



## Message from Patty

During my second year as the head of Washington State Ferries I was focused on service restoration and workforce development. 2022 was a year of rebuilding – our ferry service, our new flagship terminal, our workforce and investments to our fleet.

In March 2022, we had restored service in the San Juan Islands, were trialing two boat service on a second route, and were operating alternate service schedules on the rest of our routes. Less than a year later we've restored three routes and are trialing a fourth, published regular [progress reports to our Service Restoration Plan](#) and made great strides to creating the workforce we need to fill critical positions.



*On a fleet visit with Chief of Staff Nicole McIntosh (left), Sealth Staff Chief Engineer Chris Blasko (left center) and Assistant Engineer Jonathan Griswold (right) in vessel's*

## Community engagement

Public engagement is crucial to the decision making we do at Washington State Ferries. Each year we host two rounds of systemwide community meetings to hear from those we serve.

In 2020 we changed our in-person meetings to virtual and have continued to do so out of convenience and accessibility for all of our attendees. Thank you to all who participated in our outreach last year and we hope to see you in 2023.



*Members of our Executive Team and I answer questions from participants during a virtual public meeting this summer.*

*engine room.*

I'm consistently impressed with our entire team here at WSF. It's a mission-driven organization working to provide customers with up-to-date information, ensure passengers are safe while traveling on our marine highways, and continually planning and building back service. This newsletter is a look back at 2022 – both the highlights and challenges – and a status update on our entire ferry system.



*On Veterans Day we flew flags from all military branches on our vessels throughout the fleet. Kitsap (pictured) flew the U.S. Army flag, alongside the POW/MIA flag, which flew on all operating vessels.*



*In recognition of the Mariners ending their over 20-year postseason drought we held a media event on board the Tacoma, temporarily renaming the vessel the "Good Vibes Only" and naming announcer Aaron Goldsmith "Honorary Captain." The Mariner Moose also made an appearance and took photos with our crew, including Capt. Harlow Wood (pictured).*

I was glad to see more in-person events take place in 2022 as COVID-19 cases decreased, the mask mandates were removed and our ridership increased. Working with community organizations like local professional sports teams, the Youth Maritime Collaborative and visiting transportation professionals,

# 2022 by the NUMBERS

**17**  
MILLION  
TOTAL RIDERS

**COMPLETED**  
**129,317**  
TOTAL TRIPS

**354**  
DEPARTURES  
PER DAY



**695,483**  
TOTAL SERVICE MILES  
NEARLY **28** times around the Earth



**457**  
WHALE  
SIGHTINGS



**65**  
LIFESAVING  
EVENTS



**97.9%**  
TRIP RELIABILITY  
Top reason for cancellations was vessel availability

**1,192,167**  
Vehicle reservations  




**2,250**  
MEDICAL  
TRANSPORTS



**85,501**  
calls answered  
by customer service



**6** open  
houses  
& public  
meetings

**233**   
NEW employees  
→ 202 fleet ←



**6,854**  
HOURS of TRAINING  
Completed by  
EMPLOYEES

Increased our social media outreach to

**47,573**  
Twitter followers



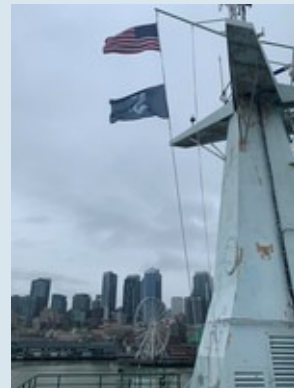
**15,700**  
Facebook followers



## Reliable service

In March, we released our [COVID-19 Service Restoration Plan \(PDF 794KB\)](#), which outlines how we're restoring ferry service to pre-pandemic levels. Every two weeks we post a

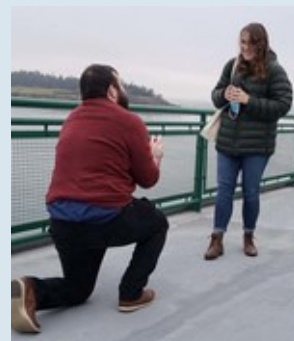
we held tours, flew flags and had some fun for our riders.



All ferries serving Colman Dock flew Seattle Kraken flags on Wednesday, March 2, in honor of the first ever Kraken Day.



A sailing aboard Salish Saturday was extra special for bride Victoria and groom Chuck Shafer aboard the upper deck of Salish.



