

AGENDA

San Juan County Conservation Land Bank Commission

**Members of the public may participate in person at
846 Argyle Ave, Friday Harbor, WA 98250
join virtually by [CLICKING HERE](#)
or by phone @ (360)726-3293 Pin# 92880**

March 17, 2022

8:30 am	Convene
8:30	General Public Comments
8:40	Approve February 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes
8:45	Chair and Commissioners' Reports
8:55	Partner Update – San Juan Preservation Trust
9:00	County Council Update – Christine Minney
9:05	Financial Update
9:10	Director's Report
	○ Strategic Plan Request for Proposals -- ACTION
9:40	Stewardship
	○ False Bay Creek Preserve
	○ Wetland Mitigation Policy
10:10	Break
10:20	Stewardship cont.
	○ Spencer Spit Preserve SMP Final Draft
	○ Land Bank and Tribal Interests Introductory Discussion
10:35	Outreach and Volunteer Report
	○ Upcoming community conversations
10:45	Future Agenda Items
10:50	Executive session: Acquisition of Real Estate
11:10	Adjourn

Future Agenda Items List

- Staffing – staff to report back at a future meeting
- Traditionally important landscapes and flora and fauna, and access for tribes of the region within current and future preserves
- The Land Bank's collective big dream/goal for the overall resiliency of the islands and the bioregion

The Land Bank Commission May Add or Delete Agenda Items and Projects for Discussion. The Agenda Order is Subject to Change. You are invited to call the Land Bank office at 360-378-4402 for more details prior to the meeting. SJC Code 2.116.070 "All meetings and actions of advisory bodies and their subcommittees shall be open to the public, even where such meetings are not within the purview of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 42.30 RCW, except where the meeting is properly closed for executive session, as provided in RCW 42.30.110"

San Juan County Conservation Land Bank Explanation of Funds

Financial Accounting Background

As a county government agency, the Land Bank works with the County Auditor and the County Treasurer to pay all bills and track revenue and investments. We also complete annual and amended budget(s) each year. All budgets are approved by the Land Bank Commission as an Expenditure and Acquisition Plan and then by County Council in public session **SJC Code 2.120.130**. The Council has the ability to approve or reject budgets, but not change line items.

We operate with two separate funds, the Conservation Area Fund, which we use to pay for the administrative and acquisition aspects of the program and provides the majority of funding to the Stewardship Fund which we use to pay for the property management aspect of the program.

Conservation Area Fund

Conservation Area Fund: (CAF)

Revenue:

REET*

Conservation Futures tax (CFT*)

Interest

Timber Harvest Tax

Other; Grants; Leasehold tax

Expenses:

Administration

Acquisitions

Debt Service and Bonds

Transfers to Stewardship

Investment:

LGIP*

Treasury/Bonds

Stewardship Fund

Stewardship Fund: (STEW)

Revenue

Timed YE transfer from CAF
to the Endowment*

Timed quarterly transfers from CAF
for site enhancements

Other, Grants, Leased property

Salish Seed Project plant material

Interest

Expenses

Administration

Property Mgmt. / Maint.

Site enhancement

Investment:

LGIP

Treasury/Bonds

Definitions:

REET: 1% Real Estate Excise Tax levied on the buyer at the time of sale.

CFT: A small portion of the property tax that was allocated to the Land Bank for acquisition of open space when the Land Bank was created **RCW 84.34.230**. The vast majority of this fund's revenue was bonded through 2036 to enable the purchase of Turtleback Mountain in 2006.

LGIP: Local Government Investment Pool **RCW 43.250.010**

Endowment: Not an actual endowment (acts as a reserve, established by the county to provide funding for the maintenance of acquired real property interest in perpetuity) **SJC Code 2.120.090**

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

Min	\$4,619,503	\$3,097,954
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[illegible]

