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# San Juan Islands Trust Land

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## *Recommended Management Guidelines for San Juan Islands Trust Land*

Issued by the San Juan Islands  
Trust Land Advisory Committee

May 1985

# The San Juan Island Trust Land Advisory Committee

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**RE: Recommended Management Guidelines for San Juan Islands  
Trust Land**

Dear Sirs:

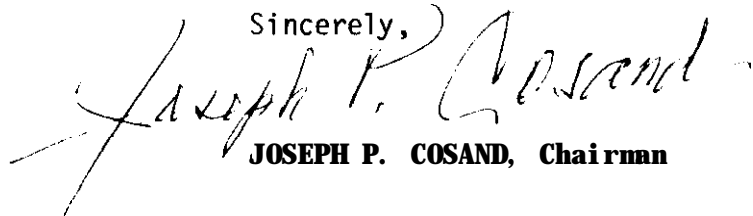
The San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee is pleased to present you with our Recommendations for management of Trust Land located in San Juan County. Our 12-member Committee, appointed only 14 months ago, has worked diligently to produce this indepth study of the 2,500 acres of DNR-managed land in San Juan County. The enclosed report represents the commitment of each committee member. Much of our success can be credited to the excellent logistical and staff support provided by the Department of Natural Resources.

Over the past year, our Committee has studied DNR and County policies and visited nearly all of the 26 parcels of Trust Land. We held a series of seven well-publicized public workshops during the spring and five public meetings during the fall of 1984. Our preliminary findings were distributed to all postal boxholders as well as to property owners adjacent to Trust Land. Community reaction to both the planning process and our Recommendations has been consistently positive. The broad representation of County citizens on this Committee and their ability to work productively to resolve land-use issues has been a model of different viewpoints working together for the common good.

Our final report integrates DNR Trust responsibilities with the needs and desires of the citizens of San Juan County. This document represents a consensus by the Committee for the long range, prudent use of all 26 parcels Trust Land in San Juan County.

We believe this report signals a new beginning for San Juan County and the Department of Natural Resources. We are confident this document will serve as the basis for agreement by the Board of Natural Resources and San Juan County for future uses of Trust Land. Each Committee member looks forward to assisting you in any way possible to implement these Recommendations.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH P. COSAND, Chairman

JC:br  
Enclosure

cc: San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee  
Bob Rose, Project Manager



**Recommended Management Guidelines**  
**for the San Juan Islands**  
**Trust Land**

**Issued by the San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee**

May 1985



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**Recommended Management Guidelines**

**- Executive Summary -**

**Part I**



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# Introduction

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The San Juan Islands constitute a unique and irreplaceable resource for the people of the State of Washington and the residents of San Juan County. The conservation and wise use of the islands depend on both public and private land use and management decisions. For the past year, the 12-member San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee has worked to develop the following Recommended Management Guidelines for the most appropriate uses and management of nearly 2,500 acres of Department of Natural Resources-managed Trust Land in the County.

## **The Department of Natural Resources and Its Role in San Juan County**

Created in 1957, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages various Trust Lands throughout the state. The act creating the DNR also named a five-member Board of Natural Resources to set policies and oversee management of the various trusts. The Commissioner of Public Lands is the elected administrator of DNR.

DNR manages over 2 million acres of forest land and nearly one million acres of agricultural land in the State of Washington for the benefit of specific institutions such as public schools, the University of Washington and Washington State University. In addition, the agency manages 2 million acres of state land located below the mean high water line under a Public Trust doctrine for the benefit of the general public. DNR also administers recreational facilities that provide opportunities for citizens to enjoy public lands with only modest improvements, such as “primitive” campgrounds, marine parks, picnic areas and educational interpretive sites. In addition to fire control on state and private forest land, DNR administers the Forest Practices Act, manages the Natural Area Preserve System and performs many other proprietary and regulatory functions.

In San Juan County, DNR currently manages 26 upland properties totaling 2,463 acres. This land represents only about 0.1 percent of the State Trust Land base but 2.3 percent of all land within San Juan County. DNR lands in San Juan County are located on six islands as shown on the location map on the cover of this report. Twenty-two of the properties are “Common School Trust Lands” with limitations on their disposition and use as described in the following section. Three of the properties were purchased for recreational use and do not have income-producing trust requirements.

## **The Special Role of DNR Lands**

When the State of Washington was created by the Enabling Act of 1669, a land-rich, money-poor federal government gave the state over 3 million acres of land to be held in trust for the support of public institutions. In each township Sections 16 and 36 (2 square miles) were granted for the “support of the common schools” (grades K-12). The State Constitution established the Common School Construction Fund (Article IX) to receive the fair market value of proceeds from the sale, lease or management of School Trust Lands to finance the construction and renovation of school facilities in the state.

Over the years the U.S. Supreme Court and various state Supreme Courts have consistently ruled that the designated institution must be the primary beneficiary of any proceeds from these lands. For instance, if a State Park, a Natural Area Preserve or a school playground is created from Trust Land, the Trust must be reimbursed for the fair market value of the land.

For the purpose of providing increased continuity in the management of public lands and facilitating long range planning by interested agencies, DNR may withdraw limited acreages from income obligation under the Multiple Use Act 179.68 RCW). However, a withdrawal does not modify DNR’s obligations to manage the land under its jurisdiction in the best interests of the beneficiaries of Trust Lands. DNR has an underlying legal obligation to diligently pursue long-term economic benefits for the Trusts.

Recent unprecedented defaults on state timber contracts totaling over 250 million dollars combined with low projected prices in the future for timber have placed the Common School Construction Fund in a precarious situation. One result of this shortfall has been a reevaluation of School Land management in an attempt to diversify and stabilize income flow to the trusts.

