

Salish Current

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

Dear Readers — We've reached the eve of our November/December fundraising campaign when we will ask you to make possible our effort to serve this community with real news that is freely accessible, advertising-free and independent; news that is supported by its community of readers for the community of readers, without subscriptions, free from corporate ownership or the largess of wealth. We'll ask you next month to make a donation that will be matched dollar-for-dollar, a donation large or small, one-time or monthly, that will take us into 2022. Tell others about us, share this newsletter, invite others to read *Salish Current*. Thank you for being part of the *Salish Current* community. — **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. 29, 2021

[Nooksack Tribe, partners face up to climate change challenge](#)



The Nooksack Indian Tribe is partnering with nonprofits, universities, government agencies and others in stepping up to challenges created by climate change to habitat and species in the South Fork Nooksack River.

By Kimberly Cauvel — The Nooksack Indian Tribe has been working with a wide range of partners to plan for supporting at-risk habitat and species in the South Fork Nooksack River. A new report from the tribe aims to translate the science and put boots on the ground. ([Read more.](#))

[Voters to have their say — amid controversy — on San Juan County charter amendments](#)



While there are many ideas as to how to protect the natural environment of the San Juan Islands, there is general agreement as to its beauty.

By Heather Spaulding — San Juan County voters will have had their say by Nov. 2 on hotly debated amendments to their charter proposed by the Charter Review Commission. ([Read more.](#))

Whatcom County to consider climate change goals in delay of natural gas franchise renewal



The gas is still on, even as the Whatcom County Council votes to delay signing of a franchise agreement with the supplier. The delay gives the council time to consider the terms of an agreement in light of its draft Climate Action Plan.

By Mallory Biggar — The Whatcom County Council voted to reschedule until early January a decision renewing a franchise agreement with Cascade Natural Gas, following testimony by climate activists regarding the franchise's effect on climate change goals — and after spirited discussion among council members. ([Read more.](#))

Letters to the Editor

- Ransom: Supports Kristina Michele Martens for Bellingham City Council
- Komac: Supports Russ Whidbee for Bellingham City Council
- Plaskett: Supports Russ Whidbee for Bellingham City Council

Health and Safety

The National Weather Service today issued a flood warning for the Skagit River and south fork of the Nooksack River. ([KGMI](#))

Psychedelic mushrooms, among other plant-based psychedelic drugs, might be following cannabis on a road to legalization, thanks to a new resolution sponsored by Seattle City Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis. In Bellingham, psychedelic mushrooms are still illegal. Bellingham City Council President Hannah Stone said in an email that a resolution to decriminalize psychedelic drugs has not been previously brought to consideration by the Bellingham City Council. ([The Front](#))

Water on Washington State Ferries tested positive for legionella due to being stagnant when the galleys and water fountains were closed down during the pandemic. ([San Juan Journal](#))

Whatcom County 10/29/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 30.2/100K; 70.2% vaccinated
San Juan County 10/29/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Medium risk; 9.8/100K; 78.5% vaccinated
Skagit County 10/29/21 [COVID ActNow](#) Very High risk; 51.2/100K; 65.2% vaccinated

Education

Western Washington University's Munro Institute for Civic Education Presents two forums on Nov. 4 in person and [online](#).

- "How to Reduce Harm? Addiction and Drug Policy in Washington State" brings together from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. panelists Sen. Manka Dhingra, Rep. Andrew Barkis, Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo and Professor Seema Clifasefi of the UW Harm Reduction and Research and Treatment Center.

- "*Priced Out: Housing Affordability Challenges in Washington State*" features from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Sen. Patty Kurderer, Rep. Greg Gilday, Professor Rachel Fyall of the UW Evans School of Policy and Governance and Kurt Nabbefeld of the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development.

Skagit County school districts in Concrete, La Conner and Anacortes welcomed new principals this school year. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Government

San Juan County

The San Juan County Council will hold a public hearing on its [preliminary 2022-2023 budget](#) on Nov. 9, 9:15 a.m.

The San Juan County Council will meet next on Nov. 2.

City of Bellingham

The Bellingham City Council Public Comment Sessions will be held on Nov. 1, 15 and 29. [To participate](#) (Meeting ID: 923 0705 9297 Password: 018602)

The City Council met on Oct. 25. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Public Hearing: 23137 The council held a public hearing on a resolution and an ordinance to amend the Bellingham Municipal Code to make modifications to parking fees. The council voted unanimously to refer the measures back to the Public Works and Natural Resources Committee for further discussion.
- The council unanimously approved the mayor's appointments of Tim Wilder, Jacki Quinn, and Addie Candib to the Transportation Commission.
- The council voted unanimously to authorize the mayor to Enter into an Interlocal Agreement Between City of Bellingham and Public Utility District #1 for Carbon Reduction Initiatives
- The council voted unanimously to support a staff recommendation to contract with Northwest Youth Services for operating a Young Adult Winter Shelter.
- The council voted unanimously to support expanding of the Homeless Outreach Team with an additional \$196,000 in funds to support the expansion.

