

# Great Peninsula Conservancy

## Strategic Plan

### 2016-2020

November 17, 2015

## Vision Statement

**Great Peninsula Conservancy is a trusted, visionary, and self-sustaining community leader that is making a difference in people's lives. GPC envisions a day when:**

- The unique natural character of the Great Peninsula region is vibrant and valued.
- Healthy populations of bears, orcas, salmon, and eagles are a testament to a thriving ecosystem that will support future generations of all species and a high quality of life for people.
- A network of protected lands (forests, marine shorelines, estuaries, streams, freshwater wetlands, farms, and community greenspaces) connects all the communities of the Great Peninsula.
- Our region's communities are actively involved in Great Peninsula Conservancy's land preservation and stewardship efforts.

## Values

**Great Peninsula Conservancy holds these values and acts accordingly.**

- **Integrity:** We strive to achieve continuity of purpose in everything we do, from the focus of our conservation efforts to the allocation of our resources. We practice the highest standards in our conservation, stewardship, financial and administrative activities. We are honest, effective, fair, efficient, and fiscally responsible.
- **Leadership:** We are a conservation leader and have a responsibility to pursue bold and innovative conservation strategies.
- **Proactive & Responsive:** We seek out priority landscapes for conservation while being responsive to community needs.
- **Partnership:** We collaborate with individuals, communities, conservation organizations, public agencies, tribes, and businesses to identify conservation opportunities, resolve challenges, devise strategies that respect the interests of all parties, and achieve practical, tangible, and lasting conservation and stewardship goals.
- **Respect:** We base all of our relationships—within our organization, with our conservation partners, with individuals, businesses, communities and the land itself—on respect, trust and tolerance. We seek out and value diversity in these relationships.

- **Engagement:** We strive to engage people in our conservation mission through activities that build strong personal relationships to the land and create healthy, livable communities. We search for opportunities to learn from the communities in which GPC operates.
- **Stewardship:** We steward our lands to protect their ecological viability, cultural and community value now and forever.
- **Sustainability:** We practice conservation that supports a healthy natural environment, productive economies, and vibrant human cultures. Our work builds resiliency for wildlife, our local communities and the land trust itself.

# **Great Peninsula Conservancy Strategic Plan 2016-2020**

## **Mission**

**Protecting forever the natural habitats, rural landscapes, and open spaces of the Great Peninsula of Washington's Puget Sound**

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Conserve important and threatened lands on the Great Peninsula**

- Working with partners, conserve remaining lands in the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project
- Develop and implement GPC's Shoreline and Estuary Initiative within North Kitsap, Hood Canal and Key Peninsula
- Expand GPC's Forest Initiative to protect priority working forest lands and establish community-managed forests in Kitsap, North Mason and South Sound
- Expand GPC's Stream and Freshwater Wetland Initiative to protect and restore conservation lands in priority watersheds
- Engage with community groups to undertake conservation projects of high community value in GPC's Community Greenspace Initiative
- Expand strategic partnerships and alliances that enhance and accelerate successful conservation outcomes within our geography and our communities

### **Responsibly manage the lands that Great Peninsula Conservancy protects**

- Proactively implement responsible stewardship and monitoring practices on lands under our care
- Maintain and, as appropriate, restore the ecosystem health of lands conserved by GPC
- Identify and implement opportunities to provide public access and improve signage on targeted GPC lands

### **Involve our region's communities in Great Peninsula Conservancy's land preservation efforts**

- Strengthen GPC communications with people in our region
- Provide a variety of opportunities for people to participate in GPC activities
- Create an Ambassador Landscape program that welcomes local communities and non-traditional partners to become engaged in land conservation close to home

### **Build a strong organization capable of proactively protecting and responsibly managing lands in perpetuity**

- Recruit, train and retain a professional staff, engaged board, and skilled volunteers to maintain a high performing organization
- Grow a robust and diverse funding base to support operational and projects costs
- Upgrade GPC's technology and communication infrastructure to achieve improved efficiencies, professionalism and outcomes
- Improve integration across GPC program areas

# Great Peninsula Conservancy

## Strategic Plan

### 2016-2020

## Implementation Plan

### Goal 1: Conserve important and threatened lands on the Great Peninsula

**Ten Year Vision:** Large tracts of forestland, extensive stretches of near-pristine marine shoreline, undisturbed reaches of freshwater streams, pockets of wetland habitat and locally-important community greenspaces across the Great Peninsula are protected forever

#### Five Year Objectives

1. **Working with partners, conserve remaining lands in the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project**
  - a. Complete GPC's Grovers Creek Preserve through conservation of an additional 1½ miles of stream and 110 acres of land outside KFBP boundaries
  - b. Partner with Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe to place a conservation easement on Port Gamble Forest land to be acquired by the tribe through Navy U & A mitigation funding
  - c. Assist Kitsap County and other KFBP partners in a community campaign to raise funds to purchase remaining Port Gamble Forest land
  - d. Continue to provide leadership and support through the Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition to achieve the goals of the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project
  
