a garden manager. On a minimal scale, we would like to add back some of the produce we have specialized in in the past, such as garlic and beans.

Environmental

Soils - please share any knowledge/opinions regarding the soil condition/potential. What has been done to improve the soils during your tenure, and in your opinion what are the immediate and long term activities needed to improve and enhance the soil quality?

It is in the best interest of the farmer to improve soils, but it is time consuming and expensive. The current conditions widely vary from poor to excellent. We are managing the soil using on farm composting and livestock rotations. With the chickens on pasture, for example, we are bringing in a large amount of additional inputs that are spread on the field through their feed program.

We have selected a different field each year to run our chicken tractors over (moving many twice a day). In this way we are able to add a consistent amount of nutrients to an entire pasture over the course of the season. The results have been excellent, with better grass and forage growth.

Additionally, the compost generated through normal farming activities is managed and spread directly on to the fields. We have seen dramatic improvement in some of the fields that have been top dressed with our compost.

It is a slow process to improve soils. We are choosing to do it in an organic and sustainable manner.

In your opinion, how should responsibilities towards soil health be divided between lessee and LB?

It is the responsibility of the lessee to keep the soils in good condition and to improve them. I feel that if the Land Bank spent money toward improving the soils, there are other farmers who would view that as an unfair advantage.

How can the Land Bank best support and incentivize farm lessees to utilize best management practices and stewardship of ag and environmental resources on the farm i.e. soils, forage, water quality and quantity, sensitive habitats, etc. ?

Perhaps offering some type of compensation, such as a lease rate reduction, for improvements made to CFP resources above and beyond normal farming activities. The Land Bank currently supports composting and waste management projects such as the heavy use area. Funding for additional winter containment areas is another possibility, to facilitate healthy watershed and pasture areas. Other options include keeping lease rates low or offering incentives for best management practices, and having outside assessments by the Extension Agent or Conservation District. The Land Bank staff and lessee would need to work at keeping communication lines open, working together to identify and address sensitive habitats, etc.

Infrastructure

If you were putting together a building and infrastructure maintenance and improvement plan, what are the most important and largest items it would include? Please don't include anything that would be a significant expansion of existing facilities, but do include anything that is in need of repair, near the end of its service life, marginally functional, deficient, etc.

The electrical issues are the most important to address. The CFP electricity needs to be repaired and permitted. This is essential to enable the lessee to actually use the facilities as part of their business (such as with the dairy). There must be the option of getting the proper approvals and permits.

Making sure the **water systems** are functional. Some of that work could potentially be done by the lessee, depending on if they are licensed and bonded.

Fencing: This is something that would work well for a lessee to build/repair current fences in exchange for rent costs. Since the lessee cannot take the fences when they go, it would make sense for the LB to pay for materials. Identifying the critical fencing areas is a dialog between LB staff and the lessee.

What infrastructure improvements would improve/increase/diversify long-term production?

- Water access at the shop/farm stand building.
- A bathroom/bathhouse by the farmstand and LB office instead of a portapotty.
- If ever needed, Coffelt Farm Preserve could be a great centrally located place for the Food hub, and depending on the future lessee is worth consideration. If this is the case, a walk in cooler would be needed.

Are there any current safety items on the farm that still need to be addressed?

Electrical updates/maintenance

In your opinion is there a need for additional housing on the farm for the single farmer model? Year round or seasonal?

Our experience here has been unusual due to Covid. Pre-covid, we had considered having farm interns come for seasonal work. These interns would have needed housing.

With Covid, the intern option was taken off the table, and we instead hired islanders who were already established in the area. The benefit is that we have highly qualified year round employees who are not going anywhere, thus decreasing time spent training a revolving crew.

The flip side of that is that our costs are much higher, as interns are often paid substantially less in exchange for room and board. With more housing options, one could hire interns for seasonal work, though the tiny house is currently a seasonal housing option. We can't guess the housing needs of other lessees.

Any other infrastructure thoughts?

As we are in a short term lease, we have found our way to successfully farm with what is currently available. We have focused our investments on portable items, like hen houses on trailers, chicken tractors, portable fencing and equipment that we can take with us or sell if we do not get a long term lease. It seems that with good communication, additional infrastructure is possible.

Community benefits:

Besides the sacrifice area, what areas of the farm do you see as possible for shared space/resources/equipment with other farmers or community members, without affecting a lessee's ability to safely and efficiently operate the farm?

