

**Q1: What inspired you to run? What do you think has worked well in our county governance, and what changes would you seek to implement in the next three years if elected?**

Christine Minney	Ryan Palmateer	Cindy Wolf	Rick Hughes
<p><b>Inspiration-</b> In March 2020 just as COVID was making its mark, I found myself in dire need of leadership and direction because I own a small restaurant and the rules were changing fast. For me to be informed and aware of what was becoming daily changes in reality, I had to start watching emergent County Council and Board of Health meetings to stay knowledgeable and make reasonable decisions for my business and my customers' safety. I came to realize how approachable local government could and should be. When I understood that the County Council seat for Position 1 was up for election without an incumbent, I was compelled to make the choice to run.</p> <p><b>What has worked well-</b>In governance, as it pertains to the current Council, I felt secure in the positions and management during the earlier parts of the pandemic through today. I also acknowledge the many, many volunteers whose voices were clearly a part of the greater discussion.</p> <p><b>In the next 3 years,</b> As a Council member, I want to be approachable and interactive. I want to hear the focuses of the community to make appropriate decisions based on those conversations and I want to advocate in strong and socially relevant ways to bolster any number of our communities needs.</p>	<p>I was inspired to run for county council after seeing what inadequately regulated VRs were doing to the quality of life in the islands and to our environment., I announced my candidacy at a Vacation Rental Working Group meeting. Having worked on the three major islands for the past four years, I have learned a lot about each community's concerns</p> <p>My top priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Economic Recovery</b> - The pandemic has taught us that <i>reliance on tourist dollars puts our local economy at high risk</i> for major disruptions. I'll work with the Economic Development Council, the Agricultural Guild, and the people working with our seniors to explore the best ways to develop more year-round jobs.</li> <li>• <b>Affordable Housing</b> – <i>Our need for affordable housing is critical.</i> I'll work with governmental and non-governmental partners to create more. But part of the problem is vacation rentals. We need better, fairer regulations designed to protect existing neighborhoods, make VRs less attractive for non-local investors and speculators, and encourage more long-term affordable housing. I will work with community groups to accomplish this.</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Support</b> - The pandemic has also taught us that <i>we need to improve our local food resilience</i>, to become less reliant on mainland supplies. We need to produce more food here at home and partner with local food producers to develop food systems that support our local needs. I will use my relationships with the agricultural community to that end.</li> </ul>	<p>I am running because my 12 year old daughter needs a functioning society to live in and the county needs a change in leadership if we are going to be part of the solution. We are running out of time. The county adopted a climate change resolution back in 2008. Unfortunately none of the goals were ever given the force of law. In fact, the provisions that likely would have made the most difference in the county's carbon footprint have been left out of the new resolution. There was an ask for an inventory of county government operational and geographical greenhouse gas emissions to be followed up with reduction targets. This never happened. There was a targeted combined county-fleet-wide average of 36 mpg to be met that was never implemented. LEED certification standards were to be adopted for all County buildings and remodels. The latest resolution only holds the county to the energy efficiency standards in it's own building code. This is not the way to make meaningful change.</p> <p>On the positive side, I think the county does good work for senior citizens through support of its Senior Centers and does a good job maintaining and repairing county roads.</p>	<p>My family has always brought forward an ethos of service above self and I have felt that calling to serve my community. I have served on volunteer boards most of my life and felt it was time for me to serve San Juan County. One board leads to the next, and here we are! I felt that the county did not always treat the community fairly and - knowing that one must be the change they want to see - I stepped forward to work with the community to help make the County a better partner in the daily lives of its residents. In the years I've been involved, the county has made some great progress in this realm. With the help of the voter-approved housing REET, we have granted almost three million dollars toward active accessible housing construction - with even more to come. In addition to affordable housing, I'd like to see the county fulfill a goal of deploying one megawatt of renewable energy generation; expand our off-road bike/trail network and continue to diversify our local economy.</p>

