

Watmough Addition Preserve

Interim Stewardship and Management Plan



August 2022

San Juan County Conservation Land Bank

350 Court Street No. 6

Friday Harbor, WA 98250



SAN JUAN COUNTY
CONSERVATION
LAND BANK



Watmough Addition, Lopez Island Interim Stewardship and Management Plan

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A. Introduction

The Watmough Addition, located on the southeastern shore of Lopez Island, was long considered as the last unprotected property on Watmough Bay, and one with immense ecological and cultural significance. In February of 2022, the Conservation Land Bank purchased the 11.6-acre property from the Higgins Family Estate. This acquisition completed a conservation area that features approximately 450 acres of protected lands and 1.67 miles of shoreline.

The protection of undeveloped natural areas is a central tenet of the Land Bank's mandate, and establishing interconnected natural areas is one approach to mitigating the global crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.¹ After acquiring a property, the Land Bank creates a Stewardship and Management Plan (SMP) to guide decision-making and work planning, and to promote transparency. SMPs identify future management priorities and summarize annual, five-year, and ten-year maintenance activities and/or improvements. SMPs are adopted by the Land Bank Commission following a public hearing and then ratified by the San Juan County Council, typically as part of the County's budgetary process.

This Interim SMP for the Watmough Addition will temporarily satisfy the above requirements. Interim management periods are often dedicated to gathering pertinent information about a new preserve to aid development of a comprehensive long-term plan, and to eliminate immediate risks to ecological health and human safety. Interim management periods can range from 1-3 years, depending on the complexity associated with a new acquisition.

The interim period for the Watmough Addition may extend two years. During this time, the Preserve's invaluable ecological, cultural, recreational, and historic resources will be assessed; partnership support to offset the costs of acquisition will be sought; and opportunities for public comment regarding long-term management will be provided. Public access will be restricted to guided tours and volunteer events.

Summary of Interim Plan Objectives:

- **To protect and assess the area's natural, cultural and historic resources;**
- **To seek funding partnerships to offset acquisition and management costs; and**
- **To provide avenues for the community and Tribes to engage in long-term stewardship plans.**

¹ The Land Bank's mandate is to "preserve in perpetuity areas in the county that have environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historic, scenic or low-intensity recreational value and to protect existing and future sources of potable water."

B. Preserve Overview

The Watmough Addition encompasses 11.6 acres on the southeastern shoreline of Lopez Island. The property is surrounded by public lands as well as private lands that have been encumbered from further development by conservation easements (Figure 1). Adjacent public lands and trails in the vicinity include 400 acres within the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) San Juan Islands National Monument and 13 acres within the Land Bank's Watmough Bay Preserve. Boulder Island, designated as a San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge, is 500-feet offshore and closed to public access.

The property has scenic views of Watmough Bay, Chadwick Hill, and across Rosario strait to Anacortes and the Cascades. The Preserve features 2,053 feet of rocky shoreline and two pocket beaches, remnant patches of coastal bald/prairie, and a mixed conifer forest. Bald eagles perch on several mature Douglas-fir trees; river otters utilize the nearshore and banks for foraging; and patches of chocolate lilies grow along the headland. This area is also designated as a high priority for salmon recovery within San Juan County.