## **The San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee**

As part of the reevaluation of the “Trust portfolio,” Commissioner of Public Lands Brian Boyle has directed the DNR to develop a long range management plan for the Trust Land in San Juan County. This effort was initiated in 1983 after the San Juan County Commissioners expressed growing concern with DNR proposals.

Previously, DNR and San Juan County seemed to be at

an impasse regarding Trust Land management. DNR had proposed or carried out timber sales or recreational developments without the benefit of a long range plan. Statements by DNR officials about the possible sale, exchange or lease of Trust Land had alarmed County officials. Several proposals for logging of sensitive sites and sale to private development interests were judged to be inappropriate by the County.

The DNR opposed the "Conservancy" designation placed by the County Comprehensive Plan on Trust Lands. This designation requires that DNR apply for a Conditional Use permit to harvest timber from Trust Lands. Under the Forest Practices Act, DNR is the designated regulatory agency for overseeing the removal and replanting of trees on private and state land. Two sales approved by the Board of Natural Resources were deferred because application to the County for Conditional Use permits would have raised serious questions for DNR. Similarly, nonapplication for these permits would have raised serious questions for County officials. In addition, under other state laws, DNR abides by local land use regulation when state lands are treated "substantially the same" as adjacent private lands. The Conservancy designation on most Trust Lands appeared to CNR officials to be a form of "spot zoning" with negative financial consequences for the Common School Trusts. The County felt justified in protecting sensitive sites from destructive logging and inappropriate development.

Relations between the County and DNR were characterized by suspicion and distrust. Both parties were frustrated but wished to avoid a court battle that would be costly and uncertain. As a result of meetings between the County Commissioners and the Commissioner of Public Lands, both parties agreed, in a Memorandum of Understanding signed on January 24, 1964, to resolve their differences within a framework of cooperation and consultation for the planning and long-term use of the DNR-managed Trust Lands. A critical part of the planning process is the 12-member San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee appointed by Commissioner Boyle, in consultation with the County Commissioners.

The purpose of the Committee has been to provide a forum for discussion of issues and areas of concern regarding the wise and prudent multiple uses of DNR-managed lands. The goal of the Committee process has been to obtain advice and information from state and local agencies and groups, the general public and from its own members on how to integrate DNR trust obligations for environmentally sound land management with educational and recreational opportunities and with the concerns of island and regional residents.

## **What the Committee Has Done**

The Committee held its first public meeting late in January, 1984 at which they adopted a Charter, Operating

Guidelines and a schedule for their work. During subsequent meetings, background information was provided by DNR and County staff about various aspects of land-use and management. Committee members visited nearly all of the Trust Land parcels in a series of Saturday field trips.

In late March and early April, the Committee held a series of public fact-finding workshops to gather information and ideas from island residents. Based on this information, the site visits and previous discussions, the Committee held two all-day work sessions in April to explore the various alternatives and opportunities offered by each of these properties.

In October, the Draft Recommendations were published in full and available to all citizens and groups for comment for approximately six weeks. In addition, 6,700 summaries of the Draft Recommendations with provision for public participation by use of the mail and at community meetings were mailed to all residents of the County and to all property owners adjacent to Trust Land.

During the last week in November, 1984 the Committee conducted a series of five community hearings at various island locations to gather citizen comments on the draft policy and site recommendations. These hearings were attended by approximately 100 citizens. In addition, almost 70 "Mailback" response forms were received as were over 20 letters. A summary of the meeting comments, as well as the written responses and the letters received, accompany this report in the Appendix.

The Committee's deliberations have been guided by five primary factors contained in the Committee Charter: 1) The Trust nature of the state lands; 2) sound principles of resource management; 3) multiple use provisions compatible with basic Trust obligations; 4) protection of public resources (e.g., water, wildlife); and 5) San Juan County plans and policies.

## **Committee Recommendations**

These Recommendations are divided into two sections: Policies and Site Analyses. The Policies Section presents a framework for the Multiple Use and Administration of the Trust Lands in the County. These policies define the important social and environmental values of the Trust Land and propose ways for DNR to operate as a "good neighbor" in San Juan County while prudently generating incomes for the School Trust.

In the Site Analyses Section, each property is examined for its environmental and community resources. The Committee has indicated the parcels suitable for forest management, natural preserves or land that should not be managed by the state but should be kept in public ownership. The Committee concluded that the Trust responsibilities of the DNR and the potential forest productivity of certain lands provide an ample justification for a continuing presence by the DNR in land management activities in San Juan County.

The Committee recognized that if the community waits 20 years to acquire some of this property, it will increase astronomically in value. The time is past when the public can expect to have these Trust Lands for nothing. At the present time, with a favorable atmosphere of community interest, DNR can be responsive to public initiatives. The Committee believes that the uses of Trust Land are limited only by imagination and energy if the underlying obligations of the lands are addressed.

These Recommendations are long range in nature and should be considered as valid policy objectives. As such, they should prevail over short range or conflicting opportunities that may otherwise seem expedient. The policy and site recommendations may be extended and updated periodically as provided in the implementation section, but should also be accompanied by an evaluation process comparable to this Committee.

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## Multiple Uses of Trust Land

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### Forest Management

Of the 26 pieces of DNR land in San Juan County, the Committee recommends that five be managed specifically for timber production as well as multiple use. On Lopez Island: Odlin South, Chadwick Hill, Shark Reef Road and Lopez Hill. On San Juan Island, Mitchell Hill will be managed for forestry. On Orcas Island, portions of the Point Lawrence property may be managed for forestry in the future. Current knowledge is rudimentary regarding the most prudent and successful strategies for island soils, climate and forest cover.