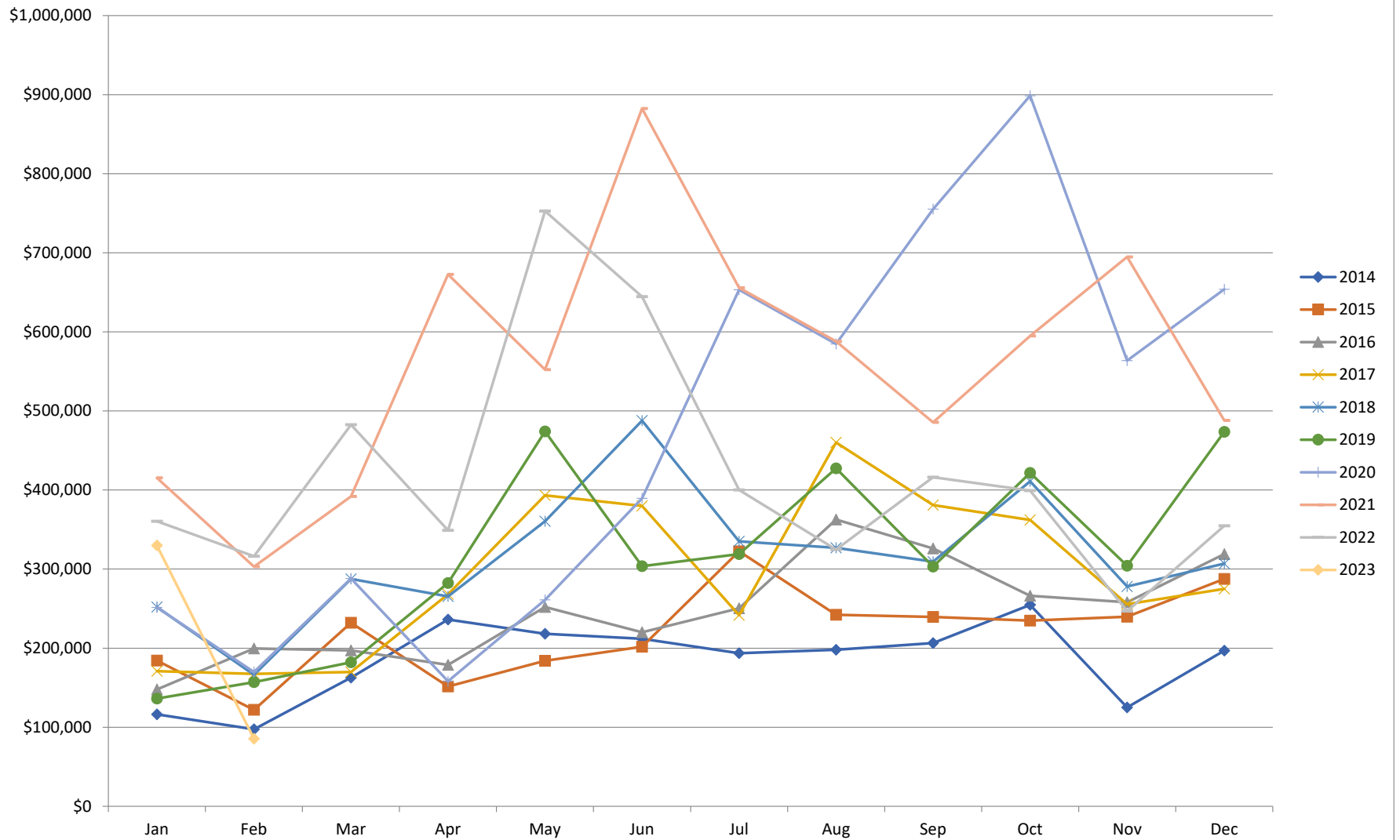
TE Budget Proj(%)	149.73%	101.65%
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YE Budget Proi(%)

