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Campaign to Save Petersen Farm Makes Community Goal

Great Peninsula Conservancy has succeeded in raising \$415,000 from the local community to help save Silverdale's Petersen Farm. A tremendous response from Great Peninsula Conservancy members and the public at large made this accomplishment possible. More than 250 people, groups, and public agencies made donations to the campaign. Contributions were received from across the Great Peninsula—from Hansville on the north to Belfair and Gig Harbor on the south. Gifts also came from around Puget Sound and even as far as Guam and Germany.

The campaign was completed with a closing gift of \$20,000 from Frank Stutesman of Snohomish County. Stutesman was pleased to be able to make the gift from the required annual distribution from his IRA, and by so doing avoid paying federal income tax on the distribution. Many other people made last minute donations to the campaign, some even making a second or third gift. Phone calls to Great Peninsula Conservancy in the closing days indicated high interest in the project. The campaign deadline of November 15 was extended to November 30 to allow these late donors to participate.

While the community goal of \$415,000 has been achieved, the farm's fate is not yet secured. These funds are to be used as match in a grant application to USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program for an additional \$285,000 to achieve the total project budget of \$700,000. Application will be made early in 2012 with a decision by spring or early summer.

Other significant donors to the campaign include: Estate of Gerald Petersen – approx. \$200,000, Bill and Bee Mahan Charitable Trust – \$43,000, Port of Silverdale – \$25,000, an anonymous Kitsap family – \$20,000, Gary and Marilyn Cunningham – \$10,000, Jerry and Nancy Reid – \$10,000, Linda Benedict – \$5,000, and Bremerton Rotary – \$5,000.

Great Peninsula Conservancy extends its heartfelt thanks to the many individuals, organizations, agencies, and partners who helped achieve this accomplishment. It has been inspiring to see such enthusiasm for saving a piece of our farm heritage and passion for building a strong farm future in our community. Thank you!

Gerald Petersen, the farm's owner, passed away in September 2009 at the age of 94. Soon after, Great Peninsula Conservancy learned that Petersen's will instructed his niece, Dorothy Lind, to sell the property, while trying to ensure that it be conserved as a working farm. Lind sought out Great Peninsula Conservancy for help in making this happen. GPC had long been interested in conserving this Clear

Creek Valley landscape and proposed to purchase a conservation easement on the farm to give permanent protection to the land. The estate then would sell the land to a private individual who would farm the land under the conservation restrictions. These restrictions permanently extinguish development rights from the land and conserve its natural features—farm fields, creek, and forests.

Great Peninsula Conservancy initially focused on obtaining state and federal farm preservation grants to purchase the conservation easement. About one year ago it became apparent that significant private contributions also would be needed. Planning for a capital campaign was soon underway and, after first obtaining a few key pledges, the campaign was formally launched in mid June of this year with a November 15, 2011 deadline—only five months.

A small but dedicated campaign committee made presentations to local service clubs, garden clubs, and public agencies—many of which responded with generous donations. Private individuals also were asked to help save the farm. Again, many responded with generous contributions. In August 2010 and September 2011, the public was invited to tour the farm. Hundreds turned out for a day of family fun that included hay rides, kids' games, a farmers market, and walking tours that highlighted the legacy of this homestead farm. Along the way, frequent newspaper articles kept the public apprised of the campaign's progress and helped reach a successful conclusion.

Great Peninsula Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust working to preserve forever the natural habitats, rural landscapes, and open spaces of the Great Peninsula – a region encompassing Kitsap, Mason, and western Pierce counties, Washington. Great Peninsula Conservancy has protected over 5,700 acres of this spectacular region of west Puget Sound, including magnificent forests, untouched shorelines, salmon streams, wildlife-rich estuaries, working forests, and family farms.