

PRESS RELEASE

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GUEMES MOUNTAIN SAVED! CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCES SUCCESS

\$2.2 million dollar conservation effort meets the mark and just in time.

GUEMES ISLAND – “We did it!” That’s the phrase heard from the Save Guemes Mountain campaign leaders and supporters who have succeeded in raising \$2,200,000 to purchase and permanently protect the 70 acre top of Guemes Mountain. Current zoning would have allowed up to seven homes or the possibility of placing an estate at the summit. In either scenario, development would have been highly visible from elsewhere on Guemes Island, from Anacortes, Samish Island and other areas and access to the 360 degree views from the summit would have been lost.

The conservation project began in October 2007 when Skagit Land Trust and the San Juan Preservation Trust were approached by Guemes residents concerned about the mountain top being sold and developed. The two land trusts joined together to secure the 70-acre property on Guemes Island. After more than a year of due diligence, which included negotiating a \$600,000 reduction in the purchase price , a capital campaign was started early in 2008. This campaign was greatly assisted by an energetic local steering committee led by four co-chairs.

Tim Seifert, executive director of the San Juan Preservation Trust says “The Co-Chairs each did the work of ten people and deserve an enormous amount of credit for the success of this campaign.” The Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee were Guemes Islanders Paul Beaudet, Karen Everett, Joost Businger and Marianne Kooiman. In addition to working tirelessly on the campaign, at closing, Joost Businger donated a small “in-holding” property on the mountain top that he had strategically purchased from a telecommunications company years ago.

Molly Doran, executive director of Skagit Land Trust adds “Early on there was a core group who believed we could do this and gave time, finances or both generously. Without their financial pledges to the campaign and a grant from the Linnemann Family Foundation to help pay for appraisals and other due diligence we would not have been in a position to weather the economic storm. Then in the last few months we were given the wonderful gift of a \$200,000 matching grant from the Northwest Wildlife Conservation Initiative that really gave our fundraising efforts a huge boost, helping us get to the finish line.”

The Northwest Wildlife Conservation Initiative is a program of The Nature Conservancy and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation that helps to conserve wildlife habitat identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Because of the property’s location at the heart of 500 acres of previously protected private and public land, the mountain top will serve as the key link connecting

conservation land stretching from pristine marine shoreline to the mountain's grassland/prairie bald summit and down forested slopes to an inland valley of wetlands and farmland.

Skagit Land Trust now owns the property and the San Juan Preservation Trust holds a conservation easement (permanent protection agreement) on the land. Major funding for stewardship is being provided by the Boeing Charitable Fund through a \$50,000 grant. A stewardship grant was also given by the Anacortes Parks Foundation. This grant will help the two land trusts install low impact view sites and trails as well as restore wildlife habitat. A neighbor has agreed to donate a trail easement allowing access across their property to connect with the new land trust property. Details such as parking and the exact route remain to be decided. No trail exists yet, and private property should be respected until the easement is finalized. Although the mountain top has been purchased, stewardship and property management funds are still needed and being raised.

“Behind the scenes, land trust conservation staff led by Martha Bray and counsel from both organizations worked through an amazing amount of complex details which allowed us to raise funds with confidence” said Renata Hoyle Maybruck, development and outreach director of Skagit Land Trust. “We’ll be looking at that mountain the rest of our lives and remembering the people who made it happen. The Guemes picnic, with over 300 people attending, and the host of other events like the art auction, concert, garden tours, required an incredible amount of volunteer effort.”

“This campaign succeeded due to the professionalism, dedication and work of the steering committee and over 550 community members who gave so generously” said Brian Windrope of the San Juan Preservation Trust. “It was amazing to witness the level of dedication to saving the mountain.

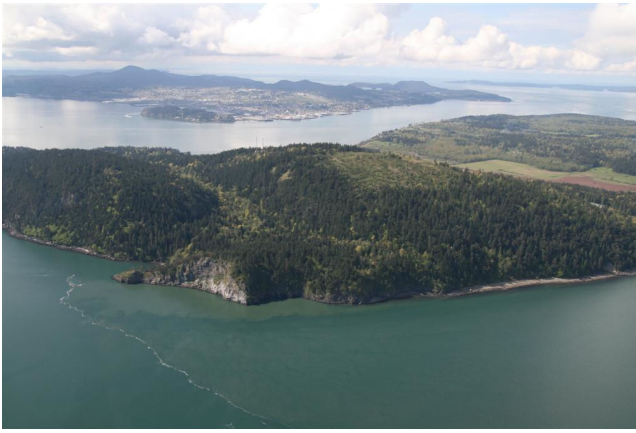
For more details about the campaign, including information on access and making donations to help the stewardship fund, please see the campaign website at www.saveguemesmountain.org

About the San Juan Preservation Trust

Founded in 1979, the San Juan Preservation Trust (www.sjpt.org) is a private, non-profit land trust dedicated to helping people conserve land in the San Juan archipelago. Noted for its \$18.5 million acquisition of Turtleback Mountain on Orcas Island, the organization has permanently protected more than 240 properties, 30 miles of shoreline, and 13,000 acres on 18 islands, including land now managed as public parks, private nature preserves, and working farms and forests.

About the Skagit Land Trust

Skagit Land Trust (www.skagitlandtrust.org) was founded in March 1992 by three visionary leaders and 31 Charter Members to help protect the natural lands, open space and wildlife habitat of Skagit County for the benefit of this and future generations. The Trust has grown steadily to become a respected grassroots organization with strong local support and is recognized as an innovative leader in conservation. The six staff, 18 board members and 200 active volunteers are joined by over 1000 members to protect the most important and beloved land and landscapes in the county. The amount of land and habitat protected by the Trust has quadrupled in the past five years to more than 5,500 acres including more than 23 miles of shoreline.



The above photo shows Guemes Mountain, in the center of the image, with Anacortes in the distance (John Scurlock).



The view from Guemes Mountain encompasses many San Juan Islands, Anacortes and Mt. Baker (Steven Businger).