

# FRIENDS

• *of the San Juans* •

Special Edition | Farming in the San Juans

*Spring 2007*

# From the Director...

## Farm to Plate...Healthy Local Food in San Juan County

We are devoting our spring newsletter to farming in San Juan County. In this issue you will meet some family farmers, and read about agriculture practices, education programs, efforts to protect farmland, and outlets to buy island-grown food. Supporting local farmers can solve some of our biggest environmental challenges like reducing fuel use, pesticide consumption, and maintaining our rural land use pattern.

Agriculture dramatically shapes the environment. The fate of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin region and the survival of many endangered species largely depend upon farmers, ranchers and private forest owners; these same landowners also serve as the frontline against sprawl. Through good stewardship practices, San Juan County's farmers produce a bounty of healthy food - as well as clean air, clean water and habitat for fish and wildlife.

The local food movement in San Juan County is alive and thriving. But, farm and food production policies could do much more to meet the needs of farmers, consumers and our community. Unless we provide farmers and landowners with adequate tools and incentives, many of the biggest environmental challenges will not be met. That's why FRIENDS is working with farmers to develop new approaches that meet the needs of agriculture without compromising the environment.

Enjoy the Spring and Summer Harvest.

Stephanie Buffum Field

# What is Sustainable Farming?

by Katie Hover, Lacrover Farm

There has been a lot of buzz lately around the word "sustainable" – sustainable housing, sustainable living, and sustainable farming. So what does it mean to be sustainable? We can easily say what sustainable is not: it doesn't mean fast; it doesn't mean cheap, and it doesn't mean easy.

The Community of Family Farms defines sustainable farming as "an agriculture whose methods do not deplete soil, water, air, wildlife, or human community resources". There are farmers who argue that sustainability means excluding all off-farm inputs, such as fertilizer and feed.

Scott Meyers of Sweet Grass Farm believes that there is also a personal component to sustainability that needs to be considered. "How long will the farmer be able to do the type of physical work that is required to run the farm?" To help his own

sustainability, he has set up the fences and other infrastructure on his farm to make handling his cattle less physically demanding.

There is also a community model of sustainability. As noted in Cornell University Primer on Community Food Systems: "Reaching toward the goal of sustainable agriculture is the responsibility of all participants in the system, including farmers, laborers, policy makers, researchers, retailers and consumers."

We all play an important part in a sustainable food system. For example, sustainable farmers need customers for their products, outlets need to be created for customers to easily find locally grown food and regulations regarding land use and water quality need to be enforced. Sustainable farming is truly a community-based effort to benefit the whole environment.



photo by Mark Gardner

## FRIENDS of the San Juans

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# Our Community Food System: *Farming in the San Juan Islands*

by Katie Hover, *Lacrover Farm*

It's a great time to be a farmer in the San Juan Islands. More residents are aware of the importance of buying locally grown food products, especially vegetables, fruits, and meats. Seasonal and year-round residents have learned that produce picked at the height of ripeness tastes better and has superior nutritional value. Those who are concerned with global warming and our dependence on fossil fuel, know that food grown in your own back yard, or within a 50 or even 100 mile radius, reduces transportation and energy costs. Supporting local farmers strengthens the local economy. And, given our dependence on the ferry system, local agriculture provides food security for our community.

Farmers in the islands enjoy more than just the support of their happy customers. The San Juan County Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC) is an advisory body working with policy makers and farmers to address ag-related issues such as regulations, marketing, and farmland preservation. Washington State University Extension - San Juan County provides information and educational opportunities to island farmers & gardeners. There are movements to create more year-round outlets for locally grown food and more restaurants are featuring locally grown meats and produce. There are also local organizations - the San Juan County Land Bank, the San Juan County Conservation District, the San Juan Preservation Trust, and the Friends of the San Juans - who are working not only to preserve farmland but also to

find ways to keep farming viable in the islands. All these groups know that you can't have farming in San Juan County without farmers.

Agriculture is part of the history of the San Juan Islands. Many of the multi-generational families who live here have been farming in the islands for over a century. The rural character of these islands - the open spaces, the wide vistas - depends on agriculture. Over twelve thousand acres throughout the county are designated Open Space/ Agriculture by the San Juan County Assessors office. Agriculture is an important aspect of island life.

My husband I are farmers on San Juan Island. We have a diversified, certified organic, 30-acre farm where we grow fruits and vegetables, raise chickens for meat and for eggs, raise sheep for

lamb, and pigs for pork. Our decision to move to San Juan Island came after an exhaustive search, yet was immediate: we found the perfect piece of property, we found a supportive farming community that we could learn from; and, over time, we found an enthusiastic and caring customer base. We can't imagine doing this anywhere else.

Our passion for farming is shared by most farmers here. In 2006, the Agricultural Resources Committee surveyed the approximately 200 county residents engaged in agriculture. When asked why they farm, these farmers and food producers were passionate in their answers. They love and enjoy their work. They desire to feed themselves and provide healthy food for others in the community.



*Paul Lacrampe tends to the chickens at Lacrover Farm. Photo by Bill Pawek*

And they generally agree that they farm, “Because I like it and want to preserve the land.”

