

2018 San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit Report



San Juan County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



2018 AG SUMMIT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

SAN JUAN ISLANDS
AGRICULTURAL GUILD



Lopez Community
Land Trust



Agricultural
Resources
Committee
of San Juan County



Summit Overview

The San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit is an unique opportunity for the agricultural community to come together for inspiration, education and camaraderie. 2018 marked the sixth year of the Summit. Offering a mix of hands-on half day workshops, social activities, shorter informative sessions and local food tasting opportunities, the Summit is a valued and important annual event in our community. It is often the only time various groups and farmers from throughout the islands have a chance to share information, and catch up on the previous year. As one attendee stated, “It is a great opportunity for farmers around the country to network and encourage each other. We enjoy it every year. This was a great informative event”.

The Summit was attended by farmers and producers from at least five islands in San Juan County, with additional attendees from Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Three-quarters of evaluation respondents indicated that they will make changes to their enterprises based on information gained at the Summit. More than half of the attendees who filled out evaluations were farmers currently in production, managing a combined area exceeding 1,400 acres. The Summit continues to provide valuable education to members of our agricultural community contributing to the development of a robust regional food system.

Summit Successes

- As the average age of farmers in San Juan County is >60, the Summit is a key venue for training the next generation of farmers. In 2018, 69% of attendees had less than 10 years of experience with farming or ranching.
- Information is delivered which will directly benefit the community. 75% of all attendees indicated that they will make changes to their farm, garden, marketing, product development, or other enterprises based on information they learned.
- Demand for the Summit remains high. 74% of those who filled out Saturday evaluations were return attendees, and 91% indicated support for continuing to offer the Summit on an annual basis.
- Successfully funded with generous cash and in-kind sponsorships, support from partner organizations, grant funding, community volunteers and registration revenue. Donations are critical for maintaining high quality programing and offering scholarships and affordable registration fees as grant funds fluctuate.



Summit attendees listen to a panel of long-time Lopez Island farmers share history Photos by Brook Brouwer

Summary of Attendance

Total Saturday session attendees	163*
Total Friday workshop attendees	71
Total full scholarships & work-trade registrations provided	14
Speakers and event organizers	62

*Includes paying attendees, scholarship, work trade, sponsors, speakers and organizers

Evaluation Responses

Overall Summit rating (1 very poor - 5 excellent)	4.5
Because of information presented at the Summit, do you intend to make changes to your enterprises?	75%
How often should the Summit be held?	91% Every Year
Percentage of attendees who were farmers/ranchers	>50%*
Percentage of attendees who have been farming or ranchers less than 10 years.	69%
Combined acreage managed by evaluation respondents	1,400 acres
Evaluations received as a percentage of attendees	45%

*Of the 73 evaluation respondents, 49 indicated farming/ranching experience

Select Comments on Overall Summit:

- Wish I could have done more sessions, video record all sessions and put up for attendees
- Great networking, fun, was great to hear from old timers.
- Some topics could cover a double session with no break. Easy, or run all day.
- Thank you for all your hard work! I'm very happy with my experience
- The scholarship option made it possible for me to attend & for that I am very grateful!



Lopez Island farmer, Rex Ritchie, shares his experience with pasture renovation during a Friday workshop. Photo by Brook Brouwer

Friday Workshop Evaluation Responses

Name of Workshop	Number of Attendees	Overall Rating (1-5)
Are There Vegetables in This?	4	4.5
Building Soil- Growing Forage: On-farm composting and pasture renovation	37	4.2
Exploring Direct and Local Wholesale Markets for Your Farm Business	11	4.6
Hands-on Entomology for Farmers and Gardeners	15	4.6
Interested in Starting a Dairy in San Juan County?	9	5
Legal and Financial Perspectives for Accessing Farmland	16	4.5
Preparing Processors and Farmers for FSMA Compliance	6	4
Tractor Maintenance and Right-Sizing Machinery to Your Farm	16	4.5

Select Comments on Friday Workshops:

- I was so impressed by the dedication everyone showed toward the program the kids were so engaging when giving their presentations. Chef, gardeners and educators are really moving the program forward
- Very worthwhile!
- No till seeder was very cool!
- Very informative
- Thank you so much!
- Great to see what other folks are doing! Very easy to follow along and ask/answer questions!



