

AGENDA
San Juan County Conservation Land Bank Commission
Annual Retreat
Friday Harbor Labs
December 19, 2025

7:45 District meetings

8:40 Abbreviated monthly meeting

9:05 Introductions and Retreat Goals – Brian and John Howell, facilitator

9:10 Summary of Accomplishments (*Lincoln*)

A summary of the work that was accomplished in the past year, and how that work relates to last year's priorities.

Materials: Summary of 2025 accomplishments

Discussion Questions

- *Are there any important accomplishments missing from the summary?*
- *How do you feel about what was accomplished this past year?*

9:25 Background Context for the look ahead (*Lincoln*)

There are many circumstances that have changed since the Commission's last retreat. There have been changes that will likely effect the Land Banks ability to accomplish its mission and its work. The Commission should consider these changes as it thinks about the work in the coming year and beyond. This will include a revenue forecast.

Materials: Revenue summary and forecast

Discussion Questions

- *Are there other circumstances that have changed that you think significantly effect the Land Banks work?*
- *Are there questions about the revenue forecast?*

10:20 Break

10:30 Strategic Plan Check-In

The plan was created and adopted in advance of reauthorization. There was a strong emphasis on communication in the plan, but some of the other goal statements are too broad to provide clear direction. In particular, there is a need to talk about the goals for stewardship and organizational development. The next two items focus on these questions with a goal of fleshing out the last two elements.

10:35 Stewardship Direction

A. Overall Policy and Resource Direction (*Lincoln*)

The Land Bank has unavoidable obligations to steward its properties such as basic maintenance, protection of the resource, e.g., water quality, invasive species management, and biodiversity conservation. Additionally, we have aspirational goals for management such as landscape scale

enhancement to improve habitat and resilience in the face of a changing climate, or adding amenities for public access, such as restrooms, new trails, and opening areas for those with limited mobility, etc.

The question for the Commission is how best to prioritize our level of effort across the full suite of these possibilities. A starting point for this conversation is to get a better understanding of both staff and the Commission's perceptions of what's most important and how we're doing on those things.

Discussion Questions:

- *What are our overarching goals for the next several years? (e.g. ecological integrity, low-intensity recreation, etc... Other?)*
- *Where does the Commission think we are excelling or falling short?*
- *What do you see as short-term priority actions?*

12:00 Working Lunch

12:30 B. Organizational/ Staffing Update (Lincoln and Staff)

A lot of work has been done by the staff to identify staffing and organizational issues that need to be addressed. A staff survey was completed and there have been a series of six facilitated staff meetings. Some of the issues identified included: communication gaps, siloing of Stewardship decisions by district, and the need for more staff direction and clearer roles. Several desired outcomes were identified, including: broadened staff review process incorporating peer review; change in staff meeting structure and reporting out; establishing shared behavioral principles and accountability; creation of a Stewardship Management Team to help guide organization-wide stewardship decisions; and a process for review and revision of the Policy Manual.

Materials: Background memo

Discussion Question:

- *What would you like to see from staff going forward on these proposals?*

1:30 Strategic Plan Proposed New Goals and 2026 Priority Actions

Staff have compiled new draft goals and actions in advance of the retreat. These are presented as an attachment. *Materials:* Restated Goals 4 and 5 with 2026 Actions

Discussion Questions

- *Do these changes embody the stewardship and organizational conversations?*
- *Are there needed edits/additions?*

2:00 Wrap-up – Review of action items

2:15 Adjourn

AGENDA
San Juan County Conservation Land Bank Commission

**Members of the public may participate in person at
The University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs
Commons Room
620 University Rd, Friday Harbor, WA 98250**

December 19, 2025

8:40am	Convene
8:40	General Public Comment Period
8:45	Approve Nov 14, 2025 Meeting Minutes
8:50	Officer Nomination Committee Report
8:55	Council Update – Jane Fuller
9:00	Director’s Report – Lincoln Bormann
9:05am	Adjourn to Annual Retreat

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

DECEMBER 2025

Overview

2025 was a year packed with impactful work across our preserves and community outreach events. None of this progress would be possible without the immense support of our Commissioners and dedicated community volunteers – Thank you!

Outreach

Staff: Tanja Williamson, Margo Thorp

Outreach supported 84 events in 2025, including volunteer work parties, native plant education, interpretive walks, and public meetings.

Salish Seeds Nursery

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

The nursery was at full capacity in 2025, growing plant materials for Land Bank restoration projects, partner projects, and the general public. Output included 30,000 bulbs and plugs, 1,200 potted plants for the Fall Native Wildflower Sale, and 47 pounds of seed. Staff held 12 native plant-themed educational events, 6 for adults and 6 for youth, on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez, with over 200 participants in total.

District 1

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

2025 marked a necessary slow-down on projects and recentering on existing obligations. Nonetheless, significant advances were made in habitat restoration across many preserves: Beaverton Marsh, Cady Mountain, False Bay Creek, Frazer Homestead, Kellett Bluff, Middlewood, Mount Ben, Mount Grant, Westside, and Zylstra Lake Preserve. We successfully implemented the first prescribed broadcast burn on a Land Bank preserve. Our capacity for habitat restoration was also increased as Jacob and Shauna became the first DNR Certified Burners in San Juan County history. The consternating invasive Northern Pike issue came to a head as WDFW conducted an enforcement action. The Frazer Homestead and Beaverton Marsh agricultural leases were given flight this year with a great deal of community excitement surrounding the Grange's Overmarsh Commons project. Charlie shepherded these leases with patience and committed a great deal of time to infrastructure at Beaverton Marsh. The year would not be complete without mention of the Beaverton Trail project. The opportunity caused a major pivot in work plan to develop the project with an incredibly tight timeline, culminating with the fortuitous hiring of Rachel Dietzmann as a project manager.

