

AGENDA
San Juan County Conservation Land Bank Commission

**Members of the public may participate in person at
SJI Grange, 152 1st St N, Friday Harbor, WA 98250
join virtually by [CLICKING HERE](#)
or by phone @ (253)205-0468 Meeting ID: 875 4917 7162**

February 21, 2025

8:45am	Convene
8:45	General Public Comment Period
8:55	Approve January 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes
8:50	Partner Update – San Juan Preservation Trust
8:55	Council Update – Jane Fuller
9:05	Chair and Commissioners Reports
9:15	Directors Report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion/Approval of False Bay Creek mitigation plan• Discussion / Approval of Northshore Conservation Easement Sale to the San Juan Preservation Trust
9:55	Outreach/Communications Report – Tanja Williamson
10:05	Break
10:15	Stewardship Report
10:30	Future Agenda Items*
10:40	2 nd Public Comment Period
10:50	Executive Session: to consider the acquisition of real estate as per RCW 42.30. 110(b)
11:15	Adjourn

* Increasing accessibility

Tribal Relations (Frankie Robertson)
Possibility of establishing a Friends group
Setting stewardship priorities / management plans
Staff Capacity / Organization study
Consistent stewardship standards for all islands; also, infrastructure standards
Review of acquisition matrix criteria
Budget explanation and financial guidelines

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”

STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

FEBRUARY 2025

Overview

It's getting birdy out there! Woodpeckers are drumming on snags, and finches are ever-so-slightly tuning up for a morning chorus. Staff continue to support the Community Wildfire Protection Plan update, and a draft of the document is expected to be released for public review later this month. In early March, members of the Terrestrial Managers Group will participate in a facilitated meeting to identify partnership opportunities and establish shared, long-range goals. An overview of preserves and SMPS was developed to support strategic planning and prioritization. Erin is coordinating with members of the Madrona Club to secure a donation to support a reforestation project on Orcas. Peter attended the North Sound Riparian Conference and presented on a successful riparian planting methodology developed in Oregon.

Outreach

Staff: Tanja Williamson, Margo Thorp

February is host to The Great Backyard Bird Count and Margo put together a breadth of programming around the annual event, including a Birding 101 class which can be viewed on our YouTube channel (click link to view recording: https://youtu.be/rw_KN7uwCXo), three guided birding events, and a youth birding education workshop with Stillpoint School on San Juan Island (Photo 1). The guided bird walks occurred during the Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb 14-17) at Land Bank Preserves on Orcas, Lopez, and San Juan Island and are led by both staff (Erin Halcomb and Amanda Wedow) as well as community volunteers (Kim Middleton and Beth St. George).

Peter is leading a North Shore Preserve tour on Friday, February 14th for the Orcas Island Garden Club.

Alchemy Art Center also kicked off their Art on Preserves winter series which runs every Friday in February and March. Tanja continues to keep busy entering events into the calendar and promoting them, as well as brainstorming events with partner organizations county-wide. Click the link to view the calendar (<https://sjclandbank.org/events-calendar/>). Tanja has begun working on the 2024 annual report and hopes to have a launch-ready website by end of month.

Salish Seeds Nursery

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Eliza moved overwintering plants to sheltered locations and tucked them under blankets before the cold weather struck (Photo 2). Seed orders and special requests for 2025 plugs have picked up in the last month. Eliza attended a quarterly meeting of the Washington Native Seed Coalition, a group working to coordinate and increase the availability of native seed for habitat restoration. We are exploring possibilities for increasing seed cold storage at the SJPT's Red Mill Farm. Margo will soon be attending the National Native Seed Conference in Tucson, Arizona.

District 1

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

Beaverton Marsh: SJC Council approved the long-term agricultural lease with SJI Grange for the Overmarsh Farm Commons project. The Grange anticipates having a strong first season of community gardeners and are working towards grazing participants.

Cady Mountain: The Island Conservation Crew and Land Bank staff put in hard work felling small diameter firs, piling branches for future burns, and planting native plants from the nursery.

Frazer Homestead: SJC Council approved the long-term agricultural lease with the Shephard Family. Farm planning is underway with the Conservation District. Charlie and the Shephards are working on fence and water system designs with future cost-share funding potential.

