



## **SJ Conservation Summit a success**

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Bringing 15 different local conservation organizations together in a summit in celebration of Earth Day proved to be beneficial to all. "We all have similar goals," said Lincoln Bormann, Director of the San Juan County Land Bank. "It is helpful to meet like this to avoid working at cross purposes."

Executive Director of the San Juan Preservation Trust Tim Seifert said, "There is a high conservation ethic in the county. It's like a contact sport in the San Juans. Ordinarily, we work in silence. This is our opportunity to work together."

Keynote speaker Tom Cowan, regional liaison to the Puget Sound Partnership, recounted his memories as a child on Lopez when residents could buy salmon right off the boat at Mackaye Harbor or pick up a crab for a dollar from a bucket on the dock and pay by the honor system. "In the last 50 years, society has done more damage to the Sound than in the previous 50,000 years," said Cowan. "The sunsets in the San Juan Islands are still as beautiful as ever. But, underwater, things are not so pleasant."

"Derelict marine gear clogs the waters, shellfish beds and swimming beaches have closed and Orcas are eating poisoned fish," said Cowan. "We need to focus on controlling and treating stormwater to save Puget Sound."

"The stars are aligned to make improvements," said Cowan. "The political will is there. Governor Gregoire initiated the Puget Sound Partnership and our state representatives and senators are on board."

"This is our best chance to save Puget Sound," said Cowan. "We now have the money, the brains and the environmental work ethic to get it done."

"As Washingtonians we joined together to save the Olympic Rain Forest, Mt. Ranier, the North Cascades, cleaned up Lake Washington and prevented jet skis in San Juan County," said Cowan. "Your involvement is critical in this issue."

### **San Juan Stewardship awards**

Six awards were given to San Juan County residents and businesses that have shown outstanding stewardship of the land and water. The awards recognize individuals and businesses who are not conservation professionals and who have shown a long-term commitment to preserving the environment in their daily lives.

Blossom Organic Grocery was recognized for making efforts to stock island grown products and for buying green power from OPALCO only.

Island Paper and Supply received an award for their sustainability management practices, which include selling post-consumer waste products and non-toxic cleaning products. Island Paper and Supply is also responsible for converting many San Juan Island restaurants to biodegradable packaging in place of styrofoam.

Fred Ellis, Sr. of Shaw Island won an individual award for his commitment to saving the fauna and flora of the San Juan Islands since 1937. Ellis and his wife Marilyn purchased and donated over 1000 acres of land and waterfront to conservation uses over the last 60 years. "It is very comforting to know it will go on in perpetuity," said Ellis. Quoting noted Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson, Ellis said, "Man is defined not by what he creates, but by what he chooses not to destroy."

Ona Blue and Neil Hanson were recognized for their 16 years of commitment to the free "Take it, or Leave it" facility at the Lopez Transfer Station. Through their voluntary efforts, tons of clothing, tools, electronics, appliances and furniture have been diverted from the landfills and the cost of off-island disposal.

Bill and Barbara Humes, farmers and ranchers of Warm Valley Farm on Orcas Island were awarded the farmland stewardship award for their 45 years of protecting land through conservation trusts, mentoring other farmers and taking exceptional care of their island neighbors.

The Port of Friday Harbor received the shoreline stewardship award for being among the first ports in the State to meet the shoreline stewardship criteria, using electric cars for Port business, their innovative "Pumpty-dumpty" pump-out station, oil, battery and trash recycling facilities, "repair it, re-use it" shelter and the 400-gallon marine aquarium at the ferry terminal devoted to appreciation of local marine animals.