

Welcome,
summer!



Happy 100th, Moran | New visitors' center open

BY COLLEEN SMITH
Editor/Publisher

COLLEEN SMITH/STAFF PHOTO
State Parks Director Peter Mayer and Friends of Moran president Sandi Talt cutting the ribbon to the new visitors' center on June 18.

It was a land donation that launched the entire Washington state parks' system.

It took Robert Moran more than a decade to get the state on board with his plan, but on June 18, 1921, he signed over 5,424 acres of raw land to be enjoyed for generations to come. In honor of Moran State Park's 100th birthday and the grand opening of the new interpretive center, a special celebration was held at the summit of Mt. Constitution.

Those in attendance included State Parks Commission Chair Mike Latimer, State Representatives Alex Ramel and Debra Lekanoff, Exhibit Development Coordinator Sam Wotipka, State Parks Director Peter Mayer, Friends of Moran president Sandi Talt, local Moran historian Christopher Peacock, San Juan County Council Members Jamie Stephens and Christine Minney, County Manager Mike Thomas and Becky Burns, the great-granddaughter of Robert Moran. Carolyn Cruso provided music for the festivities.

Latimer recognized that the celebration was being held on ancestral land. Moran was originally an area used as transient hunting and fishing grounds for the Lummi Tribe of the Salish Nation.

"And a special thank you to the state legislature, which approved a tremendous park-friendly budget," Latimer said. "It's a testament to the importance of parks."

Lekanoff also honored the Coast Salish Peoples, asking the crowd to "pause for a moment to honor the ancestors who walked these lands."

Originally from New York, Moran arrived in Seattle in 1875 with just a dime to his name. He became a ship engineer and worked on several of John Muir's Alaska expeditions. His brothers later joined him in Seattle, where they launched a ship repair business that grew to become one of the largest employers in the area. In 1904, after receiving a diagnosis of only a few years to live, Moran purchased 7,000 acres on Orcas. He built his grand retirement home, which is now the Rosario Resort mansion. Free from the pressures of his career and breathing fresh island air, Moran lived until 1943.

Moran's friendship with Muir inspired him to donate parklands to the state. But in 1910, when he first broached the subject, there wasn't an entity in place to accept the acreage. After successfully lobbying for the formation of a parks' board,



Moran was rejected yet again after the land was deemed too big to manage. In 1920, his donation was finally accepted but the governor dragged his feet on signing the paperwork. By 1921, a new governing entity was formed — the state parks committee — which finally approved the resolution to accept the deed.

"Robert Moran's gift launched the state parks commission," said Mayer, who noted that it is all thanks to Moran's "persistence

and resiliency" that the state parks commission manages 120,000 acres within 125 parks today.

From 1933-1941, the Civilian Conservation Corps worked to build roads, infrastructure and trails in Moran State Park. It was the longest-running project in the program's history. The park has 151 campsites, five freshwater lakes for swimming and non-motorized boating and more than 30 miles of hiking, bicycling, mountain biking and equestrian trails. Mount

Constitution stands 2,409 feet above sea level.

The Friends of Moran group was instrumental in the construction of the new visitors' center at Mt. Constitution. FOM was founded in 1997 and is one of the oldest nonprofit groups in the parks system. The organization, led entirely by volunteers, has given \$100,000 to Moran in the past few years.

Wotipka, who put years into the project, called it the most "spectacular exhibit in the park system."

FOM runs the Summit Gift Shop, which will soon move into the new building. Construction on the facility began in June 2020 led by Rolf Eriksen and Carla Stanley. Fallen trees from a major storm in the winter of 2019 were milled by West Sound Lumber Company and used in the new construction.

"It carries on the legacy that Moran started," Talt said.

Upcoming events

The Friends of Moran is reinstating its Walks and Talks program that first launched in 2019. It was put on hold in 2020 but is now back and more robust, with 42 offerings led by 17 scientists. There will also be a summer concert series with local musicians. All performances will begin at 5 p.m. at Cascade Lake.

SEE MORAN, PAGE 3

Following the journey of waste



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Spring Street International 2021 graduates Linnea Morris and Ela Anevine did a deep dive into waste management.

