

## New Washington State Ferries Tariff Takes Effect May 1, 2006

On May 1, a new tariff for Washington State Ferries (WSF) customers will go into effect.

The 2006 tariff proposal was developed by the Tariff Policy Committee (TPC), a group of ferry riders, legislators, and transit operators that is appointed by the Washington State Transportation Commission. The TPC presented their original tariff proposal to the Commission on Wednesday, January 18, at the Commission's monthly meeting.

In February, WSF and the TPC began collecting public comment on the proposal. Eight meetings were held from February 15 through March 1 to explain the proposal and gather public comments. Those who could not attend a meeting were invited to comment via letter or email. WSF received 689 comments on the original proposal.

More than half the comments were related to the proposed change for the motorcycle fares. Other comments concerned the general fare increase, commercial fares and other issues.

Based on this public comment, one part of the original proposal, changing the motorcycle ratio from five motorcycles to one car (5:1) to 4 motorcycles to one car (4:1) was removed. The TPC changed their recommendation to the Commission on this element based on the 365 comments received.

The Commission agreed to drop the proposed ratio change, keeping the ratio of 5:1.

On March 23, the Commission held a public hearing in Seattle to take formal testimony concerning the proposal, review customer comments that had been gathered throughout the process, and make decisions based on the TPC's now amended recommendations.

The Commission approved a 6% fare increase for the ferry system. The 6% fare increase will raise full fare Cross Sound passenger fares 40 cents, from \$6.10 to \$6.50 roundtrip. A one-way full fare car and driver ticket will go up 65 cents, from \$10.60 to \$11.25 during non peak season, and 80 cents from \$13.30 to \$14.10 during peak season (May 1 through October 7, 2006).

The Cross Sound frequent user passenger ticket book will go up in price from \$48.80 for 10 round-trip tickets to \$52.00, or raise single tickets from \$4.88 to \$5.20 round trip. Cross Sound car and driver frequent user ticket books, with 20 tickets, will go up from \$169.60 to \$180.00 or 52 cents per ride. Washington State Ferries Central Sound monthly passenger passes will go from \$79.10 to \$83.20. Frequent users do not pay the peak season surcharge.

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## Short Legislative Session Yields Big Results on Ferry Issues

The 2006 legislative session ended on March 8. Although this year's legislative session was a short one, the Governor and the Legislature made progress on a number of ferry issues.

WSF received legislative direction on new vessel construction, passenger-only ferry service, and collective bargaining. But perhaps most importantly, the legislature took the first step in an effort to address the ferry system's need for a reliable, long-term funding strategy.

The following are details from important ferry-related bills that passed this legislative session.

### Long-Term Financial Stability

The Governor proposed, and the Legislature approved, funding for a ferry financing study to be conducted by the Legislature's Joint Transportation Committee (JTC). The study is intended to aid policy discussions and decisions by members of the legislature regarding the future of Washington State Ferries.

The study will review ridership, revenue, forecasting methodologies, capital project scoping, prioritization, cost estimation, project changes, and performance measures. It is due to the JTC by Nov. 1, 2006 and the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2007.

### Collective Bargaining Changes

In an effort supported by all 13 WSF labor unions, WSF management, WSDOT management, the state Labor Relations Office (LRO) and Office of Financial Management (OFM), legislation was passed to improve the collective bargaining process. This will bring WSF and its maritime unions into closer alignment with the collective bargaining process of other state unions and will lead to the completion of timely agreements on contracts. WSF Executive Director Mike Anderson and Human Resources Director Charley Bates worked closely with the unions to get this important legislation passed.

The new process will align the timing of negotiations with the legislative budget process, and involves the Governor and the legislature in the approval of negotiated agreements and interest arbitration awards.

### Passenger-Only Ferry Service

WSF has been directed to continue operating passenger-only ferry service between Vashon Island and Seattle until another operator is approved in 2007.

This bill directs WSF to determine the fair market value of the passenger-only vessels M/V CHINOOK and M/V SNOHOMISH by completing an independent appraisal by Nov. 1, 2006. Following the appraisal, and when another operator is identified and approved, the department is directed to sell the boats and deposit the proceeds from the sale in the state's passenger-only account. The proceeds will be used to fund operating and capital grants to approved passenger-only ferry service operators.

