



Great Peninsula Conservancy

Volunteer Handbook

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Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook has been designed to be a guide for your time as a volunteer with Great Peninsula Conservancy. We want to share with you our history, philosophy, practices, and policies so you can take on your role with the most confidence. No volunteer handbook can answer every question. You are highly encouraged to speak with Great Peninsula Conservancy staff if you have any questions that are not addressed in the handbook. If you have any questions regarding the content of this handbook, please contact GPC Stewardship Staff.

Organizational Information

History & Background

In the 1980s, as the population on the peninsula began to grow, visionary local leaders took action to preserve the natural beauty of this region and protect local lands and waters. This was done by four separate, volunteer-run Land Trusts: the Hood Canal Land Trust, the Indianola Greenway Land Trust, the Kitsap Land Trust, and the Peninsula Land Trust. For their protection efforts to be successful, they realized a strong organization was needed to take on regional challenges and to shoulder stewardship responsibilities far into the future. Great Peninsula Conservancy was formed in 2000 to take on those responsibilities.

While Great Peninsula Conservancy now maintains a professional staff to carry on the conservation mission of our region, our roots will always be in volunteerism – a tradition that is carried on today by all those who help GPC in our mission.

Mission

Our mission is to conserve vibrant forests, streams, shorelines and community greenspaces to help wildlife and people thrive. We commit to caring for the lands we protect to ensure wildlife and people enjoy the many benefits of nature well into the future. And we enrich lives by offering opportunities for people to experience nature close up.

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Volunteer Information, Conduct, & Policies

'Volunteer' Defined

Unless specifically stated, a 'volunteer' is an individual who performs their specified job description willingly at the direction of Great Peninsula Conservancy without compensation. Although Great Peninsula Conservancy does not recognize volunteers as employees, they understand and enforce the need to respect them as such. As a direct result of this, organizational rules and expectations apply to volunteers while volunteering with Great Peninsula Conservancy.

Minors

Great Peninsula Conservancy welcomes and encourages the involvement of youth within our organization. Individuals whom are under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian fill out Liability Forms, and Emergency Contact Forms as needed. Youth participation at some events may require a parent or guardian.

Becoming a Stewardship Volunteer

Great Peninsula Conservancy has two types of stewardship volunteer opportunities:

- **Event Volunteer:** Great Peninsula Conservancy holds volunteer events throughout the year, throughout our working region. These events vary in work type – from planting parties, to trail building, to invasive species control. We welcome anyone to join us at these events. Volunteers need only sign up and sign a liability waiver (or for our volunteers under 18 years of age, bring a Youth Waiver, signed by a parent or guardian), and join in on the fun!
- **Volunteer Land Stewards:** Our Volunteer Land Stewards (VoLS) are those who want to get more involved in stewarding our preserves. Volunteer Land Stewards often have one preserve that they visit regularly and work with GPC staff to steward. Our VoLS receive training on stewardship protocols, tools, monitoring software, and common issues with land management.

Tracking Your Time

All volunteers, regardless of the work they contribute, must log their location, activity, and time through GPC's Volunteer Hours Tracking Form, which can be found [online](#).

Representing Great Peninsula Conservancy

While volunteering with Great Peninsula Conservancy, volunteers must take into consideration the magnitude of their actions and comments while working alongside outside personnel. Volunteers may not speak with the press unless previously authorized by the Great Peninsula Conservancy Executive Director. Volunteers are required to act as representatives of the program as indicated within the extent of their position descriptions.

Safety and Security

The safety of our volunteers is very important. We expect all Great Peninsula Conservancy employees and volunteers to be safety-conscious, follow safety rules, and to immediately alert

management of any conditions in the workplace that are believed to be unsafe or unhealthy. Safety training will be conducted before beginning any project with Great Peninsula Conservancy. If a person feels unsafe at any time, they should discontinue their project and seek a safer alternative.

Harassment and Discrimination Policy

It is the policy and commitment of Great Peninsula Conservancy to not discriminate based on race, color, sex and/or gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, religion, and/or familial status in admission of its volunteers or its programs and services. All volunteers and employees are accountable to this notion and failure to comply with this policy may result in termination from the program. Great Peninsula Conservancy is also committed to an environment in which all employees, volunteers, partners, and participants are treated with respect and dignity. Each person has the right to a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory and retaliatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Great Peninsula Conservancy expects that all relationships in the workplace will be professional, business-like, and free of bias, prejudice, harassment, or retaliation.

