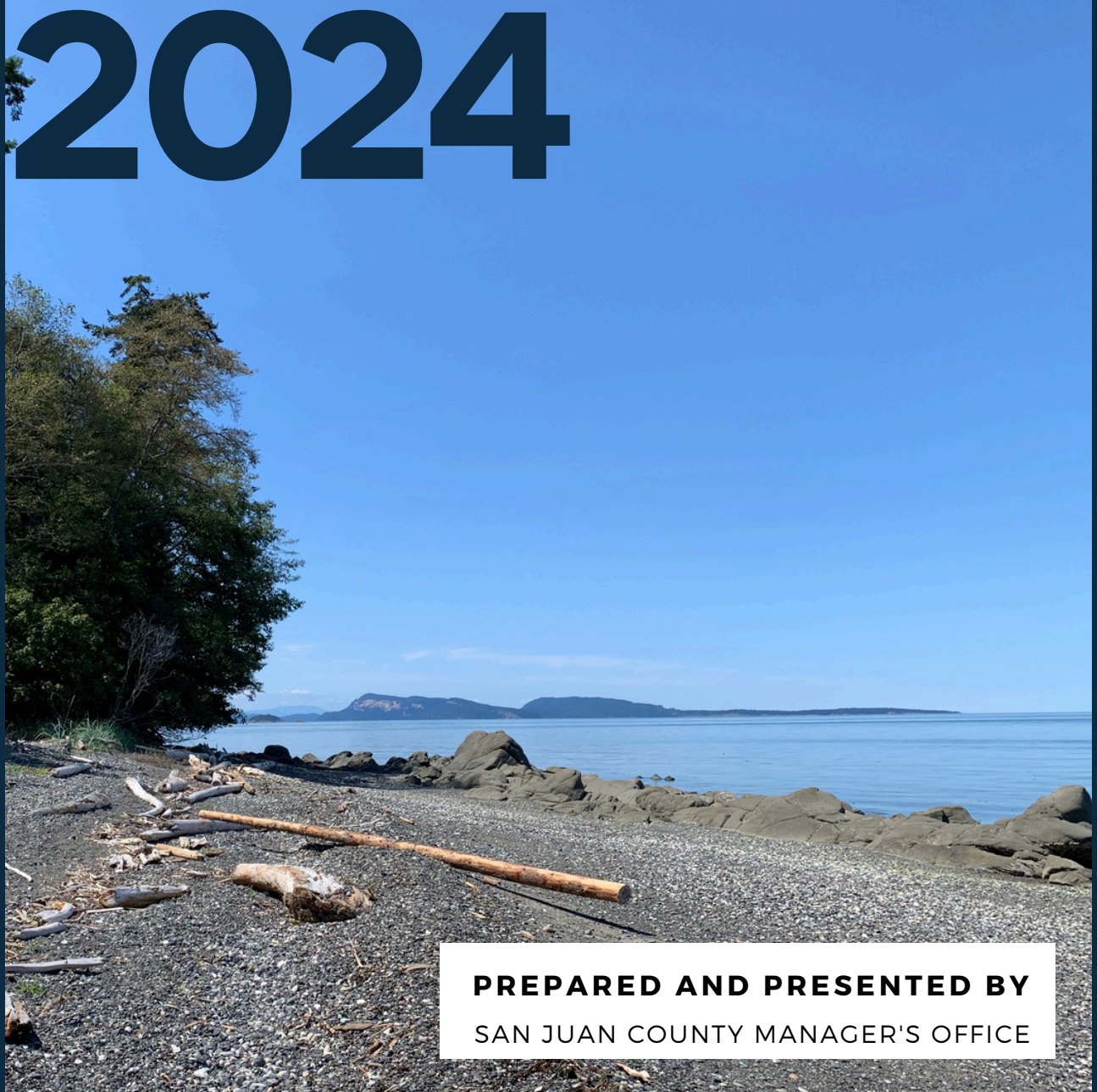


SAN JUAN COUNTY

YEAR-IN-REVIEW

2024



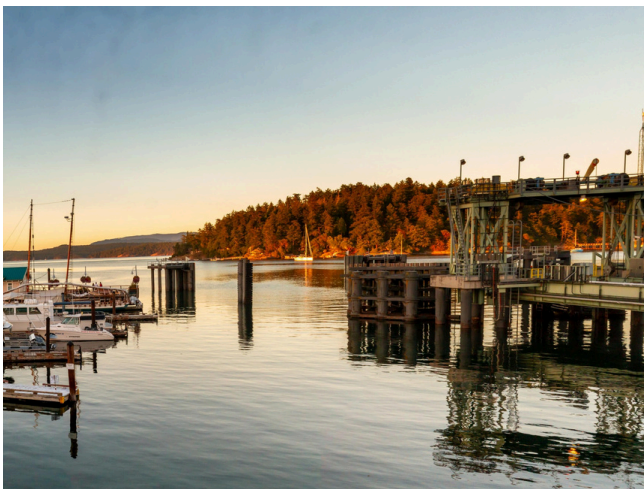
PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY
SAN JUAN COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

The Year In Review

2024 was a year of firsts – the first full year operating with the 32-hour work week, the first rural County to pass a cultural access program, and my first taste of island life.

I joined the County in July of 2024 and am honored to be a part of your community. My family and I moved across the country for a chance to live in a place that prioritizes the health and wellness of its residents, its environment, and its programs, as well as values creative problem solving and resourcefulness. This year, I watched islanders support affordable housing efforts, advocate for improved ferry service, collaborate to provide essential programs and services, and protect what they love.

This year, San Juan County continued to support affordable housing efforts throughout the islands via the Home Fund, the Affordable Housing Awards, Connecting Housing to Infrastructure (CHIP) grants and a new Emergency Rental Assistance Pilot Project.



Drawing national attention, our creative approach to employee benefits via a 32HWW has proved positive for budget, recruitment and retention efforts, and employee wellness. By taking care of our employees, we're taking care of friends, neighbors, and the bottom line.

Islanders used their vote to renew the Conservation Land Bank REET for another 12 years – further solidifying the islands as a leader in preservation.

