

# Communicating Washington's Maritime History

Maritime Washington National Heritage Area

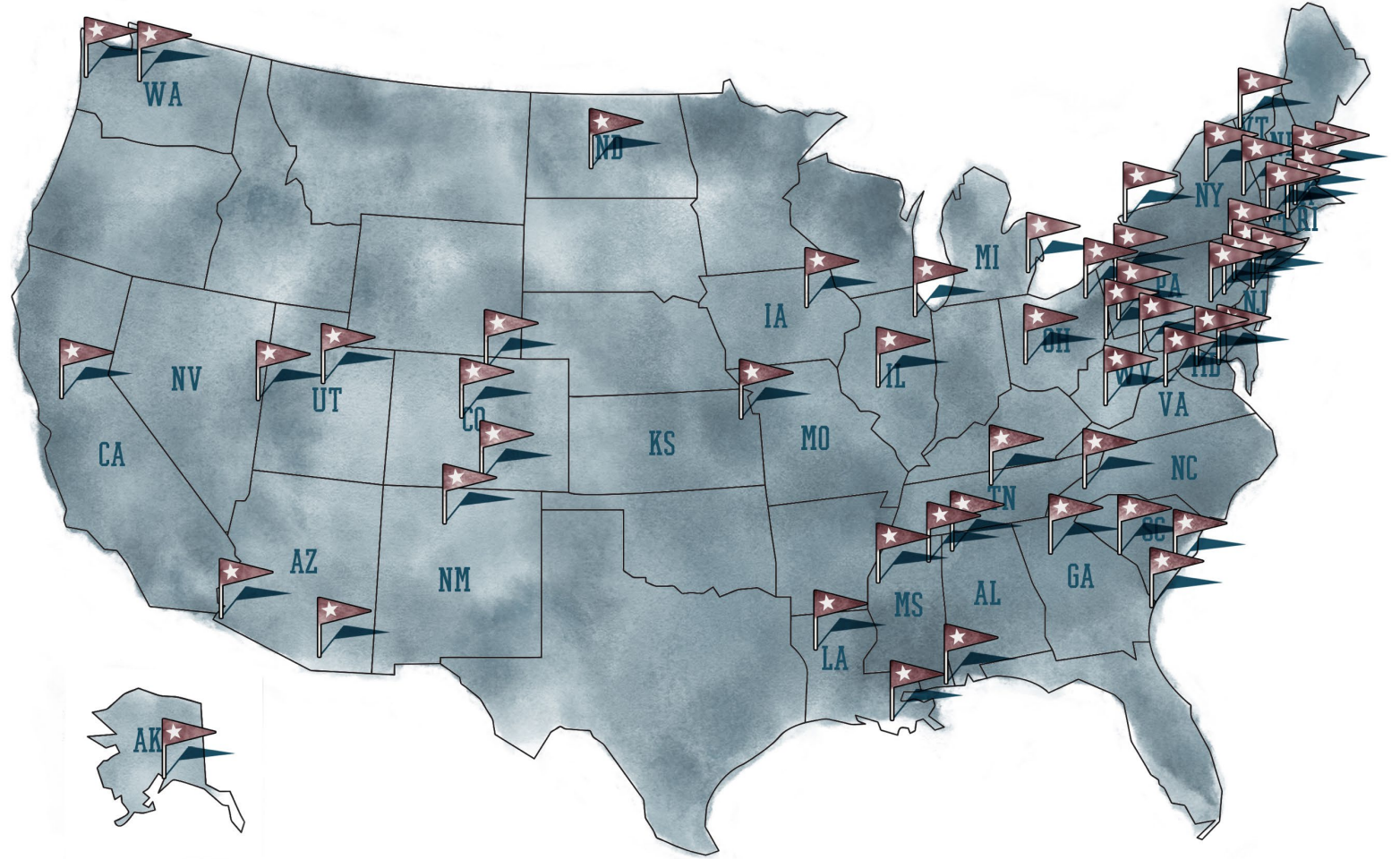


**MARITIME  
WASHINGTON**  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

WPPA Annual Meeting | November 19, 2025

# National Heritage Areas

- Designated by Congress
- 62 across the country
- Landscapes of national importance
- Financial and technical support from National Park Service but not traditional park units
- Non-regulatory!





