

**Minutes**  
**San Juan Islands National Monument Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Oct. 6, 2023**  
**Meeting via Zoom**

*Ten of the twelve current MAC members were in attendance to provide a quorum for this meeting.*

MAC Chair Jamie Stephens provided a welcome and gave a brief introduction to Zoom and best practices and Sam Barr gave a traditional Salish greeting to start the meeting.

BLM District Manager Kurt Pindel gave a short update that there is some progress with realty and access issues at Watmough Bay. BLM is staying in contact with the Landbank on their Interim Management Plan and any studies that are being conducted on the Higgins property where an acquisition is being looked at.

The MAC members introduced themselves and mentioned their interest areas. Then BLM members introduced themselves. Then Jamie reviewed the agenda, and the MAC. Jeff reviewed the terms of current MAC members as well the Call for Nominations that went out yesterday.

Signed and approved plan in September was not met and the new target is the end of the calendar year, but hopefully before the December 7 meeting. He and Monument Manager Brie Chartier explained there is no Monument budget. Once BLM is in the implementation phase of the plan, they will seek funding for specific projects. Kurt also talked about our table of organization and how the different “colors” of money can be spent. He also summarized the visit to the Monument with the BLM State Director and Brie in June. BLM Archaeologist Rich Bailey talked about yesterday’s Tribal meeting where the BLM and many Tribal representatives discussed ways to organize and operate a Tribal Forum. He also said the cultural surveys for the entire Monument have now been completed.

Brie gave an update on getting settled and some of the work being done on the Monument like working at the Lopez Farmer’s Market and the County Fair. She explained most of her time so far has been trying to network with the all the partners and acquaint herself with the Monument properties. She also asked for help with learning the annual schedule of regular events the Monument can participate in to increase awareness of the Monument. She shared some usage rates over the last two years and explained that because she is a new manager/supervisor, there is a ton of training that she must accomplish as well. Tracey had some questions about the seasonal hiring process. Brie shared the open advertisement for the Outdoor Ranger position, asking the MAC to help spread the announcement. She also is hoping to create a cadre of trained volunteers to pull from. She mentioned some challenges with trying to recruit an Outdoor Recreation Planner that can be a long term and sustainable position when the cost of living is so high. Kurt did add that the Office of Personnel Management is looking at expanding the cost of living increase in King County to include San Juan County and it’s a hope that this will be approved at the end of the year which would give employees an 18% increase.

Tulalip representative, Patti Gobin expressed appreciation for Rich's report and the fact that the Tribal Forum is moving forward. She also invited Brie to visit Tulalip lands and meet others tribal members.

Jamie started the discussion about how the MAC can help with implementation of the plan once the ROD is signed. The MAC members gave ideas and mentioned helping with public outreach as they did during the planning process. They declined to come up with concrete items because they haven't seen the final plan yet. Funding sources and priorities were also discussed. They talked about prioritization of projects through the MAC, the tribes and the community to be in sync and to be discovered organically and help inform the direction of implementation.

An update on the Sustainable Tourism Plan was given by Kendra Smith, the County Director of Environmental Stewardship. The proposed plan will be ready this fall and the county will go back to the public then for more feedback.

There were no official recommendations to the BLM. There was a lot of discussion about the length and quantity of meetings. It was agreed that hybrid meetings were the way to go. The next meeting is scheduled for December 7.

Public comments were made by Wendy Mickell, Russell Barsh and Amanda Wedow. The main themes were appreciation for the MAC, concern over heavy public use, the positive BLM State Director visit, the need for the MAC to obtain objective and empirical advice/data from scientific sources and the Land Bank's release of the interim plan for the Higgin's property. A written comment from Nora Nickum was read aloud and is attached below.

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The following written public comment was read aloud at the MAC meeting.  
Public Meeting Oct 6, 2022 of the MAC for the San Juan Islands National Monument

I have two serious concerns that I would like to reiterate in advance of the Final Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision (ROD).

**1. Public feet-on-the-ground, including camping, should not be allowed on most, if not all, small rocks and islands (categories A & B). These are sensitive wildlife refuges in fact if not in name.** Shoreline birds are plummeting in numbers all along the coasts of the US. I am extremely worried that camping might be allowed in areas where birds might be nesting on the ground, and where there are no facilities for human waste. Tidelands which border rocks and islands are also being overused and stressed by human activities—not just in the San Juans, but beyond.

The presidential proclamation which designated this a National Monument directed the preservation and protection of resources. With this new National Monument, we have an opportunity to use these rocks and islands to do just that, and we can't squander that opportunity.

**2. Hunting and the use of firearms should not be allowed. The small footprints of the**

**multiple National Monument areas make such activities extremely dangerous for both neighboring residents and visitors.** It also seems ironic that the BLM suggests visitors should use shoulder seasons for peaceful experiences, when the fall is prime hunting time.

Finally, I would like to share some comments on the management plan process:

- I appreciate that appointments to the MAC have been made.
- I sincerely hope that the MAC will be able to more fully participate in the management of the San Juan Islands National Monument than it has been allowed to in the past. I thank all MAC members for their time and effort.
- The process has generated hundreds of pages of documents, but this does not indicate to me that the BLM has listened to comments which have been submitted. **I hope that, in contrast, the final DOC does reflect those public comments, as well as the initial purpose of the National Monument to preserve and protect.**