



# Great Peninsula Conservancy

Spring 2017

*Protecting our lands and waters for generations to come*



*You've Grown Grovers Creek Preserve! – Page 2*

# You're Saving the Land You Love

You did it again! Your dedicated support recently conserved another 80 acres of forest and wetlands on Grovers Creek not far from Kingston. Grovers Creek Preserve is now 280 acres!

As you'll read on the next page, the new purchase is a renewing forest. The old growth was long gone, and the land was covered with stumps from a second crop of trees, when a family first farmed it in the 1940s. The trees grew back and wildlife returned. But the land was at risk of being reduced to stumps again—until you saved it. The long stretch of forest and wetlands glimpsed on your right as you drive north from North Kitsap Heritage Park on Miller Bay Road is now protected forever. Thanks to you!

Nearby Port Gamble Forest is another beloved place with an uncertain future. Together, we have worked for many years to purchase this timberland owned by Pope Resources. The land was once a hub of Washington State's timber industry. With the former lumber mill gone,

Pope Resources has given the community the first option at buying it, to ensure the trails and forest long enjoyed by the community are not lost to subdivision.

As you'll see on page five, a big leap forward was made in December, when Kitsap County purchased over 1,300 acres of Pope Resources' forestland, expanding the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park to almost 1,900 acres! The forest corridor is envisioned as a sanctuary for wildlife and part of a future Sound to Olympics Trail crossing the Kitsap Peninsula.

While this is an amazing victory, there is no time to rest. Over 1600 acres along the western edge of the Port Gamble ridge still are at risk.

Community members like you are pitching in to make donations large and small. The sum of all donations made by July 2017 will determine how many acres we are able to save. Please join me in making a donation today at [SavePG.org](http://SavePG.org)! Together, we can save the land we love!

Sandra Staples-Bortner  
Executive Director

Cover Photo: Eighty acres of forest and wetlands were added to GPC's Grovers Creek Preserve in February.  
Cover Photo Credit: Erik Pedersen; Back Photo Credit: Amy Gulick



## Great Peninsula Conservancy

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

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# Creating the Next Old Growth Forest

Theresa's memories of the old 'stump farm' her father bought in the late 1940s are of clearing brush and attaching a heavy metal 'choker' to stumps being hauled away for burning. Theresa Niemeier Corlett, now 80 years old, was a teenager then living in Suquamish.

Her son, John Helton, remembers wandering the property as a young boy in search of old fragments of yellow and blue blasting wire – a reminder of the dynamite that was used to dislodge big, old-growth stumps. Family lore has it that misjudging the amount of dynamite to use could be risky and stumps sometimes went flying, including one that landed on the other side of Miller Bay Road.

Today, the 'stump farm' is a vibrant forest, with extensive wetlands and branches of Grovers Creek crossing the property. In February, you helped purchase the family's remaining 80 acres as an addition to Great Peninsula Conservancy's 200-acre Grovers Creek Preserve (which already includes over

20 acres of family land). The combined properties are home to bear, beaver, coho, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and countless birds.

Theresa's father, Edward Niemeier, had a law practice in Poulsbo and bought 120 acres south of Kingston on Grovers Creek as a hobby farm. The land had been heavily logged and he saw an opportunity to raise cattle. His dual life as a lawyer and farmer made itself clear for all to see whenever he was called out to the farm in his business suit to retrieve escaped cattle.

In the early days, trees were allowed to regenerate naturally on much of the property not used for cattle. In the 1970s, the remaining land was replanted in trees. Now, more than four decades later, the forest has returned.

In 2000, the property was inherited by Theresa's sons John and Doug Helton. With their homes elsewhere and a strong interest in conserving the property, the brothers sold the land to

Great Peninsula Conservancy in 2017 to protect its wildlife-rich forest and wetlands forever.

As Theresa put it, she is 'glad [Great Peninsula Conservancy] is out there banging the drum' to protect Kitsap's forests. She continued, 'There are a lot of people my age around and we know what it used to look like around here' and would hate to lose the forests again.



Contributed Photo

Today the 'stump farm' on Grovers Creek is a vibrant forest. Richard Corlett, stepfather of former landowners John and Doug Helton, admires the trees on the 80 acre addition to Grovers Creek Preserve.

# Join Us on the Waterfront!

## GPC Spring Dinner April 27th

You're invited to our conservation community's annual celebration. Join GPC Thursday, April 27 for a Spring Dinner on the waterfront at Kiana Lodge. You've made some amazing conservation possible, and you will want to be there! Chef Xinh Dwelley is coming out of retirement from Xinh's Clam and Oyster House to prepare delicious shellfish hors d'oeuvres for you at 6 pm. Kiana Lodge's signature alder-roasted salmon dinner follows at 7 pm.