King Sisters: There are new baby lambs!

Mount Grant: Staff spent one winter morning burning piles at the LSR site to create biochar and decrease debris on-site. Nick Walsh from the Island Conservation Corps began his master's field research at the LSR site to study charcoal created from conservation burns (Photo 5)

Third Lagoon: The first red-flowering currant was spotted in full bloom during the final week of January. A skunk cabbage was also spotted in full bloom.

Westside: Staff and Island Conservation Crew enjoyed working in the snow: felling trees, piling branches, and burning piles (Photos 6 and 7).

Zylstra Lake: Every five years, monitoring of Zylstra and the UW False Bay Marine Preserve is required to assure continued congruence with the \$1M federal grant agreement (UW supported the acquisition by providing match). Erin recently monitored the marine preserve and was reminded of the significant wildlife habitat provided by estuarine conditions. The creek was flowing, and its mature riparian corridor and outflow into the bay was bustling with birds, including oystercatchers, wigeons, teal, pintails, gulls, dunlins and several species of songbirds (Photos 8 and 9).

District 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Tyler Goodman

Coffelt Farm: Evaluation of the failed septic drain field is complete and the consultant is developing a proposal to design a new system nearby but at a slightly higher elevation. The proposed location is away from wetlands, but due to slopes, a geotechnical report may be necessary.

Coho: Tyler and Peter replaced a rotting plank over a small drainage with two wider, thicker planks of locally milled cedar (Photo 10). This is the first of several trail improvements planned for 2025.

Crescent Beach: Erin and Peter met with tribal representatives from the Lummi Nation to discuss enhanced protection of cultural resources at this Preserve as well as at Eastsound Waterfront Park. This is an ongoing collaboration and we're exploring ways to protect a shell midden that is exposed along a trail segment. Erin and Peter continue to plan for the grant-funded forest thinning project. We've ordered signage that includes a QR code link to a project page under the Stewardship/Forest Resiliency tab on our website. Erin and Tanja helped prepare a letter sent to Preserve neighbors describing the project. If all goes as planned, work will begin this summer.

Deer Harbor Waterfront: We're grateful to volunteer, Joe Bullock, for pruning the five fruit trees this year. Following the recent removal of several dead alders, and as part of ongoing efforts to enhance native vegetation on the preserve, staff will plant additional trees this winter.

Eastsound Waterfront: Erin is presenting to the Madrona Club about restoration projects here and at North Shore to encourage their participation and support. Planning and permitting continues for the collaborative, grant-funded shoreline restoration project being led by Tina Whitman at Friends of the San Juans. As noted previously, this project will remove an old concrete cistern and associated debris from the shoreline and establish native shoreline vegetation to improve resiliency to increasing shoreline erosion. Pending successful permitting and bid solicitation, this work could occur as early as this summer.

Judd Cove: With federal permitting complete, Tribal consultation and county permitting are underway for a grant-funded shoreline restoration project, which will remove the remaining rock wall and concrete debris left from the pier that was removed early in the Land Bank's ownership. This project will also enhance and expand the forest buffer along the shoreline. Rock salvaged from this project will be used in a future project that will replace two failing, undersized culverts and restore the small stream that runs through the Preserve. Pending successful permitting and bid solicitation, implementation is scheduled for this summer.

North Shore: Conditions have been quite icy this month, as seepage from the extensive wetlands has frozen on the parking lot and trails. Undaunted, walkers still arrive daily. Staff identified and cut a remaining drainpipe that was routing water onto the parking lot and will make minor improvements to trail drainage this spring. Planting will resume next week with help from Blackcap Restoration and the ICC. The plant list includes 4,800 bare root trees and shrubs representing 17 species. Shrubs make up 90% of the order, as we'll be establishing high density shrub habitat to support insects, bats and birds. This will also eliminate the need for maintenance mowing while maintaining sweeping views of the Salish Sea.

Turtleback Mountain: Staff continue to hear about (and see) signs of mountain biking on the south side of the mountain despite ample signage. This use widens switchbacks and often leads to conflicts with hikers on narrow trails. We believe it the same individuals each time and will increase patrols to try to prevent it. We're preparing to resume forest thinning activities with the ICC and others. This will include burning remaining piles and creating new ones in an ongoing effort to complete priority work described in the Turtleback SMP. We've developed a conceptual plan to re-work the South Entrance parking and are awaiting a design proposal from a consultant. Pending permitting and a successful bid solicitation, we hope to complete this work in the fall. As described in the SMP, this project complements plans to establish a small Garry oak savanna and highly accessible loop trail in the field south of the parking lot.

