



**To:** David Louter, National Park Service; Melanie Bacon, Island County; Molly Hughes, Town of Coupeville; Jon Crimmins, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
**CC:** Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve; Anne Matsov, NPS  
**From:** Helen Price Johnson, Interim Reserve Manager  
**Date:** October 15, 2021  
**Subject:** Annual Narrative Report: October 2020 – September 2021

## **Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve FY2021 Annual Narrative Report**

In accordance with the Trust Board's Rules of Procedure and the terms of NPS Cooperative Agreement #P21AM00001 (CFDA 15.956), this report summarizes Trust Board activities and accomplishments of the prior year.

The categorical headings organizing this report align with Trust Board responsibilities in the Cooperative Agreement and Annual Task Agreement: Administration, Human Resources, Land Protection, Partnerships/Planning, Maintenance, Interpretation/Education/Outreach.

This report documents significant progress in meeting key Trust Board responsibilities. Highlights in FY2021 include: creating a Trust Board Interpretation Plan with action table; expanding access to the Jacob and Sarah Ebey House through increased volunteer recruitment; continued success with administration of grant funded preservation projects, support for Town and County Historic Preservation efforts, including ordinance review, updating the Trust Board website with local content.

The hurdles this year included continuing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, significant personal medical challenges, turnover in key staff positions, delays in funding. These resulted in some objectives carrying forward to the coming fiscal year for completion.

### **Administration and Operations:**

The administration of the Trust Board in 2021 was successful in achieving most work plan objectives. Thankfully during FY2021 NPS base funding and VIP funding held steady (though delayed due to DOI review), as did support from the Town of Coupeville and Island County. The Trust Board did adjust funding targets from Friends of Ebey's in response to their constraints in fundraising during the pandemic.

**Staffing:** The Trust Board staff worked closely as a team to meet work plan objectives in FY2021. In addition to the full-time positions of Reserve Manager, Preservation Coordinator, and Office Manager, the part time Outreach and Education Coordinator was supported with a seasonal summer intern.

One dynamic in FY2021 administration/operations was staff turnover in key positions. Through the winter months, the Reserve Manager and the Historic Preservation Coordinator maintained responsibilities while juggling medical care for serious illnesses. NPS Easement Monitoring was

completed in November of 2020. At the end of March 2021, the Preservation Coordinator left the Trust Board staff. During the hiring process for this position, the Reserve Manager picked up those responsibilities. This included her attendance at local Design Review and Committee twice monthly meetings in support of Town and County staff and advising multiple preservation grant recipients. The Reserve Manager ably provided the necessary bridge for these tasks, though this did constrain her time for other administrative duties. The Preservation Coordinator position was then filled at the end of May with a talented and enthusiastic new hire, Claudia Kiyama. She has stepped into this role well, quickly building professional relationships with Town and County staff, citizen volunteers on the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Trust Board Land Use Committee.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, Kristen Griffin retired after serving as Reserve Manager for over seven years. Helen Price Johnson, former Island County Commissioner was then hired as Interim Reserve Manager through October 15, 2021. During this time period a FY2022 budget and work plan were adopted by the Trust Board and submitted to NPS. The Friends of Ebey's request was successfully presented. A revised Town and County Historic Preservation Interlocal Agreement was proposed to the jurisdictions, as well as comments for improving the ordinances governing local design review. Also, the posting and interviewing for a new Reserve Manager was facilitated. An extension for the Cooperative Agreement was completed with NPS during this period. Public presentations were made to the Town of Coupeville, and the Board of County Commissioners by the interim Reserve Manager.

After a year of vacancy, we enthusiastically welcomed Anne Matsov as the temporary Acting Superintendent of NPS Operations in the Reserve, the position previously held by Roy Zipp. There is great anticipation for collaboration with her in updating the 2015 Cooperative Agreement which has had its five-year timeline twice extended, and now is slated to expire at the end of FY2022.

