



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

News of the week: Aug. 26, 2022

Dear Reader —

Meeting and greeting some of our donors, readers and new friends over the last month on our first in-person outreach effort in our readership area has been exciting and inspiring. We plan to continue in the fall our “listening post” meetings, to learn more about what you think. That’s the point of this new kind of not-for-profit, open-access news media: community news reporting that’s part of the community.

We heard many suggestions and needs expressed about local news. One question was what difference there is in having two daily newsrooms in Bellingham. I think nearly everyone in Whatcom County has welcomed having more local news; it’s a good thing for the community. We hope the corporate owners of one and the millionaire backer of the other will keep both papers going; both are competing for the same subscribers and advertisers.

How does that affect the *Salish Current*? It really doesn’t. Our reporting, while news-based, is focused on a deeper, explanatory style that we hope serves readers — and you continue to tell us it does. *Salish Current* is also free to read and free from advertising, independent with no stories behind a subscription paywall.

One more subject that arose in our summer outreach was whether our news content would include more Canadian news. This question arises because some readers of *Salish Current* also subscribe to the weekday blog, [Salish Sea News and Weather](#), a compilation of environmental news from media throughout the Salish Sea region. The blog has been curated since 2007 by Mike Sato — who also serves as *Salish Current* Managing Editor.

Since we launched *Salish Current* in 2020, we’ve kept the editorial focus on news in the Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit readership area, but we’re considering ways

to include British Columbia news that affects our readership area.

We feature the "Salish Sea News and Weather Week in Review" at the end of this letter. If you are interested in subscribing, just follow the link below.

Thank you for reading Salish Current and for your [support](#).

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Want more news?

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 8/26/22](#): Dog Day!, climate law, Clean Fuel Standard, Columbia River salmon, gas pipe expansion, Fraser River sockeye, fish passage work, Washington EVs, Columbia River dams

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

#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter

#NoJusticeNoPeace

News from the *Salish Current*

[Some progress but gaps remain in mental health care for Whatcom adolescents](#)



Group and one-on-one mental health therapy sessions provided support for students in five of seven public school districts in Whatcom County this summer, supplementing services available during the school year and enabling students to connect and bond

over shared issues. However, providers note, gaps still remain.

By Matt Benoit: Summer services in the Bellingham and Nooksack Valley school districts aimed to fill gaps with a new option this year: mental health therapy. [Read more](#) ...

[Will mitigation banking offset loss of valued wetlands?](#)



Wetland areas perform a variety of functions that help control climate change. The City of Bellingham and Whatcom County are moving forward with four new mitigation sites, to regain function lost or diminished by some development.

By Kai Uyehara: Protection of sensitive Whatcom County wetlands may be enhanced, with approval of next steps toward a proposal for 608 acres in mitigation banking. [Read more ...](#)

[Letter to the Editor](#)

- Sharon Abreu: Council vote not appropriate

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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](#)

[Officer fired.](#) The City of Ferndale has fired police officer

Scott Langton who was arrested on July 26 and charged with attempted child molestation in the second degree. The city had previously placed Langton on leave after he was alleged to have contacted a far-right extremist group following the Jan. 6 Capitol riots. ([KGMI](#))

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

New president. Skagit Valley College incoming president Christopher Villa will lead the college following outgoing president Tom Keegan's strategic plan. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Government

San Juan County

Oil spill. The council met in special session on Aug. 19 for an incident command briefing on the sunken vessel Aleutian Isle oil spill pollution response. ([video](#))

The council met on Aug. 23. Agenda items and video, [click here](#).

- Overview of Current Use and Designated Forest Land Special Tax Programs (32:41)
- Sustainable Tourism Management Plan Update (1:12:32)
- Marine Program Update (1:31:46)
- Solid Waste Update (1:56:50)
- Postponed: Comprehensive Plan Update

City of Bellingham

The council will meet on Aug. 29. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public Hearings:

- Emergency Ordinance Imposing a Moratorium on the Acceptance of Development Applications Within the RM Zones in the Silver Beach Neighborhood. [Staff memo](#). [Zoning map](#).

- Hundred Acre Wood (aka Chuckanut Community Forest) Master Plan. [Staff memo](#). [Draft master plan](#).

Public Works and Natural Resources:

- Neighborhood traffic. [Staff memo](#).

Parks and Recreation:

- Formal Naming of Hundred Acre Wood (aka Chuckanut Community Forest), [Memo](#).

