

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Aaron Barnett, 206-616-8929
or aaronb5@uw.edu

Eric Scigliano, 206-616-9568 or escig@uw.edu

A big boost for boaters and clean water in Gig and Quartermaster harbors

Washington State Parks' Clean Vessel Act Program brings free, convenient sewage pumpouts to environmentally sensitive boating meccas in Central Puget Sound.

Boaters docking at Vashon Island's Quartermaster Marina or Gig Harbor's new Maritime Pier this season will find a welcome new amenity: a state-of-the-art automated pumpout station, making it easy for them to empty their onboard waste tanks cleanly and safely rather than breaking the law and endangering both shellfish and human health by

dumping overboard.

“Before, boats had no choice but dumping the sewage in Puget Sound and Quartermaster Harbor,” says Steven Choe, who owns the busy Vashon marina. The new \$53,000 rig, installed in February, is the only working pumpout system on Vashon Island. “A lot of people are really excited about having this” adds Choe. “We have a lot traffic from Tacoma and Seattle.”

Lita Dawn Stanton, the City of Gig Harbor’s special projects manager, says its new \$68,000 pumpout system, plus another it plans to install at the Jerisich Float moorage downtown, are important to the city’s maritime goals. “We’re a boat-friendly city and harbor, definitely environment-minded. But without the grant [from the Washington State Parks Clean Vessel Act Program]. I don’t know that the city would have had the wherewithal to install two pumpout systems.”

Quartermaster Harbor, a shallow, constricted bay, has suffered dramatic algal blooms and severe oxygen depletion, as recounted in a new [King County study](#). Making sure boat waste is “pumped not dumped” keeps one source of oxygen-depleting nutrients, as well as Norovirus and other pathogens, out of the water.

Gig Harbor obtained federal Clean Vessel Act (CVA) funding, derived from taxes on recreational fishing gear and marine fuel, from the Washington State Parks CVA Program. This program, in [partnership](#) with Washington Sea Grant, helps marina owners install and operate the pumpout stations, educates owners and boaters about the importance of proper sewage disposal, and distributes free adapter kits that make pumping easier and cleaner.

The Washington Parks CVA Program also helped Quartermaster Marina obtain its pumpout system, but with funds from a different source: a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reduce pathogens threatening shellfish and humans in Washington waters. The Washington Department of Health, which is administering the grant, provided the Parks CVA Program \$248,000 to build and expand pumpout facilities at local moorages.

In addition to the new Quartermaster Marina and Gig Harbor facilities, these funds will provide new or replacement pumpout systems at the ports of Kingston, Everett and Port Angeles, portable pumpout units at Friday Harbor and Orcas Island's Rosario Resort, and a pumpout boat to provide mobile service out of Semiahmoo. "A lot of those

areas, like mooring fields, are very transient,” says Department of Health environmental engineer Mark Toy. “So mobile servicing is important.”

Washington State Parks and contractor Terry and Sons Mobile Pumpout already provide free mobile service on Lake Washington and Portage Bay.

Gig Harbor’s new system isn’t mobile, but “it’s very convenient,” says Lita Dawn Stanton. “You can have a beer at the Tides Tavern, then go next door to the bathrooms above the pumpout.”