

GREAT PENINSULA CONSERVANCY

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

The Great Peninsula Conservancy sponsors hikes, interpretive walks, and other outdoor activities for the enjoyment of members and prospective members. We want to create opportunities for people to appreciate the beauty of our region, experience the many values of the natural environment, and thus better understand the need to protect it for the benefit of ourselves and future generations. Most importantly, we want you to become a committed member to help support our efforts to preserve our local natural areas.

How does it work?

All activities are hosted by volunteer members who offer to make some *minimal arrangements* so an activity may take place. Activities are intended to be informal gatherings of outdoor lovers, and *participants should not expect the kinds of services and amenities that are normally associated with commercially run outdoor programs.*

A schedule of hikes and other activities is posted on the Conservancy's web site at www.greatpeninsula.org, in Kitsap Regional Libraries, in the calendar sections of Kitsap newspapers, and via an e-mail distribution list. Notify the GPC office if you would like to be added to this list.

To sign up or obtain further information about an activity, call the Great Peninsula Conservancy office at 360-373-3500. *Some activities are limited to members only* and some will have a limit on the number of participants.

How difficult are the hikes?

Hikes and walks take place in the Conservancy's operating area as well as throughout the Olympic Peninsula, and range from easy to strenuous. The schedule may include beach hikes, river hikes, mountain hikes, and snowshoe hikes. These general guidelines are used:

Walks - usually no more than 4 miles in length, at a slow, social pace, with no more than 500 feet of elevation gain.

Easy Hikes - usually between 4 to 7 miles, *or* involving an elevation gain of 500 to 1000 feet.

Moderate Hikes - usually between 7 to 10 miles, *or* involving an elevation gain of 1000 to 2000 feet.

Strenuous Hikes - usually over 10 miles, *or* involving an elevation gain over 2000 feet.

Is there a fee?

There is no participation fee for Great Peninsula Conservancy members. Guests may participate in *two activities* for free prior to becoming members. There may be certain costs associated with some activities such as park entrance fees, parking fees or passes, ferry tickets, etc., which must be paid by each participant.

Why must I sign a Liability Release?

The Great Peninsula Conservancy is a nonprofit organization and without some protection of its assets, and its staff and volunteers, we would not be able to offer this program. Also, for some activities, our insurance carrier may require us to have such a release.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

GPC and its volunteer activity hosts cannot accept responsibility for the safety and care of any participant, and anyone participating in an activity does so at his or her own risk. Following these guidelines will help you enjoy activities and contribute to everyone's positive experience:

- Familiarize yourself with the description of any hike or activity. Know what to expect.
- Consider your physical condition so you won't get committed to something that is beyond your current limits. Opt for an easier activity if you have any doubts. Inform the hike host of any emergency medical situation that could arise (e.g., an allergy to bee stings, etc.).
- Be adequately prepared with the appropriate clothing, lunch, and water. *Sturdy, waterproof boots with lug soles, are a necessity for mountain hikes, as is emergency raingear any time of year.* Avoid cotton clothing in the mountains; it is a poor insulator when wet. Polypro and wool are best.
- Make sure the GPC office has your phone number so you can be notified if there are last minute changes in plans. The hike host may need to call you on the morning of a scheduled activity to inform you of any revised details due to weather or other conditions.
- Be on time to the meeting place. *If you know you can't come for an activity you have signed up for, call to notify the GPC office at 360-373-3500 during business hours; there may be someone on a waiting list who wants to go.* If the office is closed, call the program coordinator at 360-779-6250.
- Be willing to carpool and to sometimes drive others from the meeting point to the trailhead. And remember, if you ride with someone else, a modest contribution to the driver is always appreciated.
- Respect those who like to experience the natural world on its own terms and who find communication devices to be an intrusion. Use cell phones and radios only for emergencies.
- Stay with the group unless you have made prior arrangements with the activity host.
- Practice good environmental stewardship. Stay on trails as much as possible to minimize impact on vegetation. Don't cut switchbacks.
- Recognize that the return time for an activity, especially hikes in the mountains, is difficult to predict. Hiking pace, weather changes, on-the-spot decisions to change the route, emergencies, etc., all affect the amount of time a hike will take. *It's wise not to make definite time commitments for after a hike.*

Everyone is strongly advised to carry these items (sometimes called the *10 essentials*) on all mountain hikes:

- 1) Map and compass
- 2) Flashlight
- 3) Extra food and water
- 4) Extra clothing
- 5) Pocket knife
- 6) Matches
- 7) Fire starter
- 8) First-aid kit
- 9) Sunglasses and sunscreen
- 10) Whistle