A network of islanders answered the call when disruptions to ferry service presented challenges. Through coordinated lobbying efforts, our County was awarded \$1.5M in emergency relief funding. I look forward to continuing to work with community partners to develop a supplementary transportation program in 2025.

I am proud of the hard work, successes, and on-going problem solving in 2024 and look forward to new opportunities in 2025. Please enjoy a brief review of the past year in the pages that follow.

We look forward to continued partnerships, advocacy, and firsts in 2025.

-Jessica Hudson
County Manager

TIMELINE



January

Councilmember Jane Fuller assumed the role of Council Chair for 2024

March

The “Point-In Time” (PIT) Unhoused Count identified 134 people who have no stable place to live, down from the 148 identified in 2023.

May

San Juan County kicked off its Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) Update with support from a consultant team and a grant from the Department of Commerce.

July

New County Manager, Jessica Hudson, joined the County workforce.

September

San Juan County was granted \$1.5million from WA Governor to support local transportation infrastructure.



November

San Juan County published ‘One-Year Check-In Report’ for the 32-Hour Work Week.

February

The County launched a ‘Communications Survey’ to understand how to better meet the communications needs of residents.

The Health Dept. published the Community Health Assessment that identified health needs, gaps, and existing community strengths.

April

San Juan County published the 6-month check-in report for the 32HWW.

June

Public Works resurfaced nearly 16 miles of roads.

The Land Bank opened the new Cady Mountain Preserve and trail.



August

The County Fair, themed ‘100 Years at Home’ welcomed over 15,725 attendees.

October

Council Approved 6-Year Transportation Plan.

