



Great Peninsula Conservancy

Spring 2010

Protecting our lands and waters for generations to come

Preserved: Bucklin Hill Urban Forest

The hum of vehicles from the busy road fades away as we walk into the forest. We look up to see a snag, a standing dead tree, drilled heavily with holes made by woodpeckers seeking a meal of insects. An urban oasis, this private property is one of few undeveloped woodlands on the eastern fringe of Silverdale. In December, Great Peninsula Conservancy and a very committed landowner protected this property, affectionately referred to as the Bucklin Hill Urban Forest.

Looking east from Silverdale, the forest sits on a flat spot near the top of this prominent ridgeline that can be seen from around Dyes Inlet. Looking west from the property on a clear day, one can see the spectacular scenery of the Olympic Mountains. The property straddles two watersheds – Clear Creek and Barker Creek. An overstory of Douglas fir, red alder, and pacific madrone towers over a dense understory of huckleberry, salal, and sword fern.

The Bucklin Hill Urban Forest is owned by Marge Thorne. Mrs. Thorne and her late husband, Chuck, built the house on the property they purchased over 50 years ago when it was part of a 20-acre turkey farm. Then partially forested, Marge has witnessed the trees growing larger. Growing up, their two girls made camps in the woods and Marge has been concerned about it being developed for a number of years. A longtime supporter of GPC,



Photo Credit: Michael Yadrick

Marge Thorne smiles in delight at having fulfilled her dream of protecting her forest.

Mrs. Thorne carefully considered her options and her goals: happy family, happy neighbors, and her primary wish - the forest to remain natural forever. Protected today with a permanent conservation easement, the forest now includes some Douglas firs that are three feet around!

Numerous huckleberry bushes provide seasonal snacks for the Thorne family and native birds alike. The four-acre forest provides an oasis for birds, which take cover in the "messy" thickets of native understory and forest canopy. Urban woodlands like this one give refuge to a variety of animals that are attracted to the rich mix of mature trees, snags, native

understory, patchy open areas, and forest edge.

Protecting the native forest cover here helps infiltration of water into the soil, while filtering pollutants before the water reaches Puget Sound. Scientific research also tells us that leafy neighborhood trees, like those in the Thorne urban forest, clean the air by capturing pollutants.

While some of GPC's efforts focus on preserving large, intact natural habitats, preserving community greenspaces in the midst of busy neighborhoods is also one of our conservation strategies. With Mrs. Thorne's additional generous pledge to GPC's stewardship, defense and monitoring fund, Great Peninsula Conservancy will continue to look after her conservation legacy forever. And the entire Silverdale community, who enjoy the forested view, clean air and water, and wildlife refuge at the crest of Bucklin Hill, will thank Marge and her family for their generous gift for many years to come.

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— 2010: The Year of the Member —

2009 was another pivotal year for Great Peninsula Conservancy. In 2008 we placed our emphasis on revitalizing our operating systems, membership outreach, and conservation partnerships. While in 2009 our conservation program really took off with the hiring of a Conservation Director, launching of the Forests Initiative, and revision of our Conservation Plan. I'm looking to 2010 to be the year our fundraising and membership expand to meet the needs of our growing organization. To borrow (very) loosely from the Chinese calendar, I'll call it 'The Year of the Member'.

Great Peninsula Conservancy's members and donors are truly the lifeblood of our work. In 2009, GPC members and donors contributed 52% of our operating budget. In 2008, it was 69%. The difference is primarily due to increased success in 2009 in obtaining grants from private foundations and government agencies. While we will continue to seek grants to support our Conservation Initiatives, support from members will always be critical to our mission.

GPC members are a committed group of people who share a common vision for conserving the great places of the Great Peninsula for our children, grandchildren, and future generations. We share a passion for the land that is evidenced in many ways, one of which is our willingness to contribute our hard-earned dollars to support Great

Peninsula Conservancy. I know there are many more people like you in our communities. Our goal for 2010, The Year of the Member, is to strengthen our financial base by increasing the number of GPC members and donors.

Today, a dedicated group of 500 people make up GPC's members and donors. You have made GPC an organization of which we all can be proud. Now, we need to reach out and encourage more people to join in our important work. The staff and board will be working toward that end in 2010. I invite you to be part of the effort. Please consider sharing Great Peninsula Conservancy's stories with your family, friends, and colleagues. A colorful palette of conservation lands is awaiting GPC's protection. With more people wielding paintbrushes, we can extend our brush strokes over a much broader sweep of the landscape.

