# Restoration, Acquisition, and Combination Proposal

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| **Project Number** | 14-1933 |
| **Project Name** | Fishery Pt. Neighborhood Shoreline Conservation Easement Acquisition |
| **Sponsor** | San Juan Preservation Trust |

## 2014 Project Proposals for Restoration, Acquisition, or Combination Restoration and Acquisition Projects

1. **Problem Statement**

**Provide an overview of fish resources, current habitat conditions, site or reach conditions, and other key salmon recovery problem(s) in the watershed that this project is intended to address.**

Nearshore rearing in the San Juans supports all 4 parameters for VSPs - abundance, productivity, spatial structure and both life history diversity and genetic diversity for Chinook salmon as outlined in Table 4 in the RITT’s Monitoring and Adaptive Management Framework.[[1]](#footnote-2)

This project will protect in perpetuity shoreline within the identified highest priority Waldron Island/President Channel Fish Use and Salmon Recovery Regions in the San Juan Islands.

“Of the four parameters for viable salmonid populations (abundance, productivity, spatial structure and diversity), abundance and productivity are very difficult to assess in the nearshore environment given the lack of data and the extent of dispersal through a large area. Whether or not there is benefit to genetic diversity is also difficult to ascertain, but use of the area by juvenile salmon suggests that the San Juan Islands support diversity in a viable salmonid population. It may also indicate that there is benefit to spatial structure for all populations in the ESU because the area provides resilience as another place for fish to use.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

As is acknowledged in the local San Juan recovery chapter, it is difficult to assess the VSPs in the nearshore environment, but projects like this one to protect priority nearshore rearing areas are expected to enhance:

* abundance in the density of fry, parr and yearlings;
* productivity in nearshore survival rate;
* productivity in fish growth, i.e., average size, nearshore growth rate, and nearshore residence time;
* spatial structure, i.e., distribution in rearing within and among nearshore habitats;
* life history diversity, i.e., nearshore residence time;
* genetic diversity, i.e., number of populations using the nearshore habitats based on genetic stock identification.

Presently the San Juan Islands do not have the funding or the capacity to monitor all of these indicators. The indicator which the San Juans have been able to assess most recently is the genetic stock identification results. With appropriate resources it could be possible to detect changes over time for the VSP parameters. However, even without the current ability to assess all of these indicators there is certainly still value in this project to protect high priority nearshore rearing habitat in a location correlated with presence and abundance of juvenile Chinook usage in the San Juans.

Without the acquisition of shoreline conservation easements, the property would be vulnerable to additional shoreline development potentially including armoring, alteration of natural drainage patterns, degradation of water quality, and removal of marine riparian vegetation which would impact nearshore habitats and the northern shoreline of Waldron Island. The shoreline is vulnerable to development because it is common for shoreline owners, especially in the San Juan Islands, to heavily modify the landscape, for example, by replacing forest with lawn and creating extensive impermeable surface areas including large homes and extensive outbuildings.

Without a Conservation Easement, risk of future residential development moving close to the shoreline with accompanying appurtenant structures, natural vegetation removal, alteration of natural drainage patterns, and attempts to harden the shore to protect infrastructure increases over time. Development pressure at Fishery Pt. on Waldron include the potential for future landowners to build larger houses and associated structures with shoreline alterations as is currently happening along a critical shoreline at Mar Vista, San Juan Island. Although the Waldron sub-area plan is more restrictive than the countywide comprehensive plan, the sub-area plan can change and exceptions to current county restrictions have been known to be allowed.

1. **Project Purpose**
	1. **State the project goal(s**).

The goal of this project is to protect the natural shoreline processes, natural habitat, water quality, and native marine riparian vegetation of the target property at Fishery Pt., Waldron Island for endangered outmigrating juvenile Chinook salmon; juvenile chum and pink salmon; surf smelt; Pacific sand lance; and Pacific herring.