San Juan County purchased a new building on Orcas Island following the sale of its share of the Orcas Senior Center.

December

The County opened the newly renovated skate park in Lopez Village.



The Budget

San Juan County operates on a biennial budget. 2024 is the first year of this two-year cycle. County leadership develops the budget process by:

- Estimating revenues from state and local taxes, federal and state grants, and user fees and charges
- Evaluating budget requests from various departments including the Sheriff's Office, Courts, and other programs
- Proposing a balanced budget for the Council to review

Our approach to developing the budget:

- Build a fiscally responsible budget
- Discuss department and program priorities
- Balance budget through internal reallocation of resources to avoid tax rate increases
- Plan for a sustainable budget to meet future needs

At the time of this publication, the 2024 financial year is not yet complete and reconciled, however, the County is on track to collect approximately 93% of budgeted revenues and spend about 80% of budgeted expenditures.



VIEW THE BUDGET ONLINE

Visit the [Auditor's Office website](#) to view the County budget, the Budget-In-Brief, and quarterly reports.

DID YOU KNOW?

San Juan County government is responsible for collecting payments and fees, and administering funds for these (and many other!) public programs and services:

EMERGENCY SERVICES

9-1-1 calls, emergency response, and coroner services

PUBLIC WORKS

County road maintenance and infrastructure projects

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Vaccine and dental clinics, programs and support for seniors, families, and children

LEGAL SERVICES

Family Treatment Court, the Public Defender, and Prosecuting Attorney

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Permits, inspections, and land use and long-range planning

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing assistance for low- and moderate-income households

PARKS, RECREATION, & FAIR

Public parks, the County Fair, and event rental space

UTILITIES & STEWARDSHIP

Water/sewer, landfill, recycling, stormwater management and maintenance, habitat restoration work

Council Corner

IN 2024, SAN JUAN COUNTY COUNCIL FACILITATED THE AWARD OF \$1.5 MILLION FROM THE WA STATE GOVERNOR TO FINANCE TEMPORARY MARINE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES DURING FERRY SERVICE DISRUPTIONS.



Councilmember Cindy Wolf, WA State Governor Jay Inslee, Councilmember Christine Minney, Council Chair Jane Fuller

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"2024 has been a year of considerable change, growth, learning, and meaningful collaboration for our local government in partnership with community members and local organizations. This year, I'm proud of securing \$1.5 million in emergency relief from the WA State Department of Commerce to address ferry service disruptions in our community and develop innovative local ferry service solutions in the year ahead.

I'm thrilled by our continued progress toward building more affordable housing units on all the ferry served islands and our ongoing commitment to providing health and other essential local government services to residents of all the islands. As I look toward 2025, I will carry the lessons learned and connections forged within our community and at the state and federal levels from this year into future work."

-Jane Fuller
District 3

NOTABLE ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS & INITIATIVES

- Council passed a resolution solidifying San Juan County's commitment to **tribal engagement** and adopted new Tribal Engagement Framework.
- Council approved a multi-year lease of the **Argyle Lots property for affordable housing** purposes.
- Council approved a resolution to adopt the **Equal Employment Opportunity Plan**.
- The County re-joined the **Northwest Clean Air Agency** in an effort to better monitor air quality and educate the public on best practices.
- The Council adopted an ordinance through councilmanic action to enact a 1/10th of 1% sales tax to create a **Cultural Access Program** in SJC.

Thank you

Councilmembers Wolf and Minney finished their terms on Council and did not seek re-election.

The County is grateful for their tireless efforts to make SJC a vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable place to live, work, and play.

We thank you for your years of service!

Initiative Spotlight

FERRY ADVOCACY

The County invested significant time in advocating for improvements to the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system. These efforts included:

- Launching a **resident-focused informational page** on the 'Engage' platform to assist locals in providing feedback, understanding the latest news, and more.
- Gathering survey data from partner organizations and internal departments, along with anecdotes from employees, residents, business owners, and visitors to shape an 'executive relief' request.
- Conducting an internal County Government ferry impacts review to provide feedback to WSF.