This is true for all the farmers that I spoke with in writing this article. I wanted to find out what the farmers thought about their own farming operation: the challenges, the risks, the joys, and the successes. There are a few threads that run through my interviews with our local farmers. First of all, there is a huge satisfaction in knowing your customers, seeing the people who are buying your products, and getting face-to-face feedback (with most of it being really good). Secondly, everyone is trying to be more sustainable, requiring less off farm inputs, and making the land and environment better than when they found it.

The following are snapshots of a few farms and farmers involved in our community food system. There is not enough space to do justice to all of the incredible people helping to bring local farming to our plates.

### Horse Drawn Produce Lopez Island

The farm owned by Ken Akopiantz and Kathryn Thomas is, to me, the epitome of what a working farm should look like. There are large, functional outbuildings: a three-sided building where they sell their produce and meat; a beautiful, sturdy, multi-use barn with a hay loft; a Quonset hut used to raise their pigs; and a milking room that is also used for intern housing. When I was there on a Monday morning, there were chickens gently clucking as they grazed around the farm, gentle mooing from the cows in the barn, and pigs outside digging in the dirt. Because of all these animals, there was a large furlough of composting grass, straw, and animal wastes, ready to be applied to the garden where Ken will be planting.

The farm on Port Stanley Road is protected by a San Juan Preservation Trust conservation easement. Ken and Kathryn have a diversified farm and, as such, lead extremely full lives. But

as Kathryn noted “I don’t sit well.” Having livestock included in their farming operation has helped their sustainability, as everything they need to build their soil for growing their vegetables comes from their animals.

Ken and Kathryn sell their produce and meat (lamb and pork) to residents and visitors all over Lopez Island through the Farmers Market, their farm stand, and at Blossom Organic Grocery, in Lopez Village. They also sell to restaurants on Lopez and Orcas Islands. They believe that there is a huge market available to local farmers. They also believe that by having a variety of different products for sale, more people are willing to come to their farm. “Having the meat and eggs encourages one-stop shopping – the people are already coming to the farm, and now they can pick up all they need for the evening meal,” explains Ken.

### Sweet Grass Farm Lopez Island

Sweet Grass Farm is also on Port Stanley Road on property protected by a San Juan Preservation Trust easement. But if Ken and Kathryn are produce farmers, Scott Meyers is a grass farmer.

Seeing Sweet Grass Farm from the road is a visual delight. The dark brown cows, all Waygu beef cattle, contrast deeply with the bright green grassy fields. Scott and his wife Brigit own 80 acres and lease the adjacent 120 acres. They have developed the entire swath into fields of emerald green.

Scott has worked hard to get the fields to look this way, using neither irrigation nor fertilizer. Using Managed Intensive Grazing, a method of pasture management, the

*Ken Akopiantz washes vegetables from his farm, Horse Drawn Produce. Photo by Debby Hatch*





Waygu cattle are allowed to eat the grass in paddocks, or small areas, for a short time before being rotated to another paddock. This type of grazing allows the pasture to rest and re-grow, utilizing the nutrients from the livestock. Over time, the grass becomes much more lush and nutritious with greater variety, creating a better food source for the animal. It's the cows that do all the work, turning up the soil with their hooves and fertilizing with their manure. It is Scott's job to know when it's time to move them to the next paddock. Using Managed Intensive Grazing techniques allows them to reduce the use of hay in the winter, which is better for the cattle and the environment. Scott and Brigit are also working with Ducks Unlimited to create bird habitat in the wetland area with "pondlets." As Scott explains, "Improving the land and adding wildlife habitat improves the health and vitality of the whole system."

Farmers have historically used animals as instruments to develop pasture and as a way to provide nutrients for the soil. Horses, cattle, and sheep can help with a farming operation by keeping the grass down. Some local farmers, like Ken Akopiantz, use livestock to take the place of tractor work. Utilizing livestock in a farming operation harkens back to the days of the traditional "family farm."

## Heritage Farm San Juan Island

Jim Sesby and Christina Dahl-Sesby have farmed 39 acres of land since 1999. Their property has a conservation easement owned by the San Juan County Land Bank.

Their philosophy was to make a self-sufficient family farm. Yet, they also thought it was important to provide more than what they needed for their



*Brigit Meyers, of Sweet Grass Farms, with "Chocolate," one of their Waygu cattle. Photo by Scott Meyer*

## The Orcas Farmers Market

**A local food success story...** To hear Julie Miller, Manager for the Orcas Island Farmers Market, tell it, the story of the growth of market in the last five years is the most exciting thing that ever happened. Julie is an amazingly energetic woman: a person passionate about local food, farmers, and the community.

When Julie started managing the market back in 2001, there were only four farmers participating. Although farmers started the market 36 years ago, it was known more for crafts than food. The farmers who were there - Brenda Harlow, George Orser, and Rena Patty - were doing a brisk business, but locally grown produce was not the focus. Julie then encouraged Sidney Coffelt, of Coffelts Farm, to start selling their lamb cuts at the market. Sidney also started bringing sheep skins and wool-filled comforters. Now there were meat and farm products, in addition to crafts and produce.

