

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contacts:

Sandra Staples-Bortner

Great Peninsula Conservancy Port of Silverdale

(360) 373-3500

sandra@greatpeninsula.org

Theresa Haaland

Port of Silverdale

(360) 698-4918

portofsilverdale@wavecable.com

grafhoke@visitkitsap.com

Patricia Graf-Hoke

Kitsap Peninsula VCB

(360) 373-0580

Petersen Farm Campaign Tops \$355,000

Now only \$60,000 short of target as November 15 deadline looms

With a recent pledge of \$25,000 from the Port of Silverdale the campaign to save historic Petersen Farm in Silverdale has raised \$355,000 toward its community goal of \$415,000.

When the farm's longtime owner, Gerald Petersen, passed away late in 2009, the estate looked for a way to achieve Petersen's goal of keeping the property intact as a working farm. Great Peninsula Conservancy stepped in and offered an innovative legal tool, known as a conservation easement, to ensure the land remains in agriculture. Given the 167-acre property's high value, buying the land outright is not an option for the Conservancy.

With the conservation easement, the Conservancy purchases (and extinguishes) development rights from the land and leaves the land available for sale to a farmer at a much reduced cost. This keeps the farm in private ownership where, with hard work and ingenuity, the farm will produce food for our community and a place for children to enjoy hayrides and learn about farming.

In making its pledge, the Port of Silverdale recognized several public benefits of the farm conservation project that advance the Port's mission. Preserving a large productive working farm located within the port's district helps maintain small-farm economic enterprises in the area. "Economic development activity of this type is central to the Port's mission", confirmed Theresa Haaland, port administrator.

State law also recognizes promotion of tourism as a Port function. Annual Petersen Farm Fall Fairs, like the one held on September 18 that attracted 950 people, draw visitors from near and far to enjoy the region's rural heritage. The project complements the efforts of another local economic development agency, Kitsap Peninsula Visitor and Convention Bureau, which attracts visitors to the region by promoting the Kitsap Peninsula as the 'natural side of Puget Sound'. Bureau executive director Patricia Graf-Hoke, who volunteered at the farm event, commented, "Petersen Farm and nearby Clear Creek Trail are two of the reasons visitors from around Puget Sound come to our area and support local businesses with their tourism dollars."

Ports also are charged with improving streams and water quality within their districts. Petersen Farm is nestled in the Clear Creek Valley and includes over 3,000 feet of Clear Creek, numerous springs and small tributaries that feed the creek, and extensive forests and wetlands that help to replenish and purify its waters. "Conservation of Petersen Farm will provide permanent protection for the segment of Clear Creek that crosses the farm and an opportunity to restore the stream to benefit salmon and farming," stated Sandra Staples-Bortner executive director of Great Peninsula Conservancy.

Other major donors to the campaign include the Estate of Gerald Petersen (\$202,500), Bill and Bee Mahan Charitable Trust (\$43,000), an anonymous local Kitsap family (\$20,000), Gary and Marilyn Cunningham (\$10,000), and Jerry and Nancy Reid (\$10,000). Many other people from around the region have made contributions ranging from \$25 to \$5,000. Visitors to Petersen Farm Fall Fair on September 18 contributed over \$2,500 to help save the farm. The remaining \$60,000 must be raised by November 15, 2011, to be eligible for a matching grant from USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to complete the project.

Donations to the Campaign to Save Petersen Farm may be made to Great Peninsula Conservancy, with 'Petersen Farm Campaign' noted in the memo line, and mailed to: Great Peninsula Conservancy, 3721 Kitsap Way, Suite 5, Bremerton, WA 98312; (360) 373-3500; info@greatpeninsula.org; www.greatpeninsula.org. Contributions of \$500 or more will be recognized on a plaque at Petersen Farm. Gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Great Peninsula Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust working to preserve forever the natural habitats, rural landscapes, and open spaces of the Great Peninsula – a region encompassing Kitsap, Mason, and western Pierce counties, Washington. Great Peninsula Conservancy has protected over 5,700 acres of this spectacular region of west Puget Sound, including magnificent forests, untouched shorelines, salmon streams, wildlife-rich estuaries, working forests, and family farms.

Photos available upon request: Petersen Farm and Petersen Farm Fall Fair