These efforts and more resulted in San Juan County receiving an award of \$1.5 Million from WA Governor Jay Inslee. The funds will support local transportation infrastructure including interisland passenger only water taxi service, Anacortes / San Juan Islands passenger only charter service, and on-call barge service for essential/critical services during disruptions to ferry service.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING

This year, the County hired a consultant to lead the organization in **DEIB work** via a two-year contract.

County staff participated in a County-wide survey and results were presented to Council in August. The County then formed an internal DEIB committee for staff to help lead this work into 2025.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In 2024, the County continued investing in affordable housing projects including:

\$1.4M

in new dollars from the Home Fund to projects that will create 64 new units of housing

\$100K

in rental assistance subsidies distributed to seniors and people with disabilities

32

affordable housing units with County funding in active construction

32-HOUR WORK WEEK

This year, the County monitored the impacts of the 32HWW and **published reports** at the 6-month and 1-year marks that revealed \$975,000 in savings to the 2024 budget, an 85% increase in applications to the County, and 23% less sick time used by employees, among other data.

These results and more lay the groundwork for making any necessary systematic improvements as the County adapts to and optimizes the 32HWW in 2025.



IN 2024, HCS EXPANDED ACCESS, PROVIDED DIRECT SERVICES ACROSS THE COUNTY, AND CONTINUED CORE FUNCTIONS ESSENTIAL TO PUBLIC HEALTH.

Health & Community Services



This year, the Health & Community Services Department (HCS) published its 2023 **Community Health Assessment Report (CHA)** in February. By partnering with our community, the County is better able to understand health needs, gaps, and community strengths. HCS hosted **21 interviews with community leaders** and **six focus groups** in an effort to include the voices and experiences of our community partner agencies and our Latinx and Spanish-speaking community. **The top three community-identified needs were: access to care, affordable housing, and mental health.**

NOTABLE PROJECTS & INITIATIVES



- The **Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)** expanded to San Juan Island this year and provided 83 preschool slots on Lopez (LI), Orcas (OI), and San Juan Islands (SJI).
- HCS announced a **partnership with Mount Baker Planned Parenthood** to provide clinic space to support access to reproductive health services.
- HCS forged strong partnerships to bring dental services to islanders. The department **helped facilitate 44 community dental clinics** on OI and SJI that served 254 patients and provided over \$261,942 of dental work. HCS also facilitated **school-based clinics** for 100 students, providing 184 sealants and 90 cleanings.
- HCS issued **90 'Next Step Kits'** to assist islanders with substance use issues.
- HCS published a variety of newsletters: 36 Senior Signal, 4 Food Safety, and **launched a new ECEAP newsletter** for preschool-aged families.

HCS BY THE NUMBERS

895

immunizations administered

39,969

meals produced by the Senior Nutrition Program

75

Family Caregiver Support Groups facilitated by HCS staff

The Courts

NEW TRADITIONS

This year, the Courts hosted the first 'Law Day' celebration in May.

65 seventh grade students from Friday Harbor and Orcas Island visited the courthouse and participated in activities including a mock trial, career panel, civics lessons, games, and a tour.

CLERK'S OFFICE

The Clerk's office implemented the **eFileWA electronic filing platform**. Trainings were noticed and offered throughout July with the new system coming online July 29.

The Office also helped the Courts **successfully navigate a state-wide system outage**. Without access to state systems, the Office managed to maintain most scheduled hearings and brought all systems current within three days of the system returning. It was a win for teamwork!



Superior Court launched **Family Treatment Court** with an active caseload after a multi-year, multi-agency planning period. Family Treatment Courts, by working as a multi-disciplinary team, can help families with their unique needs, access treatment, reduce barriers, and reunify with their children.

