

FRIENDS

of the San Juans



2010
Annual
Report

FRIENDS 2010... A Year in Review

by Stephanie Buffum Field - Executive Director

In 2010 FRIENDS of the San Juans completed 10 years of shoreline surveys and enjoyed many legal victories. However, we also confirmed a disturbing trend in permitting by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) allowing docks over eelgrass and bulkheads on documented forage fish spawning beaches (see page 5-6).

In victories for rational planning, we successfully challenged the County's Essential Public Facilities ordinance (see page 7) and the Vesting mini initiative (see page 12).

We believe science, and not political pressure, should inform policy. In 2010, FRIENDS completed mapping of our most critical habitats (see page 9) and provided this data for two planning processes that will impact community development for the next decade--the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update (see page 9).

Our success depends on our partners: members, scientists, interns, allied organizations, foundations, and caring individuals who generously contribute

to our financial and operational well-being. Your support provides the energy we needed to hold the line for clean water, working farms and healthy natural areas for fish, wildlife, and people.

We are extremely grateful to you all.

FRIENDS of the San Juans

MISSION: To protect the land, water, sea, and livability of the San Juan Islands through science, education and advocacy.

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Cover: Science Director Tina Whitman restoring habitat at Shoal Bay Lagoon, Lopez. Newsletter design by Tif & Gif Creative.

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Opportunities to Make a Difference

By George Lawson
President, Board of Directors

As a child I knew that the San Juans provided beauty, adventure and inexpressible enchantment unrepeatably anywhere. I feel the same today about the islands as when I was a child.

However, I am astonished how difficult it is to communicate how our individual actions impact our collective welfare even when presented with the facts.

There are thousands of inspiring people in the San Juans, many of them members of FRIENDS, who care deeply about the environment. However, there are those who don't act to preserve it. Coupled with the current depressing disdain for science, we are working in a political climate of fear.

Advocacy remains critical, and sets us apart from other organizations. In 2010, FRIENDS took some body blows from state decision-makers. We stood firm and continued to patiently speak our truth to a world that seemed deaf to our concerns. Our efforts paid off in the vesting and Essential Public Facilities victories.

I believe our science and educational programs have renewed importance. We know that real change will come from talking and listening to our neighbors and at small group gatherings. Individually we have influence with all whom we run into--even those with whom we disagree. We can then shift from a climate of fear and ignorance to solutions based on trust and knowledge.

I remain encouraged by a future filled with opportunities to fulfill our calling and to make a difference for the San Juans. Thank you for doing your part.



Tracking Shifting Baselines

What were the San Juans like when you first moved here? What is your baseline for seeing wildlife or catching local fish and shellfish?

In an effort to establish a baseline of current conditions for critical marine species protected by county and state law, FRIENDS has devoted the past ten years to assessing marine resources, tracking permitting trends, and mapping shoreline modifications such as docks, bulkheads, and mooring buoys. FRIENDS has surveyed and mapped the location of eelgrass, kelp, and forage fish spawning habitats, as well as the nearly 4,000 structures, along our shores. Our analysis of County permit activity uncovered an increase in both the number and the rate of new modifications in shoreline habitats, illustrating the need to improve

protections for them. Not surprisingly for our community, the majority of impacts are associated with residential development.

While each individual action may seem small, the combined or cumulative effects can hinder the recovery of important marine species, such as salmon and orca.

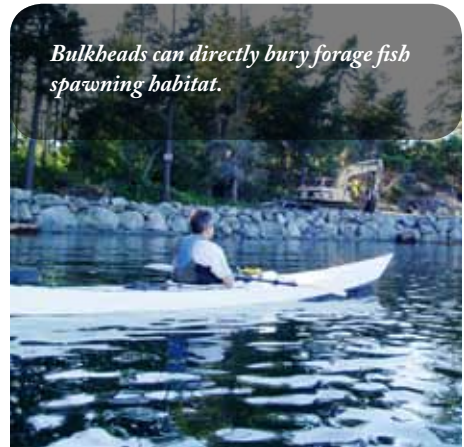
To better understand how cumulative impact analysis and policies can protect shoreline ecosystems, FRIENDS hosted a 2-day workshop last September, “Opportunities to Improve Shoreline Management in Puget Sound: A Technical Workshop for Scientists and Land Use Professionals”.