This year is Great Peninsula Conservancy's 10th anniversary. Please join me in making this anniversary year – The Year of the Member.

Sandra
Staples-Bortner
Executive Director



Photo Credit: Sivad Studios

Great Peninsula Challenge

2007-2009 Challenge

Since the fall of 2007, members of Great Peninsula Conservancy contributed and pledged \$118,000 toward our 2007-2009 Great Peninsula Challenge goal of \$126,000. While we came in \$8,000 under our target, this was a remarkable achievement for our nearly 500 members. Thank you!



Photo Credit:
Byron Kane

Immature bald eagle over
Klingel Wildlife Refuge.

2010 Challenge Goal – \$50,000

As we turn our attention to 2010, GPC has launched a new one-year Challenge of \$50,000. This bump from about \$40,000 a year to \$50,000 is certainly within our reach. As before, all contributions to the Challenge will be matched and support vital work in GPC's three initiatives: Streams & Estuaries, Forests, and Community Greenspaces. Conserving the great places of the Great Peninsula will only happen with your support. Please help us meet our 2010 goal!

Great Peninsula Conservancy

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

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GPC Conservation Plan

A Road Map to Our Future

Great Peninsula Conservancy is beginning the new year with a new Conservation Plan. We are evaluating ourselves, thinking about how we do conservation, and looking at projects for the future. Of course, we cannot do it alone and we value your outlook on how to keep our waters clean, help fish and wildlife to thrive, make sure natural areas are within reach of communities, and support working lands that give us a variety of food and forest products.

Why is the document important? The Draft Conservation Plan presents a type of road map that will help us to fulfill our mission – protecting forever the natural habitats, rural landscapes, and open spaces of the Great Peninsula. Without a map, we won't know where we are going and we won't know when we get there! GPC's previous Conservation Plan excellently outlined properties that we wished to preserve. Efforts led to many successful conservation projects, including greater protection along the Clear Creek Trail, purchase of properties in the Chico Creek Watershed, and acquisition of Sehmel Homestead Park in Gig Harbor.

With our Draft Plan in hand, we are now ready to gather feedback on our action strategies, criteria for project selection, and identify future projects for the next six years (2010-2015). We are pursuing our priorities by, of course, focusing on conservation of lands and waters that are reflected in our three Conservation Initiatives: Streams & Estuaries, Forests, and Community Greenspaces. Landowners are our primary partners in conservation, and we educate people on options for voluntary conservation and stewardship of their property. We also nurture our conservation partnerships with public agencies, tribes, community groups, and other conservation groups. By following this multi-pronged approach, Great Peninsula Conservancy continues to expand its capacity to conserve priority lands and waters across our region.

The Draft Conservation Plan was the subject of a lively Open House at GPC's office on February 3. Folks had an opportunity to speak face-to-face with GPC staff and Board members, learn about the Draft Plan, and express their views on just about anything having to do with conservation on the Great Peninsula. These comments will help shape the final revision of the Draft Plan before GPC's Board of Directors formally adopts it later this spring.

Working through the planning process will strengthen

partnerships and renew connections with members, community groups, and project partners. We also hope to discover new friends along the way. Finalization of the Conservation Plan will help GPC showcase our work and compete for important sources of grant funds. Most importantly, the Plan will provide clear direction and guidance for GPC's Board and staff to ensure we spend our limited financial and human resources wisely.

What is next? Your input is vital. If you have not done so already, **please review and provide feedback on the Draft Plan.** It is available on the GPC website at www.greatpeninsula.org. After reading the Draft Plan, you are encouraged to let us know what you think of it by completing a short online survey. If you wish, you also have the choice of mailing, emailing, or calling with your comments. We are eager to hear from you as we create a road map for the next six years of conservation action!

Conservation Strategies:

- Focus conservation on priority lands: Streams and Estuaries
- Focus conservation on priority lands: Forests
- Focus conservation on priority lands: Community Greenspaces
- Develop conservation partnerships with individuals, public agencies, tribes, community groups, and other conservation organizations
- Conduct outreach to landowners on options for land conservation
- Build GPC's capacity to be responsive to conservation opportunities



Conservation Director Michael Yadrick and long-time GPC supporter, Alice Harris, discuss GPC Draft Conservation Plan at the February 3 Open House.

Martha John Creek Conservation

Photo Credit: Michael Yadrick



Cedar Cove at the mouth of Martha John Creek.

