



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

News of the week: April 29, 2022

Dear Reader —

For not-for-profit organizations, asking for money is essential. And while *Salish Current* depends on readers who can pay to enable us to provide news accessible to all, there's some pain in asking. That's because all not-for-profits ask—for flood relief, the arts, environmental justice, aid to the unhoused and more. The needs are real and the causes just.

Local journalism—independent, transparent, fact-based, trustworthy news that strengthens democracy by keeping our community informed—is one of those just causes that meets real needs. And, it's our mission.

So this week, we're asking: [please GiveBIG](#) to *Salish Current*. The statewide campaign raises money to help participating organizations meet our missions, and also raises awareness of the important work that not-for-profit organizations are doing in localities around the state.



Donations to *Salish Current* pay for freelance reporters who cover health and safety, education, government, environment, business, community and arts. *Salish Current* has no hidden hedge fund or millionaire behind the curtain; just paid freelancers and volunteer editors, board members and community advisors.

We believe that the freely accessible, fact-based news we report will increase trust in the civil discussion and civic decisions in our community. We believe you, too, can share in growing the health of our community.

Why? Because *Salish Current* is community journalism that's free to read, free from advertising, and supported by its community of readers. Not everybody can donate

but those who can—with a monthly or one-time donation—donate, so everyone can read the news.

Please [GiveBIG to support *Salish Current*](#).

Thank you.

And if you'd like more news, here you are:

Salish Sea News Week in Review 4/29/22: Arbor Friday, decolonizing conservation, container ships, old-growth, tire pollution, Olympic Mountains glaciers, cold-water corals, Totem Pole journey, British Columbia fish farms, Tokitae, Green River salmon, First Nation forestry, heat dome survival, ocean extinction, saving sea stars, suing for marbled murrelets

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

News from the *Salish Current*

[Can Southern Resident killer whales have legal rights?](#)



Southern Resident killer whales swim close to shore off Lime Kiln Point State Park on San Juan Island, to the delight of onlookers. Advocates seeking establishment of legal rights for nature—including the endangered orcas—shared

their perspectives during the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference this week.

By Olivia Palmer — Ecosystem conference: Advocates are promoting 'rights of nature' as orca numbers dwindle. ([Read more.](#))

[New parking rules on as Bellingham struggles with enforcement](#)



Historic Fairhaven will make history again on May 1, as the district sees parking fees assessed for the first time. The new pay stations in Fairhaven come along with new fee hours—including Saturdays—for both Fairhaven and downtown

Bellingham ... meanwhile, the City faces challenges in parking enforcement as the labor market impacts staffing.

By Matt Benoit — New parking rules—and fees—take effect May 1, but enforcement resources are low. ([Read more.](#))

[Funds secured for affordable housing on Port waterfront](#)



Work is progressing on an affordable housing project at Barkley Village, one of several completed or ongoing in the Bellingham area. Construction could begin this year for another: The Millworks, a multi-partner project planned for Port of Bellingham

property near the waterfront.

By Lauren Gallup — State funds have been secured for The Millworks, a multi-partner affordable housing project in Bellingham. ([Read more.](#))

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Ann Stevenson: Whatcom residents can help in the global refugee crisis

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

News from around the region

Health and Safety

COVID-19 cases are slightly increasing in Whatcom County, but remain in the CDC's low community level rating. The Omicron BA.2 variant became the dominant variant in Washington state and has been found in Whatcom County, according to the health department.

(The Northern Light)

- [Whatcom County Community Level Health Risk](#): Low
- [San Juan County Community Level Health Risk](#): Low
- [Skagit County Community Level Health Risk](#): Low

Education

Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College track with national trends of enrollment decline. *(The Front)*

Western Washington University was granted \$6 million by the state legislature to fund new programs and expand on existing ones, and to be used to invest in classroom upgrades, buildings and other minor works.

(CDN)

Government

San Juan County

The council met on April 25. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Presentation: Oil Spill Response Priorities and Capabilities in the Salish Sea (0:02:11)
- Action: The council unanimously approved holding a public hearing on May 17 for the removal of a planning commissioner.

- The commission met with Rep. Alex Ramel regarding the Friday Harbor fire.

The commission will meet next on May 3.