### San Juan Islands Forestry

Recent studies of the forest soils of San Juan County have shown they are highly productive, if properly managed to capture the rapid growth during the first 50 years of stand development. The unique qualities of these soils and the current lack of knowledge about the best management practices for this region suggests that long-term research trials and demonstrations are needed. Of the five parcels indicated by the Committee for forestry, four have been extensively logged in the past. The four parcels on Lopez Island were clearcut and/or burned between 1880 and 1915. Aerial photos indicate that Mitchell Hill was clearcut in the early 1940s.

### The Local Economy and DNR-Managed Forests

The Committee recognizes that an important component of the local San Juan Island economy is the forest industry. Forestry has long been a part of the economic structure of San Juan County. Active management of DNR lands will help keep the forest industry as part of the economic fabric in the County.

. DNR should use the option of selling timber in what are known as "Area Sales." These sales are approximately 5 to

8 acres in size, and can be sold locally without the lengthy review process required of larger sales.

. Consideration should be given to sales proposals that include moving a portable mill onto the sale site.

. DNR should make firewood available to the public.

### Experimentation

The harvesting units and schedules would be based on soil type, slope, forest cover, regeneration potential for seedlings, location of stream corridors and wetlands, unique animal or plant habitats and concerns of neighboring property owners.

Past harvesting in the islands has, for the most part, taken the best, well-formed trees and left the defective and least productive parent trees. This has led to a genetic degradation of the current forest. A deliberate, selective tree harvest would encourage and maintain examples of healthy gene pool resources.

DNR managers believe that with proper stocking levels, close attention to nutrient supplies and cultivation of the best trees suited to the particular site, a highly productive forest will result.

. DNR should adopt a philosophy of small unit management with a high degree of attention paid to the site-specific characteristics of individual management units. A management plan should be developed for each block.

. If a clearcut harvesting unit is necessary for healthy forest reproduction, units should be approximately 15 acres. Logging in adjacent areas should not take place for 5 to 7 years.

. Sales should be designed to minimize visual disruption of the landscape.

. DNR managers should work in consultation and cooperation with adjacent forest landowners.

## Recreation

Recreation on Trust Lands is one of the most important benefits that DNR lands can provide. Particularly on forest management sites, multiple uses, including recreation, should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible. The Committee Recommendations emphasize day-use recreation when active logging is not going on. These guidelines provide a framework for compatible recreational uses which balance DNR's legal requirements and the interests of the public.

- . All recreational development should be modest in scope, carefully planned, environmentally sensitive and compatible with DNR long term management and local concerns.
- . To develop a sense of local responsibility and care for these lands, cooperative relationships with user groups which don't infringe on management objectives should be encouraged as a way to minimize development and operations costs.
- . If a parcel of Trust Land is desired for an exclusive use, such as grazing, a lease should be required.
- . DNR should develop day-use recreation sites rather than overnight camp sites.

## Hiking

- . Trails should **be** made available with a minimum of signing and located with natural travel patterns and safety in mind.
- . Trails should be kept as far as possible from neighboring property lines.
- . Where DNR land borders on large public or private holdings, cooperative trail use agreements should be developed to provide more opportunities for hiking trails and loops.

## Horseback Riding

- . Separate bridle trails should be available on Trust Land if conflicts arise between equestrian and pedestrian traffic.
- . Horse traffic should be prohibited where fragile biological resources could be damaged.

## Wildlife and Plant Observation

- . DNR should make information available about the natural succession of vegetation and the dynamic changes in animal population due to changing habitats.
- . Interpretive signs or facilities should be kept low-key, unobtrusive and in harmony with the site.

## Beachwalking

- . DNR should make a coordinated effort with San Juan County to acquire access to the public shorelines.
- . Where access is provided, notice should be posted that the shorelines of the County are designated a Biological Preserve.

## Picnicking

- . Day-use sites constructed on Trust Lands should be minimal in size and intensity of development, reduce the need for maintenance, and minimize the danger of fire.
- . To protect resources from over-use, recreationists should walk a certain distance (e.g., one-half mile) to reach their destination.
- . Users should pack out their own garbage.
- . Open fires should be prohibited at day-use areas.

## Camping

- . If new overnight facilities are provided on DNR land, appropriate site development must protect the interests of adjacent neighbors.
- . Camp sites should be available only by walking in, with no fires allowed and no water provided, to limit use.
- . If camping is provided on DNR lands, a caretaker should be considered.
- . Facilities on DNR lands should not duplicate opportunities available on county or State Park lands.

## Hunting

Hunting as a recreation activity on DNR lands created more controversy than any other single issue. Members of the public reported that shots from careless hunters nearly hit them while walking in what were thought to be preserves (i.e., Shark Reef). Those who assert there should be no hunting on DNR land believe the current level of deer population will be reduced through natural selection.

Others stated that some island dwellers still require hunting of native deer to supplement their diet. Department of Game biologists and observers of island wildlife have noted the stressed nature of the deer population, with increasing numbers of deer starving for lack of feed or, alternatively, becoming domesticated by relying on feed from home dwellers. From this perspective, hunting is a useful and controlled way of reducing the population to the carrying capacity of the land.

While DNR can regulate hunting on developed recreational sites, regulation and enforcement on other properties is the responsibility of the Department of Game. At a minimum, DNR and the Department of Game should institute the following measures:

- . An active program of hunter education involving signing and other information should be available at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal.
- . Hunting should be allowed, under Department of Game regulations, on specific parcels of DNR land: Lopez Hill and Chadwick Hill on Lopez Island and Mitchell Hill on San Juan Island. Warning signs should be posted during hunting season.
- . NO HUNTING signs should be posted at the boundaries of all other DNR properties.

## Wildlife

The varied nature of DNR ownership in San Juan County makes it nearly impossible to propose consistent management guidelines for conservation of wildlife. Existing inventory information revealed that certain parcels have known eagle or osprey nesting sites.