In 2002 John Steward of Maple Rock Farm started farming on Orcas Island and immediately started selling a

large variety of produce at the Farmers' Market. Soon after, Morningstar Farm joined the market followed by Rhonda Barbieri. Suddenly there was an abundance of varieties, selection and quantity. Many of the farmers made it a point to bring more to the market, either by doubling farm capacity or leasing land to grow more.

Farmers also started to bring more than just fruits and vegetables - there were flowers (edible ones too, thanks to George Orser), eggs, and value added products. As Julie puts it, "there was an explosion of taste, color and variety." And the best part was that all of these products were being sold! In addition to selling at the Farmers Markets, the Orcas Island farmers also started subscription services and marketed to local restaurants. Julie believes that because the Farmers Market is so successful, and because so many restaurants are featuring local foods, there is a growing awareness of the economic importance of farming, and preservation of farm land, in the islands.

## Washington State University Extension San Juan County

by Candice Jagel, Agriculture Education Coordinator WSU Extension

How can I start an organic seed business? Can I use manure as fertilizer safely? Where can a farmer find affordable liability insurance? What varieties of apples grow best here? Can goats or sheep control noxious weeds? These are just a few of the ag-related questions that the WSU Extension office in San Juan County has fielded recently. WSU Extension has been providing practical, research-based information to agricultural producers in the County since 1919.

In the waning days of the dairy industry here, for example, WSU Extension helped local producers identify new breeds of cattle for beef production. More recently, WSU Extension helped develop the Mobile Meat Processing Unit, which allows producers to access wider markets with a USDA-inspected product.

*Artichokes grow along the shoreline at Nootka Rose Farm on Waldron Island.  
Photo by Katie Hover*

WSU Extension organizes educational opportunities such as Backyard Barnyard, the ag business planning course Cultivating Success, Livestock Advisor training, and Master Goat Farmer training (contact them about this November 2007 class!). The Ag Education Coordinator, Candace Jagel, sends out regular Ag Events Notices and collaborates to produce the county's three farm products guides. WSU Extension also directly supports the work of the Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC) through membership, subcommittee work, and research.

With its long history of supporting agriculture in San Juan County, WSU Extension is also looking ahead to the future, working with farmers to be more profitable in a changing economy, educating our youth about farming through the 4-H program, and fostering sustainable agriculture and a strong local food system

family. An example is their WSDA licensed raw-milk dairy. They decided to get a cow since they enjoy delicious, nutritious unpasteurized milk. But as Jim notes, "you need to milk every day regardless of the number of cows," so they bought a couple of cows and went through the substantial expense and paperwork requirements to be able to sell their milk legally. This philosophy also worked with their decision to sell pasture-raised chickens: they raised chickens for meat before, so why not do the same here and raise some for their friends? Now pasture-raised chicken is an important part of their business. Plus, raising chickens on grass provides benefits to soil which improves the quality of their pasture.

Jim and Christina also believe strongly in educating people about the importance of locally grown food and knowing where food comes from. To that end, they conduct farm tours of their farm, located off of Cattle Point Road. It is a very "hands on" tour, with opportunities to collect eggs, watch a cow being milked, and feed a calf a bottle of milk. The tour ends with a horse-drawn wagon ride on the farm. All the way, Jim and Christina are able to provide some education about the importance of having livestock live on grass and the improved taste and nutritional value of eggs that come from pasture-raised hens. As Christina notes, "we want people to come away with the realization that there are many ways to farm and the importance of knowing your local farmer."

### Our Lady of the Rock Shaw Island

Innovation is an important part of the work done at Our Lady of the Rock, a Benedictine monastery located on Shaw Island. Through their call to a monastic life, the nuns endeavor to







*Freckles the Sheep, Lacrover Farms.  
Photo by Bill Pawek*

balance prayer, work and study. They do this in addition to operating one of the first WSDA licensed raw milk dairies in Washington.

The Benedictine Order puts great emphasis on stewardship of land and animals, as well as being as self-sufficient as possible. Therefore, in 1977, when Mother Therese came to Shaw Island, she found herself with two Jersey cows within a month. By 1981, they had created a certified dairy and have supplied milk to residents of Shaw Island ever since. The eight nuns living in communion also raise rare-breed livestock, including Highland cattle and black Cotswold sheep. They sustain the monastery's substantial forest lands; spin, dye and weave the wool from their flock; foster a large group of kids involved in raising llamas and alpacas for 4-H; and make herbal products for sale.

Despite this seemingly heavenly lifestyle, the nuns have very real earthly tasks such as running a dairy within the regulations of the Washington Department of Agriculture. Once in awhile the idea is floated that, because raw milk is potentially dangerous, it should no longer be allowed. But Mother Therese asks, "If people have the choice to buy what's at the grocery store, including proven unhealthy

items such as cigarettes and candy, why can't people have the choice to drink raw milk?" Although the regulations can be a bit onerous, providing fresh, unpasturized milk is an important part of the mission of Our Lady of the Rock.

