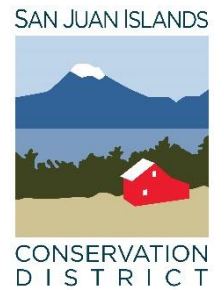


5-Year Plan (FY2024 to FY2029)

San Juan Islands Conservation District



Organization of the San Juan Islands Conservation District (SJICD)

SJICD is a political subdivision of the State of Washington with authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08. SJICD was established in 1947 in the San Juans. In 1964, three districts from San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Islands consolidated into one that now serves all of San Juan County. SJICD is comprised of a five-member volunteer board of supervisors, associate supervisors who serve as advisors, and a staff of professionals with diverse skills and expertise necessary to accomplish the District's goals.

Function of the District

- To provide natural resource conservation services to the local community by providing technical expertise, financial support, and educational opportunities.
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Who We Serve & Why

- The San Juan Islands Conservation District serves residents of San Juan County through direct and voluntary programs. We promote on the ground conservation of natural resources to help maintain a healthy and functional environment and economy for current and future generations.
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Mission

- To promote the stewardship of county natural resources through education, implementing natural resource conservation practices, and fostering a stewardship ethic in partnership with landowners, residents, agencies and other organizations. To support our local community in taking action to address climate change.
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Vision

- Our vision is an economically vital community that preserves the natural resources and rural character of the San Juan Islands through stewardship.
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Values

- Promote natural resource conservation through local voluntary efforts.
 - Recognize the value of productive working lands to local economic sustainability and climate change resiliency.
 - Collaborate with partners to provide conservation programs that benefit our local community.
 - Protect wildlife habitat and a healthy environment for current and future generations.
 - Support our local community in taking action to address climate change.
 - Foster a stewardship ethic among island residents and visitors.
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Natural Resource Data & Information:

- Land Area and Cover: 174 square miles on 428 islands. Mostly private lands with some state and federal holdings. Dominated by second-growth conifer and hardwood forests, with some scrub and shrub plant communities, open prairies, grasslands, rock outcrops and beaches.
- Major Watersheds include False Bay, Eastsound, Blind Bay, Deer Harbor, Friday Harbor, Hunter/Mud Bays, Roche Harbor, Westsound, Westcott/Garrison/Mitchell Bays, and Fisherman Bay.
- Shoreline: 408 miles, more than any county in contiguous U.S., 5,700 shoreline parcels, 50% developed.
- Population: The year-round resident population is approximately 18,000, which doubles in the summer. Over 1 million visitors can visit during the busy summer months. Population growth in the islands increased at a rate of roughly 12% from 2012 to 2022.

District Priorities and Goals

Natural Resource Management Priorities

Goal 1: Climate Change - Mitigate, adapt, and increase resiliency to climate change impacts through all aspects of natural resource management.

Goals	Measures
a. Improve community understanding and increase implementation of “climate smart” agricultural practices.	a. Number of Climate Smart BMPs implemented b. Number of landowners engaged c. Co2 reductions as a result
d. Improve forest health conditions and reduce the risk of wildfire while optimizing the use of woody biomass.	a. Number of acres treated for wildfire mitigation b. Volume of woody biomass used for carbon sequestration and soil improvement
e. Establish, restore and maintain riparian buffers and in-stream conditions to improve water quality conditions for fish and wildlife habitat.	a. Acres of riparian management zones established, maintained, preserved or restored. b. Site specific metrics including SVAP results, water temps, and dissolved oxygen.
c. Support habitat restoration efforts that improve biodiversity.	a. Acres or square feet of habitat established, maintained, preserved or restored. b. Wildlife population increases observed by quantity, location, or other metrics.

Goal 2: Agricultural Stewardship – Improve environmental conditions of agricultural operations while increasing agricultural viability.

Goals	Measures
1. Provide ongoing technical assistance, farm planning, and cost-sharing services to the ag community.	a. Number of Individual Stewardship Plans (farm plans) completed. b. Number of ag cost-share projects completed. c. Number of BMPs implemented.
2. Increase Agricultural Viability.	a. Number of beginning farmers and ranchers engaged in planning and technical assistance. b. Number of BMPs that help reduce costs or increase profitability for agricultural businesses
3. Facilitate implementation of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP).	a. All goals and objectives identified in the VSP Work Plan and Adaptive Management Plan.
4. Improve countywide infrastructure to upcycle organic materials.	a. Volume of organic waste diverted from waste stream

Goal 3: Forest Stewardship – Improve forest health conditions and reduce the risk of wildfire while optimizing the use of woody biomass.

Goals	Measures
1. Provide ongoing technical assistance, forest management planning, and cost sharing services to forest landowners.	a. Number of forest management plans completed . b. Number of forestry cost-share projects completed. c. Number of BMPs implemented.

2. Increase engagement and education related to forest health and wildfire mitigation.	a. Number of landowners engaged. b. Number of structure ignition assessments completed.
3. Implement projects to meet objectives listed in the CWPP and other guiding documents.	a. Number of acres treated for wildfire mitigation.
4. Improve countywide infrastructure to upcycle organic materials.	a. Volume of woody biomass upcycled to biochar, woodchips or compost.