**Q2: What is your view on our county's tourism and economic growth and their impacts?**

Christine Minney	Ryan Palmateer	Cindy Wolf	Rick Hughes
<p>I think tourism is an overwhelming topic with many facets that impact our unique islands in varying degrees of hardship. I recognize the sense of urgency that many residents have to stem the tide of tourism or at the very least make it a more reasonable element in its burden on residents lives as well as its environmental impacts. To say that we have the ability to limit tourism seems fallible but our ability to find ways that make tourism work better for the greater good is reasonable and certainly possible. Let's build environmental and cultural awareness. Let's sensitize people to the beauty and fragility of nature and its resources. Let's ask them to give back for the opportunity they've had to visit. The tax dollars received as a result of tourism/hotel stays have created significant infrastructure in our communities that benefit us all. It also directly funnels these monies into several institutions that serve to enhance the lives of residents and tourists alike.</p>	<p>While tourism has had some significant economic benefits for San Juan County, we have to ask ourselves some questions. How much is too much? Who is benefiting from the levels of tourism we have been seeing and what are its negative effects? At what point do we say we do not need to allow non-resident speculators to destroy our quality of life with their party house vacation rentals? I fear that we have been moving towards an unsustainable model that will turn the San Juan Islands into another Martha's Vineyard or Aspen, where the cost of living is so high that our workforce will have to be ferried in daily because those workers won't be able to afford to live here. I believe that San Juan County can and must change how it handles tourism and it's adverse social and environmental impacts. We need a more diversified economy and I see opportunities to accomplish that.</p>	<p>The fact that we are a favored tourist destination gives us bargaining leverage when dealing with the state and federal governments regarding open space, wildlife and fisheries issues. That said, tourism must exist in harmony with our rural quality of life.</p> <p>It is interesting to note that in the recent survey on tourism, commissioned by the Terrestrial Managers Group of San Juan County, business owners, residents and visitors all agreed that at the height of a normal summer we are at capacity. We have the ability, through smart planning decisions about lodging and transportation, to manage visitor numbers and significantly reduce the environmental impact of tourism on the islands, while still allowing guests to enjoy time here. We cannot offer our guests a good experience if there are too many of them here at the same time. We also cannot provide for them in case of a major emergency or disaster.</p> <p>The San Juan Islands have not always been so tourist dependent. We can nurture parts of the service economy, including small trades, health care, and home repair and renovation, that do not count so heavily on tourists or building new homes. We can do more to enhance and expand local agriculture. We need to build infrastructure to end our use of fossil fuels. By addressing affordable housing and taking good care of our schools we can make the islands a place young people want to invest in with energy, ideas and innovative, environmentally friendly businesses.</p>	<p>Tourism has been part of the island economy for over 100 years and it will continue to be in the future. That said, we must continue to diversify the economy and limit our reliance upon it. I have - and will continue to support - the distribution of fiber and wireless overlay to foster work at home opportunities, expand access to education and culture while encouraging new business opportunities. I would like to see a year round economy that allows family wage jobs twelve months a year, service and quality care for seniors that allows our seniors to age in place, an expansion of trade based jobs and continued growth in small local manufacturing.</p>

**Q3: In the last 6 months, there have been upheavals from the pandemic to recent wildfires, increasing polarization, and threats to democracy. What lessons or perspectives have you drawn from these and how would they inform your leadership as a council member?**

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<p>I have witnessed the vulnerability we face as individuals, communities, cities, states and a nation. Our dependence on government and the impact of governmental decision making is more evident than ever post COVID and has certainly drawn a line in the sand in a lot of ways. Unanswered injustices have created reasonable anger &amp; fear coupled with overwhelming violence. At the local level, Leadership should participate within the context of the job, in the least divisive way, not representing political parties or their persuasion. Leadership, to me, is the success of self-development, working within team development, and ethical practices combined with civic mindedness. I demonstrate these well in my own life and will use them when it comes to the decision making that County Council members are faced with.</p>	<p>I have lived by the mantra, “The only constant in the universe is change itself.” Since the 2016 election we’ve seen a great deal of undesirable change that is contrary to the public interest but 2020 has seen more change in a 10-month period than most decades. We have been forced to deal with these issues head on, in a very personal way. Nearly every San Juan County resident has seen his or her way of life altered in dramatic fashion. We are living in a new world and it requires fresh thinking. We have an opportunity to model the change we wish to see in the world. We need to focus on what we can do to make our county and our individual communities better places to live. We need to focus on diversifying our economy, creating enough affordable housing to allow our working people, our seniors and those with disabilities to live here, producing more of our own food (and thereby creating jobs), and doing our part to reduce our carbon footprint. All of those efforts will serve to protect and enhance the quality of life here that we so value. I will work with local groups, organizations, businesses, nonprofits and community foundations to make sure our community has what it needs to succeed.</p>	<p>Sound local government, laws instead of resolutions and “understandings,” are what we need in these turbulent times. We don’t know what is coming next. We need competent leaders with a solid moral compass that set a tone for how the people’s business should be done. We need leaders unafraid to hear truths they don’t like, wise enough to discern and entertain good ideas even when they come from unconventional places or people with incompatible view points. We need leaders who are able to make the decisions that are in the long term best interests of our people and our planet. We don’t know what is coming next, so we want a leadership team for the county that is responsive, trustworthy, nimble, good at creative problem solving and transparent in their governance. I have the skills and temperament to be part of such a team.</p>	<p>The San Juan County Charter requires County Council members to be Non-partisan and I truly believe local government should not be tied to parties. It is the responsibility of each council member to treat each resident equally - whether meeting in person or addressing concerns put forth in public forums. This is all about representing our residents, not parties on either side of the aisle. One thing I’ve learned over the years is that government is not about winning, but about collaboration, compromise and moving forward. I will continue to do my best to listen, learn from the community and do my best to make decisions that represent the entire population. Right now, the health of San Juan County residents is my top priority. I have learned so much this year - navigating our community through these waters from the very onset of the Covid pandemic - and, as such, I feel prepared to handle the complexities of the virus through what will surely be more challenging times. I have always committed to “following the science” and will continue to do so. As with any good leader, my job is to consider all the information available, consult the resources of our community and make the best decision possible for the good of all of our residents - even if it means changing my mind or my position from time to time.</p>