District 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Tyler Goodman

Thanks to the Salish Seeds Project and private nurseries, we were able to plant 4,900 trees and shrubs, 3,000 wetland sedges and rushes, 4,500 upland plugs and bulbs, and 50 pounds of native seed. We completed grant-funded projects at Crescent Beach and Judd Cove Preserves, thinning the forest and

restoring the shoreline respectively. We also rehabilitated the South Turtleback parking lot, improving access and adding eight parking spaces and continued ongoing Garry oak habitat enhancement and shaded fuel break work. Honoring our commitment to local agriculture, we replaced the failing septic system at Coffelt Farm Preserve. And lastly, we were fortunate to take ownership of a new 25-acre shoreline preserve on Orcas and a 225-acre Washington State School Trust Lands parcel on Blakely.

We're grateful for our supportive community, and for the invaluable assistance of dedicated volunteers and skilled partners and contractors.

District 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow, Claire Waterman

In December, staff is wrapping up annual monitoring of Lopez Preserves, which is an opportunity to visit different areas of the preserves and monitor for changes and plan for work ahead. Other goals for the month are cleaning out the storage unit, winterizing tools, and to prepare next year's workplan.

This year's field work went exceptionally well with support from our Seasonal Field Assistant, Claire. We completed our routine maintenance tasks across the Lopez Preserves and tackled several projects such as replacing the Weeks Wetland viewpoint. Staff continue to receive positive feedback about the new platform as well as the new Watmough Head public access.



Photo 1. Early morning view at the Salish Seeds Nursery.



Photo 2. Beth Tate of WDFW looking at the outfall falls at Friday Harbor Labs creek.



Photo 3. Beaverton Marsh Ditch filling up on November 20.



Photo 4. Burn piles with ICC and Blackcap at Cady Mountain Preserve.



Photo 5. The WA DNR certified burn manager evaluation at the Westside Preserve.



Photo 6. Planting bulbs and grasses at the Westside Preserve.



Photo 7. Tanja and Shauna planting atop Westside Preserve.



Photo 8. Margo, Elliott, and Chary planting atop Westside Preserve.



Photo 9. Over 5,000 plants on their way to planting projects on Orcas.

Photo 10. Volunteers planting plugs along the wetlands at North Shore Preserve.



Photo 11. Happy planters at North Shore Preserve.



Photo 12. ICC conducts a test burn on piles at North Shore Preserve.



Photo 13. New bench installed on Turtleback Preserve overlooking Massacre Bay.



Photo 14. Burn piles across the landscape at Turtleback Mountain Preserve.



Photo 15. Can you spot the juvenile eagle stationed along Waldron's shore?



Photo 16. One of many bright findings across Lopez conservation lands.



Photo 17. Wire mesh installed to prevent slips on the Hummel Lake dock.



Photo 18. Lobaria (lungwort) lichen amongst maple leaves at Upright Head Preserve.



Photo 19. Tanja helps plant wildflowers at Watmough Head Preserve.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Land Bank Commission
FR: Lincoln Bormann, LB Director
RE: Accomplishments for 2025
DATE: 12-12-25

Once again, Land Bank staff have accomplished a great deal over the year. Even in the year following the successful reauthorization of the REET, when a something of a “pause” might have been expected, there has been an abundance of activity. Below are some of the highlights.

Acquisitions

- Completed Dolphin Bay Road shoreline acquisition on Orcas.
- Concluded acquisition of 225-acre Washington State Trust Land parcel on Blakely.
- Collaborating with landowner on Shaw for a potential conservation easement project (possible Salmon Recovery project for 2026).

Financial management

- Commission approved financial guidelines, at a time when fiscal health is a priority.
- Redesigned Quarterly Report Spreadsheet for public and commission.
- Compiled twelve-year projections for the next authorization period.
- Drafted a balanced 26-27 biennial budget.
- Endowment increased by 32% over the previous year projected \$10M end of 2025.

Funding

- Cascade Creek Addition: revised application and awarded \$520K.
- Watmough Addition acquisition: \$1.45M received.
- Dolphin Bay acquisition: \$400K private donation received, working toward receipt of \$1.1M Salmon Recovery grant.
- Successfully redirected \$5.2M in federal trail funding to the Beaverton trail project.

Outreach

- Total of 85 events hosted.
- Expanded senior walks and youth education programming –
 - 7 child focused outreach events spanning Orcas, Lopez and San Juan, reaching approximately 120 children
 - New community partners (Orcas Senior Center; Salmonberry School)
- Land Bank website update completed.
- Celebrated new trail/preserve addition opening at Watmough.
- Annual report completed.

- Initiated monthly Land Bank advertorial in local papers (San Juan Journal, Islands Weekly, Islands Sounder).
- Hosted tours of the Crescent Beach Forest Health Project.
- Hosted multiple volunteer events at Turtleback and North Shore Preserves including planting parties and the first annual North Shore Preserve apple ID and tasting event with Kwiaht.
- Held 12 native plant-themed educational events, 6 for adults and 6 for youth, on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez, with over 200 participants in total.

Working with Partners

- Terrestrial Manager’s Group: coordinated annual retreat for members, and eight monthly meetings.
- Tribal Engagement: drafted and distributed notification letters to Tribes regarding Cascade Creek, Blakely, and Dolphin Bay acquisitions; followed up with Lummi THPOs regarding Crescent Beach (CRA and thinning area), participated in WDFW Co-Managers Group meetings to discuss deer hunting opportunities on Orcas; and developed and populated a summary of the Land Bank’s tribal engagement efforts for the County’s inter-departmental tribal working group.
- Core participant in Conservation District’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update. Also supported Healthy Shorelines Action Planning process and Marine Boater Survey efforts with the Environmental Stewardship Department.
- Launched standardized GIS-based ecosystem mapping system in collaboration with San Juan Preservation Trust.