Superior Court Services (SCS) staff became certified trainers for **Stewards of Children**, a training that teaches adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. During 2024, SCS provided training for more than 60 adults across SJC to youth-serving organizations.

LEGAL SERVICES

The **Prosecuting Attorney's Office** provided training to County employees and prosecutors throughout the state and resolved a number of criminal cases.

The **Public Defender** worked to settle criminal cases when appropriate and defended people's constitutional rights at trial. Several of our poorest community members had thousands of dollars in Legal Financial Obligations reduced or forgiven by the Courts with the Public Defender's assistance.

PILOT PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

District Court participated in a **Sequential Intercept Mapping Pilot Program**.

This program seeks to connect criminal court defendants with a care network that will help them access healthcare, substance use disorder treatment, food assistance, and more.

DCD & Real Estate Planning

SPACE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The County purchased and sold multiple properties this year in an effort to plan for staffing needs on various islands.

The organization purchased a building in Friday Harbor (the former Banner Bank building), sold its portion of the Orcas Island Senior Center to facilitate the non-profit's growth, purchased a building on Fern Street in Eastsound to host County staff on Orcas, and purchased a property on Shaw Island for Public Works.



Former Banner Bank building and future County offices.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

This year, the Department of Community Development began **public engagement efforts for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update**. Staff hosted community meetings on three ferry-served islands, tabled outside of local grocery stores to provide information, and presented multiple updates to Council.

COMP PLAN BY THE NUMBERS

11

elements under review

100+

community members attended in-person Comp Plan open house events

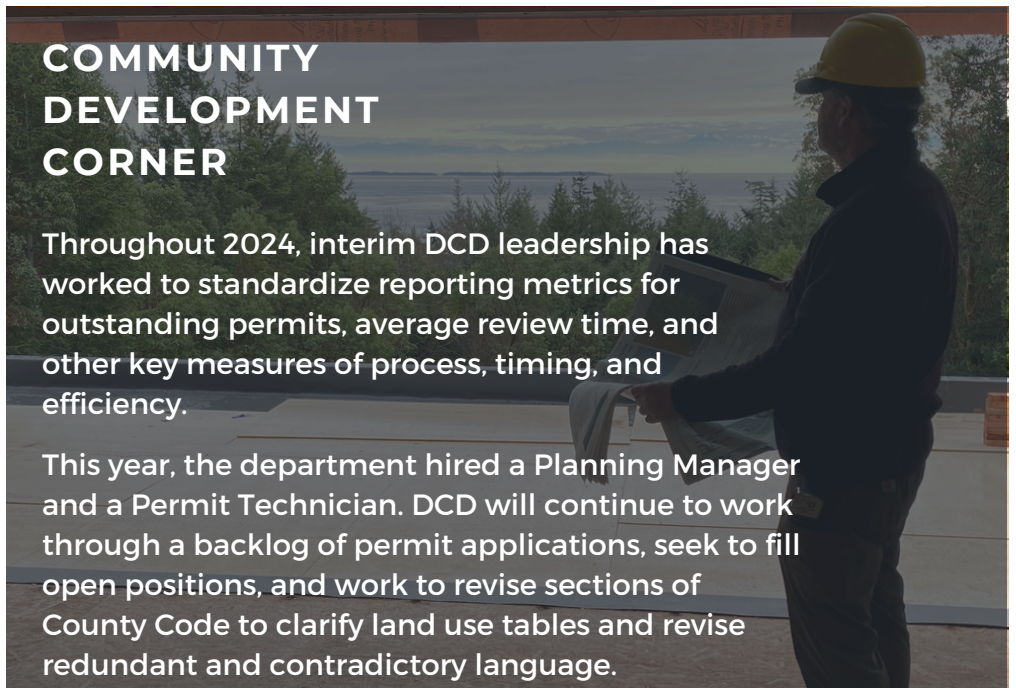
6

in-person events to provide opportunities for public input

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORNER

Throughout 2024, interim DCD leadership has worked to standardize reporting metrics for outstanding permits, average review time, and other key measures of process, timing, and efficiency.