**Trust Board Composition:** FY2021 had the following representation on the Trust Board:

Position 1	Sally Garratt	Town of Coupeville
Position 2	Lisa Bernhardt	Town of Coupeville
Position 3	Andrew Ziehl	Town of Coupeville
Position 4	Erin Borden	Island County
Position 5	Clark Bishop	Island County
Position 6	Al Sherman/Alan Hancock	Island County
Position 7	Unfilled	Island County, At-Large
Position 8	Chris Holm	Washington State Parks
Position 9	David Louter	National Park Service

Board composition changed with Al Sherman's retirement from the board on December 31, 2020. Island County Position #6 was filled in January 2021 by Alan Hancock. The Island County At-Large Position #7 remains unfilled at this time, and recruitment is underway.

The 2021 slate of officers was elected in February 2021: Lisa Bernhardt (Town), Chair; Sally Garratt (Town), Vice Chair; Erin Borden (Island County), Treasurer; and Andrew Ziehl (Town), Secretary.



**Sally Garratt, Town #1  
Vice Chair**



**Lisa Bernhardt, Town #2  
Chair**



**Andrew Ziehl, Town #3  
Secretary**



**Erin Borden, Island County #4  
Treasurer**



**Clark Bishop, Island County #5**



**Alan Hancock, Island County  
#6**



**Chris Holm, Washington State  
Parks & Recreation, #8**



**David Louter, National Park  
Service, #9**

**Trust Board Meetings:** The Trust Board maintained a schedule of regular public meetings with one business meeting and one workshop monthly. Due to continued COVID-19 restrictions, these meetings were held via Zoom Video Conference Services. The exception to this was in December (no workshop due to holiday schedules). In addition, in late May a special meeting was held to strengthen the Trust Board's relationships and communications with regional Tribal representatives (see Interpretation, Outreach and Education section). Also a few special meetings were scheduled in late summer and early fall to conduct interviews of candidates during the search for a new Reserve Manager. All meetings were held with appropriate public notice and in accordance with the Washington State Open Public Meeting Act.

**Trust Board Committees:** The Trust Board committees met virtually as needed during the year. The Executive Committee (Lisa Bernhardt, Chair) focused their efforts on the hiring process to fill the Reserve Manager position. Education/Outreach Committee worked to finalize the Interpretation Plan. The Finance Committee (Erin Borden, Chair) recommended increased funding for the FY2022, to sustain operations and provide a modest COLA for staff. The Land Use Committee (Sally Garratt, Chair) took the lead on recommending updates for the Town and County Historic Preservation ordinances. Now that Anne is here to fill the NPS position, the Trails Committee (Erin Borden, Chair), will reconvene in Fall 2021 with her and State Parks to address critical trail maintenance concerns, and move forward with the Walking Ebey's plan.

**2022 Work Plan:** The Interim Reserve Manager prepared a draft work plan which was presented to the Board in July 2021. The Executive Director of the Friends of Ebey's (Julie Dougherty Winger) attended the workshop. The draft was discussed and modified at two workshops. A final version was approved at a Trust Board meeting and forwarded to NPS in August 2021.

**Cooperative Agreement:** Another one-year extension for the 2015 Cooperative Agreement with NPS was authorized in September 2021. This provides the Trust Board and the Acting Superintendent of NPS Operations to complete work on updating this agreement during FY2022. All are committed to completing this task in a timely manner with a spirit of positive collaboration.

**Operations Budget:** The FY2021 operations budget was based on \$285,150 in operating income (does not include special project funding or in-kind contributions). This operations budget was approved by the Trust Board and forwarded to NPS in August 2020. Base funding from NPS decreased to \$180,000, plus \$6,000 for Volunteer programming.

During FY2021, NPS base funding was used to support personnel costs for administration and operations. VIP funds paid for a part time seasonal employee to coordinate Jacob & Sarah Ebey House docents, and miscellaneous volunteer program expenses (such as uniforms, training, volunteer name tags, recognitions, etc.).

The Town of Coupeville provided \$12,000 in support for Design Review, and \$3,000 in general funds. Island County provided \$10,000 in support of Design Review and \$5,500 in visitor support.