* 1. **List the project’s objectives.**

The objective of this project is to ensure permanent protection on approximately 40 acres and 2900 feet of natural shoreline in this highest priority Fish Use and Salmon Recovery Regions.

1. **Project Context**
	1. **Describe the location of the project in the watershed***.*

North Shore of Waldron Island, San Juan Islands.

* 1. **List the fish resources present at the site and targeted by this project.**

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| Species | Life History Present (egg, juvenile, adult) | Current Population Trend (decline, stable, rising) | ESA Coverage (Y/N) | Life History Target (egg, juvenile, adult) |
| Chinook | Juvenile |  | Y | Juvenile |
| Chum | Juvenile |  | N | Juvenile |
| Pink | Juvenile |  | N | Juvenile |
| Surf smelt | Juvenile |  | N | Juvenile |
| Pacific sand lance | Juvenile |  | N | Juvenile |
| Pacific herring | Juvenile |  | N | Juvenile |

* 1. **Discuss how this project fits within your regional recovery plan and local lead entity’s strategy to restore or protect salmonid habitat in the watershed.**

Fit to Strategy: Protection is the highest priority action in the San Juan Salmon Recovery Chapter. “Much of the nearshore habitat in the islands are intact and functioning, so the first key is to protect high quality habitat for salmon.”[[3]](#footnote-4) Projects in the 3 year work plan are prioritized based on tiers. Tier 1 projects are projects which address the highest priority work such as protection actions in priority regions.

This project is listed as a Tier 1 project in the local 3 year work plan and is a highest priority action for salmon recovery as it would protect in perpetuity over 3000 feet of shoreline.

Fish Use: The project is in a highest priority Fish Use region (PIAT Figure 8). Beamer & Fresh (2012) report Chinook occurrence at 25% frequency in catch data for this area.

Shoreforms: The project contains high protection priority shoreforms - bluff- backed rocky beach transport zone and barrier beach “sandflats” (PIAT Figure 11).

Process Degradation: The project is in low/zero percent shoreline degradation (PIAT Figure 10).

Protection Priority: The project is a high/medium Protection Priority (PIAT Figure 17).

Sea Level Rise Resiliency: The project is high/medium resiliency for Long Term Salmon Recovery Protection priority (PIAT Figure 19).

* 1. **Explain why it is important to do this project now instead of at a later date.**

The property owners are eager to complete this transaction at this time. Discussions with the landowners have resulted in general agreement regarding terms for shoreline protection in the Conservation Easements. Donated CEs may occur in the absence of purchased CEs, however the intent of a neighborhood approach to shoreline conservation would not be realized.

* 1. **If any part or phase of this project previously has been reviewed or funded by the SRFB, please fill in the table below.**

Not applicable.

1. **Project Description**

Please answer the questions below and all pertinent supplemental questions. NOTE that projects that include acquisition, fish passage, diversions and screening, or knotweed removal, and projects that are Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP)-related have supplemental questions at the end of this proposal.

* 1. **Provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including project size, scope, design, and how it will address the problem(s) described above.**

Acquisition only – not applicable.

* 1. **If this project includes measures to stabilize an eroding streambank, explain why bank stabilization at this location is necessary to accomplish habitat recovery.**

Acquisition only – not applicable.

* 1. **If restoration or acquisition will occur in phases or is part of a larger recovery strategy, describe the goal of the overall strategy, explain individual sequencing steps, and which of these steps is included in this application.**

Our Local Integrating Organization, the San Juan Action Agenda Oversight Group, performed a threat analysis and prioritization of strategies and near term actions to update the San Juan Action Area in 2011- 2012. One of the top strategies identified locally to Protect and Restore Habitat is:

Identify and implement shoreline protection tools including land preservation via acquisition and conservation easements, restoration, and protection of marine areas consistent with treaty rights.

