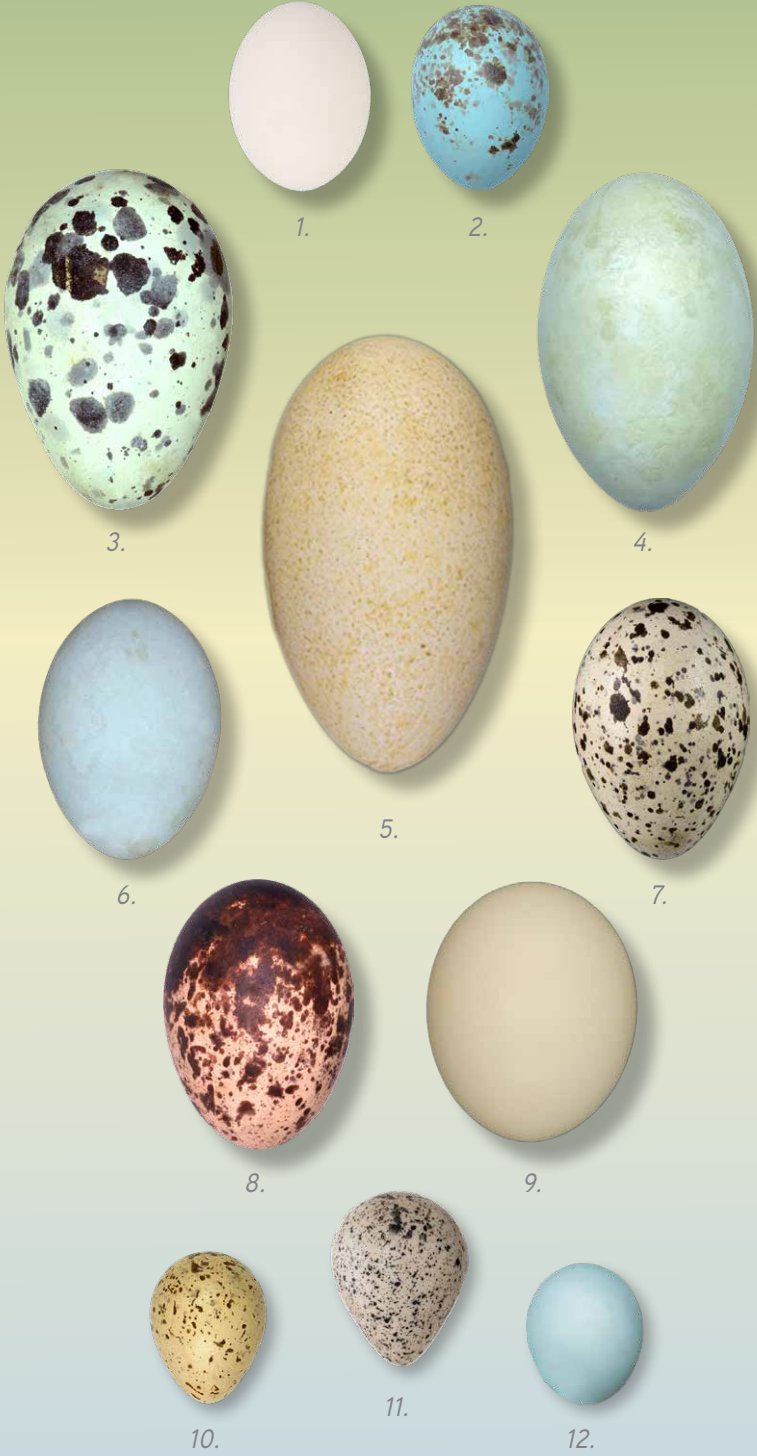


SAN JUAN COUNTY
CONSERVATION LAND BANK
ANNUAL REPORT 2024



RENEWAL & RESILIENCE



FROM THE CHAIR:
BRIAN WIESE, SAN JUAN COUNTY
CONSERVATION LAND BANK

RENEWAL & RESILIENCE

Spring is here—full-blown and finally—and we’re beginning to come out of our winter hibernation and get out in our gardens and on the Conservation Land Bank preserves. As we welcome the renewal of another season, we’re also celebrating the renewal of the Land Bank’s authorization and REET funding source for another twelve years. So, first and foremost— thanks to all of you who supported the **Land Bank’s renewal by a 2 to 1 (67%) margin in the November election**—and especially our volunteer Renewal Committee and all who wrote letters and raised your voices on our behalf. We appreciate your confidence and will work hard to continue earning it in the coming years!

