



June 19, 2025



Grain loading at the Port of Garfield's Central Ferry site, just outside of Pomeroy (photos courtesy of the port).

May Updates at WPPA

Greetings from WPPA World Headquarters in Olympia, where our newly refurbished parking lot is the latest in building upgrades that our team has set about executing during these slower days, after the Legislative Session has adjourned and our building tenants aren't in their offices daily. The building still buzzes with activity, as WPPA staff load out boxes of name tags and programs for upcoming seminars, and just as quickly unload and stow computers and projectors as the seminar program progresses and one gives way to another.

We kicked off our seminar program in earnest with a whirlwind of a Spring Meeting, convening just sixteen days after the end of the 2025 Legislative Session. Our staff took one or maybe two days off following session, before turning their focus to executing a 230-person event at the Historic Davenport Hotel in Spokane, WA. Thanks to all whose commitment to attendance makes these a great place to see friends and learn about breaking news in the port world—or as Commissioner Bachman, our Executive Committee President, described it: “Take part in a Big Ideas Exchange!”

Content at the Spring Meeting was highlighted by several discussions of tariff policy, international trade, and the role our ports play in facilitating the state's export-economy. We also heard from speakers who addressed evergreen issues like energy supply and welcomed representatives from the Department of Agriculture and the Columbia Basin Development League to talk about water supply challenges that could affect ports and our partners in coming years. Committee meetings with packed agendas also stirred discussion, and new Associate Members rubbed elbows with port commissioners who have served for thirty years—these receptions always generate new friendships.

On Friday, we once again celebrated some praise-worthy port projects, with our annual Spring Awards honorees. This year, they're briefly summarized as follows:

Community Engagement Award – Port of Port Townsend: The 2025 winner demonstrated creativity and community spirit in the way they ensured that a major in-water infrastructure project minimized disruption on the marine environment while also being well-understood, accessible, and even visible to members of the community. The Port of Port Townsend's breakwater reconstruction was essential to protecting and preserving historic Point Hudson, and to make the project possible, the port took a partnership approach to engagement with its state and federal regulators—and emphasized community through its sea creature relocation and public underwater camera. The port collaborated with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center to provide training for divers on relocating the marine wildlife under the breakwater, along with the Washington SCUBA Alliance and the Octopus Gardens Dive Shop, among many others. Read more here: <https://www.washingtonports.org/2025-community-engagement-award/>

Creative Partnership Award – Port of Coulee City: The newest member of WPPA was presented with the award that recognizes the efforts our members make in presenting creative solutions to community problems. Their Medical Clinic and Library project made the most of limited funding by taking advantage of port ingenuity and addressed the lack of modern healthcare options and the need for a new library in a town of fewer than 1,000 residents. Since 2015, the port worked with partners to secure funding for four phases of project development, and in 2024 they cut the ribbon on their new facility. The result of their creative problem-solving is a facility that offers improved accessibility and welcoming community space, and is a great example of the work a port can do when bringing together partners with a common goal. Read more here: <https://www.washingtonports.org/2025-creative-partnership-award/>

Environmental Stewardship Award – Port of Skagit County: Like many of our port members, the Port of Skagit understands the challenge and threat that abandoned and derelict vessels can pose to public health and the environment. WPPA presented them with the 2025 environmental stewardship award for the creative approach they took to resolving this issue. Starting in 2024, the port partnered with the Department of Natural Resources and others to bring more boats into the Department of Natural Resources Vessel Turn-In Program (VTIP) and allow more boats to be safely recycled. Eight different organizations and entities, with the port, worked together to launch the program in July 2024, and vessels at the end of their use were able to be voluntarily turned in for free and transported to the Port of Skagit's La Conner Marina to be deconstructed and recycled. In just four short months: 49 vessels were voluntarily turned in; and 109 tons of total material was successfully recycled, including 80 tons of scrap wood, 19.8 tons of metal, and 6.7 tons of cardboard. Read more here: <https://www.washingtonports.org/2025-environmental-award/>

Job Creator Award – Port of Chehalis: This year, the WPPA was thrilled to present the Port of Chehalis with our 2025 Job Creator award winner for its work on the Southwest Washington Grain Project. The Southwest Washington Grain Projects consists of 8.2 acres of port-owned land that is now dedicated to agricultural development. Phase one of the project is where a grain storage facility will allow transloading of grain, accommodate a weigh station and an operations building, and will allow for future phases of complementary development. In undertaking this project, the port focused on improving the economic resilience of the local agricultural economy that had seen its farms devastated by a combination of catastrophic flooding and loss of market access. Western Washington Agriculture faces unique challenges including the loss of processing facilities, flood events, lack of infrastructure, development pressure, and diminished competitive advantages, at a time when the infrastructure necessary to develop alternative markets is not available. The proposed infrastructure development will not only benefit individual producers, but the agricultural economy of western Washington as a whole. Read more here: <https://www.washingtonports.org/2025-press-release-award/>

