

Salish Current

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

Dear Readers — We've welcomed the first week of Daylight Savings Time and this weekend we'll welcome the Spring Equinox and the beginning of astronomical Spring. And we welcome the many new readers who have subscribed this month — and thank many of you who have seen fit to support paying our freelance reporters by [donating](#) to *Salish Current*. Thank you for going with the Current. — **Amy Nelson, publisher, and Mike Sato, managing editor**

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News from the Salish Current, week of March 19, 2021

[A next step to resolve Nooksack water rights waits on legislative budget decision](#)



The Nooksack River winds through Whatcom County, supplying water for multiple uses; at left, the North Fork broadens and then narrows to flow under a bridge on Highway 9 north of Van Zandt and conjoin with the South Fork.

By Alex Meacham — The state Department of Ecology has announced its intent to resolve the contentious issues around water rights in the Nooksack Basin through the legal action of adjudication, and money to move that process forward is proposed in the budget under consideration by the Legislature. ([Read more.](#))

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[From the Editor's Desk / Readers respond to why the San Juans need a rescue tug](#)

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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

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday [announced](#) the extension of the border closing for another month to April 21.

March 21 marks one year since the U.S. and Canada closed their shared border to nonessential crossings due to the pandemic. It's anybody's guess when the border might reopen for discretionary trips. ([NW News Network](#))

Whatcom County 3/19/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very high risk 10.7/100K

San Juan County 3/19/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Low risk 0.8/100K

Skagit County 3/19/21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk 5.5/100K

Education

Despite COVID-19 closures, local libraries continue providing resources to their communities. ([Klipsun Magazine](#))

Government

- *San Juan County*

The San Juan County Council amended its vacation rental moratorium to cover the urban growth areas of Lopez and Orcas as well as the hamlets of Orcas Island for six months, and to develop through its work plan a limit on the number of vacation rentals allowed in the island. ([San Juan Journal](#))

- *City of Bellingham*

The Bellingham City Council held a [special meeting](#) on March 15 to consider an [ordinance](#) to authorize a sales and use tax for housing and related services.

Tara Sundin, Planning and Community Development, presented an overview of the city's housing resources, capacity, financing and projects. The council passed the ordinance 7-0.

Mayor Seth Fleetwood updated the council on tent encampments and invited city residents to visit the city's [website](#) for more detailed information on housing and service resources.

- *Port of Bellingham*

The Port of Bellingham Commission met on March 16. [Agenda items](#) included:

Commissioners voted 3-0 against a 3% moorage rate increase for recreational boats at Squalicum Harbor and voted 3-0 to approve a new commercial lease with Pacific Cruises Northwest, Inc., dba Port Fairhaven to operate a fish and chip restaurant in the Bellingham Cruise Terminal.

Staff has scheduled an April 20 presentation by Harcourt Development to update the commission on progress of the waterfront condominium construction.

The commission will begin having public comment opportunities at the beginning and at the end of all commission meetings.

Nature

Wildlife officials in Washington state have said British Columbia and U.S. federal and state agencies will work together to track, trap and eradicate Asian giant hornets in the Pacific Northwest. ([Associated Press](#))

Based on two studies, each published in peer reviewed journals, Citizens of Ebey's Reserve has notified the Navy, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that it will sue if the federal agencies don't reconsider how Growler flights may impact endangered Southern Resident orcas and threatened marbled murrelets. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Business

The acreage of the former dairy farm of Leroy Lagerwey northeast of Northwood and Kamm roads in Lynden has been granted a 92-lot residential mixed density rezone. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Bellingham's Community Food Co-op donated \$95,206 to 20 local farms across Whatcom and Skagit counties as part of its 2021 Farm Fund program. ([The Northern Light](#))

Ferndale community development director Haylie Miller has resigned to take a position as community development director of Marysville. ([My Ferndale News](#))

Community

The Lake Whatcom Joint Councils and Commissioners will meet at 6:30 p.m. on March 31 and the public can view the meeting. Go to [City of Bellingham](#).

Terrance "TeeJay" Morris, a Bellingham activist and community organizer who is a key voice in the local Black Lives Matter and social justice movement, will seek the District 1 Whatcom County Council seat currently held by Rud Browne who has announced he will not be running for re-election. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Michael Shepard announced he is running for re-election to his second term as Port of Bellingham Commissioner. ([Facebook](#))

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

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