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FRIENDS

· of the San Juans ·



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Annual Report *2003*

A Year of *Unparalleled* *Success*

NEWS FROM THE VOICE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

President's Report

FRIENDS of the SAN JUANS has just completed a year of unparalleled success, with victories in land use cases that—if they'd gone the other way—could have done much to destroy what we love about the San Juan Islands.

At the same time — and it's a measure of FRIENDS' strength that we can achieve multiple goals simultaneously — our marine research efforts made major contributions to restoration of our islands' ecosystems. While the primary funding for our Forage Fish and Eelgrass projects has come from the State's Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the results will benefit far more than salmon. Seabirds, shell fish, bottom fish, and orcas and other marine mammals are all part of the ecosystem that starts with the almost invisible spawn on beaches and underwater grasses.



While the results of our marine research will become apparent in future years, another FRIENDS' marine program produced immediately visible results that delighted islanders. Thanks to scores of volunteers, our Beach and Marine Clean-Up efforts over several weekends removed large quantities of debris from some of our most beautiful beaches and surrounding waters.

With the County's elimination of its Planning Department, FRIENDS' efforts to make land use regulations more responsive to islanders' priorities took on even greater importance. We renewed our commitment to more effective planning with the creation of a *Planning for Growth* work group, dedicated to developing and evaluating proposals for managing growth in ways acceptable to island residents.

FRIENDS' success can be measured in quantitative terms, too. Our membership has grown some 40 percent in two years, our revenues have risen even faster (although our expenses have also risen as we've expanded our programs), our Marilyn Ellis Endowment has grown, and our total assets are greater than ever before.

None of this would have happened without the dedication and hard work of our wonderful staff led by Stephanie Buffum, our Board, and numerous members and others who helped as volunteers. We also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our donors, the individuals and organizations who've been so generous this past year, and who've made possible our work to preserve and protect the beauty and wonders of the San Juans.

Thank you, everyone!

Roger Collier

FRIENDS

of the San Juans

MISSION

To protect and promote the health & future of the San Juan Islands: land, water, natural & human communities. To support comprehensive planning. To encourage individual and community participation. To foster a stewardship ethic.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meets alternate months. Members are welcome. Please call for time and location.

PRESIDENT

Lynn Bahrych - *Shaw*

SECRETARY

Patricia Jo Pirnack-Hamilton - *Orcas*

TREASURER

Jon Christoffersen - *Shaw*

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Roger Collier - *Orcas*

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Paul Carroll <i>Lopez</i>	John Marx <i>San Juan</i>
Irmgard Conley <i>Orcas</i>	Fred Ellis <i>Shaw</i>
Heather Spaulding <i>San Juan</i>	

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Charles Armstrong - *Orcas*
Kevin Ranker - *San Juan*
Jim Lawrence - *San Juan*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stephanie Buffum
(stephanie@sanjuans.org)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

Tina Whitman (tina@sanjuans.org)

MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Shannon Davis (shannon@sanjuans.org)

FORAGE FISH RESEARCHER

Lety Hopper

OFFICE ADMINSTRATOR

Jana Marks
(jana@sanjuans.org)

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Christine Coulter

WEB SITE

www.sanjuans.org

Financial Highlights

FRIENDS OF THE SAN JUANS is a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization. FRIENDS' income comes from membership dues, gifts and donations, and from a variety of grants. FRIENDS' expenditures are for major programs (marine research, land use, etc), for publications, and for administrative support. This financial snapshot summarizes FRIENDS' balance sheet and income statement for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2003.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Sept 30, 2003	Sept 30, 2002
Current and Fixed Assets		
Cash and Other Unrestricted	\$124,752	\$63,956
Marilyn Ellis Endowment	68,053	64,924
Fixed Assets	12,278	14,023
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TOTAL ASSETS	\$205,083	\$142,903
Liabilities and Accumulated Surplus		
Current Liabilities	\$2,299	\$2,124
Accumulated Surplus	202,784	140,779
	-----	-----
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	\$205,083	\$142,903