The Interlocal agreement intends that each partner will make in-kind contributions to the operations of the Reserve but those contributions are not included in calculations of operations costs. In 2021 the Town of Coupeville and Island County both provided year-long staff support

for the design review and permitting process (a program responsibility under the Cooperative Agreement) as an in-kind contribution to the Reserve. Island County also provided significant in-kind financial administration support through their Auditor and Treasurer's office for voucher processing, and through staff in the Budget office as lead agent for GrantSolutions. Tracked volunteer hours in the Reserve are another substantial form of in-kind contribution to the Reserve.

The Friends of Ebey's maintained their contribution of \$35,000 for general capacity, and due to the pandemic, reduced sponsorships for programming and outreach from \$6,000 to \$3,000. The Nature Conservancy grant funding remained steady at \$5,000.

The State audits and financial reports were completed in a timely manner with positive results in FY2021, as noted in the Work Plan. The need and scope of work for an Economic Impact Analysis was determined to be best postponed and reevaluated as a priority by the incoming Reserve Manager.

**Restricted Fund budget** was also passed by the board in 2020, showing \$104,695 in income for FY2021 expenditures. The budget was larger this year due to carryover of \$48,695 from projects from the previous year, and \$4,000 from 2019. The 2021 grant cycle accounted for \$50,000 in new funds, plus \$2,000 for grant administrative expenses. This fund is used entirely for Ebey's Forever historic property rehabilitation grants (a program responsibility under the Cooperative Agreement). This program is 100% non-federal funding, consisting of donations raised by the Friends of Ebey's.

The Trust Board made progress in restoring its contingency/reserve fund in 2021, but did draw on the fund by \$6,000 for the mandated State Audit. It will take two or three more years before this fund is sufficient to cover even two months of expenses at current operations levels (\$30-40,000 would be needed).

**Sustainability:** Trust Board staff continued an office recycling program to reduce trash by regularly transporting recyclables to the recycle center. We replaced eight of the torn and worn fabric covered conference room chairs with repurposed, gently used donated plastic chairs which are more versatile, easily cleaned and stackable.

**NPS Reporting:** In addition to this annual report, Trust Board staff submitted all requested reports, including a mid-year progress report the 2021 SIR, the 2021 VIP report, and the Harpers Ferry requested inventory reporting on Unigrd brochures.

### **Human Resources:**

**Summary: Under the Cooperative Agreement, the Trust Board will (subject to available funds), hire professional staff to coordinate the Reserve and Trust Board activities; implement the VIP program for the Reserve and manage VIP funds; and provide training.**

**Staffing:** The work of the Trust Board was accomplished with a full time Reserve Manager through June 2021 (Kristen Griffin), then a part time Interim Reserve Manager through mid-October 2021 (Helen Price Johnson), a full time Office Manager (Carol Castellano), and a full time Preservation Coordinator (Jason Benson/Claudia Kiyama). The Education Outreach



Coordinator position was filled at part-time capacity (Jordan Belcher). A part-time seasonal intern (Megan Keating) provided additional outreach to the community, assisted with volunteer docents and provided visitor services at the Jacob and Sarah Ebey House visitor contact station.

**Staff Development:** All staff completed mandatory NPS FISSA training, All Staff attended Maritime Washington National Heritage Area information trainings. Office Manager took several NPS webinars on website federal accessibility and NPS funding processes in GrantSolutions.

**Volunteers in Parks:** The Trust Board maintained an active and successful VIP program in FY2021 with 129 volunteers contributing 9,341 hours of service to the Reserve. These hours represent visitor services (seasonal docents), planning and administration (including Trust Board members, Friends board members, committees, partners), historic preservation projects and various trail and maintenance projects.

As noted, 17 docents (including new volunteers) staffed the Ebey House Visitor Contact Station for three days per week during the summer season (Memorial Day to Labor Day), and several contributed additional hours assisting with other projects. All expenditures are appropriately documented in relevant reports.

