

NEWS RELEASE (WAV-C / KEDA)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WAV-C's Illahee Waterway Tire Cleanup Project Honored as
Washington Economic Development Association's Project of the Year**

Innovative Environmental Initiative Recognized for Remarkable Impact on Puget Sound Ecosystem, Economy, and Community

Silverdale, WA – The Washington Autonomous Vehicle Cluster (WAV-C), a program of the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance (KEDA), is thrilled to announce that its Illahee Waterway Tire Cleanup Project has been honored with the prestigious Project of the Year award by the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA).

Bruce Kendall, WEDA Awards Committee Chair who also serves as President & CEO of the Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County added, “We received a number of impressive nominations from communities across Washington. The nominations reflect a unique array of the breadth and diversity of strong work taking place by economic developers in Washington. These projects are often complex and require extensive collaboration and creative partnerships.

Washington Autonomous Vehicle Cluster (WAV-C) Illahee Waterway Tire Cleanup

WEDA’s recognition of WAV-C’s Illahee Waterway Tire Cleanup project underscores their commitment to establishing Puget Sound as the leading hub for cutting-edge autonomous technologies.

Introduction:

WAV-C's Illahee Waterway tire cleanup project emerged as a standout contender for the Washington Economic Development Association's Project of the Year award. The initiative seamlessly integrated environmental restoration, economic advancement, and community engagement, setting a precedent for sustainable development.

Problem:

"The Puget Sound, a crucial ecosystem, faces a silent menace with approximately 500,000 tires discarded decades ago, releasing hazardous toxins and jeopardizing aquatic life and public health," remarked Seth Abelson, WAV-C Program Manager. "WAV-C recognized the urgency of this pressing issue, acknowledging its broader implications for the local economy and community welfare."

Solution:

WAV-C partnered with SERCO, a global public services company, to develop a comprehensive strategy comprising three key elements: employing cutting-edge underwater unmanned technologies for precise identification of derelict tire dump sites.

Impact:

The project's impact transcends mere tire removal:

Environmental: Substantial reduction in the discharge of harmful toxins into the water, enhancement of water quality, and safeguarding of aquatic biodiversity.

Economic: Generation of business prospects, stimulation of the local economy, and facilitation of job growth.

Community: Restoration of recreational opportunities, revitalization of the local economy, and promotion of community well-being.

Sustainability and Long-Term Vision:

WAV-C's vision extends beyond the confines of the Illahee Waterway, envisaging future collaborations to combat tire pollution across the Puget Sound. By sharing expertise and best practices, WAV-C aims to inspire a widespread cleanup initiative, ensuring the enduring health of the ecosystem.

Conclusion:

The Illahee Waterway Tire Cleanup Project epitomizes the spirit of the Washington Economic Development Association's Project of the Year award. It exemplifies innovation, environmental stewardship, economic prosperity, and community resilience, significantly contributing to the state's economic and environmental welfare.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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Pictured (L-R): Rochelle LeMay, WAV-C Business Development Director; Seth Abelson, PhD, Program Director WAV-C; Bruce Kendall, WEDA Awards Committee Chair and President & CEO of the Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County



Pictured: Seth Abelson, PhD, Program Director, WAV-C Program



About WAV-C:

The [Washington Autonomous Vehicle Cluster](#) (WAV-C), located in the Kitsap Peninsula, stands out as one of the most innovative communities in America. WAV-C collaborates with government agencies, academic institutions, corporations, top entrepreneurs, and a deep bench of funders to introduce the newest and most advanced innovative solutions in maritime autonomous vehicles. WAV-C is a program of the [Kitsap Economic Development Alliance](#), and is currently funded by the Washington Department of Commerce's [Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program](#), made possible by a grant from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

About Washington Economic Development Association:

The [Washington Economic Development Association](#) (WEDA) is a trade association that advocates for economic growth, connecting businesses and connecting agencies. The Project of the Year award recognizes outstanding contributions to economic development, sustainability, and community impact in the state of Washington.

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About Kitsap Economic Development Alliance: Founded in 1983, the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance mission is to facilitate healthy economic growth and investments that support livable, resilient communities, fueled by innovation and the diverse people and businesses of Kitsap. For more information, visit www.kitsapeda.org

About SERCO

Serco is a global public services company dedicated to helping governments and businesses deliver vital services to communities. With over 50 years of experience and operations in more than 25 countries, Serco boasts a workforce of over 100,000 employees. Serco's environmental services business offers a wide range of services to help organizations reduce their environmental impact and improve sustainability performance.