

## REVISED DRAFT

### SWAC Site Recommendation Presented to the San Juan County Council

At the request of the San Juan County Council in October 2006, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) took on the task of recommending a site and a conceptual design of a new waste transfer facility for San Juan County to be located on San Juan Island. A rigorous scoping procedure identified five potential sites and a “No Action” option.

SWAC members visited the sites and deliberated the pros and cons of the environmental issues itemized in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement as well as other issues raised by concerned citizens. Based on these inputs, the input from staff, and guided by the goals of the Solid Waste Management Plan, a majority of the committee members have agreed:

that the Egg Lake site not be further considered

- too far from town and the south of the island
- wetlands incursion
- incompatibility with lake environment
- traffic flow

that the Golf Course Road site not be further considered

- property no longer available
- too small to accommodate anticipated services
- very exposed
- traffic and safety concerns

that the “No Action” option not be further considered

- existing facility is out of compliance
- too small to accommodate anticipated services
- proximity to existing, closed landfill
- zoning and ownership issues.

Of the remaining three sites, a majority of 6 to 3 members felt that the Sutton Rd. site was the least favorable

- sloping terrain restricts efficient design
- rocky terrain may cause design & excavation issues
- noise mitigation due to terrain
- potential landfill leakage (possibly exacerbated by excavation)
- traffic flow design and mitigation issues
- proximity to populous neighborhood
- extensive excavation requirements
- zoning and ownership issues of the considered property
- zoning of surrounding areas
- service disruption during construction.

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It is important to note that three SWAC members found this site to be their preferred site:

- the nearby neighbors are already used to the transfer station and an up-to-date facility would be a significant improvement
- the site is already environmentally compromised
- if the County were to locate its facility elsewhere, the Town of Friday Harbor may opt to operate its own facility which could impact the County's rate structure and raise duplication of services issues discouraged by the Comprehensive Plan.

A majority of the committee agreed that the Daniel Lane site is the second most preferred site

- adequate size
- gentle topography
- centrally located near town

Factors that were considered unfavorable

- questions as to whether the site was available for sale
- increase in traffic volume
- proximity to neighbors

A majority of the committee agreed that the Beaverton Valley site is the most preferred of the five potential sites

- size and terrain would accommodate all recommended facility services
- centrally located near town
- best potential for overall mitigation of adverse effects on neighbors
- the County owns the property
- fewer impacted neighbors
- reduced visibility from road
- traffic mitigation appears feasible.

Two committee members felt that this site was the least preferred

- vehicular safety could not be achieved
- impact to the neighbors would be high
- this use was not known when neighboring property was purchased

It is important to note that some committee members felt the Draft EIS was incomplete or flawed such that SWAC could not make an informed recommendation based on it. However, a majority of members agreed that any possible changes to the Draft EIS would likely not be substantive and that the final decision by the County Council will include information and data not now available to SWAC .

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It should also be noted that the issue of bird strike potential and adherence to FAA guidelines regarding siting of a transfer station near an operating airport continued to be of concern to several SWAC members. It was, therefore, the consensus of SWAC to recommend a wildlife assessment be done regarding all sites under consideration.

In addition, it was a majority opinion of SWAC that while total costs must be considered by the Council when making its final decision, it is critical to weigh those costs in balance with the cost of effective solid waste management over time. Since the new transfer station has an expected life of at least 50 years, SWAC encourages the Council to consider how we, as a community, can over time make this facility as affective and appealing as possible to reduce solid waste over many years and many generations.

In keeping with SWAC's mission of guiding solid waste policy in accordance with the goals of the County's Solid Waste Management Plan, the committee considers waste reduction to be a fundamental principle underlying the infrastructure and operational requirements of the County's waste management programs. Considering that this is likely to be the last major waste facility sited on San Juan Island, the committee feels strongly that it should recommend a site that will best accommodate all anticipated programs. While cost of building a new facility is an issue, the cost effectiveness of waste reduction and a well designed, well managed facility over the next several generations should not be ignored.

Since SWAC members have given considerable time and effort to this task, they were encouraged to write an individual recommendation if they felt it was necessary. These reports are attached.