

THE SAN JUAN PRESERVATION TRUST

Land & Legacy

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A Deep Responsibility to the Land Bernie Hannah Protects his San Juan Island Farm

By Christine Chan

Watching Bernie Hannah, 75, sift through old newspaper clippings, photos, and farm records, including the original Homestead Certificate dated February 1883, it's evident that his San Juan Island farm has much history. It's a rich history woven into the land he's committed to protecting.

"I want this place to stay a farm," he says. "It's belonged to me and my dad (Alvan Hannah), my granddad, and my great-grandmother before that. Lots of memories."

As he walks the pasture, he recalls the old barn, once the largest on the island, now gone. He describes how it contained horse stalls, milking cows, a full boxing arena, and a "white lightning" still housed beneath the hayloft and vented out through pipes in the steaming manure pile. "That old pile just never stopped steaming," he laughs.

Now and again the sod will reveal a piece of metal from the Hannah family's old blacksmith shop. While parts of the land have been logged over the years, the majority remains forested. The field was cleared long ago by a team of horses, the timber converted to cordwood and hauled to the Roche Harbor lime kilns. Other remaining trees with low fire scars on the bark suggest intentional fires once set by Native Americans



Bernie Hannah proudly displays some of the bounty from his 163-acre farm, which is protected by a voluntary land conservation agreement with the San Juan Preservation Trust.

to facilitate hunting and to maintain camas fields.

Bernie's 163-acre farm is now largely protected by a conservation easement with the San Juan Preservation Trust. This voluntary agreement is designed to reduce residential density and to preserve richly vegetated wetlands, seasonal streams, mixed forest, pond and pasture. Bernie's open field provides a vivid contrast to nearby land once owned by an uncle, now developed into a subdivision known as Hannah Heights. Bernie says that's exactly the fate he wants to avoid for his acreage.

"It was my grandfather's wish that the farm remain in one piece. There aren't that many places like this left on the island." He looks around. "It's just great to have the space to walk around – the open space. I can see the geese land in the

pond and the deer bed down in the field. You can see the weather change in the distance."

The land was originally homesteaded by Ed Zigler and acquired by the Hannah family through Zigler's marriage to Minerva Hannah, Bernie's great-grandmother. Family lore is thick with stories of early life on the farm, rabbit and quail hunting adventures, snowstorms, and the inevitable connection to local waters.

While it's clear that Bernie feels a deep responsibility to the land and his forefathers, he also has a highly prag-

matic side. "I see the land as a piece of ground where you can be somewhat self-sufficient," he says. "You've got an organic orchard and a big organic garden. Got the land to graze livestock. You can be healthy if you live off the land."

Ambling through the 100-tree apple orchard, Bernie notes that although it's smaller than the original orchard of 400 trees, it still produces plenty of cider. Each autumn he lets the neighbor kids get in on the cider pressing action, often ending up with more than 150 gallons to freeze and sell over the summer. It's one of the small ways Bernie can keep working the land he wants to preserve. ■

Christine Chan is a neighbor of Bernie's and a member of the Preservation Trust.

The San Juan Preservation Trust is a private voluntary organization whose mission is to preserve and protect open spaces, scenic views, forests, agricultural lands, habitats, watersheds, riparian corridors, wetlands and shorelines in the San Juan Archipelago.

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Protecting a San Juan Island Mountaintop

Private-Public Partnership Will Establish Nature Preserve



Eliza Habegger, Acting Director of the San Juan County Land Bank, enjoys the view from Mt. Ben.

The San Juan Preservation Trust and the San Juan County Land Bank announced in January that they have jointly acquired 21 acres on Mt. Ben, a hilltop on the southern shoulder of San Juan Island's Mt. Dallas. The acquisition protects the property from future development, and is the first step in creating a nature preserve and public walking trail system that accesses sweeping, unobstructed views of the San Juans and beyond.

The Preservation Trust will share ownership responsibilities with the Land Bank, which will manage public access on the preserve. Input from the public will guide the creation of primitive walking trails and other preserve management guidelines. The complex transaction included a significant price reduction from Jean Walkinshaw and Martha Wheeler, the previous landowners, who approached the Land Bank and the Preservation Trust early in 2004 to discuss options for conserving the property.