As a threatened species, eagles are particularly important both as a national and local wildlife resource. Because of increased pressure on eagle habitat, the Committee recognizes that the conservation of eagle nesting and roosting sites on public lands may be the only way in which stability can be achieved for the resident population.

- . Preserves or moratorium sites should be fully inventoried by qualified wildlife biologists.
- . Any parcels considered for sale or trade should be reviewed with habitat biologists and specific mitigating measures taken to minimize or eliminate negative impacts on wildlife.
- . Multiple use plans for forestry units should recognize wildlife management as an integral part of the sustained yield policy.
- . Wildlife management zones should be designated for the riparian areas adjacent to wetlands, stream corridors and for other critical habitat areas such as cliffs, shorelines and grasslands.
- . Snags and trees with dead tops should be left as nesting sites and food sources for cavity nesting birds and raptors.
- . In forest management areas, harvest units should be designed to maximize "edge effect" by using natural contours and varying the size and distribution of timber sales.
- . Closing access by land and water to critical areas during the January 1-April 1 period should be considered to reduce human disturbance of breeding eagle populations.
- . All recreational activities should be designed to have a minimal impact on wildlife and habitats.

## Education

The Trust Lands in San Juan County provide a number of opportunities for both school-age children and the general public. Those parcels designated for DNR or local preservation can be used as important "benchmark" areas where the native, undisturbed San Juan biota can be studied and experienced in a controlled interpretive setting. The forestry units will give DNR an opportunity to develop and demonstrate forest management practices appropriate to the conditions of the San Juan Islands. These activities can be incorporated into the school curriculum as well as serving as a demonstration to private landowners of new techniques and technologies for forest land conservation.

- . All management activities should be designed to incorporate education and research as primary components in the use scheme for the San Juan Islands Trust Lands.
- . DNR foresters and natural interpretation specialists should work with the San Juan County School Districts to develop curriculum materials relevant to Trust Lands in San Juan County.
- . Low-key informational and interpretive materials should be incorporated into the management plan for each forest unit. Designated interpretive trails should be developed as a focal point for day-use activities.
- . Endowments, special funding and contributions from local and regional civic groups, conservationists and other interested parties should be solicited to provide other educational opportunities.

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# Administration

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Island residents have expressed numerous concerns about potential impacts of forest management and public use of Trust Lands in San Juan County. Control of access to Trust Land, trespass onto private property, vandalism, fire and impacts on water supply were identified as important issues to consider in planning for Trust Land management. The Committee believes that there is a great potential for DNR and the citizens of San Juan County to work together in the management of these lands.

## Control of Access

The following measures are suggested to allow access under reasonable conditions and to provide a measure of

safety for the community.

- . Forest management sites should have one vehicular access.
- . All DNR forest management and preserve areas should be for day-use only.
- . Property boundaries should be clearly marked.
- . Access points for shorelines and areas of biological importance should be located away from parking areas.

## Trespass

Another major concern expressed by property owners adjacent to DNR land was the fear of trespass, particularly of walkers and drivers onto private roads and paths.

- . When a trail crosses private land, the boundaries of the private land should be clearly marked.
- . At the entrance to each DNR holding, a clearly visible map should show trail routes as well as the proximity to private land.
- . Roads and trails should be clearly defined and kept as far as possible from adjacent property lines.
- . Recreational uses and forest management roads should be designed and placed away from adjacent private holdings.
- . DNR and the community should work with the County Sheriff to develop a system of notification and enforcement.

## Vandalism

Vandalism to signs, DNR and logging contractors' equipment, recreational installations and neighboring property is one of the potential consequences of public use of public lands.

- . All signs and installations should be attractive, well designed and kept to a minimum.
- . All DNR sites should be closed to public motorized access.

## Fire Control

Fear of fire is most often mentioned by island residents when considering the prospect of public lands being made available for public use. While fire has been a shaping component of the native San Juan Islands ecology, it is not compatible with human settlement in the limited island landscape.

- . Post NO FIRE signs on all forest management sites and on all recreation and preserve sites where there are no DNR installed fire pits.
- . Stiff penalties should be adopted and posted for fires in nondesignated areas.
- . Timber sale areas should be opened for firewood gathering.
- . On grass lands such as Cattle Point and Griffin Bay, DNR should consider controlled burning, grazing or haying leases.
- . On forested sites, grazing should also be considered as a way to reduce understory fuel loads.
- . DNR Fire Wardens should work with local districts and neighbors of DNR lands to develop a community "Neighborhood Watch." A system of coordination should be developed between DNR, County Sheriffs and Local Fire Districts.

## Water Supply

Three aspects of public use have been identified as issues of concern by the Committee: changes in water quantity due to forest management; draw down of aquifers from high use rates (especially during the summer), and ground-

water pollution. The proposed management practices on DNR lands should have an insignificant effect on streamflow (surface runoff) or water quality of streamflow or groundwater. The undeveloped nature of DNR lands make them an important part of the complex water recharge system in the islands.

- . All forest management plans should include provisions to maintain or improve the quantity and quality of water originating on DNR lands.
- . Any pumps installed on DNR properties for public use should be hand pumps to conserve groundwater resources.
- . Vault toilets should be pumped out at regular intervals.
- . Prevention of groundwater contamination should be a priority.

## Lease, Trade Or Sale

Three options were identified for DNR lands not indicated for other uses such as forest management or preserves: Lease, Trade or Sale. The fundamental idea behind each of these options is to maintain approximately the same number of acres in the public land base in San Juan County for multiple public uses. If any of these properties are to remain as parks or preserves a conscious management decision must be made to accomplish this end.