Thirty five shoreline planners, managers and scientists from private and public sectors and federally recognized tribes convened at the University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs. Participants

Docks can block sunlight that eelgrass, kelp and other light dependent species require to grow.



Bulkheads can directly bury forage fish spawning habitat.



and Understanding Impacts

shared information on existing policies, regulations, and scientific models for evaluating cumulative impacts to shoreline habitats. The group identified information gaps and outlined new approaches for improving our understanding of cumulative impacts. The workshop also fostered new partnerships to improve collaboration among interested parties.

Presenters included: Ray Clark of the Ray Clark Group & Duke University, Andrea MacLennan of Coastal Geologic Services, Dean Patterson of Futurewise, Kit Rawson of Tulalip Tribes, Paul Schlenger of Anchor QEA, Barry Wenger of WA Dept. of Ecology, Tina Whitman of FRIENDS, and Terry Williams of Tulalip Tribes.

To prevent the “death by one thousand cuts” occurring in our shoreline and



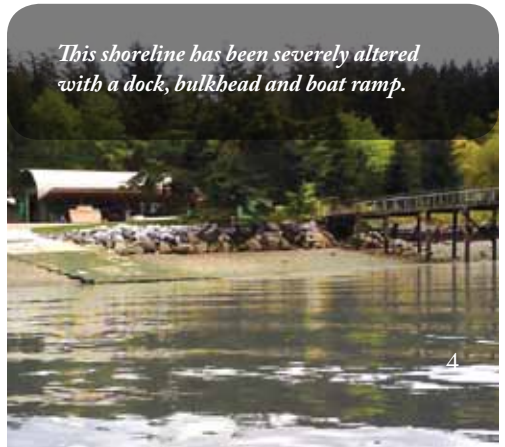
Stephanie Buffum Field, Executive Director of FRIENDS, with Cumulative Impacts Workshop keynote presenters Ray Clark (l) and Terry Williams (r)

marine systems, FRIENDS will continue to advance our understanding of cumulative impacts. Our work will include a pilot risk assessment that evaluates climate change and cumulative effects of armoring on forage fish spawning beaches.

Stormwater runoff causes beach erosion and carries pollutants into the marine environment.



This shoreline has been severely altered with a dock, bulkhead and boat ramp.





Permitting Net Loss

Over the past few years, FRIENDS has encountered a disturbing trend that is impeding efforts to restore endangered species and meet state no-net-loss requirements. During appeals, state courts and agencies are using WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) permit approvals to justify reversing San Juan County Hearing Examiner denials of harmful shoreline developments. Concerned with the potential cumulative impacts of this trend, FRIENDS contacted WDFW and learned that in over 60 years of issuing Hydraulic Project Approvals (HPA), WDFW has never denied a permit in San Juan County. Public testimony from WDFW officials suggests that this trend is likely to continue if unchallenged, causing further resource impact and hindering local protection efforts.

Four recent WDFW approvals have directly undermined attempts to protect local marine ecosystems:

- single-user dock over eelgrass in

exchange for the applicant's purchase of the right to remove an unpermitted mooring buoy 1.3 miles away from the dock's impacts;

- two-user dock in and around eelgrass in exchange for the removal of one of the applicant's unpermitted mooring buoy anchors in nearby eelgrass;
- 100-foot-long rock bulkhead on a documented surf smelt spawning beach solely to impede erosion of landscaping - no structure was at risk;
- 800-foot-long, unpermitted, rock bulkhead on a feeder bluff, burying potential forage fish spawning habitat - WDFW issued this approval after-the-fact to wrap up a criminal enforcement action.

During 2011, FRIENDS will work to decrease harm from WDFW's permitting program.

Desired improvements in the HPA program include:



Removal of Unpermitted Activities as Mitigation

While the removal or modification of unpermitted mooring buoys in eelgrass may benefit that habitat, FRIENDS has expressed concerns to state agencies about the use of such actions to mitigate for the impacts of new structures, such as docks and bulkheads. Unfortunately, WDFW officials have stated their intent to continue to allow applicants to remove or modify their own unpermitted buoys to justify new development. With nearly 1,500 unpermitted buoys in the San Juans, and many of them lying in eelgrass, that could mean substantial new impacts to eelgrass as the previously unpermitted impacts are laundered into authorized impacts through the mitigation process.