Joshua Treadway proposes to his girlfriend Sarah on the sun deck of Salish.

[progress report](#) showing our riders and stakeholders where we are with crewing, vessels and service throughout the system.

There are two main challenges to restoring full service: vessel availability and crewing. We made a lot of progress towards hiring and training fleet employees in 2022 but will need to continue to focus on workforce development in order to get our crewing levels to a sustainable place. We work hard to ensure critical vessel maintenance avoids the busy summer season but because of the age of our fleet sometimes vessels go out of service for unplanned maintenance.

Thanks to great work by our entire team, we're close to restoring ferry service to pre-pandemic levels. To ensure each route is reliably restored we prioritized ferry routes based on ridership, service performance, availability and directness of travel alternatives, and vessel and crew availability.

Right now:

- The Edmonds/Kingston route started its Trial Service Stage on Jan 1. WSF is monitoring the route's reliability closely and once it reaches 95% reliability for a three-week period it will be considered fully restored.
- Once Edmonds/Kingston has been fully restored a trial three-boat service on the Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth (Triangle) route will be next. This will be highly dependent on both crewing and which vessels are available.
- After the Triangle is restored the timing of full restoration on the Seattle/Bremerton and Port Townsend/Coupeville routes is dependent on the number of new mates who complete training in spring 2023.
- We do not anticipate being able to restore service on the Anacortes/Sidney, British Columbia route any sooner than summer 2023.



*This summer the Wenatchee hosted the wedding of Lara and Matt Wilder. Congratulations to the newlyweds on your "Ferry Tale" wedding!*



*Simrun Chhabra proposes to partner Savanna Steele in the Puyallup passenger cabin. Photo courtesy Hannah Sabio-Howell.*



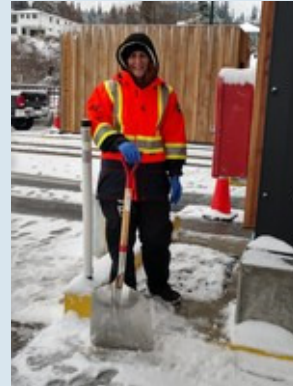
*A [@wsdot Instagram](#) follower has some ferry good gingerbread*



Route	Restoration Stage
ANACORTES/ SAN JUAN ISLANDS	4 Regular Service
SEATTLE/ BAINBRIDGE	4 Regular Service
MUKILTEO/CLINTON	4 Regular Service
EDMONDS/KINGSTON	3 Trial Service
FAUNTLEROY/ VASHON/ SOUTHWORTH	2 Alternate Service
SEATTLE/ BREMERTON	2 Alternate Service
PORT TOWNSEND/ COUPEVILLE	Late-Fall/Winter Regular Service Late-Spring Alternate Service
ANACORTES/ SIDNEY, B.C.	No Service
POINT DEFIANCE/ TAHLEQUAH	Regular Service

*This scorecard is part of our bimonthly service restoration plan update. More information about this update can be found on [our website](#).*

*decorating skills! Check out this photo of their holiday interpretation of a San Juan Islands vessel!*



*Mukilteo Terminal Ticket Seller Briana Penafiel clears snow during a storm in December.*

### Service awards

Many of our employees celebrated incredible milestones in their careers here at WSF. Congratulations to our hard-working staff, especially those who celebrated anniversaries of 20 years and above! What amazing dedication to public service.



*The Mukilteo recognition event included two 30-year employees, Ticket Seller Maria Mezich (fourth from left) and Relief Terminal Supervisor Irene Dodge (right).*



*As of Oct. 1, 2022, youth ride for free as a result of the Move Ahead Washington transportation package. The law requires us to provide free fares for passengers 18 and under. The legislation applies only to youth riding as a passenger in a vehicle and those walking onto a state ferry. It does not include teenagers behind the wheel of a motor vehicle. Drivers under 19 years old will continue to pay the adult vehicle and driver fare.*



*Spokane marked it's 50th birthday in 2022! To mark the occasion, a gold stripe was painted on its center stack during the vessel's maintenance period at our Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility. Built in 1972, Spokane is one of two*



*Congratulations to Staff Chief Engineer Mike Bryne with a very rare 50-year service award at our Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility!*



*With Senior Budget & Program Development Manager John Bernhard after presenting him with a ship's wheel as recognition for 45 years of service.*



