



# Great Peninsula Conservancy

Spring 2015

*Protecting our lands and waters for generations to come*



Photo Credit: Don Willott

*Grovers Creek Campaign – page 4*

# GPC Achieves One Milestone and Reaches for the Next

All of us at Great Peninsula Conservancy are walking a little taller lately. In mid-February, we received exciting news: Great Peninsula Conservancy is now an accredited land trust! The accreditation seal, awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. I know you will agree that's pretty weighty stuff!

Great Peninsula Conservancy is among only 18% of land trusts nationwide that have achieved this distinction. We are proud to join this illustrious group. Our accomplishment provides assurance to you – our members and community – that your faith in us is well deserved.

GPC's board and staff have worked hard to achieve this milestone. While the application itself took months to complete, we have been working towards this goal since at least 2008. In those seven years, we have implemented best management practices across our organization -- from financial management to land stewardship, and everything in between. Along the way, we've matured as an organization and created a foundation for future success. I hope you share our pride, as your donations and contributions of time and expertise have sustained our growth.

GPC's founding board members, who birthed GPC in 2000 out of the merger of four all-volunteer land trusts, would



Photo Credit: Amara Oden

*GPC board and staff toast attaining accreditation milestone.*

probably say that we have been working toward this monumental goal since then. While the Land Trust Alliance didn't begin the accreditation program until 2006, our founders recognized from the start that they would need to build a strong

organization to carry out our mission of conserving land in perpetuity. Thanks to these early leaders who set Great Peninsula Conservancy on a path for permanence.

What does accreditation mean to GPC and you? We'll keep doing what we have been doing – conserving and stewarding land. You now have assurance that Great Peninsula Conservancy operates with a high level of professionalism and is a trustworthy nonprofit partner. I think you already sensed that, but now you know!

Talk of conserving land brings me around to our current land conservation priorities. Our highest profile projects are centered on Filucy Bay on the Key Peninsula, the Union River estuary in North Mason and Grovers Creek in North Kitsap. While details on the first two projects will have to wait for another time, you can see beautiful photos and read all about the Grovers Creek project on pages 4-5.

Thank you for your many gifts to Great Peninsula Conservancy, which give us flexibility to support each project as needs arise. Please consider a special gift now to help GPC reach our next conservation milestone!

**Sandra Staples-Bortner**  
Executive Director

## Great Peninsula Conservancy

*Protecting forever the natural  
habitats, rural landscapes,  
and open spaces of the  
Great Peninsula.*

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# Join Us! GPC Spring Dinner April 30

Join us for a wonderful evening with GPC friends. Our 5th Annual Spring Dinner on Thursday, April 30 will once again be held at beautiful Kiana Lodge. Fabulous shellfish hors d'oeuvres, donated by Taylor Shellfish Farms and prepared by Xinh of Xinh's Clam and Oyster House, will be followed by a salmon dinner and the presentation of GPC's Great Peninsula Conservation Award. Help us recognize recently retired Kitsap Sun reporter Chris Dunagan for his outstanding environmental reporting. This is an event you will not want to miss.

Keynote speaker Joe Gaydos will share photos and stories from his new book, *The Salish Sea: Jewel of the Pacific Northwest*. Copies of Joe's book will be available for purchase at the event thanks to Liberty Bay Books!

Bring your friends and enjoy this delightful evening as a table sponsor. Table sponsors receive complimentary dinner and drink tickets for a table of eight. All proceeds from our fundraising dinner benefit Great Peninsula Conservancy's work to protect natural habitats, rural landscapes and open spaces.

Seating is limited. Get your tickets early! Tickets (\$100) and Tables (\$800) include a one-year GPC membership. Ticket deadline is April 16. See you there!

**RSVP by April 16**

Mary Zabinski  
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Photo Credits: Sam D'Arangel (top); Bob Towery (bottom)

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A campaign is underway to conserve Grovers Creek and the surrounding forests and wetlands that nourish North Kitsap's Miller Bay. This special place has giant trees and is home to an abundance of wildlife. It also will be a critical link in the Sound to Olympics Trail. A coalition of community partners known as the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project is working to purchase 270 acres that will be protected forever, under the careful stewardship of Great Peninsula Conservancy, as the Grovers Creek Preserve.