A better approach is to work with buoy owners and the WA Dept. of Natural Resources to permit and upgrade anchoring systems or relocate buoys to eliminate eelgrass impacts - and FRIENDS is doing exactly this! FRIENDS obtained funding to provide financial and technical assistance for owners to relocate or update mooring buoys with harming eelgrass. Please call us if you are interested in this program.

- internal consultation with WDFW's own fish experts and external consultation with other state agency scientists;
- preventing the use of unpermitted activities for mitigation of new impacts;
- requiring mitigation to replace the functions and values likely to be lost due to a project;
- applying best available science to permitting decisions, including likely impacts of sea level rise;
- performing a cumulative impacts review of all projects permitted over eelgrass.

2011 promises to be a busy year!

The Washington Administrative Code defines no-net-loss as the avoidance or mitigation of adverse impacts to fish life or habitat functions necessary to sustain fish life or area by habitat type. Mitigation to achieve no-net-loss should benefit those organisms being impacted.



*2010 Board President Mike Kaill
conducts a beach seine at Westcott Bay
with staff attorney Kyle Loring (r)*

Keeping San Juan County Playing By Their Own Rules

On October 12, 2010, the Washington Growth Management Hearings Board rejected San Juan County Ordinance No. 2-2010. FRIENDS challenged the ordinance that would have allowed the construction of trash transfer stations and other new Essential Public Facilities without requiring preservation of critical areas and natural resource lands, such as farmland and forestland.

The Griffin Bay Preservation Committee, which has held the County accountable during past attempts to develop a barge landing site near the La Farge gravel pit also intervened to prevent the County from skipping the Growth Management Act's (GMA) determination process for designating barge landings as Essential Public Facilities.

The Growth Management Hearings Board agreed that the ordinance failed to protect critical areas, farmland,

and forestland and invalidated it. The Board determined that the ordinance improperly: (1) assigned Essential Public Facility status to several types of facilities without justifying that determination; (2) failed to protect critical areas by merely disfavoring the siting of the facilities in those areas, failing to require mitigation for unavoidable impacts, and neglecting to require the use of Best Available Science when siting Essential Public Facilities; and (3) failed to conserve farmland and forestland by allowing the placement of Essential Public Facilities in their midst without mitigating for impacts to the continued use of those lands for resource purposes. The Board ordered the County to revise the ordinance for consistency with the GMA.

FRIENDS is working with the County to ensure that the revised ordinance is consistent with the GMA.

Erosion Happens...

and your favorite local beach is the beneficiary.

Have you ever wondered how sandy beaches, such as Crescent Beach on Orcas, Jackson's Beach on San Juan, South Beach on Shaw, or Odlin on Lopez came to exist amidst our rocky shorelines? Geologists explain that "feeder bluffs" -- a term coined by local engineer Wolf Bauer -- provide the materials that create and sustain beaches.

Feeder bluffs play a crucial role in shaping local shorelines. In 2010, FRIENDS collaborated with Coastal Geologic Services to map San Juan County's existing and pre-development feeder bluffs and beaches.

Those surveys found that 22 miles feeder bluffs exist today and 5 miles of feeder bluffs have been lost to development. The feeder bluffs were ranked for restoration and conservation priorities. Examples of high quality feeder bluffs are Point Hammond on Waldron, Indian Cove on Shaw and Ship Bay on Orcas.

The mapping shows that considerable portions of existing feeder bluffs are unable to transport gravel and sand to beaches due to bulkheads. FRIENDS is exploring opportunities to work with property owners to restore these critical bluffs and beaches and provide alternative soft shore armoring where feasible.

Land managers are currently applying the feeder bluff mapping results to updates for the Shoreline Master Program and the local Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan. Feeder bluff maps are available on the FRIENDS website: www.sanjuans.org/maps and [reports.htm](http://www.sanjuans.org/reports.htm). A feeder bluff map book is also available at your local library, Community Development and Planning Office, and for purchase through our office.