The bill also allows the creation of new county ferry districts, specifically, King and/or Kitsap Counties. These counties must seek the Governor's approval of business plans to operate passenger-only ferry service between Vashon Island and Seattle and/or Southworth and Seattle. They may not contract with private operators for this service and must use existing labor agreements.

The bill instructs WSF to collaborate with any new providers to use WSF facilities. Any provider wishing to operate passenger-only ferry service must present a business plan for the Governor's approval by Nov. 1, 2006.

### New Vessel Construction

The Legislature approved the design and construction of four new 144-vehicle passenger-vehicle ferries. The new vessels will replace the oldest boats in the fleet, the Steel Electrics, built in 1927. The first new

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## Sidney, B.C. Event Celebrates International Ferry Route

On Sunday, April 2, Washington State Ferries resumed International ferry service on the Anacortes/Sidney, B.C. route for the busy spring, summer, and fall seasons. The service was on hiatus during the 12-week winter schedule.

To celebrate the reopening of the route, the ferry system and the City of Anacortes Chamber of Commerce hosted a special event featuring the sister cities of Anacortes and Sidney, B.C., as well as unveiling the ferry system's 2006 commemorative poster.

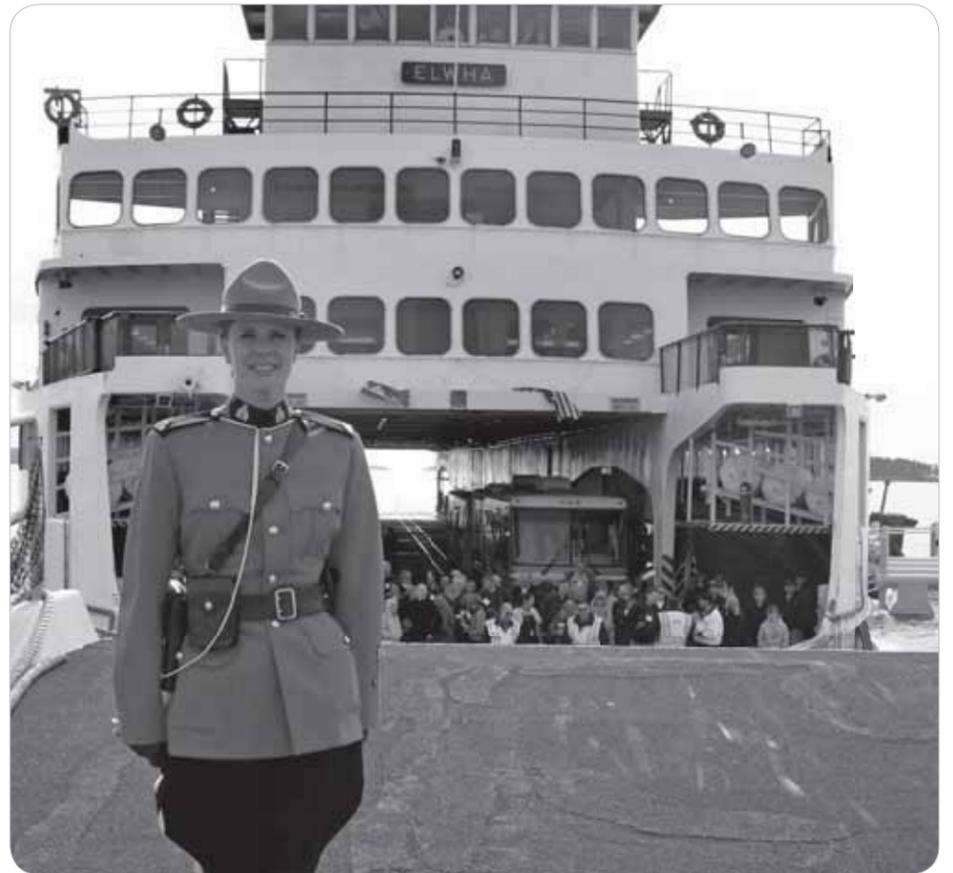
The year's first sailing to Vancouver Island departed Anacortes at 7:45 a.m., and arrived in Sidney at 10:45 a.m. after a lovely cruise through the San Juan Islands. Upon arrival at Sidney, there was a brief ceremony to mark the return of the Ana-

cortes/Sidney, B.C. route. Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell and Sidney, B.C. Mayor Don Amos and other dignitaries and citizens from both sides of the border, took part in the celebration.