## **Our Opportunity**

Public grants and private donations totaling \$1,860,000 already have been raised toward our \$2,100,000 goal. Land acquisition already has begun. The first two parcels totaling 25 acres were acquired in 2013 (Kawahara donation) and 2014 (Helton purchase). The largest parcel (175 acres) is owned by a single company (Pope Resources) and purchase of this property is expected to be completed by April 30, 2015. Project partners

have set our sights on raising the funds needed to purchase the remaining approximately 70 acres by May 31, 2015.

## **Natural Splendors of Grovers Creek**

Explore the Grovers Creek landscape and you'll find a rare grove of 200-year-old Sitka spruce, hemlock, cedar, Douglas fir and grand fir. You'll also find a peat bog that gives a spring to your step as you cross its hummocks and skirt its pools. You'll cross Grovers Creek on a fallen log and marvel at the handiwork of beavers. You'll struggle to get through wetland thickets of alder and salmonberry.

These diverse habitats support over 60 bird species; host threatened steelhead as well as coho and cutthroat; and provide a home for beaver, black bear, mink, otter, salamanders and frogs. Our hope is that a pair of marbled murrelets, a small threatened seabird that lays its single egg high up in an old growth conifer, might someday nest in one of Grovers Creek's ancient spruce trees.

Only a mile downstream from this mosaic of habitats, Grovers Creek flows into tidal Miller Bay. The expanse of wetlands spreading out from the creek ensures that the water entering the bay is clean and flows year round. Each fall as the rains return, salmon make their way up Grovers Creek and the bears return to feed upon their spent carcasses. It's as if time has stood still.

## **Open Space & Trail Corridor**

Groves Creek Preserve is at the center of a forest corridor of nearly 1700 acres spanning the Kitsap Peninsula. To the east lies Kitsap County's North Kitsap Heritage Park. The land to the west is proposed to be protected as the North Kitsap



Photo Credit: John Williams



Photo Credit: Byron Kane



# ek Campaign

Community Forest. Farther west, the Port Gamble Forest soon may be protected for trails and wildlife habitat. Together, these conservation properties will conserve a significant open space corridor and protect land critical to a future Sound to Olympics Trail.

## Help Save Grovers Creek – Online Campaign in May

The Grovers Creek Campaign is a significant funding challenge for Kitsap Forest & Bay Project partners. The community has rallied in support of this visionary land conservation

initiative before and your help will be needed again for this next critical phase. During March and April, project partners will complete the major gifts phase of our fundraising effort. In May, the campaign goes online with a community-wide effort to complete funding.

Look for an announcement in GPC's May eNews for your chance to make a gift online and invite your network of friends and family to join you in making a donation. Your gift via Indiegogo.com (or by mail if you prefer) will help protect the big trees, bears and salmon of Grovers



Photo Credit: Don Willott

Creek. Your gift also will help realize the dream of a Sound to Olympics Trail connecting people from Kingston to Port Gamble. **Please consider**

**a donation to this priority project before May 31, 2015.** Your participation will help protect this magical place for all time.



Photo Credit: Don Willott

## Grovers Creek Campaign – Major Donors (thru 3/17/2015)

Michelle Amicucci  
Anonymous  
Wayne & Mary Booth  
Virginia Cowling (bequest)  
Virginia Davison

Albert Foster  
Friends of Miller Bay  
Great Peninsula  
Conservancy Board  
Becky & Mike Hall

Doug & John Helton  
Sara & Byron Kane  
Kawahara Family  
Kitsap Audubon Society  
North Kitsap Trails Association

Seattle Audubon Society  
Lynn & Bob Sudduth  
WA Recreation &  
Conservation Office  
BJ Wilhite



# GPC Stewardship Events

## Port Gamble Trailhead Cleanup

GPC's first stewardship event of 2015 was a great success! On an overcast and windy February 21 over 100 volunteers removed more than 60 cubic yards of garbage and over 200 tires from three Port Gamble trailheads. Afterwards we celebrated our hard work with a BBQ and prize drawing. Lucky folks won a dozen or so awesome prizes provided by Platypus Hydration and Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance.