BY ELA ANGEVINE
Spring Street School graduate

When people tell you that you can do things at home to be more environmentally friendly, live more sustainably, recycling is one of the first things that comes up, right? They say, "Recycling. It's easy." Well, I'm here to tell you, to console you, that it is not easy. If you feel frustrated by our system not only globally, but also on the San Juan Islands, you are not alone.

Spring Street Garbage Patrol — the environmental club founded by myself and Linnea Morris

— researched the journey of our recycling on the three largest of the San Juan Islands. The compilation of information comes from the websites each island's facility operates, interviews with employees and managers of all the transfer stations, and speaking with locals who work in tandem with the waste business. If you live on Lopez, Orcas, or San Juan this important information pertains to YOU!

Linnea and I were not prepared for what turned out to be a frustrating research journey. We had no appreciation for the complexity of waste management in general, let alone on remote islands. We started with the idea that there are five waste facilities and with the notion that we could separate recycling and not focus on the trash. Needless to say, we were wrong. There are three transfer stations: San Juan Transfer Station on San Juan, Orcas Recycling Service on Orcas and Lopez Solid Waste Disposal District on Lopez; there is one hauler: San Juan Sanitation (on Orcas, servicing all the islands); and, to top it off, on San Juan the town's Refuse and Recycling Service only picks up inside the town's limits.

The town leases the SJTS on Sutton Road to San Juan County, which in turn has a contract with Lautenbach Industries, a company based in Mount Vernon. Friday Harbor's RRS has a contract with SJTS apart from the county's (this is why waste pickups are cheaper in town), yet SJS picks up the recycling (Friday) from a few big businesses in Friday Harbor because the town, which owns the garbage trucks that

do curbside pickups, doesn't have the equipment to do commercial pickups of recycling. However, the town does the commercial pickups of material solid waste or garbage that goes to SJTS. On San Juan both the town's trucks and SJS's trucks drop off MSW at SJTS which then goes to Cowlitz County Landfill.

The more research one does on recycling, the more confusing it becomes. What constitutes as recycling at one facility might not be accepted on another island even though it is "recyclable." This is because what's "recyclable" really depends on where it is sent or, in other words, who is buying the material. A lot has changed in the past 10 years, starting with the leasing of the county-run transfer station — on the town of Friday Harbor's land — in 2011 which led to Lautenbach Industries becoming the operator, to the more recent "China Sword" where China banned almost all recycling coming from the U.S. (which included all of our recycling for some time) due to the contamination. Many of you might remember that we did not stop recycling. This is because our transfer stations quickly found new buyers, and these buyers were renting huge warehouses to store the recycling in until they could find places to send the separated materials. Malaysia became the "new" China until this February when the Basel Convention made it illegal to ship plastic numbers 1-7 through international waters. (As of right now, the San Juan County

SEE RECYCLING, PAGE 4

SJC mask ordinance ends on June 27

Submitted by the San Juan County Health Dept.

The San Juan County Health Officer Order requiring the wearing of masks by customers indoors in businesses and other public spaces will end on June 27, 2021.

Health Officer Dr. Frank James explains his decision, "Thanks to the high vaccination rates in the islands, including in island kids 12 and older, I feel comfortable with lifting the masking order on the June 27. That's the date that the last of the 12-15 year-olds who took part in our recent vaccine clinics will be fully vaccinated. I'm extremely appreciative of the way islanders embraced the vaccine effort and have set our community up for a safe summer ahead."

Despite the lifting of the order, there are important things to keep in mind:

-There may still be WA State masking requirements for specific industries or workplace settings. Details at: <https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-179-000.pdf>

-There will still be cases. The rise of the new Delta and Gamma variants, combined with low vaccination rates in some communities across Washington and beyond means that there will be an ongoing risk of infection.

-Anyone caring for children 11 or under should be thoughtful and cautious about exposing those kids to high-risk situations.

-Adults who choose to remain unvaccinated will be at the highest risk. The long-term impacts of COVID can be debilitating, and anyone without the protection of a vaccine should be especially careful.