That said, I also have to acknowledge we may all be facing some lean times ahead. For the Land Bank, despite our reauthorization, future revenues are looking constrained. Property sales, our main source of income, are down; many of the grants we depend on to support acquisition and restoration often trickle down from federal sources, and they are looking uncertain at best. So, for the moment, we are being conservative with the public’s funding and placing the bulk of our efforts into stewarding the land and resources under our care. In 2024, no new acquisitions were made but we did dedicate significant revenue to on-the-ground activities. We’ve opened one new public trail, the Red Tail Trail at Beaverton Marsh, as well as two new preserves: the spectacular Cady Mountain Preserve on San Juan Island, and the momentous North Shore Preserve on Orcas Island. **I encourage you visit these all new public spaces.**

Finally, I want to recognize something special about the Land Bank and about our San Juan Islands community. Many of you know that we are the only county in Washington—and one of the few in the country—to have voted for a public land bank to preserve our priceless natural lands. At a time when budgets and dedicated personnel of many of our federal resource agencies are being decimated, and our celebrated natural areas nationwide face threats of overcrowding, understaffing, and privatization, we stand together to protect our public lands and natural resources. **Your Land Bank will continue to forge strong partnerships across islands and agencies, and to live up to our responsibility of conserving our land, waters, and wildlife.** We invite you to join us.

GREAT HORNED OWL AT REST
PHOTO COURTESY: PHIL GREEN



LAND BANK DIRECTOR
LINCOLN BORMANN AND SJPT
CONSERVATION DIRECTOR
VICKIE EDWARDS OPEN
CADY MOUNTAIN PRESERVE,
SAN JUAN ISLAND



UNDER TALL TREES, EVERY STEP
UNCOVERS SOMETHING NEW



(ABOVE, LEFT):
PILEATED
WOODPECKER



(ABOVE, RIGHT):
OPENING DAY
AT REDTAIL TRAIL,
**BEAVERTON MARSH
PRESERVE,**
SAN JUAN ISLAND

PUBLIC LANDS FLOURISH ACROSS TWO ISLANDS

In 2024, your Conservation Land Bank added 3 miles of public trails spanning three preserves and two islands.

We are thrilled to offer experiences in nature close to home and protect critical wildlife habitats and natural resources, now, and for future generations.

Celebrations kicked off in June when the heart of San Juan Island—**Cady Mountain Preserve**—officially opened to the public. **Over nearly 20 years, the Land Bank has endeavored to conserve portions of Cady Mountain, piecing together six separate transactions between 2003–2022, culminating in 470 acres protected.** In collaboration with the San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT), the last parcel purchased was the key piece to providing trail connection from Cady Mountain Preserve to the National Historical Park's English Camp and Roche Harbor Highlands trails system. However, even more significant are Cady Mountain's ecological features. Identified by The Nature Conservancy as an

important climate resiliency area, the Cady complex contains high diversity wildflower areas, extensive Madrona/Douglas-fir Forest, Garry oak savannah, wetlands and several intermittent streams—resources which provide huge returns for the climate, biodiversity and our community's well-being.

Two months later another long-awaited project came to fruition—the Redtail Trail opened in August, connecting Island Rec's John O. Linde Community Park and the eastern portion of **Beaverton Marsh Preserve** on San Juan Island. A crowd of 100 christened the 72' boardwalk linking Linde Park's paved path to the trail, a forested 1/2-mile gravel loop dotted with valley vistas.

