



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

News of the week: June 3, 2022

Dear Reader —

As *Salish Current* officially begins its third year of publication next week, I want to thank you, for your reading, your donating and your supporting fact-based, open access, independent news from and for Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties.

The fact-based local news comes from a great corps of paid freelance reporters and volunteer editors. Our coverage is free to read and independent thanks to supporters who have donated to start us off and help us grow.

Since we began publishing in 2020 (with a prototype mode starting in late February) we've brought you:

- 211 original articles by Salish Current journalists — that have prompted dozens of insightful comments from readers via letters to the editor
- 43 thoughtful Community Voices columns on issues from Nooksack Basin water rights to diversity, equity and inclusion
- 118 weekly newsletters, highlighting our content and linking to news from other journalists around the region.

Our readership grows weekly, both of the newsletter and the website, and our list of donors gets longer every month.

We launched Salish Current because local news matters; we continue because you trust and support us.

Our game plan in the next few years is to grow our reporting and our readership by funding a paid newsroom staff to bring you more in-depth reporting, curated local news briefs and thought-provoking community commentaries.

Salish Current is a news product. It also is an idea, a concept of how news can be written and delivered as a public resource, as a community good supported by the community it serves.

At *Salish Current*, we rely on donations from individuals to help cover the cost of the journalism we produce. Because of this, we are constantly reminded of who we serve: readers like you.

There's never a bad time to support journalism that strengthens our local democracy. If you like what we are doing, please consider being a [Salish Current donor](#).

Thank you!

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Looking for more news? Check here:

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 6/3/22](#): Egg Friday, lithium water, recreation, salmon hatcheries, stuck red barge, green crab, orca month, J59, vessel slow zones, beating oil, Lolita

News from the *Salish Current*

[Retail theft surge prompts varied responses](#)



The presence of security guards in local businesses does not necessarily increase the sense of security on the part of customers, and in fact makes some feel less safe. As retailers respond to increases in theft and burglaries with security guards, some local residents suggest there are better ways to address the problem.

By Matt Benoit — As the presence of security guards grows in response to increased retail theft, some

residents say de-escalation is a better strategy. ([Read more.](#))

[Community Voices / Hope on the horizon](#)



A dog named Mouse provides company and comfort for a woman currently living out of an RV. Community Voices contributor John Dunne shares her difficult story.

By John Dunne — Despite a difficult start to a difficult life, a woman in her 60s looks forward to finding housing — and reconnecting with family. ([Read more.](#))

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Thomas Goetzl: “Some thoughts on the gun violence most recently witnessed in Uvalde, Texas”

**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

Ticks. An interactive [map](#) issued by the B.C. Centre for Disease Control shows high-risk areas for ticks. ([CBC](#))

COVID-19 Community Health Levels:

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

Education

Erin Duez is the new principal at Anacortes High School. She replaces Principal Daniel Williams, who resigned earlier this year. ([Anacortes American](#)) Colette Roche is the new principal at Mount Vernon High School and will take over for interim Principal Bill Nutting on July 1. ([Skaqatt Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council will meet on June 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Discussion: Seismic Assessment Report, San Juan County Courthouse
- Discussion: 2022 Planning Commission docket briefing
- Discussion: Affordable Housing Grants
- Discussion/Action: Code of Conduct –Resolution Re-Adopting Code of Conduct

City of Bellingham

The council will meet on June 6. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Introduction of Rebecca Mertzig as Chief of Police.
- Public Works and Natural Resources Committee: Resolution to approve the 2023-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) [Staff memo.](#)
- Parks and Recreation Committee: Status Update on Parks and Recreation Projects. [Presentation.](#)
- Committee of the Whole: An ordinance amending the 2021-2022 biennial budget increasing expenditures related to a bridge loan to preserve affordable housing. [Staff memo.](#)
- Presentation of Draft Climate Action Fund Resolution. [Staff memo.](#) [Presentation.](#) [Resolution.](#)
- Consideration of an ordinance establishing a Shelter Protection Area immediately adjacent to the proposed interim housing facility located at 910 West Holly Street. [Ordinance.](#) (See also: “Not in their backyard — or anyone else's “([CDN](#)))

The council will meet again on June 26.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on June 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

- Public hearing: Ordinance providing for the submission of a proposition to the qualified electors of Whatcom County authorizing the County to lift the limit on regular property taxes under Chapter 84.55 RCW for the purpose of funding for childcare, early learning programs, and increased support for vulnerable children. [Ordinance](#).
- Other Actions: Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Pyramid Communications for public communications for the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force in the amount of \$88,800. [Staff memo](#).

The council will meet again on June 21.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on June 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent agenda:

- Motion authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a Personal Services Agreement with Makers Architecture and Urban Design for [Phase 1](#) of a Waterfront District Marine Trades Area Master Plan with a total contract amount of \$71,219 and amend Capital Budget 215-880-1900 by \$10,000 for a total budget amount of \$235,000.
- Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a new Remedial Action Grant [agreement](#) with the Department of Ecology for the Whatcom Waterway site to provide \$1,340,000 in State funding toward site cleanup.
- Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a new Remedial Action Grant [agreement](#) with the Department of Ecology for the I & J Waterway site to provide \$320,000 in State funding toward site cleanup.

Action items:

- Approve a motion authorizing the Executive Director to execute a Personal Services Agreement

with FLO Analytics to conduct an expansion of the I-5 corridor infrastructure and utility [study](#).

The commission will meet again on June 21.