-As variants continue to evolve, it is important to understand that COVID might still have surprises for us. As always, rapid steps to minimize risk, patience, and flexibility will be key.

San Juan County Health & Community Services Director Mark Tompkins highlights the work to get to this point, "It has been an extremely long and bumpy road, but I couldn't be more proud of the islands. So many pitched in, and in so many ways. There's more work to do, but this is a major milestone, and I'm grateful to the entire San Juan County community for helping San Juan County make it through."

Forum on VRs looks at common ground

BY SIENNA BOUCHER
Staff reporter

The vacation rental discussion continues.

The second online community forum was held on June 18, this time focusing on common ground.

On Jan. 12, San Juan County put a six-month moratorium on approval for rental permits. In March, the scope was limited to just the urban growth areas of Lopez and Orcas as well as the hamlets of Orcas. It's set to expire mid-July if it is not renewed at that time. It does not impact current rental properties but halts the momentum of new ones.

The online discussion, sponsored by the San Juan Island Community Network and the Sounder, Journal and Weekly, lasted more than two hours and looked at finding solutions for after the moratorium is lifted. The event was facilitated by

Sounder reporter Diane Craig and San Juan Island resident Michael Soltman.

According to Jan Scilipoti of Lopez Island and a member of Hosting on the Rock, about 7% of homes in San Juan County are being used as vacation rentals and about 36% are used as second homes.

Formalizing a good neighbor policy that specifically includes vacation rentals was the common ground that viewers and panelists found themselves settling upon. The policy encompasses a possible cap on VRs during busy months to protect quality of life, making sure visitors are respectful and act accordingly, and also making sure that VR owners are aware of the impact they have on the island.

Toby Cooper, a fourth-generation

SEE VR, PAGE 8

Sheriff's Log

The San Juan County Sheriff's Office responded to the following calls.

June 8

- A deputy on Orcas responded to a report of vandalism at the public school after some buses had been tampered with. There are no suspects at this time.
- A driver on Lopez was given a warning for speeding in a school zone and for failing to obtain a

Washington driver's license within 30 days of establishing residency.

- A San Juan deputy stopped and cited a driver on San Juan for driving left of center, for speeding, for not having a valid license with identification and for not having insurance. The driver also received multiple warnings.
- A deputy on San Juan took a report of harassment

and documented the incident at the request of the person who reported the harassment.

- A San Juan deputy responded to an allegation of telephone harassment. Though the information was taken, the complainant did not wish to pursue criminal actions.

- A deputy stopped and cited a driver for speeding 59 mph in a 35 mph zone on Orcas Road.

- An Orcas deputy was dispatched to a suspicious

circumstance call.

June 9

- A San Juan deputy stopped a motorist for a tire noise violation. The driver was cited for the tire noise, for not being in possession of a driver's license and not having evidence of insurance.

- A deputy responded to a lost property call in Friday Harbor.

- A San Juan deputy responded to a report of vandalism and documented the incident.

- A Lopez resident reported a minor hit-and-run collision while parked in a parking lot in the village. The involved driver was located and said they had

left a note on the car. Once confirmed, no further action was necessary as the parties handled the matter between themselves.

- A deputy responded to a report of an unconscious person in Friday Harbor. He was checked by EMS and refused treatment. He was also found to be in possession of alcohol in violation of his conditions of release and the report was sent to the probation officer.

- A deputy responded to a report of a theft in the East-sound area.

- A Lopez deputy checked on a report of trespassing and found a person camping in their vehicle at Fisherman Bay Spit Preserve.

The deputy advised the car camper to move to a camp-friendly location.

- San Juan deputies responded to a domestic disturbance. Once investigated, the deputy determined no crime was committed.

June 10

- A San Juan deputy responded to a report that several boats were secured to the county dock in Roche Harbor without permits. Six boat owners were issued citations for restricted mooring zone violations. Multiple vehicles were also tagged with warnings for parking without a permit.

SEE SHERIFF, PAGE 7



ROLF ERIKSEN PHOTO

Above: The new visitors' center at the summit of Mt. Constitution.

