

# Maritime Washington National Heritage Area Management Plan Executive Summary

**We are connected by water.** Washington State’s coastal areas—from the Pacific Ocean into the Salish Sea, stretching across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and throughout Puget Sound—have been defined by their relationship to saltwater, connected by a shared maritime heritage.

Since time immemorial, humans have settled along the saltwater coasts of what is today Washington State, supported by the rich maritime resources for food, shelter, spiritual inspiration, trade and transportation to create diverse and complex communities with stories of local, national, and international significance. For thousands of years, Native people have flourished along the coastline, developing technologies, cultures, and lifeways that are deeply rooted in and shaped by this place. Today, the first people of this region continue to thrive, adapt, and steward these lands and waters. Over the centuries, a myriad of other communities from around the world have come to call this place home—and all have been influenced by its intricate waterways and relationships to water.

The shorelines and peoples of Washington State have, in turn, impacted the development of the region, the nation, and the world. Abundant natural resources, unique Tribal cultures, a complex history of exploration and immigration, vibrant working waterfronts, robust trade connections, and technological innovations—all shaped by their relationship with saltwater—have made this region and its maritime culture unlike any other. The designation of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area along our state’s saltwater shorelines recognizes the importance of Washington’s maritime heritage to our local, regional, and national story.

## WHAT IS THE MARITIME WASHINGTON NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA?

**National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a nationally important landscape.** National Heritage Areas build public-private partnerships to better tell the stories of these places and support communities in maintaining and sharing their unique resources. Although supported by the National Park Service, National Heritage Areas are unique in that they are locally run and completely non-regulatory. There is no change in ownership of land, no added rules or regulations, and participation is voluntary.

In 2019, the **Maritime Washington National Heritage Area was designated by Congress to help share and preserve our state’s unique maritime heritage resources and stories.** Its purpose is to support those who celebrate, maintain, and share our water-based experiences, to strengthen partnerships and increase collaboration, and to enhance the way residents and visitors alike

think about and experience our maritime heritage.

**Maritime Washington includes 3,000 miles of Washington State’s saltwater shoreline from Grays Harbor County to the Canadian border,** extending one-quarter mile inland from the mean high tide line. Its boundaries include the coastal lands of 18 federally recognized Tribes, 13 counties, 32 incorporated cities, and 33 port districts.

### WHAT IS THE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND HOW WAS IT CREATED?

This Management Plan outlines the goals, strategies, policies, and plans for the future of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area. It is the “navigation plan,” outlining what this new program will look like, what it will do, and how it will do it. This plan will serve as a useful and living document to guide staff, leadership, and partners in working together to launch this new National Heritage Area. This Management Plan includes seven chapters:

- **Chapter One: Introduction:** Provides background on the purpose of Maritime Washington, the creation of this Management Plan, and the geography of the region.
- **Chapter Two: Directional Guidance:** Outlines the mission and goals of the heritage area, as well as its key functions and partnership structures.
- **Chapter Three: Interpretive Plan:** Presents a framework for interpreting and sharing the narratives and resources of the area, including a historical overview, a framework of interpretive themes, and an overview of interpretive strategies.
- **Chapter Four: Key Sites from Resource Inventory:** Features a selection of resources from the Resource Inventory, including descriptions of each site and its relationship to the heritage area’s interpretive themes. The full Resource Inventory is included as Appendix B.



*Figure: Map with boundaries of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area in light blue.*

- **Chapter Five: Branding and Marketing Plan:** Outlines communication tactics and channels for Maritime Washington, as well as the heritage area’s brand identity.
- **Chapter Six: Business Plan:** Describes the organizational structures, policies, and strategies for governing, staffing, managing, and funding the heritage area.
- **Chapter Seven: Implementation Plan:** Identifies short- and long-range actions and performance goals for the heritage area, as well as guiding principles for implementation.
- **Appendices,** including a copy of Maritime Washington’s designation legislation, an inventory of resources located in the heritage area, a detailed overview of the management planning process, detailed marketing plans, and letters of support.

This plan took shape through a highly collaborative process over the course of three years. Planning efforts were led by a Steering Committee, representing diverse perspectives and interests from across the region, alongside five working groups, including a Tribal Working Group. Members of the public contributed to this vision through surveys, mapping activities, individual interviews, and 17 public workshops, focus groups, summits, and virtual office hour sessions.

## WHAT WILL MARITIME WASHINGTON DO?

**Vision:** Maritime Washington envisions a future in which

- Maritime partners are stronger through increased organizational sustainability, more funding opportunities, stronger cross-sector and cross-regional relationships, broadened networks for sharing ideas and solutions, and increased support for leaders and practitioners.
- Maritime heritage in Washington celebrates and reflects the diverse people, communities, and cultures within it—past, present, and future.
- Residents and visitors alike are more connected to Washington’s saltwater shores and waterways through interpretation, physical access, and a strong sense of place/identity.

**Mission:** The Maritime Washington National Heritage Area supports a network that strengthens the maritime community and connects people with the stories, experiences, resources, and cultures of our state’s saltwater shores and waterways.

