

2026 CONFERENCE PROGRAM



Washington Museum Association



THE POWER OF PLACE

MUSEUMS SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

WaMA Conference 2026
Bainbridge Island & Suquamish, WA



DISCOVER SUQUAMISH HISTORY & CULTURE

Visit the Suquamish Museum just a short trip from Seattle! Explore exhibits, art, and traditions of the Suquamish Tribe.



SUQUAMISH
MUSEUM

Scan the QR Code to explore
Suquamish history & plan your visit!
Or visit SuquamishMuseum.org



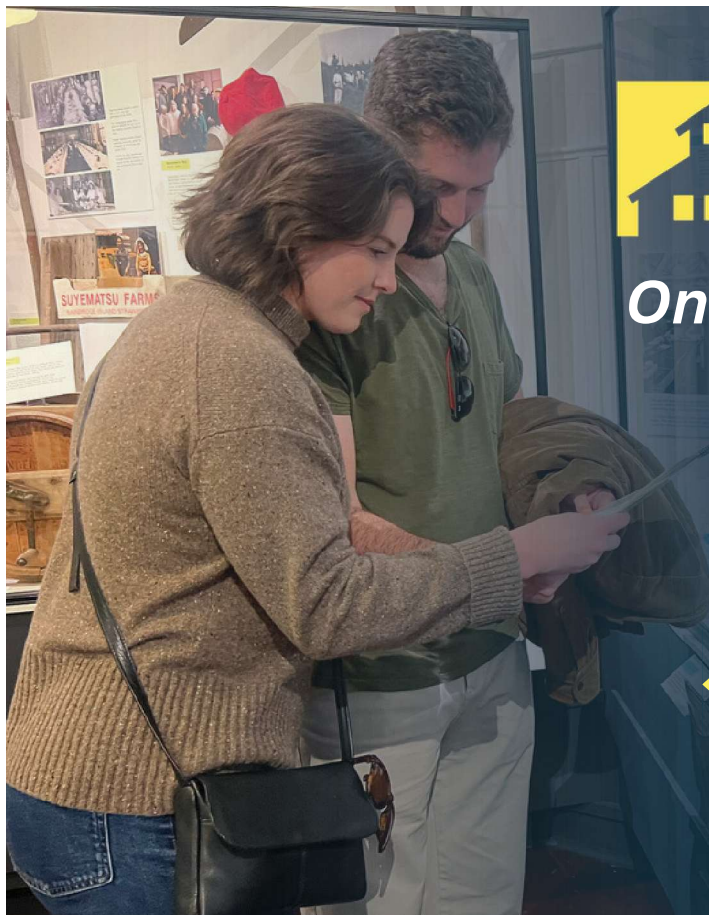
Bainbridge History Museum

One Island. Many Stories.

Open 7 Days a Week
10:00am-4:00pm
FREE ADMISSION

215 Ericksen Ave NE

www.bainbridgehistorymuseum.org



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

ADAMS LEVEL



AWARDS BANQUET



BAKER LEVEL



GLACIER LEVEL



ST. HELENS LEVEL



OLYMPUS LEVEL



EXHIBITOR LEVEL





BOARD & STAFF

PRESIDENT

Sarah Samson

Assistant Director of Operations | Master of Arts in Museology, UW, Seattle

VICE PRESIDENT

Korum Bischoff

Deputy Director | Bainbridge Museum of Art, Bainbridge Island

TREASURER

Rob Worstell

Director of Education | Northwest Museum of Art and Culture, Spokane

SECRETARY

Anne Smyrl

Independent Collections Professional | Southwest Washington

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Mikayla DeTolla

Assistant Director for Qualification | UW Medicine Advancement

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Brad Richardson

Executive Director | Clark County Historical Museum, Vancouver

DIRECTORS

Meaghan Anderson

Assistant Director of Education | Hands On Children's Museum, Olympia

Lynn Bethke

Collections Manager | Museum of Culture & Environment, CWU, Ellensburg

Kate Dugdale

Public Programs Manager | Burke Museum, UW, Seattle

Lauren Otto

Museum Professional | Tacoma

Jabari Owens-Bailey

Curatorial Education Program Manager | Museum of Glass, Tacoma

Devorah Romanek

Museum Professional | Seattle

Robert Schimelpfenig, Ph.D.