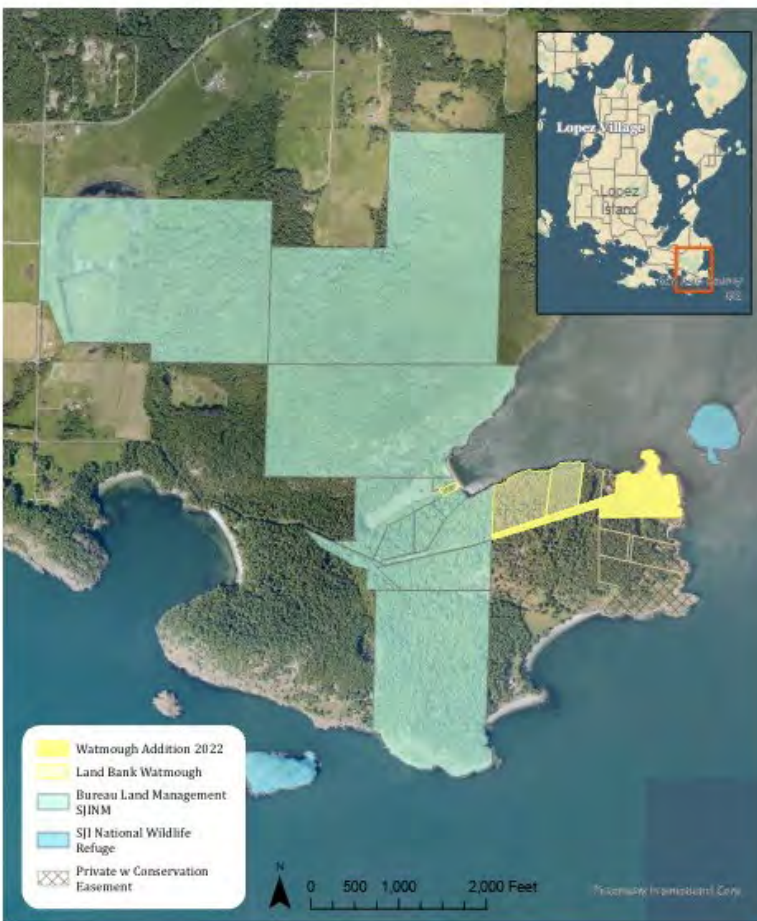


Figure 1. South Lopez Island, Preserve Context

The property is comprised of two parcels. The first parcel is a narrow two-acre strip that runs east to west.² This parcel contains mixed conifer forest and a powerline and connects to existing BLM and Land Bank properties. The bulk of the Preserve (9.6 acres) is on the headland parcel that forms the outer, southeast point of Watmough Bay.³ This shoreline parcel includes a small portion of tidelands, an extensive shell midden, and numerous structures, one of which is the homestead built in 1876 by an early settler, Sampson Chadwick.

This landscape has been home to Coast Salish peoples since time immemorial. Euro-American use of the Preserve area dates roughly to the 1870's. In recent history, including at the time of purchase, the property was occupied and owned by the Higgins Family. The name "Watmough Addition" is considered temporary. A permanent name will be adopted, in accordance with the Land Bank's Preserve Naming Policy, prior to opening the Preserve for public access.

Acquisition History

The Conservation Land Bank acquired the Watmough Addition from the Higgins Family estate in February of 2022. The purchase price was \$2.55 million. Prior to fee-title purchase, the Land Bank explored other avenues of protection as well as partners in funding. However, no agreements could be reached within the seller's timeframe, and pressure to secure the property before market listing necessitated quick action. A competing, private offer was also on the table and fortunately the seller favored conservation.

The Land Bank has been a key player in the protection of Watmough Bay since 1993. Transactions over the years, in the form of fee-title purchase, conservation easements and private donations, have sought to safeguard the area's rich nearshore and marine resources. The original Land Bank Watmough Bay Preserve was roughly .4 acres on the beach donated by the Oles family. In 2007, another nearly 13 acres were added with partnership support from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the San Juan Preservation Trust, and community donations. Subsequent conservation easements encumbered development on the adjacent private lands. The Higgins property was long considered as the last unprotected property on Watmough Bay, and one with extraordinarily high ecological and cultural resource value.

Grant Opportunities: Now that protection has been achieved, the Land Bank will continue to seek opportunities to offset the steep cost of acquisition. To date, grant applications have

² Tax Parcel Number 142113001000

³ Tax Parcel Number 142114001000

been submitted to the State's Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA). If awarded, these grants could potentially fund up to \$1.5 million, or somewhat more than half the purchase price. The SRFB grant application was submitted in June 2022, with a notification date of late 2022. The ALEA grant cycle begins in 2022 and award notifications will occur in late 2023.

Potential Resale: The Land Bank will also continue to explore potential resale of the property to Bureau of Land Management. This strategy, which would utilize the nation's Land and Water Conservation Fund, was discussed prior to the Land Bank's purchase. Resale to the BLM could help the Land Bank recover the full cost of acquisition, and therefore free \$2.55 million for other conservation projects within the County.

The BLM's Resource Management Plan (RMP) is expected to be released in late 2022, and to clarify what activities will be allowed within the San Juan Islands National Monument. The Land Bank will review the RMP and seek public input before any decisions are made related to retainment or resale of the property. This process may take up to three years as more information, including public input, is gathered. During the interim period, activities on the Preserve will seek to align with either path forward.

Infrastructure

As an early homestead with continual residential use, the Watmough Addition possesses a variety of infrastructure including buildings, utilities, and fencing. Determinations about the Preserve's infrastructure will be made as more information is gathered. Maintenance, replacement, and repair of infrastructure can be a significant expense, and one goal of the interim period is to identify and analyze associated costs to inform long-term planning and management.