This year, the department hired a Planning Manager and a Permit Technician. DCD will continue to work through a backlog of permit applications, seek to fill open positions, and work to revise sections of County Code to clarify land use tables and revise redundant and contradictory language.





THE PARKS, RECREATION, AND FAIR DEPT WELCOMED 15,725 PEOPLE TO THE FAIR, AND PROUDLY DISPLAYED 3,959 EXHIBITS FROM 1,932 EXHIBITORS.

Parks, Rec. & Fair

NOTABLE PROJECTS

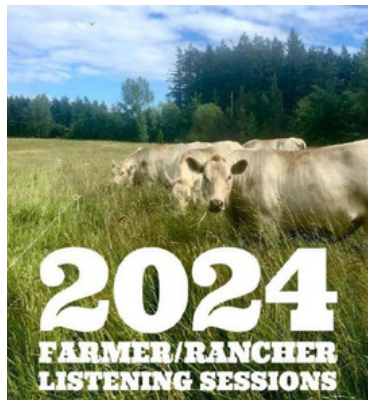
The Fair changed its days to **Thursday through Sunday** and saw an increase in attendance - especially from islanders on Orcas, Lopez, Shaw, and outer islands. The Fair also enjoyed a **higher amount of Fair entries** from other islands due to 'Drop off/Pick up days' available on ferry served islands.

The department opened a **new restroom at Eagle Cove County Park** and renovated another at the **Lopez Village Park**. In December, the department opened the **newly renovated skatepark on Lopez Island**.



COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC) remains committed to **strengthening agriculture in San Juan County**. Volunteer committee members invest significant time in community outreach, researching policies, and crafting recommendations to **support the local food system and farming community**.



3

Proposed code clarifications for Farm Stands

30

organizations gathered at the annual Ag Org Retreat in May

3

Farmer/Rancher listening sessions across 3 islands

PARKS & FAIR BY THE NUMBERS

\$1.5M

in improvements across the department in 2024

\$600K

dedicated to ADA access improvements at the Fairgrounds

\$650K

invested in skatepark updates on Lopez Island

Public Works

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PARKS & FAIR DEPARTMENT

This year, Public Works Department engineers designed new stormwater drainage systems and pedestrian accessibility improvements at the County's Fairgrounds.

In partnership with the Parks & Fair Department, ADA accessible parking, curbs, and sidewalks now facilitate safer travel to and through the Fairgrounds.

FLEET SERVICES

This year, Fleet Services completed over 400 unique requests for repair and service of County equipment. As part of ongoing green initiatives, the team replaced gas-powered vehicles with hybrid models (including swapping scooters for e-bikes) and purchased the County's first all-electric Ford E-Transit van.



New sidewalk leading to the Family Park at the Fairgrounds



New sidewalk leading around the main building at the Fairgrounds

NOTABLE PROJECTS

- Roads Crews responded to major snowfall and assisted in the removal of a full propane truck stuck on Obstruction Pass.
- Lopez Crews worked on MacKaye Harbor Road erosion repairs.
- The department purchased a new property on Shaw Island to serve as a workspace for Shaw road maintenance.
- The Road Division celebrated being fully staffed for the first time in over 5 years.
- The department hosted several community meetings on various islands to discuss projects including sea level rise adaptation strategies, the siting of an essential public facility, and a proposed trail on San Juan Island.



BY THE NUMBERS

16

miles of roads resurfaced as part of the annual chip sealing program

12

projects adopted as part of the Transportation Improvement Plan

200

miles of road striping across all islands

Land Bank

THIS YEAR, THE CONSERVATION LAND BANK WAS THRILLED BY THE COMMUNITY'S RENEWAL OF THE CONSERVATION REET FOR ANOTHER 12 YEARS.