Archivist | Washington State University Vancouver Library, Vancouver

Clare Tally-Foos

Aerospace Camp Experience Program Manager | The Museum of Flight, Seattle

EX-OFFICIO

Allison Campbell

Heritage Outreach Manager | Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma

Violeta Martin

Director of Programs | Humanities Washington

Chieko Phillips

Heritage Program Director | 4Culture, Seattle

Aaron Semer

Creative Districts Program Manager | Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA)

Abigail Watson

Emerging Museum Professional

WaMA STAFF

Kristen Heidenthal

Museums Connect Project Coordinator

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Korum Bischoff - Chair

Kate Dugdale

Kristen Heidenthal - Staff

Lisa Jackson, Suquamish Museum

Lindsay Ogles, Bainbridge History Museum

Lauren Otto

Sarah Samson

Robert Schimelpfenig

Clare Tally-Foos

Devorah Romanek

The Washington Museum Association was established to represent and serve museums of all types and sizes throughout Washington State.

OUR MISSION

- Encourage and facilitate the use and development of the highest professional standards.
- Further the role of museums as community partners in education.
- Act as a clearing house and communication network for information of special interest to museums.
- Constitute a statewide voice for a diverse constituency and display leadership in supporting cultural diversity and the open expression of ideas.
- Serve as a statewide advocate for museums and actively promote the collection, preservation, exhibition, and interpretation of historic, scientific, artistic and cultural material, sites, practices, and ideas.

WaMA is operated through the efforts of an all-volunteer Board of museum professionals and supporters from across Washington. Board meetings are hosted each quarter by different museums throughout the state.

INFORMATION:

www.washingtonmuseumassociation.org

contact@washingtonmuseumassociation.org

Washington Museum Association

PO Box 295

Wilbur, WA 99185

COVER PHOTO: LAURA ZANER

COVER PHOTO WELCOME POLE: RANDI PURSER

2026 CONFERENCE LOGO: LISA JACKSON

MONDAY

BAINBRIDGE ILSAND

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND MUSEUM OF ART (BIMA)
AND MORE!

BIMA CLASSROOM

550 WINSLOW WAY

BIMA AUDITORIUM

550 WINSLOW WAY

DAISY LANE

710 JOHN NELSON LANE

BAINBRIDGE PERF. ARTS

200 MADISON AVE N

TOURS

10AM

11AM

NOON

1PM

2PM

3PM

4PM

5PM

6PM

**MOUNTMAKING FOR
MUSEUM EXHIBITION:
INTRODUCTION TO
THEORY & PRACTICE**
(EXHIBITS)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**MUSEUM KITS THAT WORK:
RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES
FOR HANDS-ON INQUIRY**
(EDUCATION)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**THE POWER OF PLACE
STARTS WITHIN:
LEADING GROUNDED,
RESILIENT INSTITUTIONS**
(LEADERSHIP)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**MEETING YOUR
COMMUNITY WHERE
THEY ARE**
(OUTREACH & COMMUNITY
PROGRAMMING, EXHIBITS,
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
JAPANESE EXCLUSION
MEMORIAL**
(TICKETS REQUIRED)

SUQUAMISH MUSEUM
(TICKETS REQUIRED)

**CULTURAL ACCESS:
LEARNING THE HARD WAY**
(OUTREACH & COMMUNITY
PROGRAMMING, COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**PLANNING FOR PEOPLE:
WHY LOGISTICS ARE
CRITICAL FOR COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**
(COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**CREATING A SEAT
AT THE TABLE:
PRACTICAL METHODS
OF INCLUSION**
(COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

**RECLAIMING SPACE:
MUSEUMS, MEMORY,
& COMMUNITY
RESPONSIBILITY**
(EDUCATION)

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED -
SPACE MAY BE AVAILABLE)

SUQUAMISH MUSEUM
(TICKETS REQUIRED)

MUSEUM OPEN HOUSES

WALK (OR DRIVE) BETWEEN THREE UNIQUE MUSEUM SPACES OPEN JUST FOR WAMA!

BAINBRIDGE HISTORY MUSEUM | 215 ERICKSEN AVE NE, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
KIDIMU (KIDS DISCOVERY MUSEUM) | NEXT DOOR TO BIMA AT 301 RAVINE LN NE, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
DAISY LANE (BIMA'S ARTIST RESIDENCY) | 710 JOHN NELSON LANE, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

**KICK-OFF
PARTY!**

LOOKING FOR SESSION DESCRIPTIONS?