# National Heritage Areas

- Each focuses on different stories
- Facilitated by a local coordinating entity
- Meets the needs of their local community
- Build public-private partnerships to better tell the stories of these places and support communities in maintaining and sharing their unique resources





# Maritime Washington National Heritage Area

- Designated by Congress in 2019
- 3,000 miles of coastline from Grays Harbor to the Canadian border
- 1/4 mile from mean high tide line
- 13 counties, 21 federally recognized Tribes, 32 incorporated cities, and 33 port districts
- First and only NHA in the country focused entirely on maritime heritage





# Maritime Washington National Heritage Area

- Facilitated by the statewide nonprofit Washington Trust for Historic Preservation
- Guided by Advisory Board, including WPPA seat



## Where we are today

- Designated by Congress in 2019
- Completed 3-year regionwide, collaborative planning process in May 2022
- Management Plan approved in October 2022
- First year of operations as a fully-funded National Heritage Area in 2023
- Now in our third year of operations



# Community needs

## What did we hear during our three years of public outreach?

- There are already great organizations documenting and interpreting Washington's maritime history
- There are *many* amazing places, stories, industries, organizations, and individuals that make up our state's nationally significant maritime identity
- And yet, many of these things that make up our maritime heritage are underappreciated

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# Our challenge

- How can we increase connection with maritime places, cultures, and ways of life?
- How can we increase pride in our maritime heritage and identity for Washington residents?
- How can we empower the maritime heritage industry to continue their work to do the same?

Our approach

# We help preserve, interpret, and celebrate Washington's maritime heritage.

- **Connecting** residents and visitors with maritime stories and places to foster pride of place.
- **Supporting** and **advocating** for those who steward, share, and live our water-based identity to ensure its continuation.