Structures: Structures on the property include: a 965 square-foot house, a 540 square-foot carport, a shed, chicken coop, outhouse and pumphouse. Many of the structures are old and in need of maintenance, replacement, or removal. The primary building onsite is the former residence associated with the homestead era and the Chadwick family. Preliminary evaluations of the historic cabin are provided in Section E.

Road: Access to the former residence is by a private road. Land Bank staff will use this narrow, graveled lane for maintenance purposes. On a few occasions, this driveway may be used to provide access for guided tours.

Utility Access Easement: A powerline runs through the upper parcel, and OPALCO has an access easement to service these transmission lines.

Well: A drilled well serves the property. Repairs to the well head have been initiated. At this stage, the water system will be maintained.

Preserve Caretaker

The Preserve may benefit from an on-site presence due to its remote location yet proximity to a popular recreation area. During acquisition of the property, the Land Bank initially considered utilizing the cabin as a caretaker residence. While the current condition of the cabin is not suitable for that use, the existing utilities could support a recreational vehicle (RV) or tiny home. During the interim period, a preserve caretaker position may be developed to assist with maintenance, monitoring and outreach. This position may be modeled on similar programs at local State and National Parks, and in the SJI National Monument.

C. Ecological Resource Overview and Objectives

Habitat and resource protection is a guiding principle of the Land Bank's stewardship program. Maintaining or restoring an area's ecological health also typically preserves or enhances its scenic and open space character. The interim management goals for the Watmough Addition are to assess, maintain and develop plans to protect the area's ecological resources. Restoration activities may also be identified and initiated.

The southeastern shore of Lopez Island is known to be a significant area for fish, and among the few in San Juan County that consistently hosts wild, juvenile Chinook from U.S. waters. Watmough Bay currently supports sub-yearling Chinook, pink and chum salmon as well as forage fish. Species data from beach seines at Watmough Bay, set approximately 2,000 feet from the new addition, resulted in a total catch of 53,038 fish from 44 different species.⁴ This included five different species of salmon and three species of forage fish. Forage fish spawn habitat has also been documented at the beach, at the head of Watmough Bay.⁵

The Preserve's nearshore marine environment supports extensive beds of eelgrass and kelp. Its low-bank, rocky shoreline extends for 2,053 feet and pocket beaches have formed on either side of the headland. Pocket beaches are high-value habitat for juvenile salmon

⁴ http://skagitcoop.org/wp-content/uploads/Fish_Summary_for_Watmough_Bay.pdf

⁵ The beach at Watmough Bay is a documented spawning site for surf smelt and currently a one-egg site for Pacific sand lance.

and forage fish; and both beaches provide suitable, potential spawning habitat for forage fish and spawn habitat surveys have been initiated.

The Preserve's terrestrial habitats include: a remnant coastal bald, a small herbaceous wetland, and mixed conifer forest (Figure 2). All show signs of human modification. A mix of native and introduced plant species grow on the headland and a developed area surrounds the former residence and exhibits evidence of previous excavation and grading.