### **Partnerships and Community Planning:**

**Summary: Under the Cooperative Agreement, the Trust Board develops partnerships; engages on local land use issues (including Design Review); and advocates for the Reserve and its resources.**

**Partner Coordination:** Regular meetings of the Reserve Manager and the four partners of the Interlocal Agreement were held throughout 2021 and provided an important forum for issues and policy guidance pertaining to mutual interests in the Reserve. With a newly elected Island County Commissioner in District 1, these conversations were especially important in building understanding about the mission of the Trust Board and context for local preservation efforts. The Partners play a critical role as ambassadors for the Reserve, making budget decisions for their agencies which impact adequate funding for Trust Board operations.



*A growing threat from overnight campers along Hill Road at Ebey's Landing had the community very concerned. This local upswell compelled the Trust Board to step into action and direct staff to contact the Island County Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners agreed to address this problem and posted No Parking signs in this area, as a way to protect the beach habitat and prevent erosion of the public right of way. This provides another successful example of the Trust Board working in partnership to steward the Reserve.*

**Friends of Ebey's Partnership:** Despite pandemic restrictions which impacted fundraising activities in FY2021, the Friends of Ebey's continued to provide substantial financial support for operations and programs in the Reserve totaling \$35,000, as well as \$50,000 in special project funds for the Ebey's Forever Grant program. In person gatherings and celebrations were all postponed for another year in light of public health guidance.

**Maritime Washington National Heritage Area:** Fostering partnerships is what defines Ebey's Reserve so it was a natural fit for the Trust Board to become an anchor partner in the launch of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area. This new program within the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation celebrates and shares the stories of our saltwater shorelines and supports coastal communities. The Trust Board anticipates many future opportunities to expand our partnerships within the NHA

### **Land Protection:**

**Summary: Under the Cooperative Agreement, this category includes easement monitoring; developing easement language; and establishing and updating land protection priorities.**

**Easement Monitoring:** New staff in the Historic Preservation position brought a fresh perspective to easement monitoring this year. The annual review of NPS easements opens the door for communication about the importance of private stewardship of the Reserve's cultural landscape, and discussion about potential impacts in the future. The Trust Board Land Use committee reviewed the 2018 SEAP and will present it to the full Trust Board in October 2021 to acquaint new members to this important document.

**Ebey's Reserve Historic Preservation Commission:** During FY2021 the Trust Board continued to offer support and technical assistance to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Preservation Coordinator or the Reserve Manager attended HPC meetings and offered advice and assistance to Town and County staff.

There is agreement that there is need for action to improve outcomes and be more efficient and effective in this effort. To that end, a revised Historic Preservation Interlocal Agreement is being considered by the legislative authorities. In conjunction, Town and County Design Review Ordinances were reviewed by the HPC and amendments offered for consideration. Also, significant updates were proposed by Trust Board's Land Use Committee, building upon the previous work at the staff level last year. The Land Use Committee is embracing their support role with Town and County staff throughout this process.

The on-line format for HPC meetings, and staff turnover at the County Planning office restricted Trust Board staff's ability to provide the anticipated training to the HPC. This is a high priority for FY2022. Additional funding is being allocated by the Town and County to support training in the upcoming budget.

**Ebey's Preservation Grant:** In June of 2019, the Washington State Legislature allocated \$1,000,000 for 2020-21 biennial budget for historic preservation efforts in the Reserve. This program has been used as intended to benefit public and private properties of high visibility. These grants are a partnership between the Trust Board and the Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). Grant administration is handled by Trust Board

staff. Of the twelve projects which initially received funding, four were completed in FY2020. The Coupeville United Methodist Church completed its project in FY2021, as did the Captain Whidbey Inn, Fort Casey State Park, Zylstra House, Coupeville Cash Store and Pat's Place. The Coupeville Wharf project is awaiting permitting before it can proceed, and the Haller House project is still in progress. The grant recipients have until June 2023 to complete their projects.

**Ebey's Forever Grant Program:** FY2021 was the tenth year for the Ebey's Forever grant program. A full decade of these preservation projects has had such a positive impact on our local historic properties and the community as a whole.