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES – Fiscal Year 2003

Income	
Membership Dues	\$44,835
Gifts and Event	54,232
Program Grants	203,549
Other Grants	6,679
Investment and Other Income	3,551

TOTAL INCOME	\$312,756
Expenses	
Payroll	\$110,000
Contracted Services	78,309
Field Supplies	6,109
Legal and Other Issue Expenses	5,426
Publications	33,187
Other Administrative Expenses	15,765

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$248,796
NET SURPLUS	\$63,960

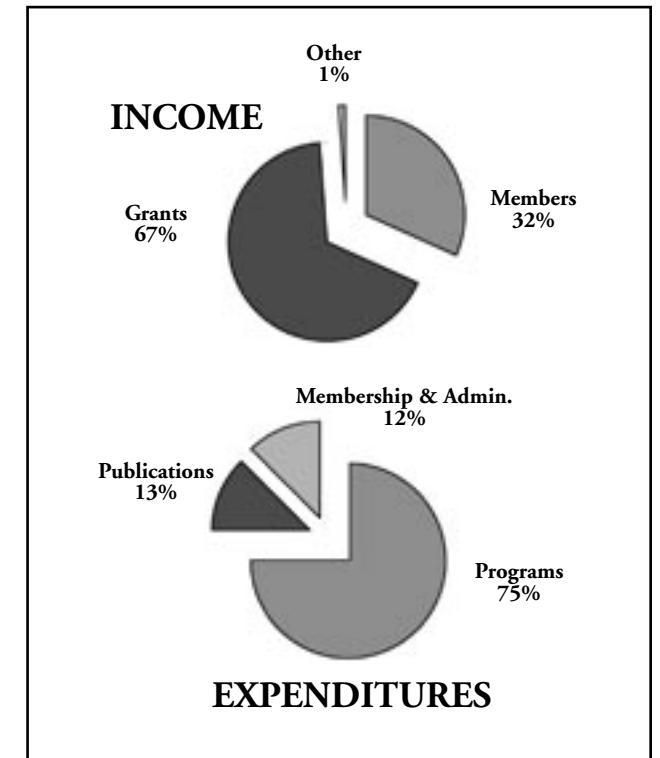
SUMMARY OF REVENUE SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

REVENUE SOURCES

Membership Contributions	31.7%
Grants	67.2%
Other Income	1.1%

EXPENDITURES

Marine Research, Land Use and Other Programs	74.7%
Publications	13.3%
Membership Support and Administration	12%



It All Depends on People

FRIENDS' twenty-fourth year has been one of outstanding success: in membership growth, in funding, in legal victories, in marine programs, in planning for growth, and much more. Every one of these successes depended on people: staff, Board members, volunteers, donors, grant funders, and many others.

FRIENDS' full-time staff proved once again how extraordinarily fortunate we are to have their dedication and hard work. Stephanie Buffum, our Executive Director; continued to build FRIENDS' reputation and visibility in the community while attracting critical grant funds. Tina Whitman, our Environmental Programs Manager, led our marine survey work and our beach clean-up efforts. Jana Marks, our Office Manager; kept our administration under control in increasingly crowded conditions. Shannon Davis, our new Membership and Development Manager, joined us in September and is already making a mark in attracting new members. These core staff were ably assisted by Lety Hopper, our forage fish researcher, by Chris Coulter, our accounting and software specialist,

and by Nick Nash, who leads our marine clean-up efforts.

Two very able summer interns made the busiest months of the year easier and even more productive. Rebecca Bressen, a member of the Samish Indian Nation, provided extensive help in the office and helped in



FRIENDS' sponsorship of "The Journey," the traditional Northwest tribal canoe trip, while John Cressetto, our legal intern, pursued the legal implications of impact fees and other land use issues.