DNR recreation sites are leased for 50 years from the Trusts by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC). A community could similarly lease Trust Land for open space or recreation.

Although DNR must derive the Fair Market Value (FMV) from its lands, this income can be generated in a number of ways. Various options, besides timber harvesting, were suggested by the Committee for DNR to meet its legal obligations.

## Lease

Leasing provides the most flexible and dynamic opportunities for generating income since they can be revised at periodic intervals to reflect changing market conditions. Two innovative lease ideas were proposed as Examples of future opportunities.

**GRAZING:** Some research has been conducted by the Forest Service on the use of sheep as a tool for brush control in young conifer plantations on the west side of the Cascades. Preliminary data indicates that if sheep are rotated adequately and if sufficient broadleaf vegetation is available, conifer reproduction will not be adversely affected.

- . Research plots should be established to determine the long-term benefits and costs of grazing by sheep and other animals.

- . Grazing leases should not preclude other compatible uses such as logging or recreation.

**WILDERNESS HOUSING/LEASING:** A leasing idea which excited the imagination of the Committee was to provide small "wilderness cabins" on low productivity or nonproductive resource land. These small primitive recreation

cabins would be provided with a minimum of amenities and rented for short or long-term, depending on the terms of the lease. Long-term leases for nonproductive sites would continue to produce a stream of income, with little management by DNR except for lease compliance. DNR would apply for appropriate County permits.

## Trade

Trading Trust Land for other land within San Juan County was perceived as the most appropriate way for the scattered and inaccessible DNR parcels to be rearranged into units that could be managed with a minimum of administrative costs. Any exchange of property is subject to a public hearing in the county where the exchange is to take place.

. Land exchanges should lead to better administrative patterns for DNR in managing trust assets.

. The "Trade" option should be pursued as vigorously as possible to allow DNR to rearrange its holdings in the County while maintaining approximately the same number of acres in the public land base.

## Sale

Sale of Trust Land requires open public bidding, with the land sold to the highest bidder. Outright sale of Trust Land diminishes the land base. It is the long-standing policy of the Board of Natural Resources to maintain the state land base. A revolving fund known as the Land Bank allows money from land sales to be used to purchase other income producing property. However, there is no assurance replacement land will be purchased in the same County.

## Access

The Committee visited nearly all DNR parcels in San Juan County and was distressed to find that for many of the properties, no legal access had been acquired.

The Committee recognized that DNR has a basic need to have access to its properties for administrative purposes or public use for recreation, education or scientific research. Simply stated, public property should have some form of public access. On a site-by-site basis, the questions become: Access for whom? And for what purpose?

Neighbors often don't want access provided to DNR Trust Lands because if provided, they will become available to more people. The logical outcome is that the land becomes the private park of adjacent owners at the expense of the School Trust and to the general public.

The Committee viewed DNR's past restraint in not using its right of eminent domain to acquire access as understandable because of its desire to maintain cordial relations with the public and due to the small size of these parcels. Continuation of this practice is inconsistent with the department's fiduciary responsibilities as trustee and not in the public interest.

. All public lands should have some forms of legal access.  
. San Juan County should support and assist, DNR in obtaining access to these public lands.

. Public uses must be consistent with the constraints of the site and the type of access available.

## Moratorium

Certain parcels were identified as having special biological values or natural undisturbed features that represent San Juan County before human disturbance. These parcels were termed "museum pieces." If these properties do not conform to the statewide criteria of the Natural Heritage Program, they should be preserved, nonetheless, by local efforts. Local preservation gives the community closest to the property an opportunity to determine use levels and activities appropriate to local concerns.

Trust Lands identified as having Preserve potential that should be kept in state ownership were — Lopez: Shark Reef and Iceberg Point; Orcas: Point, Doughty, Point Lawrence (waterfront and grasslands); San Juan: Cattle Point Igrasslands and shoreline).

For those pieces identified as potential local preserves, the Committee suggested that a Moratorium should be established to allow the local community to explore public and private funding sources to acquire the property.

The parcels at Cormorant Bay on Orcas, Cady Mountain on San Juan, and the property on Blakely Island (possibly Shaw) were suggested as lands which should be acquired as local, *public*, or *private* conservation areas.

An initial biological survey of the nine parcels of greatest concern (potential moratorium sites and preserves) was conducted during the summer and fall of 1984 by the Natural Heritage Program. Where appropriate, this information was incorporated in the Site Analysis Section of this report.

A number of mechanisms were suggested whereby these properties could be preserved while meeting DNR's fiduciary responsibilities. The alternatives were purchase and protection by 1) The Nature Conservancy or; 2) the San Juan Preservation Trust; 3) County ownership via a "San Juan Island Trust Land District" or via a yet-to-be created Island Trust Fund; 4) ownership or lease by island or island subareas; 5) community funding efforts; 6) private donor; 7) state or federal preserve programs; and 8) lease or sale to adjacent landowners with "Forever Wild" easements and possible rights of public access.

. A 10-year moratorium on any management activities that would alter these properties should be invoked while alternative funding sources are being explored or until a Conservancy use can be established to preserve these Trust Lands for future generations.

## Criteria For Future Acquisition

The random pattern of Trust Land holdings in the County

has created what has been called “an administrative nightmare” by DNR foresters. In order to consolidate these holdings, the Committee recommends that DNR trade or sell certain small or low productivity properties for other lands in the county. The following criteria for “blocking up” or enlarging existing parcels provide the necessary framework for new acquisition.

- . Any new acquisition should be adjacent to an existing forest management unit; or at least of sufficient size for management by DNR if acquired as an independent unit; or capable of producing revenue from other resource management.

- . Any land acquired should have an average site index of at least 80 (i.e., it will grow an 80-foot Douglas fir in 50 years in an unmanaged or “wild” stand).