"We had decided that we would sell the property, but in our hearts we just did not want to see it developed," said Jean Walkinshaw, a longtime San Juan Islander and member of the Preservation Trust. "Martha (Wheeler) and I originally bought the land in 1978 because we treasured the wildflowers, old trees, splendid hiking and views that the property offers. We always thought that we had something special here, and that the public might also enjoy the same experience. We're so pleased that the Preservation Trust and the Land Bank felt the same way."

"Jean Walkinshaw and Martha Wheeler, along with their husbands, must be thanked for protecting this land," said Dennis Shaffer, outgoing director of the Land Bank. "Without their generosity and relentless enthusiasm for protecting this beautiful place, the deal would never have come together."

The Preservation Trust has also reached an agreement with a landowner adjacent to the newly acquired property to purchase the eastern flank of Mt. Ben. Combined, these properties will create a nature preserve that will protect more than 30 acres of rolling meadows, undeveloped ridgelines, mixed-age forests (including old growth specimens), and exceptional views of islands, mountains, surrounding waters, and the city of Victoria. ■



Mt. Ben on the west side of San Juan Island.



“The Preservation Trust and the Land Bank now consult with each other frequently, always searching for those rare opportunities when the potential of our combined forces might exceed the sum of our individual efforts.”

After seven years of dedicated service to land conservation in our islands, Dennis Shaffer left his post as Director of the San Juan County Land Bank in early January. The Trust for Public Lands, a national land trust that focuses on providing public access to open space, recognized his tremendous capabilities and lured him back to his home state of Vermont to manage their northern New England office. It is with heavy hearts that we say farewell to a man that has made such a significant and lasting contribution to the natural integrity of these islands.

If you're a little hazy about the difference between the Preservation Trust and the Land Bank, you're not alone. **The San Juan Preservation Trust** (that's us!) is a private, non-profit organization that raises money for operations from private sources. While we do receive occasional grants from public entities for our land acquisition projects, we rely on the support of our members for most of our revenues. On the other hand, as its name implies, the **San Juan County Land Bank** (where Dennis worked) is an agency within San Juan County government that draws almost completely upon tax revenues to fund its work. The Land Bank, which collects a one percent excise tax from every buyer of real estate in the county, was first authorized for a 12-year term by a vote of the citizens in 1990, and then re-authorized in 2002. Another

vote will be required to re-authorize the agency in 2014. This is a rare and progressive concept, one that is the envy of land conservationists in virtually every other region in the nation. Only a few other land banks exist, including, most notably, the comparably popular - and expensive - islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

While both organizations protect important natural areas within the islands, we have, until recently, worked independently from one another. To be certain, there are some clear differences between our missions and mandates. The Land Bank, as a government agency, serves the general public. As such, its priorities often reflect its responsibility to provide the public with access to both their protected lands and their decision processes.

The Preservation Trust, on the other hand, is not beholden to public access or public process, and is free to take on conservation projects that – while critical to the future of our island environment – may not garner much notice from the general public. Priorities at the Preservation Trust are shaped by the capacity of its donor base, its fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities as a non-profit, and its own conservation mission.

It was Dennis Shaffer at the Land Bank, with the support of his able commissioners and staff, who deserves credit for recognizing that our two organizations could effectively leverage our respective strengths to

maximize the pace and quality of land conservation in the San Juans.

While we do not work together on every project, the Preservation Trust and the Land Bank now consult each other frequently, always searching for those rare opportunities when the potential of our combined forces might exceed the sum of our individual efforts.

In addition to the countless accomplishments of the Land Bank under his tenure, Dennis led the charge on a number of successful collaborations with the Preservation Trust, including Mt. Disney on Waldron Island; Hogback Mountain, the Orcas tidelands, Buck Bay on Orcas Island; Mosquito Pass Preserve on Henry Island; Mt. Ben on San Juan Island (see page 2); and, most recently, a jointly-produced conservation plan that will serve as our guidebook for future acquisition activities. Perhaps most importantly, Dennis is also leaving behind a legacy that includes a strong appetite for collaboration among our organizations and a blueprint for achieving a tremendously successful public-private conservation partnership in these islands.