Healthy, unaltered feeder bluffs provide sediment to beaches.



Using Science to Guide Policy

FRIENDS' science program has spent the last 10 years surveying San Juan County's shorelines and identifying critical habitats that include forage fish spawning beaches, eelgrass, kelp, and feeder bluffs. Staff also mapped all shoreline modifications and analyzed 30 years of shoreline permitting. This work was done to provide a baseline of shoreline conditions and to improve management of those habitats already identified as priorities under regulations. All along, FRIENDS' has provided this nearshore habitat data to county, state, tribal and federal governments for application in site-specific planning decisions as well as countywide and even regionwide planning efforts, such as the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan.

In 2010, FRIENDS' nearshore habitat data was submitted for consideration as Best Available Science into San Juan County's updates to the Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) and the Shoreline Master Program (SMP). FRIENDS' will continue to urge the use of science in these updates.

Critical Areas Ordinance

The 2005 update to our CAO, now expected to be completed in 2012, protects Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas, Frequently Flooded Areas, Geologically Hazardous Areas, Wetlands, and Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Counties are required to update their CAO every seven years to accommodate new information.

Shoreline Master Program

The SMP, due to be updated by 2012, protects shoreline processes, promotes public access, and accommodates appropriate shoreline uses. The WA Shoreline Management Act requires local governments to adopt SMPs with WA Dept. of Ecology approval. The SMP provides a rare opportunity for community values to guide the use of shorelines.



Grants Manager Shannon Davis collects samples for countywide forage fish survey.



FRIENDS mapped 710 armored beaches in San Juan County.



FRIENDS mapped 425 derelict creosote pilings in San Juan County.

Modification Inventory Maps Nearly 4,000 Shoreline Structures

Results inform restoration, policy and planning

In 2009, FRIENDS mapped all shoreline modifications in San Juan County. That survey found 472 docks, 710 armored beaches, 32 groins, 55 marine railways, 70 boat ramps, 425 creosote pilings (not associated with docks), 1,914 mooring buoys and 191 other beach structures. With 40% of all shoreline parcels having some form of modification, we are not as pristine as many think. Notably, the majority of impacts are concentrated on the sand and gravel beaches that are essential for forage fish spawning and out-migrating juvenile salmon. In 2010, FRIENDS shared the results of our shoreline modification assessment with local, state, tribal and federal marine managers.

FRIENDS has combined the modification inventory results with our extensive nearshore habitat database and identified and prioritized hundreds of shoreline

restoration opportunities that are physically feasible and have high habitat value.

The modification inventory project results will inform the inventory and characterization, cumulative impact, and restoration planning components of the Shoreline Master Program Update. Results are also being integrated into an update of the local Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan.

In 2011 and 2012, FRIENDS will inform owners of shoreline modifications about stewardship options, identify public and private landowners interested in restoration actions, and facilitate implementation of top priority habitat improvement projects. In related work, FRIENDS is also researching the cumulative and climate change impacts of shoreline armoring on forage fish beaches.



Shoal Bay Lagoon restoration project before...



And after restoration

Shoreline Restoration Update

Shoal Bay Healthier One Year Later

In 2010, FRIENDS monitored a tidegate removal site we had restored in 2009 with shellfish farm owners Nick and Sara Jones on Lopez Island. Where fish used to get trapped behind the tidegate at mid-level tides, they are now able to travel into and out of a lagoon there at all minus tides. Our monitoring revealed that summer temperatures within the lagoon dropped nearly 5 degrees Fahrenheit. There were also no fish kills observed. In addition, observers saw schools of juvenile pink salmon and juvenile cods and greenlings in the lagoon for the first time. The project also resulted in the unanticipated benefit of larger, shellfish.

Barlow Bay Restoration

In 2010, FRIENDS completed field research and restoration designs to remove outdated and degraded shoreline modifications (docks, bulkheads, creosote pilings) that are negatively impacting nearshore habitats in Barlow Bay on Lopez Island. FRIENDS on-the-ground restoration efforts began in 2009 when multiple creosote pilings were removed from the bay. In 2010, wetland, archaeological and nearshore marine biological assessments were completed as were restoration designs for small armoring removal projects. In the summer of 2011, FRIENDS will remove derelict rock from known forage fish spawning habitat along Barlow Bay road.

