



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

## News of the week: Aug. 5, 2022

Dear Reader —

We launched *Salish Current* at the start of the pandemic and we've finally had the opportunity to meet, in person — in well-ventilated and outdoor venues — with small groups of readers, supporters and new friends.

We're delighted to celebrate some of the generous donors who've enabled us to keep local journalism flowing your way. We've heard ideas about what news gaps we need to cover to help build community and inform us all about issues, policies and decisions.

Most of all, it's been exhilarating to experience face-to-face the enthusiasm and sense of need readers share about the sort of journalism that provides context and insight around what's important to people in the 40th and 42nd legislative districts.

Much of the need revolves around growth and change: reporting on large and small developments, climate and water, health care, addiction, housing and houselessness, education of our kids in school and in the outdoors, local agriculture and small businesses and, don't forget, the arts.

[Growth](#) is a key issue everywhere. Counting returning students, Whatcom was one of the three fastest growing counties between 2021 and 2022. San Juan grew fastest among the counties without that student bump. In sheer numbers, Bellingham saw the second highest population growth in the state.

We also encountered ample evidence that COVID is still with us. At each event, a few would-be attendees have declined due to COVID symptoms or positive tests. With that in mind, we'll continue with virtual check-ins when autumn moves us all indoors.

We may not have met you in person but don't hesitate to share your comments — *Salish Current* is community focused and community-supported, for and by you. Thank you for reading and for [your support](#).

—Amy Nelson, Publisher

Wait! There's more: [Salish Sea News Week in Review 8/5/22](#): Oyster Friday! Fraser River dikes, Terry Williams, warming Columbia River basin, cleaner Duwamish River, Mount Polley mine, Columbia River salmon, Navy Growlers, Indigenous Council, Columbia salmon plan, whale rights

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

## News from the *Salish Current*

### [‘Salmon People’ dives deep into the past to save the salmon](#)



*Isabella James fields questions after the teaser trailer of Children of the Setting Sun Productions "Salmon People" project at the Sacred Earth Fair in Bellingham.*

**By Chris O'Neill:** Inspired to keep alive the work of past generations and influenced by care for future generations, a nonprofit video production group's current project focuses on the "Salmon People." [Read more...](#)

## Can trees save the Nooksack River?



*Brel Froebe of the Center for Responsible Forestry walks through the 130-year-old Upper Rutsatz forest in Whatcom County.*

**By Clifford Heberden:** The stronger positive effects of older forests on streamflows in the watershed are under study, as forest management practices are reconsidered in response to climate change impacts. [Read more...](#)

## Community Voices / Collaborate, adjudicate to settle Nooksack water issues



*Simultaneous decline of summer streamflow levels and growing need for irrigation in the Nooksack Basin are worsening already poor conditions for salmon and other wildlife.*

**By Eric Hirst:** Summer streamflows in the Nooksack Basin have been declining for decades, while the need for irrigation water grows as summers get hotter and rainfall diminishes. [Read more...](#)

## **News from around the Salish Sea**

(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

COVID-19. The Whatcom County Health Department has released an analysis of local COVID-19 data for the first two years of the pandemic, from March 2020

through February 2022. ([Whatcom County Health Dept./The Northern Light](#))

Monkeypox. Whatcom County's first case of monkeypox reported this week. ([KGMI](#))

New Jail. Whatcom County mayors have sent a joint letter to the Whatcom County council asking for planning to begin on a new county jail. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Bear attack. A jogger suffered multiple injuries this week when attacked by a black bear on a trail north of Lake Whatcom. ([KGMI](#)) Also: WDFW searching for cubs of black bear euthanized following encounter with Whatcom jogger ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

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

## **Government**

### San Juan County

The council met on Aug. 2. Agenda items and video link are found [here](#).

- The council unanimously approved the Annual Docket Process and Requests with items declined and items deferred to the 2023 docket (2:05)
- The council unanimously approved a one-year property tax levy for the Lopez Solid Waste Disposal District (2:15)
- The council unanimously approved a resolution to send to voters a road levy increase ballot measure (2:29)

Postponed until Aug. 23 meeting:

- Discussion: Marine Program Update
- Discussion: Sustainable Tourism Management Plan Update
- Discussion: Overview of Current Use and Designated Forest Land Special Tax Programs

## City of Bellingham

The city council met on Aug. 1. [Agenda items](#) included:

- The council held a public meeting on application for a Department of Justice Assistance Grant for recruitment of new officers. The council unanimously approved application for the grant.
- The council approved (6-1, Anderson opposed) a resolution to place the EMS Levy on the November ballot. The council approved (6-1, Anderson abstained) drafting of a resolution in support of the measure.