## The Bullock Brothers Permaculture Farm Orcas Island

Throughout these islands, there are very interesting people doing very interesting things with regard to sustainability. One great example is the Bullock Brothers – Samuel, Douglas and Joseph – who are world-renowned instructors of permaculture, a design system for creating sustainable human environments. The Bullock Permaculture Homestead is a learning center and a mecca for productive and sustainable living through the integration of ecology, landscape, organic gardening, architecture, agroforestry, green or ecological economies, and social systems.

The homestead, which functions as their residence, farm, nursery and laboratory, has a mixture of soil types, elevations, and ecosystems. A large feature of their property is a marsh, which attracts a variety of wildlife. Cleared brush and tree trimmings were used as a windbreak and shelter for birds. Sam pointed out co-plants and pioneers species, which fix nitrogen in the soil before the desired plant is put in. On their land, it appeared as though everything was placed in relationship to everything else around it. Because of the permaculture ethic, there wasn't a sense of gardening as a fight against nature, but rather a belief in the order of the natural world.

## Agricultural Resources Committee

*by Eliza Buck, ARC Coordinator*

In 2005, the Board of County Commissioners established an Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC). The ARC's mission is to advocate for the protection and restoration of agricultural resources in San Juan County. Current priorities include...

- Farm Marketing: Create new markets and develop existing markets for San Juan Islands' agricultural products.
- Farmland Preservation: Identify and promote ways of retaining and increasing farmlands in the island.
- Farm Regulation: Make specific legislative recommendations to County Council on laws that impact farmers.

Goals for 2007 include working with County agencies to streamline regulations and fees placed on farm stands and farm stores; assisting the County Critical Areas Ordinance Review Committee with the development of realistic goals for protecting wetlands on lands zoned "agricultural"; working toward a permanent farmer's market on San Juan Island; creating an agricultural information sharing system on the ARC website; and increasing awareness and support for agriculture in the islands.

"The ARC is a very diverse group that can examine ideas from multiple points of view, making things as viable as possible for all parties involved. The reason I am involved is because I believe that Island Agriculture needs more diverse market options for it to survive and to grow." – Madden Surbaugh, Chef and ARC member.

The nineteen-member committee meets monthly and welcomes the public to attend. Visit [www.sjcarc.org](http://www.sjcarc.org) for more information.



*Blue Moon Produce at the San Juan Island Farmer's Market.  
Photo by Mark Gardner*

### S&S Homestead Farm Lopez

Another very important name in sustainability is Henning Sehmsdorf and S & S Homestead Farm. Henning owns the farm with his wife, Elizabeth Simpson. Together they have created not only a well-run, economically viable sustainable farm, they have also created an important classroom environment for Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and for the Lopez Island School District.

From the start, the farm has been managed according to the principles of ecological agriculture as articulated by Rudolph Steiner, integrating animal and plant production to build a self-reliant, biologically, and culturally sustainable ecosystem. Henning believes that a small, integrated farm can be an exceptionally effective

vehicle for education in the principles and practices of sustainability and self-reliance. S & S Homestead provides food for the community through a farm stand and Community Supported Agriculture. Close interaction with local residents, farm tours, and demonstrations are a regular part of their work.

### Nootka Rose Farm, Thousand Flower Farm, Blue Moon Produce, Waldron

Come to the San Juan Island Farmers' Market in July and you will notice a bountiful display of vegetables and flowers at three booths close together. This would be Steve and Linnea Bensel of Nootka Rose Farm, Joel and Margaret Thorson of Thousand Flower Farm and Rebecca Moore from Blue Moon Produce. All of them grow

an incredible amount of produce on a variety of farms scattered around Waldron Island. The Bensels and the Thorsons have been farming on their own land for over forty years; Rebecca Moore and her partner Carla Larmore have been farming since 1999 on leased land owned by the Ragen family.

The excellence and productivity of their farms is due to a variety of factors, including a lot of hard work, years of experience, and the necessity of making a living on an island that doesn't have a wide selection of industries to choose from. As Margaret notes, "If we want to stay here, we need to find something to do that makes money." Living on Waldron, which has no electricity or ferry service, provides other challenges as well. But the farmers on Waldron believe that this lack of "modern day conveniences" helps them be productive. "We aren't so pulled by a variety of things to do; it's much easier to focus on farming," was how Steve Bensel put it. Theirs is not a life for everyone, but for those of us who enjoy the produce from Waldron Island farmers, we are thankful that they are here.

### Thirsty Goose Farm San Juan

Since 1974, Jim and Lisa Lawrence have been farming on a beautiful piece of property tucked away near the middle of San Juan Island. It was Lisa, as our real estate agent, and Jim, the farmer, who said "we need more farmers in our community," that helped us decide to move to San Juan Island. Jim wants farmers to succeed here. He has been actively working toward that goal as a member of the Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC). Lisa is president of the board of the San Juan County Land Bank,



and her family has been fishing and farming in the islands for generations.

The overriding philosophy of Thirsty Goose Farm has been “to make money by raising healthy, sane food.” It was Jim and Lisa’s income from fishing that “grew” the first greenhouse, where Jim began growing tomatoes. That became profitable enough to allow him to build a second greenhouse. The increased profits allowed for a barn, which became his entry into raising sheep.