Nature

J-Pod. The Center for Whale Research captured some awesome photos in a J-Pod encounter. ([Orcsonian](#))

Orca Month. June is Orca Month and the state has a [website](#) dedicated to saving the endangered Southern Resident orcas. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Salmon hatcheries. In a weeklong series, "The Paradox of Salmon Hatcheries," reporters detail how the golden dream of hatcheries was to make more fish but that the reality is much more complicated. ([Hakai Magazine](#))

Abalone. Since 2009, more than 40,000 juvenile pinto abalone have been released at 21 sites in the San Juan Archipelago in an effort to recover the population of the native species. ([Crosscut](#))

Heronry. The City of Bellingham's \$768,000, 1.43-acre land purchase will preserve the Post Point great blue heron colony's nesting site but land protections will expire if the herons do not return to nest for three consecutive years, according to a conservation easement underwritten by the Whatcom Land Trust. ([CDN](#))

Business

Maritime award. Working Waterfront Coalition member Debbie Granger received the Seattle Propeller Club's 2022 Puget Sound Maritime Achievement Award for her contributions to the local maritime community. Granger is one of three women to be honored with the award since it began in 1951. ([The Northern Light](#))

Farmworker housing. Tony Wisdom, owner of Skagit Valley Farms, proposes that old farm buildings be repurposed into housing to meet the needs of local farmworkers. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Nooksack water. Continued collaboration among all user groups of Nooksack River water would be better than adjudication, said Whatcom County Farmers officials Dillon Honcoop and Fred Likkel at a Solving Whatcom's Water Crisis public event on May 25. The problem isn't a water shortage problem but a water management problem that could be addressed by dredging in a side channel of the Nooksack River at Everson. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Tribe economy. Washington Tribes contributed \$5.6 billion in 2020 in gross state product and employed one in every 86 Washingtonians, according to the latest economic and community benefits report from the Washington Indian Gaming Association. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Student art. Local Bellingham businesses provide a venue for Western Washington University students to display their art. ([The Front](#))

Commentary

Biodiversity. State Senator Liz Lovelett (D-40) writes, "While many states are doing what they can to safeguard biodiversity for future generations, we need the federal government to partner with us in creating a comprehensive, national solution. That's why I've joined 365 state legislators from across the country to call for a unified governmental approach toward preserving our country's natural environments with the creation of a National Biodiversity Strategy." ([Seattle Times/Opinion](#))

Community

Homeless shelter. A hearing examiner on June 8 will [hear](#) arguments from proponents and opponents of Lighthouse Mission Ministries' plans to build a five-story homeless shelter for 400 residents on West Holly Street in Bellingham's Old Town. ([CDN](#))

Blaine developments. Cascade Engineering Group and Harbor Custom Development (HCD) met with community members May 25 about Inverness, a Semiahmoo subdivision of 88 single-family and townhomes on 37 acres. HCD is also developing the

400-unit Horizon at Semiahmoo subdivision across the parkway from Inverness, and is in contract to purchase Grandis Pond, an upcoming 1,000-unit east Blaine neighborhood. ([The Northern Light](#))

Docket items. Skagit County commissioners will decide June 14 which planning docket items such as saltwater intrusion on Guemes Island and fully contained communities will be analyzed in the coming year. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Celebrating Juneteenth, a production of the Juneteenth Video Project, will be launched on June 13 and made available to K-12 schools in Whatcom County as well as to the community to deepen understanding of the celebratory holiday. ([Connect Ferndale/Ferndale Community Services](#))

Flo Simon. Bellingham Police Chief Flo Simon retired on June 1 after nearly 33 years of service. ([City of Bellingham](#))

[Snee-nee-chum](#), the Nocksack Indian Tribe's newsletter, is back in publication under the new editorship of Kimberly Cauvel. [Squol Quol](#), the Lummi Nation's newsletter is online as well.

Blaine's city manager Michael Jones resigned on June 1 after 15 years working for the city of Blaine, and will become county administrator for Island County. ([The Northern Light](#))

"Ghost fields." Once upon a time, none of Bellingham's current baseball venues existed, and residents filled places long since erased from the map. Here are some noteworthy ballparks of Bellingham's past. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

Arts and Leisure

"Alaska's Great Race" is film about Susan Butcher and her dog team at the 1985 Iditarod, the most demanding sled dog race of all from Anchorage to Nome. Virtual showings begin June 3. (Friday Harbor Film Festival's Director's Choice) [Tickets.](#)

A Sondheim Serenade. Kulshan Chorus and Sno-King Chorale present a choral celebration of the late Stephen Sondheim's music on June 4 at 3 p.m. in the Bellingham High School auditorium. [Tickets](#).

Daniel Bolshoy. The Bellingham Symphony Orchestra presents "Resounding Joy," featuring guitarist Daniel Bolshoy performing Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Guitar Concerto. The orchestra closes its 46th season with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. June 5, 3 p.m. Mount Baker Theater. [Tickets](#).

Jump in!

BIPOC gathering. Come explore and learn about the customs and culture of members of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) residents of Whatcom County at an event featuring music, dance, art, stories and food from our BIPOC citizens. June 12, 2-6 p.m., Bellingham Market Depot Square. [\(Racial Equity/Healthy Democracy Committee of the League of Women Voters, Bellingham & Whatcom County\)](#)

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Salish Current is a nonprofit online newsroom serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Founded in 2020, *Salish Current* exists to protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news — freely accessible to all — with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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