



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

News of the week: July 22, 2022

Dear Reader —

This is not a safe time for voter apathy anywhere in America. Yet the sheer volume of information may drive us to that, particularly because not all that information is trustworthy.

Overloaded, we work to sort out what is fact, what is opinion being represented as fact, and far too often what is simply wrong — misinformation — or worse yet, intentionally misleading — disinformation.

For fact seekers, elections have always been challenging. Of all that candidates and their supporters say, what is exaggeration to the point of falsehood? What truth may or may not be mixed in the mud? What is the context for statistics used to illustrate a point? Which promises are sincere, and which will be forgotten after election day?

Given the crucial choices for 42nd Legislative District voters to make in the Aug. 2 primary election, *Salish Current's* editors decided to step up our coverage of the recent candidate forum sponsored by League of Women Voters of Bellingham-Whatcom County: We decided to fact-check the candidates' assertions.

The feedback in the week following has been overwhelmingly positive. We were delighted to hear how useful and appreciated our coverage was, from people who had watched the forums and from some who had not.

We also had the opportunity to fact-check our own work — and to appreciate readers who expected us to do so and cared enough about the truth to tell us. Take a look at [the article](#), if you haven't yet read it, and take a look at this week's [letters to the editor](#). You'll see the kind of civil discussion that *Salish Current* works to promote, the kind that keeps the community talking

together about who we are choosing to serve us in government.

Promoting civil discussion and providing the depth of fact-based information needed to inform the discussion is why we exist. Thank you for reading, thank you for sharing our stories with others, and thank you for the support that makes it all possible.

... And this week, check out [Eric Scigliano's analysis](#) of how the market forces around clean hydropower are affecting industry's ability to operate and innovate — in particular a proposal for restarting the Intalco plant near Ferndale.

—Amy Nelson, Publisher

Wait! There's more: [Salish Sea News Week in Review 7/22/22](#): Spooner, natural gas, sea gardens, Atlas Network, climate clock, Canadian oceans, Tribes for Puget Sound, "Big Oil" fight, Springer's 20th, WA forest logging, 'green' aluminum 'clean' power, spirit bear

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

News from the *Salish Current*

[Intalco restart: can 'green' aluminum get 'clean' power?](#)



Transmission lines carry rivers of clean energy from Bonneville Power Administration dams on the Columbia to localities across the state and elsewhere. A new company is looking for ways to tap in, to enable a green restart of the Intalco aluminum plant.

By Eric Scigliano—Options for a clean-power source are narrowing for a buyout firm with a sustainability ethos

that wants to restart and upgrade the Intalco aluminum plant near Ferndale. ([Read more ...](#))

Letters to the Editor

- Buchanan: Ramel excellent partner with local government
- Kelly: Negative ads and mailers deserve fact-checking
- Allen: Requests clarity in endorsement fact-check
- Ging: Don't be fooled by falsehoods and innuendo
- Robbins: Cast vote for Jonathan Rands for judge

News from around the region

(The links found here may have limited access for those who don't subscribe to the source publication. Sorry for any inconvenience!

Health and Safety

Heat. National Weather Service predicts daytime highs in the upper 80s and higher are forecast for Western Washington starting Monday, July 25, and temperatures could reach into the 90s for several days next week, starting Tuesday, July 26. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

COVID-19 Community Health Levels:

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

Government

San Juan County

The council met on July 19. Agenda items and video feed may be found [here](#).

- The council unanimously adopted an ordinance amending disposition of surplus animals. (20:38)
- The council unanimously approved the Housing Advisory Committee funding recommendations for the

Emergency Rental Assistance Program for the San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Family Resource Centers (1:56:45)

- The council unanimously approved the Historic Courthouse grant application. (2:04:12)
- The council unanimously approved a Social Media Policy. (2:23:59)
- The council unanimously approved the grant application to the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) for the Higgins Property, Lopez Island (a.k.a. Watmough Bay Addition. (3:12:23)

The council will meet again on Aug. 2.

City of Bellingham

The council will meet on July 25. [Agenda items](#) include:

Committee of the Whole:

- [Race equity](#). Update on Development Process, Community Engagement and Structure of Proposed Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. [Update report](#).
- [EMS levy](#). Overview of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy Plan. [Staff memo](#). [EMS Plan](#).

The council will meet again on Aug. 1.

- [Public Hearing](#), Aug. 1, 7 p.m.

