

Agenda Date: April 24, 2025  
Item Number: B3

**Docket:** TS-250098  
**Company:** Backcountry Travels LLC d/b/a Stehekin Ferry

**Staff:** Patrick Remfrey, Licensing Services Manager  
Elaina Young – Regulatory Analyst  
Kris Irelan – Consumer Protection

### **Recommendation**

Issue an Order granting the Application and allowing the transfer of ownership of Backcountry Travels LLC d/b/a Stehekin Ferry (certificate BC068772) from Lyndsey Courtney, Colter Courtney, Clifford Courtney, and Kerry Courtney to Brun Garfoot and Reed Courtney of Discover Lake Chelan LLC, subject to the following condition(s):

- 1) Backcountry Travels LLC d/b/a Stehekin Ferry, shall comply with the Revised Code of Washington 81.84 and Washington Administrative Code 480-51 in addition to rules prescribed by the Commission for public service companies in general.
- 2) Backcountry Travels LLC d/b/a Stehekin Ferry ownership must comply with Commission investigations in a timely manner.

### **Background**

On February 19, 2025, Backcountry Travels LLC d/b/a Stehekin Ferry (Backcountry Travels LLC or Company) filed an application with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) for the transfer of ownership pursuant to the provisions of RCW 80.12 (Application).

Backcountry Travels LLC provides ferry services from the Stehekin Dock and Field Point Landing with flag stops by reservations only at Lucerne, Prince Creek, and public and private docks on Lake Chelan.

Backcountry Travels LLC was bought by Brun Garfoot and Reed Courtney who currently own and operate Discover Lake Chelan LLC, which is the other ferry company to service the Lake Chelan area. As the new owners of Backcountry Travels LLC, they plan to keep operations the same as under the Company's previous ownership. The Commission initially granted Backcountry Travels LLC its certificate on June 5, 2019, in Docket TS-180677. Their initial application was submitted to the Commission on August 10, 2018, and received one protest from Lake Chelan Recreation, Inc, (LCRI) who at the time operated a commercial ferry service on Lake Chelan.

The initial application had a prehearing conference on Monday, November 19, 2018, and on November 21, 2018, the Commission entered Order 01 which set a hearing for the application on

April 22, and 23, 2019. The protest from LCRI was withdrawn on January 3, 2019, and on April 22, 2019, the Commission convened a public comment hearing and an evidentiary hearing. At this hearing staff testified that Backcountry's application received 227 statements of support and three in opposition. The Commission granted Backcountry Travels LLC's application and issued certificate BC068772 in Order 04 dated May 23, 2019. Lake Chelan Recreation, Inc has since transferred its certificate with Commission authorization to Discover Lake Chelan LLC, which as previously mentioned is owned by Brun Garfoot and Reed Courtney.

If the Commission approves the transfer of ownership, Backcountry Travels LLC will transfer from Lyndsey Courtney, Colter Courtney, Clifford Courtney, and Kerry Courtney to Brun Garfoot and Reed Courtney. The transfer makes no changes to Backcountry Travels LLC operations, billing, personnel, or other aspects of the Company. Further, customers will not be harmed by the transfer of ownership since Backcountry Travels LLC's operations, services, and rates will not change.

RCW 81.84.030 stipulates "No certificate or any right or privilege thereunder held, owned, or obtained under the provisions of this chapter shall be sold, assigned, leased, mortgaged, or in any manner transferred, either by the act of the parties or by operation of law, except upon authorization by the commission first obtained."

In transfers of ownership, the Commission historically considers parent companies of public service companies for the purposes of transferring ownership. As such, the Companies must seek Commission approval of the transfer of ownership. Commission Staff (Staff) has reviewed the application and determined that the Companies have sufficiently demonstrated there are no reasons to oppose the transfer.

At the Commission's regularly scheduled open meeting set for April 24, 2025, Staff will make a recommendation that the Commission grant the transfer of ownership of Backcountry Travels LLC from Lyndsey Courtney, Colter Courtney, Clifford Courtney, and Kerry Courtney to Brun Garfoot and Reed Courtney.

### **Customer Comments**

On February 19, 2025, the Company notified its customers about the proposed transfer of ownership. Staff received two comments. One customer is concerned that reduced competition will result in a deterioration of customer service. The other customer wants the Commission to allow other ferry operators to serve the community in the future.

Customers were notified that they could access relevant documents about the transfer of ownership on the Commission's website. For any questions or concerns, they were directed to contact Kris Irelan at (888) 333-9882 or [kris.irelan@utc.wa.gov](mailto:kris.irelan@utc.wa.gov).

**Conclusion**

Staff recommends the Commission issue an Order granting the Application and allowing the transfer of ownership of Backcountry Travels LLC from Lyndsey Courtney, Colter Courtney, Clifford Courtney, and Kerry Courtney to Brun Garfoot and Reed Courtney of Discover Lake Chelan LLC, subject to the following condition(s):

- 1) Backcountry Travels LLC will follow all statutes, rules, and regulations as required in the Revised Code of Washington Title 81.84 and Washington Administrative Code Title 480.
- 2) Backcountry Travels LLC ownership must comply with Commission investigations in a timely manner.