

**A Community Advocate Examines the Vital Links between:  
Land Use, Local Culture, and Cultural Conservation**

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## Abstract

Occupational traditions like commercial fishing and family farming require local landscapes and properties in order to continue to exist and evolve. Communities need to act to counter land development that has one goal – short term profit (“highest and best” land-use). To anchor local place-based occupational traditions that provide social, cultural, *and economic* benefits to a community means finding ways to bypass that single outcome and dominant land development model. In Gig Harbor, Washington, “highest and best” land-use development has toppled traditional waterfront properties like a row of dominos, including commercial fishing family landscapes and marine fueling facilities, replacing them with recreational marinas, blacktop parking lots, and upscale residential uses. City planning goals calling for traditional use retention are unenforceable, and historic preservation projects preserve only the skeletons of living traditions. Traditional use advocates in Gig Harbor, beginning in 2002, began to alter the local waterfront land-use paradigm. “Land Use, Local Culture, and Cultural Conservation” details a portion of that story.

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## **Introduction**

### **Local Occupational Traditions Rely on Local Landscapes**

Family farming culture and commercial fishing family culture require access to farmland and waterfront properties. Conservation of community occupational culture cannot (and should not) be separated from the conservation of cultural landscapes,<sup>1</sup> or the development of new sites, vital to the work and the “place-making” of occupational traditions. Sustaining occupational culture within a community means securing a place for it to exist. Setha M. Low neatly frames that link in her essay *Cultural Conservation of Place*: “Without place conservation, the contexts for culturally meaningful behaviors and processes of place-making disappear, cutting us off from our past, disrupting the present, and limiting the possibilities for the future.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, communities that cannot find ways to conserve traditional cultural space are guaranteed the erosion and ultimately the loss of the valued cultural traditions that define place over time. This paper will describe a grassroots advocacy strategy designed to sustain existing commercial fishing culture on the waterfront of Gig Harbor, Washington, by advocating for existing commercial fishing use on a publically owned and intact commercial fishing landscape.

### **Community Background: Gig Harbor Past and Present**

Gig Harbor is a small community surrounding a protected harbor a few miles west of Tacoma, Washington, on Southern Puget Sound. It has a rich legacy of family based working waterfront occupational traditions, primarily commercial fishing and boatbuilding. Croatian

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<sup>1</sup> Alanen, Arnold R. and Melnick Robert Z., *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, (the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pg. ix.

(“The cultural landscape is by definition unique – that combination of natural landforms and buildings that defines a particular place or region. It is the creation of women, men, and children who lived their lives within that landscape.” “The cultural landscape tells us who we are, as Americans, far more effectively than most individual works of architecture or exhibits in museums ever can.” Dolores Hayden)

<sup>2</sup> Low, Setha M, “Cultural Conservation of Place,” in *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, ed. by Mary Hufford, (University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 66.

immigrants arrived in Gig Harbor<sup>3</sup> towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and initiated the commercial fishing and boatbuilding traditions that exist today. The fishing families of Gig Harbor lined the shore with dozens of net sheds - over water structures that are used to store and work on fishing nets<sup>4</sup>. Most of the net sheds were joined on the same property by a family house. The Gig Harbor boatyards were similarly structured landscapes in that each boatyard had a corresponding home adjacent to the boatbuilding facility. At mid-point in the last century, in addition to commercial fishing and boatbuilding sites, there were four or five waterfront fueling facilities, several waterfront marine supply stores, a fishing family herring pen facility, and various other working waterfront uses that dotted the city waterfront.

Today two boatyards remain. Of the 17 net sheds that remain, only five are actively used by commercial fishermen. Near all of the fishing vessels that homeport in Gig Harbor have been squeezed onto those five remaining active commercial fishing family properties. There are no marine fueling facilities left. The net sheds, in particular, are iconic shoreline structures unique to Gig Harbor. They represent one of Gig Harbor's most important occupations, commercial fishing, and were listed on the 2008 Most Endangered Properties List by the Washington State Trust for Historic Preservation.

Working waterfront traditions continue to provide the community with its sense of place; the City of Gig Harbor branding name is the "Maritime City." The local museum's main exhibition space is primarily focused on commercial fishing and boatbuilding. The largest local waterfront festival revolves around the blessing of the fishing fleet. Citizens

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<sup>3</sup> The following link takes the reader to a power point presented at the National Working Waterfront & Waterways Symposium in March of 2013. Guy Hoppen, Lita Dawn Stanton, Peter Katich and Peter Knutson presented. The content mirrors much of this paper's content.  
[http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6\\_Stanton.pdf](http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6_Stanton.pdf) , visual overview of Gig Harbor, p. 1 - 15.

<sup>4</sup> [http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6\\_Stanton.pdf](http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6_Stanton.pdf) , Net Shed overview, p. 44 - 64.

overwhelmingly voted to save and pay for the historic Eddon Boatyard now hosting a not-for-profit organization. The last commercial boatyard is thriving. Outside of Seattle and Bellingham the Gig Harbor fleet is the largest fishing fleet moored on Puget Sound. Clearly Gig Harborites value and utilize Gig Harbor's waterfront heritage and working waterfront sites.

Thirty-four active fishing vessels are home-ported in Gig Harbor, including my family's three vessels. Most of the fleet has been pushed onto a few remaining active fishing family properties. Over time recreational marina development has displaced most of the commercial fishing landscapes. The consolidation of the majority of fishing vessels has certainly made the fleet less visible and reinforces the "must be a dying way of life" story that often accompanies the gentrifying land-use narrative. But, if people were to stop and look, and critically analyze the commercial fishing presence on Gig Harbor's waterfront, they would notice a vitality that runs counter to the diminished fishing industry spiel. The majority of the boats found in the local commercial fishing fleet are salmon purse seiners. Twenty years ago many of those seiners were wood boats built for the Puget Sound salmon fishery and were near the end of their useful life. The only one left today is the *Shenandoah* and she's at the local museum. The older seiners have been replaced by newer purse seiners, vessels that are worth one to two million dollars, and all the fishing vessels, wood, steel and glass, are well maintained. People would spot a few gillnetters like my son's boats, the *Gypsy* and *Sumac*, which are bigger and newer than the gillnetters of 20 years ago. Keen observers would also notice that of many of the fishing vessel captains are in their twenties and early thirties, and they'd sense that the fleet has grown by a few boats over the last few years. Driving by the net sheds on a fall fishing day in Puget Sound they would see seine crewmember's newer cars and trucks parked end to end on Harborview Drive. The critical

waterfront observer would correctly conclude that there was very little to see that reinforced the idea that commercial fishing was a way of life in decline.

Yet, existing commercial fishing landscapes continue to disappear, despite signs of cultural recognition by the community and the economic strength of the North Pacific commercial fishing industry. The following is quoted from “City of Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan” overall goal language: “Preserve the commercial fishing fleet as a significant cultural and economic resource. Retain important fleet services and promote development of additional moorage and docking facilities consistent with the fleet’s needs.”<sup>5</sup> As it turns out the City Comprehensive Plan commercial fishing goal, and similar goal language contained in the Shoreline Master Program, are of no use when attempting to save a private commercial fishing family property from development. Ten years ago I asked City of Gig Harbor senior planner, Peter Katich, about the failure of explicit city planning language that called for the retention of commercial fishing use on the waterfront to actually aid in that retention. He explained that on a case-by-case basis there were no city regulations or codes in place to enforce the overall community planning goals for waterfront development. In other words – city regulations and codes do not support the waterfront use vision and goals of the greater community as articulated in the clear language of the Comprehensive Plan and the “City of Gig Harbor Shoreline Master Program.” “Highest and best” land-use, and property owner and developer rights prevail over all community planning land-use goals if in conflict. Over time, I learned that there is little will among planning departments and elected officials to add regulatory tools that reinforce overall community land-use planning goals. That information was hard to digest.

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<sup>5</sup> City of Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan, 1994, p. 72.



## **“Highest and Best” Land-Use: A Local Cultural Landscape Blight**

“Lacking an authentic local culture, a place is open to exploitation, and ultimately destruction, from the center.”<sup>6</sup> Wendell Berry, in his essay *The Work of Local Culture*, puts into words what the community activist instinctively knows as he/she struggles to sustain culture and place. The grassroots cultural conservationist orbiting outside the “center” will nearly always oppose entrenched community power brokers and a development community that espouse the neo-liberal idea of “highest and best” land-use, and the related concepts of “rationalization,” and “revitalization” when justifying the redevelopment of traditional community landscapes.

These terms sound reasonable - highest, best, rationale, revitalize - but often disguise development that has a single motive – profit, either developer profit or consolidated profit for corporations. When hearing the terms applied to resource or land management in your community it should be cause for alarm. The cultural conservationist or any citizen who believes strongly in community diversity, traditions and values, needs to shed light on development motives and point out the cultural, social and human costs of a proposed development.

Neo-liberal economic orthodoxy is associated with “free marketers,” “Reaganomics,” and “laissez-faire,” “but it is often called ‘free trade’ or simply ‘globalization.’”<sup>7</sup> Naomi Klein explains that, “all these incarnations share a commitment to the policy trinity - the elimination of the public sphere, total liberation for corporations and skeletal social spending.” Adherents of neo-liberal economic orthodoxy believe that an unregulated free market can dictate the best outcomes for a society. “Highest and best” land-use is in keeping with neo-liberal orthodoxy. It is a myopic land development concept which states that any

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<sup>6</sup> Berry, Wendell, *The Work of Local Culture*, in *What Are People For*, (North Point Press, 1990), p. 166.

<sup>7</sup> Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, (Picador, 2008), p. 17.

property development, to be “rational,” must achieve the highest short-term monetary value, period. Promoters of “highest and best” land-use believe that the market will achieve the best outcomes for land-use for the greater community. “Highest and best” land-use, in concert with private property rights heavily influences community planners and elected policy makers. The following quote from a planning site illustrates the how influential the concept has become. “Planners and local officials serve their communities best when they listen to all claims that a property should be rezoned because the proposed use is the highest and best land use of the parcel of land.”<sup>8</sup> This statement is stunning for its blind faith that a profit-only land-use model will provide a blanket of land-use benefit for a community, and for the inferred notion claiming that cultural, social, or ecological considerations should be of little consequence to decision makers. Application of this narrow-minded “highest and best” land-use concept, developed by real estate appraisers, trumps community generated planning goals, goals that typically promote land-use diversity and, in the case of my hometown of Gig Harbor, Washington, the retention of the valued occupational traditions of the local working waterfront.

The cultural conservator’s alarm should also be set to go off when hearing the word “revitalize”. Revitalization, a more palatable word for gentrification, is a term that is generally associated with the removal of traditional properties, working class neighborhoods, or long-time residents and replacing them with middle or upper middle class residential and commercial uses. Gentrification is “often disguised as ‘regeneration’, ‘renaissance’, ‘revitalization’, or ‘renewal,’ gentrification has become, in the words of one renowned gentrification scholar [N. Smith, 2002], ‘a global urban strategy’ and ‘the consummate expression of an emerging neo-liberal urbanism.’”<sup>9</sup> To be fair there are shades

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<sup>8</sup> <http://planning.blogspot.com>.

<sup>9</sup> Lees, Loretta, Slater, Tom, and Wyly, Elvin, *Gentrification*, (Routledge, 2008), pg. xxi.

of gray associated with “revitalization,” for instance, the change of use of the Eddon Boatyard from a family boatbuilding use to an interpretative boatyard non-profit can easily be characterized as gentrification. In that case, as an activist, I think back to the upscale housing and recreational marina development that was proposed for the site and the cultural conservator in me accepts the compromise. “Highest and best” land-use, on the other hand, needs to be characterized for what it is, a shortsighted single outcome land-use philosophy that can be used to “rationalize” the subverting of community planning goals – planning goals that mirror community desires for landscape use.

### **An Alternative to the Shackles of “Highest and Best” Land-Use**

I now understood that developer rights could easily thwart the collective will of a community, despite that will being manifested in community planning document language. I knew that local fishing families wanted to keep their vessels and gear in their hometown, but sites to moor fishing vessels were being erased apace. There were more total boats, recreational and commercial, moored in Gig Harbor than ever before, yet waterfront services like boatyards were disappearing or were simply gone like fuel docks. Waterfront land-use planning goals were impotent, unable to protect the waterfront diversity that the community demanded.

Commercial fishing family waterfront property values had risen to a point where fishing families couldn’t justify purchasing another fishing family’s property, even with a robust commercial fishing industry economy. The same scenario held for a family boatyard property and all working waterfront sites; property values had risen too far for viable water dependent working waterfront uses to be maintained. “Highest and best” land-use development was toppling the working waterfront like a row of dominos, establishing a single use waterfront of recreational marinas, their blacktop parking lots, with some

upscale homes and condos. It's a development pattern all too common on community waterfronts worldwide as waterfront property has become more valued and sought after by the wealthy. In October of 2003, a front-page illustration appeared in the local paper. The headline read, over a birds-eye view illustration of seven upscale homes and a recreational marina, *Upscale new Harborview home sites go on Market*.<sup>10</sup>

For several of us in Gig Harbor that news story turned out to be the tipping point for our working waterfront activism. The upscale residential development was going to raze the Eddon Boatyard. The developers said, "This is essentially a clean up," and, "We're enhancing this neighborhood to a high degree."<sup>11</sup> My family had owned the boatyard and boatyard house from 1950 through 1977. I had grown up there. To the north and south of the boatyard property several commercial fishing family properties were still intact, including the Ancich commercial fishing family property. The Eddon Boatyard property was the anchor of the last contiguous and intact section of working waterfront in Gig Harbor. The boatyard and adjacent house had been built in 1945 as the Glein Boatbuilding Company on the site of the Anderson Boatyard that had been active from approximately 1920. In 1950, the boatyard was purchased by Ed Hoppen and Don Harter and renamed the Eddon Boat Company. The partnership was short-lived, dissolving in 1952. My family continued to operate the boatyard for several more decades, building and repairing recreational and commercial boats. In 2003, the Eddon Boatyard was one of a handful of iconic working waterfront structures that remained on Gig Harbor's shoreline other than the 17 remaining commercial fishing family net sheds.

Lita Dawn Stanton is currently the City of Gig Harbor historic preservation coordinator and had spent time on the City of Gig Harbor Design Review Board. In 2003, when the

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<sup>10</sup> Davis, Brett, "Council approves purchase of Rainier Yacht property," Peninsula Gateway, 18 August 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Davis, Peninsula Gateway, 18 August 2012.

boatyard issue emerged, we had been advocating for a “Maritime Pier” and working on some other downtown issues together. She and I were standing on her fishing family’s net shed dock shortly after the boatyard-razing article appeared in the paper. We were discussing the negative impact the proposed upscale residential development would have on the remaining working waterfront properties. As we were talking and looking across at the boatyard she suggested that we try to save it. I thought to myself, “What’s the chance?” Lita Dawn and I invited inventor and former fisherman John McMillan, and contractor and future mayor Chuck Hunter, to join us in forming an advocacy group the “Friends of Eddon Boat.” The four of us met several times in Chuck’s office during the final months of 2003 where we drafted an Eddon Boatyard preservation plan.<sup>12</sup> Advocacy meetings were held throughout the first half of 2004. Outreach gathered dozens more “Friend’s of Eddon Boat” supporters. We asked the City to place the Eddon Boatyard property on the November, 2004, ballot as a land acquisition bond issue. I wrote an opinion piece for the local paper, Lita Dawn and John designed and distributed pamphlets, posters and signs; Chuck hung signs that identified the boatyard property for passers-by; Chuck and “Friends of Eddon Boat” supporters knocked on doors to talk with voters; John drew illustrations of potential future property use; and I took photos of the growing group of supporters at the boatyard. On November 2, 2004, the bond issue vote to save the Eddon Boatyard for 3.5 million dollars passed 62% to 38%. The citizens of Gig Harbor had made an emphatic preservation statement. In 2005, Lita, John, Chuck, and I represented the “The Friends of Eddon Boat” at the state capital in Olympia where we received an “Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation” award from the State of Washington. In January of 2006, I answered a city request for Eddon Boatyard use proposals. The proposal I crafted, one of several, was

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<sup>12</sup> [http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6\\_Stanton.pdf](http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6_Stanton.pdf) , Eddon Boatyard preservation, Gig Harbor BoatShop formation, visual overview, p. 44 – 64.

accepted by city council. The “Gig Harbor Community Boatshop” proposal advocated retaining the Eddon Boatyard as a boatyard by installing a programming non-profit to utilize and interpret the facility. In 2010, the non-profit, Gig Harbor BoatShop,<sup>13</sup> moved into the Eddon Boatyard following a structural restoration process funded by over a one million dollar grant award from the State of Washington.