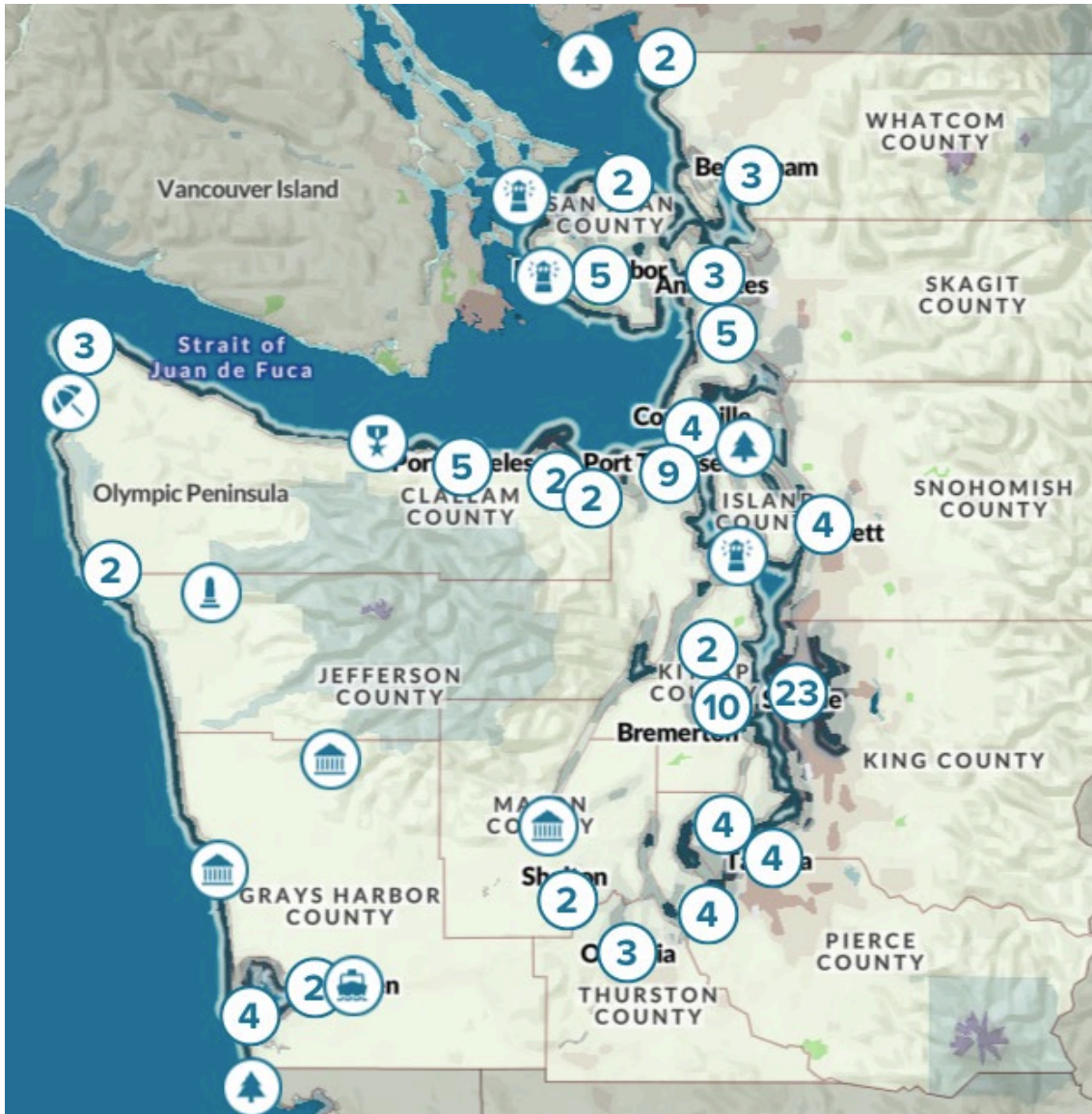
# Connecting

## Building pride of place for Washington residents and visitors

- Inviting people into the world of the waterfront through storytelling and firsthand experiences
- Increasing visibility and accessibility to maritime
- Maritime Washington as amplifier







# How we connect people with maritime heritage

## Centralized platforms

- Website and social media as centralized hubs for information and stories
- Maps, itineraries, stories, news, event listings
- Monthly newsletter with stories and events



# How we connect people with maritime heritage

## Increasing visibility

- Regional brochures
- Marketing campaigns
- Tabling at festivals and events
- Maritime heritage interpretation aboard ferries





# How we connect people with maritime heritage

## Storytelling

- Women on the Waterfront interviews
- Working Waterfronts photo series
- Tribal Guide to Maritime Washington pilot project
- Filipinos and Washington's Waterfront traveling exhibit



# Supporting and advocating

## Fostering pride and enabling work in the maritime heritage sector

- Help connect with financial and technical resources
- Advocacy and advice on projects
- Education and networking through the Maritime Washington Partner Network



**“Being a part of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area connects us to a beautiful landscape, a diverse history, a dynamic economy, and other partners who have a shared value for this amazing area.”**

– Maritime Washington Partner

## Supporting and advocating

### Maritime Washington Partner Network

- 50+ cross-sector partners working together to connect, strengthen, and increase appreciation for Washington’s maritime heritage
- Any organization (private or public, for-profit or nonprofit), local government entity, or Tribe whose work is aligned with Maritime Washington mission is eligible





# Supporting and advocating

## Maritime Washington Partner Network

- Field trips
- Virtual workshops on topics like coastal flooding and historic preservation, responsible tourism, advocacy, and more
- Annual partner meeting
- Monthly newsletter
- Online resource library
- Scholarships for conferences and trainings





# Supporting and advocating

## What is expected of partners?

- Short application explaining how work is mission aligned
- Annual fee tiered by org type and size
- Maintain good participation through meetings, workshops, learning circles, sharing best practices, messaging
- Complete annual partner survey
- Help ID projects/activities aligned with Maritime Washington goals

# How can ports communicate about heritage and foster pride of place?

- **Tell your stories – they’re fascinating!**
  - Put a face on it
  - You don’t have to (and shouldn’t) do this alone
- **Meet people where they’re at**
  - Don’t expect them to come to you without an invitation.
  - Get a table at a local event, partner with a museum or library on a speaker series, host a tour of the waterfront
- **If you’re within the National Heritage Area, join our efforts**
  - Share your stories and events
  - Come to us with preservation and interpretation questions or ideas
  - Consider becoming a partner



**MARITIME  
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NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

*Shaped by Sea & Story*