In asking why he farms, Jim answered beautifully. “It’s the aesthetic, the romantic, the beauty, the joy of working the land and producing food that is important.” Jim has seen many changes in sustainable farming on these islands since moving here. He is excited by the extensive farmer involvement in the political process as evidenced by the formation of the ARC.

## Opportunities for our Future

There are so many incredible opportunities for farmers on the San Juan Islands, but there are also some very important challenges. These challenges mirror those happening on a national level. The average age of the farmer is quickly rising – my husband and I are in our mid-40’s, yet are considered some of the “younger” farmers around. There is a desire to attract younger people to the islands to farm, but land prices are high. There is an opportunity for preservation organizations, like the Land Bank and the Preservation Trust, to lease their land, but the long-term lease agreements are complicated.

None of these challenges are insurmountable and island farmers are working together, and with the community, on solutions. Farming has been, and will continue to be, an extremely important component of our island life.



## What You Can Do...

- Support your local farmers!
- Choose a diet rich in locally grown foods.
- Eat less processed food and enjoy better health.
- Educate your neighbors and friends about the benefits in taste and nutrition with local food; have them over for a meal made with local food.
- Visit Local Farms. It’s a great way to find the freshest products available and see a working farm.
- Buy a share in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).
- Get on a farm email list so you know what’s fresh weekly.
- Request that your local grocery store, school, and senior center carry more local produce.
- Shop at stores that sell local produce.
- Go to the Farmers Market on your island.
- Ask where items on a restaurant menu come from and express an interest in eating locally. Better yet, support restaurants that you know buy local food.
- Get involved in a food gardening project at school or senior center; if there isn’t one, start it.
- Participate in a community garden or start a home vegetable garden. Share the excess with neighbors, a community kitchen or food bank.

*Ripe tomatoes from Thirsty Goose Farm. Photo by Mark Gardner*



## Farm to School Programs in the Islands

*by Katie Hover, Lacrover Farm*

Farm-to-school programs are a great way to educate and involve children in learning where their food comes from. There are a variety of programs, ranging from small to large throughout the county.

Friday Harbor Elementary School has a small garden plot and some dedicated WSU Master Gardener volunteers who work with the children, weeding, planting and harvesting their produce. Orcas Island has a larger farm-to-school program that involves the entire school and some of the local farmers including John Steward of Maple Rock Farm, Mimi Anderson at Morning Star Farm, and Vern and Sidney Coffelt from Coffelts Farm. The children meet the farmers who grow their food through school visits and field trips.

The largest and most sophisticated farm-to-school model in San Juan County is LIFE – Lopez Island Farm Education Program. There is a large garden at the school that is part of the K – 5 curriculums. S & S Homestead Farm is the instructional site for Lopez Island middle and high-school students. LIFE hopes to establish a sustainable, on campus “garden-to-cafeteria” program integrated in the K-12 curriculum and create a partnership with local farmers



*Students at Lopez Island School participate in growing and cooking their own food. Photos from the LIFE Program*

through site visits. All of this is designed to strengthen children’s understanding of where food comes from.

Rhea Miller, former San Juan County Commissioner and current director of LIFE, is passionate about the program because, as she puts it, “Food is the largest issue in our future.” Not only has our health been compromised due to our heavily processed diets, but with the demise of fossil fuel, it will become imperative to be able to grow our own food as we will no longer have the energy-dependent supply chain.

Generally speaking, kids learn eating habits from their parents. But they do change their behavior regarding food when they learn to grow and cook it. That is why, in the Lopez School, the portable kitchen and the gardens are such an important part of the curriculum. Rhea tells stories of elementary kids asking their parents to buy vegetables, preferably those from the local farms they have visited. Because the kids are completely involved with all aspects of their school lunch, they are excited about eating their fruits and vegetables.



# Cooking with Local Foods

by Katie Hover, Lacrover Farm

Madden Surbaugh, owner/chef at Steps Wine Bar and Café on San Juan Island, is passionate about cooking with local foods. “I cook with local foods because the taste is far superior. The freshness of the produce and meats means that it lasts longer. Because my dishes focus on a particular ingredient, it is particularly important to have that ingredient be the best. The food from the farmers on these islands is incredible.” Madden, a member of the Agriculture Resources Committee, has created relationships with the farmers by seeing what they have. One of his major suppliers is Nick and Sarah Jones from Jones Family Farms. “I was at the farm where they raise cattle and the pastured pigs and told them that I want their pork.” It is now one of the more popular items on the menu.

Two other local chefs from San Juan Island who have been using locally grown food for years are Tim Barrette and Laurie Paul at Market Chef. Like Madden, they appreciate the seasonality of using local food and are inspired by what’s available during the season. With the increasing number of farmers, there is more variety over a longer period of time. Also, thanks to the Islands Grown Farmers Cooperative and their mobile USDA certified slaughter unit, fresh grass-fed lamb and beef is more readily available.

Both Madden and Tim also believe in supporting local farmers. Madden states, “I feel so much better knowing that my food dollars are going to someone in my community, rather than being sent to a large corporation like Sysco. That is very important to me.”