In 2002, two fishermen, Gregg Lovrovich and I, founded a citizens’ ad hoc committee named the “Maritime Pier Committee”<sup>14</sup> to address a 50-year-old on-again/off-again advocacy attempt by fishermen to build a loading/unloading dock on the Gig Harbor waterfront available to the public and sized to suit commercial fishing use. The “Maritime Pier” advocacy process was long and convoluted. After years of work by advocates and ultimately by the mayor and city staff, the ribbon was cut by Mayor Hunter on the new “Maritime Pier” in October of 2012. The pier facility was built on a former working waterfront (fueling facility) property. The property was purchased from developers by the city in 2010 and had been slated for recreational marina and office building development. The “Maritime Pier” and the “Eddon Boatyard” projects terminated gentrifying waterfront development projects, created waterfront public access, and preserved traditional landscapes and uses.

The two quite different grassroots advocacy campaigns had culminated in vernacular working waterfront properties being rededicated, in part, to working waterfront use. Those working waterfront retention success stories were the result of local citizens and city officials recognizing the erosion of public access to waterfront and taking action to purchase traditional properties. Property purchase by the city afforded community members with

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gigharborboatshop.org/>

<sup>14</sup> [http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6\\_Stanton.pdf](http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6_Stanton.pdf) , Maritime Pier visual overview, p. 44 – 64.

opportunities to advocate for traditional uses that could not be sustained or developed on a private property. I saw that process as a path to sustaining occupational landscapes and their corresponding traditional uses. Between the two projects a recipe for bypassing “highest and best” land-use development had been revealed. Public purchase of properties and a citizen visioning process defining future property use can achieve community land-use goals that are unattainable on private properties.

### **Sustaining an Existing Occupational Tradition: The Ancich Property**

In August of 2012, the City of Gig Harbor purchased the intact Ancich commercial fishing family property.<sup>15</sup> It was purchased from developers who had planned to build two upscale houses, parking garages, and a large recreational marina. Following the purchase, the local paper printed city ideas for future use of the property – commercial fishing use was not on the list. Commercial fishing is the most culturally significant use on the local waterfront, and the Ancich property was an existing and intact commercial fishing property. I was disappointed and frankly stunned that commercial fishing use was excluded.

The “Maritime Pier” and “Eddon Boatyard” projects were very successful in that they saved working waterfront properties from a complete change of use, although, neither project directly addressed the retention of the existing and evolving occupational tradition of commercial fishing on the community waterfront. The “Maritime Pier” facility, available for both recreational and commercial use, was designed to handle commercial fishing unloading/loading needs and was not intended for long term moorage, a use that is an absolute requirement for saving commercial fishing culture on any waterfront. The “Eddon Boatyard” was ostensibly saved for interpretation by a cultural organization as the bond

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<sup>15</sup> [http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6\\_Stanton.pdf](http://wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/nwwws/B6/B6_Stanton.pdf) , Ancich property, visual overview, p. 46, 51, 89 - 100.

issue language indicates, “a yes vote secures a location for community, cultural and educational activities for all ages, including shipwright and wooden boat programs. A yes vote preserves the last remaining historically pristine, commercial structure on Gig Harbor Bay.”<sup>16</sup> I viewed an attempt at placing existing commercial fishing use on the city-owned Ancich property as a last chance to secure an authentic and evolving occupational cultural tradition on Gig Harbor’s working waterfront.

The following sections of this paper will address the argument for sustaining community occupational traditions and the advocacy work designed to anchor the occupational tradition of commercial fishing on the city-owned Ancich commercial fishing family property. My intent, providing Ancich property advocacy work as a sample of sustaining community cultural landscapes to sustain local culture, is to provide a template that other communities might apply in sustaining their own cultural traditions and cultural landscapes in the face of “highest and best” land-use and escalating property values.

## **Section I: Cultural Sustainability Methodology**

### **Commercial Fishing in Gig Harbor: Making the Invisible Visible**

*“Study without action is useless. Action without study is dangerous.”* Peter Knutson, Ph.D. sociocultural anthropologist and fisheries scholar.

Perhaps Dr. Knutson’s expression is extreme but the essence of the phrase speaks to why I went back to graduate school in 2009. I wanted to become a more effective community advocate. There is no question that knowledge acquired through study has enhanced advocacy and action. Study has made a difference in my ability to analyze how best to

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<sup>16</sup> City of Gig Harbor Land Acquisition and Development general Obligation Bond, October 2004.



approach the problem of making commercial fishing more visible in the community, a prerequisite for making a case for placing commercial fishing use on a public property.

Research was needed to shed light on facts about commercial fishing and its impact on Gig Harbor; facts that I was sure were unknown to the community at large. I knew that commercial fishing had been viable for the 30 years I'd been involved, and had been experiencing an economic boom for the past several years. The goal was to use the research data to change the common perception of a diminished and dying fishing industry, a perception I knew to be false.

The following is a phrase contained in the "City of Gig Harbor Shoreline Master Program" (SMP) of June, 1994, and placed into the draft update SMP of September, 2010. "In recent times, the fishing industry has experienced a marked decline due to a variety of social, environmental and economic factors, locally, regionally and globally."<sup>17</sup> There are two problems with the decision to use that phrase in an important city planning document: first, no other SMP goal had uncorroborated conditional language defining the health of a stated use; and second, I knew the phrase to be false. In fact, most North Pacific fisheries were well managed and healthy. Several of us on the "Gig Harbor SMP Update – Stakeholder Committee" asked to have it removed for the reasons stated above. It was removed. The use of the term "declining fisheries" in a first paragraph of a 2013 National Working Waterfront & Waterways Symposium (NWWWS) draft press release, again, described commercial fishing across the board as in decline. The symposium was held in Tacoma, Washington, a city in the North Pacific region where fisheries are mostly healthy, and was sponsored by Washington Sea Grant, a federal agency that advocates for fishermen and working waterfronts. Several of us on the NWWWS conference steering committee asked that the term be removed. The press release was rewritten. When an unsubstantiated impression

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<sup>17</sup> City of Gig Harbor Shoreline Master Program, 1975, Amended 1994, p. 19.

begins to seep into official city documents and advocate organization press releases, it is no wonder that the common perception of the fishing industry is one of decline. So, as a guide to counter the impression of commercial fishing as a dying way of life, I borrowed another phrase from Dr. Knutson to direct and focus my Gig Harbor commercial fishing research: “Making the Invisible Visible.”

### **Sustainability of Cultural Landscapes: The Necessity for Research**

The following is from the August 8, 2012, edition of the local Gig Harbor newspaper: “The city has designs on it [the Ancich property] as a park, marina, and small boat harbor for human powered watercraft.”<sup>18</sup> How could the City of Gig Harbor overlook an obvious use of commercial fishing for the Ancich property? It is an intact commercial fishing property, and a property within the new Historic Working Waterfront Environment zoning district<sup>19</sup> that has a preferred use of commercial fishing. Recent advocacy for the “Maritime Pier,” a loading/unloading dock, had seen many fishermen in front of city officials reciting a narrative of infrastructure need and fishing industry good health. There had been general knowledge within the community that commercial fishing use was being squeezed onto a handful of private fishing family properties in a shrinking commercial fishing landscape. Unfortunately, the gentrification of vernacular commercial fishing landscapes and the diminishing sites available to commercial fishing use is still widely accepted as a normal, though usually regrettable, evolution of waterfront land-use. It is a manifestation of community helplessness brought on by the dying way of life narrative associated with

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<sup>18</sup> Davis, Peninsula Gateway, 18 August 2012.

<sup>19</sup> 5.2.7 Historic Working Waterfront Environment

A. Purpose - The purpose of the Historic Working Waterfront designation is to recognize and preserve two of Gig Harbor’s most notable historic industries: commercial fishing and boatbuilding. The area possesses a significant concentration of historic uses and structures. The preferred and best uses for this area are commercial fishing services/moorage and boatbuilding. City of Gig Harbor Draft Shoreline master Program, Dec. 10, 2012.

traditional uses, and by private property and development rights steamrolling community land-use desires and rights.

A Marine Law Institute article *Managing The Shoreline For Water Dependent Uses* poses this question, “Why can’t the community just rely on the free market to determine the best allocation for waterfront land?”<sup>20</sup> The authors state that federal and state policy makers have come to reject the notion that the private market should be the sole allocator of scarce shoreline resources for a variety of reasons; including public demand for waterfront access and the demand for waterfront for water dependent uses, like boatyards and commercial fishing.<sup>21</sup> A rejection of the free market and its corresponding “highest and best” land development premise being the sole factor determining scarce waterfront land-use is the theoretical framework that informed my research. More specifically, the aim was to make the research case that there are manifold reasons to use a public parcel of Gig Harbor waterfront [the Ancich property] for commercial fishing use. The goal was to prove false the conventional wisdom that had pegged commercial fishing as a dying industry, and to shine a light on the economic and cultural benefits of retaining commercial fishing culture on Gig Harbor’s waterfront. The research had to make the invisible visible.<sup>22</sup>

I began research and data collection with several goals in mind. The **first** step was to locate all the owner/operators of fishing vessels and/or fishing permit holders in the zip codes that are generally acknowledged as Gig Harbor. I had previously tallied 34 fishing vessels that moor in Gig Harbor and knew there were more than 34 commercial fishing vessel owners in the area. The **second** research step was to collect ex-vessel value per year (gross income) per owner/operator - permit holder to assess the yearly economic value

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<sup>20</sup> Marine Law Institute, “Managing the Shoreline for Water Dependent Uses,” *Territorial Sea* Vol. IX, no. 1, 1989: p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> See appendix A for research documents.

generated by all Gig Harbor fishermen. I suspected that the total ex-vessel value would be far larger than most people in the community would think.

To compile the data I accessed information from the State of Alaska's Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC), The Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). I researched Alaska's CFEC and the WDFW to locate fishermen that resided in greater Gig Harbor. Alaska's CFEC information was publically accessible via the web. The WDFW information was available through a public disclosure request. Average season ex-vessel values per permit were obtained from each department. To be fair, I averaged the ex-vessel averages per permit from two years, 2010 and 2011. 2011 had record salmon returns in Alaska that provided huge seasons for salmon purse seiners in particular. Participation by Gig Harbor fishermen in the sardine and squid fisheries in California and Oregon is relatively small, so research on ODFW and CDFW web-sites was limited to fishery quotas, average prices for squid and sardines, and number of fishery permit holders. When that data was collected it was easily translated into average ex-vessel values for the handful of Gig Harbor fishing vessels and operators that I knew participated in the California and Oregon fisheries.

During my research I uncovered 120 vessel owners/permit holders; 86 more owner/operators – permit holders than people would have calculated from the boats moored in Gig Harbor. The sum of average ex-vessel value (gross earnings) per fishery permit held by the 120 fishermen totaled \$27,567,734. CFEC data was not available for 17 Alaskan fisheries that Gig Harbor fishermen had permits for. CFEC chooses not to reveal ex-vessel average values for privacy reasons in fisheries that fall below minimum participation levels. It is also difficult to track leased longline halibut and sablefish quota, a high dollar fishery in which I know that at least a handful of the 120 owner/operators – permit holders

participate. The ex-vessel value total would grow significantly had that data been more readily available.

The **third** research step was to reach out to the 120 Gig Harbor fishermen. To assess fishermen's opinions on commercial fishing infrastructure, the Ancich property and its future use, and their sense of commercial fishing, or lack thereof, on Gig Harbor's waterfront, I crafted a survey and sent it to 114 fisherman addresses. Several addresses like mine had more than one owner/operator – permit holder. The survey asked a series of questions. Would you support commercial fishing use (moorage and net shed access) on the publically owned Ancich property? If public commercial fishing vessel moorage space were available at a fee consistent with Port of Seattle/Port of Bellingham commercial rates would you consider keeping your vessel in Gig Harbor? Would you be willing to participate in advocating for commercial fishing uses on the Gig Harbor waterfront via email, phone, meetings, letters, joining an organization? Do you think a Gig Harbor waterfront that retains commercial fishing use is important to the community? Why?

I received 52 surveys back, nearly 46% of surveys sent out. All 52 of those surveyed supported commercial fishing use on the Ancich property. Twenty-three fishermen that moored their vessels elsewhere said they would like to keep their boats in Gig Harbor. All 52 believed commercial fishing was important to the community. Most articulated reasons why. Forty-nine of 52 of those surveyed were willing to advocate for commercial fishing use at some level. I was pleased that so many fishermen took the time to write a response to question #3. "Do you think a Gig Harbor waterfront that retains commercial fishing use is important to the community?" A few of the responses follow:

*"Gig Harbor is called the 'Maritime City.' Fishing has a historical and current history, and contributes economically to the town as it benefits providers of goods and services."*

*"Commercial fishing moorage and workspace is part of Gig Harbor history and should be maintained."*

*"Heritage!"*

*"Its Our Culture!"*

*"It provides jobs for the community, fresh seafood for the market, and a link to the lives of those that work on the water."*

*"Because there needs to be activity on the waterfront year round."*

The **fourth** research step was to draft documents based on the research results for advocacy use. Economic impact document data was included from the, *2007 Economic Impact of the Port of Seattle*, Feb. 10 2009,<sup>23</sup> by Martin Associates, a study that performed in-depth research on fishing vessel and pleasure vessel economic impact in Seattle.

For the **fifth** research step I kept a daily log of moorage use at Jerisich Park dock, Gig Harbor's no-fee guest moorage facility from November 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 through April 1<sup>st</sup> of 2013. I knew that many in the community felt that adding more transient yacht moorage would be a significant step towards downtown "revitalization." My assumption was that transient yachts are an economic non-factor for most months of the year (meaning that yachting visits to Gig Harbor are mostly a summer season occurrence) and for the city to dedicate more precious waterfront infrastructure to that use, at the expense of local uses, would be economically and socially unsupportable. The research data supported the assumption. An average of only 2.27 boats per day utilized the Jerisich Park transient dock during the five-month off-season span. I also understood that most fishermen are gone in the summer months, the only months with significant numbers of transient yachts, and that a commercial fishing moorage facility could utilize the empty fishing vessel slips for guest moorage during the summer creating heavy year around use of the commercial fishing facility.

The **sixth** and last research step was to draft a case statement for commercial fishing use

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<sup>23</sup> *2007 Economic Impact of the Port of Seattle* link, [http://www.portseattle.org/Supporting-Our-Community/Economic-Development/Documents/EconomicImpact\\_20091.pdf](http://www.portseattle.org/Supporting-Our-Community/Economic-Development/Documents/EconomicImpact_20091.pdf)

of the Ancich property. The research for the document included information gleaned from local knowledge, research results from the previous five steps, city planning documents, and the sum of cultural readings and lectures I had been exposed to in the graduate program. The case statement emphasizes the significant public benefit from commercial fishing use of the Ancich property.

The research documents generated in the winter and spring of 2013 were designed to be used in the public process - the Ancich Park visioning process. The process defined by Gig Harbor Mayor Chuck Hunter in early 2013 tasked the Gig Harbor Parks Commission, assisted by the City of Gig Harbor Planning Department, with identifying future Ancich Park use. Approximately 20 stakeholders from the community were to be identified by city planners, parks commissioners, and other stakeholders for the visioning meetings set for April of 2013.