Help us honor Gary Cunningham with the Great Peninsula Conservation Award for his lifetime of dedication to conservation on the Kitsap Peninsula. Enjoy award-winning photographer and writer Amy Gulick's images and stories of paddling and trekking among bears, misty islands, and salmon streams to document the intricacies of the rainforest environment for her book *Salmon in the Trees*. It will be an event you will not want to miss!

Reserve a table now and bring your friends! Table Sponsors receive complimentary dinner and drink tickets for a table of eight. Tickets (\$150) and Tables (\$1,200) include a one-year GPC membership. All proceeds from our fundraising dinner directly benefit Great Peninsula Conservancy's work to conserve cherished forests, streams and shorelines close to home.

Seating is limited. Get your tickets early! Ticket deadline is April 13.



Ikil Gregg Photography



Ikil Gregg Photography

# Port Gamble Forest

You have the power to create a public park bigger than New York's Central Park

With tremendous support from you, the visionary Kitsap Forest & Bay Project is one step closer to creating a public park bigger than, and every bit as key to our identity as, New York's Central Park. Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park tripled in size at the close of 2016 with Kitsap County's purchase of more than 1,000 acres from timber company Pope Resources. The addition is the latest success in a multi-year effort led by dedicated project partners, and gets us more than halfway to our goal of a 3,500 acre park.



Kilpatrick Photography

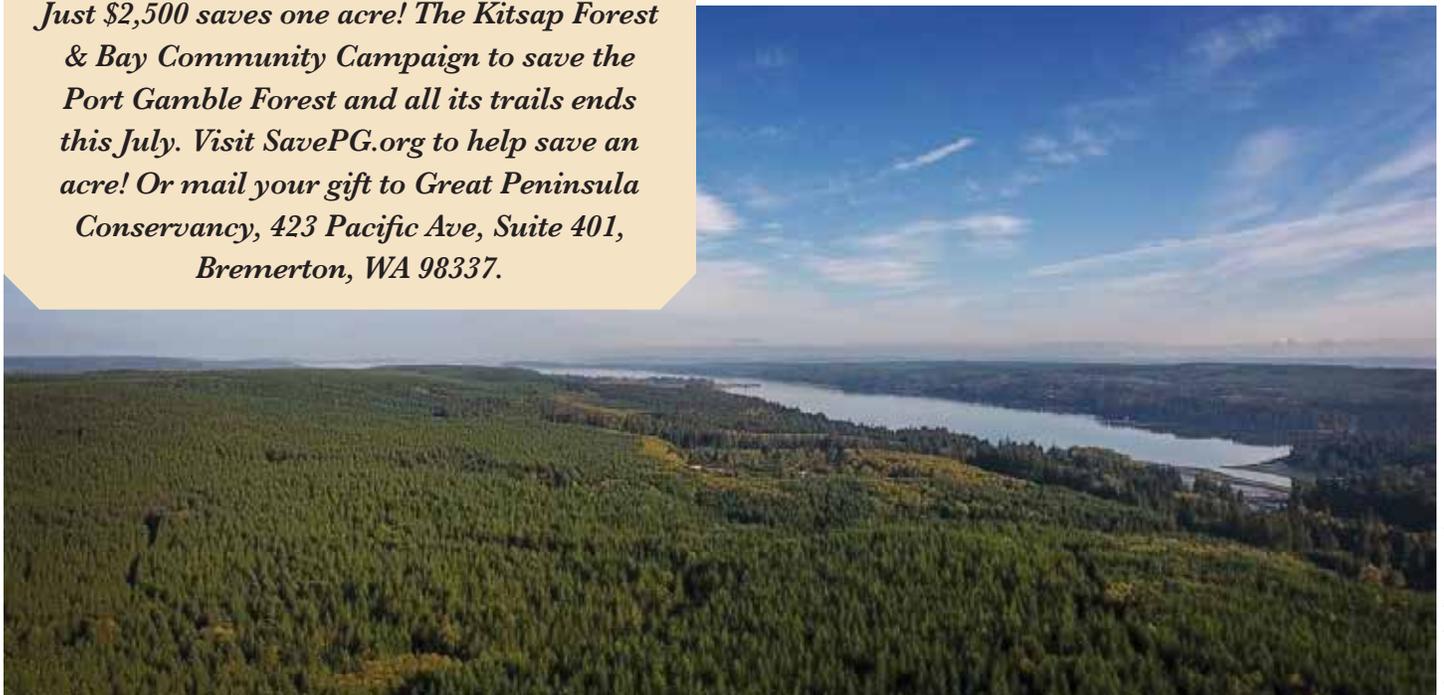
This land was once a hub of Washington State's timber industry. With the former lumber mill gone, Pope Resources is offering the public the opportunity to buy these historic lands as a legacy park that will save the trails and open spaces long enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. Imagine returning a massive forest back to the people!