Goal 4: Riparian Restoration – Establish, restore and maintain riparian buffers and in-stream conditions to improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat

Goals	Measures
1. Provide ongoing technical assistance, planning, and cost-sharing services to riparian, wetland and nearshore landowners.	a. Number of landowners engaged. b. Number of projects completed and BMPs implemented. c. Acres treated. d. Project-specific metrics including fish passage barrier removals, livestock fencing, etc.
2. Increase engagement and education related to riparian, wetland, and nearshore stewardship.	a. Number of landowners engaged.
3. Conduct planning and restoration efforts at a watershed scale, focusing on highest priority watersheds.	a. Number of watersheds b. Number of landowners and parcels engaged.

Goal 5: Habitat Improvement - Conserve and restore critical habitat for species survival and biodiversity, specifically increasing available habitat for the Island Marble butterfly and restoring eelgrass meadows to support overall marine ecosystem services.

Goals	Measures
1. Establish and maintain eelgrass seed bank in partnership with Friday Harbor Labs.	a. Number of eelgrass seeds harvested and stored annually. b. Implement, monitor and report on restoration activities related to eelgrass recovery. c. Work toward increasing available seed stock for restoration efforts with the target of harvesting 500,000 seeds by 2025.
2. Restore eelgrass meadows through proven planting techniques.	a. Number of planting sites yielding new growth. b. Square feet or acres of new growth from planting.
3. Establish and maintain suitable habitat plots for Island Marble Butterfly species recovery.	a. Number of landowners engaged, plots established, and total square footage/acreage of protected habitat. b. Number of plots showing signs of IMB occupation.
4. Identify other species and habitat types that would benefit from concerted restoration efforts.	a. Project specific metrics, e.g. acres of Garry Oak habitat under restoration.

Education and Outreach Priorities

Goal 6: Youth Conservation Corps – Engage youth of all ages in environmental learning and stewardship activities and maintain summer program opportunities for middle and high school students.

Goals	Measures
1. Provide year-round youth programs focused on environmental stewardship and resource management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of participants. b. Number of volunteer hours worked. c. Project-specific metrics such as feet of trails built, acres of noxious weed control, etc. d. Parent and crew member feedback.
2. Collaborate with an expanding network of agencies, tribes and other interested parties to promote cross-cultural interaction and learning opportunities and engage in co-management opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of partners participating in projects.

Goal 7: Islands Conservation Corps – Engage young adults in work-study programs that provide career and workforce development in environmental stewardship and conservation fields while implementing countywide restoration activities.

Goals	Measures
1. Provide workforce training, career development, and higher education opportunities for adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of participants. b. Job placement statistics for graduates.
2. Maintain a safe and productive labor crew focused on ecological restoration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project-specific metrics such as number of trees planted, acres of Garry Oak habitat restored, etc.
3. Support research opportunities in coordination with land management partners to answer pressing questions and challenges in landscape ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of internships offered.
4. Collaborate with an expanding network of agencies, tribes and other interested parties to promote cross-cultural interaction and learning opportunities and engage in co-management opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of participating partners in projects.

Goal 8: Community Outreach - Promote a stewardship ethic and high level of understanding of local ecology among area residents through outreach, education and engagement opportunities.

Goals	a. Measures
1. Support key events, conferences and trainings that contribute to common understanding, best practices and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Number of events. c. Number of participants. d. Participant feedback.

stewardship ethic among residents and visitors.	
2. Maintain and improve online website and social media presence that promotes programs and opportunities for public knowledge and stewardship.	a. Number of website hits and social media followers.
3. Provide information to the public through presentations and print materials.	a. Number of presentations and publications.

Administration and Operations Priorities

Goal 9: Efficiently and effectively manage district operations, budgets, and programs.

Goals	Measures
1. Promote a professional, rewarding, efficient working environment.	a. Percent staff retained annually. b. Employee satisfaction feedback surveys.
2. Maintain healthy financial standing.	a. Annual revenues and costs. b. SAO Annual Audit results.
3. Foster constructive and collegial external relations.	a. Number of positions held on state and local working groups.
4. Assess and improve the effectiveness of CD programs.	a. Reference all performance measures
5. Manage healthy, sustainable growth in district operations.	a. Annual revenues. b. Number of projects and grants. c. Number of staff.
6. Prioritize Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) principles throughout the organization.	a. Number of historically underserved customers annually. b. Diversity metrics of board and staff.
7. Pursue acquisition of CD office space conducive to productivity, community engagement, staff retention, and employee satisfaction.	a. Sustainable acquisition of real property meeting ongoing District needs.

Goal 10: Increase engagement with key partner agencies and tribes to maximize positive impacts related to resource management.

Goals	Measures
1. Increase tribal relationships to incorporate diverse perspectives and establish models of co-management.	a. Number of tribal partners engaged in project planning, decision making and implementation. b. Number of tribal relations training opportunities provided to staff.
2. Increase partnership with NRCS and other key partners to expand landowner access to key programs.	a. Number of NRCS program applications initiated by district staff annually.