Natural shorelines, free-flowing creeks and wetland habitats characterize Great Peninsula Conservancy's Streams and Estuaries Initiative. GPC's Martha John Creek Conservation Project is one of our newer endeavors in North Kitsap County. Conserving Martha John Creek's pocket estuary and forested watershed will, in a small way, help to protect the "jewel" of Hood Canal – Port Gamble Bay.

Travelling north and south along Hansville Road, you move along the eastern extent of the watershed that ultimately drains into the southeast corner of Port Gamble Bay via Martha John Creek. From its headwaters near Miller Lake to its outlet in Cedar Cove, Martha John Creek winds its ways through a mostly forested landscape. Though small in size, Martha John Creek and Cedar Cove are in good ecological condition and we want to keep them that way! Where freshwater mixes with saltwater, the tidal creek and marshy lagoon give refuge to coho and chum salmon as well as sea-run cutthroat trout.

The Martha John Creek Watershed spotlights some of the best things about living around Port Gamble Bay – open water with a beautiful forested backdrop, abundant wildlife, and plentiful shellfish beds. The watershed has not always been healthy, though. State health officials closed commercial shellfish harvest in Cedar Cove for three years in the late 1990s due to high fecal coliform levels. Now, the salmon population

in Martha John Creek has been declining over the last few years. These natural resources are central to the culture of GPC's primary partner in the project, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Protection of upstream habitat is critical to protecting water quality in the cove. In 2001, Great Peninsula Conservancy made a start by protecting seven acres of wetlands near the junction of 288th Street and Gamble Bay Road. The open water here is part of a complex of wetlands that is connected to undeveloped Miller Lake. The wetland supports a dense growth of sedges, hardstem bulrush, and cattails that provide

freshwater habitat for young fish and other wildlife. The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe owns 400 acres adjoining Martha John Creek. They are managing this land with protection of the stream as a high priority.

Outreach to neighbors will be a key element in the project as Great Peninsula Conservancy and the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe move forward with development of a conservation plan for Martha John Creek and Cedar Cove. GPC is beginning to meet individually with neighbors and will soon host a community gathering to invite their input on conservation and stewardship of Martha John Creek. Anyone wishing to participate in this community effort is urged to contact Great Peninsula Conservancy.



Martha John, a revered S'Klallam elder.

Who was Martha John?

by Siv Carlson

Martha John Creek bears the name of a beloved and honored member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. Martha John, of S'Klallam and Lummi descent, was a revered elder for her knowledge of traditional storytelling, crafts, and three native languages. When the Port Gamble S'Klallam built the House of Knowledge in 2004, the symbol of Martha John's clan, the owl, was carved into the center of one of the doors. According to one of the carvers, this was done to celebrate those individuals who took care to keep the S'Klallam culture alive.

Martha John was born in 1891 and, for the first years of her life, split time between Guemes Island and Port Gamble. Eventually staying in the Port Gamble area with her father, she described her upbringing as "unconventional" since as a girl she was allowed to run around outside

all the time. By third grade, Martha John was working in homes around Port Gamble and saving money to spend on outings to Seattle. This self sufficiency, aided by an undying interest in all things she could learn and observe, would become the key feature of Martha John's personality so highly regarded by later generations.

When a University of Washington language researcher wanted to learn about Suquamish, S'Klallam, and Chinook Jargon, Martha John was the one to teach them. Along with languages, Martha John also recounted legends and stories, and taught crafts and fishing techniques. Living well into her late 80s, her independent spirit and self subsistence ways, combined with careful observations early on in her life, made her a most important and valuable member of the S'Klallam People.

Gilberton Creek Restoration Update

Great Peninsula Conservancy is fortunate to have had the assistance of Kitsap Conservation District in assessing options for restoring Gilberton Creek. This small East Kitsap stream was heavily damaged by a road washout in December 2007 caused by an undersized culvert and heavy rains. The damage is in full view: reduced

Photo Credit: Betsy Carlison



Illahee Road asphalt paving, here showing the white center-line stripe, washed into Gilberton Creek.

water quality, damage to habitats, and reduced scenic values. Conservation District Engineer Rich Geiger has recommended an approach to restore the estuary and nearshore environment at the least cost and with least impact on the stream and estuary habitat.