The slaughter site is a designated area for shared farmer use, and that is working well. Power and water access is there.

The poultry processing equipment is available for use and has been used both on and off site by other farmers. We have been processing poultry twice a month from May to November since leasing the farm, and have taught many beginning farmers how to use the equipment and process poultry.

As mentioned prior, there is potential for a tool/implement lending site. Currently the Land Bank or CFS owns mowers, a manure spreader, a post hole auger, plows, and disc that could be used in a lending program. Management of equipment sharing could be by the lessee or the Land Bank/Conservation District.

Education is one of our passions, and we have found many ways to use CFP to benefit the community. The "classbarn" is the open shop area by the farm stand, and was named as such by the 4th through 7th graders of Salmonberry School. It served for the entire 20/21 school year as their outdoor covered classroom, and their "Farm Fridays" were full of chores and farm-based activities. This was a very positive experience all around, and the classbarn can easily be made available again. Having parking and electricity made it workable. Water and a port-a-potty upgrade would make it even better.

This summer we began to offer guided farm tours for locals and visitors. These tours range from kids seeing farm animals up close for the very first time to in-depth questions from seasoned homesteaders. We have also created a "self guided farm walk," where visitors can safely meet chickens, goats, Annabelle the pig and chicks. There are tourists who are delighted to see the

animals, and local families come repeatedly. This feature is free and accessible to whomever is interested.

We have fostered mutually-beneficial partnerships with many island organizations. In addition to the farmers and the kids of Salmonberry school mentioned earlier, we have led tours with every island preschool during the spring (baby season!), hosted a field trip for Compass Health counselors and kids, and most recently provided a venue for Brook Meinhart's Art Camp. If we are able to hold the Christmas Tree sales again this year, we hope to partner with local schools as a venue for their fundraising, such as hosting the Montessori wreath sale, bake sales, etc. We also look forward to partnering with local pop up foodies, such as having Brea Currey of Seabird Bake Shop sell apple cider donuts during the Farm Tour.

We love our community and the possibilities are endless. That said, the amount of outreach and community benefit will greatly depend on the lessee's goals and farm plan.

How much land (number of acres) on the property could be taken out of a lessee's operations and be used for something else without detracting from farming goals? Examples: market garden to incubate new farmers, orchards, community gardens, an educational area for the general public.

The answer to this question is dependent on the lessee and their farm plan. No matter what the scenario, questions regarding water use and availability are sure to arise. The more you divide up the space, the more it necessitates management and infrastructure upgrades.

Where on the farm would other uses such as a market garden or educational patch be the most complimentary to current farming operations?

This question depends on water availability and fencing. There is limited water for market gardening or an educational patch, regardless of where it's located. Currently the lessee is responsible for the majority of the OPALCO bill each month. There are many logistics regarding how billing would be divided if there is a need for electricity, and who would manage these resources overall.

How would a trail through some sections of the farm affect your farm operations?

A trail could be a nice addition to the property, offering access to folks in a controlled manner. There would need to be fencing, signage and other assurances that people (and dogs) would keep to the trail, for their safety and the safety of our livestock. Parking might be an issue, and it might be wise to think about having access control (ie. hours/days when open).

Describe the type of community outreach efforts/projects you've conducted, and approximate time spent.

It is difficult to quantify the amount of time spent on outreach efforts and projects. It is not an exaggeration to say that collectively, Lum Farm spends a fair portion of each day communicating with people from various organizations or in an educational realm. As mentioned earlier, we believe strongly in education, and strive to incorporate it in as many aspects of our farm as possible.

Here is a partial list of the island organizations with whom we have worked:

- Orcas Island Food bank
- 4H
- One Canoe program
- Island Schools: Salmonberry, the Montessori School, Kaleidoscope and Forest School, Children's House.
- The Winter Christmas tree sale brought in proceeds for the Community Resource Center, Salmonberry, Kaleidoscope, Children's House and the Montessori School.
- Compass Health
- San Juan Islands Farm Tour
- Brook Meinhart's Art Camp
- Farmer's Market
- Free Self-guided Farm Tours
- Paid and Unpaid farm consultations: sharing chicken house designs, livestock management assistance, etc.
- Working/Educational opportunities for island teens (we have had nearly a dozen different teens come to the farm this summer).

We recommend that you visit our "2020 year in review" for a better look into what kind of impact we have tried to have with our island community:

<https://www.lumfarmllc.com/post/2020-the-lum-farm-year-in-review>

We understand there have been some research trials during your tenure, please describe the trials and outcome/status.