*We presented a 40-year*

*Jumbo-class ferries. Next year, Walla Walla will get its gold stripe, which signifies 50 years in service. Spokane is one of four ferries in service to receive a 50-year gold stripe. The others are Tillikum, Kaleetan and Yakima.*



*We're slowly restoring galley service on our vessels. Additional openings are dependent on our food vendor being able to hire more staff and sales allowing for expansion.*

## Workforce recruitment, training and succession planning

**Workforce development still remains a critical piece in fully restoring our ferry service.** Right now, we are facing unprecedented staff shortages. The effects of an international shortage of mariners, the COVID-19 pandemic and the aging demographics of our workforce have combined to reduce staffing, resulting in unplanned service reductions and a decrease in system reliability, especially as

ferry ridership continues to bounce back from the early part of the pandemic.

In 2022, we hired 233 new employees, and 202 of them were fleet personnel. We have over 50 employees currently participating in a training program that will lead to potential promotions. We created six new training programs tailored to the needs of new and existing staff and are exploring more. It's clear we must focus on filling key positions in the

*service award to Relief Terminal Supervisor Phil Olwell. Phil has worked at our terminals since he started with us and has been a supervisor since 1998.*



*Ticket Seller Mary Hobson was presented with a ship's bell and certificate for her 40 years of service.*



*Captain Hazard Book receives a service award for 40 years!*

## 2022 Life Ring Awards



*Tacoma crewmembers in a rescue boat that was immediately deployed after*



fleet such as licensed deck officers to reliably increase service. Thanks to the substantial investment in our workforce and the cooperation of our labor partners, we hope by mid-2023 we will have restored the majority of our sailing schedules to pre-pandemic levels.

We also worked hard to build up our engine room staff, terminal staff, and skilled labor at our Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility through recruitment, training and outreach to more diverse populations. Partnering with the local Maritime High School, Seattle Maritime Academy and the U.S. Coast Guard, we held information sessions for Merchant Mariner Credentials and spread awareness through media interviews. We hosted Cal Maritime cadets this past summer on *Tacoma*, hosted tours for interested young adults and middle schoolers in the Sea Potential program, participated as a corporate sponsor in the Kitsap Try-a-Trade fair that hosted more than 700 young adults interested in trades positions.



*This summer Capt. Stephen Phillips and the crew of the Tacoma hosted a group of cadets from the California State University Maritime Academy aboard. The cadets were in town as part of the academy's summer cruise on [Training Ship Golden Bear](#). Hosting opportunities to showcase our jobs at WSF will hopefully attract the next generation of highly skilled mariners to our fleet.*

To encourage current crewmembers to obtain their pilotage licenses, we developed a "Pilotage Training Program," so they're paid to train as pilots and take required exams. In

*we received a report of a person in the water.*

Safety is our number one priority while traveling across the Salish Sea. In 2022 our crews performed a number of lifesaving efforts including rescuing people out of the water, performing CPR and prioritizing emergency services to help get people to medical care.

Each year we award the WSF Life Ring Award to either individuals or an entire ship's crew who was clearly the difference in saving a person's life.



*Rescue crews save a person in the water off Seattle's Colman Dock.*



*A rescue boat is launched off of Tillikum this summer as the crew works to save people onboard a sinking boat. Thanks to Mark Mason for the photo!*



2022 we held our first ever U.S. Coast Guard-approved Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping Engine Room Resource Management course at Seattle Maritime Academy. The class is designed to help our engine room teams get the skills needed to be effective, timely and safe in both routine and emergency scenarios. These programs and more are helping build a skilled, effective fleet that can help us add more ferry service to the system.



*Twelve of our able-bodied sailors pose for a group photo after four months of training to become licensed deck officers (captains and mates), which is our biggest crewing constraint.*

**We focused on diversity.** As part of our effort to attract young and diverse people into our workforce, we hosted two groups of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color) youth participating in the [Sea Potential](#) program at our Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility, vessel wheelhouses and engine rooms. Our Diversity Advisory Group Executive Sponsor John Vezina coordinated the tours. Thanks to many from our fleet who highlighted the many jobs that support ferry service. It's important that we introduce a new, diverse generation to the opportunities here at WSF!

There were 10 Life Ring Award events this year and 67 total lifesaving efforts in 2022. I am so impressed with our crews who go above and beyond to keep our passengers and neighbors on the sound safe. Great job to all involved!