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE DETAIL.

Or visit: [washingtonmuseumassociation.org/conference-program/](https://www.washingtonmuseumassociation.org/conference-program/)



TUESDAY

SUQUAMISH
HOUSE OF AWAKENED CULTURE
& CLEARWATER RESORT

8AM

9AM

10AM

11AM

TRANSITION TO
CLEARWATER

NOON

1PM

2PM

3PM

4PM

5PM

6PM

7PM

8PM

JOIN US AT SUQUAMISH TRIBE'S HOUSE OF AWAKENED CULTURE FOR OUR WELCOME BREAKFAST & KEYNOTE

8:00-9:30 - BREAKFAST

9:30-11:30 - WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & KEYNOTE

KEYNOTE: CENTERING TRIBAL PERSPECTIVES IN MUSEUM PRACTICE

What changes when museums create resources with communities rather than about them? Mary Jane Topash (Tulalip Tribes) and Devin Leatherman will share the story behind *Native Peoples of the Mid-Columbia Plateau*, a new Burke Box created in consultation with the Kalispel, Spokane, Colville, and Coeur d'Alene Tribes. For more than 95 years, Burke Boxes have brought mini-museums into classrooms and communities across Washington. This new box represents an evolution of that legacy, with Tribal partners shaping the materials, lesson plans, and vision from the beginning. Together, Mary Jane and Devin will explore collaboration, consultation, and authentic representation.

ABOUT HOUSE OF AWAKENED CULTURE

The House of Awakened Culture is a longhouse and community gathering place in Suquamish, Washington, on the Port Madison Indian Reservation. Built by the Suquamish Tribe in 2008, it honors the historic Old Man House, which was destroyed in 1870. Today, the House of Awakened Culture serves as an important cultural and community center for the Suquamish Tribe and the broader community.

**EXHIBIT
HALL**

**WHALE
HALL**

**SALMON
HALL**

**DEER A
HALL**

**DEER B
HALL**

**ADVOCACY
LUNCH**

**EMPOWERING REGIONAL
COLLABORATION
(EDUCATION)**

**SHOWING UP!
MUSEUMS AS THE ANCHOR
FOR CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY
(COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)**

**SHARED CONSERVATION
SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF WASHINGTON
(COLLECTIONS)**

**EXHIBIT
HALL
OPEN**

**TAILORING TRAVEL
EXHIBITIONS TO MEET THE NEEDS
OF YOUR COMMUNITY
(TRIBAL MUSEUMS)**

**IN CONSIDERATION
OF NOSTALGIA AS RELATED
TO PLACE IN MUSEUM
INTERPRETATION
(EXHIBITS)**

**MUSEUMS AS PLACES OF
DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE CONNECTION:
THE ALZHEIMER'S CAFÉ MODEL
(OUTREACH & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING)**

**KEEPING HOUSE:
HOW FRONT-OF-HOUSE
MUSEUM EMPLOYEES CREATE
& MAINTAIN COMMUNITY
(GUEST SERVICES)**

**CASE STUDIES IN
MEANINGFUL & INNOVATIVE
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
(COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION)**

**PRACTICAL DIGITIZATION
RESOURCES FOR LOCAL
HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS
(COLLECTIONS)**

**ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS:
CAREER CONNECTED EDUCATION,
PLACE-BASED LEARNING, AND
COMMUNITY
(OUTREACH & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING,
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION)**

**LESSER ADDRESSED
SENSITIVITIES: AGEISM,
NEURODIVERSITY, CLASSISM
(DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION)**

**EMERGING
MUSEUM
PROFESSIONALS
MIXER**

**AWARDS
BANQUET
(TICKETS REQUIRED)**

**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:
BARBARA LAWRENCE,
SUQUAMISH TRIBAL STORYTELLER**

THANK YOU TO OUR REGIONAL PARTNERS:



WEDNESDAY

SUQUAMISH
CLEARWATER RESORT

**EXHIBIT
HALL**

**WHALE
HALL**

**SALMON
HALL**

**DEER A
HALL**

**DEER B
HALL**

7AM

8AM

9AM

10AM

11AM

NOON

1PM

ANNUAL HERITAGE BREAKFAST

ALL ATTENDEES WELCOME!
PRESENTED BY WASHINGTON
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**MORE THAN A POST:
CRAFTING MESSAGING THAT
DRIVES REAL IMPACT**
(COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING)

**COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNI-
TIES: CO-DESIGNING NATURE BASED
EXPERIENCES WITH YOUTH**
(OUTREACH & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING,
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

**CARRYING THE WORK WITHOUT
CARRYING THE WEIGHT**
(EMERGING MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS,
DEVELOPMENT)

**THE VOLUNTEER WORKFLOW
SYSTEM: DOCUMENTING LABOR,
BUILDING CAPACITY, SUSTAINING
STEWARDSHIP**
(OPERATIONS & VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS)

EXHIBIT
HALL
OPEN

**DATES TO DOORWAYS:
A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT
FOR MILESTONES, REFLECTION
& ENGAGEMENT**
(SPECIAL PROJECTS)

**UNLIKELY COMBOS:
THE ART OF UNEXPECTED
COLLABORATION**
(EDUCATION)

**CAMPBELL HOUSE:
TELLING NEW STORIES
IN AN OLD HOUSE**
(OUTREACH & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING,
EDUCATION)

ANNUAL MEETING LUNCH

Congratulations to WaMA's 2026

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

NICOLE ROMÁN ABREU, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON | ELLEN FERGUSON STUDENT AWARD
ERICH SCHWEIGER, CAMANO ISLAND FIRE MUSEUM | GUS NORWOOD VOLUNTEER SCHOLARSHIP
JENS MALONE, NATIONAL NORDIC MUSEUM | ROBERT GRUHN WORKING PROFESSIONAL AWARD

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

**ARTS, HERITAGE, & SCIENCE
ADVOCACY WEEK IN OLYMPIA**
FEBRUARY 2 & 3, 2027

Join WaMA, the Washington State Historical Society, ArtsWA,
and Inspire Washington to celebrate Washington's arts, heritage,
and science organizations.

Meet with our elected officials and government leaders
to share how important our work is to the people of Washington.

GENERAL SESSION & KEYNOTE

Music: Chief Kitsap Academey Song & Dance
Welcome: Sarah Samson, WaMA Board President
Blessing: Luther "Jay" Mills, Suquamish Tribal Council
Keynote: Devin Leatherman & Mary Jane H. Topash



Welcome to the 2026 Conference Exploring the *Power of Place*

This year's conference invites us to reflect on the power of place—the lands, waters, and communities that give meaning to our work. Museums have the unique responsibility and ability to harness and sustain the spirit of the places we inhabit and the people who have called them home since time immemorial. As centers of culture, science, art, and heritage, we embrace and enfold a plurality of values and voices, carrying forward stories of resilience, creativity, and truth that sustain our shared humanity.

As our nation marks its 250th year, we are reminded that this anniversary is both a celebration and a moment of remembrance. It calls on us to recognize the full scope of our collective history, including the Indigenous nations whose stewardship and stories shape these lands, and whose voices are vital in guiding the future.

In this milestone year, museums face unprecedented challenges. While vital sources of funding are threatened and eliminated, political pressure mounts to alter content and undermine historical narratives to obscure an uncomfortable and complex past. Yet, it is precisely in these times that our resolve is tested, and our role as truth-tellers and community anchors becomes most essential. Our communities look to us for support as rooted and indispensable places that uphold truth, honor enduring legacies, and celebrate creative expressions. In times of great challenges, our collective strength becomes our most vital resource.

Join us as we come together as a museum community, share knowledge, support one another in navigating the turbulence of the moment, and fortify our professional network. In doing so, we affirm our commitment to our work and to our communities, safeguarding the future of our missions.



Devin Leatherman, Burke Museum

Devin Leatherman is an outreach education professional with an MA in Museum Studies and a BA in Early Childhood and Family Studies. She has 15 years of experience in designing curriculum, learning environments, and public programs in the Seattle area. In her current role as Burke Box Manager, Devin's work brings high-quality, hand-on learning experiences to over 45,000 learners each year.

Mary Jane H. Topash, Hilibulb Cultural Center

Mary Jane H. Topash, *Tulalip Tribes*, is the Historical Analyst for the Hilibulb Cultural Center in Tulalip, WA. Mary Jane has worked in the museum field for 15 years, including the Burke Museum, focusing on Coast Salish Tribal history. Her work focuses on decolonial practices, informal education and teaching, anti-stereotyping, and sharing accurate portrayals and representation of Tribal peoples.

