



## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Chuck Dalldorf  
Public Information Officer  
(916) 248-3819 [cdalldorf@sjifire.org](mailto:cdalldorf@sjifire.org)

### **Northern Outer Islands Annex into Fire District #3**

Fire District #3 and San Juan County have officially approved the requested annexation of the northern outer islands, Henry, Stuart, Johns and Spiden Islands, into the district allowing San Juan Island Fire & Rescue (SJIF&R) to begin providing emergency services to those residents.

Residents requested annexation through a provision in state law and more than 60% of eligible voting residents signed a petition authorizing direct annexation into the district. Both Fire District #3 and San Juan County formally approved the annexation after the signatures were validated by the San Juan County Elections office.

Fire District #3 Commissioner Albert Olson said, "Our district is prepared to serve the residents of the outer islands that have long felt exposed to fire hazards and extremely limited access for emergency services."

SJIF&R Chief Norvin Collins said, "We fully intend to work with residents on each island to identify needs, opportunities and training making outer island communities safer and prepared to speed emergency response and service." Chief Collins said some of the district's goals in providing services to outer island communities include adding additional marine resources at Roche Harbor, staging of fire equipment and training for residents so they will be able to safely begin emergency response and direct incoming responders, in order to save lives and property.

Henry Island resident Tim Seifert said that when his family moved from Lopez Island, their longtime insurance carrier dropped them when they realized there was no dedicated fire protection in the more remote outer islands. Tim said, "By signing on to this annexation, outer-island neighbors are pulling together to provide resources we have long needed for fire protection and EMT services. Needless to say, we anticipate that the insurance companies will also take notice."

Bob Brunkow, a Stuart Island resident, added that the addition of an additional response boat at Roche Harbor will provide needed rapid response to outer islands, including urgent EMT support. "There's no question that this could save lives."

Rhys Spoor, also a Stuart resident said, "The annexation will benefit the outer islands by providing on- islands basic exterior fire suppression and coordinated EMT /CPR support training."

The annexation mirrors the district boundaries of San Juan EMS and the boundaries of the new district become effective [REDACTED]. The incremental cost for the fire annexation would be approximately \$0.51 / \$ 1,000 assessed valuation.

"We believe initial analysis and planning is just the beginning of what we can achieve. Our district is focused on comprehensive community risk reduction and the involvement of our residents in increasing the safety of all our homes and island communities," said Chief Collins.

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*The San Juan Island Fire & Rescue was established on October 6, 1958. The fire department covers all of San Juan Island, including Brown; Henry; Johns; Pearl; Spieden and Stuart Islands. For more information, please visit <http://www.sjfire.org/>*