



Greater Gig Harbor Foundation

Building, Bridging, and Enriching Our Community Since 2006

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greater Gig Harbor Foundation's GHKP Conservation Fund Awards \$25,000 Grant to Friends of Harbor Hill Environmental Sanctuary Project

Gig Harbor, WA — The Greater Gig Harbor Foundation's Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula (GHKP) Conservation Fund has awarded \$25,000 in its initial grant cycle to the Friends of Harbor Hill Environmental Sanctuary (FHHES) project. The grant will help fund site restoration with native plants and permanent educational signage that will share the history of the site, information about wildlife, and the efforts of the Heron's Key residents who came together to create a lasting legacy that will provide opportunities for intergenerational use and learning.

Founded in late 2018, by Bill Lewallen, retired former Deputy Director of Paine Field in Snohomish County, is a Heron's Key community resident. During his tenure, Lewallen was involved with planning at Narbek, one of the state's first wetland compensation banks. There he led the formation of the Friends of Narbeck Wetland Sanctuary project, which served as a model for the Harbor Hill area project (FHHES). Securing its nonprofit status in 2019, the FHHES came under the Greater Gig Harbor Foundation in late March 2019. Since that time, the Foundation has provided legal, fiduciary, compliance and administrative oversight and services to FHHES, in what is commonly referred to as fiscal sponsorship. Work of the FHHES project is overseen by its Board of Directors, all residents of Heron's Key.

With the Foundation's investments in our community's environment topping \$3 million since 2006 and its history of commitment to environmental education, protecting critical lands and waters, strengthening community ties, and supporting climate resiliency, three families joined to form the GHKP Conservation Fund. The goal of the Fund's visionary founders is simple - to ensure that local financial resources are managed and available as opportunities arise to safeguard area lands and protect nature as both an economic and community asset.

"We were thrilled to recommend the approval of the \$25,000 award from the Fund for the Sanctuary project to support its work to restore the lands disturbed when the area was developed and to provide an accessible natural space for all in the neighboring communities," said a private donor and founder of the GHKP Conservation Fund. "The Sanctuary provides both a haven for wildlife and offers a serene environment for residents and visitors to connect with nature. This gift underscores our commitment to our community and to the lands and waters that make it special."

Phase 1 of the Sanctuary project included installation of a paved trail and benches, creating an accessible environment for visitors of all mobilities. The benches along the trail serve as viewing areas to observe the Sanctuary's diverse wildlife and natural beauty.

With support from the GHKP Conservation Fund, the Sanctuary is in a strong position to proceed with Phase 2 of its development taking place this fall. This final phase will focus on visitor experience enhancements such as the installation of educational signs, granite entry sign, and native vegetation. Planting is expected to begin in October.

"Established in 2020, the donor advised GHKP Conservation Fund, is one of the Foundation's managed funds," said Ariel Gustanski, GGHF COO. "As a community foundation, we work with donors to realize their long-term giving goals and preserve their wishes about how their funds are managed to support the causes they care about and help turn their gifts into lasting legacies. This is the work of a community foundation." Information on the Conservation Fund and how you can donate can be found here (<https://gghf.info/GHKPconservation>)

The community is invited to contribute to the continued success of the Sanctuary project. For more information or to support the project, please visit the project website (<https://gghf.info/FHHES>).

For inquiries, please contact:

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About Greater Gig Harbor Foundation

The Greater Gig Harbor Foundation (GGHF) is the only community foundation specifically working to meet the diverse needs of our greater Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula communities. The charitable 501 (C)(3) nonprofit organization has invested more than \$19 million in grants, scholarships, land, equipment, and volunteer labor during its 18-year history. At its core, the GGHF is an organization created with gifts from generous people committed to local causes. For donors, the Foundation serves as a philanthropic advisor. For the community, the Foundation serves as a grant maker and a civic leader. Through the support of its donors, volunteers and fundholders, the Foundation has been able to address some of the community's most pressing needs. For more information, visit www.gigharborfoundation.org