



# Great Peninsula Conservancy

Winter 2018

Protecting our lands and waters for generations to come.



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

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Photos: Anthony Gibbons, Camp Cohoe handbook, Don Paulson, Don Willott, EdBook.Photo, GPC staff, and Puget Sound Wiki

# Discovering Nature's Treasures

As a young girl, I spent a lot of summer days at the ocean near my Massachusetts home. When I wasn't swimming in the cold water or building sand castles, I'd walk the beach searching for sea glass and lucky rocks. In those years, it was common to find smooth, frosted pieces of green, white, and brown sea glass amidst the pebbles on the beach. 'Lucky rocks'—rocks with a white ring circling their middle—supposedly brought luck to the finder. The day's treasures were stored in a glass jar on our kitchen window sill.

When I visit Puget Sound beaches today, I am still on the lookout for treasure—a pretty shell, colored rock, or perhaps a stranded jellyfish. At this time of year, I'm likely to have binoculars to scan sheltered bays for the many ducks that winter in Puget Sound. I'm also keenly aware that these shorelines provide a critical role in the lives of young salmon that migrate along their edges. Wooded shorelines without bulkheads, like those at Cohoe Beach and Camp Hahobas (profiled herein), provide the best habitat.

Puget Sound shorelines also play an important role in the lives of small fish that lay their eggs among the pebbles in the upper tidal areas (surf smelt and sand lance) or on eelgrass (herring). These fish are a central part of the marine food web, as they are a primary prey item for salmon, marine mammals, and seabirds. The cobble beach at Camp Hahobas is an important spawning ground for surf smelt.



Young steward finds oyster shells on the beach at Port Gamble Bay

As I write, Great Peninsula Conservancy is on the brink of purchasing two exceptional Puget Sound shoreline properties: Coho Beach in North Kitsap and Camp Hahobas on Hood Canal. Your donation to GPC's Great Peninsula Challenge today will be matched by generous donors and help save these pristine beaches. Please give generously. The next time you want to walk a stunning beach to discover nature's treasures, you'll know where to go!

*Sandra*

Sandra Staples-Bortner  
Executive Director



## Coho Beach

### An Amazing Gift from the De Bruyn Family



Dave De Bruyn has kayaked by Coho Beach many times from his nearby home north of Kingston. Each time, he was amazed to find such a pristine stretch of shoreline on busy Puget Sound. When he learned Great Peninsula Conservancy had an opportunity to purchase Coho Beach, he knew he wanted to be part of protecting his home paddling waters. So he made the extraordinary commitment to provide full funding for Great Peninsula Conservancy to buy it, with a closing date coming soon.

The seven-acre Coho Beach

property is adjacent to a thirty-acre county-owned property envisioned as a future park. Together, these properties protect 2100 feet of exceptional shoreline with tidelands that extend nearly one quarter mile out before dropping. The result? A unique home for creatures big and small, including the forage fish, shellfish, and water birds who feed and dwell in the shallow water, and the massive grey, humpback, and orca whales who swim and hunt in the depths off the shelf.

The land has a history of recreational use as well. In the 1920s and 30s Coho Beach was the site of Camp Coho: "A Salt Water Camp for Girls." Girls spent four to eight weeks at camp, learning canoeing, sailing, hiking, fishing, and camping but also bed making and meal prep. They were asked to bring not only a hatchet and jack knife but "Several Good Books and Victrola Records."

The beach is quieter now than during

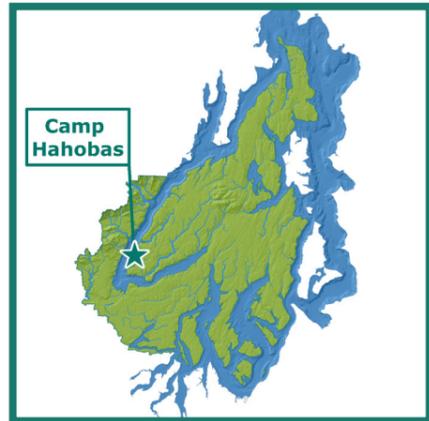
its heyday as a summer camp. During high tide it's the perfect destination for kayakers launching at Hansville or Kingston, and during low tide one can take an amazing two-mile walk from the Point No Point Lighthouse.