Agriculture

- Completed Overmarsh Farm Commons lease with SJI Grange. A very successful first growing season. Key infrastructure improvements made including fencing, water systems, parking, shed, and a greenhouse. Over 30 participants in the community garden.
- Completed Frazer lease with Shephard Family. Collaborating with SJICD cost share program to improve fencing and water systems to facilitate rotational grazing.
- Continued active agriculture on King Sisters, Zylstra, Coffelt, Fowler's Pond, Weeks wetland, Richardson Marsh.
- Finished septic replacement project at Coffelt Farm Preserve

District 1

- Advanced habitat restoration efforts at Beaverton Marsh, Cady Mtn, False Bay Creek, Frazer Homestead, Kellett Bluff, Mt Ben, Mt Grant, Westside, and Zylstra Lake Preserves.
- Jacob & Shauna became the first WA DNR Certified Burners in San Juan County along with Islands Conservation Corps and Samish Indian Nation Department of Natural Resources partners.

- Coordinated with WDFW on Northern Pike management action in Westside Lake
- First prescribed broadcast burn on a Land Bank Preserve at Mount Grant.
- Beaverton trail project
 - Successfully initiated Beaverton Trail project within short timeline.
 - Trail alignment plan is essentially complete. There will be a few tweaks
 - Permit requirements for the project are mostly defined. Application process is waiting for 30% design drawings.
 - Boardwalk design is underway.
 - Wetland delineation field work is complete. Final report should be received soon.
 - Working to have the new section of trail cleared enough for passage in January.

District 2 – Orcas

- Planted 4,900 trees and shrubs, 3,000 wetland sedges and rushes, 4,500 upland plugs and bulbs, and 50 pounds of native seed at North Shore and Turtleback Mountain Preserves.
- Completed grant-funded Crescent Beach Forest Health Project, thinning 32 acres and establishing a shaded fuel break along the length of the trail
- Rehabilitated the South Turtleback parking lot, improving access and adding eight parking spaces, including one ADA van space.
- Completed grant-funded Judd Cove Shoreline Restoration, removing beach rock and concrete and reestablishing a natural slope for native plantings.
- Continued Garry oak habitat enhancement and shaded fuel break work on Turtleback Mountain Preserve.

District 3 – Lopez

- Opened Watmough Head for public access.
- Continued implementation of SMP objectives for Watmough Head such as building stacked rail fencing, supporting tribal visits, initiating building condition assessment, noxious weed removal and planting natives.
- Removed damaged overlook and rebuilt platform at Weeks Wetland.
- Worked toward opening of Ricardson Marsh Preserve.

Salish Seeds

- The nursery was at full capacity in 2025 growing plant materials for Land Bank restoration projects, partner projects, and the general public. Output included 30,000 bulbs and plugs, 1,200 potted plants for the Fall Native Wildflower Sale, and 47 pounds of seed.
- Received \$10,000 in private donations toward construction of a greenhouse.

Memorandum

TO: SJC Land Bank Commission
FR: Lincoln Bormann, Land Bank Director
RE: Process for addressing concerns around staff dynamic, and stewardship policies and practices
Date: 12-12-25

Over the better part of 2025, staff have engaged in a process to examine ways to improve the efficiency and functionality of the Land Bank program, particularly within the stewardship arena. Issues identified in an initial survey included: a lack of consistency in stewardship approach, communication gaps, confusion over roles, interpersonal conflict, and siloing of efforts within Districts.

Over a series of six facilitated meetings these issues were discussed in detail and possible approaches were identified. These approaches are at varying stages of implementation and will extend into 2026.

Issue 1: Communications and conflict resolution

The flow of information across the organization has been uneven leading to some staff receiving partial or incorrect information. Staff expressed a desire for more direct communication from top to bottom to minimize misinterpretation. Solution: Change the structure of monthly staff meetings to include an assigned note-taker and identify clear action items. Additional actions could include reinstating an annual staff retreat/workshop and quarterly check-ins on how organizational priorities are being addressed.

Personal conflicts have arisen partly due to strong differences of opinion on organizational priorities and differing work styles. With no clear process for addressing these, disagreements have affected our ability to work together productively. Solution: Over two meetings, a list of behavioral principles was created and all staff agreed to a “social contract” with clear mechanisms set for peer-to-peer accountability.

Issue 2: Role clarification.

With a flat organizational structure and an informal reporting hierarchy between Preserve Stewards and Field Assistants, a need was identified to create more structured workplans and revisit them several times over the year. Solution: Staff have proposed a draft framework for creating workplans interactively with peer-to-peer teams jointly reviewing and revising workplans with periodic check-ins.

Issue 3: Siloing of stewardship decision-making – need for collective process to set priorities, allocate resources.

Stewardship priorities have been set largely at the District level with each Preserve Steward identifying keys projects. Although overarching priorities are discussed with the Commission the way these priorities have been approached has differed considerably. While some staff wished to create a Stewardship Manager position to unify decision-making, there isn't sufficient budget to create this position, and, there was no clear consensus on this approach. Solution: A Stewardship Management Team, composed of Preserve Stewards and the Director will set priorities and establish consistent standards going forward. This team has yet to meet and the details of how it will work have not yet been fleshed out. There is an initial meeting set for January 8, 2026.

