



5-Year Plan (2013 to 2018) San Juan Islands Conservation District



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Organization of the San Juan Islands Conservation District

- A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08. The San Juan Islands Conservation District was formed in 1964 with the consolidation of separate conservation districts that had served San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Islands from the late 1940s. District boundaries include all of San Juan County. The District conducts conservation-related research and education and to implements programs and projects that conserve renewable natural resources through a direct and strictly voluntary working relationship with landowners and other residents of this community.

Function of the San Juan Islands Conservation District

- To provide technical, financial, and educational resources to meet the needs of the local land manager for conservation of natural resources.

Who We Serve & Why

- The San Juan Islands Conservation District serves residents of San Juan County. We provide education and technical assistance to promote on the ground conservation of natural resources to help maintain a healthy and functional environment and economy for current and future generations.

Mission of the San Juan Islands Conservation District

- To work with landowners and residents to achieve their conservation goals through developing sustainable land use practices that protect and conserve soil, water, and other natural resources.

Vision of the San Juan Islands Conservation District

- Preserving the natural resources and rural character of the San Juan Islands through stewardship.

Values of the San Juan Islands Conservation District

- Commitment to promoting natural resource conservation through local voluntary efforts.
- Recognition of the contributions that productive working lands make to society.
- Ability to lead and model conservation programs within our community.
- Commitment to collaborating with local and regional partners to develop effective conservation and education programs that benefit our local community.
- Recognition of the need for wildlife habitat and a healthy environment for current and future generations.

Natural Resource Data & Information:

- Land Area and Cover: 174 square miles on 428 islands. Ferry-served islands are San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw. Mostly private lands with some state and federal holdings. 70 percent forested, plus a small amount of grassland that is largely used as agricultural land.
- Major Watersheds include False Bay, East Sound, Blind Bay, Deer Harbor, Friday Harbor, Hunter/Mud Bays, Roche Harbor, West Sound, Westcott/Garrison Bays, and Fisherman Bay.
- Shoreline: 408 miles, more than any county in contiguous U.S., 5,700 shoreline parcels, 50% developed.
- Population: The year-round resident population is approximately 15,800, which doubles in the summer. Over 750,000 visitors during the summer months. Over the past decade, population growth in the islands has been high, with a growth rate of 12 percent from 2000 to 2010.

Natural Resource Conservation Priorities and Goals

- **Priority: Preserve Working Lands**
Goals:
 - Increase agricultural self-reliance.
 - Promote sustainable, locally based agriculture and forestry.
 - Support growth of Community Supported Agriculture programs.
- **Priority: Promote Sustainable Farm Management**
Goals:
 - Improve pastureland, protect soil, and reduce nonpoint pollution by providing education and technical assistance to landowners of livestock operations.
 - Continue to provide farm planning technical assistance.
- **Priority: Promote Soil Conservation**
Goals:
 - Implement soil conservation best management practices on a broad scale throughout San Juan County.
 - Create effective tools for soil testing utilizing the NRCS soil database. Implement soil testing as yearly ongoing practice through the district with cost share as incentive.
- **Priority: Promote Water Sustainability**
Goals:
 - Promote continuity and function of natural hydrological systems.
- **Priority: Preserve Water Quality**
Goals:
 - Develop a stormwater management program, including outreach, monitoring, and implementation of BMPs.
 - Promote implementation of on the ground best management practices.
 - Provide Low Impact Development education and technical assistance.
- **Priority: Promote Sustainable Forest Management**
Goals:
 - Implement conservation best management practices in forestlands on a broad scale throughout San Juan County.
 - Develop a comprehensive forestry stewardship program that provides technical assistance to land managers.
- **Priority: Protect and Restore Wildlife Habitat**
Goals:
 - Grow the District to include salmon recovery planning and restoration.
 - Provide education and outreach to promote best management practices along the shoreline.
 - Partner with the Land Bank, Preservation Trust and Washington Water Trust to remove stream barriers, acquire water rights for in stream flow, and build a buffer demonstration project at the land bank property.
 - Promote native plant preservation and restoration.
- **Priority: Contribute to Ecosystem Recovery**
Goals:
 - Protect environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Collaborate with local and regional partners to develop and implement a coordinated and strategic ecosystem recovery plan.
 - Promote renewable energy use and energy conservation throughout San Juan County.
 - Promote native plant use and wildlife habitat preservation.

Priorities, Measures of Success, and Goals

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Preserve Working Lands	Quantity of local foods available; # of small farms.	Increase agricultural economic viability, inclusive of plant, livestock, and shellfish cultivation.
	# of landowner contacts	Promote sustainable, locally based agriculture and forestry.
	# of CSA and Island Grown farms.	Support growth of Community Supported Agriculture programs, inclusive of Island Grown and market gardens.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Promote Sustainable Farm Management	# of workshops # of interactions	Improve pastureland, protect soil, and reduce nonpoint pollution by providing education and technical assistance to livestock operators.
	# of farm plans	Provide farm planning technical assistance.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Promote Soil Conservation	Visual and testing results of quality criteria. # of BMPs implemented.	Implement soil conservation best management practices throughout San Juan County.
	# of soil tests	Create effective tools for soil testing utilizing the NRCS soil database. Implement soil testing through the district with cost share as incentive.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Promote Water Sustainability	Flow rate # of BMPs implemented.	Promote continuity and function of natural hydrological systems through education and resource planning, and implementation of BMPs.
	Report	Develop Watershed Based Characterization