2. **Develop and implement GPC's Shoreline and Estuary Initiative within North Kitsap, Hood Canal and Key Peninsula**
  - a. Give high priority to shorelines and estuaries that are intact or can be restored to historic or near historic conditions
  - b. Focus conservation at the priority drift cell scale based on existing and pending assessments of South Sound, Hood Canal and East Kitsap shorelines
  - c. Map out priorities comprehensively using Geographic Information System (GIS) as a guide for targeted focus
  - d. Seek opportunities to provide public access to shorelines for compatible recreation on conserved lands as appropriate
  - e. Secure funding and complete Filucy Bay Project to conserve over 100 acres and over 1 mile of intact estuarine shoreline
  - f. Establish strategic South Sound partnerships to support protection and restoration of Alliance for Healthy South Sound's designated Shellfish Protection Districts using GPC's Filucy Bay Project as a model
  - g. Support protection of Department of Natural Resources' conservation priorities within the expanded Stavis Natural Resource Conservation Area
  - h. Work collaboratively and independently to develop and implement regional and local protection and restoration priorities in support of WALT's Shoreline Conservation Collaborative

3. **Expand GPC’s Forest Initiative to protect priority working forest lands and establish community-managed forests in Kitsap, North Mason and South Sound**
  - a. Give high priority to forests of high site class and mature, diverse forest cover; large tracts of intact forest; forests at the urban edge under threat of conversion to residential development; headwater forests; continuous forested wildlife corridors and forests with a diversity of habitats and edge conditions
  - b. Partner with Trust for Public Land and others to conserve working forest properties within the Gamble, Dewatto and Tahuya watersheds
  - c. Advocate for and continue to pursue opportunities to develop and implement community-owned and community-managed forests of regional and local value and significance
  - d. Secure foundation grants to advance GPC’s Forest Initiative through partnerships to develop forest management plans and facilitate community engagement and oversight of community forests
  
4. **Expand GPC’s Stream and Freshwater Wetland Initiative to protect and restore conservation lands in priority watersheds**
  - a. Building on prior GPC investments and working with partners, develop and implement protection and restoration projects in watersheds of highest regional and local priority for salmon recovery and ecosystem sustainability
  - b. Identify highest priority wetland systems and engage partners in their protection and restoration through mitigation banking and Hood Canal Coordinating Council’s In-Lieu Fee mitigation program
  - c. Conserve watersheds from headwater forests to the bay with an emphasis on protecting and restoring lands of critical importance for habitat connectivity and habitat forming processes
  
5. **Engage with community groups to undertake conservation projects of high community value in GPC’s Community Greenspace Initiative**
  - a. In response to community needs and in partnership with community groups, protect cherished community greenspaces with significant value for wildlife and biodiversity, opportunities for passive recreation and trails, and high risk of conversion to incompatible land uses
  - b. Identify and protect properties with potential to engage new communities in the outdoors. Priority will be based on the following criteria:
    - areas that lack people-centered, publicly accessible outdoor areas within ½ mile of underserved populations
    - protects distinctive ‘sense of place’ within the community by: (i) conserving rural landscape, quality of life, views and scenic places and (ii) fostering an appreciation of natural, historical and cultural heritage
    - high existing and/or potential community involvement
    - helps foster a sense of community, local pride and engagement
    - high community value as open space for trails and passive recreation, access to water or scenic views, and/or opportunities for wildlife viewing
    - the landscape has the potential to connect people, especially people with limited access to or familiarity with the outdoors, with the land
    - provides a place for people of all generations to get together, exercise and interact
  
6. **Expand strategic partnerships and alliances that enhance and accelerate successful conservation outcomes within our geography and our communities**

## **Goal 2: Responsibly manage the lands that Great Peninsula Conservancy protects**

**Ten Year Vision:** GPC’s conservation lands are vibrant ecosystems that support a diversity of local plants and wildlife, and contribute to a high quality of life for people on the Great Peninsula

### **Five Year Objectives**

- 1. Proactively implement responsible stewardship and monitoring practices on lands under our care**
  - a. Ensure all conservation properties have baseline documentation, management plans, monitoring reports, photographs of critical features and structures, if present, and other records that meet or exceed Land Trust Accreditation Commission requirements
  - b. Ensure GPC annually monitors and documents the condition of conservation properties in order to maintain accurate and complete property records
  - c. Recruit and train volunteers and groups to participate in a sustainable monitoring program, and coordinate its implementation with the Stewardship Committee
  - d. Take prompt action to enforce conservation easement terms and defend against encroachments on fee-owned properties.
  - e. Develop strong relationships with neighbors surrounding conservation lands, as well as with conservation easement landowners
  - f. Track and report on stewardship costs to help develop sustainable funding benchmarks
  
