



San Juan Islands National Monument is a Regional Opportunity

In the San Juan Islands, momentum is growing behind a little-known conservation issue that has big impacts for our entire region.

A group of advocates, ranging from 156 local businesses, hundreds of residents and political leaders around the state, are fighting to save 955 acres of beautiful land--dozens of small islands, reefs and historical sites--currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The group is asking that the lands-- including Lopez Island's Iceberg Point and Chadwick Hill, the Cattle Point lighthouse on San Juan Island, and northern Patos Island--be declared a national monument, thus forever keeping them in the public's ownership and with a strong local voice in their management.



Preserving the land would mean big things for the islands and the region. Protecting their natural beauty means protecting the quality of life on the islands locals and visitors alike. But more than environmental cause and natural legacy to be handed down for generations to come, saving these lands is also about the islands' local, and in fact, our regional, economy and making sure that it remains strong.

Hundreds of thousands of tourists flock to this region every year to enjoy the pristine beauty of the San Juan Islands. Kayakers paddle from island to island, families rent sailboats and yachts, children attend camps, and vacationers dine in restaurants, relax in inns and spas and shop in local stores and galleries. The economy in the San Juan Islands depends on the tourism and recreation business that the islands' unique natural beauty draws.

What is good for the San Juan's tourism and recreation industry is good for Washington State. Hundreds of local and regional businesses also depend on the kayakers, sightseers, campers, sailors, boaters, fishermen, and others who frequent shops and recreation businesses en route to the San Juan Islands.

Maintaining the beauty and accessibility of these lands is critical to our entire regional economy and to our entire region's way of life. Furthermore, we've seen time and time again that national monument designations—like national parks—attract visitors. Having a national monument in our region will increase our region's ability to attract outdoor enthusiasts and the jobs they support.

Outdoor recreation plays a major role in Washington's--and our local and regional--economy. Over 100,000 Washington jobs depend on the continued preservation and protection of the lands and waters that make the industry possible. The Outdoor Industry Association estimates that recreation—hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing—contributes \$730 billion to the US economy and supports 6.5 million jobs. In Washington State alone, outdoor recreation supports 115,000 jobs and contributes \$11.7 billion to the state economy. Many of these jobs are local and our region depends on them.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar has voiced his support and has called on the President to declare a national monument in the San Juan Islands, preserving the land for public use, forever.

Senator Cantwell, Congressman Larsen, Governor Gregoire, local officials and I have been strong supporters of these efforts to protect these lands through either congressional or Presidential action. On the local level, Republicans and Democrats have united around this incredible opportunity.

Join us in stepping forward and calling for the monument designation that will benefit our state for generations to come. Send a message to the White House at the Islanders for the San Juan Islands National Monument web site:

<http://www.sanjuanislandsnca.org/act>

Senator Kevin Ranker