**Key functions:** Partner support, external messaging, and advocacy

**Partnership structure:** Collaboration with and amongst partners will be critical to the success of Maritime Washington. All National Heritage Areas are based on the idea of partnership: bringing together a range of Tribes, organizations, businesses, industries, and governments to better protect and share heritage resources and stories. One of the great strengths of Maritime Washington is the incredible quality and quantity of potential partners who contribute to our state’s maritime heritage and culture. Maritime Washington will rally these groups to create a robust cross-sector network that strengthens all who participate in it, through networking, knowledge sharing, trainings, resources, and other support for leaders and practitioners. Any organization (private or public, for-profit or nonprofit) or Tribe whose work is aligned with the Maritime Washington mission may choose to become a partner of the Maritime Washington network.

## INTERPRETATION

Taken together, the combination of compelling narratives, intangible cultural practices, physical resources, and effective storytellers provides those experiencing Maritime Washington with unparalleled opportunities to connect with the stories of this place. To help organize the presentation of these stories, Maritime Washington has developed **three interpretive themes**, which will provide the heritage area and its partners with a helpful framework through which to highlight the region’s many and diverse maritime stories, sites, and resources.

1. The natural abundance, dramatic landscapes, and geographic diversity of Western Washington’s coastal areas have shaped the **people** of this region: nurturing the continuous presence of indigenous cultures, attracting waves of newcomers, and leading to strong, often contested regional identities and relationships with the water.
2. Since time immemorial, Washington’s waterways have fostered **movement** and connection, creating complex local networks and a gateway to the world, bringing together people, goods, and ideas in collaboration and in conflict.
3. The richness of Maritime Washington’s natural **resources** has long fostered vibrant economies built around the water, but the environment and the lifeways that rely upon it are increasingly at risk.

The key interpretive function of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area will be to act as an amplifier and supporter of community-based storytellers. Maritime Washington does not aim to duplicate existing efforts, nor does it wish to tell any community’s stories for them. Instead, the heritage area will strive to elevate the stories and experiences offered by our partners, and facilitate interpretation of maritime heritage from new storytellers—helping both reach wider audiences and tie in to regional themes.

## BRANDING AND MARKETING

The Maritime Washington brand represents the heritage area as a program, as well as the region as a whole. It reflects:

- Our shorelines' diverse personalities, from **calming, peaceful, and meditative to restless, rugged, and dramatic.**
- **The vibrant cultures of our saltwater shores,** which make us unlike all other places.
- Our promise to **deepen connection** between people, organizations, and maritime heritage.



**MARITIME  
WASHINGTON**  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

*Shaped by Sea & Story*

For Maritime Washington to best serve those who live, work, and play within the heritage area, our community needs to know who we are, what we do, and what we hope to achieve together. Early external messaging efforts will focus on existing and potential partners and then grow to include residents of and visitors to the area.

## BUSINESS STRUCTURE

National Heritage Areas are supported by the National Park Service but are managed locally. The local coordinating entity for Maritime Washington is the statewide nonprofit Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

Moving forward, Maritime Washington will function as a full program of the Washington Trust. It will be guided by the Washington Trust Board of Directors, a Maritime Washington Advisory Board, and a Maritime Washington Tribal Working Group. Maritime Washington programming and operations will be supported by a minimum of two full-time staff.

### Anticipated expenses

- Administration and staffing
- Programming
- Marketing
- Subgranting

### Anticipated revenue streams

- Federal funding via the National Park Service/Heritage Partnership Program
- Washington State
- Grants from public and private funders
- Sponsorship
- Partnership
- Individual donors
- Earned revenue (e.g., events, activities, merchandise)
- In-kind match from partners, grantees, and volunteers

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Management Plan presents an implementation framework that will guide the heritage area’s actions over the next 10 to 15 years. It is organized around five goals, each of which is supported by several short- and long-term strategies. These strategies will be accomplished through specific projects and implementation actions by Maritime Washington and its partners.

Summary of Implementation Goals and Strategies		
GOAL	SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES	LONG-TERM STRATEGIES
Build a network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit partners</li> <li>Support capacity building through the sharing of best practices</li> <li>Facilitate communications and relationship-building amongst partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to build the network and provide new value to partners through enhanced programming</li> </ul>
Provide support and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and execute an annual grant program</li> <li>Connect partners with additional funding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the size of the grant program</li> <li>Explore new subgranting models</li> </ul>
Share diverse stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and maintain a website that centralizes maritime sites and stories</li> <li>Create and maintain additional channels to promote maritime sites and stories</li> <li>Collaborate with partners and community members on new maritime storytelling projects to better interpret the full stories of the region</li> <li>Elevate maritime stories in public spaces</li> <li>Help partners tie their sites and stories into Maritime Washington interpretive themes and regional narratives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number and depth of collaborative storytelling partnerships</li> <li>Continue partnerships to expand maritime interpretation in public spaces</li> </ul>
Encourage sustainable experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralize information about what to do in the heritage area</li> <li>Promote awareness of and engagement with the Maritime Washington region and the sites and experiences within it</li> <li>Facilitate or co-host events and programs that create connections between the public and maritime heritage</li> <li>Promote responsible tourism and visitation practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand messaging to new audiences</li> <li>Explore partner-based signage programs</li> </ul>
Preserve the region’s maritime identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for policies and actions that encourage protection of natural, historical, and cultural maritime resources</li> <li>Support projects that preserve and increase access to historic maritime sites and stories</li> <li>Increase awareness of modern maritime careers and trades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider new ways to provide preservation support</li> <li>Investigate the creation of a scholarship program for maritime careers</li> </ul>