- 2. Maintain and, as appropriate, restore the ecosystem health of lands conserved by GPC**
  - a. Working with partners, implement forest stewardship and habitat restoration practices according to GPC forest management plans
  - b. Recruit volunteers and groups to implement prioritized management plan recommendations on other conservation properties, as resources allow
  - c. Working with partners, identify and implement restoration and stewardship projects as opportunities arise
  - d. Demonstrate ecologically sound land management practices on GPC properties as an educational tool for private landowners
  
- 3. Identify and implement opportunities to provide public access and improve signage on targeted GPC lands**
  - a. Working with partners when appropriate, install GPC and educational signage and provide opportunities for public access on GPC conservation properties

## **Goal 3: Involve our region’s communities in Great Peninsula Conservancy’s land preservation efforts**

**Ten Year Vision:** People of our region recognize Great Peninsula Conservancy as a valued community partner and are actively involved in GPC’s land preservation and stewardship efforts

### **Five Year Objectives**

- 1. Strengthen GPC communications with people in our region**
  - a. Develop and launch a new website and post new information regularly
  - b. Select and implement a new software platform for GPC eNews
  - c. Continue to improve and update the content and design of GPC newsletters and other communications

- d. Develop and implement two-way communication strategies to enable GPC to be responsive to community needs and strengthen our role in the community
2. **Provide a variety of opportunities for people to participate in GPC activities**
    - a. Conduct an annual fundraising dinner, major donor reception, and other social or recreational events for GPC members
    - b. Working with partners as appropriate, organize recreational and stewardship events on GPC and public conservation lands
    - c. Identify programs through which GPC could partner to expand our outreach
    - d. Identify and train community volunteers to assist with GPC programs and operations
  3. **Create an Ambassador Landscape program that welcomes local communities and non-traditional partners to become engaged in land conservation close to home**
    - a. Develop and implement a pilot project at Sehmel Homestead Park to engage community partners, design signage that tells the story of the park and its natural history, and offer opportunities for the public to engage in recreational and stewardship events while getting to know Great Peninsula Conservancy
    - b. In partnership with community groups, identify opportunities for future expansion of the Ambassador Landscape Program targeting populations with limited access to or familiarity with the outdoors (see selection criteria at Goal 1, Obj. 5.b)

**Goal 4: Build a strong organization capable of proactively protecting and responsibly managing lands in perpetuity**

**Ten Year Vision:** GPC has the human, financial and technological resources to tackle emerging and ongoing land conservation and stewardship priorities

**Five Year Objectives**

1. **Recruit, train and retain a professional staff, engaged board, and skilled volunteers to maintain a high performing organization**
  - a. Create and implement a five-year staffing plan that increases the size of GPC’s staff to provide additional focus on conservation, development, stewardship, and financial management
  - b. Provide opportunities for staff members to attend a Land Trust Alliance (LTA) or Washington Association of Land Trusts (WALT) training program every second or third year of employment
  - c. Evaluate wages and benefits annually against comparable land trusts and make adjustments as GPC’s financial resources allow
  - d. Recruit board members with diverse skills, expertise and interests from across our geography as vacancies arise
  - e. Strongly encourage board members to attend at least one LTA or WALT training program during each three-year term in office
  - f. Recruit volunteer attorneys, real estate experts, ecologists and other professionals to help advance GPC’s programs
  - g. Develop a leadership transition plan for GPC’s senior staff and chief legal counsel
2. **Grow a robust and diverse funding base to support operational and project costs**
  - a. Develop annual revenue targets for membership/contributions, major gifts, events and bequest commitments
  - b. Initiate mini capital campaigns for specific conservation projects as needed

- c. Pursue public and foundation grants and enroll in cost share programs or other like programs to fund special projects
  - d. Seek funding to enhance GPC's ability to more fully engage in conservation projects through the entire project cycle including feasibility, design, due diligence transactions, protection, restoration and stewardship
  - e. Explore fee-for-service opportunities to expand operational support
- 3. Upgrade GPC's technology and communication infrastructure to achieve improved efficiencies, professionalism and outcomes**
- a. Upgrade GPC's website to make it an effective tool for community outreach, fundraising and events management, and train appropriate staff in its use
  - b. Replace GPC's membership database with a new system that integrates with current communications technology, and train appropriate staff in its use
  - c. Obtain Geographic Information System (GIS) capability to assist GPC's conservation and stewardship programs, and train appropriate staff in its use
- 4. Improve integration across GPC program areas**
- a. Target conservation lands for acquisition that include fundable stewardship projects
  - b. Involve GPC conservation, stewardship and communications staff in the Ambassador Landscape Program to ensure integration across all program areas