The City Council will meet again in regular session on Nov. 8.

Whatcom County

The County Council met on Oct. 26. [Agenda items](#) included:

- AB2021-590 The council adopted 5-2 (Kershner, Elenbaas opposed) an [ordinance](#) imposing a second interim moratorium on the acceptance and processing of permit applications for new or expanded recreational cannabis growing and/or processing facilities which are proposed to operate outdoors or in greenhouses
- AB2021-595 The council unanimously authorized the County Executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council to administer the Housing and

Essential Needs Program in the amount of \$503,370 for a total amended contract amount of \$2,540,694

- AB2021-611 Due to tribal objection to any ban on shooting in Drayton Harbor, the council unanimously voted to rescind [previous action](#) that established a no-shooting zone in Drayton Harbor

The County council will meet again in regular session on Nov. 9.

Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham's 2022 strategy budget [is available](#) and public hearings will be held on Nov. 2 and 16 and with 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 of Bellingham Commission will meet on Nov. 2. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Presentation of the [2022 draft Strategic Budget](#) and Public Comment period.
- Consent Agenda:
 - Authorize the Executive Director to sign an [Interlocal Agreement](#) between the Port of Bellingham, City of Bellingham and Whatcom County regarding a coordinated approach to funding and contracting with economic development service providers.
- Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a new [Remedial Action Grant](#) agreement with the Department of Ecology for the Central Waterfront site to provide \$1,895,000 in state funding toward site cleanup.
- Authorize the Executive Director to execute [Amendment No. 12](#) to the Professional Services Agreement with Landau Associates, Inc. to provide design and permitting services at the Cornwall Avenue Landfill Site in the amount of \$259,100 for a total authorized contract amount of \$1,703,937.
- Action Items:
 - Approve [Resolution No. 1396](#) to adopt a policy for preserving marine trade properties.
 - Approve [Resolution No. 1397](#) for the Marine Trades area cleanup and redevelopment project.

Nature

A University of British Columbia study reporting abundant salmon prey in one area of the Strait of Juan de Fuca was "stomped on" in a backlash by researchers who objected to its conclusions. ([KUOW](#))

Skagit County Commissioners passed a resolution asking Seattle City Light to commit to a "regionally equitable salmon investment" in the Skagit River watershed as the utility seeks a new federal license for its three dams on the river. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Business

September job growth in Skagit County dropped by 200 jobs in non-farm businesses due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in the summer. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

A total of 120 Washington State Ferry workers were fired Oct. 18 for not complying with the state vaccination mandate. ([San Juan Journal](#))

Commentary

The Lummi Nation, the "Salmon People," have stopped industrial development on the shores of their ancestral fishing grounds near the Canadian border. Will they be able to stop major port expansion on the other side of the Canadian border? ([NY Times](#))

Eric de Place and Zane Gustafson write about the risks, costs and impacts of transporting crude oil to refineries via pipeline, trains and marine vessels and the shipment of finished products via pipelines, trains, marine vessels and trucks. ([Sightline](#))

Community

A lawsuit filed in July 2019 has come to trial in U.S. District Court where arguments are being heard that the Navy did not adequately review the potential environmental and public health impacts that increasing its Growler fleet from 82 to 118 jets would have on Whidbey Island and surrounding areas. ([Skaagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

The Washington state chapter of the League of Women Voters has begun a two-year study of how the decline of local news coverage affects local communities. ([KUOW](#))

Arts and Leisure

Bellingham Public Library begins the celebration of Native American Heritage Month with a Nov. 4 screening at 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. of the film, *Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge and Honoring Sacred Waters: The Documented Oral History of Life on the Nooksack River*, with Tli'nuk'dzwidzi, Althea Wilson, Lummi tribal member, documentary film maker and Northwest Indian College educator. Zoom in [here](#); reservations not required.

Jump in!

The Port of Bellingham and partners celebrate Seafest 2021 at Squalicum Harbor on Oct. 30, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sign up for the virtual *Cherry Point Science Forum* featuring local scientists speaking on marine mammals and the implications of the summer heat wave and on longer-term patterns of environmental and ecological change in our coastal marine ecosystems. Oct. 30, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Hosted by RE Sources, [reservations required](#).

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

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