### **Sustainability of Cultural Landscapes: The Requirement for Action**

Any attempt at sustaining a community's existing cultural landscapes and traditions will fail without speaking and writing in the public realm. Research and study without political action is but half of the process in the work of conserving a cultural landscape. "To act, in the most general sense, means to take initiative, to begin, to set something in motion."<sup>24</sup> Hannah Arendt speaks to speech and action, and what she calls the "space of appearance" in *The Human Condition*. "The space of appearance comes into being whenever men are together in the manner of speech and action. To be deprived of it means being deprived of reality, which, humanly and politically speaking is the same as appearance."<sup>25</sup> Remaining

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<sup>24</sup> Arendt, Hannah, "The Human Condition" (The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 177.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

engaged in the public process, what Arendt characterizes as the “space of appearance,” is imperative if the activist is to be recognized and activist’s aspirations are to be considered.

During a decade of activism, I have learned important lessons about action and power and remaining in the “space of appearance.” As a “Maritime Pier” advocacy co-leader during a ten-year on-again-off-again advocacy project, we advocates had enjoyed on several occasions significant advocacy success, or what we had thought was success, in promoting the project. We left the city council chambers several times, and ad hoc committee meetings many times, believing that decisions had been made that would lead to a pier. Each time the project stalled. I now understand that there is significant follow-through required in the public sphere. There is a need for persistence and perpetual engagement. This needs to be understood as an essential part of achieving a political result. Arendt writes, “Power springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse.”<sup>26</sup> Sustaining cultural space requires sustained political action and places demands on the ordinary citizen that make activism difficult to sustain. Perseverance is a requirement. Each public success builds on the last. The advocates cannot “disperse” until they have met the policy or physical objective.

## **Conserving Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Traditions: Analysis**

### **Cultural Conservation: A Concept for Sustaining Cultural Traditions**

Finding information that addresses conservation of existing traditional ways of life dependent on cultural landscapes was difficult. Much of what I found of relevance, written mostly by folklorists, discussed the preservation of cultural traditions for cultural

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 200.



institution archive use or tourism use. In my readings and research, I found an occasional narrative relevant to sustaining cultural landscapes, but it was usually associated with the preservation of a cultural or ecological site, similar to the preservation of an artifact or historic structure. There is much to read about preserving folk culture, and arts and culture, and sometimes, if I took the information into a new context, it would apply to my field of interest. Then, I noticed a line of thought that applied to sustaining cultural landscapes and traditions in papers and essays written by folklorists such as Kelly Feltault and Deborah Kodish. Feltault called for a different more interdisciplinary type of folklore, she called Development Folklife - a “paradigm that allows folklorists to collaborate with communities to improve their capacity to address political, economic, environmental, and other changes that affect the sustainability of their culture,”<sup>27</sup> and Kodish asked the reader in her essay *Envisioning Folklore Activism* to “imagine what the field might look like if we framed our work in terms of struggles that matter, in which living people (and future generations) have a stake, if we linked variously placed efforts.”<sup>28</sup> She calls this action-oriented folklore “Public Interest Folklore.” These are writers and researchers that, due to first-hand, intimate experiences within communities, were articulating the need for a concept that could provide the intervener with the skills to conserve community culture going forward in space and time.

David Whisnant explains how public sector folklorists are perfectly placed to recognize the need for a professional that can actively engage with communities at the grass roots level to sustain ways of life. “They are, first of all, some of the very few public agency personnel whose work brings them regularly and directly into touch with ordinary people in ordinary situations. Public health, public safety, and social service workers work directly

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<sup>27</sup> Feltault, Kelly, “Development Folklife: Human Security and Cultural Conservation,” *Journal of American Folklore* 119.471 (2006): p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> Kodish, Deborah, “Envisioning Folklore Activism,” *Journal of American Folklore* 124(491) 2011: p. 52.

with ordinary people but most frequently only in situations involving crisis or pathology. Public sector folklorists, have regular opportunities to observe how reasonably healthy and happy citizens live their lives.”<sup>29</sup> It’s not surprising, then, that folklorists are on the leading edge of defining the relatively new and interdisciplinary concept of cultural conservation. Cultural conservation articles and essay topics offer some of the most relevant information that I could find regarding the conservation of cultural traditions within a community.

In folklife specialist Mary Hufford’s book *Conserving Culture*, she notes a policy study generated by the American Folklife Center and the Department of Interior recommending “that the term cultural conservation be adopted as a ‘concept for organizing the profusion of public and private efforts that deal with traditional community cultural life.”<sup>30</sup> She points out that cultural conservation “encapsulated some radical policy implications” that proposed shifting from “heritage protection dominated by elite and professional constituencies to an integrated approach based on grass roots cultural concerns.” Hufford states that the concept has a “breadth and focus on action”<sup>31</sup> thus completing a cultural conservation concept that contains components that describe my motivations and experiences as a community activist engaged in trying to save or create places for occupational culture to exist: a discipline that encapsulates the desire to conserve traditional community cultural life, is based on grass roots cultural concerns, and is propelled by taking action. Folklorists Kelly Feltault, Mary Hufford, Deborah Kodish, and David Whisnant are all recognizing a need for either expanding the role of the public sector folklore professional, or perhaps creating a new tangential discipline able to equip a

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<sup>29</sup> Whisnant, David, “Public Sector Folklore as Intervention: Lessons from the Past, Prospects for the Future,” in *The Conservation of Culture: Folklorists and the Public Sector*, ed. Burt Feintuch, (The University of Kentucky Press, 1988), p.240.

<sup>30</sup> Hufford, Mary, “Cultural Conservation of Place,” in *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, (University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

professional with the interdisciplinary skills and knowledge to work with grassroots community activists and communities in their efforts to conserve existing traditional cultures.

### **Sustaining Cultural Traditions: Conservation or Preservation**

Cultural preservation does not result in the conservation of existing and evolving cultural ways of life. The work of documenting a traditional culture and placing deliverables at a cultural institution, or preserving and adaptively re-using a historical farming structure, or collecting commercial fishing artifacts and displaying them in a local museum does not sustain existing occupational cultures. Fishermen and other members of occupational traditions know this. Feltault describes a challenge by a local fisherman while working on the Delmarva Folklife Project, he asked, “How are you going to preserve my culture if you don’t save my right and ability to fish?”<sup>32</sup> The answer is clear – the Delmarva project was not engaged in a process that was going to preserve that fisherman’s ability to fish. The type of cultural preservation work the Delmarva project was engaged in had as a community economic development goal the “presentation” of a traditional culture for tourists. “The goals of the project included cultural conservation [preservation?] through economic development, defined as heritage tourism.” This emphasized educating tourists and new residents about local cultural traditions, as well as creating infrastructure and building the capacity for artists to prepare for performing or presenting to the public.”<sup>33</sup>

Practitioners of occupational traditions have little interest in collaborating with cultural professionals that preserve frozen moments of culture for the edification of outsiders and the enrichment of local tourism purveyors - especially if it quickens the pace of the

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<sup>32</sup> Feltault, p.91.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 93

gentrification of their working landscapes, thereby placing their way of life at risk. A cultural preservation project dedicated to a tourism outcome could, indirectly, do just that. “This is a movement from an authentic community to one that commoditizes cultural heritage in tourist space.”<sup>34</sup> Occupational tradition bearers find it morbidly amusing that so much attention is given by cultural professionals and by members of their own community to their present and past, while the cultural landscapes necessary for their continued existence are being erased by development incompatible with their traditional culture. There is an inevitability of loss that permeates a community regarding the redevelopment of traditional cultural landscapes and loss of traditional uses. This is emblematic of how deep the roots of “highest and best” land-use theory have penetrated not only community planning departments and citizens, but of cultural workers.

A remark by Steve Zietlin, a participant at a Washington D.C. conference where “much attention was focused on cultural conservation as an alternative to the longtime model of preservation,”<sup>35</sup> seemed to advance the must-be-a-dying-way-of-life idea for traditional cultures at risk of losing landscapes necessary for survival. His remark was an apparent response to Mary Hufford’s views on the differences between the concepts of preservation and conservation. She explained that preservation’s focus was on protecting the built environment, and that “conservation registers the dynamism of cultural resources, implying that, like natural phenomena, cultural phenomena inevitably change.”<sup>36</sup> Zietlin remarks that, “sites that are crucial because of a human rather than a physical dimension can not be preserved in the sense that a building can be preserved.” He finished by echoing what I

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<sup>34</sup> Jacob, Steve and Witman, Jeff, “Human Ecological Sources of Fishing Heritage and its Use in and Impact on Coastal Tourism,” (Proceedings of the 2006 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium), Cohen, p. 396.

<sup>35</sup> Chittenden, Varick, “Put Your Very Special Place on the North Country Map!”: Community participation in Cultural Landmarking,” *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 119, No. 471, Winter 2006, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

consider to be a commonly voiced sample of the unexamined method of analyzing the viability of a community cultural use at risk. “We cannot serve as a life support system to keep dying establishments alive.”<sup>37</sup> His quote was reminiscent of specious “dying” fishing industry remarks I’d been hearing in Gig Harbor for years, while advocating for the retention of commercial fishing use in our community. In my experience, anytime a traditional use has been removed from a property for a development that’s perceived as inevitable due to “highest and best” land-use, it simply means that traditional use families could not afford, or justify the purchase, of the traditional property. It had nothing to do with whether or not the traditional use was viable or not. Zietlin’s remark, to me, manifests how the narrow land-use concept of “highest and best” property development can infect an equally narrow (in terms of cultural conservation) historic preservation process and, perhaps, even historic preservationist thought processes. Analyzing why a cultural “establishment” is perceived to be “dying” should be a mandatory civic act. Historic preservation and adaptive re-use of structures accompanying gentrifying development might be the opposite of cultural conservation and is likely a warning for living culture loss. In terms of conserving cultural landscapes for existing occupational traditions, it appears that historic preservation processes are at best a reminder that past cultural traditions were important, and are at worst aligned with land development practices that displace occupational landscapes and living traditions. “Despite the attention to context the focus of historic preservation has remained on properties, neglecting other elements of culture, both tangible and intangible. Culture itself, of course, consists of knowledge and values, and therefore is fundamentally intangible. A fisherman’s house or workboat are tangible expressions, and his stories and occupational skills are intangible expressions, of the culture

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

of his community.”<sup>38</sup> Gig Harbor’s museum has preserved a locally built 63’ purse seine vessel and the City of Gig Harbor has preserved and adaptively re-used a net shed, tangible expressions of commercial fishing culture, and each are educational platforms for the presentation of intangible expressions of culture. But, I would argue that neither directly contribute to the conservation of existing and evolving commercial fishing culture, and may perhaps contribute to cultural loss by virtue of giving a topical appearance of commercial fishing cultural retention.

Adaptive re-use of historic structures and cultural institutions that interpret our past may or may not be a direct cause for loss of community occupational culture, but to characterize these preservation and interpretation activities as conserving occupational culture is a dangerous mistake. Historic preservation and associated preservation activities have too narrow a focus to take on the work of cultural conservation. Cultural conservation requires a broader examination of why a cultural way of life appears to be “dying” in a community and appears as a multi-disciplinary strategy to counter the forces that put occupational traditions at risk. Cultural conservation, a concept “based in political, economic, and cultural rights and human security,”<sup>39</sup> will force citizens and decision makers to take a broader and more in-depth view of cultural phenomena within their communities.

### **Land-Use Planning & Cultural Landscapes: Espoused Theory – Theory-in-Use**

Stated cultural landscape policy is often in conflict with the reality of landscape development. In Gig Harbor’s Shoreline Master Program, (what is more generically referred to as a harbor or shoreline plan), the commercial fishing industry goals for Gig Harbor are:

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<sup>38</sup> Chittenden, p.53.

<sup>39</sup> Feltault, p. 9.

- Preserve the fishing industry by providing development standards that reflect the needs of the fishing industry.
- Encourage the retention and redevelopment of waterfront parcels which provide a substantial and direct contribution to the commercial fishing industry.
- Minimize the pressure to convert waterfront property to non-commercial fishing uses.
- Encourage development of moorage and dock facilities consistent with current and future needs.<sup>40</sup>

The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) of 1994 is in the final stages of being updated. The Draft SMP is in the process of city council vetting and is scheduled for adoption by city council in December of 2013. The revised SMP goal statement will be:

- It is the goal of the City of Gig Harbor to preserve the commercial fishing fleet as a significant cultural and economic resource, encourage important fleet supporting services and promote development or rehabilitation of facilities consistent with the fleet's needs, including the retention and redevelopment of waterfront parcels that provide a substantial and direct contribution to the commercial fishing industry.<sup>41</sup>

The supportive commercial fishing SMP goal statements of 1994, and the Draft SMP goal statement of 2013, and the reality of decades of parcel-by-parcel waterfront development, have little in common.

With the exception of the 2013 "Maritime Pier," a facility available for commercial and recreational use, there have been two cases of commercial fishing landscape retention in decades (properties selling fishing family to fishing family). The goal statements from the 1994 SMP and 2013 SMP Draft that "Encourage the retention and redevelopment of waterfront parcels which provide a substantial and direct contribution to the commercial

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<sup>40</sup> "City of Gig Harbor Shoreline Master Program," Adopted 1975; Amended 1994, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> "Locally Approved Draft City of Gig Harbor Shoreline Master Program," p. 7-60.

fishing industry,” and that “ promote development or rehabilitation of facilities consistent with the fleet’s needs, including the retention and redevelopment of waterfront parcels that provide a substantial and direct contribution to the commercial fishing industry,”<sup>42</sup> highlight a classic case of an absolute land-use planning disconnect. The “espoused theory of action” for land-use planning - the City of Gig Harbor has the overall planning goal of retaining commercial fishing parcels; and the “theory-in-use” for land-use planning - the City of Gig Harbor has realized the retention of only two commercial fishing parcels in decades of waterfront property sales,<sup>43</sup> clearly reveals the dilemma.

This disconnect between land-use goals and land-use reality is what Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schon characterize as a dilemma of incongruity which arises “out of the progressively developing incongruity between espoused theory and theory-in-use.”<sup>44</sup> Gig Harbor planning document writers, as indicated by the planning goal statements they wrote, recognized that commercial fishing cultural traditions and the cultural landscapes fishing families depend on were a critically important component of the community’s economic and cultural fabric. Unfortunately the goal statements are followed by policy and regulatory statements that utilize the words “allow” and “may” that effectively neuter goal intent. The parcel-by-parcel development process that allows commercial fishing parcels and commercial fishing use to be removed from the community working waterfront is solid evidence of that fact.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> The Morin (Lovrovich) and Gilich (Moller/Blair) net sheds were able to transfer fishing family to fishing family due to a complete lack of uplands for potential marina parking use, making a recreational marina non-permittable. Commercial fishing use in Gig Harbor has a parking exemption, which made these two properties available for fishing use. In the case of those two property sales, commercial fishing happened to be the “highest and best” use at the time of sale. It’s debatable whether that would take place now, over 20 years later even with out buildable uplands.

<sup>44</sup> Argyris, Chris and Schon, Donald A., *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*, (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974), p. 30.



Certainly city officials and the community compartmentalize; they “try to keep espoused theory in one place and their theory of use in another, never allowing them to meet. One goes on speaking the language of one theory, acting in the language of another, and maintaining the illusion of congruence through systematic self-deception.”<sup>45</sup> Likely the “protagonists” (city planners, city council members and ultimately all members of a community) that oversee as significant of a planning conflict/dilemma as the disconnect between Gig Harbor’s commercial fishing land-use goal and commercial fishing land-use reality have adopted “strategies to avoid perceiving that data do not fit.”<sup>46</sup> It is not a surprise that citizens in a community like Gig Harbor arrive at public meetings frustrated after a cultural landscape had been bulldozed. They knew, like I did, that a community majority valued the landscape and that overall planning goals rhetorically supported landscape and traditional use retention. I asked my brother Mark, a city administrator, about the land-use goal/land-use outcome conflict. I wondered if other communities had similar goal-outcome conflicts. He said that he wouldn’t be surprised if a majority of communities did.

