



# GUEMES ISLAND FERRY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



## Pier-Side Maintenance Successfully Completed

The maintenance and repair work has been completed and the ferry returned on schedule last Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your patience while the car ferry was out.

### [Peak Season Runs Through September 30](#)

As a reminder, peak season started on May 20. Nonpeak tickets cannot be used from May 20 through September 30. Peak season tickets are available to purchase, along with nonpeak tickets, on our website, mobile app, and the Anacortes terminal ticketing kiosk.

### [Memorial Day Sailing Schedule](#)

The ferry will operate on a Saturday nonpeak sailing schedule ending at 10:00 p.m. on Memorial Day, Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. The ferry sailing schedule can be found on the ferry website.

The Anacortes ferry business office will be closed on Memorial Day.

### [2027 Drydock Period](#)

The ferry is required by the U.S. Coast Guard to undergo a drydock haul-out in March 2027. Please be advised the car ferry will be out of service early next spring. We plan to offer passenger service during this time. More details will be shared in early 2027.



*Welcome back M/V Guemes!*

## Guemes Island Parking Lot Project

The Skagit County Public Works Engineering Division recently released a [Request for Qualifications](#) to hire a consultant to design the Guemes Island parking lot improvements. The parking lot on Guemes Island has been identified as County infrastructure that is out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) within the Skagit County A.D.A. Transition Plan. This plan identifies all barriers and infrastructure within the County right-of-way that are out of compliance with the A.D.A. The Engineering Division is working on a project to reconstruct the lot to A.D.A. standards, as well as ensure we are treating and mitigating all stormwater runoff.

We understand there are concerns with the initial drawings provided by Public Works staff for the lot. The initial concept drawings are a starting point for the consultants to work with as they evaluate the needs of the project and community, along with A.D.A. standards, stormwater regulations, and the limitations of the parking lot location. The drawings themselves do not constitute any final decisions, and we anticipate there will be several changes to the design based on A.D.A. requirements, real estate limitations, and community feedback.

We have heard the following comments and concerns about the initial design proposal:

- Concerning safety and emergency access, if there is only one entry or exit point.
- Retaining walls reducing access to the public boat launch on Guemes Island.
- Paving and striping layout would reduce the overall available parking spots.
- A.D.A. spots have been moved uphill further away from ferry access.

We appreciate the written comments submitted thus far, and we have shared these comments with the County Commissioners. Community feedback will be considered by the consultants in the final design concepts, and we will advertise future engagement opportunities with Guemes Island residents.

Additional information on this project can be found on our website here:

[www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PublicWorksEngineering/parking-lot-improvements](http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PublicWorksEngineering/parking-lot-improvements)



*Anacortes Bridge Apron*

## Apron Flaps Project Out for Bid

The Ferry Division will be replacing the flaps on the Anacortes and Guemes Island bridge aprons. These are the parts of the bridge at the very end that raise up and down to meet the ferry and help load and unload cars and passengers.

Skagit County Public Works has released a [Request for Bids](#) to solicit a contractor for the Apron Flap Replacement Project. The bid opening date is June 15. We anticipate construction will happen later this summer or early fall.

We expect this project to take five working days to finish. We are working on plans to offer passenger-only service to Guemes Island while the Anacortes flaps are being replaced. Unfortunately, while the Guemes flaps are being replaced, we will not be able to offer ferry service because the bridge on the island side will be unavailable.

This is a maintenance project to replace the flaps due to age, corrosion, and wear. The aprons still need to be replaced, as they were constructed in 1979-1980. A capital project for the full replacement of the aprons will also include recoating the bridges and updating the hydraulic and electrical systems at both terminals. The county has received a federal grant for \$5.79M. This year, the county will contract a design and environmental consultant, with construction possibly by 2028.

## Pier-Side Maintenance Work Items

Stabbert Marine Services in Anacortes was contracted to complete a series of required pier-side maintenance items on the vessel. These tasks address U.S. Coast Guard compliance and routine upkeep that cannot be performed during normal operations. Below is a summary of the work completed by Stabbert Marine, MER Equipment, and the Skagit County Chief Engineer and Captains.

### Work Items Completed by Stabbert Marine

#### 1. Car Deck Steel Renewal

USCG-mandated steel replacement on the car deck. This work was required to be finished by May 31, 2026, to maintain compliance.

#### 2. Opening and Cleaning All Below-Deck Void Spaces

Included gas-freeing, inspection access, and removal of accumulated scale and debris to ensure structural integrity.

#### 3. Re-Coated Apron Slide Areas

Abrasive prep and application of a high-durability coating system to reduce address wear on apron contact surfaces.

#### 4. Painted Inboard Bulwarks

Surface prep and coating to prevent corrosion and maintain integrity.

#### 5. Replacement of All Fire Pumps

Installed two hydraulic pumps and one electric pump, maintaining full redundancy to the firemain system.



*U.S. Coast Guard witnessing vacuum box testing of the welds on the steel inserts on the car deck*



*Repainted Ferry Bulwark*

## Work Performed by MER Equipment (Auxiliary Generator)

### **1. Serviced the Generator**

Full inspection and 3,000-hour service, including replacement of pumps, filters, and hoses as necessary to maintain operating condition.

### **2. Load Bank Testing**

Running the generator under controlled load to burn off carbon buildup in the exhaust stack.

## Work Items Completed by Skagit County Chief Engineer and Captains

### **1. Installation of New Electrical Cabling for Transmission Clutch Solenoids**

Replaced aging wiring and conductors to improve reliability of clutch engagement.