*Coupeville Methodist Church - Ebey's Forever Grant for painting.*



*E.O. Lovejoy House Ebey's Forever Grant for new roof on single story historic portion of house.*

This year nine applications were submitted, and ultimately, five landowners moved forward with their projects, which included:

1. Coupeville Methodist Church - clean, prepare and paint historic siding.
2. EO Lovejoy House – remove and replace composition roof on one-story historic structure.
3. Fort Casey Power House – repair roof, repair/reconstruct historic wood windows.
4. Gillespie Meat Market – remove non-historic cedar shakes from front façade and rehabilitate historic shiplap siding.
5. McWilliams Barn – remove encroaching vegetation and soils from the building exterior, repair and replace in-kind foundation and other structural elements.



This cycle allocated \$55,100 in grant funds to local projects. To date, over \$1.5 million dollars of economic impact has come from this annual rehabilitation grant program which promotes preservation in the Reserve by encouraging rehabilitation work which meets the Secretary's Standards. The Ebey's Forever grants include a diversity of preservation projects and build in long-term sustainability of preservation objectives (maintenance agreements). It also encourages voluntary listing of historic properties.

## **Maintenance:**

**Summary: Under the Cooperative Agreement, the Trust Board provides custodial maintenance and utility costs for the Trust Board office (the NPS Cottage), and reports problems or issues to NPS.**

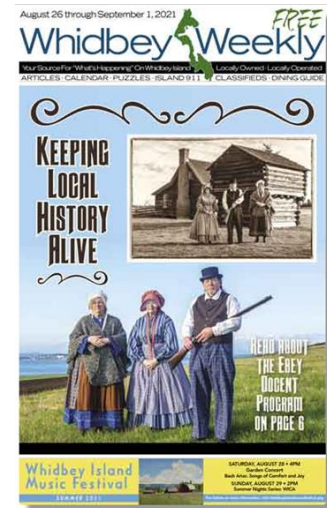


Regular custodial services are provided by Trust Board staff and contracted services for the Cottage, the Sheep Barn, and the Jacob and Sarah Ebey House. Utility costs are supported through the Trust Board budget. A new roof was installed on the Sunnyside Cottage by NPS staff. All issues requiring attention by NPS were reported in a timely manner.

## **Interpretation, Outreach and Education:**

**Summary: Under the Cooperative Agreement, the Trust Board develops and implements the Reserve's Interpretation/Education and Outreach program, including operating the Jacob Ebey House, and planning and producing media and communications (brochures, kiosks, website, social media).**

**Ebey House Visitor Contact Station:** In 2021, Trust Board staff and volunteers opened the Jacob Ebey House for visitors Friday through Sunday, from Memorial Day to Labor Day. A total of 3,378 visitors signed into the house, and were assisted by a crew of 17 docents. These numbers represent a very successful ramping back up from the shutdown last year, due to the pandemic. Visitors came from over 30 states and countries. This program was featured on the front page of the August 26, 2021 issue of the Whidbey Weekly. Docents gathered at the Blue Fox Drive-in for a late September outdoor Volunteer Appreciation event hosted by Trust Board staff.



There were nearly 200 Junior Rangers sworn in this year.

**The National Park Foundation’s Open Outdoor for Kids Grant:**

In 2021 the Trust Board applied for, and was awarded, a \$7,500 grant from the National Park Foundation to eliminate barriers and encourage low-income schools to bring fourth-grade students to the Reserve for field trips in 2022. As planned, the Trust Board will develop a cooperative agreement



with the Island County Historical Society to schedule and provide field trips for hundreds of students, with administrative support by Trust Board staff.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** There is a growing recognition of the important diversity across the Reserve’s history. This provides the opportunity for the Trust Board to elevate non-white voices and stories in this region. Significantly in May 2021, a recognition of the sovereignty of First Nations and at invitation from the Trust Board, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers of the Swinomish Tribe, Jamestown S’Klallam and Tulalip Tribes gathered in a special online public meeting with the Trust Board. This event was facilitated by Dr. Allyson Brooks, the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, and has set a strong foundation for future conversations and collaborations.