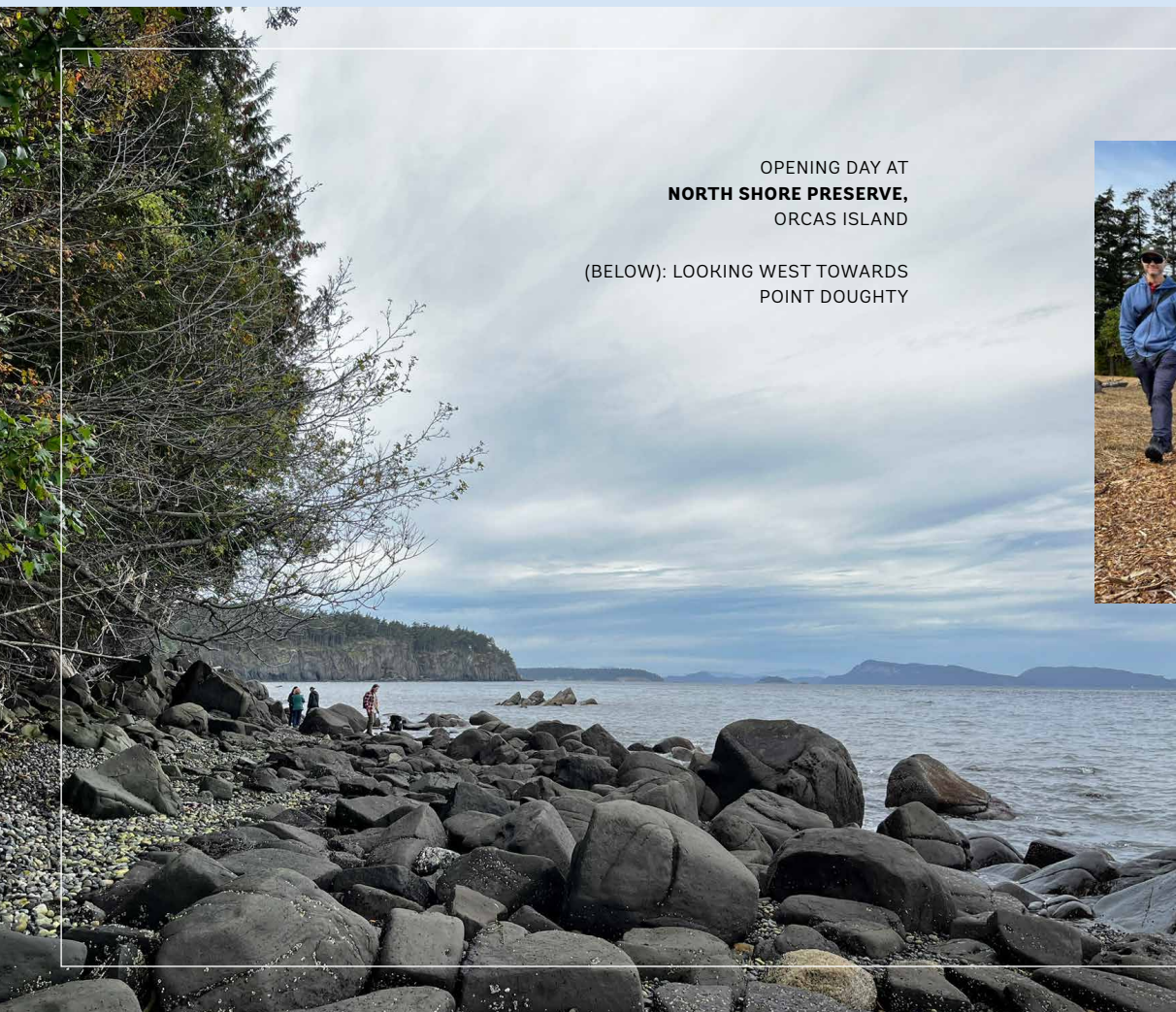
This collaboration marked the initial phase of a Land Bank goal to offer the community convenient walking access from town to the island's natural landscapes, all without stepping onto roadways.