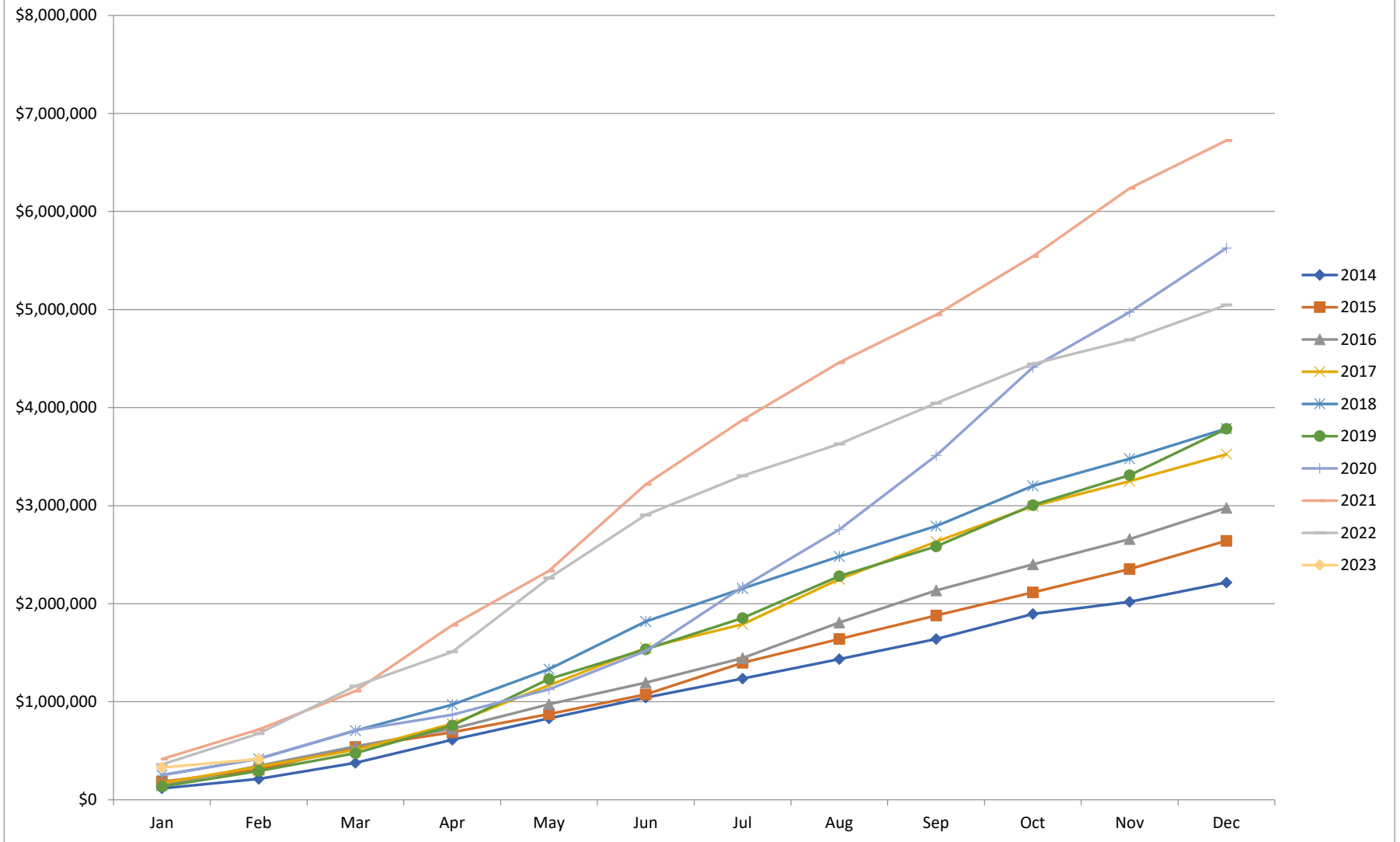
149 73%	101 65%
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100,000 45,500,000