Participants in a Friday Workshop at Midnight's Farm learn about on-farm compost production (left); Demonstration of manure spreader (center); Andrew Borner, Natural Plant Solutions, describes use of no-till seeder (right). Photos by Brook Brouwer

Saturday Sessions Evaluation Responses

Name of Session	Number of Attendees	Overall Rating (1-5)
Building Successful Sales Relationships Between Buyers and Growers	31	3
Soil Testing and Interpretation	26	4.2
Water rights 101 for SJC Farmers	34	4
Legal Tips and Local Perspectives on Transferring the Farm	15	4.7
Beeodiversity	40	4.4
Comprehensive Plan and Agriculture in San Juan County	32	4.4
Feeding Livestock for Best Performance at Lowest Cost	14	4.4
Finding Money for Farming	25	4.4
Gearing up for the San Juan County Food Hub	20	4.2
Rolling Out the Voluntary Stewardship Program in SJC	12	3.8
Strategies for Livestock Health- Q&A with WSU Veterinarian	15	4.4
Wireworm Distribution and Control in San Juan County	31	4.5
Adding Value to Local Products	12	4.4
Growing Fruit and Nut Trees	30	4.4
Launching New Farmers	25	4.6
Strategies for Conflict Resolution	10	4.6



Participants gave for 2018 Keynote (left); Saturday classroom session (right). Photos by Rhys Hansen

Select Comments from Saturday Sessions

- I didn't know anything about water rights prior to this presentation, so it was very informative
- Will pursue water rights based on information shared.
- Hopefully this will be helpful going forward for the farmers, producers and buyers. I think seemed most helpful for the organizing team. Perhaps this was to drum up interest and energy. One of those sessions that hopes to plant a seed or part of a process that may yield something awesome for years to come.
- Amazing- We are lucky to have elected officials who ask for input
- ARC and planning Department presented well. Exciting that Ag is being acknowledged and changes are coming to support farmers.
- Loved the entomology session and it's always great to talk with extension people
- Appreciated all the knowledge in the room as participants shared their experiences on a variety of subjects.
- Will try some approaches mentioned
- Great farmer experience sharing
- Informative, interactive. Well researched. Great ideas from others in the audience. Experiments shared.
- This was my favorite class, it had real farmers talking about their experiences, I felt it was interactive, and a good learning environment, with real facts too.
- Very informative Q&A from a great panel
- Great to hear about how local business have found ways to be successful
- Inspiring and encouraging!

Taste of the San Juans

The Taste of the San Juans was hosted at the Lopez Center for Community and the Arts, with approximately 100 number of people in attendance. There were eight vendors including: Aurora Farm, Barn Owl Bakery, Catkin Cafe, Core Hero Cider, Girl Meets Dirt, The Kitchen, Ursa Minor, and Woodland Keep.



Food offerings and gathering at the 2018 Taste of the San Juans at Lopez Center for Community and the Arts. Photos by Kelsey Leigh Green

Planning and Financial Support

A combination of generous cash and in-kind sponsorships, support from partner organizations, grant funding, community volunteers and registration revenue make it possible to continue offering the Summit at a level that is affordable for a large portion of the community. Donations are critical for maintaining high quality programming and offering scholarships.

2018 Steering Committee

Andre Entermann	Sunnyfield Farm
Angie Shephard	Washington State University Extension
Brook Brouwer	Washington State University Extension, Lead
Caitie Blethen	Washington State University Extension
Ellen Jones	San Juan Islands Conservation District
Faith Van De Putte	Midnight's Farm
Linda Lyshall	San Juan Islands Conservation District
Peggy Bill	San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild
Rhea Miller	Lopez Community Land Trust
Shannon Borg	San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau
Steph Coffey	San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild
Suzanne Berry	Lopez Farm to School Program
Valerie Yukluk	Lopez Farm to School Program

Staff

Rhys Hansen- Washington State University Extension SJI Ag Summit Coordinator
Kelsey Green- Washington State University Extension Day-of Support

Partner Organizations

Agricultural Resources Committee of San Juan County
Lopez Island School District
Northwest Agriculture Business Center
San Juan County
San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild
San Juan Islands Conservation District
San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau
WSU Extension San Juan County - Lead Organization



Barn Owl Bakery display at 2018 Taste of the San Juans. Photo by Grant Heitman

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Midnight's Farm

Julie Van Camp

Farm Champions



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