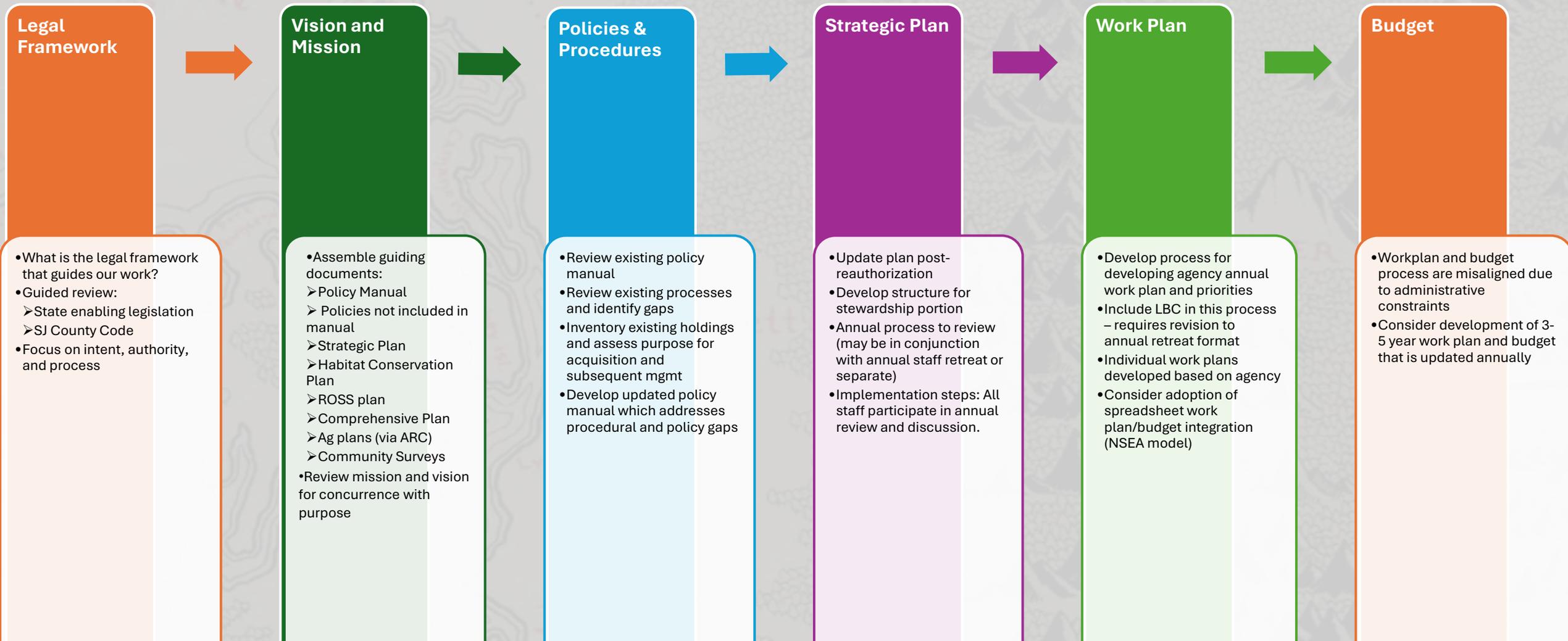
Issue 4: Questions around mission cohesion.

This issue expands on the siloing problem, highlighted by a lack of organization-wide standards (best practices). As staff worked through this problem, a clear issue emerged with the outdated Land Bank policy manual. Solution: Work with a contractor to update the manual and add best practices information in the stewardship section. A new draft of the manual would come back before the Commission for approval.

Program and Staff Cohesion

Other questions

- Is a unified approach to every property important, or will each property have its own approach?
- Is horizontal alignment individuals operating in similar roles and following same procedures
- Is vertical alignment individuals progressing towards organizational goals.





SAN JUAN COUNTY
CONSERVATION
LAND BANK

2024-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN





Message from the Land Bank Commission

Over thirty years ago, San Juan County residents had the vision to protect the best of their remaining natural places and farmlands by creating the Conservation Land Bank. During those decades, the Land Bank has acquired and preserved 5,000 acres of land, including 30 preserves that are open to the public and 400 agricultural acres leased to local farmers. More recently, through our meetings and community conversations, we've realized that you, our fellow islanders, want to know more about what we do and be involved in helping us do it.

This 2024–2030 Strategic Plan responds to what we've heard through interviews and a survey, as well as discussions at the Land Bank's recent Strategic Planning Retreat. The clear message from respondents in these processes, and from the Land Bank Commission, is that San Juan County residents appreciate and support the Land Bank but want more from us. This includes better communication, additional opportunities to volunteer, and insight into how we do acquisitions and make stewardship decisions.

The 2024–2030 Strategic Plan is designed to guide the Land Bank through the next six years of its operations, to share that roadmap with you and to invite you to participate in that journey, whether it is as a volunteer steward, an attendee at our monthly public meetings, or simply by enjoying our preserves and appreciating the special places we have. We are proud to be the only county in Washington State which has approved and supported a public land bank three times over the past three decades. We look forward to your comments on this Draft Strategic Plan, and to your continued participation and support going forward into our fourth decade.



Brian Wiese, Commission Chair



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I. Executive Summary

VISION Conserving the Islands' best places.

MISSION To protect and steward the islands' natural and cultural heritage and provide access to nature close to home.

CORE VALUES

1. Collaboration
2. Conservation & Preservation
3. Engagement
4. Integrity & Accountability
5. Service

MAJOR GOALS

The Land Bank has identified five major goals to be achieved over the six-year lifespan of the Strategic Plan. Each goal represents one of the Land Bank's five program areas.

1. **Communications** – Build/enhance the community's understanding of and support for the Land Bank.
2. **Community Engagement** – Increase community ownership of and participation in the Land Bank.
3. **Land Acquisition** – Increase conservation to maximize the islands' resiliency and health.
4. **Organizational / Operational** – Cultivate an efficient, equitable, and sustainable organization that leverages staff expertise and community partnerships.
5. **Stewardship** – Manage lands with intention and consistency.



II. Introduction

Purpose of Strategic Plan

The 2024–2030 San Juan County Conservation Land Bank (Land Bank) Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) reflects the collective vision, mission, core values, and six-year goals of the Land Bank’s Commissioners, staff, key partners, and the broader San Juan community. The Strategic Plan includes a list of strategies to achieve each of the six-year goals, as well as Year One Priority Actions to begin making progress immediately. The Strategic Plan is an essential planning tool that provides clear guidance to Land Bank leadership and staff as they work to fulfill the Land Bank’s legal mandate and represents the Land Bank’s commitment to the residents of San Juan County. Because the Land Bank is subject to reauthorization by San Juan County voters every 12 years, the Commission elected to create a six-year plan to enable revisions at the mid-point in the event of reauthorization.

