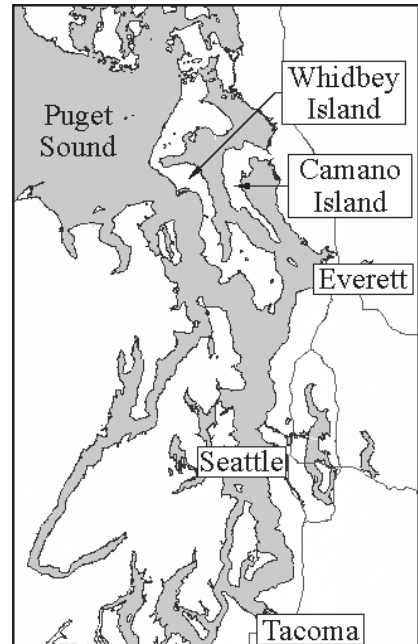


Description of Island County

Island County is comprised of five islands: Whidbey, Camano, Ben Ure, Smith, and Baby Islands. Island County lies approximately 30 miles north of Seattle and 50 miles south of the Canadian border.

Located in Puget Sound, Whidbey Island stretches 45 miles in length and has 148 miles of shoreline, making it the longest island in the continental United States. Camano Island also stretches into Puget Sound and is connected to the mainland by a 2-lane bridge. Island County has a total population of 74,000 (2003). Summer residents (May-September) make up another 10-20%.

In 1999, about two-thirds of Island County's residents lived in unincorporated areas concentrated around townships such as Clinton, Freeland, Greenbank, and especially along the shores of Camano Island. The remaining residents lived in one of three municipalities: Coupeville, Langley, or Oak Harbor.



Whidbey Island

Whidbey Island is made up of three distinct areas: north, central, and south.

North Whidbey is the most populous with 40,100 people in the greater Oak Harbor area. It is home to Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island, which employs over 7,700 military personnel. In late 1993, the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NAS) began transitioning to a P-3/EA6-B base status, housing squadrons from California and Hawaii. This brought approximately 4,000 new families into the Oak Harbor community and surrounding areas. The Deception Pass Bridge connects this region to adjoining Skagit County.

Central Whidbey has a population of 10,600 and includes the town of Coupeville, the county seat, and the small-unincorporated town of Greenbank. Coupeville, founded by 19th century sea captains, is a historic farming community. Most medical services, including a small general hospital, are located in town (the Navy has its own hospital in Oak Harbor). Island County Health Department is located in Coupeville, as are most other county government offices.

South Whidbey is the third geographic area on Whidbey Island. Made up of the small communities of Freeland and Clinton, and the town of Langley, it has a total population of 14,000. A significant number of South Whidbey residents commute by ferry to jobs at the Boeing Company in Everett or to other businesses on the mainland.

Camano Island

Due to it being geographically isolated from the county seat, Camano Island continues to remain fairly rural in flavor. It is 16 miles long and has 52 miles of shoreline. Camano has a population of 12,800 residents. Camano residents must travel at least 15 miles to the nearest hospital and most educational and medical facilities are located in the nearest town of Stanwood. A CDBG-funded community health service facility opened on Camano Island in the spring of 1999.

The County Economy

Island County, in the heart of the Puget Sound, has seen its economy change over the decades from the trading and fishing industries of the original Native Americans inhabitants to an economy dominated by a huge military presence and defense spending. In between were Hudson's Bay Company fur trappers, as well as loggers, fishermen, and farmers (who still occupy a niche). Further, the beauty of the island draws tourists and retirees. It has become a very popular place.

In fact the population has been growing rapidly, although not as rapidly as the previous ten years. From 1970, when the population was 27,011 to 2000 at 71,558, there has never been a period of decline in population.

Contributing to the growth rate has been a dramatic increase in the number of elderly persons in Island County. Growth of the 65-and-older population has been close to 310 percent since 1970 with 14.3% of the population residing in this age group in 2000.

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At the heart of Island County's economy today lies the Department of Defense. Naval operations at Navel Air Station Whidbey Island inject tremendous amounts of money into the county's economy. About 6,000 active duty military and 1,400 DoD civilian employees bring in a payroll of roughly \$250 million dollars annually. And, DoD non-wage spending adds further to the total. Additionally, the presence of Whidbey General Hospital and the county seat in Coupeville allow many residents to find professional employment opportunities on Whidbey Island and greatly add to the economy as a whole.

