



D13 Auxiliarists Visit Ballard Locks

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BALLARD LOCKS



Photo Credit David Rix

We all had a wonderful time at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks in Ballard, WA on January 24th, 2025. Auxiliary members from multiple flotillas gathered together to share the experience and use the time to build a unified auxiliary in the Pacific Northwest. This site was perfect for initiating the 2025 mission statement,

“Engage with all of Team Coast Guard and Local Communities”

Our guide was Park Ranger Pete Lundberg. We continually peppered Pete with questions about the historic vital infrastructure, which opened on May 18th, 1917. Pete quickly realized we weren't

his typical guests, who are more interested in small trivia, but instead was instantly asked deep questions pertaining to the outfall of a seismic event in the area.

Within the discussion it was determined that if the lock system, which includes a dam, was fractured, the 20/22 ft difference in water level between freshwater Lake Washington and saltwater Puget Sound would begin to flow with a turbid destructive force throughout the region.



Photo credit DCO Nijhuis

Originally, Lake Washington was lowered by 9 ft to establish the desired water level throughout the newly created 8-mile ship canal connecting the Lake with Puget Sound, all controlled by the Dam and Lock system. Yes! The 25-mile long by 2.5-mile wide Lake Washington was lowered by 9 ft during construction! Imagine an uncontrolled unexpected 22 ft drop of the Lake if an earthquake shattered the concrete and steel dam. Unthinkable, but, possible.

This kind of revelation of a potential disaster scenario gives a concrete example as to what the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other civil response services could face. As an auxiliarist, what would you be doing in such an event? Is there an action plan to follow? If on patrol during a natural disaster, would your training kick in? Having a unified approach to disaster mitigation would be key. This coincides with the 2025 mission statement—

“Empower our members with unparalleled training and resources”

In retrospect, in addition to fellowship with members of multiple flotillas, we were able to learn more about a local landmark while adding meaning to our mission and purpose. Most importantly, putting action to the mission statement -

“Electrify the spirit of service through innovation and collaboration”

Semper Paratus!

Go, Coast Guard!



Photo credit DCO Nijhuis



Photo Credit David Rix

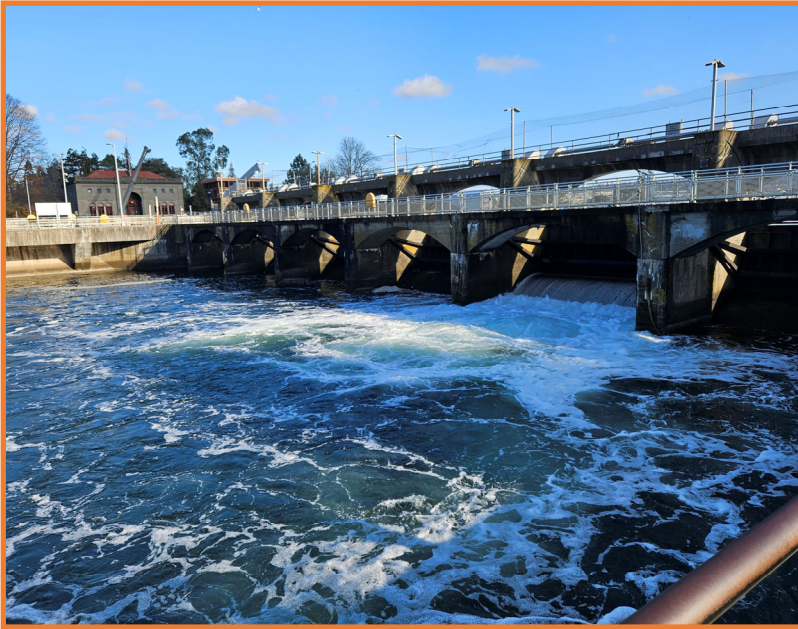


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