Approach to Developing the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan is the result of a year-long process led by a Planning Committee comprised of Land Bank Commissioners and staff. The Planning Committee worked closely with a Strategic Planning consultant, Triangle Associates, and engaged all Land Bank Commissioners and staff throughout the process. The Planning Committee met approximately quarterly throughout the year to determine the scope and scale of the Strategic Plan; design and implement an outreach and engagement process that involved key partners, stakeholders, and the broader San Juan community; and determine an efficient approach to developing a Plan with broad buy-in and support.

The Strategic Plan was developed in two phases.



Phase 1 involved extensive outreach and engagement of Land Bank partners, stakeholders, and the broader San Juan community. This engagement phase was designed to better understand unique perspectives about the Land Bank’s operations, approaches to communications, and priorities for the future. Two methods of engagement were used:

1. One-on-one interviews

Sixty-six key partners and stakeholders were interviewed in one-on-one sessions for approximately one hour each. The 66 interviewees were identified by Land Bank Commissioners and staff and represent diverse interests and sectors across the islands. Each interviewee was asked the same set of questions designed to gauge knowledge/experience with the Land Bank, perspective about the Land Bank's operations, and ideas/opinions regarding future priorities for the Land Bank.

2. Online survey

Once interviews were completed, an online survey was posted on San Juan County's *Engage* platform. This survey was designed to reach a broader audience on similar topics and questions as those covered through interviews. Almost 600 people responded to the survey (over 90 percent of these were full-time residents).



Phase 2 involved a publicly advertised, two-day in-person strategic planning retreat from December 14–15, 2023, in Friday Harbor. Retreat participants included all Land Bank Commissioners and staff, additional San Juan County staff and elected officials, former Land Bank Commissioners, and representatives from one of the Land Bank's partner organizations, the San Juan Preservation Trust. The retreat included facilitated discussions and small- and large-group activities designed to clarify and get buy-in on the organization's vision, mission, core values, goals, strategies, and Priority Year One Priority.

Document Organization

The Strategic Plan is organized as follows.

- A brief overview of the Land Bank, including its background, history, and major accomplishments to date.
- A summary of the Land Bank's vision, mission, and core values statements.

- An overview of five six-year goals, one per program area: Organizational/Operational, Stewardship, Land Acquisition, Community Engagement, and Communications.
- Strategies and Priority Year One Actions needed to implement each of the five goals.

For reference, Strategic Planning terms (in the order they appear in the Plan) are defined in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategic Plan Terms and Definitions

Component	Definition
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers the question: If your work is successful, what will the world look like? • Describes the future. • Timeframe: 20+ years/generational.
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes what is done every day to achieve the vision. • A broad description of the approach or main strategy for addressing the issue. • Timeframe: 10–20 years.
Core Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fundamental principles by which an organization fulfills its Mission and Vision.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards accomplishing the goals puts the organization on track to achieve the mission and vision. • Timeframe: six years (span of Strategic Plan)
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed statements about how each goal will be accomplished.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-to-day activities to implement strategies.



III. Background and Overview

Overview of the Lank Bank's History, Governance Structure, and Mandate

Throughout the 1980s, land development and tourism in San Juan County were on the rise and the population was growing rapidly. Facing the loss of places they loved, a diverse group of locals sought a way to save treasured lands and maintain quality of life.

Their vision led to the creation of the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank. In 1990, San Juan County voters approved funding for the Conservation Land Bank through a 1% real estate excise tax (REET) paid by purchasers of property at closing. In this way the community could protect those special places that brought them here. For over 30 years, the Land Bank, guided by local input, has been conserving exceptional places in San Juan County.

The Land Bank is a County program governed by a Commission of seven volunteers appointed by the County Council for four-year terms. The Commission's authority is codified in San Juan County Ordinance: Chapter 2.120.030-070. Since 1990, reauthorization of REET funding has occurred twice (every 12 years) via a County-wide vote; the next vote is scheduled for 2024.

The Land Bank's mandate as defined by the Washington State Legislature is:

to preserve in perpetuity areas in the county that have environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historic, scenic or low-intensity recreational value for existing and future generations. (RCW 36.32.570)



Map of Preserves and Conservation Easements

The map below shows the extent of preserves, which the Land Bank owns, and conservation easements, which are privately owned. Labeled properties provide daytime public access for low impact recreation.



- Preserves** are properties that the Land Bank owns outright.
- Conservation / Historic Preservation Easements** are privately owned and legally bound to preserve conservation values such as farmland, natural areas, or open space. Easements do not provide public access, unless otherwise noted.

June 2023

Key Accomplishments

Recent notable accomplishments of the Land Bank include:

Acquisitions, Expansions and Restoration

- North Shore property acquisition, Orcas Island, 2022. Like many Land Bank acquisitions, the North Shore acquisition occurred in partnership with the San Juan Preservation Trust, one of the Land Bank's most important partners, and was done to prevent an ecologically sensitive bluff and beach from being developed, and to expand the limited amount of shoreline available to all Islanders for hiking and recreation.
- Conservation easement over 130 acres of the RR Bar Ranch (Lopez Island). The protection of this scenic farmland property has been a priority since the beginning of the program.
- Additions to Cady Mountain Preserve (San Juan Island) for forestland conservation and public access and Watmough Bay Preserve (Lopez Island) to aid salmon recovery and protect cultural resources.
- Extensive restoration efforts, including on Turtleback Mountain (Orcas Island) and Mt. Grant (San Juan Island) to promote forest health and limit wildfire risk.
- Long-term lease of the Coffelt Farm Preserve (Orcas Island) to a private farmer and additional farmland leasing opportunities on San Juan Island.