As this money circulates through the county's economy, it creates jobs in the trade and service industries, which are large, proportionately, in Island County. Employment growth in these two sectors over the last two decades has been phenomenal, far outstripping growth in DoD personnel. The other industrial sectors in the county have also grown at a fast clip. In fact, employment growth in every major reporting sector has outpaced its counterpart statewide, usually by a wide margin. Overall, non-farm employment grew by 266 percent between 1970 and 1998. Statewide the growth was 140 percent.

Unemployment, accordingly, is relatively low. However, recent downswings in the technology industries and Boeing Corporation layoffs do affect the populations in Island County. Even though unemployment is not a significant problem currently, the type of employment available can be seen as somewhat problematic. About half of all non-farm civilian jobs are classified in trade and services. And much of this employment is characterized by relatively low wages, part-time hours, and few benefits. However, this is not unique to Island County. About the same proportion of jobs are classified in services and trade statewide. Overall, this is a prime factor behind the relatively flat real annual average wage over time, both in the county and in the state. Island County's average covered wage was \$22,022 in 1998-not much changed from \$21,035 in 1970 (1998 dollars).

In terms of total income, rather than just wages, Island County is in good shape. Per capita income registered \$28,112 in 2001, ranking seventh among Washington's 39 counties, (WA average per capita is \$31,976). This is an indication that income produced in the county is distributed fairly evenly and not concentrated in relatively few hands.

The presence of the Navy in Island County is key to the area's economy.

The presence of the Navy in Island County is key to the area's economy. At this point, it seems like the Naval Air Station's position seems relatively secure. Because of this, the economic situation of the county will probably continue as it has over the last couple of decades, turning in a good performance-especially in comparison to a majority of other counties in Washington.

The political structure of Island County allows for three county commissioners. The County Commissioners also serve on the Board of Health. The Board of Health also includes a Hospital Commissioner, a Mayor of one of our three mayor-led cities, and the Executive Officer of the Naval Hospital also serves in a non-voting capacity. The Island County Health Officer is the executive secretary of the Board of Health. The Board of Health is responsible for the policy setting for Island County Health Department.

Island County has many community members who are concerned about the environment, who focus on issues of sustainability, maintenance and preservation of the beauty of our Northwest home.

Island County has many community members who are concerned about the environment...

Despite its small area, Island County is home to a number of state and local parks and land

designated to maintain an unbroken historical continuity, and minimize growth and development. They include Ebey's National Historic Reserve, Greenbank Farm, South Whidbey, Camano,

and Deception Pass State Parks and Smith Prairie. Deception Pass State Park is the most frequented State Park in all of Washington State and rivals Yosemite National Park in the number of visitors that it attracts each year.

There are a number of community-based organizations with missions focused on environmental preservation, sustainability, and/or environmental justice within the community. Some of these include Whidbey Environmental Action Network, Institute for Children's Environmental Health, the AuSable Institute, Goosefoot, and the Whidbey Institute. There are also numerous community-based social organizations, related to service, youth, church, sports, and special interests, including the Soroptimists, Rotary, Lions, Veteran's of Foreign War and many others. The Navy has a large influence on many of the social and civic organizations in North Whidbey.

Demographics indicate that Island County is predominately white (87%), with those of Asian decent comprising nearly 4%, Blacks at 2.4% and Native Americans at 1%. Current data suggests that Asians are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in Island county with a percent growth of 64 % followed by Blacks at 51% and Hispanics at 47%.

The annual average wage in Island County is significantly lower than the state and the nation. The wage in Island County has historically been about \$6,000-\$7,000 less than statewide. The unemployment rate for Island County is 4.5% overall (Washington State Employment Security). Seventy percent of Whidbey Island businesses employ less than four people. The per capita personal income for Island County is \$21,472 (U.S. Census 2000) and the median household income is \$45,513 (U.S. Census, 2000). The percentage of individuals living below the poverty level in Island County is estimated at 6.8%-7.6%. Island County is one of a few counties whose poverty rate increased during the 1990's.