- . Any land acquired should have access or provide access to current DNR holdings.

- . New land acquired by DNR should not be encumbered in any way which restricts efficient management unless it carries with it compensating income.

## **Plan Adoption by San Juan County and the Department of Natural Resources**

The Committee recognizes that a formal framework, adopted by DNR and San Juan County, is necessary so that the implementation of these Recommendations has long-term value and consistency. The DNR-managed Trust Land in San Juan County constitutes a group of properties unified by state ownership and by Trust obligations and opportunities. Therefore, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

- . The San Juan County Board of Commissioners should initiate the adoption of this document as a Sub-Area Plan in the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan to guide present and future management decisions for Trust Land.

- . This document should be adopted by the Board of Natural Resources as a “Block Plan” under the provisions of the 1984 Forest Land Management Program (FLMP).

- . Certain properties deserve a more protective status than the current Conservancy designation on the Comprehensive Plan map. Some Trust Lands designated Conservancy should remain so. Others should be redesignated with the understanding DNR would submit for approval a binding site plan for those properties before taking any action to divest them.

- . Those properties proposed for forest management should be designated as Rural or Rural/Timber/Agricultural (R/TA), compatible with surrounding privately-held resource management land.

- . With the adoption of this document the requirement that DNR must apply for and receive a Conditional Use Permit from the County to manage Trust Land recommended for forestry should no longer be necessary. These parcels are Odlin South, Lopez Hill, Chadwick Hill, Shark Reef Road and Mitchell Hill.

- . The San Juan County Board of Commissioners should initiate hearings to consider the expeditious redesignation of these Trust Lands. Where appropriate, the Comprehensive Plan map should be amended to reflect these changes.

## **Oversight and Implementation**

The Committee is concerned that the substance and intent of these Recommendations not be forgotten in the future. The implementation of these Recommendations will provide a framework within which DNR and the citizens of San Juan County can work together for mutual benefit. To provide continuity and monitor the implementation of this plan, the Committee makes the following Recommendations based on its in-depth study:

- . The presently constituted San Juan Islands Trust Land Advisory Committee agrees to reconvene in 1985 upon the call of the Chair. The Committee should assist San Juan County and DNR in any way possible to implement these Recommendations.

- . DNR should hold a public meeting with the Advisory Committee and the San Juan County Board of Commissioners at least once a year to review proposed actions on Trust Land.

- . These Recommendations, upon the approval of the San Juan County Board of Commissioners and the Commissioner of Public Lands, should be considered a binding agreement between DNR and San Juan County.

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# Orcas Island

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## 1. POINT DOUGHTY

A relatively undisturbed natural area, the Point is a series of grass-covered benches and knobs while the northern shore is defined by precipitous cliffs, and the southern shore is characterized by high bank bluffs with rock outcrops, and sand and gravel beaches. Two acres at the Point are leased by DNR as a recreational boating site. There are two eagle nests on this site. The Seattle YMCA's Camp Orkila has used Point Doughty since 1906. 57 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Retain as a Conservancy/Natural Area.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Begin negotiations in 1985 to transfer to the Natural Area Preserve System. Eliminate boating access recreation site.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Natural (N),

## 2. BUCK MOUNTAIN

This parcel is a one-half mile finger of land protruding from the northern boundary of Moran State Park, landlocked, with no access. The site has severe environmental constraints. 80 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Trade or sell to the State Parks and Recreation Commission

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Trade or sell to State Parks and Recreation Commission by 1995.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy (C).

## 3. RACCOON POINT

Some 3,300 feet of shoreline are presently inaccessible because of the steep terrain and lack of access. The beach is part of 5+ miles of public tideland which extend from Raccoon Point all the way to the south side of Point Lawrence. The site is very steep, ranging from 50 to 70-percent slope covered with hemlock and Douglas fir. 69 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Trade or sell to the State Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Trade or sell to State Parks and Recreation Commission by 1995.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy (C).

## 4. MT. PICKETT

The western portion of this site borders Moran State Park. The eastern 80 acres is a relatively flat plateau with an

average slope of 10 percent with an unique old growth forest. 160 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Trade or sell to the State Parks and Recreation Commission. All proposed actions should reflect the Heritage value of this undisturbed forest.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Trade or sell to State Parks by 1995.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Upper 70 acres — Conservancy (C); Lower 90 acres — Natural (N).

## 5. POINT LAWRENCE

A former Federal Lighthouse Reserve that has remained relatively isolated and undisturbed, this complex site has 6,000 feet of public tidelands, including three sand and gravel pocket beaches on the south shore. The point still contains patches of native undisturbed and ungrazed Idaho and red fescue. 108 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** A five-year moratorium to allow the County, the community and other interested parties to fully explore the lease and/or purchase possibilities for this property as a nature preserve.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Five-year moratorium for community acquisition; 1990 — Community acquisition or forest management.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Point, associated grasslands and 200-foot Shoreline Management Zone (SMZ) — Natural (N); Upland — Conservancy (C).

## 6. OBSTRUCTION PASS

The only Trust Land on Orcas Island that currently has a legal upland access also provides access to over one mile of publicly-owned saltwater shoreline. There is an eagle nest at the southern end of the property, producing one young in 1983. In 1970, 5.6 acres of the waterfront portion of the parcel were leased from the School Trusts, including a trail easement from the parking lot to the popular recreation site. 83 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Recreation with Forest Management.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Defer Forest Management until 1995.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy (C).

## 7. BUCK MOUNTAIN WEST

This parcel on the western edge of Moran Park forms the steep visual backdrop for Eastsound. The southern half of the property is the watershed for Cold Creek, which drains into Cascade Lake. 260 acres.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: Trade or sell to the State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Proposed Action Schedule: Trade or sell to State Parks by 1995.

