



San Juan County Council

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District 1, Lovel Pratt, Chair
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District 3, Howard Rosenfeld

District 4, Richard Fralick
District 5, Patty Miller, Vice-Chair
District 6, Jamie Stephens

26 April 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Thank you for coming to Anacortes and inviting us to meet with you to talk about President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We hope that on your next trip to the Northwest you will visit the San Juan Islands!

We are writing to ask for your support on two of our 2011 Federal Legislative Priorities:

1. Secure Federal Funds for the Cattle Point Road Realignment Project (located in the San Juan Islands National Historical Park and the sole roadway link to the Cattle Point lighthouse on BLM land)
2. Support Long-Term Protection of Land Management Properties in San Juan County through a National Conservation Area Designation

Cattle Point Road Realignment Project

A section of Cattle Point Road between Milepost 7.5 and 8.7 at the south end of San Juan Island is in danger of sliding into Salish Sea. Cattle Point Road is a county road, and the section of road in need of realignment lies within property owned by the National Park Service (NPS), Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and is adjacent to Federal BLM land. Cattle Point Road provides the sole roadway link for over 140,000 to 200,000 annual visitors to the San Juan Islands National Historical Park's American Camp, the sole roadway link to the Cattle Point lighthouse on BLM land, and the sole roadway link for fire and medical services to the residents at Cattle Point and Cape San Juan.

Bluff erosion caused by wind and waves will likely undermine the road within the next five to fifteen years. The National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration are the lead agencies in the preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and preliminary

design. The DEIS was released on 3 September 2010 and a decision document is imminent. The estimated cost for the preferred alternative is \$5 to \$8 million.

The National Park Service has requested that San Juan County obtain funding for the project. The Park Roads Program has priority lists in each region and in this region that funding is programmed out for many years on higher priority projects. San Juan County does not have the funds to construct the road relocation without securing significant federal funding. We would appreciate any support you can provide in securing federal funding for this important road realignment project that will continue to provide critical roadway access to the San Juan Islands National Historical Park, the lighthouse on BLM land, and the local community.

National Conservation Area Designation on Bureau of Land Management Properties

Enclosed please find Resolution 48-2010 To Support the Establishment of a National Conservation Area on Bureau of Land Management Lands in San Juan County. A National Conservation Area (NCA) designation for all current Bureau of Land Management (BLM) properties in San Juan County will provide long-term protection for these important lands and provide the mechanism for ensuring that management of these lands will be guided by a community-driven management plan.

There are over 60 locations - about 1,000 acres of land in San Juan County managed by the BLM. These range from visible and charismatic places like the lighthouses at Turn Point, Cattle Point, and on Patos Island to dozens of small islands and rocks. Some of these lands are very popular recreational destinations receiving many thousands of visitors each year. This heavy and increasing use of these BLM lands is rewarding but also very challenging. Maintaining these lands for future generations will require good management and good stewardship.

There is currently no long-term comprehensive management plan for the BLM lands in San Juan County. Some of the properties on Lopez Island have an Area of Critical Environmental Concern designation, but that can be easily changed by a BLM administrator. Our goal is to ensure that good management continues over the long term. NCAs are congressionally designated areas, therefore providing more lasting protection and are created via a local citizen-driven process. BLM manages them to conserve, protect and restore their outstanding cultural, ecological, historical, recreational and scientific values and is required to work with the community to write a management plan. We are pursuing a NCA designation and not a National Monument designation because the latter is a top-down executive declaration that may not rely on community input.

Several years ago the Washington State DNR made a unilateral decision to divest itself of all its properties in San Juan County, including the Lopez Hill and Mitchell Hill properties. The community was forced to find public funding to keep these lands in the public domain. A NCA designation would preclude that situation happening with the BLM lands. During BLM's public meeting in Friday Harbor in 2010, more local interest was displayed than in any other BLM session held in other parts of our state and many of the speakers specifically supported the NCA designation.

We urge your support and we have asked our representatives to sponsor legislation in 2011 that designates all current BLM lands in San Juan County as a National Conservation Area.

Thank you for your attention to the access to and protection of our treasured BLM lands in San Juan County.

Sincerely,

**COUNTY COUNCIL
SAN JUAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Lovel Pratt, Chair
District No. 1



Richard Peterson, Member
District No. 2



Howard Rosenfeld, Member
District No. 3



Richard Fralick, Member
District No. 4



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