

CONSERVING ESSENTIAL LANDS AND WATERS

The Pacific Northwest Resilient Landscapes Initiative



LAND TRUST PROFILE

Great Peninsula Conservancy

Founded in: 2000 · **Service Area:** Kitsap, Pierce, and Mason counties, WA · **Acres Protected:** 10,612

For more information, visit: greatpeninsula.org

Rocky Creek Estuary and Riparian Protection Project

Great Peninsula Conservancy's Rocky Creek Estuary and Riparian Protection Project involves the acquisition and permanent protection of 197 acres in Pierce County, Washington. This project involves collaborating with four different landowners whose properties together make up one large block of undeveloped land. Starting at the upper estuary of Rocky Bay, and encompassing over 2.2 miles of streams, the property provides critical habitat for endangered salmon and other wildlife, as well as a place for passive recreation and educational events.

Landscape Context

The project site is located in Washington's Puget Sound region, on the northern Key Peninsula in Pierce County. It is located in the Rocky Creek Watershed, one of the largest and least developed watersheds on the Kitsap Peninsula, and contains two regionally significant salmon streams. This project will protect 197 acres of wetlands, forest, and floodplain from timber harvest and development, ensuring the vital protection of the watershed. It will also connect to over 250 acres of nearby conserved lands owned by the county, preserving an expansive wildlife corridor.

Sustaining Climate-Resilient Habitat

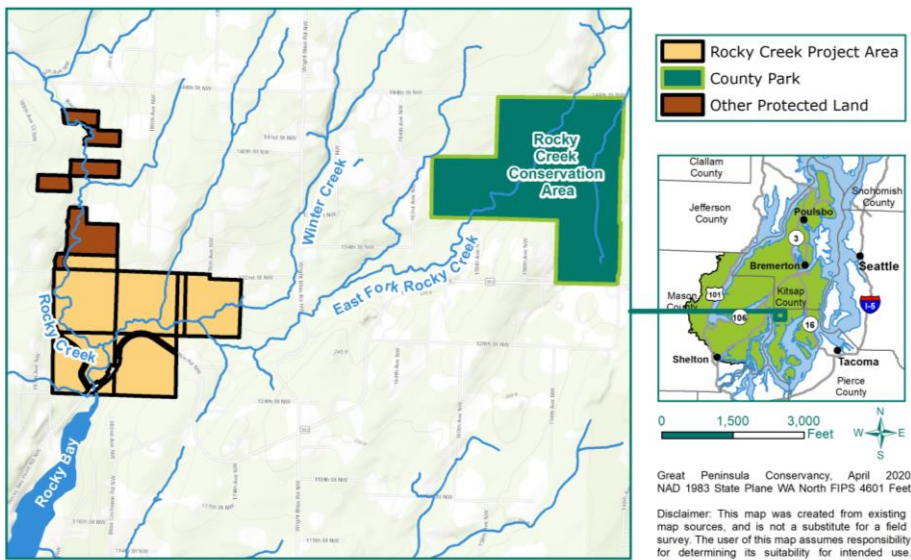
The Rocky Creek Estuary and Riparian Protection Project will protect a vital confluence of multiple streams and associated open space corridors, and thus play an important role in sustaining the landscape connectivity critical for climate resilience. It will also benefit communities by preventing development in floodplains and ensuring the project site continues to provide flood-mitigating ecosystem services. Great Peninsula Conservancy also intends to explore opportunities to use the project area as a future demonstration site for climate-adaptive forest management.

Highlights

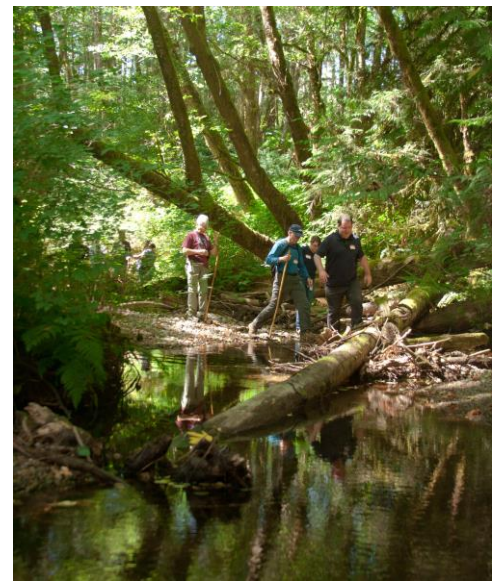
- Protects 197 contiguous acres for wildlife and passive recreation
- Conserves 2.2 miles of stream, including 1.7 miles of salmon stream
- Safeguards habitat for Endangered Species Act-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead, as well as coho salmon, chum salmon, pink salmon, and cutthroat trout
- Protects 75 acres of riparian, estuarine, and wetland habitat, including a small beaver pond
- Located in the lower reaches of one of the largest and least developed watersheds on the Kitsap Peninsula
- The Squaxin Island Tribe and many local organizations have identified the project site as a priority for protection

Restoration Activities Planned

- Removal of junk vehicles and garbage
- Decommissioning of old logging roads
- Clearing invasive plant species and replanting these areas with a diverse mix of native tree species
- Noncommercial ecological forestry to enhance tree species diversity and age class diversity



The 197-acre Rocky Creek project area includes numerous streams that flow into Rocky Bay and the wider Puget Sound. It is also close to other protected areas.



Enjoying a hike along East Fork Rocky Creek. (Photo: Jessica Lessard)



The project area is located in the Puget Sound Region of western Washington on the northern Key Peninsula in Pierce County, just 30 minutes from Tacoma.



Several streams on the property support juvenile salmon including Chinook. (Photo: Brenna Thompson)



GPC Stewardship Manager Erik Pedersen tours East Fork Rocky Creek with a GPC board member. (Photo: Jessica Lessard)

“What’s the problem? Well, overfishing and habitat, those are the two main things. Habitat was going away and what habitat was left, the salmon couldn’t get up there because of obstructions.”

— Landowner Roy Lampson on his decision to preserve his property.