Comprehensive Plan Designation: Conservancy (C).

## 8. TURTLEBACK

This landlocked parcel is surrounded by private forest management lands. Sustained yield forest management on the old talus slopes would be nearly impossible because of high road costs, difficulty in regeneration of a new forest, lack of soil cover and the danger of mechanical breakage from felling trees on such uneven, rocky terrain. 80 acres.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: Trade or sell.

Proposed Action Schedule: Exchange in 1985.

Comprehensive Plan Designation: R/TA-10.

## 9. CORMORANT BAY

This is the oldest intact forest stand of any of the DNR properties in the County, at least 180 years old, thus classi-

fying it as a true "old growth" forest. The 1,365 feet of rocky low to medium bank shoreline provides little opportunity for boating access. There is no upland access to this parcel. 31 acres.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: Moratorium to allow the community or a land trust to pursue preserve status.

Proposed Action Schedule: Begin negotiations for community/trust acquisition by 1995.

Comprehensive Plan Designation: Conservancy (C-10).

## 10. DIAMOND HILL

Bisected north to south by a draw which contains water year round, the western half of the property is very steep with south and east facing slopes.

Much of the discussion about this parcel focused on its potential watershed value.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: Defer trade or sale until 1990, pending initiation of a feasibility study of watershed potential and management options by the local community. 40 acres.

Proposed Action Schedule: Begin watershed planning effort by the community in 1985, with acquisition by 1990.

Comprehensive Plan Designation: Rural (R-10).

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# San Juan, Shaw, and Blakely Islands

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## 11. MITCHELL HILL

The second largest piece of Trust Land in the County forms the south east flank of Young Mountain. The Old Military Road from English Camp traverses the northern end of the property. Currently, the entire parcel is under grazing lease to Blazing Tree Ranch. 320 acres

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: Multiple Use Forest Management. Public uses should be consistent with access.

In tribute to Einar Nielsen's community spirit and love of this landscape, the Committee recommends that the Military Road be incorporated into a trail system to be named the "Einar Nielsen Memorial Trail."

Proposed Action Schedule: Reorganize the current lease in 1985; Timber Sale in 1987.

Comprehensive Plan Designation: R/TA-10.

## 12. CADY MOUNTAIN

This parcel on the east flank of Cady Mountain has some of the oldest trees on any DNR land in the County. Undisturbed natural areas such as this are now relatively rare. Ecologically fragile rocky slopes display moss, wildflowers and various grasses growing in ravines. The lack of undergrowth creates a distinct park-like setting. 40 acres.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: A 10-year Moratorium to allow the community or a trust opportunity to pursue reservation of this property as an ecological preserve.

Proposed Action Schedule: Begin negotiations with the community for preserve acquisition by 1995.

Comprehensive Plan Designation: Conservancy (C-10).

### 13. GRIFFIN BAY

Purchased with Initiative 215 funds (Boating Access) through the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) in 1972. DNR has an upland easement for administrative use only. The only public access is via water. 15 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** This boat-only access recreation site should be maintained by DNR as a Marine Access site.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Maintain as a boating access recreation site.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Rural (R-5).

### 14. CATTLE POINT

There are two parcels at Cattle Point. A 15-acre parcel (Cattle Point A) has been developed as a day-use area with designated pathways leading to the beach. The entire parcel was leased in 1972 for 50 years for recreational purposes.

Cattle Point extends from 1,430 feet of waterfront on the Strait of Juan de Fuca to within one-tenth of a mile of Griffin Bay to the north. This complex site includes gravelly beach, steep bluffs, stabilized dunes and grasslands, mature conifer forest and a marshland. In 1977, DNR conducted the only timber sale from Trust Lands that has occurred in San Juan County in recent memory, yielding nearly one-quarter million board feet (250 MBF). In 1962, DNR signed a perpetual easement with Cape San Juan Associates for a well and water pipeline right of way from DNR land to the Cape San Juan Community. The well is the only source of water for the community.

Cattle Point (A) — 15 acres; Cattle Point (B) — 85 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Cattle Point (A) — Maintain as a public day-use recreation area in conjunction with the Cattle Point Lighthouse lands (BLM).

Cattle Point (B) — Trade or sell — Negotiations should begin to transfer the forested area as a watershed, with conservation provisions for the marsh area. Land south of the treeline should be retained in public ownership. DNR should carry on forest management while negotiating sale or trade.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Cattle Point (A) — Complete recreational site development in 1985. Cattle Point (B) — Small timber sale — 1987; Negotiated sale to Cape San Juan Water District — 1990.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Cattle Point (A) — Conservancy (C); Cattle Point (B) — R/TA-10.

### 22. SHAW ISLAND

This landlocked parcel is a relatively undisturbed forest with a heavy component of redcedar as well as Douglas fir and white fir. Directly north is a marsh where as many as 20 eagles gather at one time during the fall. DNR and Game Department inventories also show an osprey nest on or near the north border of site. Lack of access seriously constrains short and perhaps long-term management options. 30 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Trade or sell for Conservancy/Preservation purposes. If trade or sale is not likely or possible, then forest management would be acceptable.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Begin negotiations for access and exchange or sale in 1985. Timber sale in 1990 if exchanges are not possible.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Rural (R-5).

### 23/24. BLAKELY ISLAND

The two parcels of Trust Land on Blakely Island are the eastern face of the island (East Blakely) and a small parcel at Thatcher Bay. The larger parcel was formerly a Federal Lighthouse Reserve. The smaller parcel was traded in 1975 for tidelands now part of Blakely Marina.

