

# **Salish Current**

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

Dear Readers —

If you've listened to public radio, you'd know that spring and fall are fundraising times on the air. It's a time when listeners are asked to donate so that programs can be enjoyed by all, donors and non-donors alike. Last week, public radio station KNKX successfully concluded a five-day fundraiser just a few thousand dollars short of their \$500,000 goal. It's impressive that a station anyone can listen to for free can garner that kind of support from its listener community. We see it as a vote of confidence not only for the importance of the news provided but also as a vote of confidence in open access, advertising-free, independent news media. *Salish Current's* annual funding needs are only about a tenth of KNKX's fall fundraising goals and, as we begin our fall NewsMatch fundraising campaign in November, we ask you to give [your financial support](#) for us to continue and expand our news reporting and to continue to provide news accessible to all. Please [support us](#) with a monthly or one-time donation. Thank you.

— Amy Nelson, Publisher, and Mike Sato, Managing Editor

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

News from the Salish Current, week of Oct. 15, 2021

## [Election 2021: Addressing homelessness is priority for city, county candidates — and there's agreement on how to do so](#)



*The Base Camp shelter operated in downtown Bellingham by the Lighthouse Mission is nearly full nightly — already in mid-October — a prime indicator for concern around the needs of unhoused people. Candidates for council positions share a sense of urgency about the housing crisis and sharp need for affordable housing.*

By Lauren Gallup — Candidates for Bellingham city and Whatcom County councils share concern that there are not enough options for people living unhoused in the area, and incumbents and challengers both say they want to do more to address the housing crisis. ([Read more.](#))

## [Election 2021: Parties aim to influence Port elections; candidates embrace nonpartisanship](#)



*Two of three Port of Bellingham commissioner positions are up for election in November. A look at campaign contributions on the Public Disclosure Commission website demonstrates party support for the nonpartisan offices.*

*By Ralph Schwartz — Port of Bellingham commission seats are nonpartisan, but that doesn't mean the political parties aren't trying to sway the outcomes of this year's elections with endorsements and campaign funding support.*

*([Read more.](#))*

## ['Where's the ferry?' islanders ask as crew shortages stymie scheduled sailings](#)



*Recent substantial crew shortages have resulted in cancellations of more than 50 Washington State Ferries sailings in a week in the San Juan Islands. State officials are looking for long-term solutions to serve commuters and other residents and visitors.*

*By Heather Spaulding — In San Juan County, where ferry service is an integral part of the state highway system, recent cancellations of ferry sailings related to crew shortages have resulted in some residents unable to get home, to work or to doctor appointments, and have delayed arrival of groceries and*

*other vital supplies. ([Read more.](#))*

## [Letters to the Editor](#)

- "Public sector may be better solution than private for rural broadband internet" — John Whitmer, Bellingham
- "Supports Russ Whidbee for Bellingham City Council" — Dick Conoboy, Bellingham

## **News from around the region**

### **Health and Safety**

The United States is set to reopen its borders to fully vaccinated travelers starting starting Nov. 8, for those traveling by air, land or passenger ferry. ([CBC](#))

When the U.S. border reopens to vaccinated Canadians, there will be no testing requirement to enter Point Roberts. But Canada requires a negative COVID-19 test to return to Canada and Point Roberts offers testing only on Wednesdays and Sundays, which would limit Canadian visitors. Community leaders want Canada to lift the testing regulation. ([Canadian Press](#))

The Town of Friday Harbor commissioners voted 2-2 with Mayor Farhad Ghatan casting a deciding vote in favor of requiring all town employees to be fully vaccinated by Dec. 7 as a condition of employment. ([San Juan Journal](#))

Whatcom County 10/15//21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 25.1/100K; 69.4% vaccinated  
San Juan County 10/15/21 [COVID ActNow](#) High risk; 13.8/100K; 77.7% vaccinated  
Skagit County 10/15/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 42.2/100K; 64.3% vaccinated

## **Government**

### City of Bellingham

The Bellingham City Council met on Oct. 11. [Agenda items](#) included:

- The mayor appointed Barbara Ryan as the Edgemoor Neighborhood Primary Representative to her first term on the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission. Her term will expire on Oct. 5, 2023.

The next scheduled public comment session is scheduled for Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. and can be [joined here](#).

The council voted 6-0 (Anderson excused) in favor of a [resolution](#) opposing all four Bellingham initiatives before voters on the Nov. 2 ballot and encouraging voters to vote no on the four measures.

The council is scheduled to meet next on Oct. 25.