The annual average wage in Island County is significantly lower than the state and nation.

With respect to education in Island County, 92% of residents have a high school diploma, 27% have a bachelors-level college degree or above, with 8.3% have a professional degree or graduate school equivalent.

Regional Variations

Demographics, socioeconomic and environmental concerns vary widely throughout the county's four regions. North Whidbey's sociodemographic data indicate that it is the most racially/ethnically diverse region of the county with 74.9% white, larger percentages of Black, Asian/PI, Other, and 6.2 Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2000). (Oak Harbor School District reports 72.5% of their students are white.)

North Whidbey also has the youngest population and is also the region with lowest incomes (22.3% of households make less than \$25,000 compared to 20.2% of Island County.) Oak Harbor School District in North Whidbey had the highest school dropout rate (7.6%) and lowest graduation rate (67.2%) of the four regions of Island County. North Whidbey has the highest percentage (46.3%) of households with at least one child and the lowest percentage of single-family homes, suggesting more are renters and transient. This may reflect the fact that North Whidbey has a large military component in its population.

North Whidbey residents are the best region for adult use of seatbelts (100%) and having their children wear bike helmets. North Whidbey health concerns include higher rates of alcohol and tobacco use and sexually transmitted diseases. This region has the highest percentage of the population who binge-dink (5 drinks or more on one occasion). Environmental issues or concerns in this region include food safety and 6.4% report having been told they have multiple chemical sensitivities. North Whidbey residents were less likely to report their neighborhoods being entirely safe compared to other regions of Island County.

Central Whidbey's sociodemographic data reflects a larger percentage of retirees (35.5%) than elsewhere in the county, the most (72%) households without children, and the fewest (92.1%) year-long residents compared to the rest of the county. Central Whidbey had the highest level of residents reporting good to excellent health and being physically active. However, they also had the highest percentage of residents who had suffered a heart attack or myocardial infarction (8.2%) or breast cancer (6.5%). Central Whidbey residents report that they feel safe in their neighborhoods, although they also had the greatest number of homes with loaded and/or unlocked (or both) firearms in their homes. Compared to other regions, they had high percentages of adults not wearing a lifejacket when they were on a boat. They also have the lowest rates of adult asthma (2.8% vs. 7.6% IC). Environmental concerns expressed by Central Whidbey residents include: drinking water quality concerns, pest control, worker safety and health and roadside spraying.

Residents of **South Whidbey** report lower rates of adult asthma (4.8% vs. 7.6% IC) and child asthma (3.5% vs. 5.6% IC). South Whidbey residents more often lacked dental insurance (perhaps due to higher levels of self-employment and/or small businesses). Much like Central Whidbey, they had higher percentages of adults not wearing lifejackets in a boat and a higher number of adults not wearing seatbelts in a car. South Whidbey residents drank more drinks in a month than other regions of the county. South Whidbey residents reported a greater number of environmental concerns including: multiple chemical sensitivity, indoor air quality, outdoor air quality, recreation water quality, sewage disposal, solid waste, pest control and roadside spraying. South Whidbey residents use less outside pesticides than other regions of the county.

Camano Island is the fastest growing and wealthiest region of Island County with 44.2% of population with incomes >50K (33% IC and 33.4% in WA) and only 14.3% < 25K (20.2% IC). Camano Island grew 53.6% since the 1990 Census. Camano Island had the highest rate of uninsurance and the highest percentage of residents not seeing a dentist regularly. They also report the highest percentage of poor physical health and the least physically active outside of work. Camano Island also has the largest number of households with 2 or more children (34.3%) and 6.9% of Camano Island residents report their race as "other." They report higher levels of adult asthma and child asthma and list roadside spraying as a concern. Camano Island residents are the best region for disposing of unused pesticides/herbicides/fertilizers properly but are the worst region for disposing of auto products improperly (68.7% dump them on the ground or bring them to the dump mixed with other garbage). Two other health concerns were a number of homes with unlocked firearms and higher rates of adults not wearing seatbelts.