A new interpretative panel was installed at Monroe Landing entitled “On the Beaches” which focuses on the nine tribal settlements which existed in the Penn Cove area. There are updates underway for several other panels as well. This theme is a focus for the FY2022 Work Plan.



**Outreach Programs (provided by Trust Board staff or volunteers):**

Trust Board staff provided several tours and programs on the Reserve in FY2021. These included participation in Strawberry Daze, VIP training in the Sunnyside Cemetery (in partnership with Island County Historical Museum), historic preservation support with Town and County planning staff. The popular Porch Stories program (done in partnership with Island County Historical Museum) was postponed until 2022 due to COVID-19 health concerns. Staff organized a special visit to the Ferry House with the Coupeville United Methodist Church congregation, which had its gathering in 1853. It was noted that

Rebecca Ebey, wife of Isaac Ebey, was a founding member.

Trust Board staff coordinated with partner agencies to bring three crews to work across the Reserve through the Northwest Youth Corps program. Boardwalk building as part of the Walking Ebey’s project, trail maintenance work and noxious weed control at Fort Ebey. Pacific Rim Institute hosted a crew to harvest bulbs, collect wild seeds, build raised garden beds and remove chicken wire fencing.



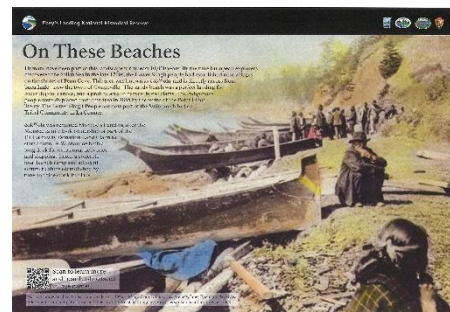


On the bluff trail cedar steps and wooden ties were installed on the section of the Bluff Trail owned by The Nature Conservancy. Removal of wood debris was the project along the Whidbey Camano Land Trust’s Admiralty Head trail to reduce fire danger.

**Interpretation/Communication Plan:** Though the twelve-year-old 2009 Long Range Interpretative Plan continues to provide a basic framework for the Trust Board outreach efforts, an updated document was needed for the Trust Board to provide timely, relevant and clear communications. For this reason, an Interpretation and Communication Plan was developed during FY2021, in alignment with the FY2021 Work Plan. Robert Steelquist was hired to facilitate the crafting of this document. The Trust Board recognizes that once adopted, it will bring clarity of messaging, broader understanding of the Trust Board’s mission and responsibilities, reflect current priorities (such as diversity and inclusion), and thus strengthen communication and the identity of the Reserve.

**Publications:** A new Ebey’s Reserve Report Newsletter was established and has been met with overwhelming enthusiasm. Two of the most popular Reserve publications were updated and reprinted in FY 2021: the Self-Guided Walking Tour of Historic Coupeville map and the Visitor’s Guide. Funding was provided through an Island County Tourism Grant of \$5,500.

**Interpretative Panels:** There were four interpretative panels installed during FY2021, and two more in the production. Three new “You Are Here” wayfinding panels were completed and are located at the Coupeville Washington State Ferry Terminal, the NPS Prairie Wayside facility, and in the Sunnyside Cottage Visitor Center. As mentioned above, there was also a new interpretative panel installed at Monroe Landing which provides a QR code link to hear pronunciation of Lower Skagit village names in the native Lushootseed language. One panel, “Things to Do” requires resizing before it can be installed, while “Traveling the Salish Sea” is in process toward fabrication.



**Visitor Services:** The Prairie Overlook trailhead and Sunnyside Cottage area saw expanded use again this year. Trust Board staff collecting data through daily surveys showing more than 16,000 visitors to the trail head at Sunnyside Cottage



*The recently renovated Pratt Sheep Barn provided a wonderful venue for the annual Junior Ranger Day in conjunction with National Park Week.*