

Top 40 Reasons the San Juan Islands are 4EverGreen

In honor of The Whale Museum, the San Juan Preservation Trust, and Friends of the San Juans celebrating their 40th Anniversaries in 2019

MUSEUM WITH A 'PORPOISE'

The [Whale Museum](#) in Friday Harbor, established in 1979, was the first museum in the country devoted to the stewardship of a species living in the wild. Today, the museum continues to promote stewardship of whales and the Salish Sea ecosystem through education and research, including an orca adoption program for the three pods of Southern Resident killer whales.

PRESERVING WHAT WE LOVE

Founded by a group of island citizens in 1979, the [San Juan Preservation Trust](#) is a private, nonprofit, membership-based land trust dedicated to helping people and communities conserve land in the San Juan Islands. The first land trust of its kind in the state of Washington, the Trust and landowners have permanently protected more than 300 properties, 45 miles of shoreline, 27 miles of trails and 18,000 acres on 20 islands. Much of its land is now managed as public parks, nature preserves, wildlife habitat, and working farms and forests.

FRIEND TO THE ISLANDS

A citizen group formed [Friends of the San Juans](#) in 1979 to help preserve the beauty, character, and wildness of the Islands in the face of increasing development. Friends' primary goals are to foster wild and healthy shorelines, promote thriving and sustainable communities, conserve forests, farmlands, freshwater and prairie habitats, and ensure the health of the marine ecosystem. The Friends use science to inform decisions that conserve the county's environment and economy.

LEAVING NO TRACE

In 2014, The San Juan County Council adopted a resolution establishing San Juan County as a voluntary Leave No Trace Area and in 2016 adopted the [San Juan Islands Seven](#) – an adaptation of the national Leave No Trace principles to fit the unique environment in the San Juans. All of the San Juan Islands National Monument is a LNT demonstration site. There are only 10 LNT demonstration sites in the USA. All exemplify the

guiding principles through management, programming, outreach, and integrated messaging.

MONUMENTAL PROTECTION

The [San Juan Islands National Monument](#), designated by President Obama in 2013, encompasses approximately 1,000 acres spread across the 450 islands, rocks, and pinnacles in the archipelago. From the proclamation: "The protection of these lands in the San Juan Islands will maintain their historical and cultural significance and enhance their unique and varied natural and scientific resources, for the benefit of all Americans."

BEEP, BEEP

There are more plug-in electric vehicles per capita in the Islands than any other county in the U.S. The [San Juan Islands Electric Vehicle Association \(SJIEVA\)](#) was created in 2016. The Electric Auto Association, a nonprofit educational organization that promotes the advancement and widespread adoption of battery electric vehicles, recently awarded SJIEVA with its 2018 Road Runner Award as the fastest-growing EV association in the U.S.

WATCHING OUT FOR THE WHALES

Through its [Soundwatch Boater Education](#) program, The Whale Museum endeavors to raise awareness among recreational boaters and kayakers about the Be Whale Wise guidelines. Be Whale Wise is a combination of federal and state regulations for safe boating around whales, especially the critically endangered Southern Resident killer whales.

LOOKOUT POINT

[Lime Kiln Point State Park](#) on the west side of San Juan Island is renowned as one of the best places in the world to watch for whales from shore. Hear whale vocalizations from a land-based hydrophone, learn about them at the interpretive center and through interpretive panels. Land-based whale watching has the least impact on the whales, although sightings are not guaranteed.

BANKING ON A GREEN FUTURE

The [San Juan County Land Bank](#) was created in 1990 to preserve in perpetuity areas in the county that have environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historic, scenic or low-intensity recreational value and to protect existing and future sources of potable water. Funding comes from a 1% real estate excise tax, or REET, paid by purchasers of property in San Juan County. As of 2018, they've preserved approximately 4,400 acres of property in 33 preserves (24 of which are open to the public) and 7.25 miles of saltwater shoreline.

STEPS AWAY

[San Juan Kayak Expeditions](#) requires all of its employees to live within walking or biking distance of the shop. All employees use stainless or Nalgene water bottles and encourage all guests also to do so.

86-ING POLYSTYRENE

An ordinance banning Styrofoam take-out containers was passed in 2010, followed by a ban on single-use plastic bags in 2016. There is a campaign underway to phase out plastic straws and utensils from restaurants and shops. Known as [The Last Straw of the San Juans](#), more than 50 businesses have taken the pledge.

GARDEN-GROWN

Restaurants like [Doe Bay Café](#) close the loop by sourcing at least 90% of their ingredients from island producers or their one-acre garden that's filled to the brim with vegetables, flowers, herbs, fruit trees, bees, and chickens. The managers of the garden aspire to grow delicious and healthy produce for the Doe Bay Café year-round. They build and maintain soil fertility and health with the café compost program and other organic initiatives. Seeds are sourced ethically and saved from their own garden as often as possible.

EASY AS '123'

[Island Inn 123 West](#) is a LEED Silver lodging. Certified LEED buildings save energy, water, resources, generate less waste and support human health. The green-as-it-gets ethic is incorporated into the smallest details, like the locally roasted coffee and recyclable bedding. Even the rainwater, gets funneled down to be stored for landscape irrigation.