Not long after the dust settled on Spokane, we kicked off a *new educational item*: our Port Academy Series, with the first edition taking place in Kalama on June 4th. More than 20 directors and senior staff from ports around the state joined Mark Wilson and his staff for a day-long deep dive into the port's business lines, approach to financial management, tour of its facilities, and an open discussion about the questions that were common to all the ports around the table. Huge thanks to the Port of Kalama for being a shining example of all a port can do, and for welcoming so many of our members through your doors for this successful first Academy event. Stay tuned for registration information for the next installment: August 14th, with the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority.

Now we continue on down the road, with Walla Walla as our next stop. The finest finance minds in our organization will gather at the Marcus Whitman from June 25-27, followed by the Directors Seminar in Leavenworth July 9-11, and the Commissioners Seminar in Blaine, WA at Semiahmoo Resort from July 21-23. The staff work long hours developing content for these, and we rely on contributions from all of you—so if you are on the fence, please take the leap and join us. We promise they are worth your while.

See you all out in Washington before too long!

Port Spotlight: Connecting Communities at the Port of Garfield



The port's main office, located at the DSP Site

Garfield County sits in the southeast corner of Washington, tucked into the rolling hills of the Palouse. With a population of only about 2,300, Garfield County seems like an unlikely place for an active port, but the Port of Garfield County has a long history with the area and is dedicated to developing their community.

The Port of Garfield County was founded in 1958 in recognition of the commerce that could be brought on the Snake River, which borders the county to the north. In 1969 the port responded to increasing barge traffic along the river by purchasing the Central Ferry site, located roughly 20 miles northwest of Pomeroy, Garfield County's only town. The Central Ferry site became a major loading station for barges on the Snake River. Pomeroy Grain Growers still ships their products via Shaver Barge Lines down the Columbia-Snake River system all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In 2024, the facility shipped between 350,000-400,000 tons of grain.

"There's also a boat launch and dock on site, and day-use parking for using the river," said Tina Keller, Assistant Manager for the Port of Garfield County.

The port acquired more land in the 1980s to establish an industrial site for the Dye Seed Plant (DSP), which became the only industrial site in the county. The DSP site is now home to four tenants, one of which is the port itself. A notable tenant there is Palouse Fiber, a company working to help transition away from plastic packaging toward biodegradable replacements using organic fibers. In 1986, the port began a process to construct a facility for the US Forest Service's Pomeroy Ranger District—a 10,000-foot space that houses the Ranger District offices. Their shop is also located at the DSP site, which houses their wildland firefighting equipment.



The Pomeroy Ranger District building

In the 2000s the port got started on their most ambitious project: providing fast broadband internet to the entire city.

"It's a process the port got started many years ago," Keller said. "Six years ago, we were able to get started putting it in with the help of grants and managed to get fiber internet to the whole community [of Pomeroy]."

The port then looked outside of Pomeroy's city limits, to the nearby community of Pataha. Pataha also got fiber internet from this project, as well as everyone in between the two communities.

"The internet is wonderful here, and high-end for such a small community," said Keller.

As the port looks toward the future, they have one eye on the maintenance of the infrastructure they've already built, and the other on finishing their fiber internet project. On the maintenance side, the boat launch and dock at the Central Ferry site have not been updated since the 1980s and are in need of repair. To address this, the port is seeking out a Recreation and Conservation Office grant to fix up the boat launch.

"If we're awarded it, we'll proceed with getting an engineer to start designing," Keller said. "We're hopeful that we'll find out whether or not we get that toward the end of June."

From there, the port has hopes of expanding fiber internet to more of Garfield County. The topography and the remote nature of the county make the project difficult, but in no way impossible, with the different kinds of internet services available.

“We’re placed in a valley, with residents tucked throughout the hills,” Keller said. The nature of the valley makes running fiber internet to isolated homes a production, but one that the port is eager to take on in the future



The Garfield County Courthouse was built in 1901 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

It’s hard not to be captivated by Garfield County, by the small town of Pomeroy and the ways that the port has been able to change the lives of residents, connecting them with the rest of the world both economically and socially. It’s a testament to the importance of small ports and their direct connection to the communities they serve. They address the needs of the community because they are in that community every day.