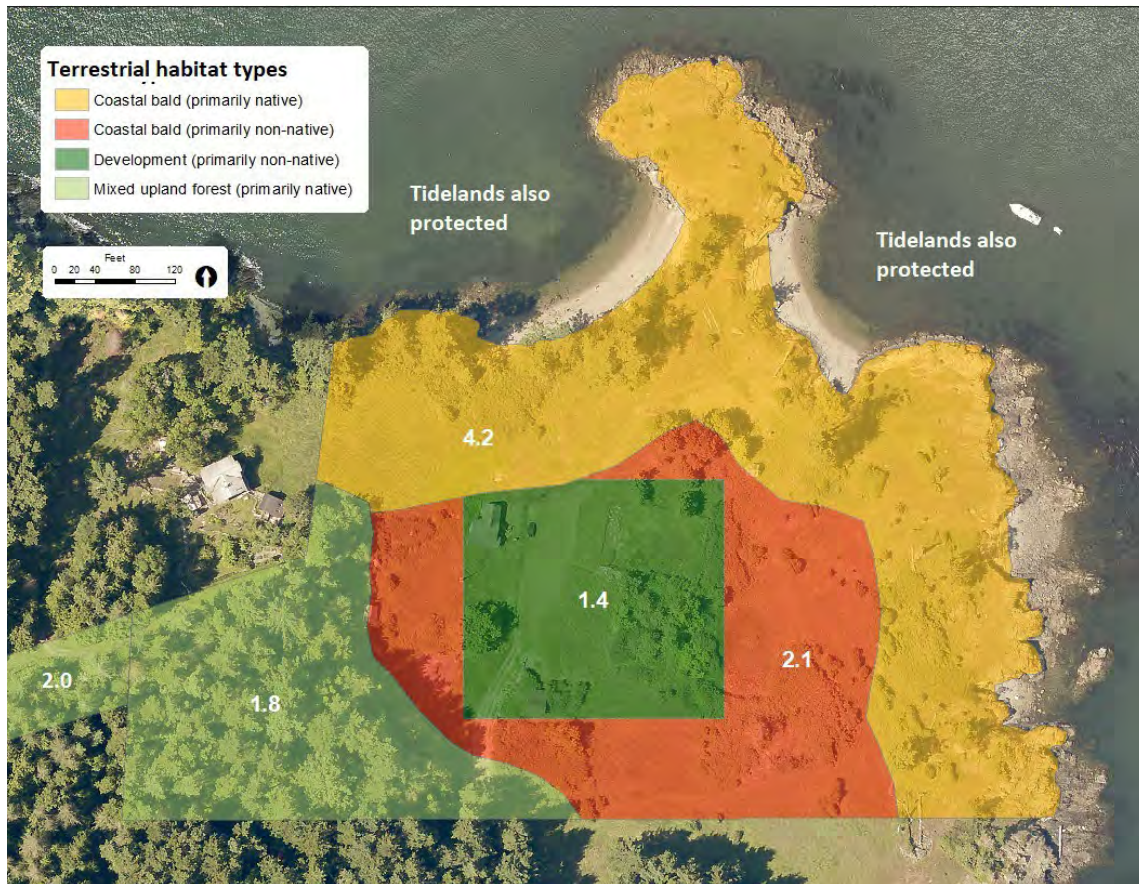


Figure 2. Generalized Habitat Areas for the Watmough Addition

A primary goal for the interim period is to complete ecological assessments that documents species (flora and fauna) and habitats, for both the terrestrial and the marine nearshore, and discuss the important linkages in between. Assessments will identify any sensitive species or features that may require special management consideration, suggest opportunities for restoration or enhancement and list potential impacts from public access and use. Baseline mapping of marine resources, such as the submerged vegetation offshore including eelgrass, kelps, and surfgrass will also be explored.

There are numerous noxious weeds on the Preserve and efforts to control these, in collaboration with the County Noxious Weed Board, will be an emphasis of the interim period. Initial efforts will focus on control of poison hemlock, bull thistle, Canada thistle, blackberry and introduced invasives such as periwinkle (vinca) and sweetbrier rose. In general, the Land Bank's weed management efforts focus in areas of greatest priority and vulnerability, and where actions have the greatest chance of success. Methods follow the Land Bank's Integrated Pest Management approaches.⁶ A vegetation management plan that covers developed and undeveloped areas will be drafted.

Summary of Ecological Resource Objectives:

- **Complete Ecological Assessment(s)**
- **Sample pocket beaches for forage fish spawn habitat**
- **Control noxious weeds**
- **Establish a vegetation management plan for developed and natural areas**

D. Cultural Resource Overview and Objectives

Native American tribes and First Nations of Canada have used the San Juan Islands as part of their ancestral territory since time immemorial. Coast Salish people gathered in the Islands to harvest shellfish and salmon from the sea, camas in the prairies, berries along streams and in forests, and other flora and fauna for food and traditional uses. These ancestral lands and waters are still utilized today, and are protected under inherent, ancestral, and tribal treaty rights.

The BLM has conducted a cultural resource assessment for lands within the San Juan Island National Monument, including Watmough Bay. Other archaeological research indicates that fishing, shellfish harvesting, and hunting were extensive in the area. A reef net site was located at the kelp beds between Boulder Island and the Preserve. A large shell midden exists also on the Preserve, though its full extent is unknown at this time. The Land Bank will consult with a resource specialist and have a cultural resource assessment performed on the Preserve, with the goal being to identify and protect any significant features.

Tribal outreach and engagement are also a high priority during the interim period. Correspondence with associated Tribes, specifically the Lummi, Tulalip, Samish and Swinomish, has been initiated. Communication to date has focused on notification of the

⁶ For further details see the Land Bank's *Guidance for Integrated Pest Management*.

Watmough Addition acquisition, acknowledgement of the importance of this area to Tribes, and an open invitation to participate in future management.

Summary of Cultural Resource Objectives:

- **Complete a Cultural Resource Assessment**
- **Invite associated Tribes to participate in management discussions**
- **Develop education and interpretation materials**

E. Historic Resource Overview and Objectives

Euro-American settlement at the Watmough Preserve is documented and evident. Sampson Chadwick, an immigrant from Canada, built the cabin in 1876. He married Adelia Bradshaw, from the S'Klallam Tribe. They farmed sheep, established a small orchard, raised children and received a land patent in 1888 for 169.7 acres around Watmough Bay. In the 1970s, descendants of the Chadwicks gifted the property to the Higgins family. Most recently the Land Bank purchased the property from the Higgins Family Estate.