In keeping with Great Peninsula Conservancy's commitment to maintain a professional work environment for all employees and volunteers, Great Peninsula Conservancy will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of our employees or volunteers by anyone, including any supervisor, or by someone not directly connected to Great Peninsula Conservancy (i.e., an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, visual, on any electronic media or any other way related to the work environment that is based upon a person's legally protected status, such as race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, age, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, genetic information, military service, marital status, veteran status, or any other protected status. Great Peninsula Conservancy will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Any such harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Great Peninsula Conservancy is subject to the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. Great Peninsula Conservancy is firmly committed to providing its volunteers with a safe and productive workplace, while promoting high standards of health and safety. Using or being under the influence of illegal substances of any kind impairs a volunteer's ability to do their job. Drugs, prescribed drugs or alcohol on the job can pose serious safety and health risks not only for the user but also for fellow workers and the public. The possession, use or sale of an illegal drug can also pose unacceptable risks to safe, healthful and efficient operations. Off the job illegal drug activity or alcohol abuse that could have an adverse effect on the volunteer's performance, or that could jeopardize the safety of other volunteers, the public, Great Peninsula Conservancy's equipment, or Great Peninsula Conservancy's relations with the public will not be tolerated. Accordingly, violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Personal Vehicle Use Policy

Volunteers will not be asked to transport participants or staff for Great Peninsula Conservancy programming or projects. A vehicle is recommended, but not required to be a volunteer with Great Peninsula Conservancy. You may be asked to transport items such as a table, chairs, and flyers or paper handouts.

Dispute Resolution

If a problem should arise among volunteers, the parties involved are expected to first communicate directly with one another in a respectful attempt to reach a mutual understanding. If a reasonable resolution cannot be reached, a volunteer can request mediation from the Stewardship Manager and then if necessary, the Executive Director.

Grievances

Should there be a disagreement over the interpretation of policies or a grievance related to one's duties or relationships with fellow staff or volunteers, it should be reported to staff immediately.

Whistleblower Policy

Great Peninsula Conservancy prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Great Peninsula Conservancy also prohibits retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint with, or otherwise participating in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by, any government agency or commission. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Any employee bringing a bona fide harassment complaint or assisting in good faith in the investigation of such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, nor discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint or assistance.

Harassment, discrimination and retaliation have no place in a professional environment, and will not be tolerated by Great Peninsula Conservancy.

Termination Policy

Great Peninsula Conservancy reserves the right to dismiss volunteers as they see fit. Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the agency at any time.

Online and Written Communication

All volunteers agree to communicate, verbally and written, with sensitivity, patience, and respect. While volunteering with Great Peninsula Conservancy, volunteers will become involved with a diverse population and must remain conscious of the possibility for misinterpretation of tone and inference. Volunteers agree to use clear and kind language when formulating messages.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary and/or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a staff member, volunteer or other person, or overall program business. Designated and authorized volunteers will have exposure to confidential information that is defined as inside, personal or sensitive information and may include contact information, business credentials, or personal experience stories.

Conflict of Interest

No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or part of the program, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, shall serve as volunteer with the activity/program. Examples of this: volunteers, such as subcontractors or landlords, who will receive monetary wage as a result of a project; a person trying to obtain a preoccupied space for themselves. If there is a concern that there may be a conflict of interest, the volunteer is asked to direct the concern to the Executive Director.

Maintenance of Records

GPC Staff will maintain a system of records on each volunteer within the program, including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, and hours volunteered. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to staff in a timely and accurate fashion.

Access to Program Property & Materials

As deemed appropriate, volunteers will have access to program property, materials and as needed, training to fulfill their duties. Volunteers may utilize Great Peninsula Conservancy property and materials only when directly required for program or event purposes.

Use and Copyright of the Website

Great Peninsula Conservancy reserves all rights and privileges to its logo, graphics, endorsement, and property, which cannot be used without consent of proper organizational authorities.

Social Media and Social Networking

Unless approved by Great Peninsula Conservancy's Executive Director, volunteers are not permitted to represent Great Peninsula Conservancy while participating in personal blogs, social media, or social networking sites. This rule exists to protect Great Peninsula Conservancy's assets, images, associates, vendors, and customers. Volunteers that create or maintain personal

blogs that reference Great Peninsula Conservancy should include clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author in the blog are the author's alone and do not represent the views of Great Peninsula Conservancy. Information published on a volunteer's blog or other blogs, forums, and social networking sites should comply with the Great Peninsula Conservancy confidentiality and disclosure policies.

When participating in social media or on social networking sites, volunteers should be respectful to Great Peninsula Conservancy's board of directors, employees, other volunteers, customers, members, and competitors. Volunteers should be aware that actions captured via images, posts or other online comments can reflect poorly on Great Peninsula Conservancy in certain cases. When participating in social media or on social networking sites, do not reference Great Peninsula Conservancy members, partners, vendors or customers without their expressed consent.