### **Cultural Landscape Value: Expanding Assessment Beyond Development Value**

Public sector folklorists like Kelly Feltault are adept at witnessing the ill effects of rising real estate values and “highest and best” property development on community cultural traditions and landscapes. She cites many causes of Delmarva Peninsula occupational culture loss, including “globalization processes that decrease the diversity of income sources for rural communities.”<sup>47</sup> As an analogy think Walmart displacing a dozen small

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> Feltault, p. 93.

local family operated businesses or an industrial farm displacing family farms. She goes on to state that no cause is more detrimental to local ways of life than “rapidly expanding and uncontrolled real estate development.”<sup>48</sup> Real estate prices rise, and that drives the value of traditional use landscapes too high for an occupational culture to exist on a traditional landscape; e.g. a fishing family cannot afford to purchase a property from another fishing family. Local governments and planners, due to broad acceptance of the narrow planning concept of “highest and best” land-use, are unlikely to restrict a property to any use that inhibits the property owner/developer from realizing the most short-term development money as possible from the property. As a result, generations of traditional cultural landscape use can be erased from a community in one real estate transaction. Conventional wisdom has these gentrifying land-use changes representing a natural evolution of community land-use, which of course, is nonsense.

Too often people make the assumption that if a property use has changed from a long-term community use, that the way of life associated with the removed use is no longer viable. That assumption does not always hold up to scrutiny. In Gig Harbor, commercial fishing landscapes continue to be redeveloped and that redevelopment has nothing to do with the viability of commercial fishing as a traditional way of life. The commercial fishing industry in the North Pacific is viable, and has been for the 30 years I have been a fisherman. 2013 was my most productive year to date. Most Gig Harbor fishermen partake in the healthy and certified sustainable Alaska salmon fishery as well as various other Alaskan, Washington, Oregon, and California fisheries. “It is possible that after final prices

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

are determined, the 2013 [Alaska salmon] season, not accounting for inflation, could surpass 1988 as the most valued salmon harvest in history.”<sup>49</sup>

Any land-use change, in any community, especially a change that runs counter to community comprehensive and shoreline plan planning goals or that raises public outcry, should be examined carefully by community members prior to coming to any conclusion that “rationalizes” the removal of a cultural landscape. How embedded in government decision making is the idea that land development value, “highest and best” land-use, should be the last word on community land-use? Feltault writes that the state of “Maryland has claimed coastal and farm land under eminent domain laws, justifying the capture of these resources by claiming the property is “inefficiently used” or derelict.”<sup>50</sup> Government policy driven by potential land development value to the exclusion a landscape’s cultural value, social value, ecological value, etc. ultimately leads to issues of human security, which are defined by the United Nations as “protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life.”<sup>51</sup> A state government seizing coastal properties and farmland from fishermen and farmers in Maryland; Sri Lankan fishing families being removed from generational fishing landscapes after a tsunami disaster because sustainable fishing culture “did not contribute to economic growth as measured by institutions like the World Bank,”<sup>52</sup> and development that runs counter to community planning goals intended to retain community traditions in Gig Harbor, are all the result of “highest and best” land-use theory, a theory so limited in its scope of community benefit that when implemented it virtually guarantees local cultural loss, the exploitation and ultimately the destruction of place.

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<sup>49</sup> Bauman, Margaret, “Value of 2013 Alaska Salmon Harvest Tops \$691 Million,” Fishermen’s News, November, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> Feltault, p. 94.

<sup>51</sup> Feltault, p. 91.

<sup>52</sup> Klein, p.491

## **Cultural Landscape Retention: Saving an Existing Working Waterfront**

The focus of this paper is shoreline, or waterfront use, and the ability of a community to retain traditional water dependent uses such as commercial fishing and boat repair on the waterfront. These uses are being displaced nationwide by non water-dependent uses like upscale residential development, or a single water non-traditional water dependent use like recreational marinas.

The Marine Law Institute article *Managing the Shoreline for Water Dependent Uses* discusses non-water dependent uses such as housing, offices, and retail stores that displace water dependent traditional uses on coastal shorelines. “If new uses are not water dependent or if traditional water dependent uses are being displaced, your community is not giving maximum support to marine uses.”<sup>53</sup> In the case of Gig Harbor and many coastal towns, traditional uses like commercial fishing are being routinely displaced by the proliferation of a single water dependent use. For example, Gig Harbor has experienced 30 years of recreational marina development, nearly all of which displaced commercial fishing properties. The article asks, “What tools should a small harbor consider to preserve traditional maritime uses?” And answers, “You should also limit recreational water dependent uses (such as marinas) if they might displace commercial fishing and similar traditional uses.”<sup>54</sup> In Juneau, Alaska, what had been a diverse traditional use working waterfront has been removed by almost one mile of multi-national corporation cruise ship berthing - “be careful to preclude “heavy industrial water dependent uses which would be incompatible with adjacent low intensity uses.”<sup>55</sup> The Marine Law Institute article advises the reader to “look at the existing buildings on the waterfront. A few might be occupied by

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<sup>53</sup> Marine Law Institute, “Managing the Shoreline for Water Dependent Uses,” *Territorial Sea* Vol. IX, no. 1 1989: p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Marine Law Institute, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

marine businesses that have seen more prosperous days. If a developer applied for permission to convert that site to a residential housing, would the community have the regulations in place to prevent that conversion? Could the community deny project approval if it would have a negative impact on neighboring marine businesses?"<sup>56</sup> The answer to the questions for the community of Gig Harbor is "no" as evidenced by decades of working waterfront erosion. The article asks more questions: "Do local planners know what uses currently occupy the waterfront and what changes they are facing in the economic environment? Do they know what resources the shorefront has to offer to marine uses? Do they know what competitive pressures, if any, threaten the survival of existing marine businesses?"<sup>57</sup> The answers to the last three questions are a qualified "yes." What I mean is that I believe Gig Harbor city planners understand all too well what uses are occupying the waterfront and the resources they offer, and they know what competitive and economic pressures threaten the survival of traditional water dependent uses. Until recently it has not been clear whether or not local planners understood the economic and cultural benefits that occupational traditions bring to the local waterfront. What is clear, is that city planners knowing or not knowing the economic and cultural ramifications of cultural landscape and traditional use loss on the local waterfront is largely immaterial, as there are no planning instruments in place to help retain traditional uses on private properties anyway.

A community like Gig Harbor, with hundreds and hundreds of boats, needs traditional marine services. Gig Harbor has lost marine fueling service. I recall no public outcry as the last fueling facility was planning its closure. The collective public voice decrying the loss is quite loud now. There has been unofficial talk anticipating that the last for-profit boatyard may potentially shut down and be placed on the market. I have heard talk of what a great

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

transient boating destination the boatyard site could be, never mind that local boaters may have to go to Tacoma boatyards for maintenance and repair. As an active fisherman I often hear people mention how important the commercial fishing heritage is to them and how they appreciate that the culture continues to exist on our waterfront. Nevertheless commercial fishing wasn't mentioned as a potential use when the city purchased the Ancich property in August of 2012. The disconnect between stated needs for traditional marine services and interest in retaining local cultural traditions, and the lack of forethought given to preserving those uses, could be characterized as an "espoused theory of action" and a "theory-in-use" cultural dilemma. The paradigm of bemoaning traditional uses after they're gone should be scrutinized. Communities should prioritize the study of traditional uses: assess the risks to their survival and explore methods available to conserve them before it's too late.

Planning policies restricting areas or zones to water-dependent uses are occasionally implemented by communities on the eastern seaboard but are rare on waterfronts of the western states. Gloucester, Massachusetts, has implemented policy to secure its working waterfront, "In order to protect its healthy working waterfront, the city [Gloucester, Massachusetts] has banned all residential developments there."<sup>58</sup> In 2010 Kevin Beal, Rockland, Maine, city attorney, explained to me that the city enacted a central waterfront overlay zone in 2009, called the Tillson Avenue overlay zone, which does not allow residential use and protects public access to the water's edge. "In 1987, by a ratio of 2:1, a citizen referendum [Portland, Maine] declared that it had been a mistake to allow even 20% of the waterfront to be developed for non-marine uses.

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<sup>58</sup> Balsas, Carlos; Kotval, Zenia, and Mullin, John, "Historic Preservation in Waterfront Communities in Portugal and the USA," *Portuguese Studies Review* Vol. 8, no. 1, 2000, p. 48.

An overlay zone was enacted which requires any new use on the waterfront to be marine related.”<sup>59</sup> Restrictive zones meant to ensure marine services and uses for a community are a problem given the “strong pressures from waterfront landowners who could realize immense profits if allowed to convert to residential uses.”<sup>60</sup> Elected officials and city administrations will need fortitude to “repel attacks by landowners who have enormous financial incentives to find the weak point in the regulations,”<sup>61</sup> or to counter efforts to change policy and regulations through plan amendments and zoning changes. It’s no surprise that there is little will in city halls to create more restrictive regulatory mechanisms that can conserve traditional landscapes.

There are a variety of methods a community can employ to retain use without imposing land-use regulation on the private property owner. “Public investment to acquire ownership rights in waterfront real estate, the community can purchase key parcels of land to hold until sufficient demand exists for marine services” - an unlikely scenario in Gig Harbor as no property, public or private, will lie fallow with no proposed uses for long. “The purchase of development rights of a property by paying the owner the difference between the value of the land in a water dependent use and its highest value”<sup>62</sup> is a good way for a community or a non-profit organization to secure a traditional use and to provide the one-time economic windfall for a fishing family or any traditional use property owner without the zoning or regulatory edict that restricts a private property’s use – although this method is complicated, requires negotiation, and money.

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<sup>59</sup> Marine Law Institute, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

Property “acquisition can also be used on a single parcel basis to control future use of a key site”<sup>63</sup> – acquisition is the quickest and cleanest method of securing a property from the detrimental effects of “highest and best” land-use development. Acquisition especially by a municipality is no panacea for saving traditional culture but it allows a public process for use to ensue. It also allows city officials and city planners to ignore the embedded planning preferences towards “highest and best” land-use manifested by the words “allow” and “may” that render overall community goal language ineffective for traditional use retention.

In fact, city officials when considering overall goal language that favors commercial fishing use retention on a historic and intact commercial fishing property (the Ancich property), with a zoning priority for commercial fishing use and faced with a commercial fishing use proposal on the table, would be hard pressed to come to any other use conclusion for the property given that the public property is not encumbered by private property rights. To do so would create an espoused theory of action and theory-in-use dilemma that would be hard to explain for those in decision-making roles.

### **Local Cultural Traditions and Landscapes, and Place**

“And I am reminded of the events and companions of my life – for my walks, after so long, are cultural events.”<sup>64</sup> When I walk through, or work in, or look at the traditional landscapes that make Gig Harbor a ‘place’ for me my memory automatically scans the past, I am in the present, and cannot help but think of the future. A place is created over time “by slow accrual, like a coral reef,”<sup>65</sup> and a place spans generations from great grandparents to great grandchildren. Human memory of the past links to a living present creating authentic

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> Berry, Wendell, “The Work of Local Culture,” in *What Are People For*, (North Point Press, 1990), p. 156.

<sup>65</sup> Stegner, Wallace, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs*, (Random House, Inc. 1992), p. 201.



local culture, and for Gig Harbor, as it is for most tradition based communities, that culture is dependent on traditional landscapes to exist and to evolve. When I walk through the Lovrovich net shed past piled up purse seine nets, down the ramp and onto the float where Tom and Gregg Lovrovich's purse seiners *Tradition* and *Sea Fury* are moored, I might think about my son Dale's recent crew jobs aboard those boats. By the time I reach our family fish tender *Beryl E*, I may have thought back to when I crewed on Gregg and Tom's father's boat during a young Tom's first salmon season decades ago. Perhaps I'll think of Dale and me and of the hundreds of crew members over the course of generations whose footsteps passed and continue to pass through Gig Harbor net sheds and wonder – are Dale and Jacob's children going have the opportunity pass through a net shed and crew aboard a local purse seiner? Wallace Stegner wrote: “a place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, lived in it, known it, died in it, - have both experienced and shaped it, as individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities, over more than one generation.”<sup>66</sup> To conserve traditional culture in Gig Harbor, or in any community that has been fashioned and is identified by traditional occupational ways of life, is to find and secure a path for subsequent generations to follow in the footsteps of existing tradition bearers. To do so ensures placed people will live there assuring that local culture will survive and evolve. Place-based traditions lead to placed-people and those placed-people create local culture.

A community must examine what tradition bearers require to exist and act to retain those things. If it is as simple as making or retaining appropriate space for occupational traditions to be placed, then the project of retaining local cultural traditions within a community should be attainable. Commercial fishing families in Gig Harbor can “make culture,” so long as fishing families have access to waterfront dedicated to commercial

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

fishing. “Although it is tempting to see culture as something given or permanent, the inescapable truth is that human beings make culture, a project that is never complete but always in process.”<sup>67</sup> Collecting and exhibiting local cultural artifacts in museums or adaptively re-using heritage structures can do the work of documenting cultural heritage and preserving portions the built environment; but unfortunately, neither accomplish the task of cultural conservation, not even close.

The rush to gentrify, to replace vernacular landscapes – cultural landscapes shaped by ordinary people who pursue everyday work like farming or fishing - with development that is not placed or culturally meaningful is perplexing. New recreational marinas with blacktop parking lots and upscale condos, or corporate cruise ship piers, over time, are not likely to engender the rooted place-based people required to create local culture. In fact, each of those uses are samples of homogeneous waterfront uses that diminish public access, reduce local waterfront activity, erase local traditional culture, and provide questionable local economic benefit going forward. To not consider every method available to conserve the landscapes that host a community’s occupational cultures is aiding in, as Wendell Berry contends, a place’s “destruction.” Land-use policy that places importance on the short term dollar value of development over all other human ecological considerations leads to “the sudden disappearance of the workplace or the gross devaluation of the resources upon which it depends, the violent upheavals in settled landscapes, the physical bifurcation and dismantling of neighborhoods, or any of the other assaults of pure capitalism upon human ecology without laws to prevent or at least mitigate them and public resources to sustain or to create the social fields in which new ecologies may evolve.”<sup>68</sup> Occupational culture unique

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<sup>67</sup> Goldbard, Arlene, “Overlaps, Intersections and Conflicts: An Introduction to Arts and Culture,” (CAN/API, 2002), p.4.

to a community, as commercial fishing culture is to Gig Harbor, will not survive uncontrolled land-use speculation. "As ever, commercial speculation and exploitation lurk as enemies of the unique, the authentic, and the local."<sup>69</sup> It matters not whether traditional uses are economically viable ways of life or not. Traditional uses become expendable, without due consideration to the loss, as the landscapes they depend on become too valuable for the uses to exist. "This loss of cultural local knowledge and local memory - that is of local culture - has been ignored, or written off as one of the cheaper prices of progress or made the business of folklorists."<sup>70</sup> What Berry is lamenting, I think, is not only the loss of existing community cultural ways of life, but the lack of ability and tools available to stop that loss. I suspect that like me, he's frustrated at the lack of internal and external help available to a community that can counter the forces that lead to the removal of local culture. Where are the cultural workers or the resources required "to sustain or to create the social fields in which new ecologies may evolve."<sup>71</sup>

"Commercial fishing families and family farms, are perhaps the last sector of the economy where the traditional family is an economic unit." These community-based traditions are linked to seasons, dependent on land or sea, and time or tide, and are representative of ways of life that "helped form the identity of the local community."<sup>72</sup> Above all, these occupational traditions are local. They are ways of life that define "place" and account for the "placed person." And, as an aside, I will posit that healthy occupational traditions form a solid community cultural foundation for a vital "arts and culture" community. Existing community fishing traditions provide contemporary context to a museum exhibit or artifact

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<sup>68</sup> Cantwell, Robert, "Folklore's Pathetic Fallacy," *Journal of American Folklore*, 114(451) 2001, p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> Alanen, Arnold R. and Melnick Robert Z., *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, (the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pg. ix.