Experts in marine studies, including Drs. Jim Norris, Larry Moulton, and Tina and Sandy Echeverria ensured that our forage fish and eelgrass proj-

ects met scientific standards, while also playing major roles in these vital surveys.

Our Board members provided time, enthusiasm, experience and guidance to the entire FRIENDS organization, setting goals and objectives, monitoring financial and programmatic progress, reporting community concerns, and acting as a sounding board for new projects.

Numerous volunteers contributed hundreds of hours of hard work to help make FRIENDS' achievements possible. FRIENDS' members and others concerned about our islands and waters worked many long days supporting our forage fish, green crab monitoring, eelgrass surveys, and beach and marine clean-up efforts, as well as providing valuable assistance in our office and at a variety of events. We thank all our volunteers—their efforts not only made our success possible, their belief in FRIENDS' goals was an inspiration to us all.

Finally, our donors — individuals and foundations and other entities — made our success possible through their extraordinarily generous support of our programs and of FRIENDS' activities as a whole.

Preserving Our Land

Despite the downturn in the State of Washington's economy, San Juan County's growth continues, with the pace of house building in the past dozen years faster than in any other county in the State. With County planning having fallen victim to budget problems, FRIENDS' efforts to preserve the beauty and character of our islands are more vital than ever. Fortunately, these efforts continue to be successful.

FRIENDS gained a major victory in March, when the Growth Management Hearings Board issued its latest ruling on the Accessory Dwelling Unit (or guest house) issue, rejecting the County's attempt to allow a rentable second residence on almost every rural parcel. While the decision was a big success for FRIENDS, the controversy isn't over. The County has appealed the Hearings Board ruling and rejected FRIENDS' offer of settlement negotiations, meaning that taxpayers face further costs and delays before this issue is finally resolved.

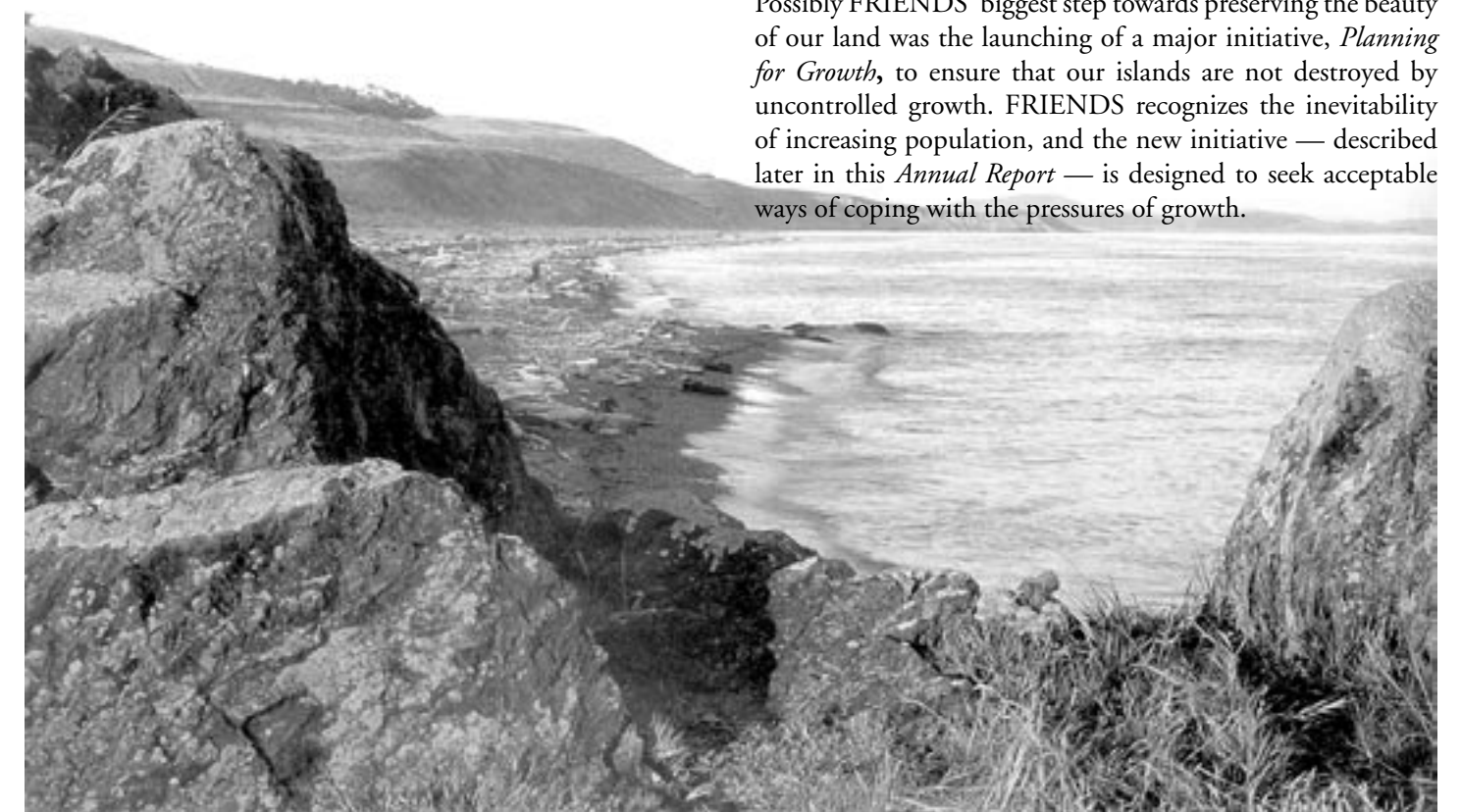
A second FRIENDS' victory, and one that did conclude an argument, ended an attempt by absentee owners to build a house in a conservation area bordering a wetland on Lopez'

