

San Juan Initiative Policy Group
Draft Meeting Summary
May 28
Orcas Firehouse

Lisa Byers	Tom Cowan	Ron Hendrickson
Teri Williams	Patty Miller	
Jonathan White	Susan Key	Mary Riveland
Peter Kilpatrick	Level Pratt	

Staff: Jim Kramer
Amy Windrope
Karrie Cooper

Public: Maggie Schuler

Decisions:

1. April 17th meeting approved with no changes.
2. Agree to proceed with additional work products (described below) supported by PSP new funds.
3. Staff directed to explore the possibility of having a County approved list of experts available for public.
4. Policy Group reaffirmed recommendation of having adequate fees to cover the cost of reviewing permits in complicated situations.
5. Additional work on prescriptive standard, vegetation process and interface with Conservation District needed.
6. Maintain recommendation that a main structure, septic, road and driveway be threatened by erosion in order to allow the placement of a bulkhead or other shore stabilization structure.
 - a. Include "dwelling units" to allow protection of guest houses
7. Staff directed to simplify proposed monitoring approach and tie the monitoring to on the ground outcomes that were measured in the Case Studies.
8. Staff directed to identify the institutional structure that needs to be carried into the future to fully implement recommendations.

Staff Updates:

Community engagement:

- 7 meetings in 1 1/2 weeks attended by around 100 folks representing a broad range of perspectives.
- Post cards, emails, meeting notices in the papers and personal phone calls were methods used to engage the stakeholders.

Those in attendance identified the phone call most successful.
In future, better organization is needed to avoid multiple calls.

The San Juan Initiative received additional funds from the Puget Sound Partnership to support implementation of the recommendations. These funds will support the following work to be completed by June 30, 2009:

- Map feeder bluffs on San Juan and Lopez Island. Additional funds to complete San Juan County mapping are being sought by the Marine Resources Committee and Friends of the San Juans.
- Develop a definition of “threatened” in relation to allowance of bulk heads:
- Develop Web content for SJ County website to help property owners and prospective property owners understand the regulations and the ecology prior to building and buying process.

Discussion of issues and staff recommendations outlined in 5.28 Issue Paper

Summary of community workshops discussion:

Additional points or highlights from meeting than that provided by staff:

- Review of public perspectives: strong consensus in identifying the lack of technical assistance as a root cause of confusion and inconsistencies. Concern about staff retention at Planning Department.
- Illustrated compendium needed. Public wants examples of proper setbacks, soft-shore armoring, filtered views, adequate vegetative cover.
- New bulkhead standards recommended by Initiative supported by majority.
- Interest in a marketing tool similar to “green home” designation for shoreline properties? And could we tailor trainings to meet the ongoing educational needs in the RPA process while certifying and/or providing credit hours to realtors?
- Phone calls are the most effective way to increase attendance at meetings.

Improving Technical Assistance for Property Owners

1. Do you support the Conservation District as the organization to provide technical assistance to property owners?

- Discussion focused on current needs and resources provided by Conservation District:
 - CD Board supportive of providing education and technical assistance to shoreline land owners. Staff has limited capacity to facilitate this. This role is non regulatory.

- Funding: all CD services are free to the public. Conservations Future: small property tax dedicated through 2014.
- CD interested in piloting Green Shores program within San Juan Co. Policy Group wondered if beaches and bluffs could be given priority by CD?
- Property owners want interface of regulatory requirements and site evaluation.

2. Do you agree with the staff recommendation to explore the possibility for the County to develop a list of technical experts?

- Staff directed to look for examples of success in doing this
- Need to address legal considerations

3. Do you agree that a fee structure should be developed for the County to hire technical experts?

- There is community support for adequate fees for reviewing permits.
- Idea: Shoreline stewards fee to fund a County Shoreline Specialist. Additional fees be applied for special projects
- Per parcel fee: possibility to be discussed in future
- Policy Group reaffirmed the goal of having adequate fees to cover the cost of reviewing permits in complicated situations.