## Madden’s Recipe for Broccoli Soup

2 Lbs. Locally Grown Fresh Broccoli  
 3 ea Sweet Onions Diced  
 6 ea Garlic Cloves Minced  
 1 Tbsp Yellow Mustard Seeds  
 ½ Gallon Whole Milk  
 4 tbsp butter  
 2 ea fresh lemons  
 Sea Salt & Fresh Ground Black Pepper

In large soup pot heat 4 tbsp Butter till just starts to froth. Add Mustard seeds stir quickly.

Add Garlic & Onion cooking until garlic smell is strong (3-4 minutes). Add Broccoli & Milk.

Bring to light simmer and cook until broccoli is tender.

Using blender puree soup until smooth (do this in small batches so hot soup does not splatter everywhere). Hint: for brighter green soup, add a few fresh spinach leaves to blender while soup is pureeing.

Season soup with sea salt, fresh ground black pepper & fresh lemon juice. Garnish with a little Extra Virgin Olive Oil & Dollop of Crème Fraiche or Sour Cream. Enjoy!

*Broccoli Soup from Steps Wine Bar & Cafe.  
 Photo by Tawm Perkowski*



## Farm Land Conservation

by Katie Hover, Lacrover Farm

County-wide, there is growing awareness of the need to conserve farm land. We are fortunate to have multiple organizations in San Juan County working to do this.

The San Juan County Land Bank was first voted into being in 1990 with a 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.” The primary source of funding is a one percent real estate excise tax paid by purchasers of property in San Juan County.

During the past 18 years, the Land Bank has purchased conservation easements on 1,082 agriculture acres. The properties that the Land Bank has targeted for preservation this year are important and include the 195 acre Coffelts Farm on Orcas Island, a variety of farms in the fertile Central Valley area of Lopez Island, and 155 acres in San Juan Valley on San Juan Island.

Lincoln Borman, Director of the Land Bank, understands the importance of not only protecting farm land, but also making it productive. As the bumper sticker says, “It isn’t farm land without farmers.” Farm properties that are protected by easements need to have a Farm Resource Management plan created in conjunction with the San Juan County Conservation District. These ensure that best practices are used with regard to water and farm wastes. They are also looking at creating a long-term lease on a 60 acre parcel on San Juan Island, to encourage land management using livestock.



*Christina Dahl-Sesby works the fields at Heritage Farm, which is protected by a San Juan County Land Bank conservation easement. Photo by South Bay Photography*

Another entity actively involved in the preservation of farm land is the San Juan Preservation Trust, a private, non-profit conservation organization. The mission of the San Juan Preservation Trust is “to preserve and protect open spaces, scenic views, forests, agricultural lands, habitats, watersheds, riparian corridors, wetlands and shorelines in the San Juan Archipelago.”

The Preservation Trust has protected approximately 2500 acres of farmland via Conservation Easements. Tim Seifert, Executive Director, realizes that the oversight of these properties is an issue. He notes, “the Preservation Trust is best at protecting the land, but we need to start being proactive about the management of our agriculture properties.” Putting together a strategy for how to best preserve the farming

integrity on these lands is currently being investigated.

FRIENDS, as well, is actively pursuing the goals of farmland protection, by providing land use expertise to farmers, supporting various initiatives and through education about the importance of locally grown foods. When asked about the value of agricultural land to the islands, Stephanie Buffum Field, Executive Director for FRIENDS remarked, “By protecting farmland we are protecting our homes and habitats. Healthy locally produced food is in the interest of all our residents. Today over fifty percent of all parcels in the islands have been developed. Where and how we develop the next fifty percent of our parcels will affect our food quality, water quality, water quantity, forests, farmlands, fish and wildlife, and our sense of this place.”



# "Farming In The San Juans" Resource List

## Farms Listed

This not a complete list of our island farmers... for a more extensive listing of San Juan County Farmers, Farm Product Guides are available from the WSU Extension Office for San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Islands. Electronic versions are also online at <http://sanjuan.wsu.edu/agriculture/AgMarketing.html>

### San Juan Island

Lacrover Farm  
935 Mitchell Bay Road  
[www.LacroverFarm.com](http://www.LacroverFarm.com)  
378-3515, [farmers@LacroverFarm.com](mailto:farmers@LacroverFarm.com)

Heritage Farm  
221 Heritage Farm Lane  
378-2872, [drafhorse@interisland.net](mailto:drafhorse@interisland.net)

Thirsty Goose Farm  
531 Boyce Road  
[www.thirstygoose.com](http://www.thirstygoose.com)  
378-5575, [jim@thirstygoose.com](mailto:jim@thirstygoose.com)

### Shaw Island

Our Lady of the Rock Monastery  
[www.ourladyoftherock.com](http://www.ourladyoftherock.com)  
468-2321

### Lopez Island

Horse Drawn Produce  
2823 Port Stanley Road, Lopez  
468-3486, [swiftbay@yahoo.com](mailto:swiftbay@yahoo.com)