Committee of the Whole:

- Presentation: 22 North

The council will meet again on Sept. 12.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on Sept. 13.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Sept. 6.

Nature

Green crab. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reports that over 138,000 green crabs have been captured locally this year, a big increase over previous reports. 85,000 were captured near Bellingham last year. ([KUOW](#))

Business

Where's The Ferry? 45% of Washington State Ferries sailings on the Anacortes-San Juan Islands route have run behind schedule this year because of crew shortages and higher traffic volumes, according to ferry officials. In June, nearly half of all sailings ran behind schedule, a 40% gap below WSF's goal to run 95% on time. The entire system has seen over the last decade a steady decline to 85.3% on-time performance below the system's 95% goal. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

At work. Washington state's unemployment rate in July 2022 was 3.7%, as reported by the state's Employment Security Department as compared to the national rate

of 3.5%. Whatcom County's unemployment rate was 4% of a work force of 115,941; San Juan County's rate was 3.4% of a work force of 7,664; and Skagit County's rate was 4.2% of a work force of 62,561. ([DES](#))

Commentary

Slow water. Environmental journalist Erica Gies in her new book, "Water Always Wins," reflects on the power of "slow water" and advises us to stop resisting and to just go with the flow. ([National Observer](#))

Community

Tourism. San Juan County council members were briefed this past Monday on the county's tourism management plan vision and goals, process and progress. ([Orcsonian](#))

Master plan. The City of Bellingham will hold a public hearing on the draft master plan for the city's southside Hundred Acre Wood forest park on Aug. 29, 7 p.m. ([City of Bellingham](#))

Credit card. Impetus behind the abrupt departure of former Blaine public works director Bernard "Bernie" Ziemianek became clearer after it was disclosed that he was asked to resign after discovery that he allegedly used a city credit card to purchase over \$4,000 of personal items. ([The Northern Light](#))

Arts and Leisure

Friday Harbor film. The Director Series presents "Yasuni Man," a film focused on the conflict between oil companies and native Waorani people in South America. Stream on demand Aug. 26 through Sept. 7 for \$1.95. ([FHFF](#))

Movie. Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema. "The Princess Bride," Aug. 27, 7 p.m. [Tickets at the event.](#)

Exhibit: "Looking Forward, Facing Back" features the work of Jessica Silver, Lyz Staman, Susan Cohen Raphael and Erin Libby, and will send you on a time-traveling

journey through the whimsical and surreal dream worlds of these evocative creators. Exhibit closes Aug. 27, 11 a.m.–4 p.m., [Allied Arts Gallery](#), Bellingham.

Gallery. Artists from the Pacific Northwest Exhibit: Francis Xavier Donovan, Anita H. Lehmann, Bonnie Smerdon, David Syre. Gallery Syre, Sept. 1, 5–7 p.m. [Information](#).

Lummi artists. Lummi Artists on Lummi Island features traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, Sept. 3, 11 a.m.–6 p.m., Otto Preserve, Lummi Island. [Information](#).

Rena Priest, Washington’s poet laureate presents a reading and writing workshop. Mount Vernon, Sept. 3, 7:30 p.m., Lincoln Theater. [Information](#)

Community grants of up to \$2,000 from the Skagit Community Foundation are now available for not-for-profit arts organizations in Skagit County through Sept. 20. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Jump in!

LWV. The League of Women Voters encourages you to celebrate Women's InEquality Day on Aug. 26, which usually marks the day when some women were given the right to vote. But in 2022 women have fewer rights than they've had in decades. [Here's how to take action](#).

Low-tide beach walk. Family-friendly naturalist-led beach walk, Aug. 27, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Meet near the Heron Center, Birch Bay State Park. [Information](#).

Dog Day of Summer. THE festival for dogs and their owners! There will be vendors, activities, contests, and great food. Aug. 28, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., Whatcom Humane Society. [Register here](#).

Sucia cleanup. Join Surfrider Foundation on a remote beach cleanup of Sucia Island, Aug. 28, departing Squalicum Harbor: Group 1 at 9:30 a.m., returning 1:30 p.m.; Group 2 at 11 a.m., returning 3 p.m. Equipment provided, dress for the weather. [Register here](#).

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

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Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Founded in
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democratic governance by reporting and curating local
news — freely accessible to all — with independence
and strict journalistic integrity.

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