



An Introduction To The Largest Ferry System in the Nation



SINCE ITS CREATION ON JUNE 1, 1951, Washington State Ferries has become the largest ferry system in the United States and the third largest in the world. Over 25 million people a year ride on Washington State Ferries – more people than travel on Amtrak in a year. In comparison, BC Ferries carries 21 million, Staten Island Ferries carries 20 million riders and Alaska Marine Highways carries 400,000.

Washington State Ferries (WSF) operates 29 vessels and 20 ferry terminals throughout Puget Sound, from Pt. Defiance in the south, to Sidney, B.C. in the north. Thousands of commuters, employers, students and commercial shippers

depend on WSF every day for safe, reliable transportation across the Sound.

Washington State Ferries is:

- A Transit Agency
- A Marine Highway
- A Mover of Freight and Goods
- An Environmental Steward
- A Source of Tourism and Economic Development
- A Key Link in the Region's Multi Modal Connections
- A Provider of Safety and Security to Passengers and Employees

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We Are A Transit Agency

Washington State Ferries is the largest ferry transit system in the United States and one of the busiest. We carried over 25 million riders last year. In comparison, BC Ferries, our neighbor to the north, carried 21 million, NYC carried 20 million riders and Alaska Marine Highways carried 400,000. Amtrak nationwide carried 21.5 million people and about 27 million flew out of Sea-Tac airport last year. Our ridership has grown 22% over the past decade and is projected to grow more than 60% over the next 17 years.

We are also the second largest transit system in Washington State, second only to King County Metro. Commuters make up about 50% of our annual ridership. On our busiest commuter route, Bainbridge to Seattle, we carry 20,000 people in an average day. For comparison purposes, a Jumbo Mark II class ferry boat used on the Bainbridge to Seattle run has the capacity to carry 2,500 passengers per trip. This is equivalent to the carrying capacity of 208 12-seat vanpools, 60 40-foot buses, or 17 commuter rail cars.

We Are A Marine Highway Across Puget Sound



Washington State Ferries is an essential part of Western Washington's high-way network serving eight counties within Washington and the province of British Columbia in Canada.

We operate 10 ferry routes with nearly 500 sailings per day, providing critical links between urban areas on the east side of Puget Sound and growing communities on the Kitsap Peninsula, as well as more rural destinations on the Olympic Peninsula and the San Juan Islands. In 2002, we carried over 11 million vehicles along 200 miles of marine highway.

For the communities of Vashon Island and the San Juan Islands, we provide the only practical link for vehicles – personal and commercial – to the mainland.



We Are A Mover of Freight And Goods

Washington State Ferries vessels and terminals are specially constructed to accommodate commercial truck volumes, height, tonnage and turning radiuses. We are the sole link for commercial vehicles to Vashon and the San Juans. WSF provides a dedicated "Haz Mat" run to and from Vashon Island each day for delivery of fuel, solvents and other hazardous material.

Island residents rely on WSF for delivery of groceries and other basic supplies and services. Island businesses depend on WSF to get their products off the island and to the markets. In order to support the movement of commercial freight, WSF gives priority loading in the San Juan Islands to commercial vehicles via a reservation system.

We are a Key Link in the Region's Multi-Modal Connections

WSF services and facilities form a critical link in the State's network of multi-modal connections. We provide seamless connections between marine transportation and vanpool, auto, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, trolley, commuter rail, monorail, freight and local transportation modes. Priority loading for freight, bicycles, vanpool and carpool, park and ride lots at ferry terminals, and schedule integration with our transit partners are just



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some of the many ways we promote modal diversity and seamless connections for our customers.

We Are Environmental Stewards

Washington State Ferries is leading the way toward a greener and cleaner Puget Sound through a variety of environmental initiatives.

As a major consumer of diesel fuel (20 million gallons each year) WSF has begun implementing a fuel consumption and emissions reduction program. For example, we've installed energy efficient engines that burn cleaner and with less fuel. We've installed "Ecotip" fuel injectors that are reducing our fuel consumption. We are currently testing lower sulfur fuels and will be testing the potential use of Biodiesel fuels in partnership with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and the Environmental Protection Agency.

In the early 1990's WSF instituted an aggressive oil-recycling program. We now recycle tens of thousands of gallons of oil per year. In fact, we even designed special filter crushers in order to squeeze all the residual oil out prior to disposal.

WSF received an Environmental Excellence Award from the Federal Highway Administration for our work with scientists at Battelle and the University of Washington on an innovative approach to eelgrass restoration at the Clinton ferry terminal.

WSF is also taking the lead in removing creosote-treated timber from our facilities in Puget Sound. To date, we have removed over one million board feet of creosote-treated wood and have plans to remove an additional 14 million over the next ten years.



Photo: Battelle

Washington State Ferries has encouraged residential growth and provided access to jobs for West Sound residents for the past 50 years. Our state ferry system is a critical link between more affordable housing on the west side of the Sound and key employment centers on the east side of the Sound.

Passengers And Employees Rely On Us For Safety And Security

WSF is a potential terrorist target, a port of entry and a border crossing. As demonstrated at the ferry crossing in Port Angeles, where Ahmed Ressam was caught smuggling explosives across the border intended for an act of terrorism, ferry systems are a potential means for transporting weapons, as well as potential terrorist targets.

With funding from the USDOT, WSF has initiated emergency preparedness drills on our vessels to simulate a response to a vessel hijacking and Haz Mat emergency situations. The first such hijacking response drill took place in December, 2002 aboard the M/V QUINAULT in cooperation with the Washington State Patrol, Kitsap County Sheriff's office, Seattle Police Department and the US Coast Guard.

Ferries are also a part of the solution during times of crisis. Ferries proved to be a vital means of transportation in New York City on September 11, 2001. The New York ferries remained functional while every other means of transportation was disrupted. In Puget Sound, ferries will be a critical part of the transportation infrastructure in the event of a security-related incident and Washington State Ferries is an active partner in the local emergency planning process.

We are a Tourist Destination and Source of Economic Development

We are a major tourist attraction in Washington and, like the space needle, a true icon of the Northwest. As the gateway to the San Juan Islands, British Columbia and the Olympic Peninsula, we transport over a million passengers and vehicles during our peak tourist season.



Photo: Steven J. Brown

Washington State Ferries