The fun event included giveaways, a Canadian "Mounty" in Red Surge Dress, the Town Crier and a local marching band.

The event was also the first opportunity for fans to see the new 2006 WSF poster, which was unveiled by artist Alex Young. Young, a local artist known for his ferry art, has featured the Sidney ferry terminal and the International ferry, the M/V ELWHA, in this year's poster, entitled "Ferry between Friends."

(For more information on purchasing the new poster, see the article "WSF Poster Unveiled and Available for Purchase.") ■



*A Canadian "Mounty" in traditional Red Surge Dress welcomes the first International ferry run of the year.*

## Traveling to Canada: Be Prepared to Have Fun

It's a beautiful journey aboard a Washington State Ferry as the ferry sails from Anacortes through the San Juan Islands to Sidney, B.C. on Vancouver Island. The 2-3 hour cruise provides beautiful scenery, photo opportunities and views of island living. Visitors to Vancouver Island can enjoy Butchart Gardens, with its hundreds of trees and masses of colorful flowers and shrubs. Take double decker buses on a sight-seeing trip right from the ferry dock. Sidney is just 17 miles from Victoria, a one-of-a-kind city, capital of British Columbia and a blend of English and Canadian architecture, flavor and charm.

### Canada and Customs

Passengers on the Anacortes/ Sidney, B.C. route or San Juan Islands/Sidney, B.C. route will be crossing

International boundaries and will be subject to United States and/or Canadian Customs Service and Immigration inspection.

As a US Citizen, you will need to provide **proof of your citizenship**. This includes providing one of the following:

- Passport
- Birth Record
- Certificate of Citizenship
- Certificate of Naturalization

Always carry photo identification with you. Vehicles and/or baggage are also subject to inspection. San Juan Islands passengers boarding boats originating in Sidney, B.C. will also be subject to customs inspection upon arrival in Anacortes.

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# Maritime Festival Offers a “Taste of the Waterfront”

The 2006 Seattle Maritime Festival is May 4-6 at Pier 66 on the Seattle waterfront. The festival is designed to celebrate and showcase Puget Sound’s maritime and fishing industries, but it’s also about having fun!

This is an exciting time for the downtown Seattle waterfront. The next decade promises to bring dramatic changes to this historic neighborhood, including a new Seattle Art Museum Sculpture Garden, viaduct and seawall construction, a new waterfront streetcar, a renovated Seattle Aquarium, a new Seattle Ferry terminal at Colman Dock, and other developments.

This year’s festival offers the opportunity to

celebrate the past, present and future of the Downtown Seattle Waterfront. Festival-goers can enjoy the biggest tugboat races anywhere; free admission for children at Waterfront attractions; free harbor tours; and a tasty Chowder Cook-Off. It’s all a part of the fun during the annual Seattle Maritime Festival, May 4-6, 2006.

Loads of free activities will be held during the festival, which is sponsored by the Seattle Propeller Club and the Port of Seattle. Most of the public activities will take place on the Family Fun Day on Saturday, May 6, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Pier 66/Bell Harbor Marina on the Downtown Seattle Waterfront. Look for the WSF booth! ■



## Come Say Hello to WSF!

WSF will be in the community this summer at fairs and festivals throughout Puget Sound, ready to answer your questions about day-to-day operations at ferry terminals, and our ongoing projects. We hope you’ll stop by our booth at your local festival and say, “Hello!”

WSF is part of the communities we serve – we live and work alongside you, help you commute in the morning and get you home after a long weekend, and we want to get to know you better. You might meet any number of employees at a fair – from ferry-boat captains to vessel engineers, terminal attendants to service planners.

This is WSF’s second summer visiting fairs – we had such a great time meeting with our neighbors in ferry communities last year, we thought we’d do it again! From strawberries at the Vashon Strawberry Festival, to the world’s largest Tug Boat Race at the Maritime Festival, to handcrafted wooden boats at the Wooden Boat Festival in Port Townsend, there’s something for everyone. See you at the fair! ■

## MARITIME FESTIVAL EVENTS

Following are just a few of the events taking place at the 2006 Maritime Festival. All events are subject to change.