On behalf of the board of trustees, staff, and membership of the San Juan Preservation Trust, we wish Dennis and his family a successful and productive new life in Vermont. His time in our islands was relatively short, but the fruits of his work will be enjoyed for many generations to come. ■

Contaminated Logs Removed From Guemes Island Shoreline

In September, the Preservation Trust received an offer it couldn't refuse. The Skagit County Marine Resource Committee (MRC) was removing toxic creosote logs from area beaches and wanted to work on the south shore of Guemes Island, the site of our 42-acre Peach Preserve.

Naturally, we were pleased to have this work done to further protect the preserve's 2,000 feet of shoreline and 13-acre freshwater wetland. The work began on November 3 and continued for several days. Creosote soaked logs of all sizes were marked, dragged offshore with a small tugboat, and then stacked onto a barge. Preservation Trust Director of Stewardship, Dean Dougherty, said he didn't realize the scope of the problem on the Peach Preserve until he looked down the shoreline and saw dozens of blue flags marking the creosote logs. "There was one about every 30 feet," he noted. "By the end of the first morning, the MRC's barge was already full and we had to call it a day."

Creosote is a black, sticky, toxic, tar-like substance used to preserve wood. As the logs decay, the compounds leach into the water and then make their way up the food chain where they can be concentrated in larger marine animals. As little as half a part per billion of creosote is lethal to herring fish eggs and larvae. While cre-



The Preservation Trust and the Skagit County Marine Resource Committee work together to remove toxic creosote logs from Preservation Trust-owned land on Guemes Island.

osote logs are no longer used in new construction, old logs have been washing up on beaches for decades.

The Preservation Trust purchased the Peach Preserve in 2000 thanks to a generous donation from the late Patsy Collins. "Since the purchase, the stewardship staff has worked hard tackling invasive Scotch broom growth on this site," said Dougherty. "I'm very pleased we could extend our protection efforts to the shoreline. This is not a problem we would ever have been able to tackle alone."

The log removal project is ongoing. So far, contaminated logs have been removed from the south shore of Guemes Island and parts of Fidalgo Bay and the Swinomish Channel, but many more areas need to be tackled. The Preservation Trust thanks the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee, the Northwest Straits Commission, The Washington DNR and the Padilla Bay Reserve for funding this project. ■

Annual Membership Drive Update

We Still Need You

Thanks to the support of new and long-time members last year, the San Juan Preservation Trust marked its 25th year of service to the islands by protecting 405 acres through 10 transactions. This brings the number of permanently protected acres to 9,722 (15 square miles).

Your membership contributions fuel our conservation work. We receive no government or tax support for our opera-

tions. So far, our annual appeal for membership contributions (we only do one a year) has received a positive response. A hearty thank you goes to the individuals, families, and organizations that support our conservation programs for the San Juan Islands.

Donations continue to arrive at our Lopez Island office, and our list of new members is growing. As the Preservation Trust begins new conservation projects for

2005, we hope those of you who have not yet renewed your membership will do so today.

This archipelago offers magnificent natural beauty, diverse wildlife, working farms, and tranquil open spaces. As you know, many important island landscapes are vulnerable to the pressures of increasing popularity. The Preservation Trust can protect more cherished island places, but we can't do it without you. ■

Former Trustee Leads Bird Watching Trip

On a bone-chilling November morning, a hearty group of islanders gathered in the parking lot next to the theater in Friday Harbor. Their goal: crisscross San Juan Island in search of black-bellied plovers, hooded mergansers, northern flickers, and a host of other avian species that seem to love the San Juans as much as we do.

San Juan Island bird expert, former national park ranger, and former San Juan Preservation Trust trustee Barbara Jensen (our guide) spotted the first bird of the day before everyone even stepped out of their cars. And it was a good one. Right there in a tree between the parking lot and the theater sat a merlin, a hawk that uses sudden bursts of speed to catch and kill other birds in flight. True to its name, the merlin disappeared as quickly as Barbara spotted it, and only a few people could add it to their list.