beautiful Shoal Bay. A decision in Superior Court marked the final, successful step in FRIENDS' efforts to prevent the desecration of this biological jewel. The story was the major news article in the June 17 edition of *Islands' Weekly*.

Another successful day in court involved FRIENDS' support of longtime San Juan Island resident Elizabeth Da Gradi's battle to save a lovely grove of trees on her property. The absentee owner of a neighboring parcel, hoping to improve his view, sued to force Ms Da Gradi to cut down the trees. FRIENDS reviewed the local codes, covenants, and restrictions, helped Ms Da Gradi find legal help, and filed an *amicus* brief in what proved to be, in the words of Executive Director Stephanie Buffum, "a very good day for trees."

FRIENDS anticipated a future concern in the Summer newsletter, focusing on the County's resource lands, the farms, woodland, and open space that are a vital part of the beauty of the islands. As population pressures grow, the likelihood of attempts to rezone these lands increases, and FRIENDS is moving to build support for keeping these lovely areas as untouched as possible. The newsletter described the contribution made by farmers and foresters to our island economy — underlined in another FRIENDS' publication a few weeks later, when the Cost of Community Services study showed the contribution made by these lands to County tax revenues.

Possibly FRIENDS' biggest step towards preserving the beauty of our land was the launching of a major initiative, *Planning for Growth*, to ensure that our islands are not destroyed by uncontrolled growth. FRIENDS recognizes the inevitability of increasing population, and the new initiative — described later in this *Annual Report* — is designed to seek acceptable ways of coping with the pressures of growth.



Restoring the Health of Our Beaches and Waters

The San Juans' hundreds of miles of shoreline and surrounding waters still look lovely, but longtime islanders are all too aware of the decline in fish and other marine life, and of the increasing amounts of debris floating in the water or washed ashore. FRIENDS' marine projects represent a major effort to solve these problems.