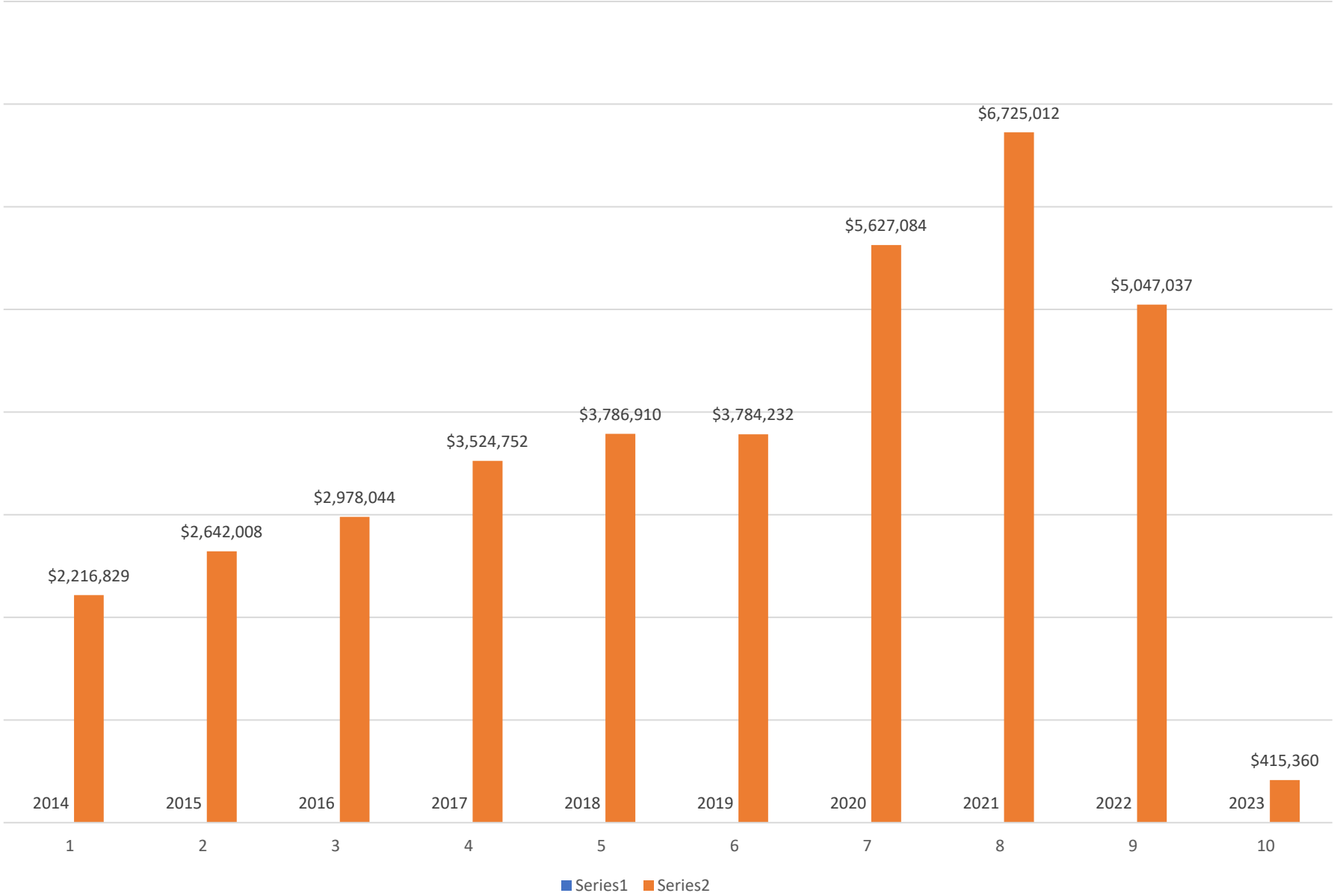
REET by Month



REET by Year



REET by Year Column





Your Taxes: Impact and Value

We are often asked if Land Bank acquisitions “take land off the tax rolls,” resulting in higher property taxes for other landowners. To answer this specific question, yes, but very little. To begin, the taxable value of Land Bank Preserves is less than one half of one percent of the total taxable property in the County (roughly \$55 million of the total \$12.49 billion). If this amount were added back to the total, and the tax rate adjusted to keep the total amount collected the same, it would reduce the annual tax on a \$500,000 property by \$10.00.

ESTIMATE OF IMPACT ON TAXES OF LAND BANK PROPERTY OWNERSHIP	
CURRENT SITUATION	
Total taxable value in the County	\$12,490,694,086 ¹
Average tax rate	\$5.86 per \$1,000 ²
Avg. tax per \$100,000	\$586
Tax on \$500,000 property	\$2,930
Total taxes	\$73,229,162 ³
ADDING LAND BANK PROPERTY BACK TO TAX BASE	
Taxable value of Land Bank property	\$55,000,000 ⁴
Total taxable value with LB properties added	\$12,545,694,086 ⁵
Average tax rate to yield the same total taxes figure	\$5.84 per \$1,000
Avg. tax per \$100,000	\$584
Avg. tax on \$500,000 property	\$2,920
Potential tax reduction per \$100,000 in value	\$2.00
Potential tax reduction on \$500,000 property	\$10.00

¹ SJC Assessor / 2022 Statement of Assessments with taxes to be collected in 2023.

² Calculated based on 2022 Statement of Assessments (Total tax distribution/Total taxable value)

³ SJC Assessor / 2022 Statement of Assessments with taxes to be collected in 2023.

⁴ Estimated based on assessed values, adjusted to current market. Retains tax status of property when purchased, e.g., DFL, ag current use, etc. Does not include former DNR properties as they were already in public ownership. Actual estimate: \$51.2M rounded up to \$55M.