<sup>70</sup> Berry, Wendell, "The Work of Local Culture," in *What Are People For*, (North Point Press, 1990), p. 157.

<sup>71</sup> Cantwell, p. 66.

<sup>72</sup> Jacob and Witman, p. 394.

focused on fishing heritage or offers compelling subject matter for existing artists – as upscale condos or tourist shops cannot. Traditional culture is rooted and generational, not transient and export oriented or non-local as a tourist industry can be. There is a reason for tradition bearers to be in a community - because of access to water and fish or farmland - they are dependent on local ecology. Artists respond to, and appreciate the authentic landscape and tradition based activity. Painting or making photographs of a waterfront condo, a passive non-water dependent scene, is not the compelling subject matter that an active commercial fishing landscape is. It was no accident that a vital commercial fishing industry in 1920's and 30's Gloucester coincided with an art movement that had reached its height and included painter Edward Hopper and writers T.S. Eliot and Rudyard Kipling who found inspiration from Gloucester's working class traditional fishing culture.<sup>73</sup> Fishing villages or farming communities can only exist if the human traditions they represent are safe. "It does no good for historians, folklorists, and anthropologists to collect songs and the stories and the lore that make up local culture and store them in books and archives. They cannot collect and store – because they cannot know – the pattern of reminding that can survive only in the living human community in its place."<sup>74</sup>

## **Advocacy Timeline – Ancich Property Visioning Process**

### **Overview – August, 2012 – December, 2013**

This section details the actions taken in advocating for commercial fishing use on the Ancich property from August of 2012 to the present, December, 2013. The Ancich property is located within the city limits on the Gig Harbor waterfront. It is within the newly

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<sup>73</sup> Kurlansky, Mark, *The Last Fish Tale*, (Riverhead Books, 2008), p.106.

<sup>74</sup> Berry, p. 166.

designated Historic Working Waterfront Environment, a waterfront zoning designation. The Ancich property is an intact commercial fishing landscape with a dilapidated commercial fishing net shed and un-improved uplands. The City of Gig Harbor purchased the property in August of 2012 from a group who had planned to develop the heritage landscape property for upscale residential and recreational marina use.

### **August, 2012 - Call to Action**

The call to action came unexpectedly via email while I was working out of Juneau, Alaska, about a thousand miles north of Gig Harbor. Like most all Gig Harbor fishermen, my family participates in the Alaska salmon fishery. Most local fishermen are up north for at least two to three months. I was linked to an article in the *Peninsula Gateway*, a local Gig Harbor newspaper, which detailed a Gig Harbor City Council decision to purchase the Rainier Yacht property, locally known as the John Ancich property, or the Ancich property. The paper characterized the property as “the last piece of sizeable waterfront property available to the city. The city has designs on it as a park, marina and small boat harbor for human-powered watercraft.”<sup>75</sup> I was pleased that city council purchased waterfront parcels that were destined for the development of upscale homes, parking garages, and a private marina, but alarmed that city officials discussed a variety of recreational uses on the intact historic commercial fishing Ancich property without even a mention of retaining traditional commercial fishing use. The oversight was magnified by the Ancich property location within the new Historic Working Waterfront Environment. That zoning district has only two “preferred and best uses” - “commercial fishing services/moorage and boatbuilding.” The Historic Working Waterfront Environment was not a zoning anachronism, the designation was brand new having been approved by the planning commission on Jan. 13, 2011 for

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<sup>75</sup> Davis, Peninsula Gateway.

inclusion into the draft Shoreline Master Program scheduled to be adopted in late 2013. It was also common knowledge that commercial fishing properties had been lost to redevelopment at a steady pace over decades as real estate values became too high to maintain traditional water dependent uses on private property. The bulk of the Gig Harbor fishing fleet was now moored at five remaining fishing family properties clustered within the Historic Working Waterfront Environment. In fifty years a mile of city working waterfront had been reduced to a few hundred yards.

### **February 13, 2013 – ‘Community Boating Center Steering Committee’ Meeting**

The first official meeting devoted to discussing Ancich property use was arranged by a city council member that had been proactive in his effort to begin the process of determining use for the site. When I had first been asked to participate upon my return home from Alaska in October of 2012, the committee’s unofficial name was the Ancich Park Visioning Committee. By the time the group of invited stakeholders met on February 13 of 2013 the committee name had changed to the Community Boating Center Steering Committee, which I thought clearly signaled a desire for future property use. The term ‘community boating center’ had been used to describe a human powered craft center.

Three council members were in attendance, a kayak club representative, and several other stakeholders representing various interests. I came into the meeting ready to utilize incomplete research I had been compiling for a visioning process that was moving too rapidly for me to finish the research process. Senior city planner Peter Katich delivered a comprehensive Ancich property zoning and land-use analysis that spelled out the allowable uses for the site. City historic preservation coordinator Lita Dawn Stanton presented a power point describing site history and detailed a broad funding request to the state for \$921,000 to create a “Multi-Use Boating Center” that would “provide moorage slips for

commercial and recreational boaters” and provide storage facilities and staging for a community kayak program and a local sailing program. Her use of the “Boating Center” term seemed to be inclusive of more potential uses than I understood the community boating center term to encompass. Nothing about the visioning process to this point included opportunities for the general public to participate; the meeting’s representatives were selected by invitation and the funding request detailing probable Ancich property use was generated by city staff. As it turned out, Mayor Hunter thought the visioning process was too insular and moving too fast: at the end of the meeting it was announced that the current stakeholder group was being dismantled with the Ancich property future use task being turned over to city planners to facilitate a broader stakeholder visioning process, and to the Parks Commission to make a use recommendation to forward to City Council. The surprise reconfiguration of the process allowed for more public participation and, on a personal level, more time to finish the research I had started in November.

### **Early February 2013 – Send Out Fisherman Surveys**

The first week of February I sent out 114 surveys to fishermen. Ultimately I received 52 surveys back. The survey data impacted to the commercial fishing advocacy process favorably; respondents indicated that there were 25 commercial fishing vessel owners that do not currently moor in Gig Harbor, but would like to moor their vessels in their homeport. The survey identified more local fishermen who were willing to participate in the Ancich advocacy process and who would be new faces and voices at city hall. The results demonstrated that there were more fishermen living in the Gig Harbor area than moored fishing vessels or GHCFM membership indicated.

### **February 20, 2013 – Fishermen’s Club Endorsement**

The Gig Harbor Commercial Fishermen’s Club (GHCFC) endorsed the advocacy position we fishing stakeholders had crafted for the Ancich property: commercial fishing use of the Ancich net shed and a commercial fishing moorage facility being built water-ward of the net shed. They voted to have me and one other commercial fishing stakeholder (to be determined) represent commercial fishing interests during the stakeholder process. The GHCFC was founded by descendants of Croatian immigrants and has about 60 members, not all of them active fishermen. The survey revealed that there were more active fishermen in the community not affiliated with the GHCFC than there were in the club. That fact was another anecdotal piece of information regarding number of fisherman in the area that surprised people. Having the support of fishermen/local tradition bearers was critical to the advocacy process.

### **February 25, 2013 - City Council Authorizes Ancich Visioning Process**

On February 25, 2013, the Gig Harbor City Council authorized the Gig Harbor Parks Commission to conduct a public visioning process for the Ancich property as outlined by Mayor Chuck Hunter.

### **March 6, 2013 – Parks Commission Meeting**

On March 6, the City of Gig Harbor Parks Commission announced the details for the Ancich Waterfront Park visioning process. I made one public comment asking that the public process pause for June, July, August, and September while commercial fishermen were gone fishing.



### **March 14, 2013 - Meeting with City Planners**

On Thursday, March 14, I was invited to meet with City of Gig Harbor planning director Jennifer Kester and senior planner Lindsey Sehmel. The meeting was notable due to city staff's desire to set Ancich visioning process dates. Most fishermen participate in the Alaska salmon fishery and are gone for much of the summer. I asked that another stakeholder from the fishing community be included in the process explaining that the size of the fleet, importance of commercial fishing heritage to our community, and the significance of commercial fishing economic benefit warranted at least two fishing advocates out of a projected stakeholder group of 20. The planners asked a variety of good questions designed to help them better understand the request for commercial fishing use of a public space. The meeting revealed how city staff members were becoming more aware and open to the concept that other uses, not only recreational, might be appropriate to place on public properties.

Gregg Lovrovich, president of the GHCFC was added to the stakeholder group. I also noted that the local museum was included in the stakeholder list and asked that the cultural organization Gig Harbor BoatShop be included as well, explaining that the organization's mission was working waterfront related, and its waterfront location at the Eddon Boatyard was within the Historic Working Waterfront Environment with the Ancich property. A BoatShop representative, John McMillan, was added to the stakeholder group.

### **April 17, 2013 - Stakeholder Meeting #1**

Nineteen diverse stakeholders selected by city planners with input from parks commissioners and other stakeholders attended the Ancich Stakeholder Meeting #1. Many, not all, had uses for the property in mind. Gig Harbor Canoe & Kayak Club use and commercial fishing use dominated the discussion. Early in the workshop there were

stakeholder questions regarding commercial fishing use. Most questions came from the point of view that assumed commercial fishing to be a dying way of life. Planning director Jennifer Kester asked me if I would care to field the questions. After answering a few questions I offered up copies of each of the five research documents generated to show the community that commercial fishing was vital, and to specifically advocate for commercial fishing use of the Ancich property. I had 20 copies of each document with me and was hoping for an opportunity to distribute them. The documents addressed most all questions stakeholders were asking regarding commercial fishing, including economic viability of the industry and if there was a demonstrated need for more local commercial fishing moorage. We also added a five page illustrated property use proposal that detailed commercial fishing use of the property (See Appendix A). The 19 stakeholders then broke into five small groups and were asked to come up with Ancich property use ideas and to later present them to the larger group. As luck would have it, the four commercial fishing/working waterfront advocates were spread evenly through the groups. In each of the five presentations created by the five stakeholder groups commercial fishing was included as a use on the Ancich property.

#### **April 24, 2013 – Stakeholder Meeting #2**

The Ancich Stakeholder Meeting #2 began with a question and answer session relating to the two uses that had risen to the top of the stakeholder list, commercial fishing use and kayak club use. Planners asked me to field the commercial fishing questions. Many of the initial questions challenged the 28 million dollar gross income figure I had calculated in the economic impact study. A few stakeholders had a difficult time replacing their commercial fishing assumptions with commercial fishing facts. Several questions seemed designed to minimize the impact the 28 million dollar figure by asking about net incomes and other

economic minutia. I explained how I arrived at the gross income figures, including researching state websites and filing public disclosure requests, and that I had no time to drill down to net incomes or, on the other hand, to calculate the economic multiplier effects of the 28 million dollars in the community.

The distilled result of the second meeting? There could be two uses on the property, commercial fishing use and kayak club use, but they should be distinct. I clarified by mentioning that the property could be shared, perhaps, but the two facilities could not be shared. All 19 stakeholders agreed. There is information available on the incompatibility of commercial fishing and recreational users sharing a facility. Commercial fishing advocates made a case that the Ancich commercial fishing net shed should be retained as an existing commercial fishing structure, and that a commercial fishing vessel moorage facility should be built extending from the net shed.

### **May 22, 2013 – Ancich Park Open House**

The Ancich Park Planning Open House was the culmination of the stakeholder process. Each of the property use proposals was graphically detailed on aerial photographs of the Ancich property. Every proposal had commercial fishing use included in some manner. We worked hard to get the word out to fishermen and their families about the open house to good effect. Attendees at the open house were asked to vote on their favorite idea.

### **November 6, 2013 – Parks Commission Votes on Ancich Recommendation**

At the Parks Commission second Open House several final use recommendations, presumably influenced by the open house vote, were portrayed for public review. This open house was the final opportunity for the public to see and comment on the visioning process recommendations. One recommendation was our preferred option of commercial

fishing use of the Ancich net shed and a commercial fishing moorage facility being built water-ward from the net shed site. Public comment was scheduled and taken during the regularly scheduled Parks Commission meeting following the open house. I called around 20 fishermen days prior to the meeting and asked them to come and speak. Some recreational use advocates were still pressing for adaptive re-use of the net shed for kayak storage and recreational meeting space. During the public hearing portion of the open house around a dozen fishermen spoke, most of who were individuals that I had located through the fisherman's survey and were unfamiliar at city hall. The public testimony from those speakers was very compelling, perhaps the most powerful impromptu activist's display I had ever witnessed. Following the public testimony the Parks Commission voted unanimously for the option that portrayed commercial fishing use of the Ancich net shed and a commercial fishing moorage facility being constructed water-ward from or near the net shed on the north side of the property, with a kayak use being placed on the south side of the property. On December 9, 2013, as I write, the Parks Commission's Ancich Park use recommendation, Resolution No. 949, will be placed in front of the Gig Harbor City Council members for a vote.

### **December 9, 2013 - Ancich Park Use - City Council Vote**

On December 9, 2013, a City of Gig Harbor Council meeting came to order at 5:30 pm. Fourth item in the New Business portion of the agenda was the Parks Commission recommendation for Ancich Park use, Resolution 949. It was the culminating event in a nine-month public visioning process initiated by the city to define future use of the Ancich property. I had spent several days prior to the meeting alerting fishermen via emails and phone calls asking them to attend and speak if they were willing. I had spoken with four of seven council members and felt reasonably good about the resolution passing if the issue

wasn't tabled. A year's worth of advocacy work by others and myself was on the line. A public hearing commenced following an explanation by senior city planner Lindsey Sehmel of the Ancich Park visioning process and a presentation of the Ancich Park use recommendations.

Perhaps ten fishermen went to the podium to speak to council members.<sup>76</sup> They held the council members attention with their captivating narratives. Mick Martin mentioned that he'd gone to elementary school "right here" as he pointed to the ground – the new city hall was built on the site of the Harbor's former elementary school – and continued to describe a list of places he'd found to moor his fishing vessel none of which included his homeport of Gig Harbor. Mark Worley explained that his grandfather had come to town to settle in the forties, and described getting up at 5 am that morning to drive to Astoria, Oregon, over a three-hour drive, to work on his boat and that he timed his return trip to get to "this meeting." He said that he and his wife had bought their boat 20 some years ago and that his homeport of Gig Harbor was lettered on the stern, but their boat had never been to their hometown due to lack of commercial fishing moorage. Bob Haltner, new to town, talked about his purse seine crewmembers that earned "\$25,000 to \$50,000" a season and how that could take the pressure off a parent's worries about financing their kid's college education. He said if he could keep his boat here he'd likely hire a local crew. The testimony went on with narratives that spoke to the economic impact of commercial fishing, stories of fishermen's connections to Gig Harbor, and was punctuated by occasional laughter. I had been nervous that a long public comment period might get tedious. I shouldn't have been, the fishermen's words were compelling. They perfect ambassadors for commercial fishing families and commercial fishing use.

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<sup>76</sup> Gig Harbor City Council Ancich Park use Public Hearing audio, 12/9/2013. Fisherman testimony: <https://soundcloud.com/hoppen/gig-harbor-fisherman-testimony>. City Council comments and vote: <https://soundcloud.com/hoppen/gig-habor-city-council>.

The public hearing closed and council members began to comment. First up was one of the three that I had made the mistake of not talking with, Gig Harbor's mayor-in-waiting, Jill Guernsey. She was positive in endorsing the recommendation, she stated that, "This is the first time I can remember that we've had such a wonderful opportunity for cooperation and public involvement, the testimony tonight has been exceptional."<sup>77</sup> I knew at that moment that council would vote to support the Ancich Park recommendations. Each council member enthusiastically spoke to the recommendations. Councilman Payne, "acknowledged that 'commercial fishing is not a dying industry. It's growing and it's vital and it can really be an economic driver and asset to this community.'<sup>78</sup> Councilman Kadzik said that he was glad we are able to "provide such a great opportunity for the fishermen."<sup>79</sup> The vote was seven to zero in favor of the Resolution 949 to place commercial fishing use in the Ancich net shed and to build a moorage facility for commercial fishing vessels on the shed or north side of the property and to have a kayak use on the south side of the property. In August of 2012, commercial fishing use of the Ancich property was not on the list of potential uses. On December 9, 2013, an occupational tradition, commercial fishing, that had been invisible to much of the community was now apparently breaking out of the fog. The council vote was a milestone in the process, but there are more to go – funding, and construction, and defining details of use.