OPENING DAY AT
NORTH SHORE PRESERVE,
ORCAS ISLAND

(BELOW): LOOKING WEST TOWARDS
POINT DOUGHTY



PUPS AND OWNERS
ENJOY THE NEW
TRAIL AROUND THE
RESTORED WETLAND



THE PRESERVE'S
FIRST VISITORS



ONE NEW PUBLIC TRAIL

Lastly, scenic and ecologically rich **North Shore Preserve** opened to the public in September on National Public Lands Day! Located near the northwest corner of Orcas Island, **the 58-acre preserve offers forested uplands, wetlands and over 1,800 feet of natural shoreline** with prime nearshore habitat for juvenile salmon and the forage fish critical to salmon recovery.

In 2022, the Land Bank and the San Juan Preservation Trust joined forces to purchase the defunct Glenwood Inn Resort. That same year the Land Bank launched an exhaustive planning, permitting and contracting effort that, to date, involved five consultants, 13 contractors and required eight permits to remove 13 structures.

Staff also removed hundreds of tons of debris, restored wetlands, and established parking and trails to support low-intensity recreational access.

TWO NEW PRESERVES

Among the Land Bank's highest priorities was restoring the ecological integrity of the property through re-establishment of wetlands, removal of thousands of invasive plants, and extensive ongoing revegetation with native species.

The Preserve is open from sunrise to sunset.

**WE INVITE YOU VISIT
AND ENJOY THESE NEW
PUBLIC SPACES!**

OUR MANDATE:

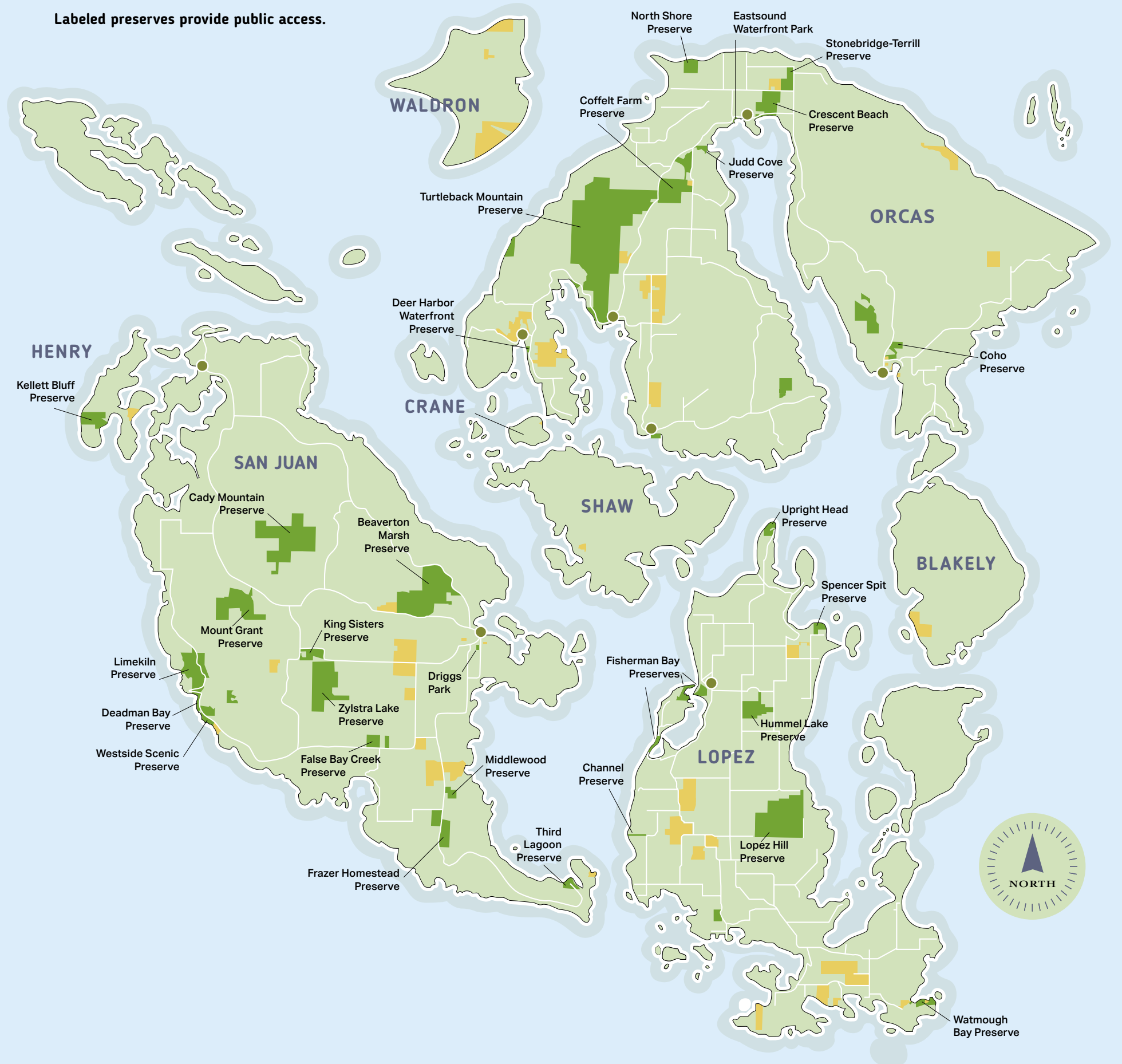
TO PRESERVE IN PERPETUITY AREAS IN THE COUNTY
 THAT HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL, AGRICULTURAL,
 AESTHETIC, CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC, HISTORIC, SCENIC
 OR LOW-INTENSITY RECREATIONAL VALUE
 AND TO PROTECT EXISTING AND FUTURE SOURCES
 OF POTABLE WATER.



