



Land Bank extends Turtleback plan comment period

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Recognizing the high level on interest in management of the Turtleback Mountain Preserve, the Land Bank is extending the public comment period on its draft management plan until April 18.

"We have received many comments from people already in our three public meetings and via e-mails, letters and calls," Land Bank Director Lincoln Bormann said in a press release.

"However, some have expressed confusion over our process and we wanted to make sure we received input from as diverse a cross-section of the community as possible."

In order to further ensure capturing a variety of opinion, the Land Bank will have its April 11 meeting on Orcas Island. The meeting location has yet to be determined.

"The agenda will provide for an expanded public comment time," Bormann said. "It will be an opportunity for the Land Bank Commission to hear comments first-hand."

Following the end of the comment period, the commission will review all public comments and direct staff to redraft the plan as needed. The draft plan would then go back before the San Juan Preservation Trust board for approval as mandated in the terms of the conservation easement on the property.

The draft plan will be finalized in a public hearing before the County Council.

About the Land Bank

The Land Bank Program was approved by San Juan County voters in 1990 and renewed in 1999 by a nearly 3-1 margin. It is the only such program in the state of Washington.

Through conservation easements or outright purchases, the Land Bank protects special places in the county including shorelines, woodlands, farmland, wetlands and historic structures. To date, the program has protected more than 4,800 acres of important conservation lands throughout the islands.

The Land Bank is funded through a 1 percent real estate transfer tax, but strives to leverage this revenue with state grants and partnerships with other organizations.

More information on the Land Bank is available at http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/land_bank

Share your ideas and comments by e-mail at sjclandbank@rockisland.com or call the Land Bank office at 378-4402.