Many thanks to Dave (below at left) and Katherine De Bruyn, longtime GPC members, who saved this special place for you and future generations to enjoy!



# Camp Hahobas

## Saving a Shoreline on a Timeline



When the local Boy Scout council saw dwindling numbers of summer camp attendees, they decided to sell the majority of their land on the Tahuya Peninsula—the long-running Camp Hahobas—save for 120 acres to be used as a wilderness camp.

And wilderness it is. The mostly-undeveloped 550 acres in Mason County along Hood Canal feels

incredibly remote. You reach the camp via a winding gravel section of North Shore Road with scattered summer cottages and towering trees. Great Peninsula Conservancy is on track to purchase 100 acres of the camp this year and hopes to purchase another 60 acres next year.

This unexpected opportunity came to Great Peninsula Conservancy with no time to pursue one of our most important sources of funding—state grants. With a rapidly approaching deadline, we were approved for a loan from a respected conservation lender and immediately turned to members to help cover the down payment and closing costs for the 100 acres. In mere months, generous donors contributed the entire \$148,000 needed to complete the first purchase in December of this year.



Anthony Gibbons



Partners in the project include the Department of Natural Resources, which will purchase the remaining 270 acres of the camp as an addition to Tahuya State Forest; the Trust for Public Land, which is brokering the deal; and the U.S. Navy, which will contribute funding and hold an easement on both the GPC and DNR lands that extinguishes all development rights in perpetuity.

## Saving a Place for Wildlife and People

The 160 acres to be acquired by Great Peninsula Conservancy include over

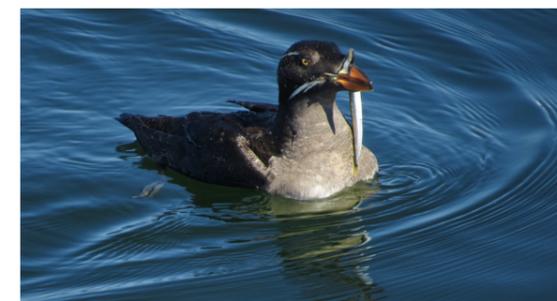
one-half mile of gorgeous shoreline, native forest, and several small creeks. Preserving this special place will protect the homes of fish, shellfish, birds, and bears, while also providing an outdoor retreat for nature enthusiasts. An easy hike through the forest will lead people to the magnificent beach with breathtaking views of the Olympics.

Underwater gardens of eelgrass provide habitat for crab, shrimp, herring, salmon, and waterfowl. Even more than trees and other dry-land vegetation, eelgrass has an incredible capacity to absorb and store carbon. Nurturing these marine gardens is one

way to protect against climate change and minimize harmful acidification of seawater.

The shoreline at Camp Hahobas is a known spawning beach for surf smelt—an important little fish in the food chain that is preyed on by salmon, osprey, guillemots, mergansers, auklets (at right), and seals among others. Eelgrass beds and smelt spawning habitat are both highly threatened by shoreline disturbance and polluted runoff.

In Great Peninsula Conservancy's ownership, this habitat-rich wilderness will forever be protected for wildlife and people!



Don Willott





# Sustaining the Sound: Oysters

EdBook.photo

## A Series on Regional Climate Change

Puget Sound shellfish have seen their ups and downs. In the early 20th century, stocks of the native Olympia oyster were nearly decimated to feed gold rush laborers. In the 1930s, paper mills regularly dumped toxic chemicals into the Sound. Today, warming sea temperatures encourage the growth of toxic algal blooms, which recently shut down shellfish harvesting along the eastern Kitsap shoreline. More importantly, climate change has rapidly increased ocean acidification, which has marked negative effects on the shell formation of baby oysters.