PLANTING FOR TOMORROW

The [Salish Sea Project](#), co-sponsored by the San Juan County Land Bank and San Juan Preservation Trust, is an effort to restore native wildflowers and grasses in the San Juan Islands. Plants and seeds of species native to island grasslands, oak savannahs, and prairies are produced at a nursery located at Red Mill Farm in San Juan Valley. Most of the plants and seeds are either used on Land Bank preserves or purchased by other agencies and non-profits for habitat restoration projects elsewhere.

STANDING FOR THE SEA

The [Salish Sea Association of Marine Naturalists \(SSAMN\)](#) promotes education and stewardship of the Salish Sea ecosystem through a network of professional and aspiring naturalists.

Among the education and outreach projects include volunteer docents at Lime Kiln Point State Park and Westside Preserve, Killer Whale Tales (a workshop for grade-school students), and the Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

SUSTAINABLE SHOPPING

Outside-the-box thinking has created two almost fabled island solutions to waste reduction: the [Orcas Exchange](#) and the [Lopez Take-it-or-Leave-It](#). Both facilities are part of their respective islands' transfer station and have become community hubs. The Orcas Exchange started in 1984 as a one-room cabin with the gradual addition of sheds and other handmade structures to cover the growing collection of reusable items. The Lopez transfer station is a bird of another feather; run almost entirely by volunteers and consists of a self-separating recyclable system with a baler. The Take-it-or-Leave-it is similar to the Exchange in the acceptance of reusable goods like clothes and electronics.

COMPOSTING FOR CHANGE

[Midnight's Farm](#) on Lopez Island is committed to "living solutions to climate change." The Field House, used as a farm stay, has a passive solar design and all other new buildings have high-efficiency standards. Midnight's Farm also has the only Department of Ecology-approved on-farm organic compost facility in San Juan County. The facility diverts yard waste from burn piles and instead returns the carbon to the soil.

SEEKING REFUGE

The [San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuge](#), set aside in 1960, covers 84 islands, islets, rocks and reefs, including several dedicated marine mammal haul-out sites in the San Juan archipelago as a haven for migratory seabirds and other wildlife. A few are accessible to visitors, with overnight campgrounds on both Turn and Matia Islands, but most are off-limits.

A LIGHTBULB MOMENT

Orcas Power and Light Cooperative's (OPALCO) first [Community Solar](#) project came online in 2018. Located on approximately 3.6 acres at an OPALCO substation on Decatur Island, the site was chosen primarily because of its proximity to a main feeder from the mainland.

GMOS GOT TO GO

San Juan is the only county in the state of Washington to have banned genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In November 2012, voters elected to have the county take a firm stance against GMOs. The [measure](#), which was proposed by organic farmers and others in the county, makes it unlawful to propagate or grow genetically modified plants and animals in San Juan County.

WAVE RUNNERS NEED NOT APPLY

In one of the most sweeping [measures](#) enacted anywhere against such craft, San Juan County was the first governmental entity to ban all Jet Skis and similar personal watercraft from its waters in 1996 in an effort to preserve the archipelago's reputation as a 'tranquil oasis.'

FARMED LUNCH

Orcas Island schools have had an active and vibrant farm to cafeteria program since 2005, which includes a newly expanded garden, a K-8 [Farm to Classroom](#) program, and fresh scratch-cooked meals in the school cafeteria using locally grown organic produce and meats.

YMCA LEADS THE WAY

YMCA's Camp Orkila on Orcas Island incorporates Leave No Trace and other similar stewardship initiatives into their [programming](#). Their Marine Salmon Center demonstrates the ecology of the Salish Sea. The campus reduces waste through composting, reusable napkins, rags, and mugs, and sugar shakers at the coffee station in the Lodge. The camp store no longer sells single-use water bottles. Produce from the onsite garden is served in the Lodge.

SPARKLING STEWARDSHIP

The [Mansion Restaurant](#) at Rosario Resort offers a House Sparkling Water sourced from the Cold Springs on nearby Mt. Constitution, gently filtered and lightly carbonated in-house, to order. The greenhouse on the grounds produces the greens and flowers seen in the 19 Mansion garden beds, as well as the microgreens produced weekly for the restaurant.

ZEROING IN ON WASTE

Orcas Island hosts "[Zero Waste Week](#)" in April, a student-fueled, kid-powered week of environmental information and action to encourage all island residents to go towards ZERO! This includes documentary film screenings, environmental speaker presentations, and live music performances.

PADDLE POWER

Kayaking is a low-impact way to see more of the beauty of the San Juans from a unique perspective — feeling the breeze, riding the waves, and seeing the wonders of nature up close. All the professional guides, and anyone looking to launch their own kayak, are required to go through the [Kayak Education and Leadership Program \(K.E.L.P\)](#), which informs kayakers on marine wildlife regulations and guidelines to reduce human-powered vessel disturbance.