The road washout severely scoured Gilberton's stream channel, leaving behind large gravel in the upper creek and deep mud in the pocket estuary. Slabs of asphalt, large chunks from the old concrete culvert, and lengths of guardrail litter the stream floor, some buried up to two and a half feet deep! Now two years later,

Gilberton Creek after the Illahee Road Wash Out

- 1/2 mile of creek impacted from Illahee Road to shoreline
- Heavy scouring of ~120 ft. of stream below road embankment
- Stream bank scoured leaving 7 ft. cuts in places
- 590 dump truck loads of fill washed downstream
- 6.5 dump truck loads of asphalt (~134 tons) deposited in stream and pocket estuary
- Slabs of asphalt buried to a depth of 2.5 ft. in some locations
- Asphalt left at a height of 4.5 ft. on the banks of the stream
- Guard rail left 6.5 ft. up a tree
- Large trees uprooted and washed downstream to litter the cove and beach

vegetation is re-establishing itself on the valley floor, which helps stabilize the stream channel. However gravel and mud will continue to move through the system for several years. The new 10-foot culvert under Illahee Road seems up to the task of letting Gilberton Creek's normally low-water flow unimpeded. While this is good, it makes it unlikely that winter rains or tidal action will be sufficient to flush out the deep mud that has accumulated in the cove.

Salmon are not known to spawn in Gilberton Creek. However, its pocket estuary does provide important habitat for salmon, other fish, and a variety of birds. Our restoration efforts will be focused on the pocket estuary – known as Grahn Kove.

The recommended approach is to remove the worst debris from the stream channel and cove, dig out the estuary, and prevent new sediment from refilling the estuary. The first step in the restoration will be to remove the accessible road debris from the stream valley, estuary, and surrounding beaches. Large tree trunks and root wads littering

the tideflats are a navigation hazard for boats and also should be removed. There may be an opportunity to use some of this wood as habitat features in the restored estuary.

The estuary can be restored by digging out enough mud from the cove so that it again holds water at low tide and tidal flushing action is restored.

Since we expect upstream sediments from the road washout to continue to make their way downstream, a sediment trap will be built just upstream of the cove. The purpose of the trap – basically a large pit dug into the stream channel – is to capture this sediment before it can refill the lagoon. The sediment trap would need to be dug out annually during the dry season. Over time, the upstream creek bed will stabilize, and the trap will no longer be needed.

Recommendations in hand, Great Peninsula Conservancy is now consulting with affected landowners, Kitsap County, Suquamish Tribe, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine the feasibility of this restoration proposal. Stream restoration is part science and part art, so these additional viewpoints will help shape a strong restoration plan. We can then move ahead with the real undertaking of restoration.



Illahee Road guardrail and large woody debris in Gilberton Creek.

Photo Credit: Betsy Carlison

GPC 10th Anniversary

Photo Credit: Mary Ellen McCaffree



Gary Cunningham, first GPC Board President, addresses membership at "Merger Day Celebration" in June 2000.

Thirty years ago the first of four local land trusts formed to help their communities and neighbors preserve natural areas and woodlands, protect fragile shorelines, restore degraded streams and wetlands, and take care of these special places forever.

stewardship responsibilities for their lands far into the future. To provide that assurance, Great Peninsula Conservancy was established ten years ago with the merger of four local conservancies: Hood Canal, Kitsap, Indianola, and Peninsula Heritage land trusts. Thanks to the foresight of our founders and to those that have carried their vision forward, Great Peninsula Conservancy is going strong ten years later. GPC is still providing land conservation resources to individuals, communities, and our conservation partners throughout the region... *protecting forever the lands and waters of the Great Peninsula.*

Milestones in thirty years of local land conservation

- Indianola Land Trust founded in 1980 as 2nd oldest land trust in Washington State
- First fee title property donated to Hood Canal Land Trust in 1985 – Klingel Wildlife Refuge
- First conservation easement donated to Hood Canal Land Trust in 1986 – Johnson South Sound Refuge
- First fee title property donated to Indianola Land Trust in 1989 – Puget Street
- First conservation easement and fee title property donated to Kitsap Land Trust in 1991 – Hood Canal - Lofall - Bolin
- First conservation easement donated to Indianola Land Trust in 1992 – Indianola Greenway - West/Stech
- First conservation easement donated to Peninsula Heritage Land Trust in 1993 – Henderson Bay - Home - Lind
- First fee title property donated to Peninsula Heritage Land Trust in 1995 – Henderson Bay - Home Cemetery
- Great Peninsula Conservancy formed by merger in May 2000
- First Executive Director hired in December 2000
 - Staff grows to three in 2009
 - Over 2,000 acres protected in Kitsap, west Pierce, and north Mason Counties

For their pioneering protection efforts to be successful, the founding land trusts recognized the need for a viable organization that could shoulder



Founding Land Trust members gather at Clear Creek Sa'qad Interpretive Center to celebrate creation of Great Peninsula Conservancy in June 2000.