Sources: Island County Health Department and Washington State Department of Trade and Economic Development

Local Assets and Resources

Local Institutions

1. Businesses

2. Parks/Recreation

- SW Parks and Recreation
- Island County Parks and Recreation
- Parks
 - Fort Ebey State Park
 - Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
 - Deception Pass State Park
 - Joseph Whidbey State Park
 - Ala Spit
 - Grasser's Lagoon
 - Hastie Lake
 - Kettle's Trail Park
 - Fort Casey State Park
 - Keystone State Park
 - Hancock Nature Reserve and Overlook
 - Greenbank Farm
 - Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens
 - South Whidbey State Park
 - Double Bluff Beach
 - Camano Island State Park
 - Utsalady Bay
 - Triangle Cove
 - Cavalero Cove
 - Stillaguamish Delta
 - Livingston Bay
 - Cama State Beach
 - Freeland Park
 - Maxwellton Community Park
- Recreation
 - Lam's Link's (9 holes)
 - Gallery Golf Course (18 holes)
 - Holmes Harbor Golf Course (18 holes)
 - Island Greens (9 holes)
 - Northwest Soccer Camp
 - Outdoor Classroom
 - Pacific NW AAU Track & Field
- Other
 - Monroe Landing
 - Marinas
 - Horsemanship Opportunities for Potential Equestrians (HOPE)

3. Health/Hospitals

- Whidbey General Hospital
- Naval Hospital Oak Harbor (Navy)
- Physicians and Other Healthcare Providers
- Island County Health Department
- Island Home Nursing
- Visiting Nurse Services
- Island County Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB)
- Island County Stanwood Community Public Health & Safety Network

4. Law

- Island County Sheriff
- Local Police Departments (Langley, Coupeville, Oak Harbor)
- NAS Whidbey Security Department (Navy)

5. Social Services

- Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
- Island County Health Department (Human Services Section)
- CADA
- Catholic Community Services
- Community Mental Health
- Fleet and Family Support Center (Navy)
- Child Protective Services (CPS)
- Child Abuse Prevention Foundation
- Housing Authority of Island County
- Opportunity Council

6. Library-Learning

- Langley
- SVCC/Oak Harbor Library
- Coupeville

7. Colleges/Community Colleges/Vocational Schools

- Skagit Valley Community College
 - NAS Whidbey Island Branch
 - Oak Harbor Campus
 - South Whidbey Center
- Chapman University (Whidbey Island Academic Center)
- Seattle Pacific University
- Western Washington University

8. Schools

■ High Schools

- Oak Harbor High School
- Coupeville High School
- Bayview High School
- Stanwood High School
- South Whidbey High School

■ Middle School

- Coupeville Middle School
- North Whidbey Middle School
- Oak Harbor Middle School
- Stanwood Middle School
- South Whidbey Intermediate School
- Langley Middle School

■ Elementary Schools

- Coupeville Elementary School
- Broad View Elementary School
- Clover Valley Elementary School
- Crescent Harbor Elementary School
- Hillcrest Elementary School
- Oak Harbor Elementary School
- Olympic View Elementary School
- Stanwood Elementary
- South Whidbey Primary

■ Other Education

- South Whidbey Homeschoolers
- Langley Christian School
- Coupeville Cedar School
- Wellington Day School
- Oak Harbor Christian School
- Montessori (Oak Harbor)
- Cascade Job Corps Center
- Cooperative Extension- Island County/WSU
- Displaced Homemaker Program- Skagit Valley College (SVC)
- Head Start- SVC
- Whidbey Institute
- Readiness to Learn
- Family Resource Centers
- Whidbey Island Waldorf School
- Small Business Resource Center- SVC
- Hedgebrook- Writer's Retreat
- Maxwelton Salmon Adventure
- Whidbey Island Greenbank Farm

Citizens' Groups/Associations

1. Churches

- Apostolic
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist
- Catholic
- Charismatic
- Christian
- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Christian Science
- Church of Christ
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- Community
- Episcopal
- Evangelical Free
- Foursquare Gospel
- Independent
- Jehovah's Witness
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Nazarene
- Non-Denominational
- Pentacostal
- Presbyterian
- Reformed
- Religious Science
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Unitarian Universalist
- Unity

2. Cultural Groups

- All Island City Band
- Coupeville Festival Association
- Whidbey Island Center for the Arts

3. Block Clubs

4. Transportation

- Automobile
- Bike
- Bus system
- Ferries (Keystone/Port Townsend, Clinton/Mukilteo)
- Pedestrian
- Island Transit