With financial support from the State of Washington, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Bullitt Foun-

dation, and others, FRIENDS is leading the way in efforts to restore salmon stocks in the San Juans. Our three-year Forage Fish project has surveyed more than 500 beaches to identify spawning areas of the forage fish that salmon depend on for food. The final step—now underway—is the completion of a data base to ensure that shoreline construction doesn't result in the destruction of precious spawning sites.

FRIENDS' Eelgrass Survey is the second of our salmon restoration projects, involving state-of-the-art marine research. During the summer months, the 35-foot research vessel *Brendan D*, equipped with underwater video camera, GPS, digital recording unit, and digital camera, surveyed known and potential eelgrass beds throughout the islands. The high-tech approach allowed researchers to view eelgrass bed details on a plasma monitor while simultaneously recording the location and extent of the eelgrass—critical marine habitat for salmon forage fish and for much other marine life.

The importance and credibility of FRIENDS' efforts were recognized with the award in early

summer of a third State salmon restoration grant, for a 2-year study of herring spawning sites, and by invitations to make presentations to the Northwest Straits Commission and the Department of the Interior.

FRIENDS' beach survey work expanded to include green crab monitoring, with staff and volunteers searching for this recent immigrant from California. The pesky green crab is a voracious predator that feeds on clams, oysters, and mussels, and could have catastrophic impacts on island shellfish stocks.

FRIENDS continued its support of efforts to gain Federal Endangered Species designation for the San Juans' orca whales, and also sponsored a presentation by famed mammal toxicologist Dr. Peter Ross on the risks to orcas of PCBs and other marine toxins.

For many islanders, the most visible of FRIENDS' beach and marine activities were probably the clean-up efforts. The Marine Refuse Clean-Up managed by fisherman Nick Nash had its first birthday in June, while a series of beach clean-ups involving some 150 volunteers helped restore beaches on San Juan, Waldron, Shaw, Orcas, Stuart, and Lopez.

Growth in our lovely San Juans seems inevitable, and there's no question of the threat of development to the beauty and character of the islands. But with better planning, perhaps we can preserve what's loveliest and best about living here. That's the objective of FRIENDS' *Planning for the Future* initiative.

Planning for the Future

FRIENDS' *Planning for Growth* work group brings together people knowledgeable in planning, permitting, real estate sales and development. Their objectives: to analyze the potential impact of growth, to inform citizens about growth trends and issues, to evaluate growth management tools, and to develop proposals to manage growth in ways acceptable to island residents.

The results so far? FRIENDS published the final report on the Cost of Community Services study in late summer. The study—conducted in conjunction with the American Farmland Trust—showed that for every dollar of tax revenue from residential development \$1.32 was spent on public services. In contrast to the often-hyped belief that residential development is good for the economy, the report projects that a 25 percent increase in County population—expected by the end of the decade—will result in a \$3 million budget hole to be plugged by increased taxes, reduced services, or both.

The second product of the *Planning for the Future* initiative—currently in final draft—is a series of island maps, showing the impact of future growth allowed by the present Comprehensive Plan. These maps, described by one work group member as “horrible,” show all too dramatically the sprawl allowed by current County regulations.



The third product of the *Planning for the Future* initiative—also currently in draft—is a study of impact fees that could be imposed to compensate for some of the costs of growth. Impact fees have been established by other Washington cities and counties, but not by San Juan County—the fastest growing county of all.

Another aspect of looking towards the future is FRIENDS' representation on the new San Juan County Economic Development Council. The mission of the EDC is to diversify and strengthen the islands' economy through a public-private partnership based on the environmental and other goals of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Finally, FRIENDS was a key sponsor of a hugely successful effort to influence thinking about island development. The *Low Impact Development* conference brought together an audience of more than one hundred planners, contractors, architects, landscapers, realtors, and others to hear about development strategies that minimize the impact on the environment while still making economic sense. The conference not only helped produce a more sensitive approach to development, but also created a demand for further discussion, with the result that a second conference, *Navigating the Future*, co-sponsored by FRIENDS, is scheduled for October.