- WSU fertility - Brooke Brower will have results soon
- no till drill seeding vs broadcast seeding; This was a non scientific subjective evaluation which found minimal advantage to no till, and big gains by generous compost spreading.
- The Land Bank has done herbicide trials

- The Weed Board did a thistle rust trial.

Communication

Do you have any ideas how to streamline and improve communication between lessee and LB?

Having a point person for communications has been very helpful. We try to maintain a climate of being receptive to asking and answering questions, open mindedness and problem solving together. We are holding on to our positive outlook!

Other

How do you envision the long-term future of CF?

We believe that maintaining this historic farm as working farmland is meaningful and essential to our community and environment. Coffelt Farm Preserve holds a tremendous opportunity to foster resiliency and relevancy in local food production. We have relished being part of this chapter in its nurture and management, and hope to continue in the future.

Are there any other thoughts or ideas you would like to add?

We are extremely proud of what we have been able to accomplish over our two years at Coffelt Farm Preserve. We have worked very, very hard, and are thrilled with the feedback we are receiving from both new and long-time customers. Partnering with the Land Bank, this land, our animals and our community during historic times has been deeply fulfilling. At the very least, we hope that the last two years have been a positive glimpse of what the future can hold.

Zylstra Lake Preserve | Algal Blooms May Prevent Swimming

Posted on sanjuanupdate.com July 17, 2021 at 5:30 am



Cyanobacteria bloom at Zylstra Lake in October 2018. San Juan County Land Bank, Contributed.
By Doug McCutchen, Preserve Steward, San Juan County Land Bank

This is the first in a series of articles describing the background of Zylstra Lake Preserve and the work that is going on to develop a long-term stewardship and management plan for the property. This article focuses on recreational access to the reservoir.

Zylstra Lake Preserve is easily the most complex project the San Juan County Land Bank has taken in its 30-year history.

The property is currently open to access, operating under an interim management plan.

Based on research, the Land Bank has elected to move slowly on the question of water access.

Sanctioning swimming access seems irresponsible and boating access is complicated by changes in water level and the potential of some simple contact-based health impacts.

In the short term, we are asking the community to refrain from water access and to be careful around the water.

Please keep your pets on a leash and do not allow them to swim or drink the water.

Fishermen are urged to be cautious when handling or consuming fish and are encouraged to wash their hands after fishing, especially when algal blooms are visually present.

Water Access

Water is the most important element for creating and sustaining life on the planet. Perhaps it is this innate dependence and deep biological connection with water that draws us to water for recreation. Whether scenic views, boating, or swimming, water is often at the center of where we seek our literal re-creation.

Water is also at the center of complexity at Zylstra Lake management as there is overlapping interest in recreational, agricultural and ecological use and connection to this valuable and scarce resource.

A small day-use area with swimming and boating access was part of the early vision for Zylstra. Although this level of use is a bit beyond the typical scope of the Land Bank's "low-intensity recreation" mandate, there was consensus within the Land Bank Commission that the recreational need for this type of water access on the island is high.

The intention to move forward with this plan was elevated enough that the Land Bank began exploring a potential partnership with other agencies who might help manage this more intense use while we simultaneously began a series of environmental assessments of the property.

Algal Blooms

Our first inkling that there might be some management challenges came in the form of algal bloom reports, including the photograph taken by a local pilot and photographer Chris Teren.

Staff members began assembling research on algal blooms, especially cyanobacteria – a blue-green algae that matched observations. The following year, samples of the algae were sent for laboratory analysis when the blooms began in summer. The results confirmed the presence of potentially harmful types of cyanobacteria.

Around the same time, biologists working on an assessment of the property returned results of tests showing abnormally high levels of phosphorus, nitrogen, and related nutrient.

The source of these compounds is not known with any certainty but likely includes several sources. These include feces from hyperabundant Canada goose population, legacy agricultural inputs from the property itself as well as upstream operations, and leaky septic systems, in addition to general erosion and pollutants.

The combination of these nutrients and the shallow, warm water of the lake create optimal conditions for cyanobacteria to thrive. Disturbance of sediment, as might be expected from recreational activities, releases suspended nutrients, increasing the likelihood of cyanobacteria blooms.

So what is the big deal with these blooms? Cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms have serious health consequences for humans and other animals. Mild reactions might include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, sore throat, swollen lips, blisters, dermatitis, or other maladies. More serious reactions include pneumonia or death.