LOPEZ GIRL SCOUTS EARN THEIR
 "TAKE ACTION" BADGES BUILDING
 ISLAND MARBLE BUTTERFLY PLOTS
 AT FISHERMAN BAY SPIT

- Land Bank Preserves
- Conservation / Historic Preservation Easements

Labeled preserves provide public access.





(LEFT): VOLUNTEERS GATHER DONATED FIREWOOD FROM RESTORATION WORK FOR USE AT THE JOYCE L. SOBEL FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

(RIGHT): ORNITHOLOGIST KIM MIDDLETON EDUCATES ABOUT THE HABITAT VALUE OF SNAGS



VOLUNTEERS:

A VITAL CONNECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE LAND

We don't do it alone! Land Bank volunteers are the heart of our conservation efforts. In 2024, volunteers invested over 1,500 hours in their county's public lands, and their contributions provided a wide spectrum of service.

Some helped to improve access by building trails and kiosks. Others helped keep our natural areas healthy by removing weeds, tending to native wildflowers at the nursery, and joining a planting party. Experts shared their knowledge and led excursions on everything from intertidal beasts to lichens to plein air painting techniques. Creative and generous, these various volunteer commitments highlight the diverse ways our local natural areas bring us together and strengthen our community's resilience.

Interested in joining the fun? Contact Tanja Williamson at 360-370-7655 or email tanjaw@sjclandbank.org.