<b>Competitions</b>	<p><b>Tugboat Race and Parade to Post</b> (May 6): It’s the country’s largest tugboat race, with 40 boats expected to compete in four heats, starting at 2 p.m. on the course from Pier 86 to Pier 66. Beginning at 12:30 p.m., a spectacular parade of industry boats will be held along the waterfront.</p> <p><b>Stories of the Sea Poetry Competition</b> (May 4)</p> <p><b>Survival Suit Races</b> (May 6)</p> <p><b>Quick and Dirty Boat Building</b> (May 6)</p> <p><b>Chowder Cook-Off</b> (May 6): Waterfront restaurants compete for the trophy in this cook-off. Buy your Chowder Passport for only \$5 at all participating restaurants or at the festival information booth at Pier 66.</p>
<b>Demonstrations and Displays</b>	<p><b>U.S. Coast Guard Sea-Air Rescue Demonstration</b> (May 6)</p> <p><b>Tractor Tug Demonstration</b> (May 6)</p> <p><b>Vessel tours and displays of industry equipment</b> (May 6)</p> <p><b>Free Harbor Tours</b> (May 6): Thanks to the Port of Seattle, free harbor tours will depart from Pier 66.</p>
<b>Kids Programs</b>	<p><b>Kids programs</b> (May 6): Includes free admission to waterfront attractions, remote control boat exhibit, face painting, toddler fishing pond and wooden boat building. The Port of Seattle, along with four other maritime related organizations, joined the American Lung Association for a 500 mile team relay backpacking expedition along the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) to raise money and awareness about the negative affects of tobacco.</p>
<b>More Tastes of the Waterfront</b>	<p>Select waterfront eateries will offer discounts and coupons.</p> <p>Don’t miss the <b>Wild Keta Salmon Cook-Off</b> on Sunday, April 30, 2006, at Fishermen’s Terminal. Event includes BBQ competition and Celebrity Chef Demos, free samples and free recipes. Open to the public. To enter the BBQ competition, call Paula at 206-283-3366.</p>
<b>Information</b>	<p>For further information on the Seattle Maritime Festival, call the public information hotline: (206) 728-3163, or visit <a href="http://www.portseattle.org/news/events/maritime_2006.shtml">http://www.portseattle.org/news/events/maritime_2006.shtml</a>.</p>

## Visit the WSF booth at these UPCOMING EVENTS:

- May 4-6, Maritime Festival, Seattle Waterfront
- May 20-21, Anacortes Waterfront Festival
- July 4, Bainbridge Grand Old Fourth
- July 7-9, Vashon Strawberry Festival
- Aug. 11-13, A Taste of Edmonds
- Aug. 16-19, San Juan County Fair, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island
- Aug. 17-20, Island County Fair, Langley, Whidbey Island
- Sept. 2-3, Bremerton Blackberry Festival
- Sept. 8-10, Wooden Boat Festival, Port Townsend
- Sept. 8-10, Mukilteo Lighthouse Festival
- Sept. 16-17, Commencement Bay Maritime Festival, Tacoma
- Early Sept. 2006, Salmon Homecoming, Seattle

## WSF Gathers Input on New Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal

In March, Washington State Ferries held two open houses—in Mukilteo and in Clinton—to give information about the new Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Project to the community, and to gather comments on terminal concepts being studied in the environmental review process. Approximately 80 people came to the two open houses. Those who were unable to attend were invited to submit comments by mail or e-mail by April 5.

The current terminal facility in Mukilteo is in need of major repairs, is too small to handle even current traffic efficiently, and will not be able to accommodate the projected growth in ridership. The ferry terminal project is led by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Washington State Ferries/Washington State Department of Transportation (WSF/WSDOT). The new terminal is being designed

to connect directly with Sound Transit’s planned commuter rail station, will improve ferry operations, and enhance public access to the waterfront.

WSF began an environmental assessment (EA) in 2004. Based on information gathered during the EA process, WSF is moving to an expanded environmental review—an environmental impact statement (EIS)—in compliance with the National and State Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/SEPA). In addition to performing a more detailed analysis, the EIS will analyze the phasing of construction of the terminal.

