

# How to Plan for the Ferry Haul-out

The *M/V Guemes* goes out of service on March 14, 2025 at 9:00 p.m. until April 29 for engine replacement, maintenance, and inspections required by the U.S. Coast Guard. While longtime islanders are familiar with haul-out preparations and procedures, newer residents may be wondering what will change, and those of us with aging brains might benefit from some reminders. Here's what you might need to know.

## When Is It?

The last ferry run before the haul-out will be at 8:30 p.m. on Friday March 14. The haul-out is scheduled for March 15, 9:00 p.m. through April 29. While the beginning date is certain, the end date can vary, depending on what maintenance and/or repair may be needed. Sometimes extra time is needed.

The walk-on ferry will operate on the non-peak schedule, charging non-peak fares. Note that during this haul-out, Skagit County is also implementing its new electronic ticketing system. For information about the haul-out, see [https://skagitcounty.net/PublicWorksFerry/Documents/02042025\\_update/FerryDryDock-March15throughApril29.pdf](https://skagitcounty.net/PublicWorksFerry/Documents/02042025_update/FerryDryDock-March15throughApril29.pdf).

For information on the new ticketing system, see <https://skagitcounty.net/Departments/publicworksferry/ticketing2024.htm#FAQ>

To receive email alerts and updates about the ferry, sign up at <https://skagitcounty.net/Departments/Home/emailListmain.htm>.

## Passenger-Only Service

Arrow Launch will provide passenger-only service on the *Strait Arrow*, a 65-foot support vessel that can accommodate 49 passengers. In addition to an open deck, there is a cabin that can seat six rows of passengers and 40-plus people. The steps to the cabin are narrow and steep, and seating is not easily accessible for people with mobility difficulties.

In good weather, riding on the open deck can be a pleasant experience and provide time to chat with your friends and neighbors, whom you may not have seen for a while. In inclement weather, the ride can require caution when walking and carrying loads up and down the ramps and aprons. The ferry crew can be counted on to be watchful and offer assistance.

Bicycles and small motorcycles are allowed, at the discretion of the captain, along with well-behaved, leashed dogs.

## **On-Island Shuttle Service**

Skagit Transit will provide a passenger van that will operate Monday through Friday from 7 to 11:45 a.m. and from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m, and from 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. and from 12:30 to 5:15 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Shuttle service will begin the day before the outage and end the day after to allow islanders to get their vehicles moved. This is a by-request service to and from the ferry only, not from point to point on the island. Call at least one hour before the time you need to be picked up on the road nearest your house. Call (360) 757- 4433, press #2, and ask for Guemes Dispatch. Residents needing service for the first ferry run may call the night before, prior to 7:00 p.m. M-F and prior to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The suggested fare is \$1 or fifty cents for seniors, youth, and those with disabilities.

## **Barge Services**

Many islanders manage to park a vehicle in Anacortes and use other transportation on the island. If you have an unexpected need, San Juan Marine Freight & Services, now owned and operated by Corey Joyce, can provide barge service for up to seven cars on the *M/V San Juan Enterprise*. There is a \$300 minimum charge for service (which can be split among multiple vehicles) and scheduling is as available. The preferred way to arrange service is to send a text to (360) 202-8611, or you can call (360) 293-7575 if you can't text.

Additional barge services include Pintail Marine (360) 317-8532; San Juan Ferry and Barge (360-317-8486); and Humpback Hauling (360) 317-7433 (Friday Harbor).

## **Other Services**

Waste Management makes arrangements to provide garbage and recycling services during the haul-out.

The Store is trying to get its gas pump fixed and will try to have supplies for small tanks.

Vanderyacht Propane and Farmer's Supply are serving as many customers on the island as possible before the shutdown and will collaborate on barge runs as needed. Service may be slightly delayed but they assure that "you'll be taken care of." If you are an Amerigas customer, you may need to contact them directly – we were unable to get any information regarding plans for the haul-out.

The *Skagit Herald* is delivered by the USPS, and deliveries will continue as usual. We have not been able to confirm how the *Anacortes American* will be delivered.

The U.S. Postal Service will continue to deliver mail and packages that can be carried onto the *Strait Arrow* but please don't order anything unnecessarily! Aeronautical Services, which delivers on the island for UPS, will have a delivery vehicle parked on Guemes Island and walking onto the ferry with a large cart to bring over all of the reasonably sized UPS packages for delivery. If packages are too large for transport over to Guemes in the cart, they will be left at UPS Burlington for customer pick up, or held until the ferry boat is fully operational then delivered. We weren't able to get a response about deliveries by FedEx Express or FedEx Ground.

The Guemes Island Fire Department (GIFD) and Anacortes paramedics are prepared for emergencies. Call 911, as usual, for medical emergencies. If necessary, a patient will be delivered to the passenger ferry in the island ambulance, transported onboard on a gurney accompanied by GIFD personnel and Anacortes paramedics, and met by an Anacortes ambulance on the other side. Patients can also be airlifted from the island. After-hours medical calls will be handled in the usual way, requiring a special ferry run or an airlift flight. All participants in such emergencies do everything possible to protect the patient's privacy.

For information about NW Hospice and hospice care during the haul-out, contact Juby Fouts at (360) 293-2704.

## Plan Ahead

The best way to prepare for the outage is to *plan ahead*.

- Be thinking about your transportation options. Many islanders park one car on the Anacortes side and keep another on the island, or use the shuttle. Others share a vehicle in Anacortes with friends and neighbors. (Remember that parking limits are 72 hours in the ferry parking lots and on Anacortes streets, unless otherwise marked.) Others discover their bicycles, and some choose to travel elsewhere during the haul-out. This is a time when neighbors help neighbors.

- If you plan to park a car in Anacortes, do not wait until the last day before the haul-out to move it there. The last run will be at 8:30 p.m. on March 14. The lines get very long in the last days before the car ferry goes out, as people gather last-minute supplies and park cars.

- Stock up on bulky and heavy items. Don't forget pet, livestock, and garden supplies. If you plan on buying furniture, tires, heavy machinery, appliances, etc., make sure they will be delivered well before March 14.

- Check that you have all your medical supplies stockpiled or planned for, especially oxygen. Schedule your medical appointments and procedures around the haul-out, if possible. If you have concerns about your treatment/appointments, talk to your healthcare team.

- Replenish your fuel supplies ahead of time. Remember that it is illegal to transport gasoline in passenger vehicles or on the passenger ferry. Two five-gallon containers of gasoline can be transported in your truck bed.

- Keep in mind that all supplies that are transported on the passenger ferry must be carried by hand in wheelbarrows or your own carts. This includes all packages coming through delivery services. During the haul-out is not the time to order a mattress to come via FedEx Ground.

- If a bevy of wheelbarrows starts collecting on the Guemes side, grab one to return on your way across the channel.

- Give yourself extra time to find parking and to catch the ferry you need. Restricted capacity may cause overloads.

- Keep your sense of humor. Islanders often find they enjoy the sense of community and camaraderie that comes from the pedestrian travel and the sense of adventure. Besides, you'll be earning island cred by surviving a haul-out: *real* island living. At least it's not 2011 (a 55-day outage)!