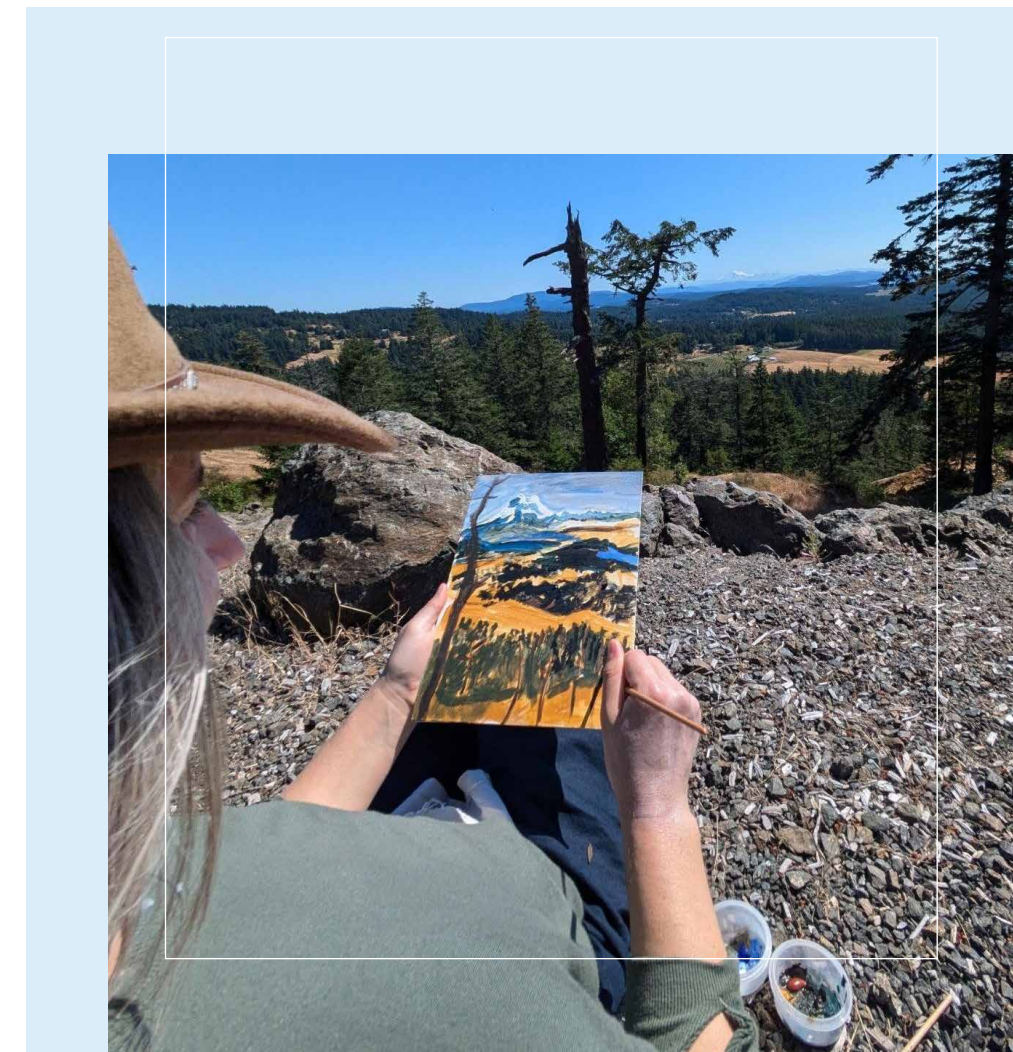
GROWING COMMUNITY!

(ABOVE): CAMPERS FROM ISLAND REC'S CAMP EAGLE ROCK PLAY A NATIVE WILDFLOWER GAME MATCHING SEEDS TO MATURE PLANT

In 2024, the Land Bank hosted over 120 events, growing access to public lands through programming designed to engage diverse community groups. **Themes included art and poetry workshops, nature-based wellness walks, senior walking groups, and youth education programs.** These efforts provided participants with multisensory experiences—observing seasonal changes, listening to natural soundscapes, and engaging with the land through hands-on creative and educational activities.

By integrating the arts and sciences, the Land Bank strives to strengthen community connections to public lands and support meaningful, low-impact access for all age groups.

