

Islands Weekly—Land Bank Acquisition on Lopez

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Submitted by San Juan County Land Bank

Roughly two miles of nearly pristine beach on the west side of Lopez Island may become accessible for nature viewing and long walks. There is one spot where the high bluffs dip low along a streambed to allow a gentle walking path to the beach. Funding from the San Juan County Land Bank and donations from the Lopez Community can make this acquisition a reality.

Fronting the San Juan Channel, the shoreline with its wild and remote flavor is one of the longest publicly owned tidelands on our island. Currently only accessible by boat, the property provides for walkable trail access through an island forest to the sandy beach with panoramic views of our neighboring islands, views through Cattle Pass, to the Olympic mountains and north to Turtleback.

The Land Bank has secured a purchase and sale agreement on two parcels allowing community access to the beach. The Land Bank plans to complete this purchase agreement by Jan. 20. The Land Bank Commission has committed funds toward the purchase of the properties and will seek grants from state programs to help offset some of that cost. At the same time, it will keep money in reserve for other identified acquisitions of critical properties on Lopez, including the remainder interest of Lopez Hill.

“This acquisition will make a stunning piece of Lopez Island available to anyone who appreciates the solitude and beauty offered by a quiet walk on a beach,” said Land Bank Commissioner at large Christa Campbell.

The Land Bank is asking the Lopez community to contribute \$50,000 to close the sale. The amount is also necessary for obtaining state grants by demonstrating the community’s commitment. With the closing date rapidly approaching, community fundraising will begin immediately, with a milestone date of Dec. 8, for pledges.

Contributions and charitable pledges are needed now in order to proceed with this opportunity to make two miles of walkable beach available for walks, sunset vistas, wildlife viewing and birding. Make your tax-deductible gift now. Please contact the San Juan County Land Bank at (360) 378-4402, or email judyc@sjclandbank.org.

A special section has been made available on LopezRocks to accept, on behalf of the San Juan County Land Bank, your tax-deductible donation. Your early donations will be matched up to \$7,000. You may reach this site directly at www.preservelopezshoreline.org.

You are invited to join the upcoming November Land Bank meeting on Lopez, on Friday, Nov. 18, 8 a.m. at Grace Church.