One of the near term actions under this strategy is:

San Juan County Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery will identify priority habitats for acquisition by 2013 in updates to the Salmon Recovery strategy, and will lead acquisition of, or establishment of conservation easements for 25% of priority habitat shoreline miles with willing sellers/owners by 2014.[[4]](#footnote-5)

This project addresses this near term action by acquiring over 3000 feet of shoreline via four Conservation Easements providing nearly 0.6 additional shoreline miles of highest priority Fish Use habitat that will have been protected in perpetuity. This is in addition to the already protected shoreline on Waldron Island, which would bring the total to 30,323 feet or approximately 6 miles of protected nearshore rearing habitat for salmon in this priority salmon recovery area.

* 1. **Describe the long-term stewardship and maintenance obligations for the project or acquired land.**

The Conservation Easements will preserve and protect the properties’ ecological, natural shoreline, forest, scenic, and open space values and will limit residential use of the Conservation Easement acreage to existing cabins and their outbuildings. The Preservation Trust will monitor the properties annually to ensure compliance with Conservation Easement terms.

* 1. **Describe other approaches and design alternatives that were considered to achieve the project’s objectives and why the preferred alternative was selected.**

The property owners are willing to provide Conservation Easements but not willing to sell their property. The use of a Conservation Easement is a cost-effective alternative to fee-simple purchase of the property.

* 1. **How have lessons learned from completed projects or monitoring studies informed your project?**

A successfully completed prior Conservation Easement acquisition project (PSAR funding) has provided familiarity with the grant process. The shoreline valuation approach developed for this project will be available for application in future shoreline neighborhood conservation easement projects.

* 1. **List all landowner names**.

Burn Family Trust; C.T. Burn; Wernstedt Family Trust; Two Northern Lights LLC

* 1. **List project partners and their role and contribution to the project.**

Friends of the San Juans has partnered with the Preservation Trust in a preliminary project to identify this neighborhood for shoreline conservation easements.

* 1. **Stakeholder Outreach:**

There is no known opposition or barriers to this project in the Waldron Island or greater San Juan Island communities.

* 1. **Contingency Planning:**

There are no known constraints or problems that may delay or increase the costs of this acquisition.

* 1. **List and describe the major tasks and time schedule you will use to complete the project.**

Finalize, sign and record Conservation Easements by the end of 2015.

* 1. **Describe your experience managing this type of project.**

The San Juan Preservation Trust has completed over 300 Conservation Easement and preserve acquisition projects in its 35-year history.

1. **Design and Implementation Questions for Restoration Projects** (Acquisition-only projects need not respond to these questions.)

Acquisition only – not applicable.

## Supplemental Questions

### Acquisition Project Supplemental Questions

(Applies to both acquisition-only and combination projects).Answer the following supplemental questions (these are not included in the ten-page limit):

1. Provide a detailed description of the property.

This highest priority property extends along the north shore of Waldron Island both east and west of Fishery Pt. East of Fishery Pt., the rocky medium bank shoreline is characterized by a mixed conifer forest including old growth Douglas fir and an herbaceous understory of native marine riparian vegetation. West of Fishery Pt. the low/no bank “sandflat” extends over 200 ft. inland and is discontinuously vegetated with sedges, herbaceous plants and a few trees. This project will add to existing Conservation Easement and Preserve shoreline protection on Waldron Island for a total of approximately 6 miles of shoreline and 800 acres of natural habitat protected by the San Juan Preservation Trust.

1. State what type of acquisition is proposed (e.g., fee title, conservation easement).

Conservation Easement.

1. State the size of the property to be acquired. *Attach a site map in PRISM showing the property boundary, habitat features, easements, roads, and buildings, as appropriate.*

The Conservation Easements will encompass approximately 40 acres total and protect over 3000 feet of natural shoreline. Thirty-four acres and 3 development rights will be a CE donation and 6 acres of shoreline will be a purchased CE. The sponsor will explore opportunities to include additional forest acreage in the purchased CEs. Once these conservation easements are completed, adjacent “sandflat” landowners to the south will be contacted to ascertain their interest in complementary shoreline conservation easements.