“Pomeroy is the heart of the county,” Keller said. “We’ve got the Snake River to the north, the Blue Mountains to the south, we’ve got the Lewiston and Clarkston Valley 30 minutes away, rolling hills, and prairie. It’s a great place to be.”

Legislative Spotlight: WPPA Kicks off 2026 Legislative Priority Setting

With the ink barely dry on the state’s \$77.9 billion Operating Budget, WPPA has turned its sights on preparation for the 2026 Legislative Session. To continue increasing access and engagement for our membership, WPPA is making a few process changes designed to increase participation in this important process.

What is the same?

The WPPA Legislative Committee will meet monthly and will continue to be the committee that reviews and recommends policies to the WPPA Board of Trustees for ultimate inclusion in WPPA’s 2026 Legislative Priorities, adopted during the WPPA Annual Meeting in November. WPPA’s Standing Committees, including the Environmental Policy, Trade & Transportation, Marina, and Economic Development Committees, will convene more frequently during the interim and include more discussion and advancement of issues. In short, the committees will continue to be the place where policy details will be discussed and hammered out, prior to a recommendation coming before the Legislative Committee.

For those issues which are important to more than one committee or have a very specific or defined work plan, WPPA has created Work Groups designed to include membership from as broad as possible group of stakeholders. This includes the Port Electrification, Power Supply & Grid Resiliency, Tax Increment Financing, and Industrial Stormwater Work Groups, to name a few. These Work Groups meet on an ad-hoc basis and typically include informative presentations from topical subject-matter experts and dedicated time for conversation about policy or funding priorities shared by one or more port districts.

What is changing in the way WPPA is preparing for the 2026 Legislative Session?

First, WPPA isn't simply "rolling over" policies we have advocated for with the anticipation they will again be included in our priorities for 2026. With budget constraints again expected during 2026 session, most issues will be discussed in more depth during the standing committee meetings to determine whether they continue to be important and viable. You'll notice that our 2026 Priority Setting document also includes broad policy statements for each of our priority policy areas. These statements are designed to drive alignment and provide greater clarity for all, whether you are a long-time participant in the priority setting process or joining us for the first time.

WPPA will also be working on expanding our outreach and grassroots coordinating with other agencies and associations that may share common interests. The Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA), for example, has been a partner in developing economic development priorities for a few years as our city and county counterparts at the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington Association of Counties have been instrumental in coordination around transportation, taxation, and general governance policy. WPPA will continue to work to find common interests with our historic partners and expand outreach efforts with the Association of Washington Business (AWB), the Washington Association of Public Utility Districts (WPUDA) and various labor organizations as well.

WPPA will also increase our visibility and communication on policy areas including recreational and tourism promotion and workforce development, and we will continue to increase our effectiveness in advocacy on state energy policy. Many of these areas have been part of broader policy goals but will have goals and objectives developed to provide more specific policy guidance going forward.

Finally, WPPA will seek to further balance our priorities by advancing more policy priorities and fewer budget priorities. The state is an important partner in all we do, so we recognize how challenging this goal will be to achieve. Simply put, we expect to see similar budgetary constraints as we saw during the 2025 session in 2026. By prioritizing policies versus budget items, we are more aligned with the legislature's priorities and more likely to be successful in funding the budget priorities that we advance.

Your port's participation in building our 2026 legislative agenda is critical. Whether you are a member of the WPPA Legislative Committee or participate in one or more of the standing committees or work groups, we need your active participation to get this right. If you have any questions or need more information on how to participate, please contact any staff person on WPPA's advocacy team who can get you connected to the right venue.

Knowing the Waters

In this month's edition of Knowing the Waters, Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law covered the establishment and enforcement of rules for the public at port facilities like marinas, piers, and boat launches, all of which get packed in the summertime. He provides information on best practices for adopting port rules and looks at the precedent for the enforcement of those rules for the public. Read more for an excellent analysis of what is often a difficult question for ports to answer, [here](#).

WPPA Enviro Seminar – Request for Proposals

Washington Public Ports Association's 2025 Fall Environmental Seminar is an exciting two-day seminar focusing on environmental issues and policy impacting state public ports. This year the Seminar will be held on September 25th - 26th in person, at the Alderbrook Resort in Union, WA! We organize numerous panels, discussions, and presentations from experts in their field and each year **invite you to submit a proposal to speak on an environmental topic at the Seminar**. Or if you have a topic you would like to learn more about, please let us know about that too! Submit proposals (no longer than one page) to our Senior Director of Environmental Policy, [Carly Michiels](#), **no later than 5PM on July 1st**. Reach out if you have any questions.