Partnerships

- Strong partnerships, including with the San Juan Preservation Trust, which helped bring about important acquisitions, and the other conservation land agencies to more effectively manage Preserves.



Community Engagement

- Many opportunities for community involvement. All Commission meetings are open to the public and have remote access options; these include regular monthly, special, and management plan meetings. Additionally, there have been open houses, tours of newly acquired properties, educational events, and volunteer work parties. In 2023, the Land Bank had roughly 100 such opportunities.
- Inter-island engagement such as the semi-annual Community Conversations, dozens of work parties each year, and helping fund the utilizing the county-wide Youth Conservation Corps.
- An increased number of properties open to the public. Of the Land Bank's 39 Preserves, 30 are open to the public. This includes nine on Lopez Island, eight on Orcas Island, 12 on San Juan Island, and one on Henry Island.



Programs

- The Salish Seeds program, which provides seeds and plants for restoration efforts, celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2023.



How Conservation Works in San Juan County

The Land Bank is one of numerous entities working to conserve land in San Juan County. Washington State Parks, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the San

Juan Preservation Trust all have missions and mandates focused on land conservation and protection. Currently, less than 17 percent of land in San Juan County is publicly owned. The Land Bank owns four and a half percent.

The Land Bank is charged with protecting property by acquiring conservation easements and through outright purchases according to the elements of its mandate. Various criteria are used to help the Land Bank prioritize acquisitions, including:

- Shoreline priorities for salmon recovery.
- Opportunities for low-impact recreation.
- Landscape resiliency to climate change.
- Areas designated as important for agriculture and rural character.
- Rare ecological communities.
- Presence of wetlands.
- Important wildlife habitat.

When opportunities are presented, the Land Bank considers these criteria as well as financial capacity, opportunities for partnership, and the potential for securing additional revenue before agreeing to move forward.



Intertidal walk at Deadman Bay Preserve

Upon initial approval, staff work to come to agreement with the landowner on the project type (conservation easement on private property or outright purchase) and purchase price and structure. Once terms are reached, the project comes back to the Commission for additional discussion with public input. Ultimately, the Commission includes the project in a budget recommended to the County Council for approval after public hearings in both bodies.

Following a due diligence period where appraised value, title review, and other factors are considered, staff bring the project back to Council for acceptance of the deed. After this last step, the purchase proceeds to closing.

The Land Bank has been exceptionally fortunate to work with a variety of partners on many of these projects, most prominently the non-profit San Juan Preservation Trust. The Land Bank's ability to match public funds with the Trust's ability to raise money from private citizens has proved itself repeatedly. Neither partner could have done many of these projects on their own, but the synergy between them has brought seemingly impossible projects to fruition. In total, the Land Bank has been successful in matching its excise tax revenues with other sources of funding on a nearly 1:1 basis.



Guided hike on Watmough Bay Preserve.

IV. Vision, Mission and Core Values

VISION

Conserving the islands' best places.

MISSION

To protect and steward the islands' natural and cultural heritage and provide access to nature close to home.

CORE VALUES

1. Collaboration
2. Conservation & Preservation
3. Engagement
4. Integrity & Accountability
5. Service



V. Goals, Strategies and Year One Priority Actions¹

Five major goals to be achieved over the six-year lifespan of the Strategic Plan are identified in Table 2 below. Each goal represents one of the Land Bank's five program areas identified as part of this process.

Each of the five major goals includes numerous strategies. These strategies include more specificity about work needed to keep the Land Bank on track to accomplish the goal. At the beginning of each new year, these strategies will be revisited and refined as needed, and a suite of actions needed to advance the strategy will be developed and prioritized. These detailed actions will be included in separate Work Plan documents.



An afternoon tour at North Shore preserve.

¹ Year One Priority Actions were identified during the process to develop the Strategic Plan but have not been pulled into an annual budget with approved funding.

Table 2 includes the Land Bank’s five major goals, accompanying strategies, and examples of Priority Year One actions needed to advance the strategies in 2024.

Table 2: Goals, Strategies and Year One Priority Actions

Goal 1 (Communications). <i>Build/enhance the community’s understanding of and support for the Land Bank.</i>	
Strategies	Examples of Year One Priority Actions
1. Share Land Bank news on actions and events through regular publication and emails, and the Annual Report.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a regular editorial column with seasonal topics to keep the public aware of Land Bank management. 2. Continue to build the listserv and establish a “blast” list of partners to provide regular updates. 3. Continue producing and distributing seasonal newsletter.
2. Proactively address misinformation regarding the Land Bank.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a communication cohort of citizens who are well-informed about Land Bank activities and initiatives.
3. Ensure adequate resources to support effective communications.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a communications plan to help prioritize actions. 2. Review communications activities and budget and increase as necessary to implement strategy. 3. Seek opportunities to support Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator with contracted or internal assistant.
4. Expand efforts to reach people via social media, presentations, open houses, and signage on the Preserves.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate videos and interviews into social media posts. 2. Give regular presentations to service and professional organizations. 3. Hold a minimum of one open house on Lopez, Orcas and San Juan islands.

Goal 2 (Community Engagement): *Increase community ownership of and participation in the Land Bank.*

Strategies	Examples of Year One Priority Actions
1. Increase and diversify the number of available activities/events to a broader audience.	1. Develop a “Friends of the Land Bank” group. 2. Integrate Land Bank activities into local middle and high school curriculum.
2. Expand and improve the volunteer program.	1. Identify and implement ways to make it easy to get involved with the Land Bank. 2. Expand volunteer opportunities to include students.
3. Improve the overall effectiveness of the Land Bank’s current outreach and engagement activities.	1. Assess the effectiveness of current engagement activities to inform future priorities. 2. Celebrate preserve openings and create a sense of community ownership.