The effort has brought together a strong coalition of partners including land trusts like Great Peninsula Conservancy and Forterra, local tribes including Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and the Suquamish Tribe, local governments, and recreation organizations, with those interested in habitat preservation and boosting tourism. The group has a unique vision for the Port Gamble Forest Park addition: protecting the land from development while restoring a more natural forest.

Pope Resources, the timber company that owns the land, will retain the right to log most of it one last time, enabling the community to buy more land for less money. The forest will be logged in stages over 25 years, leaving the most environmentally-sensitive areas untouched, and replanted to create a diverse forest. This creative solution for returning the forest to the people will provide recreational opportunities and protect water quality as a lasting gift to future generations. We have until July 2017 to save this historic forest. You can help save the remaining 1,600 acres. See the box on this page to learn how you can help!

## Help Save Port Gamble Forest Trails!

*Just \$2,500 saves one acre! The Kitsap Forest & Bay Community Campaign to save the Port Gamble Forest and all its trails ends this July. Visit [SavePG.org](http://SavePG.org) to help save an acre! Or mail your gift to Great Peninsula Conservancy, 423 Pacific Ave, Suite 401, Bremerton, WA 98337.*



Kilpatrick Photography

# Meet Your Conservation Community

*Melissa Sherwood, GPC Steward and Birding Expert*

When you sign up for one of the monthly bird walks in Sehmel Homestead Park you will enjoy the company and expertise of GPC land steward, Melissa Sherwood. Why does Melissa like to get outside? "It renews me," she says. She loves the fresh air, the plants and animals, and all the amazing things she discovers (and shares with walkers on her bird tours!).

Melissa has been an active user of trails in the area even before the Sehmel homestead became a park. As momentum built to create a park at



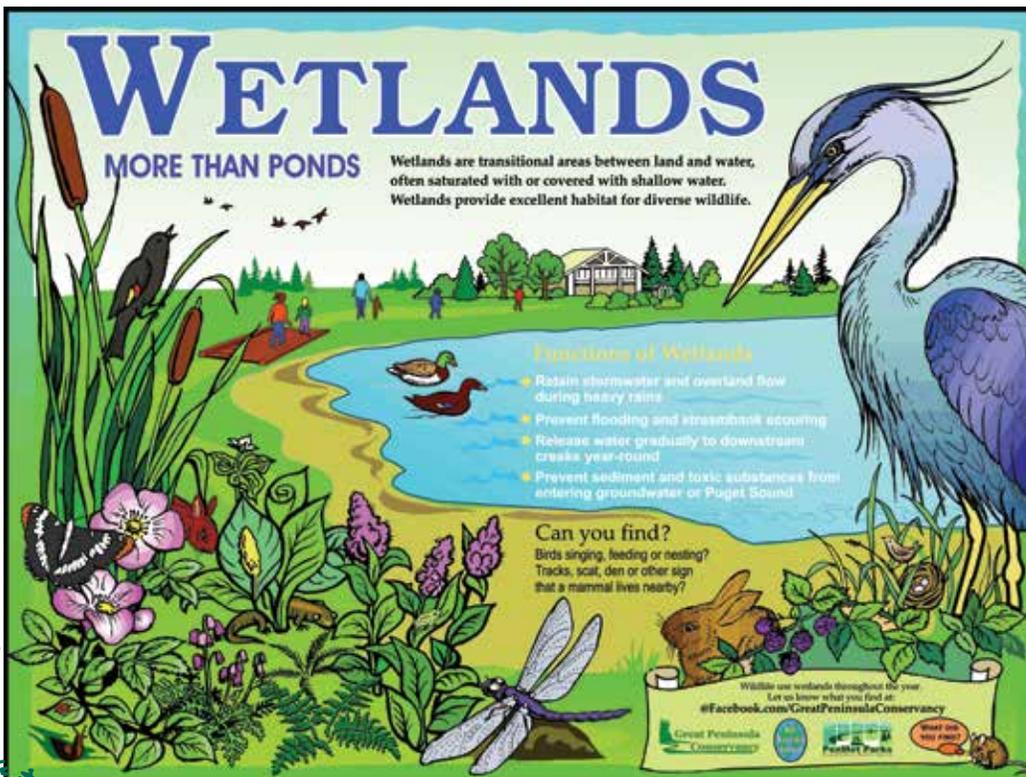
Melissa Sherwood

the old homestead in the early 2000s, Melissa's commitment to maintain the local environment she cared so much about motivated her to join in and help out. When asked what being a GPC steward means to her, Melissa told us "it enables me to see Sehmel not as my park, but as a park that belongs to us all."