However, since more than 440 birds have been recorded in the state of Washington over the years, the group of novice and expert bird watchers would not be disappointed. By the end of the day, some 35 birds had been spied and identified, including eagles and various species of ducks, shorebirds, gulls, and sparrows.

When the damp cold finally broke through to the skin, the birdwatchers gathered at the home of Karin Agosta, President of the San Juan Preservation Trust board of trustees, to compare notes and ask more questions of Barbara.

“The San Juan Islands’ spectacular natural areas attract more than 250 species of birds,” said Dean Dougherty, San Juan Preservation Trust Director of Stewardship. “The presence of these birds, and other wildlife, is one of the reasons that the Preservation Trust and its members work so hard to preserve and protect the natural features of these islands.” ■



Audra and Eric Adelberger identifying waterfowl.



Bird expert Barbara Jensen points to an eagle perched in a tree at False Bay on San Juan Island during a recent Preservation Trust birding trip.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of Dr. August Swanson

Peter O. Ways

Emilie and David Long

In Memory of Susan Lawrence

Wendy and Ken Ward

In Memory of Larry Morrow

Syd and Jamesetta Stibbard

In Memory of Betty Whitridge

Anne Hay and Joe Floren

In Memory of Maude McKinley

Anne Hay and Joe Floren

In Memory of Thomas Johnson

Jonathan Brock and Elaine Chang

In Memory of Beatrice Kroesche

Jane Kroesche

In Memory of Yoshiko Daniel

Jim and Bev Smith

In Memory of Earl Smith

Jim and Bev Smith

In Memory of Larry Wold

Sally Wold

In Memory of Lee O'Malley

Margaret Philbrick

In Memory of Tony Surina

David and Roberta Moorhouse

In Memory of Randy Smith

Carolyn and Roger deRoos

In Memory of Frank Wilson

Carolyn and Roger deRoos

David and Roberta Moorhouse

OTHER GIFTS

IN HONOR OF

Rita O'Boyle and Dick Root's Marriage

Cynthia Moffitt

—
Ed Carlberg

Karen Carlberg

—
David Will

Carolyn Cruso

—
Thomas Kroesche

Jane Kroesche

—
Bart and Anne Walton

Nancy and Michael Mason

—
Harold Kawaguchi

Benjamin Kawaguchi

—
Marilyn Kennell and Alan MacMurray's

Wedding

Carol and Michael Herbert

—
Nancy Taylor and Fritz Levy

Sarah and Jim Levy

—
Jack H. Seeley's Birthday

Arlene Wechezak

—
Jocelyn and Ray Perry

Clark and Lisa Palmer

—
In Celebration of the Swanson Family

Jenni Swanson Voorhees and James Voorhees

—
Eric Swanson and Devon Hodges

Becky and Simon ffitch

Margaret and Kurt Vance

Jenni and Jim Voorhees

August Swanson

Emilie and David Long

—
Gretchen and Tom Seifert

Pat Thrasher

Education and Volunteer Coordinator Joins the Trust



Kathleen Foley is our new Volunteer and Education Coordinator.

A new part-time Education and Volunteer Coordinator joined the San Juan Preservation Trust in January. Kathleen Foley, a resident of San Juan Island, will focus on building a strong volunteer program that will benefit our various conservation programs. She also will coordinate our public education efforts, which include providing private landowners with assessments of the natural and wildlife attributes of their properties.

Kathleen earned a BA in business and marketing from Washington State University, and recently received her degree in Wildlife Science from the University of Washington.

She eventually became a PAWS wildlife rehabilitator, a job that required her to deal with the daily triumphs and heartbreaks of caring for thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals. After a difficult decision to leave rehabilitation work to earn a second bachelor's degree, she returned to PAWS as a volunteer and helped develop the group's Habitat Assessment Program, which was designed to help staff determine habitat suitability of privately owned land for rehabilitated wildlife.