*Quartermaster Dave Farmer used a Kitsap rescue boat to take a USDA Wildlife Services agent to free a seagull caught in a wire atop a dolphin at Slip 1 at Clinton terminal.*



*Sea Potential students pose for a photo with their chaperones and Relief Chief Mate Brett Wheeler aboard Walla Walla.*



Thank you for riding Washington State Ferries. Together, we can all take part in ensuring our ride is safe and enjoyable. To help us "All Sail Together," please:

- Refrain from unlawful conduct as outlined in state law RCW 9A.02.05. 
- "Unlawful Transit Conduct"
- WSF maintains a zero-tolerance harassment policy. Please refrain from the use of abusive or offensive language to fellow passengers or WSF crewmembers. This includes, but is not restricted to, racist, sexist, and homophobic comments meant to demean another person.
- Do not obstruct or impede WSF staff from performing their duties.
- Do not block or impede fellow passengers or otherwise interfere with their use of WSF services.
- Do not disturb others by engaging in loud, raucous, unruly, harmful, aggressive, violent, or harassing behavior.
- Alcoholic beverages may only be consumed within designated areas.
- Be courteous by keeping conversations, music, and videos at a level not disturbing other passengers.
- Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is not allowed in WSF terminals or on vessels.

Failing to follow the WSF Code of Conduct may lead to a time specific "No Trespass" order from law enforcement.



In response to concerns raised by terminal staff and vessel

crews, our Diversity Advisory Group developed a Passenger Code of Conduct to help ensure the safety and security of our passengers and our most valuable assets – our employees. We have a zero-tolerance harassment policy and a process to prohibit abusive or offensive language directed at our crewmembers or fellow passengers. Violating this policy may lead to a time-specific no-trespass order by law enforcement. I am so proud of this good work done by the DAG in an effort to build our agency's diversity, equity and inclusion in a respectful and welcoming work environment.



*Fourteen new terminal employees completed orientation and training to now work throughout our system.*

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## Systemwide electrification



*System Electrification Program Administrator Matt Von Ruden talks to attendees about our system electrification plans.*



We're moving toward a hybrid-electric ferry system to reduce greenhouse gases and improve local air quality. In early 2023 we will issue a Request for Proposals for design-build teams to build five new hybrid-electric Olympic-class vessels. These new ferries, along with plans for 11 future vessels, are required to be built in Washington in accordance with state law. In 2023 we will invite bids to convert our three Jumbo Mark II vessels from diesel to hybrid electric.

In 2022 we signed a partnership agreement with Seattle City Light that will allow our team to tap into SCL's ingenuity and clean energy to help transition to a hybrid-electric ferry system.

Our electrification team presented at a number of conferences in 2022, including hosting a special industry day event for nearly 75 people in maritime, with company representatives from 16 states and five countries. We're sharing the progress we're making and collaborating with people from all over the world on this exciting next chapter in our ferry system's story.

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## Major construction



*A snapshot of progress at Colman Dock and Alaskan Way in November 2022.*

**Completed Seattle terminal building opened in November 2022**

Construction on our [Seattle Multimodal Terminal at Colman Dock Project](#) began in 2017, and one-third of the building opened in 2019. In November 2022 we opened the final two-thirds of the terminal building, opening up for more room to spread out and more seating, and gorgeous views of Elliott Bay.

In September, the project hit one million labor hours from the nearly two dozen labor unions that have supplied the carpenters, pile drivers, plumbers, electricians and roofers who have worked on our flagship terminal. Twenty percent of the labor hours – or 200,000 hours – have been by apprentices, ensuring that this project helps to build the strength of our region's skilled labor force. We're expecting to complete construction in 2023! I can't wait to see this wonderful new facility complete and usable for all our ferry riders.

#### **Bainbridge overhead walkway project**

The [Bainbridge terminal overhead walkway](#) is getting a big upgrade! Construction started last summer, and it will continue into 2023 as we maintain service at the terminal. Thank you to our Bainbridge terminal customers for navigating the changes in operations as our crews replace the aging structure with a new, safer walkway. The project will also refresh old mechanical and electrical components that power the existing moveable transfer span that connects the walkway to a ferry. I am looking forward to the completion of this project in early 2024 and how it will make life easier for our many riders that use the route every day.