67% OF SJC VOTED 'YES'

This year, the program produced the illustrated native wildflower guide "Growing Native Wildflowers in the San Juan Islands" and completed its first strategic plan.

In addition, the Conservation Land Bank partnered with the San Juan Island Grange for a creative community-driven ag lease project at Beaverton Marsh Preserve (SJI) and with Alchemy Art Center to provide Art on the Preserves workshops.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NOXIOUS WEED BOARD

The San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Program marked its **21st year of funding as a taxing district and its 26th year of operation.**



Staff controlled noxious weeds for the Conservation Land Bank on various preserves including North Shore, Turtleback, and Crescent Beach Preserves on Orcas and Watmough Bay Preserve on Lopez. Thanks to the crews there's a lot less Himalayan blackberry, Canada thistle, bull thistle, English hawthorn, English holly, tansy ragwort and more on the preserves!

\$6K

awarded to the Youth Conservation Corps for noxious weed control

\$1.5K

awarded to WSU Extension's Integrated Weed Control Project

11

monthly reports submitted to the Weed Board

LAND BANK BY THE NUMBERS

1

New trail: Redtail Trail at Beaverton Marsh Preserve (SJI)

2

Preserve openings: North Shore (OI) and Cady Mountain (SJI)

120

outreach events including new Nature Rx Series and Art on the Preserves Workshops



THE DEPARTMENT SUSTAINS A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AND AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY BY WORKING IN CLEAN WATER, SOLID WASTE, MARINE & CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY.

Environmental Stewardship

NOTABLE PROJECTS

- **Clean Water:** Advanced stream corridor restoration on San Juan and Orcas to protect and improve water quality.
- **Solid Waste:** The team hosted 10 events in 2024 including the Great Islands Clean Up, Hazardous Waste drop off events, and composting workshops.
- **Marine Programs:** The department partnered with local agencies to host a derelict **vessel turn-in and recycling event** that diverted 48 tons of debris from the Salish Sea and landfills. Staff also completed the **state of the marine stewardship area** and vessel impacts research to inform new approaches to protecting the marine environment and salmon recovery in the Islands.
- **Climate & Sustainability:** Staff engaged the community via surveys, open-house events, and public meetings to help draft the **climate element of the Comprehensive Plan Update**. The department also completed **Sea Level Rise analysis** to inform future infrastructure projects.
- **Cultural Resources:** Staff worked with a tribal engagement consultant to create a county-wide strategy for working with local tribes.



BY THE NUMBERS

26

derelict vessels removed from the Salish Sea

853

responses to the Climate Surveys plus a dozen meetings

5,751

pounds of litter collected during the Great Islands Clean Up events covering 338 miles of beaches and roads

Election Year

THIS YEAR, THE COUNTY ADMINISTERED FIVE ELECTIONS INCLUDING THE FEBRUARY SPECIAL, PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, APRIL SPECIAL, PRIMARY, AND GENERAL ELECTION.

To help educate local voters, the Elections Office published 21 press releases throughout the year, conducted special outreach during National Voter Education Week, and distributed voter pamphlets county-wide.

Thanks to these education efforts and an engaged public, San Juan County saw 86.89% voter turnout in the General Election.



Camolyn Armstrong, Elections Manager

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The **Assessor's Office** team inspected half of Lopez and all of Shaw, Decatur, Blakely, Center, and 21 other small islands. In 2024, \$136 million in new construction was added to the tax roll.

The **Auditor's Office** audited approximately 9,250 financial claims and issued almost 6,200 warrants for Junior Taxing Districts.

The **Treasurer's Office** launched a new online portal that allows taxpayers to quickly, easily, and securely pay taxes online.