⁵ This does not account for the impact on properties near Land Bank Preserves. Being near conservation land boosts property values by up to 20% according to multiple analyses. With Land Bank Preserves privatized the value of these properties would drop significantly, potentially even cancelling out the expected added value of privatized Land Bank preserves.

STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

MARCH 2023

OVERVIEW

The earliest of singers have started: Red-winged blackbirds, American robins, purple finches. Satinflower is again in bloom at the nursery (Photo 1). Indicators of spring's onset seem to increase by the day, as light lengthens and terrestrial life is further compelled to bloom, migrate, build nests, spawn, or otherwise perform whatever magic they've mastered to ensure that there's a next generation. Needless to say, Conservation Land Bank staff are delighted to witness the season's opening encore, as they work dutifully to update policy documents, protect new plantings, prepare for management plans, attend and organize events. Several staff recently attended the Ag Summit, and many also plan to attend the upcoming Terrestrial Managers Group (TMG) Annual Meeting. – And hope to see some Commissioners there.

OUTREACH

Staff: Tanja Williamson

On March 4th, Tanja was among 17 attendees who braved rain and wind and hiked the Limekiln loop with Shauna and Hobbes, the interpretive specialist for WA State Parks (Photo 2). There was wonderful commentary from both leads, and many happy, albeit wet, attendees. Tanja warmed up the following day and hosted a table at the San Juan Island Volunteer Fair. She has been making strides in booking Conservation Land Bank participation in numerous events such as the summer farmers' market, the County Fair, and the Great Islands Clean-Up. The communication subcommittee met and flushed out rough dates in April, and district-specific topics for the Spring Community Conversations series.

SALISH SEEDS PROJECT

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Aaron and Eliza completed an extensive cost analysis of plant materials produced at the Salish Seeds Project nursery. All seeds, bulbs, and plants that the Land Bank sells are required to be priced so as to reimburse us for the cost of production; no subsidies and no profits are allowed. Thanks to this analysis, there is now strong confidence in the accuracy of plant prices. Several hundred potted plants will be included in the Master Gardeners Native Plant Sale, which wraps up on March 18th. And Margo is returning for a third season as Nursery Assistant. She will start on March 27th.

DISTRICT 1

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

American Camp Trail: Annual monitoring was recently completed. Only a few, small improvements and maintenance activities were identified. Otherwise, the trail is in great shape.

Beaverton Marsh: Members of the ICC crew worked hard to remove spurge laurel from an area nicknamed “Spurgelandia” because of its extreme density on site (Photo 3). An old, barbed wire fence was also removed. Consultation with Tribes was initiated regarding proposed trail improvements, and an invitation to provide input on developing a management plan was also extended. Planning with Island Rec and other partners continues.

Cady Mountain: Staff met with SJPT staff and oriented them to the new addition. The site visit was designed to help them prepare for their upcoming campaign to purchase a conservation easement, and it included discussion of potential provisions to include within the CE such as forest health activities and deer hunting. Trail work has occurred in several areas (Photo 4).

Deadman Bay: Staff are refurbishing old signs with brand new cedar frames.

Frazer Homestead: Charlie and Jacob completed annual monitoring on a nice sunny day of both this preserve and the nearby Anderson property. Brush along the trail corridor got a heavy “haircut.”

Kellett Bluff: A request was received from Whiteswan Environmental to hold an event. Their request, to have up to 50 members of local Tribes and First Nations visit the Preserve, is part of a larger, multi-day event that would also include a visit to SJ Island National Historical Park. Doug is coordinating with partners at the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Preservation Trust, and Nature Conservancy on planning.

Limekiln: Staff cleared downed branches and trees that obstructed the trails.

Middlewood: Staff worked in the island marble butterfly plots. This entailed sowing mustard seed and erecting cages to protect the plants from deer browse.

Mount Grant: Staff cleared trees, which toppled during recent windstorms, from the Newt Pond trail. Land Bank staff teamed up with SJPT staff to remove some snags that were determined to be hazards along a boundary with neighbors, and to admire tiny red caps of *Cladonia* lichen (Photo 5). On April 1st, road access to the summit will resume for both Wednesdays and Sundays from 10:00am-7:00pm.

Zylstra Lake: Island marble butterfly recovery efforts occurred here as well, with staff sowing mustard seed and caging the plots to prevent deer browse (Photo 6).