Bird tours run from April – October. What can you expect? "Quiet listening for the sound of birds, enjoyment of native plants and animals, creeks and ponds... and the occasional pulling of an ivy sprout."

Mary Zabinski

## Colorful New Signs Coming to Sehmel Homestead Park



Joanne Tejada

Soon your walks through Sehmel Homestead Park will be a bit more educational. Thanks to generous gifts from a GPC member, the KGI Watershed Lu Winsor Memorial Environmental Program, and Land Trust Alliance, park visitors will get a chance to identify wildlife and environmental features with three new trail signs. The beautiful eye-catching signs were designed by artist Joanne Tejada.

Each sign encourages visitors to interact with the environment. Can you find birds nesting in the

wetlands? Did you find the spiral Douglas fir? Snap a picture and let us know! Share it with us on Instagram @GreatPeninsulaConservancy and tag it #GreatPeninsula!

## Birdwatching Guided Walks at Sehmel Homestead Park

Wednesdays, 8 – 10 am

- April 5
- May 3
- June 7
- June 28
- August 2
- September 6
- October 4

Call Melissa Sherwood  
to reserve a spot!  
253-851-7230

Groups meet at the  
Master Gardeners'  
enclosure. Be sure to  
bring your binoculars  
and dress for the  
weather. Call ahead to  
ensure that tours are  
scheduled.



Nancy Sefton

## Memorial Gifts

(November 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017)

- ♦ **In memory of  
Billie and Barney**  
Rick Barner
- ♦ **In memory of  
Linda Benedict**  
Bo and Kay Blakey
- ♦ **In memory of Ronald  
and Vella Boyles**  
Pam Boyles and  
Roger Johnson
- ♦ **In memory of  
Rosa Roberto Carter**  
Lee Carter
- ♦ **In memory of  
Richard Corlett**  
Theresa Corlett  
John and Wilberta Lelle
- ♦ **In memory of  
Virginia Cowling**  
Janeen Dorsch
- ♦ **In memory of  
Joanne Crabb**  
Sherrie and Ken Kilborn
- ♦ **In memory of  
Lisa Gerrish**  
Kathleen and George Ramsey
- ♦ **In memory of  
Jack Hansen**  
Dorothy Benson
- ♦ **In memory of  
Marilyn Karlstrom**  
Vern and Jane Schuelein
- ♦ **In memory of  
Roy Meyers**  
Steve and Betty Fabry
- ♦ **In memory of Clarence  
"Pete" Pedersen**  
Ben and Charlotte Pedersen
- ♦ **In memory of  
Helen and Dick West**  
Melinda and Paul West
- ♦ **In memory of  
Jennifer Williamson**  
Natalie E Bryson

## Gifts to Honor

(November 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017)

- ♦ **In honor of David and Katherine De Bruyn**  
Margaret Duncan and Bill Baird

## You Make a Difference

Community volunteers of all ages came out in the rain to join GPC, Kitsap County Parks and REI for a day of stewardship at Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park on February 18. Volunteers spread gravel and improved drainage on the beach access trail. We celebrated our accomplishment together with a BBQ lunch. Many thanks to grill master Michael Vandegrift and all of our wonderful stewardship volunteers!



Mary Zabinski



# Great Peninsula Conservancy

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## A Mark of Distinction

The accreditation seal **AFFIRMS** national quality standards are met.

	✓	Sound Finances
	✓	Strong Transactions
	✓	Excellent Land and Easement Stewardship
	✓	Effective Governance

**Great Peninsula Conservancy is an accredited land trust.**

# SAVE THE DATE

*Great Peninsula Conservancy*  
**SPRING DINNER**  
*April 27, 2017*

# Kitsap! GREAT GIVE MAY 2, 2017

**Double Your Impact When You Donate to GPC  
During Kitsap Great Give!**

### 3 Easy Ways YOU can HELP:

- Follow GPC on Facebook and Instagram throughout March and April for updates on how to get involved.
- Visit [KitsapGreatGive.org](http://KitsapGreatGive.org) on May 2 to make your tax deductible donation.
- Share your story and encourage friends and family to support GPC on May 2!



@GreatPeninsulaConservancy