AGRARIAN ACTION

[Pebble Cove Farm](#) on Orcas Island proudly serves organic snacks and beverages, buys organic and fair trade whenever possible, uses all-natural, non-toxic cleaning products and toiletries, line-dries linens and towels (weather permitting), and purchases in bulk to reduce waste. Outside, they never use pesticides or chemicals and only feed organic grain to their animals. Guests get to cook with organic eggs and organic produce from the onsite garden and barn.

LICENSE TO CONSERVE

The proceeds from a specialty [San Juan Islands license plate](#), introduced in 2019, is providing additional funding for the local Youth Conservation Corps as well as a small

grants program for stewardship initiatives throughout the county.

BURSTING WITH BIODIVERSITY

Long recognized as a biological treasure, the San Juan Islands have sites devoted to research, education, recreation, and conservation. In 2004, the San Juan Board of County Commissioners created the voluntary [San Juan Marine Stewardship Area \(MSA\)](#) and asked the Marine Resources Committee to work with scientists and community leaders to develop a management plan that would achieve a healthy marine ecosystem in balance with human use.

FRESHLY FORAGED

[Outdoor Odysseys](#) uses locally sourced and/or organic products on all their gourmet kayaking trips. Mama Bird Farm greens and San Juan Island Sea Salt are two must-haves on any tour. They frequent the San Juan Island Farmer's Market throughout the summer and even forage for a variety of local ingredients. On the smaller islands and in state parks, they take extra care to practice water conservation and educate guests on best practices.

A CLEAN HAVEN

[Beach Haven Resort](#) on Orcas Island recycles their used bath and hand soaps through a program called Clean the World who melts the soap down and repackages it for homeless shelters. They work to remove any invasive plants that arise on the property and landscape with native plants for drought resistance. They do not fertilize their lawns to help protect salmon and other species.

TEACHING A LESSON

The Lopez Island School District was recently named a [Green Ribbon School Awardee](#) by the U.S. Department of Education, recognizing schools and districts making significant progress towards "reducing environmental impact and costs; improving the health and wellness of the school, students, and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education." Recent renovation played a critical part by installing new lighting and heating systems that are more efficient. Its Farm to School Program, LIFE, is acclaimed throughout the state as for its leadership.

SPRING CLEANING

The annual [Great Islands Cleanup](#) is a county-wide effort every Earth Day to remove litter from beaches and roadsides. Past cleanups have removed over 6,000 pounds of marine debris and litter.

CLEAR AS CRYSTAL

[Crystal Seas Kayaking](#) uses solar power to run their main headquarters/trip preparation building and serves locally sourced food to guests — buying directly from the farmers and regional processors for overnight kayak trips.

SOLELY SOLAR

The solar array on the barn at [Saltwater Farm](#) generates more power than they use in an entire year (over 44,000 kilowatt-hours). Set on 162 acres, Saltwater Farm has many diverse ecosystems, and the owners regularly work with local experts to ensure any changes are the right ones for the land and its flora and fauna.

MINOR DETAILS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Virtually every ingredient in the [Ursa Minor](#) kitchen, from the wild roots and bark that glaze tender pork belly to the bread, comes from the island or its immediate surroundings. Chef Nick Coffey works closely with local farmers, foragers, and the fishing fleet to offer a cuisine that is uniquely Lopez Island.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Founded in 2000, the [SeaDoc Society](#), a flagship program of the Karen C. Drayer Wildlife Health Center at the world-famous UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, conducts and sponsors vital scientific research in the Salish Sea. SeaDoc conducts and sponsors ground-breaking marine research to uncover the environmental factors threatening to unravel the web of life in the Salish Sea and surrounding watersheds.

HAIL TO THE KING

Long Live the Kings (LLTK) Founder and Chairman Emeritus, Jim Youngren, started the [Glenwood Springs Hatchery](#) on Orcas Island in 1978, with LLTK assuming operations in 1986. After over 30 years, Glenwood Springs continues to play a vital role, releasing 800,000 Chinook in 2019 to help maintain fisheries, meet tribal treaty obligations, and provide food for our endangered Southern Resident killer whales. Glenwood Springs also welcomes over 1,000 tourists, students, and campers to the hatchery each year for an invaluable hands-on experience introducing visitors to the iconic salmon and the severe challenges they face.

GUIDING ISLAND GUESTS

San Juan County Public Works, in collaboration with the San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau and members of the Stewardship Network and Terrestrial Managers Group, created a [guide](#) for visitors to share the community's stewardship values. Jam-packed with tips on everything from bringing your own mug and reusable bag to giving wildlife space, these guides engage visitors in what it means to be a steward of the San Juan Islands.

5 STAR RATING

The Port of Friday Harbor is a 5-Star Enviro Stars Clean Marina Award Winner for excellence in pollution prevention and promoting clean boating practices. This includes a program of hazardous waste reduction, conducting marine operations while protecting the environment, demonstrating leadership in marine ecology and educating boaters about using environmentally sound practices such as clean wash-downs. The Port provides garbage pick-up and recycling, a state-of-the-art sewage pump-out vessel for boats and attempts to achieve zero spills in fueling.

Find this flier with hot links to organizations here:

www.visitsanjuans.com/media



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