(RIGHT): SOAKING IN SUMMER SUMMIT VIEWS WHILE PAINTING AT A FREE PLEIN-AIR WORKSHOP PHOTO COURTESY: ARCHEMY ART CENTER



**YOUR PROPERTY TAXES:
MINIMAL IMPACT
AT SIGNIFICANT VALUE**

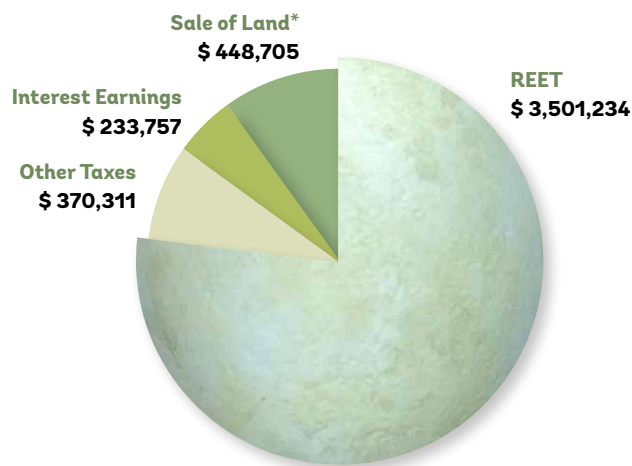
\$3.50 M

2024 REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX (REET)

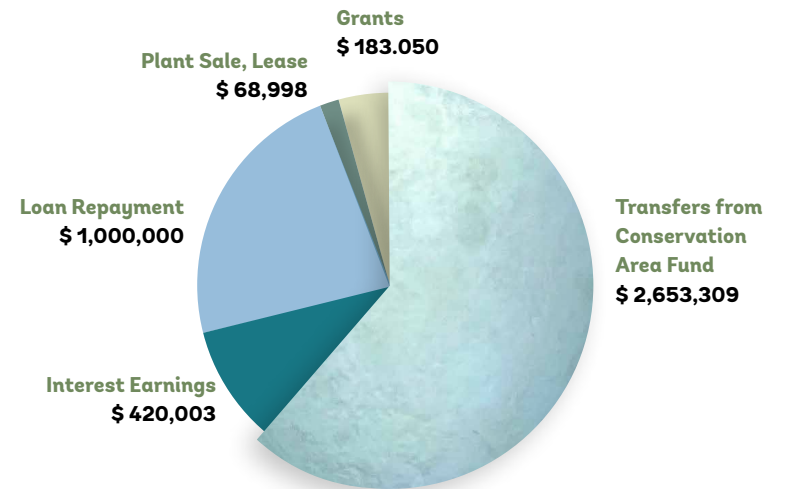
We are often asked if Land Bank acquisitions “take land off the tax rolls,” resulting in higher property taxes for other landowners. The answer is yes, but very little. The taxable value of Land Bank property is **less than one-half of one percent** (0.41%) of the County’s \$14.15 billion in total taxable value. If all Land Bank property were taxed, and the tax rate was lowered as a result, the savings to property owners would be roughly \$3 per \$100,000 in value, **reducing the annual tax on a \$750,000 property by only \$22.50**. This is a bargain!

What do you get for this? To start, 32 Preserves open to the public, 400 acres leased to local farmers, hundreds of acres of forests restored, iconic landscapes protected from mountaintops to coastlines.