"Kathleen is a great addition to our staff," said Tim Seifert, Executive Director of the Preservation Trust. "Her combined background in volunteer management, habitat surveys, and public outreach will be a great service to the Trust, and to the community."

Kathleen is a Washington native who has spent many summers exploring the waterways and islands of the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands, first as a young girl on her parents' boat, and now on the boat she shares with her own family.

"Living on San Juan Island and joining the Preservation Trust make me feel as though I have come full circle," says Kathleen. "Experiences I had in these islands as a child are etched indelibly into my memory. Now I have the opportunity to help protect the very places that meant so much to me growing up; the same landscapes that I now am blessed to call home and that continue to inspire me."

Kathleen and her husband, Chad, and their 2 1/2-year-old son, Evan, live on San Juan Island. She takes pride in the fact her son can tell the difference between a raven and a crow. "He's been the first recipient of my love for wildlife and natural history," she says. "Now I look forward to sharing my passion with others." ■

How to Put the Preservation Trust in Your Will

A growing number of members are helping to create a legacy of protected lands by including the Preservation Trust in their wills and living trusts. Such legacy gifts help save special island places and inspire future generations of conservationists.

Bequests to the Preservation Trust are fully deductible for estate tax purposes. You can use the bequest provisions in your will to endow an annual contribution, or to make a special gift that will enhance the Trust's ability to protect more land on the San Juan Islands. Another option is to use your will to establish a life income gift that will provide income to your heirs, and long-term support to the Trust.

Bequests may be for a specific dollar amount, personal property, or land. They also may be for a portion of the residual estate – that portion of the estate that is left after other gifts have been made. Finally, a contingent bequest can provide for a gift if one or more of your other named beneficiaries doesn't survive you.

What follows is sample bequest language for you and your attorney to consider:

Specific Bequests: In a specific bequest, you leave a specified amount of money or property, or a specified percentage of the estate to the beneficiary:

"I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to the San Juan Preservation Trust, a non-profit charitable organization with offices in San Juan County, Wa., (the sum of \$_____) or (___ percent of my estate) or (specific items of property) to be used for its general purposes and use at the discretion of the San Juan Preservation Trust's board of trustees."

Residuary Bequests: In a residuary bequest, the donor leaves all or part of the balance of the estate to a beneficiary after all of the specific bequests have been satisfied:

"I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to the San Juan Preservation Trust, a non-profit charitable organization with offices in San Juan County, Wa., all (or indicate a specific dollar amount) of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate to be used for its general purposes and use at the discretion of the San Juan Preservation Trust's board of trustees."

Contingent Bequests: A contingent bequest provides for the disposition of the estate if one or more of the named beneficiaries fails to survive the donor. It can be used in conjunction with a specific or residuary request.

"If any of the above-named beneficiaries should predecease me, I hereby bequeath his or her share to the San Juan Preservation Trust, a non-profit charitable organization with offices in San Juan County, WA."

For additional information, please contact Sven Haarhoff at 360-468-3202, or at svenh@sjpt.org. ■

BUSINESS & FOUNDATION GIFTS

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
The Seattle Foundation
Microsoft Giving Campaign
Cottons
San Juan Safaris
Professional Forestry Services
Gerald H. Kumata & Associates
Coldwell Banker – San Juan Island
Sherman Physical Therapy
Friday Harbor House
San Juan Naturals
C & C Equipment Company
Sam Stitt & Associates
J R Zukin Corporation
Orcas Island Community Foundation
Coldwell Banker – Orcas Island
Peninsula Community Foundation
Fagerholm Properties LLC
D.R. Stephens & Company
Islanders Insurance
APT Environmental Solutions, LLC
Turtleback Farm Inn
Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program
Washington Women's Foundation
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Northwest Asthma & Allergy Center
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Thorco
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Cason Tyler LLC

THE SAN JUAN PRESERVATION TRUST

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An early morning view of Blakely Island from the Lopez Island ferry landing. Thanks to a voluntary land conservation agreement with a generous land owner, the Preservation Trust has protected 2,289 acres on Blakely since 1993. The property has the largest contiguous forest under single private ownership in the San Juans.