Chadwick family history is documented at the Lopez Historical Museum. A historic property inventory was completed for the house in 1980 and did not result in a preservation listing. However, many original features such as, single-pane windows, varying rooflines, and a shingled roof remain. The Land Bank will continue to gather more information on the cabin, structures, as well as the heirloom orchard through an historic resource assessment.

Although the house has been consistently occupied, the overall condition indicates a need for maintenance prior to future use. Preliminary evaluations of the old house have revealed: structural needs on the foundation, interior lead paint, an outdated electrical system, and needed repairs to the bathroom and kitchen. During the interim period, the Land Bank will seek professional evaluations of the cabin, attain cost estimates for repairs, and review potential funding sources. The Land Bank acknowledges the community's interest in this historic structure and will share information gleaned from further assessment and gather public input prior to making any determinations.

Summary of Historic Resource Objectives:

- **Complete a Historic Resource Assessment**
- **Attain a cost analysis for repairs to the cabin to help inform long-term plans**
- **Explore partnerships and future funding for cabin repairs**
- **Seek public input on the desired future use of the cabin**
- **Develop education and interpretation materials**

F. Public Access Overview and Objectives

One component of the Land Bank's mandate is to provide opportunities for low-intensity recreation. A majority (76%) of Land Bank's preserves feature trails as well as opportunities to picnic and observe wildlife. Recreational activities are designed to minimize effects on a preserve's other conservation values and its neighboring communities.

During the interim period, the Watmough Addition is closed to the public. This closure affords staff the necessary time to meet with Tribes, neighbors, and other interested parties; assess and establish an ecological baseline of conditions; and work uninterrupted. The property also has numerous safety hazards related to its infrastructure. Signs will be posted to notify the public that the Preserve is temporarily closed to protect neighbor privacy, natural and cultural resources, and personal safety.

However, guided opportunities to visit the Watmough Addition, via hikes and volunteer events, will be provided throughout the interim period. The Land Bank is eager to share the Preserve's many highlights, its scenic views of Chadwick Hill and across Rosario strait to Anacortes and the Cascades, and to provide in-person updates about the project. The Land Bank will also arrange volunteer work parties and a monitoring program. Volunteer efforts help extend the abilities of the Land Bank's small staff, engage the community in stewardship of the property, and provide additional opportunities to access the Preserve during its closure.

Once all major work identified for the interim period is complete, the portion(s) of the property deemed appropriate for public access will be opened. This may take two years due to various regulations related to permitting, contracting and resource protection. Any future recreational activities and site improvements will also be evaluated for concurrence with potential funding sources. Access is currently envisioned as hiking-in from the established trailhead at Watmough Bay, and the guided, public tours will provide an example of this.

Summary of Public Access Objectives:

- **Connect with immediate neighbors and notify them of public ownership**
- **Post signage**
- **Provide periodic guided public tours**
- **Establish a volunteer program**

G. Cost Projection

This cost projection is intended as a financial planning tool and is not a commitment of resources. All figures are approximate. Actual expenditures will be reviewed and revised during the Land Bank's budgeting process.

Table 1. Cost projection

Year	General Operations		One-time Costs		Annual Subtotal
2022	\$15,000	General stewardship, maintenance, monitoring, noxious weed removal, site cleanup, planning	\$5,000	Ecological Assessment	\$46,500
			\$20,000	Cultural & Historic Resource Assessment	
			\$5,000	Well System Repairs	
			\$1,500	Signage	
2023	\$15,000		\$10,000	Structure assessment, stabilization	\$25,000
2024	\$15,000	General stewardship, maintenance and monitoring, noxious weed removal	\$10,000	Public Access Improvements	\$25,000
2025	\$10,000				\$10,000
2026	\$10,000				\$10,000
2027	\$10,000				\$10,000
2028	\$10,000				\$10,000
2029	\$10,000				\$10,000
2030	\$10,000				\$10,000
2031	\$10,000				\$10,000

Total 5-yr costs (2022-2027) \$116,500
Total 10-yr costs (2022-2031) \$166,500

H. Planning Process and Public Engagement

The Land Bank will share information gained during the interim period and seek public input on management directives. A scoping meeting to provide updates on the various resource assessments and to solicit input on future ownership and use(s) will be held in 2023. Prior to any opening, the Preserve will be named in accordance with the Land Bank's Preserve Naming Policy. Public comments and questions are always welcome.