Improving Standards for Retention of Shoreline Trees and Ground Cover

1. What refinements need to be made to the prescriptive standard recommended by staff? (i.e.: 85% of trees maintained)

- Public in support of general approach, but want better science to create prescriptive standard. Need clear codes. Difficulty with 15%...too vague, and isn't based on science.
- Support a clear prescriptive standard within CAO
- Illustrated compendium on website: describes prescriptive standard
- How does code enforcement fit into this process?
- What will we allow property owners to do on their property without having to get permission from the County?
- RPA process valuable. Gives landowners advice.
- Work with realtors to get the word out that they can have a free CD site visit.
- Need to identify funding mechanism for CD

Staff Directed to Address:

- What should the prescriptive standard be?
- What is the trigger for when a property owner needs a "Shoreline Vegetation Permit"

- i. Undeveloped property
 - ii. Existing development
- What is the trigger for a “Shoreline Resource Plan?” from the Conservation District and what service will the CD provide?
- What is the trigger for the exception process, Critical Area Stewardship Plan?
- How does the RPA fit in?
- Who will enforce the regulations and the Shoreline Resource Plan?

Process for Addressing the Policy Group Questions

- Create a small sub-committee to flesh out details: Mike Carlson, David Roberts, Ron Henrickson, Steve Schramm, Susan Key and Danna.
- Staff continues to refine prescriptive approach with help from subcommittee
- Staff identifies the various triggers by creating a flow chart that shows decisions and outcomes
- Test on various types of shoreline
- Refine and write up for review by Policy Group
- Insert approach and language into the Critical Areas Ordinance after Policy Group approval

Overall Concern:

- The San Juan Initiative needs to maintain the focus on a tailored approach to assure credibility and community support. It is what we have recommended. Can we stay true to it as we move into the future?

Improving Standards for Protecting Beaches and Bluffs

1. Based on community input, does the Policy Group want to change their recommended standard for replacement bulkheads on beaches and bluffs?
2. Should we move forward in drafting the regulatory language?
3. Should we convene a small subgroup to craft a “repair and replace” policy statement?

Decision: Maintain language that a main structure, septic, road and driveway be threatened by erosion in order to allow the placement of a bulkhead or other shore stabilization structure.

- Include “dwelling units” to allow protection of guest houses.
- Look for existing language as guide in what we should use.

Monitoring Effectiveness of San Juan Initiative:

1. **Would the benchmarks recommended by the staff provide adequate information to know if implementation is on track and measuring effectiveness over time? Would you feel our efforts were successful**

if these benchmarks were achieved? What refinements do you recommend?

- Need benchmarks that are specific, descriptive, and measurable
- Short-term time frame seems unrealistic: 1-year to measure short-term and 3-years to measure long-term
- Reduce and refine the list. Simplify. Identify key indicators.
- Are we making a difference with the overall culture? Complete focus group survey. We will know if the culture has changed by seeing the results of that shift.
- Need to archive the process: original sentiments, documents, exit interviews of those engaged to determine sentiments at this phase
- We can measure success by reviewing future permits, which will demonstrate what has worked.
- Number of parcels that are “shore green”. Level of engagement by realtors in credited classes focused on shoreline protection. Number of contractors certified in green shores type development principles. All of this would demonstrate success.
- Providing access to accurate information in a timely manner could be our legacy.
- Rules and regulations that are clear and consistent will be a huge help in shifting public opinion of the County to a more positive perspective
- Identify the institutional structure that needs to be carried into the future.

One members' ideal vision of success:

- New CAO passed by County Council
- Progressive dialogue with the public during CAO meetings
- SJI Recommendations incorporated into CAO
- CD program proving effective with Technical Assistance site visits
- Feeder Bluffs mapped throughout the County
- No new bulkheads built without permit

Decision: Staff directed to simplify and tie the monitoring to on the ground outcomes that we measured in the Case Studies. And, identify the institutional structure that needs to be carried into the future to fully implement recommendations.

Next Steps:

- June meeting date to be determined, Amy will send out an email with proposed dates
- Consider whether you would be willing to commit to another six months as a Policy Group member
- Up coming field trip
- Determine where the San Juan Initiative will be archived