At this time the estimated cost of the full project is greater than available funding, so the project will be built in phases. Construction of the parking garage, and possibly of the second slip, will be deferred until funding is available.

Key features of the project include a new terminal building; a new ferry dock with two ferry slips; an overhead pedestrian bridge connecting passengers with the Sounder Commuter Rail Station directly from the vessels; expanded vehicle holding space that will reduce traffic back-ups; improved access for pedestrians, passengers with limited mobility and bicyclists; and improved public waterfront access.

Most comments from open house attendees showed a preference for the compact terminal alternative; while only a few preferred the upland terminal alternative. Traffic was chosen most as the important issue; followed by environment, parking, connections to train and bus, and safety.

For more information about the project, visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/mukilteoterminal>. ■



## “Clean Teams” Take a Fresh Look at Ferry Facilities

WSF has assembled two teams of four employees and tasked them with taking an in-depth look at every vessel and terminal in the ferry system, with the exception of the San Juan Islands and Sidney, B.C.

The teams are working on the Vessel Maintenance and Current Condition (VMCC) project and Terminal Maintenance and Current Condition (TMCC) project. The intent of these projects is to take a system wide approach to facility upkeep issues, such as determining whether a lingering issue can be resolved, whether certain areas need more attention from crews, or whether our cleaning products are effective.

The teams, informally dubbed the “Clean Teams,” have an eye to improve the look of the ferry system’s facilities. They are examining and noting everything in the public areas of the vessels and terminals - from marks on walls, to broken tiles, to the types of building materials that are used. And all the information is being captured in an organized way.

When going out to survey the facilities, the teams try to view them from a fresh but critical perspec-

tive, as a customer might. Ultimately, the intention of the “Clean Teams” is to improve WSF’s facilities and improve the experience for WSF customers.

“These projects provide an overall baseline from which we can continue to make improvements and plan for needed maintenance projects,” said WSF Director of Operations Traci Brewer-Rogstad. “We may hear about a particular maintenance issue from a customer and, while we have good employees who focus on keeping their areas clean, it has been difficult to keep track of which specific areas might need more focus. The hard work and effort these teams put into this project will allow us to better maintain our facilities.”

The two teams are divided into North and South Region teams, and each has a representative from the vessel deck crew, a deck officer, a terminal employee, and a Customer Information Agent.

The teams are thoroughly evaluating each vessel and terminal and documenting each problem area with a photo. Each photo is assigned a number to correspond with written notes and a blueprint of the

vessel. The teams have color-coded the notes to distinguish which department is responsible for a particular issue.

A critical piece of the Clean Teams’ mission is to speak with customers and fellow employees while conducting the evaluations, to gather opinions about the cleanliness of the facilities and to get suggestions for improvements.

The teams will use employee and customer feedback, combined with their own observations, to make recommendations on a variety of topics, from which cleaning products are most effective, to new methods that crews could use, to which types of building materials may be the easiest to maintain.

The project teams will produce a comprehensive and organized binder for each vessel and terminal that is filled with this information and can be used by the appropriate departments. The binders will be updated as the work is accomplished.

WSF’s Regional Port Captains and Terminals Managers will use the binders to ensure all work orders are completed.

Ultimately, the VMCC and TMCC and “Clean Teams” will ensure that WSF is doing everything we can to keep our facilities in the best shape possible. ■



**New WSF Tariff** » Continued from page 1.

Other approved changes to the tariff include:

- Implementing an up-front, non-refundable commercial account maintenance fee of \$50 per year with no prorating.
- Limiting monthly passes to 31 round trips per month, noting the passes are non-transferable, non-reproducible and intended for a single user.
- Extending an overweight surcharge waiver for overweight vehicles with a wheelchair lift to vehicles 20-30 feet in length.
- Implementing a new discount program for in-need organizations that provides the discount these organizations currently realize by purchasing and severing frequent user products. WSF will work closely with local governments on this program,

which will be reviewed before determining whether it will be continued beyond April 30, 2007.

