

# Salish Current

Independent, fact-based news for Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties

News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending June 26, 2020:

## [More scrutiny sought on proposed logging around North Fork near Glacier](#)



One denizen of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest — a spotted owl — pursues another — a bat — in pursuit of yet another — a moth — in a lithograph by Tony Angell featured in *The House of Owls*. A proposed “vegetation management project” in the national forest is getting attention during the public comment period.

*By Alex Meacham*

— The U.S. Forest Service has proposed logging about 5,700 acres near the North Fork of the Nooksack River around Glacier, Canyon and Wells creeks. Called the North Fork Nooksack Vegetation Management Project, the proposal focuses on the

timber harvest part of the Forest Service's multiuse mandate. That puts it at odds with the priorities of some conservation groups, and it is being met with requests for further evaluation and for revisions to minimize impact on forests and rivers in the area.

RE Sources for Sustainable Communities and the North Cascades Conservation Council (N3C) are requesting an Environmental Impact Assessment — a more in-depth study than the Environmental Assessment that is already part of the project plan.

The Forest Service is accepting public comment on the proposal through July 2. ([Read more here.](#))

\*

## Government for the people: use of force, a new Bellingham park, shellfish advisory board, South Fork Park Trail engage

**Police Use of Force presentation.** Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood and the Bellingham city council will schedule "listening sessions" in July to hear citizen concerns about policing policies and actions. At its June 22 meeting, council members heard from the Bellingham Police Department on its [Use of Force Policy](#) and were treated to a [PowerPoint presentation](#).

**Proposed neighborhood park.** The Bellingham City Council approved a resolution on June 22 to apply for \$1 million grant from the state Wildlife and Recreation Program to develop a [neighborhood park](#) near the former Bakerview Nursery site. The 29-acre site along East Mount Baker Road was purchased in April this year for \$2.3 million, and the purchase was approved by the state for retroactive funding.

**Shellfish Protection District.** The Whatcom County Council on June 16 unanimously approved an ordinance removing the two-term limit for members of the Portage Bay and Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committees due to the difficulty of finding applicants to serve on the committees. [Whatcom County Code 16.20](#)

**South Fork Park Trail.** The Whatcom County Council on June 16 approved by a 6-1 vote to make an application and to enter into a grant agreement with the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for [South Fork Park trail development](#). Councilmember Elenbaas voted nay.

**Next scheduled meetings** are: Bellingham City Council, 7/6, 7 PM; Whatcom County Council, 7/7, 7 PM; Port of Bellingham, 7/14, 4 PM; Bellingham Planning Commission, 7/16, 7 PM.

Salish Current *affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equality and healing for all people. #SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace*

\* \* \*

## News from around the region...

### Health & Safety

- Three new cases in San Juan County of COVID-19, two on San Juan Island and one on Lopez, were reported last week, breaking a string of six weeks without a new case. ([San Juan Journal](#)) The county, however, is requesting moving to a modified Phase 3 status. ([San Juan Health Dept/San Juan Journal](#))
- Whatcom County's rise in COVID-19 cases in the Ferndale, Lynden and Blaine areas stymied its application this week for Phase 3 status, and it will need no new cases until July 2 to meet the requirement. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Skagit County's increase in COVID-19 cases might not qualify it to apply for Phase 3 status by Friday, according to Director of Public Health Jennifer Johnson. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

### Education

- The \$9 billion drop in state tax revenue will affect the approximately 360,000 people who attend the state's community and technical colleges -- we just don't know by how much. ([KNKX](#))

### Government

- Whatcom County employees face unpaid furlough time this summer as country revenues tank from virus economy. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

- Mount Vernon finance director was cautiously pleased that city sales tax revenues 11%, not projected 30%, less than April 2019. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- The Anacortes City Council has reduced the city's 2020 budget by \$1.66 million in response to projected budget shortfalls in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))
- Bellingham City Council members say they are committed to criminal-justice reforms and its police department says it is already reducing harm caused by police use of force. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- The San Juan County council is considering a social justice resolution that includes prohibiting all carotid control holds as well as increasing transparency and accountability by including the city manager and a council member to its police department's Force Review Board. ([Orcas Issues](#))
- Whatcom County prosecuting attorney Eric Richey is among 24 people appointed by Governor Jay Inslee to a task force making recommendations on policing. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- The Blaine City Council designated June 19 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in recognition of the day in 1865 that slaves were declared free in Texas and that the Civil War had ended. ([The Northern Light](#))

## Nature

- Americold Logistics of Lynden was fined \$41,000 by the Environmental Protection Agency for discharging pollutants into Fishtrap Creek which flows into the Nooksack river. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- A poster with pictures of Asian giant hornets was found northeast of Bellingham warning that the "murder hornets" leave "piles of dead bees or people, most of them headless." ([KGMI](#))

## **Business**

- Most of Intalco's 720 employees in Ferndale will be laid off by mid-summer with far-reaching effects on Whatcom County. Meanwhile, communities downwind of Intalco's smokestacks could catch a break from a legacy of pollution. ([The Planet](#))
- Fully reopening the U.S.-Canadian border is going to take time, and it will be even longer before cross-border shopping and visits recover, according to panelists at a Western Washington University presentation last week. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Survey shows how impacts from COVID-19 affect the Lummi Nation and Whatcom County fishing industry. ([Port of Bellingham/Whatcom Talk](#))
- North to Alaska ferry passengers have to show proof of having tested negative for COVID-19 -- and take another test 7-14 days after arrival. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

## **Community**

- All In Washington raised \$45 million to support workers and families having a hard time during the pandemic, and the Whatcom Community Foundation received \$170,000 for local help. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Whatcom Transportation Authority seeks to measure how willing riders are to use public transit during the time of virus and what safety measures are important with an [online survey](#). ([My Ferndale News](#))
- Craig Chambers is the new director of United Way of Skagit County, replacing the retiring Debra Lancaster. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))
- Merry-Ann Keane, chief administrative officer for PeaceHealth Peace Island Medical Center, has resigned and will leave her position on July 17. ([San Juan Update](#))
- Homeless residents on Orcas Island were able to shelter in place recently through the coordinated efforts of island organizations, businesses and property owners. ([Islands Sounder](#))

\* \* \*

*Like this newsletter? Share it. And it's easy to subscribe by reply mail. Your email address will never be shared-- and you can unsubscribe at any time. Mike Sato.*

\* \* \*

*Salish Current is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, online local news organization serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Salish Current exists to strengthen democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.*

*Facebook: [Salish Current](#)*

*Twitter: [@currentsalish](#)*

*Email: [SalishCurrent@gmail.com](mailto:SalishCurrent@gmail.com)*

*Website: [salish-current.org](http://salish-current.org)*