The Conservation Land Bank can be contacted at:

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WRIA 2 (San Juan Islands) Salmon Recovery Chapter Update and Multi-Species Conservation Plan, 2022.

Draft Watmough Addition Preserve INTERIM Stewardship and Management Plan Public Comments

Topic	Comment #		Staff Response
Ecological Resources	4	I suggest limiting the "restoration", including invasives removal, to be as minimal as possible.	<p>Thank you for sharing your thoughts on how to best care for the Preserve’s many ecological features.</p> <p>Expanding our ecological assessment to include baseline monitoring and mapping of the intertidal marine habitat is an excellent suggestion. We will look for opportunities to collect this information in ways that are compatible with efforts across the County.</p>
	5	We support the existing ecological resource objectives and Friends of the San Juans encourage you to add additional assessment work to improve understanding of the nearshore marine habitats and species at the site. A simple but powerful addition to the research and assessment plan would be to map the submerged underwater vegetation offshore of the site including eelgrass, understory and canopy kelps, and surfgrass. This information directly informs management decisions such as recreational access and also creates a baseline of current conditions. Information on fish utilization of the site, ideally seasonally, could be collected using snorkel surveys or beach seining methods. Just like plant communities and associated animals are understood for the terrestrial environment, marine habitats, especially at this location, deserve the same level of attention and those things that are ‘underwater’ shouldn’t be left out.	
Cultural Resources/ Tribal Engagement	2	<p>The objective to engage tribes in long-term stewardship plans as stated on page 2 is a great idea. I would suggest sending multiple letters, to multiple departments (Council, Natural Resources, THPO, Cultural dept, etc). Tribal engagement should go beyond the simple public comment period.</p> <p>A dream for the inter-tribal Coast Salish Youth Stewardship Corps is to perform stewardship duties and cultural revitalization at the same time, as our ancestors did, via canoe. A location like this would actually make that possible. An inter-tribal group of youth from mainland tribes could paddle over, land at Watmough and have water and power. And plenty of land to do conservation work in partnership with local island youth. The remnant coastal bald would be a great place to enhance habitat for traditional prairie food plants like camas, chocolate lily, spring gold and Indian celery. (Madrona Institute)</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and your recommendations on how to better foster Tribal engagement in long-term stewardship of the Preserve.</p> <p>It is not listed in the interim plan but important to note that the Director of the Conservation Land Bank sent written invitations to four Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) in June of 2022. These letters shared news of the acquisition, acknowledged cultural ties and significance, and expressed interest in having dialogues about how the site might be managed. This invitation remains open. We will consider expanding our outreach effort to include contacts beyond THPOs.</p> <p>We would very much like to continue the conversation regarding the Coast Salish Youth Stewardship Corps and potential opportunities for access and inclusive management efforts.</p>
	5	We appreciate that the Land Bank has recognized the importance of Tribal engagement for this site. Friends of the San Juans encourages the Land Bank to engage with the Tribes before the Cultural Resource Assessment is conducted and to meaningfully ask and be responsive to what Tribes want the Cultural Resource Assessment to include and how it should be conducted. Tribal engagement on management considerations is also important, and the development of any interpretive materials would also benefit from Tribal participation.	

Draft Watmough Addition Preserve INTERIM Stewardship and Management Plan Public Comments