*This portion of the old walkway (foreground) was demolished in mid-September after walk-on passengers were diverted to a new 100-foot section, shown behind it. That new section is itself temporary as crews build the permanent structure.*

## **Fauntleroy Terminal - Trestle & Transfer Span Replacement**

Our [Fauntleroy Terminal - Trestle & Transfer Span Replacement project](#) is in the planning and design phase. In 2022 we received a lot of great community input about what the future of the terminal should include.

WSF hosted two community meetings and an online open house last summer to share why we're replacing the Fauntleroy ferry terminal and gather community input. In the fall the Community Advisory Group reviewed the results of Level 2 screening of options to replace the aging, seismically vulnerable terminal.

Two alternatives are moving forward in the environmental review process. One would keep the dock at the same size as the current facility and the other would expand the dock to hold up to 186 vehicles. Both alternatives would be designed to minimize and avoid effect to the nearshore environment and nearby Cove Park. We will continue to engage the three advisory groups that provide input and the community served by the terminal before completing the Planning and Environmental Linkages study report by mid-2023.

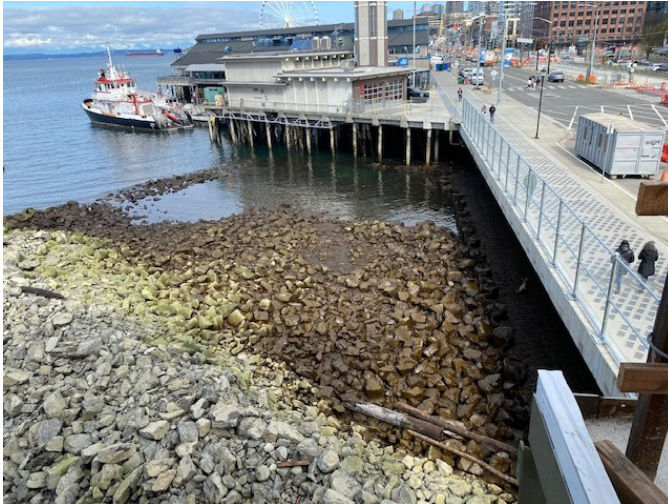


*A graphic of one of the alternatives being considered as part of the Fauntleroy terminal project's Level 1 Screening.*



## Greening the fleet

Green Marine is the premier environmental certification program for the North American and European maritime industry and in 2018 we became the first U.S. ferry operator to join. In 2022 we earned our second certification, improving in waste management. In 2023 we'll be working to develop a plan towards our next step: zero waste.



*Our Seattle Multimodal Terminal Project opened 180 feet of shoreline, part of the project's work to restore salmon habitat in Elliott Bay.*

### Protecting marine mammals

Sharing the Salish Sea with our whale neighbors is a responsibility we take very seriously. In 2022, 100% of our crewmembers completed the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's ECHO Program "Whales in our Waters tutorial," an interactive online course designed to help professional mariners test their knowledge of local species and learn how to navigate their vessels safely in their presence.

After a two-year pandemic hiatus, our popular onboard marine naturalist program returned this past summer, where marine naturalist volunteers from The Whale Museum ride aboard our Anacortes/San Juan Islands route to provide riders with information about marine mammals and orca whales.



*Thanks to the West Sound Cycling Club we have new bike stations and a bike repair station at the Bremerton terminal.*

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## Looking ahead to 2023

As we move into 2023, I'm looking forward to continuing to bolster our workforce, wrap up some major projects and build back our ferry service.



*I had the opportunity to present to maritime professionals from all over the world at the Interferry conference hosted in Seattle.*

In October I spoke at an international ferry conference called Interferry, which was hosted here in Seattle. I heard from folks all over the world about the shortage of mariners. Locally and nationally, we're competing against marine

transit agencies like BC Ferries, the Alaska Marine Highway System and the Staten Island Ferry. We are learning how to be an employer of choice for those in the marine industry and I'm confident we can achieve that goal.

As we work to make sure our captains and mates are well equipped with the skills needed to safely work aboard our vessels we ask for your continued patience into 2023.

**Patty Rubstello**

Assistant Secretary, WSDOT/Ferries Division



WSF Weekly Updates are available online at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/about-us/weekly-update](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/about-us/weekly-update)  
Questions? Contact us at [WSFWeeklyUpdate@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:WSFWeeklyUpdate@wsdot.wa.gov)

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**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information**

If you would like to learn more about accessibility and the tools we have available, visit [www.wsdot.wa.gov/Accessibility](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Accessibility)

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