Goal 3 (Land Acquisition): *Increase conservation to maximize the islands' resiliency and health.*

Strategies	Examples of Year One Priority Actions
1. Increase collaboration with partner organizations.	1. Build partnerships for specific projects including funding/granting agencies and across organizational boundaries when the Land Bank is not taking ownership of properties.
2. Prioritize strategic projects over opportunistic ones.	1. Continue work to refine and publicize generalized conservation priorities, including creating priority area maps. 2. Cultivate relationships with key landowners in priority areas.
3. Increase the transparency of the Land Bank's approach to land acquisition by better articulating the "story" of land conservation.	1. Communicate the Land Bank's strategic priorities to the broader community. 2. Clarify acquisition criteria and decision making related to conservation easements versus outright purchase.



Goal 4 (Organizational/Operational): *Cultivate an efficient, equitable and sustainable organization that leverages staff expertise and community partnerships.*

Strategies	Examples of Year One Priority Actions
<p>1. Capitalize on existing staff relationships with community members.</p>	<p>1. Establish consistent messaging; use existing Frequently Asked Question documents to support staff engagement with community members.</p> <p>2. Incorporate Land Bank themes into interactions among informal groups (trail users, mountain bikers, etc.).</p> <p>3. Actively recruit community members and organizations for Land Bank activities.</p>
<p>2. Seek opportunities to leverage funds to improve adaptability and durability.</p>	<p>1. Establish a centralized grant opportunity tracking and application process.</p>
<p>3. Build and strengthen staff structure and capacity.</p>	<p>1. Conduct an outside evaluation of staff structure, job descriptions, capacity, and succession plans.</p> <p>2. Support additional staff training and education.</p>
<p>4. Build stronger relationships and collaborations with Tribes and other key partners.</p>	<p>1. Strengthen relationships with County leadership and other County departments, including the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.</p> <p>2. Continue to build and refine the Land Bank’s partnership with a variety of entities, including but not limited to: San Juan Preservation Trust, San Juan Conservation District, Terrestrial Managers Group, and affordable housing organizations.</p>

<p>5. Advance the Land Bank’s policy and budgeting protocols, structure, and approach. Refine Land Bank policies and procedures to maximize operational efficiency.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update budget structure to link expenditures with key elements of mandate. 2. Better align management plan updates with budget to support project implementation.
<p>6. Expand the Land Bank’s efforts to increase climate resiliency and reduce emissions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and prioritize climate resiliency actions by district. 2. Invest in a carbon footprint review. 3. Investigate the possibility of using Land Bank properties to sequester carbon and/or contribute to emissions reduction.

<p>Goal 5 (Stewardship): <i>Manage lands with intention and consistency.</i></p>	
<p>Strategies</p>	<p>Examples of Year One Priority Actions</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the management and stewardship of all Land Bank properties continue to adhere to best practices and standards. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt a plan and timeline to ensure that all Land Bank preserves have a current management plan. 2. Develop standards for recreational infrastructure.

VI. Next Steps and Implementation

Throughout the six-year timeframe of the Strategic Plan, the Land Bank will hold annual, facilitated discussions to review progress towards achieving each of the listed goals and identify and prioritize the following year's suite of actions needed to continue making progress. These priority actions will be summarized in an Annual Work Plan.