Sweet Grass Farm  
866 Bakerview Road  
[www.sgfbef.com](http://www.sgfbef.com)  
468-4450, [scott@rockisland.com](mailto:scott@rockisland.com)

S & S Homestead Farm  
2143 Lopez Sound Rd.  
468-3335, [sshomestead@rockisland.com](mailto:sshomestead@rockisland.com)

### Waldron Island

Nootka Rose Farm  
317-8239, [n.rose@pocketmail.com](mailto:n.rose@pocketmail.com)

Thousand Flower Farm  
472-0574, [thousandflower@yahoo.com](mailto:thousandflower@yahoo.com)

Blue Moon Produce  
317-8130, [bluemoonproduce@gmail.com](mailto:bluemoonproduce@gmail.com)

### Orcas Island

Bullock Brothers Permaculture Homestead  
[www.permacultureportal.com](http://www.permacultureportal.com)  
[info@permacultureportal.com](mailto:info@permacultureportal.com)

Maple Rock Farm  
[www.maplerockfarm.com](http://www.maplerockfarm.com)  
845 Pinneo Road  
376-5994, [stewardship@orcasonline.com](mailto:stewardship@orcasonline.com)

Coffelts Farm  
1071 Crow Valley Road  
376-4357, [coffeltsfarm@rockisland.com](mailto:coffeltsfarm@rockisland.com)

Morning Star Farm  
376-5994, [msfarm@rockisland.com](mailto:msfarm@rockisland.com)

Orcas Farm  
376-3276, [orcasmfarm@rockisland.com](mailto:orcasmfarm@rockisland.com)

## Other Resources Listed

Washington State University Extension  
San Juan County  
[sanjuan.wsu.edu](http://sanjuan.wsu.edu)  
378-4414

*Blue Moon Farm, Waldron Island.  
Photo by Katie Hover*

San Juan County Agricultural Resources  
Committee  
[www.sjcarc.org](http://www.sjcarc.org)  
Eliza Buck - 378-6621

San Juan County Land Bank  
[www.co.san-juan.wa.us/land\\_bank](http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/land_bank)  
378-4402

San Juan Preservation Trust  
[www.sjpt.org](http://www.sjpt.org)  
468-3202

Lopez Island Farm Education Program  
[www.lopezclt.org/sard/websiteupdate.htm](http://www.lopezclt.org/sard/websiteupdate.htm)  
Rhea Miller – 468-3654

Orcas Island Farmers Market  
[www.orcasislandfarmersmarket.org](http://www.orcasislandfarmersmarket.org)

Steps Wine Bar and Café  
[www.stepswinebarandcafe.com](http://www.stepswinebarandcafe.com)  
370-5959

Market Chef  
224 A Street, San Juan Island  
378-4546



## On-site Sewage Management

In 2006, San Juan County Health and Community Services formed a citizen advisory committee made up of State-licensed septic designers, wastewater system inspectors, septic tank pumpers, realtors, shellfish growers, and environmental organizations to develop a comprehensive management plan for operation and maintenance of on-site sewage systems in San Juan County. Shannon Davis represented FRIENDS on this committee. Plan development was in response to a state requirement that the twelve Counties bordering the waters of Puget Sound develop and submit an On-site Sewage System Management Plan to the State Department of Health by July 1, 2007. After 12 months of work, the committee has completed a draft plan which was presented at public meetings. The plan is designed to provide effective management of on-site sewage disposal systems countywide by identifying and correcting failing systems, eliminate public health hazards, and maintaining our pristine water quality. Copies of the draft plan are available by calling Health & Community Services at 378-4474 or on the County's web site ([www.co.san-juan.wa.us](http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us)). Comments on the proposed inspection requirements will be accepted at the Board of Health public hearing currently scheduled for June.

## Workshop for Excavators

FRIENDS of the San Juans recently partnered with the San Juan County Conservation District and hosted a "Land Development Permits and Practices- the good, the bad and the ugly" workshop for professional excavating, landscaping and building contractors. Over 70 land development professionals attended this unique workshop to hear presentations on local and state environmental regulations and best management practices for wetlands, shorelines and stormwater. This successful workshop brought together local and state permitting agencies, land use consultants and private contractors and will help all participants improve protection of resources. The workshop also strengthened relationships between county and state managers and will improve coordination of resource protection and permitting efforts in the future. Generous funding support was provided by the Puget Sound Action Team and The Russell Family Foundation.

## Deer Harbor/Trendwest

Trendwest is seeking to enlarge its Deer Harbor resort. Last spring, FRIENDS' staff attorney argued, and the Hearing Examiner agreed, that Trendwest's proposal violated the interim hamlet

provision that prohibited more than 5,000 square feet of construction on a single parcel. Trendwest disagreed and sued the County. On March 2nd, Superior Court Judge Alan Hancock ruled in favor of the County, upholding the Hearing Examiner's and FRIENDS' interpretation.

