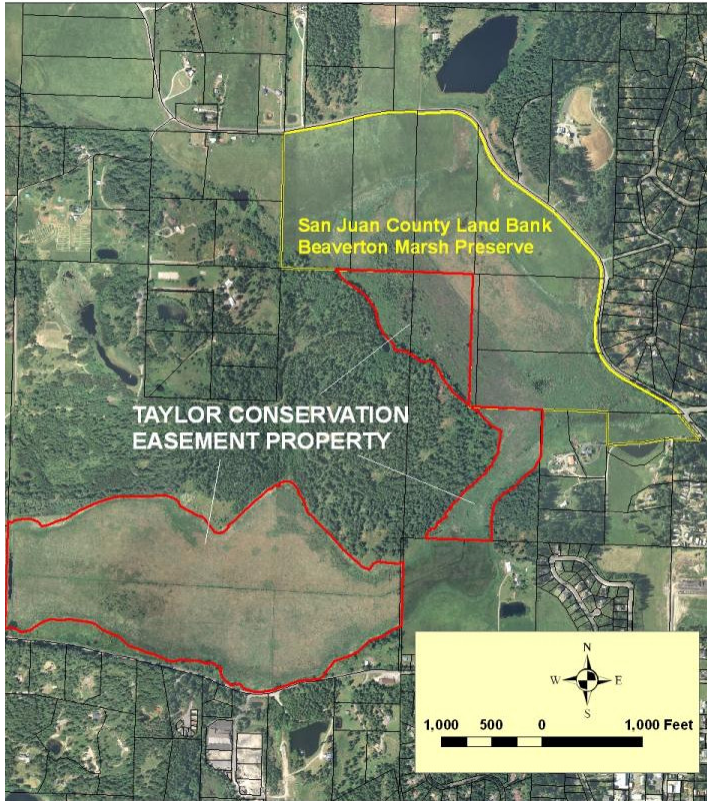




San Juan County News



Land Bank Purchases Conservation Easement in Beaverton Marsh, San Juan Island

Wednesday, Jan 19 2011 - In partnership with the national non-profit Ducks Unlimited, the San Juan County Land Bank purchased a conservation easement over 157 acres of Beaverton Valley Marsh from the Taylor family just before the close of 2010. Over 330 acres of the largest wetland system in the county have now been protected by the Land Bank and partners.

The other protected tracts include the Land Bank's 135-acre Beaverton Marsh Preserve along Roche Harbor Road, and 40 acres on Beaverton Valley Road recently purchased from the Buck family with the assistance of the San Juan Preservation Trust.

“While the property remains in private ownership, the Conservation Easement allows the Land Bank to actively restore the marsh, including removing invasive species and replanting natives,” said Lincoln Bormann, Land Bank Director. “It allows us to significantly expand our restoration efforts.” Beaverton Marsh was originally drained in the 1800s to allow farming in the rich wetland soils. Since then, as farming activities have dropped, invasive Reed Canary Grass has come to dominate the marsh. Last year, the Land Bank began restoration plantings at its Beaverton Marsh Preserve, funded by a state Landowner Incentives Program grant also secured by Ducks Unlimited. “The long-term goal is to try and restore the whole wetland system, complete with a broad variety of native flora and fauna,” he added. “It will be a great opportunity for Islanders and visitors to see an ecosystem start to thrive again.”

“We are very excited about the prospect of continued restoration of the marsh,” stated Mike Taylor, speaking for the family. “We’re really looking forward to seeing more waterfowl and native plants in the coming years.”

Though Land Bank revenues have fallen dramatically in the last two years, the organization has used funding partners to help make up the difference. All of the \$468,000 purchase price for the Conservation Easement came from Ducks Unlimited through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant.

“We’ve been lucky to find other funding and great partners in these times. We are also grateful to property owners like the Taylors who want to see the land protected,” concluded Bormann.