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<sup>77</sup> Glock-Jackson, Charlee, "New mayor, council member sworn in at December meeting," Gig Harbor Life, December 20, 2013, p.3.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

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## **Practical Applications of Ancich Advocacy Process**

### **The Local Cultural Advocate - Personal Hurdles**

I would be remiss if I didn't describe a few of the personal requirements of local activism. After all, it is my hope that this paper can assist, perhaps inspire, other local activists or would be activists from other communities to take on the challenge of conserving local cultural traditions. First on the list is identifying collaborators, people to help do the work of conserving existing culture. You can't get it done alone. Preferably they will be as passionate as you, because doing the work of conserving culture means lots of time spent with no pay, the activist's dilemma. Find someone with computer and graphic arts skills if you don't have them. The ability to illustrate ideas, create outreach pieces like signs, and to work with photographs is a must. Be prepared to speak in public, perhaps the most difficult part of the work, at least for me. If you cringe at the thought of speaking in public don't mess around memorizing or attempt to speak extemporaneously. Write it to speak it, practice it out loud a dozen times, revise until it sounds like speech and not writing, and then read it in public. It works and you will come across as prepared, and you're guaranteed to get your message across. Finally, the advocacy must be persistent. Follow through. If it's a capital project you have advocated for that succeeds at gaining city approval then stay involved with it until it's built, and be involved in crafting policy that describes the details of use. It's not over until it's over.

### **Occupational Traditions Provide Public Benefit**

A case can be made that conserving local occupational traditions provides far more benefit to a community than other uses thought to deliver enormous public benefit. Public benefit delivered on public land by traditional uses is poorly understood, in fact, I believe so

misunderstood that traditional uses are automatically discounted as an option for use on a public properties. Demonstrating the manifold public benefits of traditional use is a key advocate's tool. When hearing the question from decision makers or from advocates of a competing use, "why should we place a private use, e.g. commercial fishing, on a public property," the advocate needs to re-characterize the debate. Describe the public benefit delivered by keeping a traditional use in your community. Ask decision makers to gauge all potential uses by assessing public benefit delivered. Clarify by using samples of public land and public entities facilitating a so-called private use to point out that public benefit is calculated in different ways. I pointed out during the Ancich process that the Port of Tacoma, a public entity using public land, funded by public money, to facilitate private shipping interests, is rationalized solely by economic benefit. I asked if walking a dog in a public park would be considered a private use and if that use provides significant public benefit? Or ask your decision makers to describe the benefits to community delivered by an organization that delivers a specific recreational use on public property - the description of benefits might be short. Not considering all potential uses of a public property is backwards. Focusing on who delivers the use is regressive and limiting, communities need to calculate and consider the public benefits from any potential use no matter who or what delivers that use, especially if the use is part of the cultural fabric of a community.

Recreational uses tend to rise to the top of the public's consciousness when considering use of a public space especially in small communities - the go-to use is typically park use. I was alarmed, but not completely surprised at the projected uses, all recreational, for the Ancich property. The uses fit the pattern for public waterfront development. Communities reliably develop public space for park and recreation use while overlooking traditional uses. Why? I believe recreational use on public land is thought to provide the most public benefit to a community, never mind that park use in the northern latitudes of Washington State



sees the space underutilized much of the year or that repetitive recreational park use compounds underutilized public space.

There may be ways to provide public access, conserve traditional uses, and still have the necessary park and recreation space to serve a community. Occupational traditions on a public property can combine multiple community benefits as other uses may not, including conserving authentic and existing local cultural traditions, providing economic benefit and jobs that stay in a community, and preserving and utilizing historic structures and landscapes for real use. Those traditional use benefits can enhance cultural interpretation and heritage tourism, continue to provide public access to a property, retain a traditional community use, and even provide a another place to walk a dog. One will probably find that describing the public benefit of retaining occupational traditions, even if the economic justifications are weak, will confirm a case for the retention of an important community tradition.

### **Encourage Public Purchase of Traditional Landscapes**

Certainly there are other methods of traditional landscape retention, but most take money, planning, and time, like conservation easements. Landscapes at risk can be secured relatively quickly by public purchase, a method that only takes money. It is a path that quickly secures an at risk landscape and allows citizens and elected officials to enter into a process for land-use that is not available on private properties. Private development always tends towards “highest and best” land use; in Gig Harbor that means upscale non-water dependent residential or office use and/or recreational marina use. Why traditional uses are lost, or not developed, on private properties is easily understood given the favorable “highest and best” land-use planning environment. Public ownership of properties allows city staff and elected officials to close the awkward gap between “espoused theory of action

and theory in use” when considering community overall goals for a given landscape.

The following is a description of preferred and best use for the Ancich property from the draft Shoreline Master Program:

- A. Purpose – “The purpose of the Historic Working Waterfront designation is to recognize and preserve two of Gig Harbor’s most notable historic industries: commercial fishing and boatbuilding. The area possesses a significant concentration of historic uses and structures. The preferred and best uses for this area are commercial fishing services/moorage and boatbuilding”.<sup>80</sup>

On a public property there is not the roadblock of private property rights that would hinder a community from implementing a preferred and best use of property. It would be hypocrisy at a high level for decision makers to completely ignore overall city goals for a property if it is publicly owned.

### **Make a Case for Diversity**

Make the case for land-use diversity in a community. Devoting all public waterfront space to recreational use hinders opportunity for land-use diversity, similar to all private waterfront properties being developed into recreational marinas. Repetitive land-use on public and private properties, such as parks and recreational marinas on a community waterfront, manifests a lack of diversity and a lack of creative land-use planning, and likely does not mirror community land-use goals.

### **Demonstrate Fact Through Research**

If traditional occupational uses are at risk in a community finding facts or opinions that support the conservation of that local tradition and presenting them in written form can be

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<sup>80</sup> “Locally Approved Draft City of Gig Harbor Shoreline Master Program,” p. 5-23.

a powerful advocate's tool. The City of Gig Harbor planning department and the parks commission requested copies of the research papers I compiled for the Ancich visioning process. Some or all of the documents have been distributed to city council members, and forwarded to federal lobbyists and even to our U.S. congressional representative.

Researching and presenting data regarding numbers of local commercial fishing families, articulating the cultural value of local fishing traditions, and especially articulating economic impact of local commercial fishing operations, was a path that opened up citizen and city official eyes as to what commercial fishing, a local occupational tradition, really means to Gig Harbor. The research impact surprised me. The combination of academic research and grassroots advocacy can be a game changer.

## **Conclusion**

Local occupational traditions and the landscapes necessary for their existence are inextricably linked. Communities that identify or that are identified as traditional places would be wise to proactively analyze that link. The disappearance of traditional landscapes and traditional use from your community is likely the result of the entrenched belief that the only measure of land-use value is short-term profit. "Highest and best" land-use proponents would assert that the removal of traditional landscapes by redevelopment is a function of economic natural selection.

On the contrary, basing community land-use only on economic outcomes is a blueprint for destroying place. "Basing decisions on a single value [economics] is a recipe for unbalanced urbanism and unsustainable development." <sup>81</sup> Using the 'dying way of life' as

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<sup>81</sup> Mason, Randall, "Promoting Cultural Preservation," in *Rebuilding Urban Places After Disaster*, ed. Birch, Eugene L. and Wachter, Susan M., (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 260.

justification for local occupational culture removal is deceptive. Real estate values have little to do with traditional use viability. Communities need to find ways of measuring cultural values that can counter-balance more easily measured economic values in the struggle to retain local culture and place.

Setha Low writes that, “disruption of place, then, does more than destroy sites of labor reproduction; it also limits people’s ability to reproduce their social world and every day lives. If we do not provide supportive environments or at least allow them to exist, we can actually eliminate the social and cultural diversity we are trying to preserve.”<sup>82</sup> There is a compelling need of securing place through cultural landscape and property conservation throughout the country.

The land-use alternative for any given community is most often development that displaces place-making people with “the kind of place that specifically caters to a mobile, professional, middle class culture.”<sup>83</sup> It is a culture that Wallace Stegner would characterize as being advanced by the “displaced person.” He describes the displaced person this way; “Culturally he is a discarder or transplanter, not a builder or conserver.”<sup>84</sup> The conservation actions by the people of Gig Harbor show the signs of people that appreciate place and are willing to assign a social and cultural value to traditional landscapes and traditional uses.

Does a vote by citizens to pay over three million dollars for a historic boatyard property demonstrate a measureable value? Of course, citizens that vote to pay three million dollars for an old boatyard is proof positive that a community values local culture over developer profit. “Amartya Sen asserts that there are no universal development approaches, no blind applications of economics. He argues that cultural well-being must be considered a

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<sup>82</sup> Low, p. 67.

<sup>83</sup> Low, p. 72.

<sup>84</sup> Stegner, p. 199.

component of overall social well-being, and part of any sort of successful 'development.'<sup>85</sup> The boatyard-saving community of Gig Harbor was sending a clear and quantifiable message that echoes Amartya Sen's assertion that cultural well-being is important to community.

The nine-month public process that culminated in the Gig Harbor city council voting unanimously to retain commercial fishing use at the city owned Ancich property also revealed a measureable desire by a community to protect local culture. These decisions that have prevented the removal of traditional land-uses from a community are powerful proof of a community that rejects "economics as the sole arbiter of value,"<sup>86</sup> and "reveals a rethinking of the planning and design redevelopment projects [that] have a tendency to reduce rather than maintain cultural diversity."<sup>87</sup> The decisions are an acknowledgement that local cultural traditions matter. Elected officials and citizens from communities like Gig Harbor, will respond to tradition bearers that take the time to engage. People want to know more about place defining traditions and what they mean. When tradition bearers like fishermen take the time to connect, it can be a moving experience and a potent force for cultural conservation. Communities that act to retain traditional landscapes and uses as Gig Harbor has done have established a *living cultural traditions-have-value* precedent. I consider that hard currency available for use in the work of retaining traditional landscapes and traditional use in Gig Harbor and beyond.

How do cultural conservation advocates from places that have yet to accumulate the cultural currency that comes in the form of traditional landscape and traditional use conservation success begin to quantify cultural value? Articulate that value with research

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<sup>85</sup> Birch and Wachter, p. 260, 1.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>87</sup> Low, p. 72.

data if possible. If the economic value of the traditional use is over-looked or misunderstood and doesn't come in the "highest and best" use form of developing property to a point of maximum market value (which can have little on-going direct effect on local economies if the development is residential), then collect data and demonstrate that.

For instance, using a hypothetical public commercial boat moorage facility at the Ancich property for 20 vessels I can calculate basic distinctions in local economic benefit. I'm providing an informed educational guess based on the data I collected for 2010 and 2011. The 20 boat fleet may have a combined gross income of roughly six million dollars; corresponding pleasure boats would have no incomes. Commercial boats are paying the public for moorage; pleasure boats are paying moorage to a private facility – a wash. Each commercial fishing vessel, according to a Port of Seattle economic study,<sup>88</sup> has 33 times the annual operating costs of a similar sized yacht; that roughly translates to 33 times of injected local economic benefit per one commercial fishing vessel as compared to one pleasure vessel.

When the verifiable data is collected the claim that residential or recreational marina property development has significant economic benefit over ongoing commercial fishing use of the same property becomes more than questionable. The cultural conservator needs to be prepared for potential conflict in the public realm if the facts debunk development claims and advance the case for retention of local cultural landscapes over gentrifying development of those landscapes. Several times since releasing the researched fishing family economic data, I have been questioned about veracity of the data in public. The questioning wasn't overly confrontational but I could envision it becoming so.

The requirement of total immersion into grassroots advocacy techniques separates the

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<sup>88</sup> *2007 Economic Impact of the Port of Seattle* link, [http://www.portseattle.org/Supporting-Our-Community/Economic-Development/Documents/EconomicImpact\\_20091.pdf](http://www.portseattle.org/Supporting-Our-Community/Economic-Development/Documents/EconomicImpact_20091.pdf)

professional cultural conservator from practitioners of related academic fields like folklore, social anthropology, and historic preservation. David Fetterman's description of advocate ethnography describes an action-oriented academic that departs from the documentarian who works hard at not inserting themselves into the politics of a community being studied. "Advocate ethnographers..... take an active role in making social change happen..... they write in public forums to change public opinion, embarrass power brokers, and provide relevant information about a situation at opportune moments in the policy decision making forum."<sup>89</sup> The active or action role in making social change distinguishes cultural conservation or cultural sustainability from other related disciplines.

There is no recipe that I can envision that would avoid political action in the work of preserving local culture. Folklorist Archie Green points out that "cultural conservationists cannot escape political action, whether testifying on local zoning laws or articulating outrage at the sight of oil drenched otters in the Prince William Sound."<sup>90</sup> The cultural conservation successes experienced in Gig Harbor could not have occurred without political action. The cultural conservationist's work, whether on the ground in a local community or advising local cultural advocates, might include advocating for a result, will require taking a side or perhaps promoting a use, and will occasionally involve expressing "outrage" at the status quo.

Local activists have no trouble with the requirements for conserving culture and neither should cultural conservation professionals. "Local history, practices, and ways of life are among our most precious assets and, in an era of increasing homogeneity and globalization, our most endangered resources." The global balance of development is far too weighted in

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<sup>89</sup> Fetterman, David M., *Ethnography: Step by Step*, (Sage Publications, 2010), p. 139.

<sup>90</sup> Green, Archie, "Raven, Mallard, and Spotted Owl – Totems for Coalition," in *Conserving Culture*, ed. Hufford, Mary, (University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 249.

favor of narrow economic development theory and practice that inevitably destroys place and place makers for anybody concerned with sustaining those “precious assets,”<sup>91</sup> whether local activist or cultural professional, to stand back and watch them disappear.

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<sup>91</sup> Goucher College, Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability, program marketing piece.



# Appendix A

## Research Documents

Compiled by Guy Hoppen

Fall 2012/Winter2013

# Ancich Property Commercial Fishing Use - Case Statement

Guy Hoppen – April 2013

Supported by the Gig Harbor Commercial Fishing Community



Ancich Netshed Dock

Photo G. Hoppen

## Why should Gig Harbor support an Ancich Property commercial fishing use proposal?

- The Ancich property is an intact commercial fishing family property.
- The Ancich site is located between two of the remaining active commercial fishing properties.
- The Ancich property is within the SMP's Historic Working Waterfront Environment. The *"preferred and best uses"* within the Historic Working Waterfront Environment are *"commercial fishing services/moorage and boatbuilding."*
- City Comprehensive Plan and Shoreline Master Program goals support the preservation of *"the commercial fishing fleet as a significant cultural and economic resource."*
- Fishing families are significant contributors to the local economy.
- Cultural Heritage – The occupational traditions of commercial fishing continue to define Gig Harbor the 'place'.
- There is demonstrated need for additional commercial fishing infrastructure.

## What are the risks if city leaders decide to change Ancich Property use?

- The only significant fishing ports remaining on Puget Sound, other than Gig Harbor, are located on public properties. Commercial fishing use needs to be secured on public properties.

- Waterfront development patterns are clear; most important and desired waterfront uses, especially working waterfront uses, will not survive on private property.