City of Bellingham

The council met on April 25. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Broadband: Spencer Moore of The Broadband Advisory Workgroup presented an update of their work, including broadband equity and affordability.
- Climate action: The administration proposes a property tax to generate approximately \$6 million per year over a 10-year term with priorities directed to renewable electricity, low-carbon transportation, electrification and energy efficiency, and climate change adaptation. Council will be presented a draft resolution on May 23 and a public hearing held on June 6. Pending council action on June 6, pro and con statements will be posted in early June.
- Sexual and domestic violence: Susan Marks, Director of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence, updated the council on the work of the commission, with a focus on restorative and transformative justice. Mayor Fleetwood earlier informed the council of his appointment of Pamela Wheeler to her first partial term on the commission.
- In-person council meetings: The council voted unanimously to continue discussion at its May 23 meeting.
- Housing plan for families with children: Samya Lutz, Housing and Services Program Manager; Tara Sundin, Community and Economic Development Manager; Greg Winter, Opportunity Council; and Louis Walbrek of Lydia Place provided council with an update on efforts to address the needs of families with children. The public can comment on the plan at [Engage Bellingham](#).
- Post Point resource recovery: The council unanimously approved that staff continue to develop the anaerobic digester and conduct further assessment of post digestion solids management. See: "[Bellingham OKs this new sewage treatment but 'forever chemicals' questions remain](#)" (Bellingham Herald/paywall)

- Mobile home park moratorium: The council unanimously approved a final extension of the moratorium on redevelopment of manufactured home parks.

The council will meet next on May 9.

Whatcom County

The council met on April 26. [Agenda items](#) included:

- The Way Station. The council approved 6-1 (Elenbaas opposed) the County Executive to enter into a grant agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Dept of Commerce for the Way Station in the amount of \$4,000,000. [Staff memo](#).
- Alternative Response Team. The council approved 6-1 (Elenbaas opposed) the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and City of Bellingham to provide funding for the Alternative Response Team pilot program, in an amount not to exceed \$167,917 in 2022 and \$259,210 in 2023. [Substitute Staff Memo](#).

The council will meet next on May 10.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on May 3. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Consent agenda: Commission motion authorizing Port of Bellingham Executive Director to execute an updated 2022-2024 [Interlocal Agreement](#) between the Port of Bellingham (Port) and the Public Utility District of Whatcom County (PUD) for the purpose of joint collaboration in the continued development and implementation of the Whatcom County Rural Broadband Fiber Network.
- Presentation: Moorage Model Update
- Action Agenda: Motion to authorize the Executive Director to approve a [policy](#) and fee schedule to allow preferential nonexclusive use for commercial fishermen to access the Fishermen's Pavilion exclusively for commercial net mending Oct. 1 through May 31, and community use June 1 through Sept. 30.

The commission will meet next on May 17.

Elections

Public Disclosure Commission Campaign Contributions

as of April 29, 2022

LD 42 Senate Campaign

Ben Elenbaas (R): Raised \$76,942; Spent \$11,904

Russ Dziato (Other): Raised \$0.00; Spent \$0.00

Sharon Shewmake (D): Raised \$81,521; Spent \$9,455

Simon Sefzik (R): Raised \$96,246; Spent \$8,532

LD 42 House Campaign Position 1

Alicia Rule (D): Raised \$52,496; Spent \$13,161

Kamal Bhachu (R): Raised \$6,255; Spent \$301

Tawsha Dykstra Dawson (R): Raised \$11,590; Spent \$8,008

LD 42 House Campaign Position 2

Dan Johnson (R): Raised \$27,336; Spent \$4,800

Joe Timmons (D): Raised \$36,655; Spent \$7,970

Kyle Christensen (R): Raised \$11,404; Spent \$4,892

Richard May (D): Raised \$50,021; Spent \$9,682

LD 40 House Campaign Position 1

Debra Lekanoff (D): Raised \$21,345; Spent \$18,959;

Debt \$1,000

LD 40 House Campaign Position 2

Alex Ramel (D): Raised \$58,427; Spent \$9,412

Trevor Smith (D): Raised \$4,100; Spent \$71

Whatcom County District Court Judge Position 1

Angela Anderson: Raised \$0; Spent \$0

Whatcom County District Court Judge Position 2

Jonathan Rands: Raised \$26,260; Spent \$4,849; Loans \$10,000; Debt \$3,642

David Nelson: Raised \$5,382; Spent \$429

Gordon Jenkins: Raised \$30,200; Spent \$750; Loans \$5,000

Nature

Tokitae. Veterinarians are examining Tokitae at the Miami Seaquarium after the facility's new owners have allowed a health exam, raising hopes that the orca may be allowed to return to Puget Sound. ([Q13 Fox News](#))

Green crabs. The Northwest Straits Commission has placed traps for the invasive green crabs in Squalicum and Drayton Harbors and some other areas in Whatcom County. ([KGMI](#))

Commerce

ADUs. Skagit County will now allow larger accessory dwelling units (ADU) in unincorporated Skagit County, increasing the maximum size from 900 square feet to 1,200. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Ferry woes. An anchor on the WSF Yakima broke loose in a collision with the Lopez Island ferry dock on Thursday and damaged the vessel enough to require taking the vessel out of service for repairs. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Ferry reservations. Vehicle reservations for summer travel on the San Juan Islands and Port Townsend/Coupeville routes between June 19 and Sept. 24 will be available at 7 a.m. PDT on Tuesday, May 3.