Photo Credit: Mary Ellen McCaffree

Shoreline Management Plan Review

All of Washington's counties are currently in the process of updating their shoreline management plans. While most of us do not become terribly excited about the details of land use planning, this update has the possibility of dramatically altering the way we use and even think about our shorelines. The original state legislation, enacted in 1971, was followed by the various county plans, which have remained basically the same for the last 38 years.

The update has some very specific goals. First, it will attempt to balance the goals of the Shoreline Management Act: encourage water dependent uses, protect shoreline natural resources, and

promote public access. Second, there is a mandate for no-net-loss of ecological functions, and finally there must be provisions for shoreline restoration.

The jurisdictions (counties and cities) must start with an exhaustive analysis of the existing shorelines, both marine and freshwater. This will be followed by an extensive public review process. Pierce County has been in the process for almost two years. Kitsap and Mason counties are just beginning.

If you are interested in the health of shorelines, you can take part by connecting to the Kitsap or Pierce county websites, or send a letter to the Mason County Planning Department c/o Barbara Adkins.

GPC Members in Action

Photo Credit: Sidnie Shaffer



Linda Benedict (second from left) and John Dickson (third from left) receive recognition of their legacy gifts to GPC and a "Legacy Society rock" at Fall Donor Reception.



Photo Credit: Ken Shawcroft

Hansville Greenway volunteers recently completed this new bridge at Hawk's Hole on the Hansville Greenway; funding for this project was provided by a generous gift from an anonymous donor.

Photo Credit: Kate Kuhiman



Clear Creek Trail recently provided an outdoor classroom for Peter Callahan's (left) Olympic College Environmental Sciences class. Students identified wetland soil types, wetland vegetation and discussed present and past uses of the fields and wetlands in the Clear Creek valley north of Silverdale.

2009 Stewardship by the Numbers

- 57 of 57 Conservation Easement projects monitored
- 41 of 42 Fee Title projects monitored
- 6 Baseline Reports completed covering 19 properties

Sinclair Inlet Birding Trip Report

On January 21, 12 GPC members joined Executive Director Sandra Staples-Bortner on a birdwatching trip along the south side of Sinclair Inlet. Stopping at several places from Port Orchard to Gorst, this eager group spotted 17 species of water birds, including large numbers of Barrow's goldeneye, white-winged scoter, bufflehead, and American wigeon. Sinclair Inlet is a heavily used wintering area for many species of ducks. We also were fortunate to see all three species of merganser: red-breasted, common, and the much smaller hooded. In the shallows, we saw pintail, mallard, and the strikingly beautiful green-winged teal. The search for shorebirds turned up black turnstone and sanderling. Many of the trip participants were novice birders who delighted in learning the different species and seeing them through the high power of a spotting scope. Participants remarked that our leisurely 9:30 a.m. start time and the mild weather contributed to the fun of the trip.

Photo Credit: Terry Mace



Green-winged Teal



Hooded Merganser

Memorial Gifts

(November 2009 – January 2010)



In memory of Dick Armstrong

Bill & Linda Bruce

In memory of Dr. & Mrs. H. A. Barner

Bruce & Tina Barner

In memory of Donna Cooper Pepos

Bill & Berrit Price

In memory of Rick Fackler

Robert Elliott

In memory of Dan & Shirley Inveen

Cam & Esther Haslam

Laura Inveen

In memory of Fred Reisch

Ann Reisch

In memory of Cory Topness

Richard & Carolyn Topness

In memory of Larry Wiltermood

Ann Reisch



Great Peninsula Conservancy

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Calendar of Events

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Review GPC's Conservation Plan & Take a Short Survey

Share your ideas.

Help shape the future of the Great Peninsula.

It's easy! Just visit www.greatpeninsula.org and follow the links at the bottom of our home page. Comments accepted through February 28.

— SAVE THE DATES! —

Sehmel Homestead Park Opening Gig Harbor in April

Watch www.penmetparks.org for details.

GPC Annual Celebration and Auction - July 24.

Something new will be added to our Annual Celebration this summer – a fundraising auction! Do you have a beach cottage, ski condo, or vacation getaway you would consider donating to GPC for a weekend or week? Perhaps you are an artist and could donate an original painting or sculpture? Or maybe you are an avid sailor or sea kayaker and would like to host a couple of lucky members on a Puget Sound excursion? Be creative and contact GPC (sandra@greatpeninsula.org) with your ideas soon. Thank you!

Photo Credit: Katherine De Bruyn



A week at a cottage in this picturesque French Village will be auctioned at GPC's Annual Celebration on July 24.