FRIENDS News and Events

San Juan County Vesting Mini-initiative Defeated

In a victory for fair and rational land use planning, the County Council voted not to adopt (5 against, 1 for) the realtor-sponsored vesting mini-initiative. This initiative sought a 4-year exemption from new land use regulations in San Juan County. FRIENDS opposed the initiative because San Juan County already enjoys some of the most generous, development friendly vesting rules in the nation. The initiative would have created an administrative headache for planners working with multiple sets of rules and was an end run around the Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program updates.

Calendar of Events – Save the Date

June 18	Orca Sing at Lime Kiln State Park, San Juan
July 22	Tribal Canoe Journey on San Juan
July 23	Tribal Canoe Journey on Lopez
Aug 13	Orcas Library Fair
Aug 20	San Juan County Fair Green Tent
Aug 27	FRIENDS Annual Meeting

LEAVE A LEGACY

By including FRIENDS of the San Juans in your estate planning, you can support our vital conservation programs while also achieving your financial objectives. Consider naming FRIENDS as a beneficiary in your will.

Contact FRIENDS (360) 378-2319 to find out more about protecting the San Juan Islands for future generations.



Office Manager Jana Marks assists on Barlow Bay Restoration Project.

Thank you members for your continued support!



2010 Financial Highlights

FRIENDS of the San Juans is a 501(C)(3) non profit organization. FRIENDS receives its income primarily from membership contributions and grants. Expenditures pay for science, education and advocacy programs, publications, and administrative support. This is a summary of our 2010 Fiscal Year (October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010).

Summary of Financial Position

Current and Fixed Assets

Cash and Other	
Unrestricted.....	\$251,408
Operating Reserve.....	\$101,000
Marilyn Ellis Endowment.....	\$77,076
Other Assets.....	\$895
Total Assets	\$430,379

Liabilities and Accumulated Surplus

Current Liabilities.....	\$792
Accumulated Surplus.....	\$429,587
Total Liabilities & Accumulated Surplus	\$430,379

Statement of Activities

Income

Membership	
Contributions (30%).....	\$195,575
Grants (68.6%)	\$447,637
Investments, Events & Other (1.4%)	\$9,326
Total Income	\$652,538

Expenses

Programs (86.81%)	\$474,743
Fundraising (7.48%)	\$40,921
Administration (5.71%).....	\$31,233
Total Expenses.....	\$546,897
Net.....	<\$105,641*>

*Note: \$101,000 transferred into an Operating Reserve.

Special thanks to Sally Hawkins for her generous contributions of GIS technical services. Sally used her GIS skills on county-wide marine riparian inventory. Her project results are being applied to Chinook salmon recovery restoration planning efforts.



FRIENDS would like to acknowledge and thank our project partners, in-kind supporters and generous funders who make our work possible.

Funders: ESRI, Horizons Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Northwest Fund for the Environment, Northwest Straits Commission, Puget Sound Partnership, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund, San Juan Island Community Foundation, The Russell Family Foundation, The Tulalip Tribes Charitable Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, WA Dept. of Ecology Coastal Protection Fund, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife ALEA, and the WA State Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

Project Partners and In-Kind Supporters: Barlow Bay Community, Coastal Geologic Services, National Park Service, Neck Point Community, Nick and Sara Jones, Rosewood Environmental, SJC Marine Resources Committee, SJC Public Works Dept., SJI Visitors Bureau, Scenic Byways Committee, Spring Street School, The Tulalip Tribes, Dr. Tina Wyllie-Echeverria, Dr. Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs and WSU Beach Watchers.



Westcott Bay Low Tide Beach Walk.

CANOE JOURNEY 2011

Friday July 22, San Juan

Saturday July 23, Lopez

In the last 20 years, the Coast Salish peoples have engaged in a cultural rejuvenation, culminating in the Annual Tribal Canoe Journey. Each summer, Tribal Canoes travel from their home to a common destination within the Coast Salish territory. The Swinomish Tribe will host the end of Journey on July 25 in La Conner. Volunteers needed for escort boats, meal servers and site prep & clean up. Call 378-2319 for more information.



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