Exceptional Collections deserve exceptional care

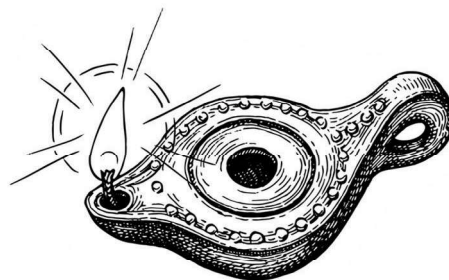
Artifact Casework ■ Fine Art Framing
Mountmaking ■ Installation & Handling
Rigging ■ Art Maintenance
Art Transport ■ Relocation Management
Climatized Storage ■ Fine Art Shuttle Service
Custom Crating ■ Customs Brokerage
Collection Consulting

Seattle • Portland
www.artechfas.com
(206) 728-8822



ARTECH

Trusted fine art services. Since 1977.



MNEMOSYNE ARCHIVES

I specialize in converting physical items into various digital formats.

Includes but not limited to:
documents, photographs, slides, negatives,
VHS, 8mm film, vinyl and cassettes

Additional services that I offer are Digital Restoration, Metadata and Transcription

Sam Rintoul, Digital Archivist
rintouls@mnemosyne-digital.com
360-355-7289
www.mnemosyne-digital.com



**WAMA THANKS THE
PUYALLUP TRIBE OF INDIANS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
FOR SUPPORTING THIS
YEAR'S CONFERENCE**

Featured in 200 Museums



proudly based in WA for 35 years

Traveling Exhibits

minotaurmazes.com

Environment & Culture Partners

Strengthening the cultural sector's environmental leadership

As an action-oriented, research and advocacy nonprofit, Environment & Culture Partners works at the sector level to equip cultural organizations with the knowledge and skills to influence positive change, the partnership to do the work, and the voice to advocate for culture in a changing climate.

Learn more and explore free resources: ecprs.org

hello@ecprs.org

[Follow us on LinkedIn](#)



WELCOME TO SUQUAMISH!

Follow us on social media and learn how the **Suquamish Tribe** celebrates our beautiful place, culture & people.



facebook.com/suquamishtribe | suquamish_tribe

What keeps a museum relevant?

Bringing the community into your conversation!

Let's explore the possibilities during a **free consultation here at WaMA.**

- Needs Assessment
- Exhibit Planning
- Exhibit Prototyping
- Exhibit & Program Evaluation
- Strategic Planning
- Audience Research
- Motivation Studies
- Observation Studies
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Passive Data Collection Systems
- Creative Solutions

Stop by / sign up for your 20-minute chat with a friendly research expert at our table in the expo hall.

Wendy Meluch & Kathryn Owen



www.WendyMeluch.com
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kathryn-owen-consulting-llc-12986614>

JOIN WaMA!

Not a member?

The Washington Museum Association provides opportunities to network, enact legislative changes, and raise every museum's visibility to the highest possible audience. Plus, you'll save on conferences and get invitations to other social events.

Join us!

You are a vital link in a statewide network of museum employees, volunteers, supporting businesses, and patrons. Your membership supports the work of all museums in Washington State.

Individual memberships start at just \$25.
Organizational memberships start at \$50.

washingtonmuseumassociation.org



HUMANITIES WASHINGTON

How can we help?

Looking to bring a fascinating speaker to your community?

Humanities Washington offers programs and support to museums, bringing communities together over ideas. We serve every museum, from small rural towns to big cities.

Find out more at humanities.org

Speakers Bureau

Bring experts to your community for an engaging talk - free.

Interested in becoming a speaker? Applications for the 2028-2029 roster will open in spring 2027.

Prime Time Family Reading

Help children read by engaging the entire family.



Join the WaMA Board!

The Washington Museum Association is seeking nominations for upcoming board openings. Serving on the board is an opportunity to support the work of museums statewide.

Meet our current board members and access the application on our website.
Scan the QR code or visit washingtonmuseumassociation.org/governance/





Ceci n'est pas une caisse.

It's your artwork.

We cater to your specific shipping and handling requirements with the preservation of your objects as our top priority.