- Adjust Washington Administrative Code (WAC) language to match WSF operation terminology under the new electronic fare collection system and to make minor corrections.
- The Commission also agreed that no sooner than six months after the electronic fare collection system is implemented system-wide, when frequent user or multi-ride products are available online and at terminal kiosks, these products would be charged up to 5% higher (not to exceed \$2.50) if purchased at a tollbooth. Exempt from this charge would be seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons purchasing the product with vouchers. ■

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replacement vessel is scheduled for delivery in 2009. The decision to reduce the program from five 133-vehicle boats to four 144-vehicle boats was due to increasing material costs, contracting delays, the decision to build bigger boats, and concerns about the availability of capital funding.

The approval of the 144-vehicle ferry size for the vessel purchase will benefit ferry riders throughout Puget Sound. For a relatively small additional investment (approximately \$5 million per boat), WSF will receive a vessel that will accommodate both current needs and future growth. The decision to recommend a 144-vehicle vessel was based on the latest ridership forecasts and the need to maximize the efficiency of our new vessel purchase.

**Operating Program Funding**

The Legislature appropriated an additional \$21 million to cover unanticipated costs in the ferry system's operating program. This figure includes \$17 million for increased fuel costs and \$7.5 million to fund labor agreements. However, the final budget bill eliminated all contingency budgets for fuel and labor costs (a reduction of about \$4 million in labor and \$8 million in fuel).

The legislature also included funding for the State Patrol for ferry security and the LRO for collective bargaining oversight.

**Alternative Fuels**

One of Governor Gregoire's top priorities is to identify and develop new, cleaner sources of renewable energy. Senate Bill 6508 will help accomplish that and will also provide cleaner air for the citizens of Washington. The bill will also create market opportunities, and develop product standards in the emerging biodiesel market. State agencies are required to use 20% biodiesel in the operation of vessels and vehicles by July 1, 2009.

It is estimated that beginning Nov. 30, 2008, biodiesel fuel will account for at least 2 percent of the total annual diesel fuel sales, if the feedstock grown in Washington can satisfy this requirement. ■

**Traveling to Canada** » Continued from page 1.

- If you are not a U.S. Citizen, you will be asked to show your "green card" or a valid Permanent Resident card. Also Non-immigrants with legal status will be asked to provide a passport and visa.
- For complete information of entry rules you may wish to visit the CBSA: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca>.

**WSF Recommends Making Vehicle Reservations**

To make traveling to Canada smoother, WSF recommends that customers taking a vehicle between Anacortes and Sidney, B.C., or from the San Juan Islands to or from Sidney, B.C., make a reservation with us.

You can do so online at: [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries) or by phone: 888.808.7977 or 206.464.6400.

**UPDATE ON WSF CLEAN FUELS INITIATIVE**

In 2004 WSF undertook a three-pronged "Clean Fuel Initiative," to reduce air emissions from the ferry fleet.

The three elements of the initiative are:

- 1) Converting the entire fleet to low-sulfur diesel (which reduced sulfur dioxide emissions by 412 tons - a 90% reduction) and particulate matter by 75 tons (a 30% reduction). This conversion was finished in 2004.
- 2) With funding from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, WSF is testing the use of ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel. That test is taking place aboard the M/V ELWHA in the San Juan Islands and should be concluded this summer. The test will determine if it is feasible to use this cleaner-burning fuel in all WSF vessels.
- 3) The 2004 pilot test of B-20 (a blend of 20 percent Biodiesel and 80 percent low-sulfur diesel) in three vessels on the Fauntleroy-Vashon-Southworth ferry route. Biodiesel is a fuel made from vegetable oils, animal fats, or cooking greases. The ferries used a mixture of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent low-sulfur petroleum diesel during the pilot test. Although biodiesel emits more nitrogen oxide than regular diesel, it contains almost no sulfur and significantly reduces greenhouse-gas emissions.

In June 2005, Washington State Ferries suspended the pilot test of biodiesel on the Fauntleroy-Southworth-Vashon ferry route because the fuel was clogging the vessels' engine filters and fuel system. These problems continued and even worsened, causing WSF to suspend the test.

During the 2006 legislative session, WSF Director of Maintenance Paul Brodeur testified at hearings about WSF's experiences (and challenges) to date with biodiesel and plans for a research study and second pilot test. Brodeur explained that, in the marine environment, the high volume of consumption and an immature biodiesel industry coupled with inconsistent quality created challenges for WSF during its biodiesel pilot test in 2004.