5. Disabled

- Action for disABLED of Skagit, Island and San Juan Counties
- Disabled American Veterans Post #47
- Skagit Self Help for Hard of Hearing People

6. Seniors

- Senior Services of Island County
- Senior Thrift
- Washington Association of Housing and Services for the Aging

7. Civic Events

- Old Fashioned Fourth of July (Oak Harbor)
- Celebrate America (Freeland)
- Native Canoe Races (Coupeville)
- Penn Cove Paddle (Coupeville)
- Penn Cove Water Festival (Coupeville)
- Mussel Festival (Coupeville)
- Coupeville Farmer's Market
- Mother's Day Concert on the Lawn (Greenbank)
- 4H Spring Show (Langley)
- Memorial Day Parade (Coupeville)
- Art and Antique Walk (Coupeville)
- Auction for the Arts (Coupeville)
- Lions Garage Sale (Langley)
- Whidbey Island Garden Tour (South Whidbey)
- Langley Arts Festival-Choochokam
- 5th Annual Very Berry Festival (Coupeville)
- Whidbey Island Folk Music Festival (Greenbank)
- Concerts on the Cove (Coupeville)
- Whidbey Island Race Week (Oak Harbor)
- Island County Fair
- Historic Coupeville Arts & Crafts Festival
- Dixieland Jazz Festival (Oak Harbor)
- 5th Annual Classic, Sports & Custom Car Show (Langley)
- 3rd Annual Run For Kids Sake (Langley)
- Harvest Fest (Coupeville)
- Biggest & Ugliest Pumpkin Contest (Coupeville)
- Whidbey Dance Bonanza Coupeville & Greenbank)
- Festival of Trees Gala Auction (Oak Harbor)
- Teddy Bear Breakfast (Oak Harbor)
- Community Days (Oak Harbor)
- Langley Mystery Weekend
- Spay Day / WAIF

8. Children's Resources/Organizations

- "In a Pinch" Community Crisis and Respite Childcare
- Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- Little Lambs Daycare and Preschool
- Maxwellton Salmon Adventure
- Shared Schooling Cooperative
- MOPS (North Whidbey)
- South Whidbey Children's Center
- South Whidbey Patent Cooperative Preschool

9. Youth Groups/Organizations

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Island County
- Camp Fire Boys & Girls: Samish Council
- Central Whidbey Youth Coalition
- Island County 4-H (Island County/WSU Cooperative Extension)
- Oak Harbor Youth Soccer Club
- Partnership with Youth
- Sea Scout Ship 63
- Youth Dynamics (Coupeville)
- Youth Dynamics (Oak Harbor)
- South Whidbey Youth Center
- Boy Scouts
- The Giraffe Project

10. Women's Groups

- League of Women Voters of Whidbey Island
- Soroptimist International of Coupeville
- Soroptimist International of Oak Harbor
- Junior Soroptimists
- Sorority
- Beta Sigma Phi Sorority
- Business and Professional Women
- American Business Women's Association
- Daughter's of the American Revolution- Whidbey Island Chapter
- Daughter's of the Pioneers of Washington- Whidbey Island Chapter
- Financial Women International
- LaLeche League of Oak Harbor
- Mabana Flames
- MADD Island County
- Madrona Flames
- Navy Wives Club of America #150
- North Whidbey Republican Women's Club
- North Whidbey Women's Bowling Association
- PEO Organization- South Whidbey
- Women of St. Hubert's Catholic Church

11. Vet Groups

- American Legion Post 129 and Ladies Auxiliary
- Disabled American Veterans Post #47
- Island Chapter American Ex-Prisoners of War
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #7482

12. Study Groups

13. Sports Leagues

- Camaloch Classic 9-hole Club
- Central Whidbey Sportsmen's Association
- North Whidbey Women's Bowling Association
- Oak Harbor Youth Soccer Club
- Oak Harbor Yacht Club
- Stanwood Camano Yacht Club

14. Social Causes

- Alcoholic's Anonymous of South Whidbey
- American Cancer Society- Island Unit
- American Heart Association
- Child Abuse Prevention Foundation Inc.
- Citizens Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Parenting Resource Center/Catholic Community Services NW