NW Tea. Researchers at the Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center hope to learn how tea can grow in the Pacific Northwest and become a commercial crop. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Seaweed. The Lummi Island Sea Greens LLC plans to use a 5-acre plot in Legoe Bay this fall as a seaweed-growing location. ([CDN](#))

NEXUS. Canadian NEXUS enrollment centers remain closed while the U.S. enrollment centers reopened for applicant interviews on April 19. Negotiations between Canada and the U.S. continue. ([The Northern Light](#))

Community

REDress Display. Visit the installation on display at the Whatcom Museum courtyard, May 5-15, which recognizes Murdered and Missing Indigenous People Awareness Day, May 5. Brought to you in partnership by Whatcom Community College and the Whatcom Museum.

Parking. New Fairhaven parking meters draw complaints from low-income area residents now faced with paying for on-street residential parking. ([CDN](#)) See also: "[New parking rules on as Bellingham struggles with enforcement](#)" (*Salish Current*)

Skagit health. Skagit County plans to develop its North Star project to align public health efforts and initiatives in more coordinated and productive strategies. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Movies. The Anacortes Cinemas movie theater has been purchased by the Anacortes Arts Festival for \$550,000. The facility's lease with the city stipulates that films will be shown on premises but not what kinds of films. ([Anacortes American](#))

Digital equity. Evergreen Goodwill has launched a state-of-the-art "Digital Equity Bus," which will bring computer literacy and workforce development classes to people in rural and historically under-resourced communities. ([Evergreen Goodwill/Whatcom Talk](#))

Child care. The Anacortes City Council voted unanimously Monday to approve a permit for construction of the 4,130-square-foot Samish Early Learning Center, which will fill a critical need in the city for licensed childcare. ([Anacortes American](#))

Arts and Leisure

[Friday Harbor Film Festival's 2022 Director Series](#) continues through Oct. 5 and features films with the themes of Explorers & Adventures, Things to Consider, and Tales from the Heart. [Watch on-demand](#) April 22 - May 3 for \$1.95 "The Poseidon Project."

[Salish Sea Early Music Festival](#) presents “Baroque quartets by Marin Marais, Georg Philipp Telemann, Johann Sebastian Bach and others” performed by Greenberg & Cohan & Wright & Napper
May 4, 7 p.m.: Fir-Conway Lutheran Church, Conway
May 6, 7 p.m.: St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Bellingham
May 7, 12 noon: Grace Church, Lopez Island
May 7, 7 p.m.: Brickworks, Friday Harbor
May 10, 6 p.m.: Orcas Adventist Fellowship Church/Orcas Christian School Gym
Masks and vaccination required • \$20 or \$25 suggested donation • youth 18 and under always free

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RARE: Recycled Arts Resource Expo. Opening April 1, 6-9 p.m., 1418 Cornwall Ave. RARE highlights creative reuse in the form of art through an exhibit at the Allied Arts Gallery and at its [virtual gallery](#) April 1-30.

Jump in!

Restoration. [Josh VanderYacht Park blackberry abatement bash](#) will be held on April 30, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., to remove invasive plants and replace them with native ground cover. (South Fork Valley Community Association)

Bike parade. On May 1, 1948, an estimated 800 Whatcom County youth rode their decorated bikes down Holly Street in a May Day bike parade in downtown Bellingham. This May 1, recreate history at the Bellingham Bike Parade which will kick off a month of celebrations for [Bike Everywhere Month](#).

Butterfly. Visit sites on San Juan Island where landowners are making new habitat for the Island Marble Butterfly and learn about the different habitat creation methods being tested and what the butterfly needs to survive May 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. R.S.V.P. to Tanja Williamson at (360) 370-7655 or email tanjaw@sjclandbank.org

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be shared and you can unsubscribe at any time. —
Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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news — freely accessible to all — with independence
and strict journalistic integrity.

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