District 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow

Channel: This Preserve has been moderately quiet. Deep tracks on the trail indicate bicycles are using the trail. New signage for 'Pedestrian Access Only' will be posted. Amanda has noticed bike tracks over hiking trails on several Preserves.

Lopez Hill: Many trees came down this winter. Tyler spent a day on Lopez helping Amanda to clear the trails (Photo 13).

Richardson Marsh: Amanda is working towards opening the Preserve for public access. The parking lot layout was reviewed and staked on the ground. A baseline report was also compiled for a conservation easement.

The Spit at Fisherman Bay Preserve: Staff repositioned logs to open the beach trail through the sand dunes and changed out signs from the seasonal closure to stay on trail. Amanda and Beth St. George from the Lopez Library will lead a bird walk Friday 14th for Great Backyard Bird Count. The Fisherman Bay Spit's habitats of forest, field, and shoreline present a good opportunity to view a variety of birds.

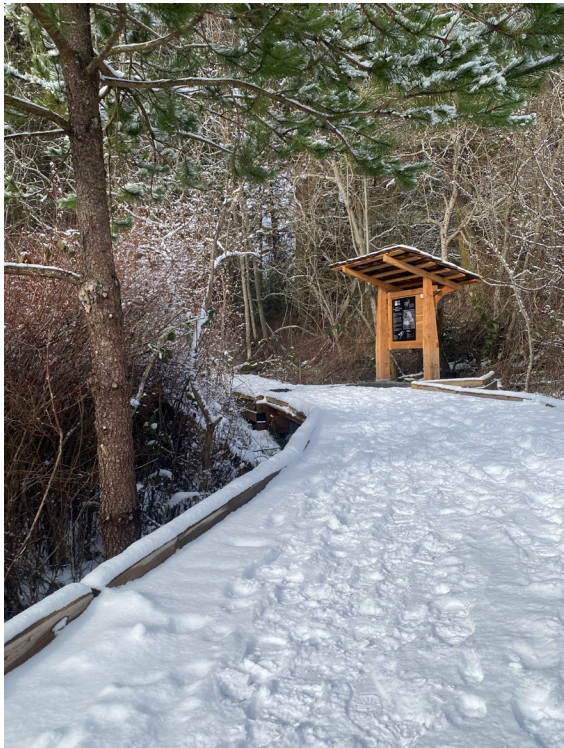
Upright Head: Friends of the San Juans are continuing to work on a grant funded project for beach restoration at Upright Head to support forage fish spawning habitat. A design concept has been completed, and the preferred alternative is to remove most of the shoreline armoring, regrade and revegetate the slope, and setback utilities at the top of the slope.

Watmough: Winter storms washed up a huge roll of plastic netting. Someone rolled up the net and reported it, and Amanda was able to drag it out to the parking lot with the help of a trail user. A smaller piece of the same material washed up at the Channel Preserve.

PHOTOS



Photo 1. Shona Aitken leading a birding lesson with Stillpoint School on SJI.
Photo 2. Salish Seeds Nursery plugs tucked under a blanket of snow.



Photos 3 and 4. Beaverton Marsh in the snow!



Photo 5. Nick Walsh (ICC) works on this master's project at Mount Grant with ICC members Melanie & Charlotte.
Photo 6. Maya with the ICC puts the final touches on a conservation burn pile at the Westside Preserve.



Photo 7. Staff and ICC warm up next to a conservation burn pile during the lunch break.
Photo 8. Golden crowned kinglet feeds in the riparian corridor along False Bay Creek.



Photo 9. Dunlin probe the mudflats at the outlet of False Bay Creek.



Photo 10. New Cedar crossing at Coho Preserve.



Photo 11. A Pacific yew tree in the understory at a conservation easement site on Lopez.



Photo 12. Snowy day at Richardson Marsh Overlook.



Photo 13. Tyler helps out on Lopez clearing fallen trees.