

# SECTION B ELEMENT 1 GOVERNANCE

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# ELEMENT 1. GOVERNANCE

**"We are self-governed by informed citizens. We are equally represented by elected officials who conduct the activities of government in an ethical, fair, impartial, responsive and open manner which recognizes the independent, self-reliant nature of its citizens. Our government institutions balance responsibility with resources and costs, consolidate services where practical, manage prudently, provide reliable data, are service-oriented, and perform in a timely manner."**

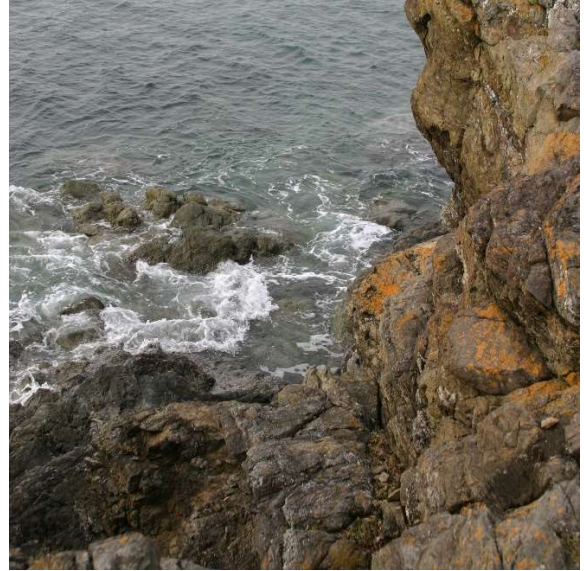


Photo: Thomas Noland

## 1.1 Introduction

San Juan County government has an established mission to provide the best possible service and responsiveness to its citizens at the least possible cost. The *Comprehensive Plan*, as the official policy statement for the County, establishes the framework for public decision-making in a number of interrelated areas. San Juan County citizens need a comprehensive plan that will meet changing needs and circumstances for the physical and economic growth within the county. This element of the *Plan* provides goals and policies for overall County government administration.

## 1.2 Goal and Policies

### *Goal*

To conduct the activities of San Juan County government in ways that are ethical, fair, just, timely, and impartial; to provide those public services necessary for the health, safety, and general well-being of the citizens; and to serve the taxpayers by managing public programs effectively and economically.

### *Policies*

San Juan County government will:

1. Conduct the public's business in a manner that is ethical, responsive, accessible, impartial, and open to county citizens.
2. Provide the minimum level of service that is effective, efficient, and affordable to county taxpayers.
3. Provide a system of taxation that, in an equitable manner, will yield adequate revenue to provide the minimum services desired by a majority of the community.
4. Ensure that private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
5. Support volunteerism and "neighbors helping neighbors" as basic tenets of island life.
6. Consider the needs of all county citizens on issues of affordable housing, jobs, services, and recreational opportunities.
7. Participate in interagency coordination efforts with federal, state, and local agencies, and the Native tribes **Tribal governments**
8. Establish and facilitate an on-going, cooperative and coordinated inter-local agreement with the Town of Friday Harbor to enable the two jurisdictions and their citizens to work together to review and consider issues of mutual concern.
9. Adopt and implement joint planning policies and a management agreement with the Town of Friday Harbor for the Friday Harbor urban growth area.
10. ~~Within three years of the effective date of this *Plan*, conduct public hearings regarding equitable redistricting, which could lead to a call for an election of a board of freeholders. Consider climate change resilience and mitigation planning a high priority when amending County goals, policies, and regulations.~~