DISTRICT 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Andrew Jansen

Coffelt Farm: A recent septic inspection identified the need for routine maintenance. This will be completed soon. Pauline Chiquet, Conservation Planner at the SJI Conservation District, is finalizing an Individual Stewardship Plan for the property, which will complement the long-term farm lease.

Eastsound: A jointly prepared, pre-proposal was submitted to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board by Tina Whitman with the Friends of the San Juans. It has been subsequently approved to advance to the next step. If funded, this project would remove the concrete beach structure

that occupies portions of the Preserve and a neighboring private property and restore the shoreline.

Fowler's Pond: Andrew has been caging some of the recently planted trees to help ensure their survival in a portion of the Preserve that has been previously mowed by the neighbor. He has also been working to eradicate weeds, holly and hawthorn, from within the riparian corridor.

North Shore: The Land Bank's consultants delineated wetlands within proposed work areas and continue to refine design plans based on those findings. Peter met briefly with the Director of SJC Community Development, David Williams, to discuss the many permits necessary to provide for public access. Staff will meet with SJPT next week to refine terms and timeline for the conservation easement. Erin has drafted a scope of work for a shoreline assessment. The Land Bank received three quotes for an automated entry gate and selected a reliable, widely used system for installation later this year. Andrew collaborated with Jason Ontjes to begin holly control, under a new agreement with the Noxious Weed Control Board (Photos 7-8).

Turtleback Mountain: A broom pulling effort was initiated across the mountain (Photo 9). Thanks to DNR, an additional \$24,000 in Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant funds will go towards forest thinning and fuels management. Efforts are ongoing to secure DNR cost-share funding to complete a broader, forest thinning effort. Peter has prepared a request for bids for multiple culvert replacements and hopes to pursue this work during the summer.

DISTRICT 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow

FB Spit: King tides and winter storms can arrange driftwood along the shoreline into a grand version of the game of jackstraw. Numerous logs were rearranged in order to clear the beach trail for more easy passage, and efforts to control Arum were initiated.

Lopez Hill: Erin, Aaron and Amanda have been working together to refine a contract for an ecological assessment (EA) of the new addition. The EA will help to inform suitable areas for the

for the proposed new trail. Other steps necessary to support the development of an updated Stewardship and Management Plan (SMP) this year, including a timeline for activities, were identified.

Richardson Marsh: Amanda hosted a bird walk. Water has receded from most of the wetland area so not many dabbling ducks were predicted. However, the forested edge of the Preserve provides opportunities to see passerine species like chickadees. Staff is reviewing areas to establish fencing, pursuing a wetland assessment, and identifying other steps necessary to complete a SMP this year.

Spencer Spit: The public comment period for the final SMP has closed. The Land Bank received four comments. Two respondents expressed appreciation for the plan and access to the area, and two respondents expressed concern related to public access. These concerns centered on potential problems related to irresponsible dog owners, trespass onto a private property, and the instability of the sandy bluffs. Signage to inform visitors about regulations, preserve boundaries and the erosive bluffs are planned. A permit for developing the trail has been submitted, and the agreement with State Parks for maintenance of the Preserve has been approved, and only awaits final signature.

Upright Head: Friends of San Juans submitted a pre-proposal to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to remove rock armoring and concrete from the shoreline. This was project was approved to advance to the next step... and tugboat sank offshore!

Watmough: The ICC is scheduled to remove blackberry thickets, other thorny brambles, and a decrepit greenhouse within the new addition area. A tour of the addition is also scheduled for the afternoon of March 17th.

Photos



Photo 1. Satinflower (*Olsynium douglasii*) blooms at the Salish Seeds Project nursery.



Photo 2. Shauna guides an interpretive walk at Limekiln Preserve.



Photo 3. ICC crew member Noah Link in “Spurgelandia” on Beaverton Marsh Preserve.



Photo 4. A new trail feature at Cady Mountain Preserve.



Photo 5. *Cladonia* lichen at Mount Grant Preserve.



Photo 6. Island marble butterfly plot work at Zylstra Lake Preserve.



Photo 7. Preliminary design for a parking roundabout layout at North Shore Preserve.



Photo 8. Jason Ontjes, the County maven of noxious weeds, at North Shore Preserve.



Photo 9. Anna Campbell, with Blackcap Restoration, pulls broom on Turtleback Mountain.



Photo 10. A modest, small diameter snag serves as a popular roost for hummingbirds and raptors, on CE protected property on Lopez.