[Police](#). The Bellingham Police Department is applying for a Department of Justice Assistance Grant and would like to use the grant for recruitment of new officers through print media, radio, buses, social media, billboards, and banners.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on July 26. [Agenda items](#) include:

County Executive Report:

- [Parks & Rec](#). Request confirmation of the County Executive's appointment of Bennett Knox as Director of Parks and Recreation effective 9/6/22.

Other Items:

- [Transportation](#). Resolution supporting a transition to zero-emissions transportation. [Amended Second Substitute Resolution - Track Changes](#).
- [EMS levy](#). Ordinance providing for submission to the qualified voters of Whatcom County a proposition renewing the levy of a regular property tax at a rate of

\$.295 or less per \$1000 assessed valuation to continue to provide emergency medical services. [Ordinance.](#)

- [Comp plan.](#) Resolution establishing priorities for Whatcom County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. [Second Substitute Resolution - Clean.](#)

The council will meet again on Aug. 9.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet again on Aug. 9.

Elections

- Candidate Joe Timmons [42nd District House] this week received the endorsement of Washington Conservation Voters.

Nature

[Ag land.](#) Skagit County Commissioners unanimously approved a six-month moratorium on salmon habitat projects to prevent conversion of agricultural land by Seattle City Light mitigation projects during the utility's relicensing of its Skagit River dams. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

[Shoreline.](#) The Blaine City Council unanimously approved an engineering design services contract for the \$900,000 Marine Park Shoreline Reconstruction Project which will create about 1,000 feet of naturalized shoreline and improved habitat from the playground to Lighthouse Point Water Reclamation Facility. ([The Northern Light](#))

Business

[Boardmill.](#) The Port of Bellingham received four proposals to redevelop the Boardmill building on the waterfront — soccer stadium, convention center, new YWCA, new hotel — with all applicants saying their projects will be ready by 2025 or 2026. The commission will consider the proposals on Aug. 9. ([CDN/paywall](#))

News pub. The *Lynden Tribune* has been publishing for 104 years and the Newsroom Pub has opened near the paper's present-day location in the building that served as the *Tribune's* home from 1939 to 1980. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

Community

Unity Village. The 23-unit tiny homes Unity Village near Bellingham's Post Point Wastewater Treatment plant will disappear when expansion of the sewage facility begins next summer but no relocation site has been identified by the city ([CDN/paywall](#))

Shelters. Funding for Skagit County's shelters and emergency services is declining as recording fees for real estate transactions, its primary local funding source, decline in a cooling housing market. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Transit. An earlier Whatcom Transit Authority budget that showed a surplus of more than \$19 million due to shutdown budgeting and federal pandemic relief now projects a 2027 end-of-year cash balance in the red. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Data breach. Bellingham Public Library said that an earlier breach in the Whatcom County Library System uncovered the data of about 735 patrons' names and birthdates, along with their library ID information. ([KGMI](#))

Cops. The Anacortes City Council approved a three-year bargaining agreement between the city and the Anacortes police union this week that provides a 5% raise for 23 employees and has a budget impact of nearly \$1 million. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

Rooftop Cinema presents "[Dirty Dancing](#)," 7/22, 7 p.m., Top of the Parkade. Free.

Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema presents "[The Sandlot](#)," 7/23, 7 p.m., Village Green. Tickets at the event.

Elizabeth Park Summer Concert Series, [Out of the Ashes](#), 7/28, 6 p.m. Free.

Family Field Days: Low Tide Naturalist-Led [Beach Exploration](#), 7/29, 12 p.m., Birch Bay.

Salmon films. The Friday Harbor Director's Film Series presents "The Breach" and "The Wild," two films about saving wild salmon and saving Bristol Bay. July 14-27, \$1.95. [To watch](#).

Pump Boys & Dinettes July 15-31 (Fri-Sun), Zuanich Point Park Fisherman's Pavilion, 7:30 p.m. A playful country-western musical set in a dock-side diner. A family-fun show with foot-stomping music and a piece of pie at intermission! [Tickets](#).

Jump in!

Indigenous Justice. "Seeking Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People" is the topic addressed by 40th District Rep. Debra Lekanoff at the Bellingham City Club's virtual program on July 27, 12 p.m. Rep. Lekanoff spearheaded the drafting and passage of a bill to address the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous people in Washington state. [Register in advance by July 25](#).

Tourism. Got some tourism and cultural activities in mind and need funding? City of Ferndale's hotel-motel [grant program](#) is taking applications until Aug. 1. City of Bellingham's [grant program](#) application deadline is Aug. 19.

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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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