Thanks to help from U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, WSF is working with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) to design a research study to determine the cause of the ferry system's problems with biodiesel. The study will examine when and where the problems might have stemmed from: The actual soybean crop itself? Temperature changes during distribution, storage or blending? Problems with the vessel's fuel lines or tanks?

The study will attempt to find the cause of the problem, and hopefully a solution, so that a second pilot test can be undertaken. WSF will keep you informed as the study progresses.

A non-refundable deposit, applied to your American Express, Discover, MasterCard or Visa, is taken to confirm your reservation and is then applied to your fare.

The remainder of your fare will need to be paid in cash or traveler's checks at the San Juan Island terminals upon your arrival. Credit cards are accepted at Anacortes and Sidney, B.C. ■

**WSF Poster Unveiled and Available for Purchase**

At an unveiling at an event at the Sidney, B.C. ferry terminal in April this year, artist Alex Young introduced the latest in his series of posters for Washington State Ferries. Alex's vivid watercolors have been featured in the ferry system's annual posters since 1984. Each one depicts a Washington State Ferry at a terminal. The 1984 poster sold out, as have others throughout the years. The posters have become a sought-after collector's item among ferry devotees.

The poster is now available for purchase, along with Young's 2003-04 Lopez Island print and the 2005 snowy Shaw Island scene at the retail locations listed. ■

- Vessel galleries on the following routes: Anacortes-San Juan Islands, Seattle-Bremerton, Seattle-Bainbridge Islands, Edmonds-Kingston, Mukilteo-Clinton
- Online at [www.nwprints.net](http://www.nwprints.net)
- Colman Dock News (Seattle Ferry Terminal)
- The Cheesecake Café (in the Anacortes Ferry Terminal)
- Anacortes Ferry Terminal Gift Shop
- Visitors Centers in Sidney, B.C.



The posters cost \$20. For more information, contact Tara Decrow at 206.515.3828 or email [DecrowT@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:DecrowT@wsdot.wa.gov)

**Local Author Seeks Quotes from Ferry Customers**

Local author John Schroeter is looking for a few good quotes for a book he is writing about local artist Alex Young. In the author's words, the book will be: "...a very nice, oversized, gift-quality edition (printed on watercolor paper) featuring the ferry poster art, along with Alex Young's story, with detours into his other works. The aim of the book is the same as that of the posters: to capture and celebrate the wonder of the ferry experience." The author would like quotes from ferry customers that echo this sentiment.

If you have a quote you would like to contribute: please contact Michelle Norfolk at 206.515.3771, or email [NorfolM@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:NorfolM@wsdot.wa.gov). ■



Artist Alex Young autographs a poster for Judy Fosmo, WSF's first female Chief Engineer, on the first run of the season to Sidney, British Columbia.

# The San Juan Islands: Where the Arts, History and Nature Converge

The San Juan Islands have lured explorers and visitors with a diverse and natural beauty since they were first discovered. Now images of ferry boats cruising from Anacortes to Lopez, Orcas, Shaw and San Juan Islands leave lasting memories. Getting here is half the fun! Especially when you know that your ticket is for round-trip travel: fares are collected only on westward sailings.

San Juan County (population 15,500) has more than 400 miles of rocky and sandy waterfront, boasting more marine shoreline than any other county in the nation. Sheltered coves, lush forests, sunny meadows, and temperate climate in this marine environment refresh visitors and residents alike. The rainshadow effect is a friend, bringing an average of 247 days with sunshine a year and about half the rain of the mainland. The inland sea surrounding the Islands is The Salish Sea, named for the Coast Salish people and its first stewards. This is one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet - and one of the most fragile. Visitors are encouraged to tread lightly and "Leave Only Footprints."

Come for rest and be seduced by true "Island Time." There are no bridges to any of the islands in San Juan County and there are no stoplights. The three major islands - Lopez, Orcas and San Juan - all offer Farmers Markets, locally-grown farm products in restaurants, local history museums, performing arts centers, parks, golf courses and sea kayaking. Hiking, biking, birding, scuba diving and wildlife cruises are also very popular activities in the San Juans. Special events and cultural festivals abound.