### **2. Cooling System Service**

Added new level sensors and drain valves to improve monitoring and simplify future maintenance.

### **3. Hydraulic System Service**

Changed hydraulic oil and addressed minor leaks. Routine leak checks are performed weekly, but this was a full-system service.

### **4. Vessel-Wide Electrical Inspection**

Verified integrity of electrical connections and relocated switches for improved accessibility and safety.

### **5. Pilot House Steering System Upgrades**

We planned to install new steering control levers and updated steering indicators in the pilot house, including rewiring steering control switches to improve reliability and reduce electrical noise. Unfortunately, the parts from our vendor in Norway are delayed. This work will be completed during the apron flaps replacement work.

### **6. Inspection of All Outdrive Brackets**

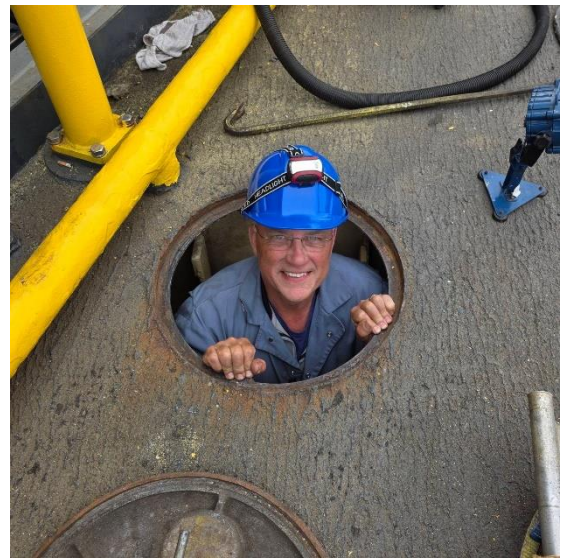
Checked for corrosion, cracking, and fastener integrity.

### **7. Underwater Propeller Inspection**

Used an underwater camera to assess condition without hauling the vessel.

### **8. Main Engine Top-End Inspection and Service**

Reset valve lash and injector timing, completing the 5,000-hour service interval for both main engines.



*Captain Van Bowling working below deck.*



*Ferry Main Engine*

## 9. Rebuild of the No. 2 Engine Fuel Manifold

Restored proper fuel distribution and eliminated any minor seepage.

## 10. Battery Replacement

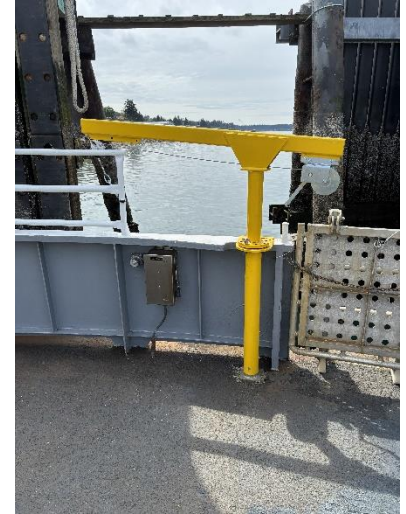
Installed new starting batteries in the machinery spaces and new battery banks in the fidley for pilot house navigation electronics.

## 11. Replacement of Flame Screens

Installed new flame arrestor screens on fuel, ballast, and void vent piping to maintain compliance and safety.

## 12. Man Overboard (MOB) Davit Service

Replaced the winch and other worn components and recoated the swing arm and stanchion to ensure reliable operation during emergency recovery.



*New Man Overboard Winch*

## Ferry Replacement Project

### Temporary Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Report

The TAG is obligated to provide a final report with recommendations on the replacement or refurbishment of the Guemes Island ferry to the Board of County Commissioners by August 31, 2026.

The group held its seventh meeting in May to vote on a recommendation to the County Commissioners. Meeting materials and summaries will be available on the [TAG website](#).

The TAG is now developing its final report for the Commissioners. A televised presentation to the County Commissioners on the TAG recommendations has been tentatively scheduled for July 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

### Value Engineering

Skagit County has selected AECOM to conduct an independent Value Engineering / Risk Assessment (VERA) study focused on the ferry's propulsion system and shoreside charging infrastructure. AECOM is performing the study following Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Value Engineering guidelines and methodology for conducting a Value Engineering / Risk Assessment (VERA) study. They are partnering with Elliott Bay Design Group to provide independent ferry expertise.

The VERA study will focus on opportunities to reduce project costs, evaluate alternative technologies and configurations, identify and develop response strategies to projects risks, and confirm whether the current design approach remains the most appropriate for advancing the Guemes Island Ferry Replacement Project.

As a reminder, the TAG is not involved in this process. The VERA study is ongoing and expected to be finished in the next few weeks. We will share more on the findings in our June newsletter. The total contract amount is \$230,893 and is funded by Move Ahead Washington (MAWA), which is sourced from

the Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at [www.climate.wa.gov](http://www.climate.wa.gov).

#### [Contact Information for Customer Support and Services](#)

Guemes Island Ferry Business Office  
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Website: [www.skagitcounty.net/ferry](http://www.skagitcounty.net/ferry)

The ferry business office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please note, our phone number has recently changed. If you call our business office outside business hours, or if there is no answer during business hours, please leave us a voicemail. We return voicemails by the next business day.

## **Feedback? We'd love to hear from you!**

*If you have thoughts, ideas, or feedback on our monthly newsletter,*

*Jenn Rogers, Communications and Engagement Manager, would love to hear from you!*

*You can e-mail her at [jrogers@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:jrogers@co.skagit.wa.us)*