	A	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1		2024	2025	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038
2	Land Bank Conservation Area Fund Cash Projections To 2038	Actual	Current Budget	Projected	Budgeted	Projected											
3	Beginning Net Cash & Investments	5,429,456	5,851,111	4,859,397	6,226,833	6,021,572	6,666,931	7,348,104	8,062,738	8,778,218	9,496,142	10,212,685	10,918,871	11,610,339	12,281,976	12,818,391	13,697,319
4	REVENUE																
5	Conservation Futures Tax	356,921	355,402	355,402	363,576	371,938	380,493	389,244	398,197	407,356	416,725	426,309	436,115	446,145	456,407	466,904	477,643
7	REET	3,501,234	3,500,000	4,200,000	3,500,000	3,619,000	3,742,046	3,869,276	4,000,831	4,136,859	4,277,512	4,422,948	4,573,328	4,728,821	4,889,601	5,055,848	5,227,746
10	Grants	-	-	1,428,776	521,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Investment Interest Earnings	233,757	25,000	200,000	150,000	93,334	103,337	113,896	124,972	136,062	147,190	158,297	169,243	179,960	190,371	198,685	212,308
13	Donations from Private Sources	12,000	2,500	426,700	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
16	Conservation Buyer Program (Sale of Land)*	446,705	1,715,000	1,679,238	80,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Total Revenue (net of beginning cash)	4,516,996	5,564,392	8,249,806	4,504,136	4,051,983	4,192,356	4,337,623	4,487,892	4,642,809	4,802,552	4,967,224	5,136,852	5,311,538	5,376,012	5,674,778	5,869,320
18	EXPENDITURES																
19	Administrative Expenses	415,473	379,581	379,581	427,151	452,780	479,947	508,744	539,268	571,624	605,922	642,277	680,814	721,663	764,962	810,860	859,512
20	Acquisition Costs	274,910	278,185	2,678,185	629,472	98,356	101,307	104,346	107,476	110,701	114,022	117,442	120,966	124,595	128,332	132,182	136,148
21	Bond Payments	660,678	645,311	645,311	635,238	236,444	237,744	238,944	244,556	244,944	245,219	250,113	254,488	258,613	256,875	-	-
23	Transfer Stew Operations	2,153,309	2,738,512	1,976,477	2,517,536	2,119,044	2,192,186	2,270,955	2,381,111	2,497,616	2,620,847	2,751,205	2,889,117	3,035,031	3,189,426	3,352,808	3,525,713
24	Transfer Stew Endowment	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
25	Total Expenditures	5,122,210	5,554,089	7,235,234	4,709,397	3,406,624	3,511,184	3,622,989	3,772,412	3,924,885	4,086,009	4,261,038	4,445,384	4,639,902	4,839,596	4,795,851	5,021,372
26	Net Revenue over expenditures	(605,214)	10,303	1,014,572	(205,261)	645,359	681,172	714,634	715,480	717,924	716,543	706,186	691,467	671,637	536,415	878,927	847,948
27	Ending Cash & Investments	4,859,397	5,861,614	5,873,969	6,021,572	6,666,931	7,348,104	8,062,738	8,778,218	9,496,142	10,212,685	10,918,871	11,610,339	12,281,976	12,818,391	13,697,319	14,545,266
29																	
30		2024	2025	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038
31	Land Bank Stewardship & Management Fund Cash Projections to 2038	Actual	Current Budget	Projected	Budgeted	Projected											
32	Beginning Operating Cash	1,479,264	1,407,920	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
33	Beginning Endowment Funds	4,377,045	7,334,567	7,624,916	9,499,753	10,128,789	13,145,336	13,605,512	14,064,070	14,517,495	14,965,003	15,405,755	15,838,855	16,263,344	16,678,201	17,082,332	17,474,574
34	REVENUE																
35	Federal Grants (Direct)	10,502	10,000	2,227	1,320,488	2,595,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
39	Sale of Plant Materials	35,783	12,000	40,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
41	Investment Interest - LGIP	302,163	100,000	325,000	200,000	156,996	203,753	210,885	217,993	225,021	231,958	238,789	245,502	252,082	258,512	264,776	270,856
43	Leased Property	33,215	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000
49	Transfer CAF Endowment	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
50	Transfer CAF Operations	2,153,309	2,738,512	1,976,477	2,517,536	2,119,044	2,192,186	2,270,955	2,381,111	2,497,616	2,620,847	2,751,205	2,889,117	3,035,031	3,189,426	3,352,808	3,525,713
51	Total Revenue (net of beginning cash)	4,083,813	4,398,512	3,859,384	4,538,024	5,371,040	2,895,939	2,981,840	3,099,104	3,222,637	3,352,804	3,489,995	3,634,619	3,787,113	3,947,938	4,117,584	4,296,569
52	EXPENDITURES																
53	Operational Cost	1,384,624	1,580,477	1,580,477	1,631,597	1,729,493	1,833,262	1,943,258	2,059,854	2,183,445	2,314,452	2,453,319	2,600,518	2,756,549	2,921,942	3,097,258	3,283,094
57	Property Management & Maintenance	623,310	747,060	600,000	1,928,591	375,000	350,000	325,000	328,250	331,533	334,848	338,196	341,578	344,994	348,444	351,928	355,448
58	Capital Improvements	402,740	503,000	200,000	348,800	250,000	252,500	255,025	257,575	260,151	262,753	265,380	268,034	270,714	273,421	276,156	278,917
59	Total Expenditures	2,410,674	2,830,537	2,380,477	3,908,988	2,354,493	2,435,762	2,523,283	2,645,679	2,775,128	2,912,052	3,056,895	3,210,130	3,372,257	3,543,807	3,725,342	3,917,459
60	CAF Transfer 60% of CAF Revenue Target	2,710,197	3,338,635	3,421,108	2,702,482	2,431,190	2,515,414	2,602,574	2,692,735	2,785,685	2,881,531	2,980,335	3,082,111	3,186,923	3,225,607	3,404,867	3,521,592
61	Net Revenue over expenditures	1,673,139	1,567,975	1,478,907	629,036	3,016,547	460,176	458,557	453,425	447,508	440,752	433,100	424,489	414,856	404,131	392,242	379,110
62	Ending Operating Cash	1,407,920	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
63	Ending Endowment Funds	6,297,048	9,015,142	9,103,823	10,128,789	13,145,336	13,605,512	14,064,070	14,517,495	14,965,003	15,405,755	15,838,855	16,263,344	16,678,201	17,082,332	17,474,574	17,853,684

Goal 4 (Organizational/Operational): Cultivate an efficient, equitable and sustainable organization that leverages staff expertise and community partnerships.

Strategies	Year Three Priority Actions
Strategy 3. Build and strengthen staff structure and capacity.	Implement needed changes identified through staffing structure discussions. These include revised staff meeting structure, workplan template, behavioral principles and accountability standards and others.
Strategy 5. Advance the Land Bank’s policy and budgeting protocols, structure, and approach. Refine Land Bank policies and procedures to maximize operational efficiency.	Increase organizational cohesion by developing and adopting a Policies and Procedures Handbook

Goal 5: (Stewardship) Manage Lands with Intention and Consistency

Strategies	Year Three Priority Actions
Strategy 1. Ensure that the management and stewardship of all Land Bank properties continue to adhere to best practices and standards.	Ensure consistent and timely preserve management planning by adopting and adhering to standard SMP format, review process and schedule
	Adopt and adhere to basic ecological management and enhancement standards Overarching considerations: Priority habitats and species, climate change risk, staff capacity, cost -Ecological integrity/threats -Species -Water resources - IPM
	Adopt and adhere to basic infrastructure creation and management standards Overarching considerations: Climate change risk, maintenance demands, staff capacity, cost - Trails - Roads - Non-farmed fields - Parking - Signage - IPM - Buildings - Water rights - Dams and berms - Culverts
	Adopt and adhere to basic agricultural management and infrastructure standards Overarching considerations: Climate change risk, maintenance demands, staff capacity, cost - Fencing - Water use - Soil health - Field management - IPM - Water quality protections
	Adopt and adhere to general guidelines for property management Overarching considerations: Staff capacity, cost effectiveness - Routine and annual monitoring - Mowing need and frequency - Hazard tree assessment/removal - IPM