The University of Washington Climate Impacts Group found that, “Globally, ocean acidification by the end of the century is expected to reduce the rate of shell formation in mussels, clams and oysters by 40 percent, with a 17 percent decline in their growth and a 34 percent decline in their survival.”

The ocean absorbs around one third of our carbon emissions from the atmosphere. These emissions from burning coal, oil, and gas become acid when dissolved in water. The ocean is currently 30% more acidic than 100 years ago and is predicted to be 150% more acidic by the end of this century. Throughout Puget Sound, oyster larvae have decreased survival linked to this acidity.

For a region home to the nation’s largest shellfish producer, the effects on the local economy could prove to be monumental. A 2015 article in *Nature Climate Change* reported, “Ocean acidification has already cost the oyster industry in the US Pacific Northwest nearly US \$110 million, and directly or indirectly jeopardized about 3,200 jobs.”

Beyond the economic implications, tracking the effects of global warming on the smallest marine species is a way to understand issues facing entire ecosystems, including salmon and marine mammals. In this way, oysters are often referred to as the canary in the coal mine.

And oysters play a huge role in maintaining marine ecosystems: they filter and clean water, protect shorelines from erosion, and provide habitat for other animals.

Recently, the Suquamish Tribe working with Puget Sound Restoration Fund planted Olympia oysters near the mouth of Chico Creek. Oyster restoration projects like this are happening at several sites in Puget Sound, often paired with eelgrass and kelp plantings. Together these marine species will remove pollutants to clean the water and absorb carbon to cut down on acidification. Great Peninsula Conservancy’s commitment to watershed and shoreline conservation means more protection of oyster habitat and a healthier Puget Sound.

The next time you find an oyster shell on your beach stroll just remember: these creatures are capable of massive cleanup and are warning us of imminent danger. If we don’t act now to reduce carbon emissions, we’ll not only lose shellfish and jobs, we’ll destroy life in Puget Sound.



Don Paulson

# Gifts to Create a Legacy

## MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS

In honor of **Terry Uhrich** from Ben & Charlotte Pedersen  
In memory of **Christopher Feagin** from Nan Feagin  
In memory of **Ann Reisch & Larry Wiltermood** from Bob Wiltermood



## Member Spotlight: Nan Feagin

Nan Feagin (above at right) is passionate about conservation and loves to understand how nature is interconnected, how we are dependent on the environment and how it depends on us to steward it and lessen the effects of our carbon footprints.

Originally a member of Peninsula Heritage Land Trust, Nan played a role in the merger of the four

local land trusts that became Great Peninsula Conservancy. She was on the first board of directors in 2000 and has remained a friend and supporter ever since.

On the occasion of her 80th birthday, Nan gave Great Peninsula Conservancy an amazing gift of \$8000 through the donation of a life insurance policy she no longer needed. This was an excellent way to

## Smarter Giving

### IRA CHARITABLE BENEFICIARY

Consider naming GPC as a beneficiary of all or a portion of your IRA. Neither you, your estate, nor GPC pay taxes on this gift. In contrast, heirs you name as beneficiaries of your IRA will pay income taxes on the gift (Roth IRAs are an exception). When dividing assets among heirs and charities, financial advisors often recommend you give your appreciated stock and real estate to heirs and make charities beneficiaries of all or a portion of your (non Roth) retirement funds.

### IRA CHARITABLE DONATION

Once you reach age 70½ you must make Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from your IRA each year. These RMDs are treated as taxable income except when you make a charitable IRA rollover. Donations you make directly from your IRA to your favorite charities (up to \$100,000 a year) are exempt from income tax. Check with your IRA administrator for details.

give outside the box and allowed her to clean up her assets. By waiting until GPC had a matching fund (the Great Peninsula Challenge now underway), her gift was doubled to \$16,000!

Nan made the donation in memory of her son Christopher, creating a beautiful legacy for him that will help protect more land, more habitat, and more greenspaces for future generations.



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## Discovering Nature's Treasures

Look inside: Two shorelines saved for people and wildlife!