## Ancich Property Commercial Fishing Use Public Benefit



Gig Harbor Fishing Fleet

Photo G. Hoppen

### The public benefits of anchoring commercial fishing use at the Ancich site

- Economic – Over 100 Gig Harbor fishing families generated over **\$28,000,000** in average gross revenue for 2010 and 2011.
- Commercial fishing **provides good jobs**.
- Retaining commercial fishing is an **important community goal** as defined by City plans, and contributes to the city goal of a mixed-use waterfront.
- Public property provides **public access** to commercial fishing traditions, the netshed, and the docks.
- Heritage Tourism – People are seeking **authentic experiences**. Historical interpretation of the past is more relevant when existing community traditions are present and thriving.
- Commercial fishing use is exempt from city parking requirements. The Ancich commercial fishing site would **avoid an upland covered with blacktop**.
- A commercial fishing moorage facility can be used for **transient moorage in the summer** months when most fishing vessels are gone.

**Commercial fishing moorage and netshed use is a public investment that delivers cultural, economic, public access, and other important benefits to our community.**

**If commercial fishing use is not anchored on the Ancich Property - a historic fishing property, within the Historic Working Waterfront district, with commercial fishing identified as the “preferred and best use” - then where?**

NOTE: Public benefit should be the defining criteria for public property use, not who or what delivers that public benefit. If being characterized as a park in some way inhibits consideration of what public benefit it is; then perhaps the designation of the Ancich site as a park would need to be re-examined.

## **Ancich Commercial Fishing Moorage Facility Proposal**

Compiled by Guy Hoppen, John McMillan, Gregg Lovrovich – Supported by Gig Harbor Fishermen

**Now is the time to anchor 150 years of Gig Harbor cultural heritage.**

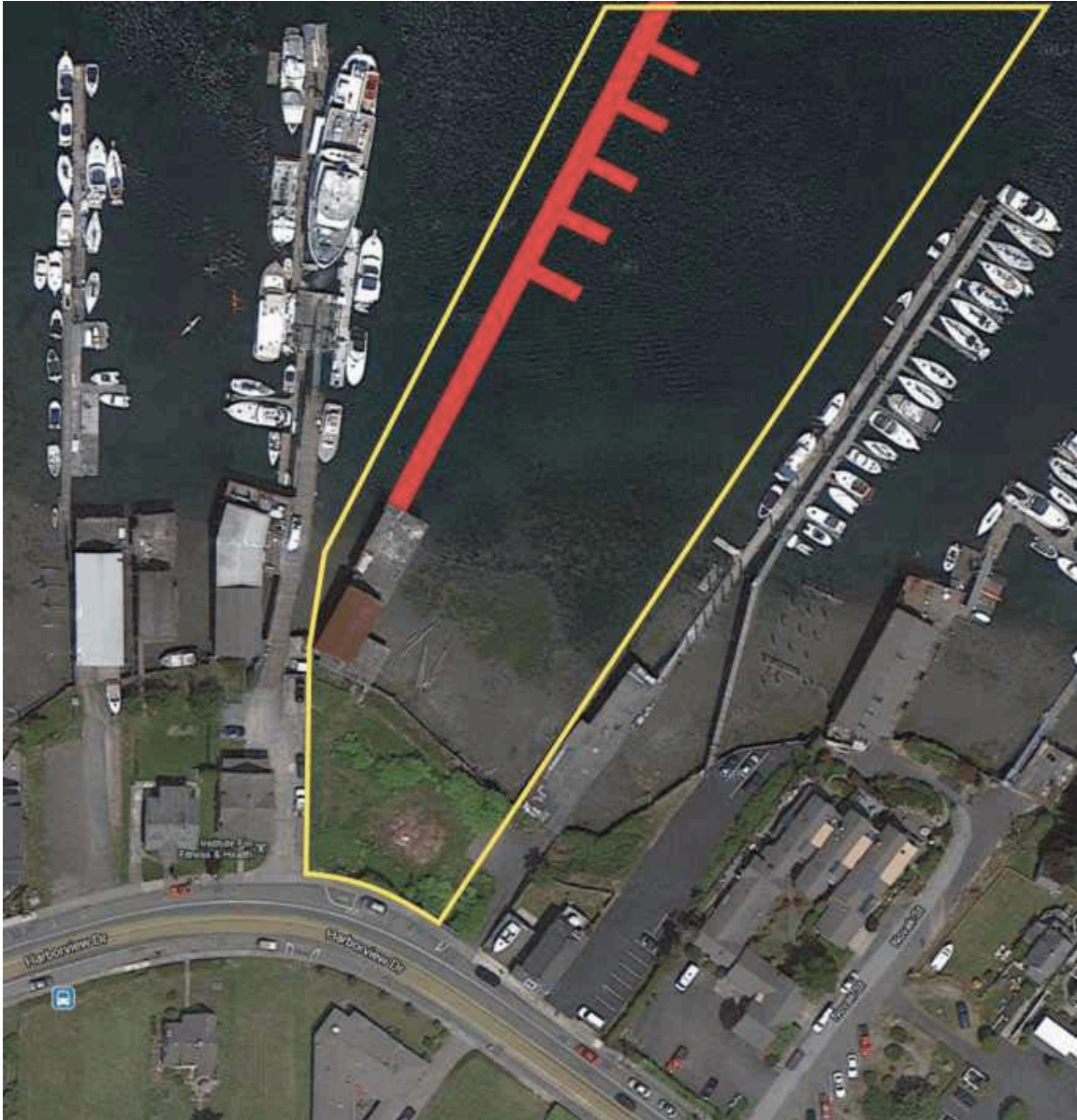


Illustration is not intended to represent exact property lines or an explicit facility layout.

**Primary Use** – Commercial fishing moorage/commercial fishing netshed use.

**Secondary Use** – Transient moorage for summer months or as available.

## **Ancich Commercial Fishing Moorage Facility Proposal**



The proposed commercial fishing moorage facility and authentic commercial fishing netshed use **anchors commercial fishing on Gig Harbor’s waterfront for future generations** as private property cannot, achieving an important City Comprehensive Planning community goal.

**9.2.1. Fishing - *Preserve the commercial fishing fleet as a significant cultural and economic resource. Retain important fleet supporting services and promote development of additional moorage and docking facilities consistent with the fleet's needs.*** City of Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan - Adopted December 2004, Revised, October 2010

The Ancich Site is within the Historic Working Waterfront District. **“The preferred and best uses” on the Ancich site are commercial fishing and boatbuilding.** Private property restrictions no longer stand in the way of community leaders achieving a preferred land-use goal.

### **5.2.7 Historic Working Waterfront Environment**

**A. Purpose - *The purpose of the Historic Working Waterfront designation is to recognize and preserve two of Gig Harbor’s most notable historic industries: commercial fishing and boatbuilding. The area possesses a significant concentration of historic uses and structures. The preferred and best uses for this area are commercial fishing services/moorage and boatbuilding.*** City of Gig Harbor Draft Shoreline master Program, Dec. 10, 2012.

**Commercial Fishing use is exempt from city parking requirements** allowing for one less waterfront parking lot and the retention of maximum green space on Ancich uplands.

**7.11.11 Regulations – Commercial Fishing Moorage** 1) *New or existing marinas or moorage facilities which provide moorage and support facilities for active commercial fishing vessels shall be exempt from the parking requirements of Gig Harbor Municipal Code Title 17...*

## Ancich Commercial Fishing Net-Locker Proposal



An Aerial view detailing pedestrian access and added street level parking on the roof of a Net-Locker structure.

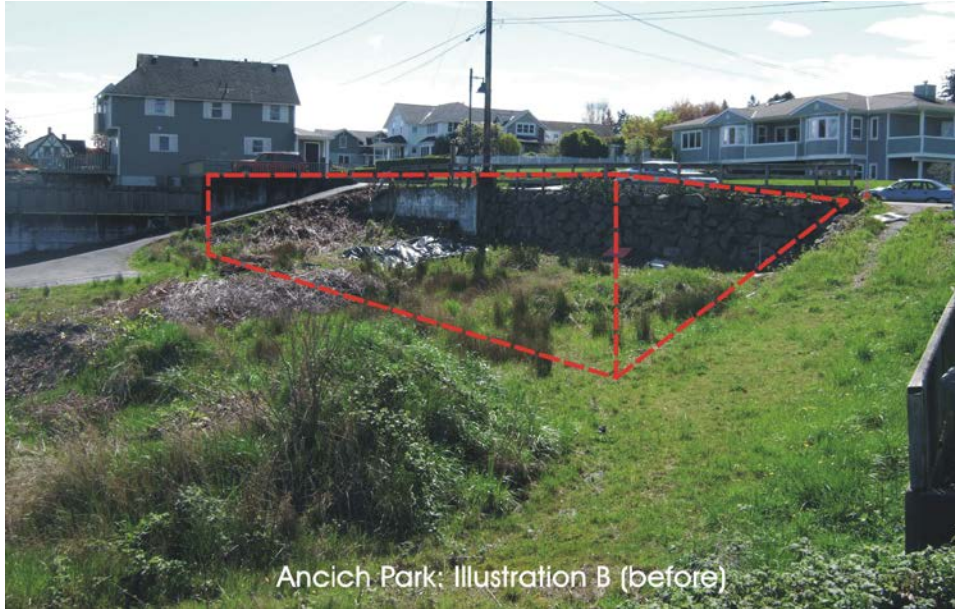
## Ancich Commercial Fishing Net-Locker Proposal



### Illustration B (after) - Net-Locker Building Concept.

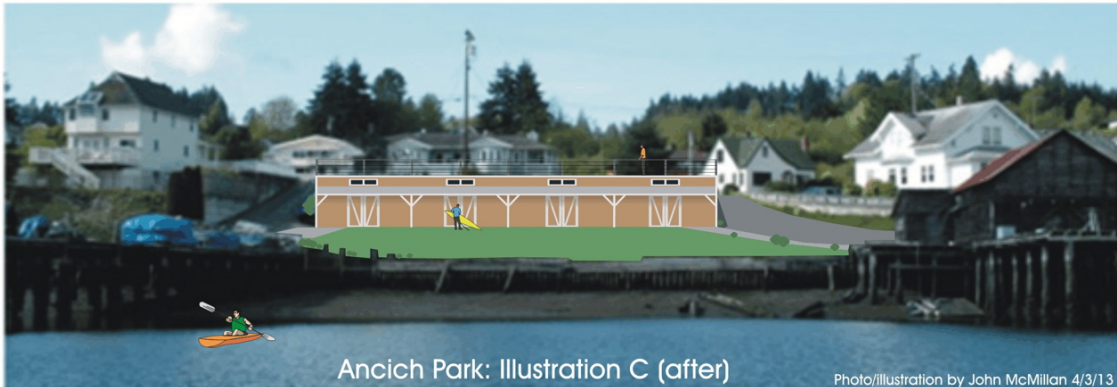
- The net-locker building use is a **practical use** of an awkward section of the Ancich property. (See PG. 5, Illustration B – (before))
- Designating the building as a commercial fishing structure maintains the commercial fishing use parking exemption - allowing the remaining **uplands to remain blacktop free**.
- The net-locker **height is at street and sidewalk level** allowing for storage use below and parking space and pedestrian use above. (See overhead illustration).
- Having several lockers allows for **commercial fishing use and potentially other uses**.
- Inspired by the vernacular architecture of historic structures from other fishing ports and Gig Harbor's netsheds, the net-lockers are **in keeping with historic structures** and maintain Historic Working Waterfront District integrity and use.

# Ancich Commercial Fishing Net-Locker Proposal



Ancich Park: Illustration B (before)

Illustration B (before) - Net Lockers Outlined in Red



Ancich Park: Illustration C (after)

Photo/illustration by John McMillan 4/3/13



Ancich Park: Illustration C (before)

Illustration C (before and After) - Net Lockers from Water View.



# Commercial Fishing Economic Impact in Gig Harbor

April 17, 2013

Guy Hoppen

## MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

The superficially plausible but actually wrong argument we fishermen often hear from non-fisherman is that fishing is a *“dying industry,”* or, *“if fishermen can’t afford to purchase a waterfront site – well then their operation must not be economically viable.”* Say it enough and people think its true.

In fact, the fisheries of the North Pacific that Gig Harbor fishermen participate in are strong and sustainable, and commercial fishing’s contribution to the local economy is significant.

Many know that commercial fishing-use and commercial fishing families are largely responsible for the unique architectural and cultural character of the Gig Harbor waterfront. And that commercial fishing provides a community sense of place that is leveraged as a **heritage tourism draw, an event driver, and a marketing venue** for the City, and for cultural organizations.

What most locals likely don’t know is that **the economic contribution to our local economy by existing commercial fishing families is huge.** Economic data was accumulated from the following sources in an attempt to make the facts more visible: Alaska’s Commercial Fishing Entry Commission (CFEC); the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); and to a lesser degree Oregon and California’s Department’s of Fish and Wildlife.

## There Are More Commercial Fishermen Here Than You Thought

- **121 Gig Harbor fishboat and/or permit owners** – There are 121 Gig Harbor area commercial fishing vessel owners and/or commercial fishing permit owners that were identified in the study. Only **33 of the 121** are members of the Gig Harbor Commercial Fishermen’s Civic Club. Crewmembers were not included.
- **34 Commercial Fishing Vessels moor full or part-time in Gig Harbor.**
- **At least 19 more local fishermen would like to moor their vessels in their homeport of Gig Harbor.**

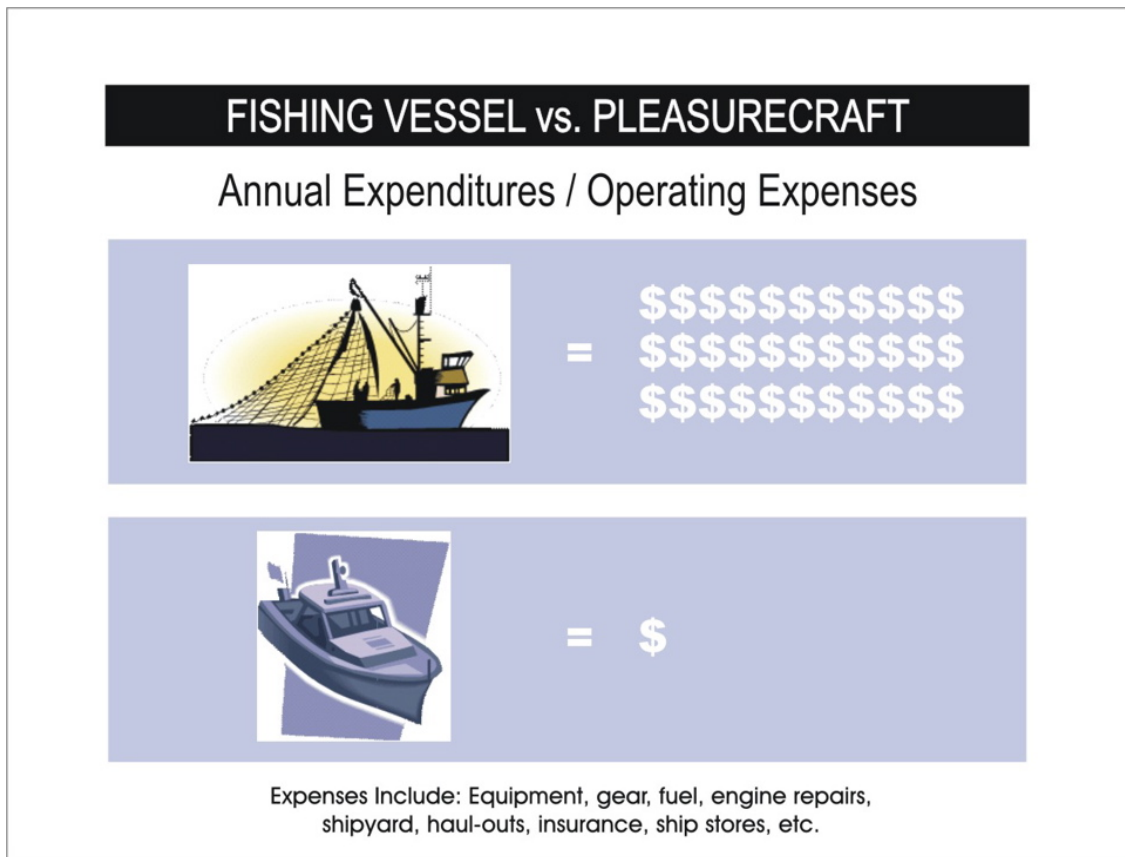
## Commercial Fishing Pays

- **\$28,000,000/year** – The yearly average ex-vessel value (gross revenue) generated by Gig Harbor area commercial fishermen for 2010 and 2011.