Topic	Comment #		Staff Response
Historic Resources/ Infrastructure (7 comments)	1	The house should be saved. It may be the oldest house on Lopez. There are ways to 'restore' the house: for example, the restoration of the Port Stanley School House. Very importantly, the property needs a caretaker...soon. It's unique history as an isolated property makes it also attractive to squatters and mischief-makers.	<p>Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the future management of the Preserve’s infrastructure and historic values. Throughout the interim process, the Land Bank will be initiating assessments to better understand many facets of the existing infrastructure including: its historic status and potential eligibility, its structural integrity, the condition of the utilities, as well as identify costs associated with any improvement.</p> <p>Throughout this time, we will remain in consideration of establishing a caretaker. Greater knowledge of the infrastructure (particularly electric and septic) will help to determine the specifics of any potential future arrangement.</p> <p>During the interim period, we will work to establish a volunteer program that will help to protect the resources on site from “mischief makers,” and incidents of vandalism. Though incidents may occur at any time, we believe that this is a very conscious community as there are numerous historic structures that exist in rural settings, and in popular island areas, and occurrences of vandalism are very rare.</p>
	2	It’s great to see that the water system will be maintained. If there is power, is that going to be maintained? Those utilities would be major assets to stewardship crews. Especially ones coming from off island, such as tribes. Having a caretaker position on-site would be great. Again, be sure that this position advertisement makes it to tribes.	
	4	I also suggest that if you do consider having a caretaker that the infrastructure be as minimal as possible. I hope that the caretaker could help protect the pocket beaches and islands off the coast from human intrusion.	
	5	The house - was one of the very first on the island, possibly the second oldest, it may be 150 yrs old this year it should be preserved. We put two roofs on it in the time we lived there, it is probably time for another roof, plus other improvements, including foundation work.	
	8	I applaud the Land Bank Board for acquiring this very special property and urge that the Board to preserve the house & remaining historic structures. This very early Lopez homestead portrays a very isolated lifestyle with much of its surrounding landscape preserved by the Land Bank, the San Juan Preservation Trust, the BLM & private landowners’ conservation easements. The Watmough Addition illustrates the early extreme isolation of early settlers, a huge contrast with today’s high speed, instant contact world. I believe the property is eligible for National Register of Historic Places nomination & status for both its rich indigenous & Euro-American settlement histories. Currently, with the house not occupied, it could be described as “an attractive nuisance”... It really needs a caretaker, either residing in the house or in nearby quarters.	
	11	I heartily endorse a caretaker on the grounds. This has been used by segments of the community for a very long time, and it would be reasonable to expect some trespassing. It is best to have someone looking out for it, since it is so isolated. Access is also easier in some ways by boat, and that access needs to be monitored as well.	
	13	About the potential for caretaker, add National Monument into list of similar programs to model after State Parks and National Parks, as there is a new trailer for use by docents all summer at Turn Pt. Lighthouse.	

Draft Watmough Addition Preserve INTERIM Stewardship and Management Plan Public Comments

Topic	Comment #		Staff Response
Access (9 comments)	1	The road easement should be continued for walkers and bicyclists. The easement helps the public understand the historical meaning of the Watmough Head property.	<p>Thank you for your comments about what future access at this Preserve is appropriate and desired, and for sharing what access occurred prior to the Land Bank’s acquisition.</p> <p>As shared in the interim plan, we will keep the Preserve closed while we undergo this period of assessments and planning. However, we will continue to offer guided hikes and volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Long-term recreational planning will seek to ensure that neighboring properties, and the Preserve’s significant natural, cultural and historic resources are not negatively impacted by public use. Restrictions and allowances related to access, which may range from beach access to dogs, will be vetted during a public scoping process.</p>
	2	This site has amazing beach access and upland access. It would be ideal for landing canoes from the mainland.	
	3	I imagine the question of public access will be a difficult decision. The Trail --- I want you to know that for all the years we lived there local folks would hike the trail from Watmough Bight up to the back of the homestead and then turn north up the driveway and walk the road out and back to Watmough Bight, where they had parked their cars. This trail is about 1.5 miles long, just right for a short hike where if lucky. You can see the sun rise over Koma Kulshan, and on a clear day you can get a good view of Mt Rainier rising over the Junction where the Straights of Juan de Fuca meet Rosario Straights. I think this trail access should be continued I see no reason to restrict it. It was never busy, since Lopez Island does not have a large population. Most people who went to the Bight stayed there, not a high percent of them hiked the loop just those who wanted exercise and appreciated the views, mostly local residents. And, in all the years we lived there not one of these hikers ever bothered us or caused any problems, to us or the environment.	
	4	<p>I would suggest making all pocket beaches there off limits to the public. Watmough has public access, and because of high use, is a poor place for forage fish. Retaining beaches that do not get any public use is vitally important for forage fish.</p> <p>Limiting the number of trails, and the number of people who use the area will be vital if/when you do open it up to public use. Over-tourism is devastating to the natural communities of the island and is obvious at all of the areas in SJC that get heavy use. I would encourage you to think about the rights of the land and the natural communities who live there: think about what they would want (mostly, to be left alone with minimal interference so they can thrive) and their right to flourish. We do not have formal Rights of Nature in SJC despite our best efforts, but we can still think about natural communities as if they do.</p>	
	5	Friends of the San Juans supports the Watmough Addition being closed to the public during the interim period. It will be important to identify the protections needed for the ecological and cultural resources before any public access is provided.	
	6	First, congratulations and thank you for making this acquisition come to fruition. I know firsthand the difficult balancing act inherent in a project with these characteristics- critical habitat and open space as well as excellent trail connectivity	

Draft Watmough Addition Preserve INTERIM Stewardship and Management Plan Public Comments