For nearly 30 years, Art Work Fine Art Services has served as the trusted logistics partner to some of America's most highly-regarded museums, galleries, collectors, and artists. We specialize in expert and custom solutions for domestic and international shipping, warehousing, and preservation of artwork. Our team is made up of passionate experts in many mediums, including design, painting, printmaking, carpentry, photography, and sculpture. Art Work FAS offers services in Portland and Seattle, in addition to California's Bay Area and Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, New York City, and across the Rocky Mountains.

To request an estimate or find out more about the services Art Work Fine Art Services offers, contact us.

Studio Understory

Illuminating lesser-known aspects
of history, culture, and the natural world.



A Washington-based exhibit services company
contact@studiounderstory.com



Kamloops BC 356 km

Victoria BC 97 km

Seattle WA 195 km

Vancouver WA 405 km

Tillamook Bay OR 421 km

We're in your 'hood.

Since 2003, GNW has served cultural organizations
in all their fabrication needs, locally and internationally.

San Jose CA 1332 km



exhibits workshops classes & friends



gallery
one
visual arts center

myELLENSBURG.COM

WASHINGTON STATE
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



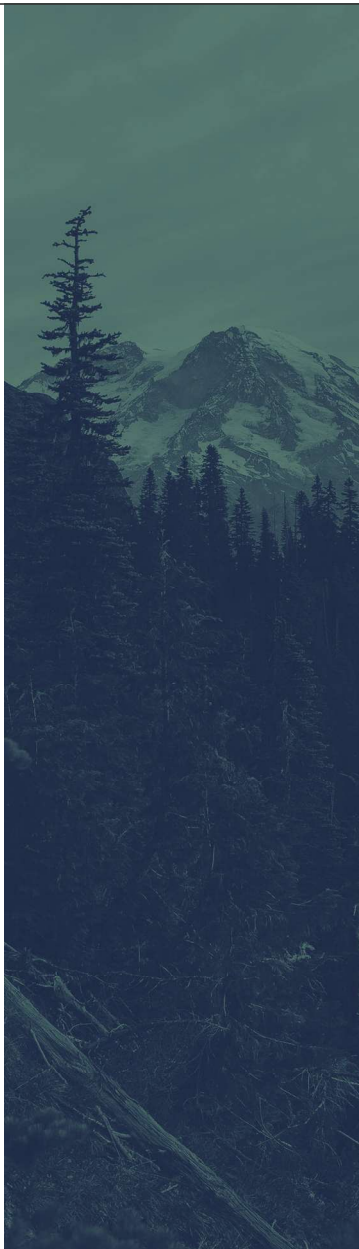
HERITAGE OUTREACH

Partnering with the
heritage sector to
preserve and interpret
Washington's history.

Visit our website to learn
more about the ways we
support museums and
historical societies.

- Affiliate Programs
- Workshops
- Grants

www.washintonhistory.org/across-washington



**LOOKING
FOR
SESSION
INFO?**

**SCAN THE QR
CODE FOR MORE
DETAIL:**



Or visit:
[washingtonmuseumassociation.org/
conference-program/](http://washingtonmuseumassociation.org/conference-program/)

**WAMA THANKS OUR
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR SUPPORTING THIS
YEAR'S CONFERENCE**

WASHINGTON



Secretary of State



WESTERN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION
OAKLAND, CA SEPT. 14-17, 2027

CRAFT YOUR ESCAPE TO KITSAP COUNTY

Make Kitsap County your Pacific Northwest getaway—where scenic beauty meets rich culture. Stay to enjoy local restaurants, wineries, and warm hospitality—visit Bainbridge Island Museum of Art to experience contemporary art and craft during the celebration of *Handwork*.

FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION & OPEN DAILY THANKS TO BIMA MEMBERS & DONATIONS



**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
MUSEUM OF ART**

550 Winslow Way East
Bainbridge Island, WA, 98110





PLAY MORE. EARN MORE. EXPERIENCE MORE.

One of many benefits of being Players Club member is earning incredible rewards like an unforgettable stay in a room with breathtaking views of Puget Sound at our fabulous AAA Four Diamond Resort!

Join the Players Club and start earning your rewards today!



15347 Suquamish Way NE, Suquamish, WA 98392 | (360) 598-8700 | (800) 609-8700 | ClearwaterCasino.com

When Gambling Becomes a Problem, There's Hope. Help Starts Here. 1 (800) 547-6133