**Q4: How can the county council best utilize its powers and position to address climate change, pollution, habitat and species loss (including threatened resident orca)?**

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<p>There are many things the county as a whole can do to begin the process of being carbon neutral, but good starting points will be to prioritize investment in infrastructure such as converting to an electric vehicle fleet for county operations and creating energy efficient infrastructure that reduces heating needs and costs. Continue installation of solar panels on all county buildings to create the electricity that runs the show but also gives back to the system. Make communities more pedestrian/bike friendly that reduce vehicle miles traveled. Build commercial composting facilities diverting waste from landfills and turning unwanted organic matter into nutrient rich compost that is then returned to the land to sustainably improve our soils. Educate within the community from school children to seniors. Teach techniques that help residents understand the impacts of climate change and why it is important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These techniques provide ideas, tools and encouragement that can inspire residents to change their behavior in ways that reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions. And lastly, create policy that mitigates impacts based on community conversation, educated input and research.</p>	<p>The County Council has taken the first step in establishing a resolution to address climate change in 2020, however simply writing a resolution does not actually change anything unless acted upon. In 2008 a similar resolution was passed and simply vanished into obscurity. I would push to make the county council more accountable for tracking it's progress towards it's climate change goals by establishing an ordinance, holding elected officials "feet to the fire" to make sure that the county council actively works towards achieving its objectives. The goal of the County Council should not be to just do enough to get re-elected, but to show what work we have done and what that work did to improve conditions in the county and Salish sea. We cannot simply keep a "business as usual" mindset when faced with potentially calamitous issues.</p>	<p>I see a number of possibilities:                      Transition the county fleet to electric vehicles                      Translate the new climate resolution into ordinance and strengthen energy efficiency requirements in building codes.                      More serious stormwater treatment                      Effective, timely septic inspection and replacement when required                      Support the Marine Resources Committee and Oil Spill Response                      Support kelp planting and enforce eel grass protection                      Explore opportunities to support bio-char projects                      Encouraging and support development of a more diversified grid powered by renewable energy sources.</p>	<p>San Juan County just passed a Climate Change resolution that will help to harness our power as a community to battle these very important issues. We need to execute the deployment of one megawatt of solar generation; protect natural resources; plan for sea level rise; complete a zero waste solid waste plan; find alternative uses for glass and other recycled materials; limit the carbon footprint of county vehicles; work with WSF for the construction and deployment of Hybrid-electric ferries; and connect multi-modal transportation to promote regional access for our residents. The county needs to work with DNR, state agencies and local property owners to purchase and protect the critical nearshore habitat and produce transportation plans that adapt for sea level rise. Climate change, its effect on the environment and what we can do about it has long been a passion of mine. In addition to looking at every issue on the county level through the lens of climate change, I have spent many trips to Olympia, meeting, planning, testifying and otherwise pushing the Joint Transportation sub committee for the immediate implementation of Carbon fees to the state transportation system.</p>

