

# PORT HISTORY 2012 TO 2021

In 2012 an effort was begun to revitalize the Fair Harbor Boat Ramp which was in serious disrepair after 50 years. Thanks to the recognition and financing by Washington State's Recreation and Conservation Office through a series of grants, work started in 2015 and was completed in 2021.

Phase I was the replacement of the ramp itself and installing a never before boarding float. Completed in 2018. **Grant Value: \$814,468.00**

Phase II was the acquisition of property to construct a turn-around area for a vehicle and boat trailer. Completed in 2019. **Grant Value: \$418,961.00**

Phase III is the development of the turn-around, beach restoration and permanent ADA compliant restroom. Completed in 2021. **Grant Value: \$840,000.00**

Our lobbying group, the **Washington Public Ports Association**, asked Port's to submit their application for their 2020 Creative Partnership award. The Port of Grapeview submitted the following:

## **The Little Port That Could**

There is no question that of the 75 ports in Washington State, the Port of Grapeview is the smallest in terms of income. Their total annual revenue is around 26,000 dollars a year. Revenue comes from property taxes and the Port of Grapeview's levy is three cents thousand dollars of assessed valuation of a property parcel. By contrast, the Port of Allyn is 18 cents and the Port of Dewatto almost 21 cents. For a 100,000 dollar assessed value, a Port of Grapeview property owner will pay the Port a little more than three dollars. Not even a latte.

A port's function is detailed in the Revised Code of Washington Title 53 to "develop industry and promote trade...for the economic benefit to the state of Washington." This is readily evident to anyone that uses SEATAC or visits the Port of Seattle and Port of Tacoma. But what about those small ports?

In 1959 it was decided to build a small boat launch ramp at Fair Harbor at the end of Griswold Avenue adjacent to the privately owned marina. In June of 1960, the contract for construction was awarded. In 1968, a second ramp was constructed in lieu of a dock and float that had been proposed in 1966.

The Port's main attraction is its boat launch. Built in the 1960's, by the beginning of this century it was crumbling quickly and rapidly becoming dangerous. In addition, there was no boarding float. Boaters had to wade into the water to get in and out of a boat. That is a real disadvantage to the elderly and disabled.

The Port Commissioners decided to tackle replacement. But how? 26,000 dollars a year wasn't going to get through the environmental process, never mind pouring concrete. In 2012 Glenn Carlson was elected commissioner and he tackled the issue from a retired businessman's perspective. He assembled a few volunteers who devoted time to preparing a grant application to

Washington State's Recreation and Conservation Office, a state agency that manages grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat and farmland, and help return salmon from near extinction.

"With no staff and a handful of dedicated volunteers, it was a labor of love in the making, said Carlson." In 2014 they made their presentation to the RCO's Boating Facilities Fund, which does what its namesake says - funds new and rehabilitation projects with funds coming from marine gas taxes.

The next hurdle was the RCO funds only 75% of a project's cost. The other 25% must come from elsewhere. The port had a small savings account but that was nowhere near the 25% needed. They approached the Taylor Shellfish Company who donated \$70,000 cash to the project. Carlson interjected, "we were flabbergasted when, in response to some help, Bill Taylor committed to this large sum. To part with 70,000 dollars from any business is a significant contribution."

Architect, Roger Hansen, a Grapeview resident stepped up with another 70,000 dollars of architectural and engineering time and permit applications were submitted.

In 2016 the port was notified by the RCO that they had been successful in their grant application. Preliminary work began, first by architect Hansen, who began the environmental and permit processing. Hansen said, "From the permitting process angle we had to deal with the Mason County Shoreline regulations, Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries and Cultural Resources. Each had a set of requirements that had to be attended to. By January of 2018 we had the permits in place and began construction."

First was the removal of the old ramp, then the installation of the new ramp and finally the boarding float. Commissioner Anderson stated that "the ramp and float is very popular with the boating crowd because boaters can launch in a minus tide."

As this was progressing, it was evident that the port needed permanent restrooms. Replacing the portable unit was in the works for the first grant but the port underestimated the cost of permitting and construction and the restrooms were put on hold.

The owners of land adjacent to the launch had moved and the port applied for a property acquisition grant which was awarded in 2018. Purchase was completed in July of 2019 and yet another grant was awarded by the RCO in 2020 to build the restroom, additional parking and mitigate Corps of Engineer environmental concerns.

Commissioner Farmer said, "I am a new commissioner and I have been astonished by the work accomplished by the volunteers. Not one cent of grant money went to staff. And the RCO has been most generous to us."

Carlson amplified on the RCO, "we are very grateful for their kindness in seeing the need for a low tide launch in north Case Inlet. The RCO has been very considerate towards our projects on

behalf of Washington's boaters. The RCO has approved grants us over two million dollars for this recreational project over three grants and we thank them for their generosity."

Not too bad for a group with a 26,000 dollar annual budget.

**To our surprise, we won first place.**

**The link to the video below was produced by the WPPA to celebrate the Port's award.**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeymiYXbUWs>**