Grants and Resources for Ports

Climate Resources at Washington Climate Action

The [Washington Climate Action](#) website is a first-stop shop for funding or other resources related to climate and natural resources, including grant writing support and contracting information.

National Brownfields Training Conference – applications due June 27, 2025

The National Brownfields Training Conference is hosting their annual Perfect Pitch Competition, where entities in need of Brownfields assistance can submit their projects to be selected to present to the National Brownfields Conference. The top 3 projects will be invited to present to the conference and awarded \$50,000 in support. All applicants will be connected to their Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) provider to explore other assistance opportunities. [Learn more about the program and how to apply here.](#)

Ecology Flood Control Assistance Account – applications due June 30, 2025

Ecology is providing \$1.5 million to communities to develop comprehensive floodplain management plans and put actions and projects in place to mitigate local flood hazards. Eligible applicants include local governments and special purpose districts, with a ceiling of \$500,000 in awards per county. Eligible projects include writing or updating a comprehensive flood hazard management plan; feasibility, mapping, and technical studies; permitting, outreach and public communications; matching federal funding; and emergency flood response and recovery. To learn more, visit the [Flood Control Assistance Account program](#) page.

- A 25 percent match for planning projects and a 20 percent match for emergency flood response projects is required.
- Prospective applicants must fill out a Notice of Intent to Apply form prior to applying.
- Applications are due June 30, 2025.

RCO Boating Infrastructure Grant Program – applications due June 5 - July 17, 2025

RCO is accepting applications for their Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, which will provide a total of \$2.2 million for the development and renovation of boating facilities that target recreational boats 26 feet long and larger.

Ports, local agencies, tribes, nonprofits and private marinas are all encouraged to apply. The money can cover guest dock renovation, installing utilities on moorage docks, moorage dock and float construction, and boater education. [Learn more at RCO's website.](#)

- A 25 percent match is required.
- The pre-application was due June 5, 2025.
- The full application is due July 17, 2025.

Commerce Public Works Board Fiscal Year 2026 – applications due August 8, 2025

Funding for construction, preconstruction, and emergency projects to maintain public infrastructure systems is available through the Department of Commerce. For construction, there is approximately \$100 million available; for preconstruction, there is approximately \$7.5 million; for emergency, there is also approximately \$7.5 million, and there is not a deadline for emergency funding so long as funds are still available. Learn more [here](#).

Ecology EV Charging Level Grants opening soon – applications open July 8 – August 21, 2025

The Department of Ecology is using funds from the Volkswagen diesel settlement for Level 2 EV charging grants. Grants will offer \$10,000 per plug (up to 80% of project costs) for a total of \$2 million this round. Read more about [how to apply here](#).

MARAD Port Infrastructure Development Program – applications due September 10, 2025

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) announced on May 2 that the deadline for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) has been extended to September 10, 2025, to align with updated guidance for the 2025 fiscal year. \$500 million will be made available to fund projects that, through enhanced port or related freight infrastructure, improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods in urban and rural areas. Webinars will be scheduled soon to describe the application and scoring process, and we will share those in upcoming Manifests. In the meantime, you can view the opportunity [here](#) on Grants.gov by September 10, 2025.

EPA Thriving Community Grant Makers – accepted on a rolling basis

The Environmental Protection Agency opened their Thriving Community Grantmakers Program on January 15 and are accepting applications on a rolling basis. The Grantmakers partner with community-based organizations from across a region to select partnerships and distribute funding. Funding is awarded in four different categories: Assessment projects, Planning projects, Development projects, and non-competitive fixed amounts. [Read more about how to apply here.](#) A [recorded webinar](#) on the program is available through the Center for Creative Land Recycling.

Federal Clean Energy Tax Assistance Program – free and available now

Administered through Commerce, the [Federal Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program](#) offers tax incentives to eligible entities (including ports) through the Inflation Reduction Act. Free resources, including personalized support from clean energy tax attorneys, are available [here](#).

Commerce Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) – applications accepted on rolling basis

The [Brownfields RLF](#) provides low interest loans to entities undertaking cleanup of contaminated properties to support redevelopment, promote public health and safety, improve environmental quality, and create jobs at and around brownfield sites. Average loan amounts are approximately \$500,000 and up to 50% of the loan may be forgiven for public entities. Loan terms are typically 5 years or less, and the interest rate is negotiated based on project need. A 1% loan fee is required. Learn more [here](#).