In our region, a number of water bodies have reported cyanobacteria blooms, some of which have resulted in the death of dogs who swam or waded into the water.

Management-wise, there is little available for the Land Bank to do to improve the situation or monitor for blooms. Neither removal of nutrients nor significantly decreasing the temperature of the reservoir are feasible.

Accurate monitoring requires the collection of water samples and sending them to a lab in Tacoma for analysis – a process that takes several days. Meanwhile, the severity of blooms can change in a matter of hours. Conditions that can give rise to blooms are also anticipated to increase.

Lowering the Reservoir

Following a structural safety review of the earthen dam by the Washington State Office of Dam Safety, the Land Bank was directed to lower storage level of the reservoir by 4 feet.

This, combined with drawdown for agricultural uses, will result in the reservoir lowering an additional 4 to 6 feet than it has in recent memory, reducing the size of the reservoir by up to a third. Lowering will contribute to increased nutrient availability and elevated temperatures. In the long term, the impacts associated with climate change and sedimentation will further increase the threat of harmful algal blooms.

Excellent explanation of the complex issues at Zylstra Lake Preserve. This is a great example of rare public outreach by the Land Bank to better educate the public about management issues of our county public lands. We are so fortunate to have the Land Bank hard-working staff protecting these recreational landscapes.

Good Stuff, Doug!

Comment by Steve Ulvi on July 18, 2021

County finance update: Coming out of the pandemic

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Submitted by F. Milene Henley, San Juan County Auditor.

I have always been amazed by four-way stops. Drivers learn as teens to negotiate these tricky, cooperative intersections, and most of us never forget. It's a marvel of social engineering.

This past year has been one giant experiment in social engineering. We all had to learn to behave in ways that were not natural but were necessary to get us all through this painful intersection. Because of San Juan County residents' cooperation and care, our county had the lowest rate of COVID cases in the state and so far (knock on wood), no deaths.

Financially, San Juan County, like all of Washington State, was dealt a blow last March when businesses were closed and people told to stay home. Sales tax plummeted. The County Health Officer's order to close accommodations dealt a further blow. In June, the County had its first month ever in which lodging tax – a component of sales tax – was negative, because of refunds.

Based on the last recession, the County prepared for the worst: reduced sales tax slowed building activity, decreased real estate sales, reductions in other economy-driven revenues. That's not what happened. As soon as accommodations re-opened in mid-June, the economy began to pick up. Cooped-up families found that they could travel to the San Juans, enjoy the outdoors, and still keep their distance from others. Second-home owners moved to their island homes, to work and school remotely, in the relative quiet and safety of the islands. Their presence showed in unexpected ways – solid waste revenue, for example, doubled compared to the previous year. This change is in sharp contrast to what happened during the last recession when solid waste revenue decreased.

The new interest in remote living showed itself in other ways, as well. Rather than dipping, real estate sales soared, giving the Land Bank its best year ever. Building permit revenue exceeded not just budget, but also all previous years.

In addition, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the County to manage the response to the pandemic. Between grant revenue and higher-than-budgeted building revenue, the County's general fund revenue for 2020 ended higher than budget, despite a decline in sales tax revenue.

In 2021, the upward trend continues. Total first-quarter general fund revenues far exceeded all previous years. First-quarter sales tax revenue exceeded past years and all expectations. Building continues strong, and real estate sales are limited only by

inventory. Although we do not yet have final data for the second quarter, these upward trends are clearly continuing. Only interest lags expectation.

One of the big questions facing the county now is how to spend the \$3.4 million (spread over three years) that it will receive from the American Rescue Plan Act. Some additional protective measures, such as those implemented with CARES funds, are already budgeted. Attention to the County's physical plant is needed. A plan to consolidate customer service activities to improve public access to services is being discussed. More possibilities are being considered.

Although San Juan County and many of its economic sectors are thriving, the COVID-induced recession did not hit all sectors equally. Many businesses, particularly restaurants and entertainment venues, are still suffering from the losses of last year. Others are struggling to find staff to re-open. Until in-person school resumes in the fall, many persons formerly in the workplace – particularly women – are finding it necessary to stay home with children rather than return to work.

As the recovery continues, our cooperation is still needed. Businesses still need our support. Some places still require masks. It was our cooperation that got us safely through the past year. If we can successfully navigate this, maybe we can learn to navigate roundabouts as well as we do four-way stops.