NOTE: 2012 commercial fishing data is not be available until late 2013. The majority of fishery income for this study was retrieved from state websites or through public disclosure requests. A small segment of fishery gross incomes were retrieved through personal interviews. 17 fisheries were un-obtainable.

The \$28,000,000 yearly total would be far larger if 2011 data had been exclusively used. The \$28,000,000 yearly total would be larger had the missing 17 fisheries been tallied. They comprise several high value fisheries that do not have a high enough number of required participants to allow for public disclosure.

### Local fishing vessels inject more money into the local economy



**The illustration above compares dollars spent by one commercial fishing vessel versus one similar sized yacht. A fishing vessel contributes 33 times the dollars into the local economy.** (The 2007 Economic Impact of the Port of Seattle, Feb. 10 2009, by Martin Associates)

# Gig Harbor Fishermen Survey

February 3, 2013

Guy Hoppen

## MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013 a survey was sent to 114 commercial fishermen. A fisherman, for the purposes of this survey, was identified as a current licensed vessel owner and/or commercial fishing permit holder. No crewmembers were included.

The survey was intended to quantify how many commercial fishermen from the Gig Harbor area - including a small sampling of fishermen from the South Sound with ties to Gig Harbor - would support a commercial fishing public moorage facility on the city owned Ancich property.

**101 surveys were sent to fishermen in the local Gig Harbor area:**

98335, Gig Harbor – 36  
98332, Gig Harbor – 30  
98333, Fox Island – 5  
98367, Burley – 10  
98329, KPN – 9  
98359, Olalla – 4  
98349, Lakebay – 6  
98351, Longbranch - 1

**13 surveys were sent to fishermen in various, mostly South Sound, zip codes.**

These fishermen were either: identified as part or full-time Gig Harbor moorage users; or identified as likely moorage candidates due to their ties to Gig Harbor.

One survey was sent to a fisherman in each of the following zip codes: 98360, 98512, 98407, 98516, 98003, 98370, 98499, 98110, 98070, 98226, 98406, 98375, and 98374.

**TO DATE - 52 of 114 surveys have been returned. Questions and responses are detailed below. It is interesting to note that 37 of 52 respondents were not Gig Harbor Commercial Fishermen's Civic Club members.**

1. Would you support commercial fishing use (moorage, netshed access) on the publicly owned Ancich Property?
  - Yes – 52 of 52 or 100%
2. If public commercial fishing vessel moorage space were available at a fee consistent with Port of Seattle/Port of Bellingham commercial rates would you consider keeping your vessel in Gig Harbor?

- **7 - No moorage required my boat is moored elsewhere.**
  - **17 – My boat is moored in Gig Harbor now.**
  - **23 – I am currently moored elsewhere but would like to moor my boat in Gig Harbor, (19 from Gig Harbor area, 4 from South Sound).**
  - **5 – I have no boat.**
3. Do you think a Gig Harbor waterfront that retains commercial fishing use is important to the community?
- **Yes 52 of 52 or 100%**
4. How many crewmembers do you employ from the Gig Harbor area?
- **88 crewmembers**

**CONCLUSION: There is overwhelming support by the fishing community for a commercial fishing moorage facility, and the netshed being restored for fishing use, on the Ancich Property.**

- **19 of those surveyed are local fishermen who would like to moor their vessels in their home community. There is a need for expanded commercial fishing moorage in Gig Harbor.**
- **100% of those surveyed support a commercial fishing facility on the city owned Ancich Property.**
- **100% of those surveyed believe that retaining commercial fishing use on the local waterfront is important.** Many fishermen echoed City of Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan shoreline goal language when asked why retaining commercial fishing use on Gig Harbor’s waterfront is important - ***“Preserve the commercial fishing fleet is a significant cultural and economic resource.”*** City of Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan

*"It provides jobs for the community, fresh seafood for the market, and a link to the lives of those that work on the water."*

Matt Dyer

*"Gig Harbor is called the 'Maritime City.' Fishing has a historical and current history, and contributes economically to the town."*

Randy Babich

*"Commercial fishing moorage and workspace is part of Gig Harbor history and should be maintained."*

John de Groen

Commercial fishing use *"is essential to maintaining the historical aura of the harbor."*

Glenda Huff

*"Keeping fishing dollars in Gig Harbor is vital for our local economy."*

Mark Worley

# Jerisich Park transient moorage use for 5 months

## 2.27 moored boats per day.

- This data was collected at approximately 7am each day during the period beginning November 25, 2012 and ending April 17, 2013. (Data collected by Guy Hoppen)
- The daily moorage totals include commercial and recreational vessels.
- The data totals include smaller open boats like runabouts and anchored resident vessels that often utilize the park moorage during the week.

**322 boats moored at Jerisich Park Dock** during the 144-day data collection period including: 268 recreational boats and 54 commercial boats.

**November 25 – 30, 2012** = 6 days

4 boats at Jerisich Transient Dock = **1.5 boats/day**

- 4 recreational boats
- 0 commercial boats

**December 1 – 31, 2012** = 31 days

46 boats at boats at Jerisich Transient Dock = **1.5 boats/day**

- 35 recreational boats
- 11 commercial boats

**January 1 – 31, 2013** = 31 days

52 boats at Jerisich Transient Dock = **1.7 boats/day**

- 30 recreational boats
- 22 commercial boats

**February 1 – 28, 2013** = 28 days

57 boats at Jerisich Transient Dock = **2 boats/day**

- 45 recreational boats
- 12 commercial boats

**March 1 – 31, 2013** = 31 days

96 boats at Jerisich Transient Dock = **3.1 boats/day**

- 90 recreational boats
- 6 commercial boats

**April 1 – 17, 2013** = 17 days

67 boats at Jerisich Transient Dock = **4 boats/day**

- 64 recreational boats,
- 3 commercial boats

At \$200 of local spending per day for a transient yacht - *The 2007 Economic Impact Study of the Port of Seattle, by Martin Associates* – **the total economic impact to the local economy for 5 months of a year would be \$64,000.**

**Conclusion: Building additional transient moorage infrastructure for seasonal use is not a viable use of public funds or waterfront space in a community that has demonstrated a need for multiple waterfront uses.**

## Commercial Fishing Representatives Respond to the 4/17 & 4/23 Ancich Meetings

By stakeholders - Guy Hoppen, Gregg Lovrovich – 5/1/2013

### Commercial Fishing use of the Ancich Netshed side of the property

#### Fishermen support the commercial fishing use of the north/netshed side, of the Ancich property.

- Local fishing families support the use of the Ancich netshed as a commercial fishing structure – if current development trends persist it may likely be the only netshed that survives as an authentic commercial fishing structure.
- In the interest of waterfront diversity and cultural heritage retention there is value in retaining a commercial fishing property within the 'Historic Working Waterfront Environment'.
- Fishing families support a public commercial fishing moorage facility being built on the north/Ancich Netshed portion of the property - Local fishing families want to live, work, and moor their vessels in Gig Harbor.

### Re-cap of Community Benefit

Retaining commercial fishing use on the Ancich property is a PUBLIC INVESTMENT that results public benefit.

- Gig Harbor commercial fishermen generated an avg. of \$28,000,000 in 2010 and 2011.
- Gig Harbor commercial fishermen provide jobs that pay well.
- Heritage tourists covet authenticity. Existing commercial fishing heritage anchors cultural organization interpretations of the past and City events that leverage fishing culture.
- A public commercial fishing facility provides public access to commercial fishing culture.
- Retaining commercial fishing use in the Ancich Shed is a pure act of historic preservation.
- Retaining commercial fishing use in Gig Harbor is an act of cultural preservation.
- New and older City planning documents prioritize the retention of commercial fishing use.

**Commercial Fishing services (netshed use) and moorage are identified as “preferred and best uses” on the Ancich Property.** Commercial fishing use should be prioritized in the 'Historic Working Waterfront Environment'.

#### 5.2.7 Historic Working Waterfront Environment

A. Purpose - *The purpose of the Historic Working Waterfront designation is to recognize and preserve two of Gig Harbor’s most notable historic industries: commercial fishing and boatbuilding. The area possesses a significant concentration of historic uses and structures. **The preferred and best uses for this area are commercial fishing services/moorage and boatbuilding.*** City of Gig Harbor Draft Shoreline master Program, Dec. 10, 2012.

**It is an act of Cultural Preservation to place existing commercial fishing use on the historic Ancich commercial fishing family Property.** There is no other proposed use for the Ancich Property that can be considered as an act of cultural preservation. 150 years of commercial fishing culture, it’s structures, landscapes, vessels, and waterfront occupational culture, defines Gig Harbor the place.

**It is a pure act of Historic Structure Preservation to retain a commercial fishing netshed and its commercial fishing use.** To adaptively reuse the Ancich netshed to a non-commercial fishing use when the development trends are clearly erasing the historic netshed structures and/or their heritage-use would be a planning error of historic proportions. This will likely be the one opportunity to secure a netshed and its heritage use on Gig Harbor’s waterfront in perpetuity.

**Commercial fishing use on the Ancich Property makes sense. No other proposed use delivers the broad spectrum of benefits listed above. All proposed uses should be viewed through a Public-Investment-**

**Delivers-Public-Benefit lens.**

COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S SURVEY - COVER LETTER WINTER 2013

## Survey Questions for Gig Harbor Area Fishermen 1/27/2013

This survey is part of a project that is intended quantify commercial fishing impact on the Gig Harbor area and to **give Gig Harbor fishermen, their families, and crew a voice regarding the future of Gig Harbor's public waterfront; specifically the recently purchased Ancich property.**

You have been selected for this survey because you are listed as an Alaska and/or a Washington State commercial fishing permit holder and/or vessel owner - and because you reside in one of the following zip code areas: 98332, 98335, 98333, 98329, 98394, 98349, 98351, 98367, 98359.

The local Gig Harbor waterfront, once dedicated completely to working and commercial fishing, now relies on six private commercial fishing-family properties to moor its commercial fishing fleet. **Commercial fishing vessel moorage may likely be reduced by half within a decade or so if waterfront land-use trends persist.**

**Commercial fishermen need to advocate for a share of an expanding city owned waterfront to retain fishing vessel moorage and commercial fishing infrastructure within their home community going forward.** (See illustrations on reverse side).

Non-commercial fishermen, including community decision makers, do not realize how strong the fisheries of the North Pacific are. **Near all city decision makers believe that commercial fishing is a "dying industry"** and they will make decisions accordingly if there isn't data that proves otherwise.

**The City of Gig Harbor recently purchased the Ancich commercial fishing family property.** The property is located on Harborview Drive between the Jerkovich and Ancich/Tarabochia docks, and is about to go through a community visioning process. The process will yield recommendations for property use. **Preliminary visioning has the property being developed into a recreational boating center.**

*"The (Ancich) property is the last piece of sizeable waterfront property available to the city. The city has designs on it as a park, marina and small boat harbor for human powered watercraft"*  
Peninsula Gateway, 8/20/2012.

There is a groundswell of support to place the recreational uses listed above on the intact Ancich commercial fishing property, despite the Working Waterfront District zone location, historic commercial fishing use on the property, the adjacent commercial fishing use, and a need for expanded dedicated fishing vessel moorage.

Thank-you for considering this request, and please call/email with comments or questions, or to answer the survey questions over the phone. **If you're willing, please send the survey back as quickly as possible as the first visioning meeting takes place on 2/13.**

Sincerely,



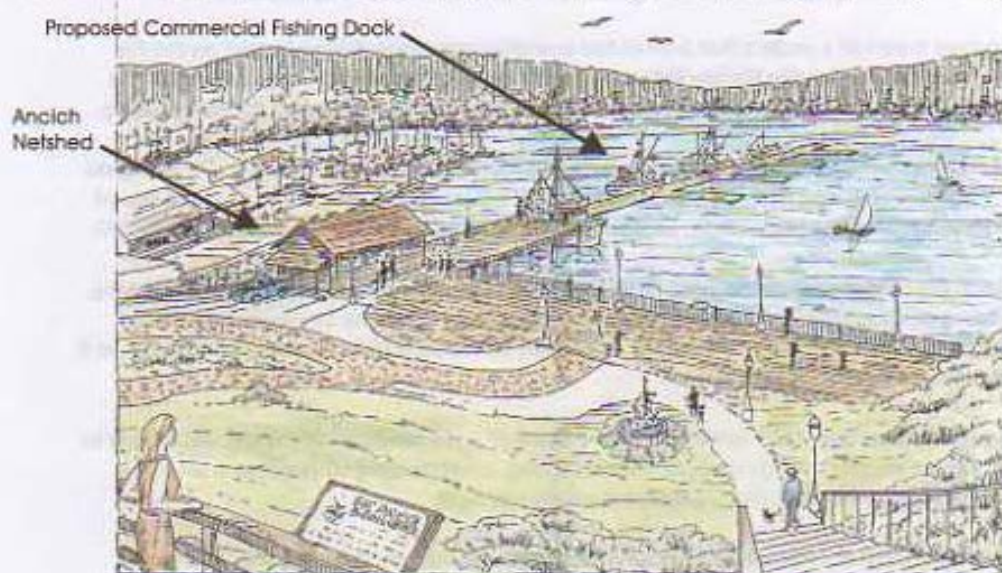
Guy Hoppen - F/V BERYL E

Cell - 253 278 4201

Email - [guyhoppen@comcast.net](mailto:guyhoppen@comcast.net)



The illustrations below detail a potential plan for commercial fishing moorage water-ward of the Ancich family netshed. The Ancich property is an intact commercial fishing family property located in the Working Waterfront Zoning District.



## The Ancich Fishermen's Dock

### Primary uses -

- Dedicated commercial fishing moorage.
- Commercial fishing use of the Ancich fishing family netshed.

### Benefits to community -

- "Hot berthing" for transient yachts during summer months.
- Anchors existing commercial fishing use on Gig Harbor's waterfront.
- Allows for public access to existing fishing culture.
- Ensures authentic commercial use of a Gig Harbor netshed.
- Commercial fishing use is exempt from city parking requirements, reducing blacktopped uplands, and allowing for a larger moorage facility than might be allowed for private or public recreational use.
- Ensures appropriate land-use in the newly designated Working Waterfront District.
- A fishing vessel has annual operating costs of over 30 times that of a similar sized pleasure craft (*Port of Seattle Economic Impact Study, 2009*). The economic multiplying effect of securing space for fishing vessels and the benefits to local providers of goods and services cannot be overstated.



**Survey Questions for Gig Harbor Area Fishermen  
Owner/Operators/Permit Holders  
1/27/2013**

1. Would you support commercial fishing use (moorage, netshed access) on the publicly owned Ancich Property?  
YES  
NO
  
2. If public commercial fishing vessel moorage space were available at a fee consistent with Port of Seattle/Port of Bellingham commercial rates would you consider keeping your vessel in Gig Harbor? Circle one:  
- My vessel is moored in Gig Harbor now.  
- YES  
- NO
  
3. Do you think a Gig Harbor waterfront that retains commercial fishing use is important to the community?  
YES  
NO  
  
WHY?
  
4. How many crewmembers do you employ?
  
5. Of those crewmembers, how many live in the Gig Harbor area. (98332, 98335, 98333, 98329, 98394, 98349, 98351, 98367, 98359)?
  
6. Would you be willing to participate in advocating for commercial fishing uses on the Gig Harbor waterfront via?  
Email – YES NO  
Phone – YES NO  
Meetings – YES NO  
Letter – YES NO  
Joining an organization – YES NO

Please provide your contact information if you want to be involved in advocating for commercial fishing infrastructure on the Ancich Property. Send the survey back in the stamped envelope included. Or call if you prefer, 253 278 4201. Thanks.

NAME –

EMAIL –

CELL –