1. Describe the property’s proximity to publically owned or protected properties in the vicinity. *Attach a map in PRISM that illustrates this relationship.*

Publicly owned and protected properties in the vicinity of the project include National Wildlife Refuge, National Monument and State Park owned islands (see attached map).

1. If uplands are included on the property to be acquired, state their size and explain why they are essential for protecting salmonid habitat.

The acquired Conservation Easements will include 40 upland acres that provide essential protection for the natural vegetation and watershed values adjacent to this highest priority Fish Use habitat.

1. State the percentage of the total project area that is intact and fully functioning habitat.

Approximately 95% of the 40 acres to be protected under Conservation Easement will remain intact and fully functioning habitat in perpetuity.

1. Explain property restoration needs*. Explain the degree to which habitat on site is impaired and the nature and extent of required restoration. Are there levees, riprap, infrastructure, or other features on this or nearby properties that inhibit channel migration or floodplain-stream interaction? Describe the likely prioritization, timeframe, and funding sources for proposed restoration activities.*

No restoration is proposed or required.

1. List structures (home, barn, outbuildings, fence) on the property and any proposed modifications. *Note: In general, buildings on SRFB-assisted acquisitions must be removed. Refer to RCO* *Manual 18, Salmon Recovery Grants, Section 2 for information about ineligible project elements.*

Two cabins and several small outbuildings are located on the 40 acres to be acquired under Conservation Easement. Terms of the CEs will maintain traditional uses. See attached list of permitted and prohibited uses and activities (to be individually tailored as appropriate for each of the four CEs).

1. Describe adjacent land uses (upstream, downstream, across stream, upland).

Adjacent land is forested and supports low intensity rural residence and forest management activities.

1. Describe the:
2. Zoning/land use

R-5/ Rural Farm Forest

1. Shoreline Master Plan designation

Nature on all but the easternmost tax parcel which is Rural Farm Forest.

1. Portion of site within 100-year floodplain

N/A

1. Portion of site within designated floodway

N/A

1. Explain why federal, state, and local regulations are insufficient to protect the property from degradation.

The Conservation Easement will provide a reduced density and building footprint in perpetuity. Although the Waldron sub-area plan is more restrictive than the countywide comprehensive plan, the sub-area plan can change and exceptions to current county restrictions have been known to be allowed.

1. For projects that have a goal of saving water: N/A
2. Describe the mechanism that you intend to use to conserve water (trust, etc.) and explain why this is the preferred approach.
3. Which steps in the water conservation process will be completed under this project proposal?
4. How much water, if any, will be saved as a result of this project? By what methods are you calculating the amount of water conserved?
5. If buying the land, explain why acquiring a conservation easement to extinguish certain development, timber, agricultural, mineral, or water rights will not achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

N/A

1. For acquisition projects intending to purchase multiple properties within an area, identify all the possible parcels that will provide similar benefits and certainty of success and provide a clear description of how parcels will be prioritized and how priority parcels will be pursued for acquisition.

N/A

###  Response to Review Panel Comments

Use this section to respond to the comments you will receive after your initial site visits, and then again after you submit your final application.

Response to Site Visit Comments

Please describe how you’ve responded to the review panel’s initial site visit comments. *We recommend that you list each of the review panel’s comments and questions and identify how you have responded. You also may use this space to respond directly to their comments.*

Response to Post-Application Comments

Please describe how you’ve responded to the review panel’s post-application comments. *We recommend that you list each of the review panel’s comments and questions and identify how you have responded. You also may use this space to respond directly to their comments.*

1. Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery: A Framework for the Development of Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plans, The Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Team, March 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. San Juan County Salmon Recovery Chapter, Puget Sound Shared Strategy, June 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. San Juan County Salmon Recovery Chapter, Puget Sound Shared Strategy, June 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. San Juan Action Agenda Profile, Action Agenda for Puget Sound, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)