Topic	Comment #		Staff Response
		and potential recreational experience. This balancing act between humans and sensitive habitat protection has grown increasingly difficult due to a growing population and a correlated growth in appetite for public access and recreational opportunities. I realize I'm sort of preaching to the choir and that public access is already part of the plan for this site, but I'm primarily writing to encourage a thoughtful, thorough, and transparent analysis of how the public will interact with this parcel and the adjacent complex once it is open (more of a process comment for the permanent management plan). It's important to engage the public and to obtain at least a certain degree of ownership or "buy-in" throughout the development of the final management plan... Personally, I like the idea of hike-in access from Watmough Bay. That area is already highly visited, and the development footprint is already there. It doesn't seem practical to construct a parking lot on the Addition property and it would impact the habitat and detract from the character of the land. Again, I appreciate the delicate balance the Land Bank is grappling with in management plan development. Keep up the good work!	
Access (continued)	9	Generally speaking, I think the interim report should clearly note that while identifying a potential funding source to offset acquisition costs is a priority, the plan should also address the importance of identifying potential partners with similar conservation priorities and the ability to implement those goals; address ways to provide for public access on the property while also developing mechanisms to ensure neighboring properties are not impacted by public uses; and the significant cultural and historic uses on the property warrant careful consideration of public access that will not diminish or destroy those features, and may necessitate the presence of an onsite caretaker/manager.	
	11	Personally, I prefer that dogs NOT be allowed due to the protection of wildlife of both the land and sea. My experience is that dog owners do not leash their dogs on public lands. It is traumatizing for many to have dogs run up to them, regardless of the tail wagging. I do hope road access will be preserved for the property. I assume this would mean adding at least one pullout between Point Colville and this property.	
	12	I know this probably isn't feasible, but I think the best use of the Watmough addition would be to keep it for research and only available by special permit. I grew up there, and it breaks my heart to think of it turning into another Iceberg or Watmough Bight—if there is any way to protect it, to keep one last place on Lopez untrammelled and pure, that would be amazing.	

Draft Watmough Addition Preserve INTERIM Stewardship and Management Plan Public Comments

Topic	Comment #		Staff Response
BLM (5 comments)	3	This recent purchase by the Land Bank appears to be a very Positive Happening. Hopefully the pristine natural environment of the place can be preserved. Is the BLM the right organization to carry this out? I am interested in hearing about the BLM’s mission. When and if you sell to the BLM hopefully it is possible to make the sale with some guarantees as not to sell back to the private market? Also other stipulations that are pro preservation and positive to the island and native cultures.	Thank you for supporting the Conservation Land Bank’s long-term ownership of this preserve. Resale to the BLM will be thoroughly examined following the release of the SJI National Monument’s Record of Decision, and conditions of that potential sale, including guarantees for permanent protection will be a priority, and shared with the public prior to any final decision.
	4	I do not support a sale to the BLM as I do not believe the BLM adequately protects the land and the species on the land (e.g. they do not do so at Iceberg Pt). I would encourage you to use tax \$ to recover the costs than reselling the land to the BLM.	
	5	Meaningful, permanent protection of the natural and cultural resources at this site should be front and center of any consideration of ownership and/or management changes and these decisions should not be made for the purpose of recovering purchase costs. To provide the most effective long-term protection of the property and its resources we recommend that the Land Bank secure a conservation easement at the site through the San Juan Preservation Trust (Trust). We recommend that a transfer of management or ownership to the BLM be taken off the table as an option unless a conservation easement (CE) with the Trust is secured first; this alternative has inherent potential conflicts with the State Salmon Recovery Funding board grant you have recently been awarded and raises significant questions about long-term management of the site. While waiting for the finalization of the National Monument Management Plan to be completed before entertaining a federal partnership is essential, the clarity it may provide for the short term is no substitute for the permanent protection that would be achieved through a CE. Even if the property ownership and management remain with the Land Bank, a CE with the Trust ensures meaningful protection in perpetuity.	
	8	Without a caretaker, I would hesitate to transfer the property to the BLM. Because of its rich archaeological middens & its isolation, I don’t think the site is ready for the large number of visitors BLM properties receive.	
	9	I appreciate all the work that has gone into applying for grant funds, and outreach to potential partners including the tribes and BLM. Partnership with either or both of these options would require that specific issues be carefully addressed, including potential access for cultural purposes and ceremonies, whether or not camping and hunting can be allowed, and how to protect the historic and cultural features from damage.	



0 85 170 340 Feet



- Watmough Addition 2022
- Land Bank Watmough
- Bureau Land Management SJINM
- SJI National Wildlife Refuge
- Private w Conservation Easement



0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

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