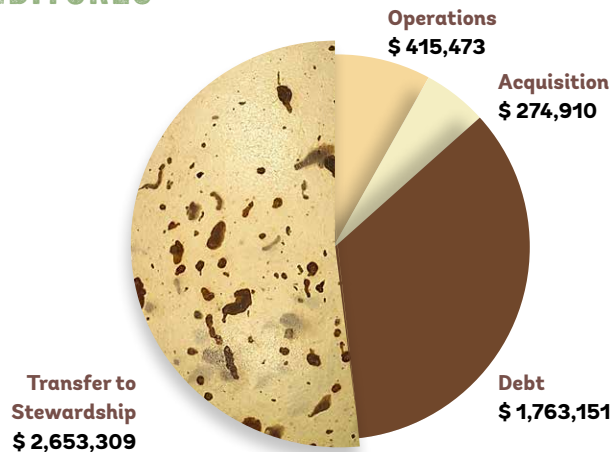
**CONSERVATION AREA FUND:
REVENUE**



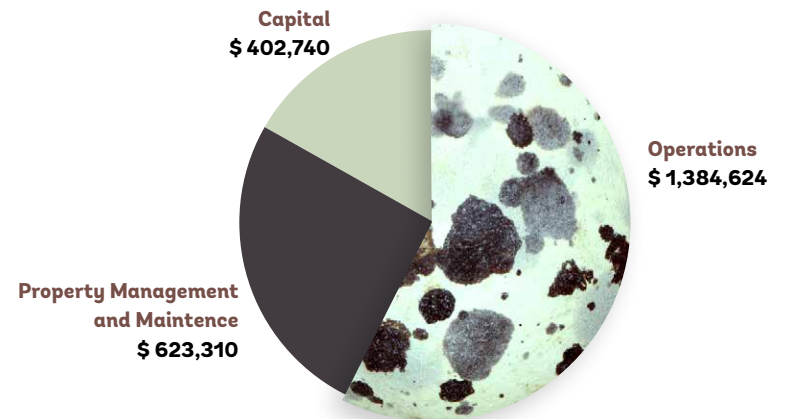
**STEWARDSHIP:
REVENUE**



EXPENDITURES



EXPENDITURES



* SALE OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS AND RIGHT OF WAY

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

6 RESEARCH PROJECTS,
INCLUDING:

Researchers from the Yale Center for Natural Carbon Capture established a test plot on the False Bay Creek Preserve on San Juan. Ten tons of basalt was spread on one acre to determine its effectiveness in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, add nutrients to agricultural soil and potentially help reduce acidity in marine waters. The researchers established plots and took soil samples. If successful, it may be possible to secure a large quantity of basalt from this program—at no cost—for distribution on farmland across the county.



4 STEWARDSHIP AND
MANAGEMENT PLANS COMPLETED

\$109,442 INVESTED
IN LOCAL ISLAND
CONSERVATION
CORPS



24 ISLAND MARBLE BUTTERFLY
PLOTS ESTABLISHED AT
FISHERMAN BAY SPIT

15 BAT BOXES DONATED
TO PRESERVES, BUILT BY
GIRL SCOUT SUPERSTAR
AMBER NEARING



23,600 PLANTS, **12** POUNDS OF SEED
ADDED AND FINAL **2** STRUCTURES
REMOVED AT NORTH SHORE PRESERVE



300 COPIES PRINTED AND
DISTRIBUTED FOR FREE OF
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
TO GROWING NATIVE
WILDFLOWERS



MULTIPLE
WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS, INCLUDING
(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE)
LONG-TOED SALAMANDER,
SHARP-TAILED SNAKE AND
BROWN CREEPER NESTLING



SAN JUAN COUNTY
CONSERVATION
LAND BANK

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Friday Harbor,
Washington 98250

Commissioners 2024

- Peggy Bill, District 3, position 3, Vice-Chair
- Tim Clark, at large, position 7
- Marilyn O'Connor, District 1, position 1
- Mike Pickett, at large, position 5, Finance Officer
- Ann Marie Shanks, District 2, position 2
- Amy Trainer, at large, position 6
- Brian Wiese, at large, position 4, Chair

Staff

- Lincoln Bormann, Director
- Shauna Barrows, Field Assistant
- Charlie Behnke, Agricultural Coordinator & Field Steward
- Cedar Charney, Seasonal Field Assistant
- Margo Thorp, San Juan Island Seasonal Nursery Assistant
- Mary Gropp, Seasonal Field Assistant
- Peter Guillotget, Orcas Island Preserve Steward
- Eliza Habegger, Land Steward
- Erin Halcomb, Stewardship Coordinator
- Tyler Goodman, Field Assistant
- Doug McCutchen, San Juan Island Preserve Steward
- Aaron Rock, Operations Coordinator
- Amanda Wedow, Lopez Island Preserve Steward
- Jacob Wagner, Field Assistant
- Tanja Williamson, Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator

**(cover)
Bird egg key:**

- 1. Band-tailed pigeon
- 2. Steller's Jay
- 3. Pigeon guillemot
- 4. Double-crested cormorant
- 5. Trumpeter swan
- 6. Great blue heron
- 7. Black oystercatcher
- 8. Osprey
- 9. Great horned owl
- 10. Western sandpiper
- 11. Killdeer
- 12. Western bluebird

PRRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 963

ECRWSSEDDM
POSTAL CUSTOMER



Photos contributed by staff and volunteers unless otherwise noted.
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