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Preserve Water Quality	# of workshops, # of attendees. WQ testing results.	Develop a stormwater management program, including outreach, monitoring, and implementation of BMPs.
	# of installations	Promote implementation of on the ground best management practices.
	# of workshops and cost share projects	Provide Low Impact Development education and technical assistance.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Promote Sustainable Forest Management	Quality criteria assessment, # of forest plans.	Implement conservation best management practices on throughout San Juan County.
	# of workshops and attendees	Develop a comprehensive forestry stewardship program that provides technical assistance to land managers, in partnership with WSU, DNR, NRCS, and Forest Service.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Protect and Restore Wildlife Habitat.	# and area of restoration and acquisition projects.	Grow the District to include salmon recovery planning and restoration.
	Workshop participants	Provide education and outreach to promote best management practices along the shoreline and riparian areas.
	Water quality testing, riparian stream buffers installed.	Partner with the Land Bank, Preservation Trust and Washington Water Trust to remove stream barriers, acquire water rights for instream flow, and build a buffer demonstration project at the land bank property in False Bay.
	# of plants preserved or restored	Promote native plant use and wildlife habitat preservation and management of noxious weed and tree species in all ecosystem settings in collaboration with WSU.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Contribute to Ecosystem Recovery	# of landowners receiving assistance. # of BMPs implemented.	Protect environmentally sensitive areas identified by partner agencies. Implement BMPs throughout the County.
	Development of plan.	Collaborate with local and regional partners to develop and implement a coordinated, strategic ecosystem recovery plan.
	# of Energy audits based upon NRCS practice 374	Promote renewable energy use and energy conservation throughout San Juan County through focused outreach to farms.

Strategic Priority	Measures	Goal
Promote a Stewardship Ethic	# of workshops, materials distributed, # of website hits, # of individuals served	Provide education and outreach to promote sustainable land use practices. Engage individuals, businesses, and the community, year-round and seasonal, in active conservation efforts and practices.
	Outreach materials	Create tools that will educate citizens, institutions, and organizations on how resources are connected and about the resource conservation opportunities.
	Landscape quality criteria (NRCS tool). # of citizens requesting assistance and information.	Gain wide acceptance of conservation and stewardship as primary community values.

Key Decision Makers

- The Board of Supervisors is the key decision maker for the San Juan Islands Conservation District. As of June 2013, the Board consists of Ron Zee (Chair), Steve Belluomini (vice-chair), Vicki Heater, Henning Sehmsdorf, April LaLande. The Board works in collaboration with the County, State Conservation Commission, WSU Extension, Friday Harbor Labs, Local Integrating Organization, and many other partner organizations.
- Associate Supervisors are: Jerry Rasmussen, Civil Engineer, San Juan Island; Thor Hanson, Biologist, San Juan Island; Thom Pence, Forester, San Juan Island; and Bill Humes, Warm Valley Farm, Orcas Island

Vicki Heater, Board Member, Re-Appointed 2012

Background – Water Quality

- *Vicki has been associated with the San Juan County Conservation District since 1994. She is an environmental health specialist with the SJC health department and is lead staff for the county's drinking water program. She is also watershed lead for WRIA 2 and developed the San Juan County Watershed Action Plan under the Non-Point Rule (400-12 WAC) and is currently working on water resource planning under RCW 90.82. She has been actively involved with the San Juan County Pony Club since 1986 and teaches riding and horse management. She and her husband live on 24 acres, which includes a small farm and 20 acres of forestland.*

April LaLande, Board Member, Appointed 2012

Background – Landscaping and Small-Scale Farming

- *April currently works as a researcher and writer for small farm programs and publications. She is a Washington State Water Distribution Specialist and has done contract work with Horses for Clean Water since 2006 helping small farm owners utilize available resources to maintain productive and healthy animals in an environmentally responsible way. April's previous day-job was a thirty year career in the lawn and garden industry working both regionally and Multi-nationally. April and her husband Mike live on San Juan Island.*

Steve Belluomini, Board Member, Elected 2011

Background – Geology

- *Steve worked as a geologist for numerous California agencies and as a private consultant in Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology. He has reviewed engineering geologic and geomorphic reports for the California Dept. of Water Resources as well as performing field studies and remediation work. Steve has a BS in Geology from Sonoma State University and is a resident of San Juan Island.*

Henning Sehmsdorf, Board Member, Re-Elected 2013

Background – Sustainable Farming

- *Henning and his wife, Elizabeth have owned and operated S&S Homestead, a sustainable, organic meat and produce farm on Lopez Island for over 30 years. Their mission is to develop and maintain an environmentally and economically sustainable farm that will: 1) grow organic soils and pastures; 2) produce high quality organic foods for both family and the community and improve local food security and control; 3) recycle farm wastes to produce farm fertility inputs; 4) train apprentices and interns in sustainable and organic farm practices; and 5) promote the growth of small-scale, community-based farming in San Juan County and beyond.*

Ron Zee, Board Member, Elected 2012

Background – Farming and Education

- *Ron is a former San Juan Islands Conservation District Manager (2006-2008) and fifteen-year resident of San Juan Island. He owns and operates Sweet Earth Farm, with his wife Elaine and daughters Amanda and Amara, selling produce at the San Juan Farmers Market and to local Friday Harbor restaurants. He is active with the Stewardship Network of the San Juans, and served on the San Juan County Agricultural Resources Committee for seven years. He is CEO of the Madrona Institute, a nonprofit organization that sponsors the San Juan Island Conservation Corps in cooperation with the Stewardship Network.*