15. Service Clubs

- Central Whidbey Lions Club
- Coupeville Lions Club
- North Whidbey Lions Club
- South Whidbey Lions Club
- North Whidbey Island Sunrise Rotary Club
- South Whidbey Island Rotary Club
- Kiwanis Club of Oak Harbor
- Kiwanis Club of South Whidbey Island
- Oak Harbor Emblem Club #450
- Oak Leaf Rebekah Lodge #254
- Whidbey Island Lodge #15 F & AM (Masonic Lodge)

16. School Groups

- Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs)

17. Political Organizations

- North and South Whidbey Republican Women's Club
- South Whidbey Democrats

18. Outdoor Groups

- Chums of the Maxwellton Salmon Adventure
- Puget Sound Anglers- Oak Harbor Chapter
- Puget Sound Anglers- Whidbey Island Chapter

19. Neighborhood Groups

20. Mutual Support

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- TOPS Club, Inc. (weight loss)
- Widows and Widowers of Whidbey Island Social Group
- Weight Watchers

21. Men's Groups

22. Local Media

- Radio stations
- Newspapers
- Local TV

23. Interest Clubs

- All Island City Band
- Artists of South Whidbey
- Clinton Community Forum
- Fishin Club of Whidbey Island
- Holmes Harbor Activity Club
- Island County Amateur Radio Club
- Island County Fair Association
- Island Theater
- Langley Community Club
- Neighbor to Neighbor
- Puget Sound Anglers
- South Whidbey Historical Society and Museum
- South Whidbey International Folkdancers
- SW Social Club
- Coupeville Garden Club
- Genealogical Society of South Whidbey Island
- Island County WSU Master Gardener Association
- Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS)
- NALS of Washington (Assoc. for legal professionals)
- Navy League- Oak Harbor Council
- Neil Tower Preservation Association
- Friends of the Freeland Library
- Oak Harbor Friends of the Library
- South Whidbey Garden Club

- Washington Adoption Reunion Movement
- Whidbey Animals' Improvement Foundation (WAIF)
- Whidbey Island Beekeepers Association
- Whidbey Island Genealogical Searchers
- Whidbey Island Navy Flying Club (WINFC)
- Whidbey Island Radio Control Society
- Whidbey Island Stamp Club
- Whidbey Island Writer's Association
- Whidbey Weavers' Guild
- Whidbey Whirlers Square Dance Club
- Whidbey Cruzers Car Club
- Whidbey Allied Arts
- Whidbey Bridge Club
- Whidbey Dance Theatre
- Whidbey Island Clarinet Choir
- Whidbey Island Futbol Club
- Whidbey Island Kiteflyers
- Whidbey Pebble Pushers

24. Health and Fitness Groups

- Camano Health Advisory Team
- Oak Harbor Racket Club
- Island Athletic Club
- Momentum Gym

25. Ethnic Associations

- Filipino American Group (FILAM)

26. Elderly Groups

27. Community Support Groups

- Armed Services YMCA
- Camano Community Council
- Camano Island / Island County Trails Comm.
- Catholic Community Services NW- North Whidbey
- Chief's Spouses Club
- Citizen's on Patrol
- Officer Spouses Club

28. Charitable Groups

- Better Birthday Club
- United Way of Island County
- Whidbey General Hospital Foundation and Guilds and Auxiliary

29. Business Organizations

- Chamber of Commerce
 - Oak Harbor
 - Camano
 - Freeland
 - South Whidbey/Langley
- Economic Development Council
- International Training in Communication

30. Artistic Organizations

- Artists of South Whidbey
- Coupeville Arts Center
- Greenbank Artists
- Whidbey Allied Arts
- Whidbey Island Center for the Arts
- Island Arts Council
- Island Dance

31. Environmental Groups

- Arboretum Garden Group #80 South Whidbey Island
- Camano Action for a Rural Environment (CARE)
- Conservation Futures Fund, established by Island County
- Friends of Camano Island Parks
- Friends of the Langley Woodmen Cemetery
- South Camano Grange
- Whidbey Audubon Society
- Whidbey Camano Land Trust
- Whidbey Environmental Action Network

32. Other

Gifts of Individuals

- Income
- Youth
- Elderly
- Labeled People
- Artists