## Geology and Wildlife

The San Juan Islands were carved by glaciers thousands of years ago. Below the sea's surface, channels plunge to depths of up to 1,000 feet. This is prime habitat for marine life. On the water you may see porpoises, seals, orca whales, sea lions and many other marine species including occasional sightings of humpback, minke and gray whales. On land look for bald eagles, osprey and hawks. Migratory birds including trumpeter swans make extended stays on island lakes and wetlands. Transient and indigenous species make San Juan County one of the best wildlife viewing areas in the world.

## Lopez Island

Lopez Island is the first ferry stop from Anacortes. There's an authentic rural charm and a spirit of community that confirms the mainland has been left behind. The landscape blends woods with pastoral farmland and shimmering vistas. Lopez is home to many artists, craftspeople, musicians, farmers, and nature lovers. Don't forget to wave to passing motorists, a local custom for many years.

Walk along the beaches and trails of the parks or go biking on the flattest of the three main islands. Visit the winery and vineyards or just sit still with a good pair of binoculars and observe the ever-present wildlife. Spend time in Lopez Village, the activity center of the island. The Tour de Lopez, a non-competitive bicycle tour through the scenic landscape of Lopez Island, is an annual event the last weekend in April. It's a wonderful opportunity for families and friends to experience the rural beauty of Lopez Island.

## Orcas Island

Art, activities and agriculture flourish on Orcas Island, the largest of the San Juans. The horseshoe-shaped island is a diverse mix of hamlets and villages, lush forests, farm valleys, placid lakes and stunning mountains. Deer Harbor, Eastsound, Olga, Orcas Village and Westsound are all popular stops. An island gem is the historic Moran Mansion located at Rosario Resort & Spa on beautiful Cascade Bay.

The panoramic view of islands, water and mountains from atop 2,409-foot Mount Constitution is a must-see. It's possible to drive within 100 steps of the top, then walk to the viewing area or up the view tower. Moran State Park also offers camping, waterfalls along tranquil trails and lakes for fishing.

## San Juan Island

San Juan Island features the walkable historic seaport of Friday Harbor (ferry passengers can easily get around on foot from the ferry landing). It's also home to The Whale Museum which educates all about whale watching guidelines and the Islands' famous residents - the Orca whale, now the official

Washington State marine mammal and an Endangered Species. More than 85 orcas make their home in the San Juans with most sightings typically from May through the end of September. They can be seen from land, most easily from the west side of the island at Lime Kiln Point State Park, also known as "Whale Watch Park" or from a commercial whale/wildlife tour boat. For guidelines on responsible viewing of Marine Mammals, visit the NOAA Fisheries website at: <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Watching-Marine-Mammals.cfm> or call NOAA Fisheries Northwest Region at (206) 526-6150.

Visitors will want to explore the rest of San Juan Island, stopping at historic Roche Harbor resort and village and Westcott Bay Reserve Sculpture Park with over 100 sculptures. Other attractions include an alpaca farm, lavender farm, sea farm, winery and vineyard. Experience history at San Juan Island National Historical Park where exhibits, historic buildings and re-enactors bring to life the Pig War, a 12-year standoff between British and American troops in the late 1800s.

## Visitor Services

Lopez, Orcas and San Juan Islands all have Visitor Centers staffed by their local Chambers of Commerce. On San Juan Island, in the Town of Friday Harbor and on the ferries, look for the "Island Ambassadors" in marine blue shirts. They are specially trained high school students who answer travelers' questions in the summer months. Also on the ferries and at marinas, look for Ship's Naturalists and Dock Walkers in the WSU/San Juan County Beach Watchers program. These visitor services are available only during the summer months, on certain sailings.

Accommodations are plentiful in the San Juan Islands. From B&Bs, inns and suites to resorts, hotels, motels, cabins, cottages, homes or campgrounds, the choices are abundant for vacations or shorter getaways on a whim. The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau website is the premier and official website for tourism in the Islands. See it at [www.VisitSanJuans.com](http://www.VisitSanJuans.com). ■

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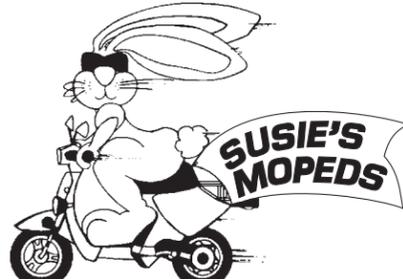
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