Special thanks to our partners Kitsap County Parks, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance-West Sound, and North Kitsap Trails Association for helping organize this big cleanup day. Kitsap County Park Superintendent Dori Leckner summed it up, "Thanks for everything. I had a blast and I LOVED ALL THAT WAS DONE. A 100% IMPROVEMENT." Thanks to all the volunteers!



*We found all sorts of things in the garbage, including salamanders!*

Photo Credits: Mary Zabinski

## Grovers Creek Tree Planting

On Saturday, March 7 & 21 Kitsap County Forester Arno Bergstrom led stalwart volunteers in planting 800 seedling Sitka spruce and western red cedar on GPC's new Grovers Creek Preserve. Thanks everyone!

The first 21 acres of the Grovers Creek Preserve were purchased by Great Peninsula Conservancy in December. Additional land will be acquired in 2015 and 2016. The proposed 270-acre preserve is rich in wildlife habitat and will provide a link in the future Sound to Olympics Trail.



*Kitsap County Forester Arno Bergstrom (second from left) instructs (from left) Jayne Larson, GPC's Erik Pedersen, and Ben Elmer in tree planting techniques.*

Photo Credit: Kate Kuhlman

**Learn more about our Grovers Creek Campaign on pages 4 & 5.**

# Welcome New Board Member

## Erin Ewald Joins GPC's Board.

Great Peninsula Conservancy is pleased to welcome Erin Ewald as a new member of its Board of Directors. Originally from Minnesota, Erin developed an appreciation for natural resources in the Boundary Waters. She and her husband moved to Washington where Erin earned her B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Washington. After graduation, she worked with the Pierce Conservation District for 10 years as the Key Peninsula, Gig Harbor and Islands (KGI) Watershed program manager. While there, Erin worked with local farms to implement best

Photo Credit: Anthony Ewald



management practices (BMPs) and improve water quality. She also has served on the KGI Watershed Council, Harbor WildWatch, Greater Gig Harbor Foundation, Pierce County Open Space Task Force and Pierce County Conservation Futures citizen advisory board. She currently is the Environmental Compliance Manager at Taylor Shellfish Farms where she continues to work with farmers as they implement BMPs. Erin lives with her husband, young daughter, dogs and horses in Gig Harbor and enjoys planting trees,

gardening and exploring Washington's many parks and open spaces.

## Volunteers Make it Happen!

Hooray! GPC is accredited! It's been a long time coming and 730 hours of staff and volunteer time. GPC owes a big thank you to the volunteers who worked with staff on our Accreditation Team: Tom Antos, Jamie DePew and Siv Carlson. Special thanks to Tom, who brought his expertise as a retired Boeing manager to the job. Logging more than 150 hours, he served as team leader for four years navigating the Land Trust Accreditation Commission application requirements, and keeping us all on schedule and on task. We couldn't have done it without our volunteers. GPC applauds a job well done!



## Memorial Gifts

(November 1, 2014 through March 15, 2015)

### In memory of Paul Brittain

Natalie Bryson

### In memory of Mary Kenney

Bob & Liz Lathrop

### In memory of Rosa Roberto Carter

Lee Carter

### In memory of Mary Ellen McCaffree

Jennifer Georges  
Ken McCaffree

### In memory of Lloyd Clevon

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### In memory of Donna Cooper Pepos

Janice Pittman

### In memory of Virginia Cowling

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### In memory of Donald Wilhite

BJ Wilhite

### In memory of Robert Gaspari

Ken & Sherri Kilborn

### In memory of Larry Wiltermood

Ann Reisch & Bob Wiltermood

### In memory of Boyd Gravunder

Jill Gravunder

### In memory of Jim and Mary Kenney

John & Pat Lantz

## In Honor

### In honor of Lyn Ghiselin

Dean Adams





# Great Peninsula Conservancy

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## GPC on Facebook

Great Peninsula Conservancy can be found on Facebook! We regularly post photos from the field, project updates, and news links on Facebook, so sign up and log in if you would like to receive up-to-date conservation news from the Great Peninsula. The best way to find us is to go to [www.greatpeninsula.org](http://www.greatpeninsula.org) and follow the Facebook link. See you there!



Great Peninsula Conservancy

# Spring Dinner

*Save the date: Thursday, April 30, 6-9 pm*

Top photo (landscape): Kevin Schafer; Bottom photo (harbor seals): Robin Lindsey