**Pam Ferris Olson** (00:00):

Hello, and welcome to the first Women Mind the Water Podcast, a new feature on womenmindthewater.com. I'm Pam Ferris-Olsen, founder of Women Mind the Water. The purpose of the website, and all we do here, is to explore the connection between women and water through storytelling. Collaboration is an integral part of the Women Mind the Water projects, because collaboration builds community, empowers individual voices, raises awareness of our connectedness, and the importance of water to our lives. Women Mind the Water also hopes to inspire action, to protect our world's water resources. My use of the term women is not meant to be prescriptive. The term is used to refer to people who are introspective, brave, and aware of their own strength and weaknesses. Women Mind the Water celebrates diversity and opposes discrimination in its many forms, including gender, race, ethnicity, ability, and age discrimination.

**Pam Ferris Olson** (01:11):

The Women Mind the Water Podcast will engage artists in conversation about their work, explore what is their connection with the ocean, and how this connection influences their art. It seemed appropriate for this inaugural podcast to have me, the founder of Women Mind the Water, discuss how the ocean has influenced me. How has the ocean inspired me to found Women Mind the Water, and how has the ocean inspired me to create a Marine art portfolio, and this podcast. Prior to founding Women Mind the Water, I worked as an educator, freelance writer, photographer, and videographer. My work has appeared in print newspapers and magazines, and on a host of online sites. My most recent brand of storytelling explores our relationship with the oceans. I dove into this work with a sense of urgency after reading countless stories about ocean degradation from causes like global warming, plastic pollution, and overfishing. I decided I simply had to do something, but I didn't know what that could be, and sincerely wanted to make a difference.

**Pam Ferris Olson** (02:25):

I grew up a few miles from Long Island Sound. However, the ocean didn't mean much to me until I lived in the San Francisco Bay area. I can remember seeing my first harbor seal. I was mesmerized, so much so that I didn't want to leave, even when my bladder was near bursting. What truly etched the ocean into my soul was my first encounter with killer whales, in the waters of San Juan Island in the state of Washington. Robed in a contrasting skin of black and white, the orcas seemed bejeweled in dazzling rhinestones made of sky and sea. This vision has haunted me for decades, even more so when I lived in the Midwest far from the seacoast.

**Pam Ferris Olson** (03:10):

Now I live along the Gulf of Maine. The threats to the ocean are visible daily. Now I live along the coast of Maine, the threats to the ocean are visible daily. The algal blooms, the plastic pollution, the stories of marine mammals stranding. My first action was to engage others, to talk about their experiences with water. That was the birth of the Women Mind the Water digital stories project. It has grown into a sizable collection of digital stories, told by women from across the country. The stories, highlighting personal experiences, have been shared and archived by the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street Water/Ways Project. While the digital stories project remains important to me, and I encourage listeners to find out on the womenmindthewater.com, how to contribute their own stories. I felt I needed to do more. I challenged myself to get more political. I chose graphic art as the medium for making a statement. I want wanted to focus on the impact of human activity on ocean creatures.

**Pam Ferris Olson** (04:21):

My vision was an image that would become the mainstay of a graffiti like protest of ocean degradation. For this, I created a killer whale, which you can see on womenmindthewater.com. I believe it is topical, eccentric, and iconic. In the creation of the killer whale, I found a wellspring of passion, and a realization of my unique perspective. I also realized that there were many other animals that demanded to be portrayed. My hope is that these images stimulate thoughtful conversation and inspire action. Now, in this spirit of collaboration, I want to find out how other artists are inspired by the ocean. Our voices and visions when combined, build a community. Both art and science are human attempts to understand and describe the world around us. And a time when we face climate change and the COVID pandemic, we are becoming increasingly worried by things that are unpredictable.

**Pam Ferris Olson** (05:25):

This lack of predictability is stressful. In their work, artists explore. The process leads to discovery and their finished piece provides a conversation about the subject, presenting a way to understand. My hope is that this podcast will offer new perspectives that help you reflect upon the world and your connection to it. And unlock a desire to engage further and take action. I invite you to subscribe to the Women Mind the Water podcast, as well as recommend an artists to be featured. Also, please submit your own water story. Use the contact form at womenmindthewater.com, to find out how to submit. Finally browse the store. The proceeds from sales from prints and t-shirts will be donated to charity. Thank you for listening. Until next time, this is Pam Ferris-Olsen for Women Mind the Water.