There are approximately 20 eagle nest sites on the island. The entire east coast of Blakely is prime raptor habitat for eagles, hawks and falcons. 225 acres and 6.6 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Trade or sell both parcels with the understanding the land would be used for Conservancy/Preservation purposes.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Exchange in 1985.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy

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# Lopez and Center Islands

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## 15. BELLA TIERRA

"Bella Tierra" was acquired by the DNR for recreation purposes in 1975 with Referendum 28 (Outdoor Recreation) bond funds. Unlike other DNR lands in the County, this parcel, as well as Center Island and Griffin Bay has no income-generating requirements. They are to be managed as a public trust for recreational purposes only. This property is one of the few DNR parcels in the County with both road and water access.

This property fronts Military Road and provides access to a public sandy beach extending for over two miles to beyond Odlin Park. Residents of the adjacent Flat Point subdivision are naturally concerned about the potential impacts of visitors on adjacent landowners. 20 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Keep in public (DNR) ownership and develop as a passive day-use recreation site with fire pits. A parking area should be provided on Military Road. Except for site maintenance and fire control, no motor vehicles should be allowed beyond the parking lot. Site planning should provide for separation of recreational users from adjacent private property.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Develop site plan for recreational development and vacate Plat of Bella Tierra — 1985; Recreational site development — 1986.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy (C).

## 16. ODLIN SOUTH

The most accessible of the DNR-managed lands in San Juan County, located next to Odlin County Park, has productive soils and is relatively flat. In 1980, DNR proposed a marked tree timber sale on 78 acres of this parcel called "Airport Partial Cut." DNR land adjacent to Odlin Park provides an opportunity for the public to have easy access to both managed and unmanaged forests. 106 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Demonstration Forest Management by DNR with special attention to forestry education. DNR and the County should work toward developing a cooperative management plan for recreation and resource interpretation.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Development and approval of Multiple Use Management Plan — 1985; Timber Sale — 1966.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** R/TA-15.

## 17. LOPEZ HILL

The highest point on Lopez Island (1535 feet) is also the largest single DNR parcel in San Juan County. The soils are productive Roche and Bow loams. Timber is a remarkably homogeneous 70-year old fire-succession Douglas fir forest with some lodgepole pine. A 9 1-acre marked tree thinning has been approved by the Board of Natural Resources. The Lopez Island School District would like to incorporate Lopez Hill into the curriculum. 400 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Forest Management with a Multiple Use Management Plan. Public uses should be limited by minimal site development.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Approve Multiple Use Management Plan — 1965; Timber Sale (90-acre marked tree harvest) — 1985.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** R/TA-15.

## 18. CHADWICK HILL

The forest cover is predominantly second growth Douglas fir, although some portions of the stand are as old as 145 years while other sections are only 45 years old. The numerous fire snags, mixed age classes and species, proximity to saltwater, the cliff face at Watmough Bay and associated wetlands all provide excellent wildlife habitat and management opportunities. There is no legal access to this property. 120 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Limited access forest management with no facilities and minimum of signing. In the context of the Multiple Use Management Plan for this parcel, management activities should be deferred on the southern one-third of this property (above the 300-foot contour). This would provide an opportunity for DNR, the San Juan Preservation Trust and other interested parties to further define ecological boundaries of the Watmough Bay/Point Colville area as defined in the BLM report.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Acquire access — 1986; Timber Sale — 1989.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** R/TA-15.

## 19. ICEBERG POINT

This narrow strip of grassland and rock outcrop headlands is adjacent to the 70-acre Lighthouse Reserve managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The Friday Harbor Marine labs have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BLM to use the site as a research and educational area. BLM has designated its land at Iceberg Point as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This designation indicates a long-term commitment to manage the property as a Natural Area, primarily for research, education and passive recreational use with no facilities or structures. At present, neither the DNR nor the BLM site has public access. 20 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Preservation for public educational and scientific use. Iceberg Point is both a local (Lopez Island) and regional (Washington) landmark. If this site qualifies, it should be considered a Natural Area Preserve and/or Heritage withdrawal until funds can be found to permanently set this land aside.

Alternatively, a Conservancy lease, purchase or exchange should be pursued to hold this property in public ownership with limited, controlled access.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Begin negotiations for access and preservation — 1985.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy (C).

## 20. SHARK REEF

About 1,330 feet of steep rocky ledge waterfront and a series of grassy bluffs overlook the dramatically swift currents of San Juan Channel. The site has the potential to be seriously and adversely affected from overuse, especially the grass/rock and moss transition zone between the forest and the tidelands. There are two or three eagle nests on DNR land close to the northern boundary with the King's Point subdivision. 39 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** San Juan County and the Department of Natural Resources should continue cooperative efforts to provide suitable passive day-use public recreational facilities for the Shark Reef Recreation/Preserve site. The area should be carefully monitored to ensure damage to the site is within acceptable limits.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Complete controlled access, passive recreational site development — 1985.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Conservancy (C).

## 21. SHARK REEF ROAD

Nearly perfectly flat, with one-fourth mile of road frontage, the most prominent feature on this parcel is the dominance of mature lodgepole pine, some as large as 24-inch DBH (diameter at breast height). Mixed among these large pine are residual old growth Douglas fir; all show evidence of fire scarring. 40 acres.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Forest Management.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Timber Sale — 1989

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** R/TA-15.

## 25. CENTER ISLAND

This 4.2 acre parcel on the west side of Center Island was purchased by the forerunner of the DNR recreation program, through the IAC, in 1974. The property has no potable water, 526 feet of waterfront and provides access to public tidelands that surround the island. Generally, members of the Center Island Beach Club did not favor development of the property.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:** Trade or sell and use the funds or value obtained to acquire other boating access land in the San Juan Islands, preferably at the southern end of Lopez Island.

**Proposed Action Schedule:** Sell in 1985/86. Identify other suitable replacement boating access sites.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Rural (R-2).