Highlighted Events



Finance & Administration Seminar, June 25 – 27 at the Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla

The [WPPA Finance & Administration Seminar](#) is happening next week at the Marcus Whitman in Walla Walla! If you haven't registered yet but would still like to attend, please email [Mandy Lill](#), as online registration is now closed. This valuable event offers [timely updates and insights](#) tailored to port finance and administration. Port finance officers, auditors, commissioners, executive directors, and associate members are all welcome to join us in Walla Walla for this engaging and informative seminar.



Directors Seminar, July 10-11 at the Sleeping Lady Resort in Leavenworth: [Registration is open](#) for the [2025 Directors Seminar](#), held this July in Leavenworth and we hope to see you there! While our hotel block has already closed, you may still be able to get a room at the regular rate by calling the hotel at 509-548-6344. Read more in our event FAQs and reach out to [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions or need help finding other lodging options. Optional: there will be an informal gathering the afternoon of July 9th in downtown Leavenworth for anyone who would like to arrive a bit early - more details to come!



Commissioners Seminar, July 21-23 at Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine: [Event information](#) is available, and [registration is open](#) for the WPPA Commissioner Seminar next month at Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine. The room block expires June 23rd so we encourage you to book your accommodations now by calling Semiahmoo at 855-917-3767 or you [can click here to make them online](#). Please email [Mandy Lill](#) with any questions and for sponsorship opportunities.



WPPA Port Academy Series – Second Installment: August 14 at the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority (CDRPA)

Attention Port Staff: Our first academy series class was a big success, so we're excited to invite WPPA members to our second Port Academy Series event! This is a new educational initiative where we are offering port staff an opportunity to learn from one another through hands-on, port led forums. This is the second of three installments in 2025 and is hosted by the CDRPA on August 14th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Registration is open, you can find information on this event [here on our website](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to [James Cockburn](#) at WPPA.

Save the Dates: WPPA 2025 Remaining Events

- Environmental Seminar: September 25-26 at the Alderbrook Lodge, Union
- Small Ports Seminar: October 23-24 at Campbell's Resort, Chelan
- New Commissioners Seminar: November 18 - 19 at the Marriott Tacoma Downtown
- Annual Meeting: November 19 - 21 at the Marriott Tacoma Downtown



Mackenzie at the helm of her ship

As Mackenzie Sees It

Notes from the Government Relations Manager and his daughter

As I mark just over eighteen months with WPPA, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on the journey so far. Serving as WPPA's Government Relations Manager has been both a privilege and a huge learning experience—one that continues to shape my understanding of our state's diverse communities, economies, and the essential role that ports play in both.

Before joining WPPA, I had a general sense of what ports meant to our state—mostly rooted in my upbringing in Sequim and Port Angeles, where the presence of the port was a familiar backdrop. But stepping into this role has opened my eyes to the full scope of their impact. Whether it's moving goods, fueling local industries, supporting job creation, or serving as hubs of innovation and environmental stewardship, our ports are not only economic engines—they are deeply embedded in the life of every community they serve.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this job has been the opportunity to visit ports across Washington and meet the dedicated individuals who make them run. From commissioners and executive directors to operations staff and government affairs specialists, every conversation has offered a new perspective and helped me better represent your interests in Olympia. I am especially thankful for the openness and generosity that members have shown in sharing their time, stories, and knowledge with me. Your insights have been invaluable in grounding my advocacy in real-world experience.

Representing WPPA during legislative session is, admittedly, intense. Long days, back-to-back meetings, and extended time away from family are part of the job. But I also recognize how fortunate I am to have the trust of our members and the support of a flexible team that understands the challenges of the work. Knowing that the policies we help shape directly impact the health and growth of port communities across Washington makes the effort more than worthwhile.

Growing up on the Olympic Peninsula gave me a personal connection to the importance of economic opportunity in rural and coastal communities that have struggled to transition away from legacy industries. Today, I see that thread woven through every port community—urban or rural. Our ports are catalysts for good jobs, workforce development, and long-term investments in infrastructure that benefit entire regions. I carry that understanding with me every time I step into a hearing room or meet with a legislator. It keeps the work grounded, purposeful, and real.

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the incredible team I get to work with at WPPA. They are a group of professionals who care deeply about our mission and about each other. Their passion, collaboration, insight, and support make even the most hectic days more manageable—and often, more enjoyable.

Thank you again to all of our members for your continued engagement and encouragement. I am honored to represent you and look forward to continuing to learn from you as we advance the important work of Washington's ports together.

Washington Public Ports Association | 360.943.0760 | www.washingtonports.org