MORAN FROM 1

They kick off on July 31 with Brograss followed by Tow Away Zone and The Daves on Aug. 14, Irthingz and Tom Rawson on Aug. 26 and JP

and the Okay Rhythm Boys on Sept. 4. For details, visit <https://www.islandssounder.com/life/celebrate-morans-100th-birthday-with-science-talks-and-concerts-all-summer-long/>.

Emergency prep locally

BY MANDI JOHNSON
Journal editor

The wildfires that raged across the Pacific Northwest in summer 2020 were devastating to many communities around the region. Hurricanes and tornadoes often ravage other parts of the country frequently.

While these incidents are extremely unlikely to affect San Juan County, it's still imperative to be prepared for natural disasters in the island community — earthquakes in particular.

"Disasters still occur here and on the mainland. The question isn't whether, it's when," League of Women Voters of the San Juans Vice President Susan Martin said. "Summer, of course, ushers in the wildfire season. ... Anyone who lived through last summer's wildfires will remember just how destructive they can be."

At its member meeting on June 14, the LWV hosted Brendan Cowan and Bill Severson to talk about disaster preparedness. Cowan is the director of San Juan County's Department of Emergency Management and has been instrumental in the county's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Severson is the San Juan County Unit Lead for the American Red Cross.

"My goal with preparedness is for everyone to understand it doesn't have to be complicated... You want to keep it as simple as possible," Cowan said.

"Before too long you'll really be able to see some measurable progress."

San Juan County's Department of Emergency Management has a new website, islandsready.org, wherein it outlines four "clear steps to

preparedness."

Step one: be prepared to be on your own for two weeks. While Cowan would like to see every islander prepared for a month of isolation following an emergency event, he accepts that's unlikely but would still like the two-week goal to be met. Step two: once your household is prepared, expand your preparedness to your neighborhoods. A community that takes care of its neighbors is both a lost art and a critical part of living in the San Juans, the website notes.

"We think those are the two most important things," Cowan said.

Thirdly, once your home and neighborhood are prepared for emergencies, the county suggests expanding to businesses and community organizations — nonprofits, volunteer groups, employers and churches. And lastly, plan your post-emergency response.

"I've been consistently impressed with how the islands has held up over the last year and a half," Cowan said, referencing the public health emergency that the COVID pandemic created.

The biggest threat to the islands, according to Cowan, are earthquakes and tsunamis.

"We're in a pretty good place as far as disasters go here in the islands," he added.

One piece of good news about the islands and earthquakes, Cowan explained, is that much of the land is bedrock, making for more solid ground, less shaking and a lower chance of liquefaction. Liquefaction is when saturated or partially saturated soil loses its strength due to shaking — essentially

turning it from a solid to a liquid. Skagit Valley is not nearly as lucky as us in this regard, Cowan noted.

Most people in the Pacific Northwest are aware of the potential for a 9.0 earthquake caused by the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the shore of Vancouver Island down to California.

"We're a fair amount of distance away from that fault," Cowan stated. "We're much better off than folks along the coast. ... There are many worse places to be in terms of the earthquake scenario."

The bad news of being in the islands, Cowan continued, is the local infrastructure is "very brittle." Power, water, internet in the islands are all provided by a delicate delivery system that, in a major emergency, could be disrupted and likely won't be fixed very quickly.

"When the earthquake happens, we're not going to be at the top of the list for help," Cowan said, reiterating the necessity to be prepared and self-sufficient.

Being a coastal community, with an earthquake there is a threat of a tsunami.

"We won't have a tsunami if we don't feel the earthquake," Cowan said. "We're not going to be looking at a 60-foot wall of water coming in and washing the islands away."

But if an earthquake is felt, he continued, the islands would have about 30 to 45 minutes to get away from

SEE EMERGENCY, PAGE 4

Summer Concert Series
Music in the Park

June 18th, 6pm
Bobby Bare Jr. with Lilo Sanchez

June 19th, 6pm
3WU - Third World United with Dustin Fox

June 27th, 6pm
Tony Furtado, Stephanie Schneiderman, and Jacob Miller

Details and Full Schedule on:
OrcasCenter.Org

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