AUDITOR'S OFFICE BY THE NUMBERS

3,700

legal documents (including about 126 marriage licenses) recorded

\$32M

in issued warrants (checks)

51,000+

vehicle and vessel transactions, with about 70% in-person or remote assistance and 30% online or mailed renewals

TREASURER'S OFFICE BY THE NUMBERS

970

Real Estate Excise Tax Affidavits (REETAs) transactions

13,600

checks for property tax payments and REETAs

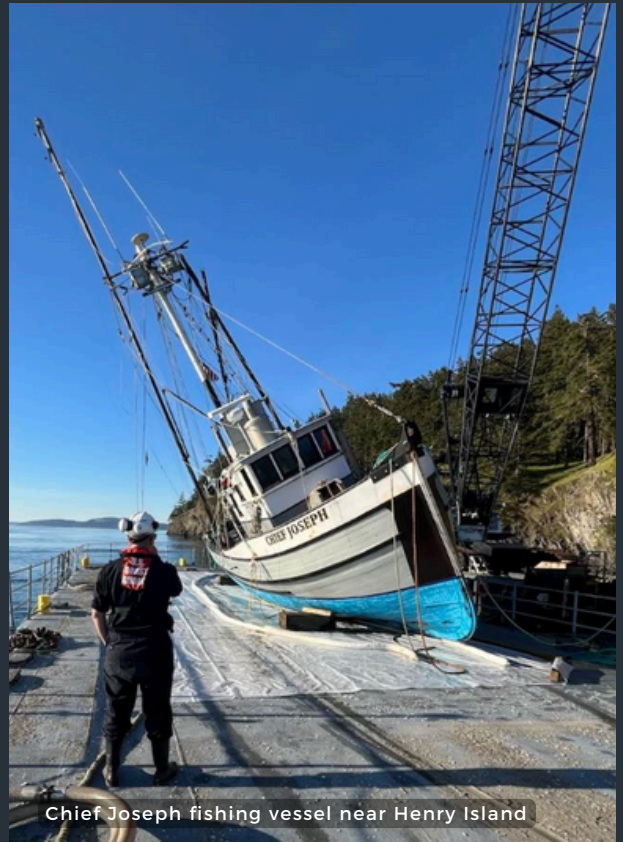
18,200

warrants (checks) cleared for county, junior taxing districts, and school districts

Emergency Response & Safety

In May, the **Department of Emergency Management (DEM)** teamed up with WA Dept. of Ecology, the US Coast Guard, the Islands' Oil Spill Association, Global Diving & Salvage, and others to **find and recover the fishing vessel Chief Joseph**, which sank off the West side of Henry Island, thus mitigating a significant potential pollution hazard in the islands.

DEM also partnered with OPALCO and local Fire/EMS agencies to **host community emergency preparedness workshops** on Lopez and Orcas Islands.



Chief Joseph fishing vessel near Henry Island

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

In 2024, the Sheriff's Office **added a new boat** to the fleet and **filled several critical deputy and dispatch positions.**

The department also engaged in numerous public outreach and education activities including a **water safety class** for youth in the community and hosting several **senior citizen crime prevention** presentations.



Sheriff Peter during Law Day



Sheriff Peter giving a presentation

SHERIFF'S OFFICE BY THE NUMBERS

2

lifesaving awards presented to Sheriff's Office deputies Rion Brandt and Gilbert Venegas

157

anonymous tips received on Tip411 from the public

8000+

calls for service fielded by the Sheriff's Office

THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE 2025 A WONDERFUL YEAR!



Deb Stanley



Public Works Department staff photo



Sheriff Peter congratulates Deputy John Stanford for graduating the Academy



Parks, Recreation & Fair Department staff photo



Joe Ingman, Parks, Rec & Fair



Auditor's Office staff photo featuring Churchill



Fun at the Fair! Libby Concord, Nate Hertel, Heather & Jon Cain, Brandon & Erin Andrews, Christine Minney, Carrie Jewett, Justin Platts



HCS staff Mark Tompkins, Melinda Hallen & Kristen Rezabek at the Luci B Wellness Van Fair booth



Mike Thomas honored for his public service



Brad Fincher with Council at the Employee Appreciation Party