### Whatcom County

The Whatcom County Council met on Oct. 12. [Agenda items](#) included:

- [AB2021-185](#) From [The Northern Light](#): In a 4-3 vote (Frazey, Buchanan and Donovan opposed), Whatcom County Council voted Oct. 12 to create a no-shooting zone in Drayton Harbor within 1,000 feet of the shoreline. The vote concludes a two-year battle between the city of Blaine, waterfowl hunters and tribal representatives to find an agreement in the dispute, and was decided just days before hunting opens in Drayton Harbor on Oct. 16.
- [AB2021-414](#) The council approved 6-1 (Elenbaas opposed) to defer further action on an ordinance granting Cascade Natural Gas Corporation a franchise for the transportation of natural gas in Whatcom County until the second meeting in January to allow Whatcom County Public Works Department to continue negotiating the franchise agreement with Cascade Natural Gas and reconsider terms of the agreement. The council requested that Public Works consult with members of the Climate Impact Advisory Committee during this process.

The council is scheduled to meet next on Oct. 26.

## Port of Bellingham

The Port Commission will meet on Oct. 19. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Presentation of 3rd Quarter financials.
- Authorize the executive director to approve the revised [Project Memorandum and Estoppel Certificate](#) for Harcourt's Waterfront Residential project.

On Oct. 25, the Port's 2022 strategy budget will be available at the port office and [online here](#). Public hearings will be held on Nov. 2 and 16 and public comment taken on the budget and proposed property tax levy until Nov. 16. The budget will be adopted by the port commission on Nov. 16 at 4 p.m. The Port Commission will meet next on Oct. 19.

## Initiatives

As of Oct. 14, "No on 4" has raised \$179,810 in cash and spent \$89,128.67 to oppose People First Bellingham's Initiative 4 ensuring worker's rights. ([Public Disclosure Commission](#))

As of Oct. 14, the People First Bellingham initiative campaign has raised \$71,136.95 in cash and spent \$24,479.16. ([Public Disclosure Commission](#))

## Nature

After an early end to tribal fisheries on the Cascade River, the state Fish and Wildlife Department extended salmon fishing on the Cascade River to seven days a week through Oct. 24 — allowing five more days than previously planned. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The San Juan Preservation Trust will use \$308,602 received from the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board to buy a voluntary land preservation agreement on nearly 12 acres of McArdle Bay shoreline on southern Lopez Island and contribute \$634,650 in staff labor and donations of cash and land or property interest. ([San Juan Journal](#))

## Business

The summer of 2021 was unprecedented for local berry growers large and small, and the associated heat waves wreaked havoc on raspberry crops as temperatures climbed above 100 degrees and raspberry crops burned from the heat. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

## Commentary

Zane Gustafson and Eric de Place write: "Phasing out operations at Washington's refineries would be good for the state's climate goals, for the health of Puget Sound, and for the rights of native peoples in the region. But it would have profound impacts on the people who work at the facilities, and those effects would extend to nearby communities where the refineries contribute a lot to the economy ... Whatever comes next for Northwest refineries, it should include, explicitly, provisions to support

refinery workers and create new jobs in high-wage industrial enterprises, including renewable energy. ([Sightline](#))

## **Community**

Beginning Oct. 16, Washington State Ferries will temporarily operate reduced schedules on most routes to provide more predictable and reliable travel. For the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route that means a [three-boat schedule](#) instead of four with temporary suspension of vehicle reservations (WSF)

On Indigenous Peoples' Day, Native people, Salmon People from Canada to California and reservations in between, gathered at the Lummi Nation's Wex'liem Community Building west of Bellingham both in person and virtually to talk about what it means to be Native. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Construction of a parking area near Galbraith Mountain, a Bellingham mountain biking area, will be completed thanks to a donation to Recreation Northwest at an Oct. 9 fundraiser of \$100,000 which was forwarded to Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition. ([KGMI](#))

The six steel-riveted digester tanks on Bellingham's downtown waterfront have been outfitted with lights to glow sea blue, orange, red and green depending on the occasion. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

## **Jump in!**

Orca Recovery Day is celebrated Oct. 16 with a beach cleanup on Lummi Island hosted by the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, with virtual and "hands-on" restoration events hosted by the San Juan Islands Conservation District and San Juan County Land Bank, with a riparian restoration on the Samish River hosted by the Skagit Land Trust, and with a planting at Presenting Park hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. ([Better Ground/Puget Sound Conservation Districts](#))

**Nonprofit *Salish Current* is Women- and Minority-Led.**

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