

**Call for Interest—  
The Center for Wooden Boats Interpretive Plan**



*An appeal to scholars.*

The Center for Wooden Boats (CWB) is seeking the input of the academic community in the formation of a new interpretive vision for its programs.

CWB seeks to understand the ways maritime heritage in the Northwest is relevant to the larger community and to explore new ways to communicate this relevance. As part of a new strategic plan under development, CWB seeks to enhance the interpretive content of its programs, events, and accumulated cultural resources.

The Center for Wooden Boats plays an instrumental role in the maritime heritage community of western Washington State. For nearly four decades CWB visitors and program participants have built, repaired, sailed, rowed and paddled historic watercraft on South Lake Union and more recently at CWB's satellite at Cama Beach State Park on Camano Island. As a community- and volunteer-centered organization, many of these programs and activities have grown organically. The overarching goal of its recently adopted strategic plan aims to provide greater structure to these homegrown programs and activities by elaborating the story of our maritime heritage in a deliberate, intentional ways.

CWB has identified primary interpretive themes (see below) from which it proposes to build an Interpretive Plan that will guide the expansion and development of interpretive activities and content. As CWB develops its Interpretive Plan, CWB staff has prioritized seeking counsel, advice, and impressions from varied sources, including staff, volunteers, visitors, professional organizations and scholars.

If you have research or teaching interests in:

- the cultures, histories, and geographies of the Pacific Northwest ,
- the migration of peoples, cultures, ideas, and commodities,
- questions of technology, design, sustainability,
- the creation of experiential and informal learning environments,

then CWB wants to talk to you.

You can inform this process in many flexible ways of varying commitment. Opportunities could include credit-bearing internships in program development and grant writing, collaborating or consulting on educational modules, or designing mobile exhibits, for instance.

Interested scholars should contact Andrew Washburn, CWB Historical Projects Manager, [awashburn@cwbo.org](mailto:awashburn@cwbo.org) by or before March 1. An information session and discussion will be convened among respondents at the Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle.

## **The Center for Wooden Boats Primary Interpretive Themes**

### **Theme #1: The history of Pacific Northwest small craft**

The small boats of the Pacific Northwest represent specific answers to unique questions. Each region of the world and each group of waterborne people devise their own methods to work and play on the sea, lakes, and rivers. CWB strives to interpret small boats dreamed, built, and used in the waters of the Pacific Northwest.

### **Theme #2: Boats as objects of design and engineering excellence**

Wooden boats are the products of as much art as science and mathematics. Boatbuilding is a blend of creative processes and practical problem solving. CWB is committed to furthering the understanding of why small boats look, work, and play the way they do, and also to passing along the skills necessary to build and use small craft.

### **Theme #3: How small boats reflect and influence the cultures of the Pacific Northwest, past and present.**

The history of region is written on the forested hills and the waterfronts of our towns and cities. For thousands of years people were drawn to this region for the abundant resources of the forest. From the towering trees indigenous people to recent immigrants hewed watercraft that brought more people to our sea and riverfronts. CWB tells the story of how boats and maritime crafts and industries influence culture and shape history.

### **Theme #4: Why Wood?**

For centuries wood was the primary material used in boat construction. Wood, while not the lightest, strongest, or most durable, possesses an ideal ratio of these qualities. Wood's properties coupled with its availability, renewable nature, and the ease with which it can be shaped continues to make it the ideal material for small boat construction. CWB interprets the history and future of wood as a boat building material.