## Tidal Energy Update

On February 22, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued preliminary permits to the Public Utility District No. 1 of Snohomish County (SnoPUD) to study the feasibility of proposed tidal energy projects in Spieden and San Juan Channels. FRIENDS successfully intervened in the preliminary permit applications last summer. The issuance of the permit allows SnoPUD to conduct investigations, collect data and prepare a license application. The permit does not grant SnoPUD the right to disturb land or install test units. SnoPUD must obtain all necessary federal, state and local permits prior to conducting any studies. To view the actual permits, go to FRIENDS website at [www.sanjuans.org](http://www.sanjuans.org).

## Protecting Orcas from Vessel Impacts

In November 2006, NOAA Fisheries Service released a proposed Recovery Plan for the Southern Resident Killer Whale population. Based on comments it received, NOAA issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on



*Over 70 attend Workshop for Excavators, Landscapers & Contractors*



*Orca & Kayaker, by Mark Gardner*



March 22nd to regulate vessel effects on Orcas. Both FRIENDS' comment letter and the Federal Register Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking are available at [www.sanjuans.org](http://www.sanjuans.org). NOAA will consider and address all substantive comments received by June 20, 2007.

Locally, FRIENDS is working with the Whale Museum, the Marine Resources Committee, Ocean Advocates and Orca Relief, as well as state and federal agencies, to advocate for a County ordinance that would provide the Orcas protection from vessel effects, including noise, pollution and disturbances, this summer.

## Shoreline Landowner's Receive Stewardship Guide and Survey

This May, all shoreline property owners will receive a copy of FRIENDS Living with the Shoreline Stewardship Guide along with a shoreline protection survey. The Shoreline Stewardship Guide provides information on local shoreline habitats and resources like forage fish, eelgrass, kelp and salmon. There is also important information on shoreline permitting requirements, ways to conserve your property, and a landowner resource guide. Using results from the shoreline protection survey, FRIENDS of the San Juans, the San Juan Preservation Trust and the San Juan County Land Bank, will

combine biological and landowner data to improve voluntary conservation programs. Funding for FRIENDS Shoreline Protection Program was provided by the Russell Family Foundation, the Charlotte Martin Foundation, the Puget Sound Action Team and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

## Climate Change Lecture: Archaeology of the San Juan Islands: A Race Against Time

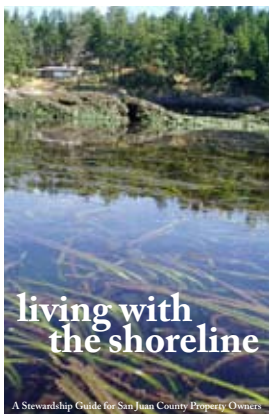
On Tuesday May 1, FRIENDS hosted Presenters, Julie Stein and Amanda Taylor of The Burke Museum and University of Washington, in the West Sound Community Hall, on Orcas Island. They shared the results of their two years of archaeological fieldwork conducted in the San Juan Islands. During their investigations and sampling at shell midden sites, they have been able to create a timeline of prehistoric Native American ways of life. Presenters also discussed the nature of erosion in this area, and the impact of erosion on archaeological interpretations. This was the first in a series of Climate Change Lectures FRIENDS has planned; for more information visit [www.sanjuans.org](http://www.sanjuans.org).

## Imagine No Litter... San Juan Island's Anti-Litter Initiative

On San Juan Island, FRIENDS has joined with over 40 businesses and organizations to lend a helping hand in solving the litter problem. The San Juan Island Anti-Litter Initiative is sponsoring a new campaign to help tackle the Island's litter problem. It's called "Imagine No Litter!" and is modeled on the widely used adopt-a-road program. Lori Stokes, co-founder of the Initiative, observes that our litter problem belongs to all of us and it won't go away unless all of us do our part. So, "Imagine No Litter!" and call Lori at 378-4643 or email her at [lori@rockisland.com](mailto:lori@rockisland.com) if you are interested in adopting either a road or a beach area. FRIENDS will continue to collect beach litter data through Initiative volunteers who sign on to adopt a beach.

## Thanks David

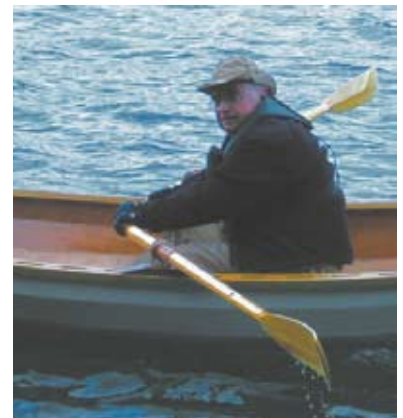
FRIENDS Board and Staff would like to thank outgoing board member, David Sarver for his years of dedication and support. David's enthusiasm for conservation and expertise in fiscal management make him a valuable member of our conservation family. David will be participating on our board as an ex-officio member. We appreciate your ongoing assistance David!



2007 Stewardship Guide



Deer Harbor Marina, by Mark Gardner



David Sarver



please join us...

Please join Friends of the San Juans for an evening with

## **Art Wolfe** "On Puget Sound..."

Slide show, talk and book signing Saturday, May 19, 2007

7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. San Juan Island Yacht Club , Friday Harbor, San Juan Island



P.O. Box 1344, Friday Harbor, WA 98250  
360.378.2319 • [www.sanjuans.org](http://www.sanjuans.org)

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