**Q5: Our well-being depends on the health of our ecosystem. How will you lead our county toward greater protection and resilience of our lands and the Salish Sea?**

<b>Christine Minney</b>	<b>Ryan Palmateer</b>	<b>Cindy Wolf</b>	<b>Rick Hughes</b>
<p>We are so fortunate to live in the midst of the Salish Sea on islands that allow us to exist in a place, at a pace, that feeds our well-being. It is our responsibility to do the same in return, create well-being for our lands and sea. I want to engage with local, active advocates as well as regional partners to establish how we provide care, healing and restoration of our shores and vulnerable species. There won't be a plan B if we fail and I simply won't be a part of the failing.</p>	<p>I will continue to use my experience in climate leadership by holding myself and the county government accountable to our words and actions by proposing ordinances that require us to show significant improvement in the areas of climate change response, pollution, affordable housing, justice and plastics. Once that ordinance is passed, it will be the job of the council to organize community task forces comprised of subject area experts and impacted residents to put forth recommended actions to the county council to effect a positive change. We must follow the science and best and most current management practices to ensure successful efforts. I will also lead by example by continuing to practice what I preach and not recommending any effort that I couldn't commit to personally.</p>	<p>I was raised in a household where it was considered arrogant to think of yourself as somehow outside of the ecosystem or inherently superior to other animals. Our great strengths as a species are cognition and adaptability. We must use them to make our ecosystem healthy and ensure our long-term survival. As a county council member I would look at all county capital expenditures through this lens.</p>	<p>Every day we work for better protection of our ecosystem, lands and Salish Sea. Since I've been in office, we have passed the Critical AREA Ordinance, Shoreline Master Plan, Transportation Element and our economic development element. All of these efforts have been approached from a position of finding balance between our land and its people. We have and will continue to look through the lens of Environment Conservation in everything we do in the county. One of the most impactful ways for us to do this is to incorporate such stewardship into the county's Comprehensive Plan at every step.</p>

**Q6: The Madrona Institute is co-launching [New Deal San Juan Islands](#) to propose draft ordinances on agriculture, climate, housing, justice and plastics for consideration by the Council in 2021. Would you in principle support these draft ordinances or what suggestions would you offer to move them toward adoption?**

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<p>I'd love to see a greater community conversation that really allows for varying thoughts and ideas behind each proposal. It is important that we discuss the concepts as they relate to the overall good of the community to garner support from the many sides. We need to talk about the proposals with a broader, community centered approach that will allow for better long-term support and success. In principle, I am absolutely motivated to make the best choices for human rights, environmental protection, and most specifically the future of agriculture. There isn't a subject presented that I cannot stand with when it comes to doing what is best for our Islands and what is best for the planet.</p>	<p>I wholeheartedly agree that the San Juan County Council needs to adopt clear, achievable, and trackable goals and holds itself accountable to improve our agriculture, climate, housing, justice, and plastics issues. We must have a knowledgeable county council that intimately knows how these issues negatively impact our residents of each of our unique islands. This can be achieved relatively quickly to match the urgency of these issues if we elect experienced people to office. We must take immediate action on these issues as they have been put off for far too long as it is. If we have to wait to train elected officials in these areas, we will lose even more precious time.</p>	<p>Having looked through the website, I agree in principle with the proposals. I would seek more input on the justice issues from our BIPOC and LGBTQIA residents and seek to put in ordinance form any protections or moves towards equity rather than leaving them in the form of resolutions. I think there are parts and portions of the climate proposals that need speeding up or thinking through, but time is of the essence on all of them.</p>	<p>I support looking at all of the issues that are presented, although I feel that most of what has been presented is either been passed or in the process of being worked on already! If you review the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resolution and the Climate Change Resolution that were passed this year I feel you see find many of the above issues were addressed. I support the ban of single use plastic including plastic liquid containers for sure. I fully support investigation into carbon sequestration and practices that may be leading to it, but would want to see strong data showing what the issues are and where they lie before committing further. As San Juan County was one of the first counties to enter into the VSP program that helps develop better eco-friendly farm plans, I think soil conservation is a big consideration. I added points for better soil management are truly found to be an issue in SJC Agriculture, we should address it.</p> <p>In regards to housing, I support the majority of the issues brought forward by the Vacation Rental Work Group and council is now currently working on revising existing Vacation Rental rules to place more restrictions on the process.</p>