

Friends *of the* San Juans

Position Title: Legal Director

Position Summary

Friends of the San Juans (Friends), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is seeking a Legal Director to help us protect San Juan County's shorelines, communities and island resources, and the Salish Sea marine ecosystem. The role will involve strategic legal counsel, overseeing litigation efforts, representing the organization in diverse legal forums, directing Friends' permitting reviews, and organizing key constituencies and campaigns to develop and implement policies that promote sustainable land use and environmental protection. This position requires a deep commitment to environmental advocacy, exceptional legal acumen, expertise in campaigns, a commitment to community engagement, and the ability to learn and navigate complex regulatory landscapes such as maritime law. Go to <https://sanjuans.org/hiring/> for more information.

Background

Friends of the San Juans protects this special archipelago in the heart of the Salish Sea, the San Juan Islands. Friends is an innovative and effective force and catalyst for positive change, with expertise in shoreline and nearshore habitats, vessel traffic risks and oil spill prevention, land use, and climate change. Founded in 1979, Friends of the San Juans is a community-based organization representing over 10% of San Juan County and founded to bring people and nature together to protect the San Juan Islands and Salish Sea through education, science, policy, and law. To protect the islands' most special places and guide growth, Friends spearheaded the County's first Comprehensive Plan. Today, Friends envisions a future where the San Juan Islands and the Salish Sea thrive as a sanctuary of biodiversity and sustainability, fostered by a community deeply connected to and actively protecting this special place. Visit sanjuans.org.

Roles and Responsibilities

Legal Campaigns

- Pursue strategic, impact-litigation opportunities and campaigns in the Salish Sea region that advance organizational priorities.
- Guide negotiations and settlement agreements to protect the Salish Sea.
- Thoughtfully engage sovereign nation and Tribal Treaty rights and work with Indigenous leaders, Tribes, and diverse partner organizations for common goals.

Policy and Permit Monitoring

- Identify, analyze, and comment on mission-relevant permit and ordinance proposals to ensure compliance with environmental protections.
- Review and comment on private and public local, state, provincial, and federal actions likely to cause environmental impacts in and around San Juan County. This includes engagement in public processes for on-the-ground projects as well as policy development and creation, rulemaking, and long-range planning.
- Conduct closed and open-record legal appeals before the San Juan County Hearing Examiner, Growth Management Hearings Board, Shorelines Hearings Board, Pollution Control Hearings Board, and state courts.

- When necessary, conduct litigation as sole staff attorney including drafting the complaint and subsequent briefs, engaging in motion practice, identifying and preparing witnesses, taking depositions, and conducting direct and cross-examination.

Community Mobilization

- Interact and work with community, organizational members, and decision-makers.
- Assist with communications, public narrative work, fundraising, engagement and outreach activities, including campaigns and events.
- Monitor strategic engagement at San Juan County Council and Planning Commission meetings, participate and engage organization when relevant.
- Support Friends' state legislative agenda with comments, advocacy, and action alerts.

Organizational Capacity

- Cultivate new allies and collaborate effectively with partners, assessing and leveraging opportunities to expand legal advocacy and support the development of leaders and interns who expand Friends' work.
- Act as Friends Staff Attorney including reviewing and updating Friends' contracts, issue briefings, internal policies, and 501h advocacy tracking.
- Lead the internal and public risk management and Board legal briefings under the guidance of the Legal Review Committee in partnership with the Executive Director; conduct duties of Corporate Secretary; and serve as staff for the Board Legal Review Committee.
- Other job responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director.

Reporting

Supervised by the Executive Director. The Legal Director serves on the senior strategy team with the Executive Director, Marine Protection and Policy Director, and the Science Director. The Legal Director will mentor and guide support staff, contract attorneys, and interns.

Required Qualifications

- Juris Doctor with admission in the Washington State Bar Association or the ability to acquire membership through reciprocity.
- Two years of post-law-school, professional experience.
- Commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just work environment.
- Commitment to the public interest and a passion for Friends' protector mission.
- Ability to work as a solo attorney, including developing a litigation strategy, drafting written work product, preparing witnesses, and prosecuting litigation as sole chair.

Preferred Qualifications

- Over five years of post-law-school, professional experience.
- Litigation and settlement experience including participation in administrative hearings.
- Experience with WA Court of Appeals, Supreme Court, Shorelines Hearings Board, and/or Growth Management Hearings Board.
- Community organizing, issue advocacy, and campaign experience
- Knowledge base in land-use law concepts and state and federal environmental laws

- Knowledge base in maritime law and other areas of the law related to marine vessel shipping
- Outstanding research, analysis, writing, and oral advocacy skills.

Skills & Abilities

- Strong analytical, legal research, written and oral communication skills.
- Able to work as a member of a team and work independently.
- Strong initiative, thoughtful judgment, and a diligent work ethic.
- Able to communicate complex legal and scientific concepts to members of the community.

To Apply: Please send a cover letter and resume (all in one pdf file) to hr@sanjuans.org. This position is open until filled. Writing samples and references may be requested after initial application review.

Benefits, Requirements and Compensation

Position Status: Exempt, full time employee. **Work Type Classification:** Hybrid: The office is located in Friday Harbor, San Juan Island. Employee may choose to work remotely for a portion of their hours, but employees are expected to be physically present in the office during business hours for a majority of their work hours. On-site presence is required at key events and meetings across island communities, which could occur before or after normal working hours and/or on weekends. Schedule flexibility available. **At-will:** Friends is an employment at-will organization.

Salary Range: \$97,000-\$112,000 depending on relevant experience and qualifications.

Benefits: Benefits include health, dental, and vision insurance for the employee, reimbursement for air ambulance insurance, up to 5% of salary employer contributions to a retirement plan, a cell phone allowance, and flexibility in employee work schedules. Annual paid time off includes 14 holidays, three weeks paid vacation, and 8 hours of sick leave per month.

Physical requirements for the position: This position is primarily office-based in Friday Harbor, WA. However, occasional physical demands may be required including outdoors work at events including weather exposure; standing at events for extended periods of time; travel via ferry, land vehicle, and/or small boat; walking on uneven surfaces such as shorelines or unpaved trails.

Friends of the San Juans values diversity and recognizes its role in building a more inclusive culture which contributes to a healthy organization. Friends' core values lead us to seek a broad range of perspectives and backgrounds to achieve our mission and to maintain an environment where all staff are valued and respected. As an equal opportunity employer, we are committed to employment practices that ensure that employees and applicants are provided with equal opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity or expression, genetic information, or any other factor that is not related to the position. We are committed to building a team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. After all, the more inclusive we are, the better our work will be.

We are open to the possibility that a great candidate for this job may not precisely meet all the above criteria, if you believe you are the right person for this job, we encourage you to apply.