The council will meet again on Aug. 29.

## Whatcom County

The council will meet on Aug. 9. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public hearings:

- Ordinance granting Cascade Natural Gas Corporation a franchise for the transportation of natural gas in Whatcom County. [Staff memo.](#)
- Ordinances amending or temporarily amending county code regarding flotation devices on the South fork of the Nooksack River to better protect ESA-listed Chinook salmon. [Ordinance \(temporary\)](#). [Ordinance \(not temporary\)](#)

Consent agenda:

- Authorize County Executive to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with Snohomish County for the use of up to 45 Snohomish County jail beds in the amount of \$1,200,000. [Staff memo.](#)
- Authorize County Executive to enter into an Interagency Agreement Amendment with the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts to increase reimbursements of Blake decision legal costs by \$787,751 for a total amended amount of \$2,578,372. [Staff memo.](#)
- Authorize County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement amendment with the Washington State Department of Health for the delivery and funding of various public health services in the amount of \$2,651,000 for a total amended agreement amount of \$9,430,654. [Staff memo.](#)
- Authorize County Executive to enter into a contract with Kulshan Community Land Trust to support

acquisition of land for affordable housing, in the amount of \$1,250,746.60. [Staff memo.](#)

Other items:

- Approve granting the City of Bellingham notice to proceed in applying for a Major Project Permit for their Umbrella Mitigation Bank (Wetlands). [Staff memo.](#) [Presentation.](#)

#### Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Aug. 9. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent Agenda:

- Authorize executive director to sign [contracts](#) with state Department of Commerce and with Corvus Energy for \$250,000 grant for improvements to leasehold space on Harris Avenue.
- Authorize executive director to sign a [contract](#) with Whatcom County executive for expenditure of \$2 million in Economic Development Investment funds to construct the North Lynden Broadband Project.
- Authorize executive director to enter into a One Time Grant Program [Agreement](#) with the Department of Ecology for \$2,915,000 in state funding for cleanup activities for the Lignin Parcel Affordable Housing Project and to amend and increase the 2022 Strategy Budget for remediation and third party reimbursement.

Presentation:

- Waterfront Update

Action Items:

- Authorize executive director to execute an Environmental Agreement with Mercy Housing Northwest and to enter into a Consent Decree Amendment with the Department of Ecology to perform cleanup actions. [Staff memo.](#)
- Authorize the Port to enter into an Exclusive Negotiating [Agreement](#) between The Boardmill Group LLC and the Port of Bellingham for a 3.42-acre parcel in the Waterfront District. See: Selection committee recommends hotel, residences for waterfront ([CDN/paywall](#))

The commission will meet again on Sept. 6.

## **Elections**

Aug. 2 top two winners go to the Nov. 8 election; final certification Aug. 16.

These results [as of Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022:](#)

2nd Congressional District

Rick Larsen (D) 85,908

Dan Matthews (R) 32,029

42nd Legislative District Senate

Sharon Shewmake (D) 23,799

Simon Sefzik (R) 16,801

Ben Elenbaas (R) 9,988

42nd Legislative District House Position 1

Alicia Rule (D) 24,515

Tawsha (Dykstra) Thompson (R) 17,790

Kamal Bhachu (R) 8,058

42nd Legislative District House Position 2

Joe Timmons (D) 14,396

Dan Johnson (R) 13,968

Kyle Christensen (R) 11,880

Richard May (D) 9,686

Whatcom District Court 2

Jonathan Rands 27,671

Gordon Jenkins 23,224

David Nelson 14,312

40th Legislative District Position 2

Alex Ramel (D) 24,809

Trevor Smith (D) 7,458

## **Nature**

Growlers. U.S. District Judge Richard Jones ruled Tuesday that the Navy violated federal law in an environmental study of expanded Whidbey Island jet operations by failing to quantify the noise impacts on classroom learning as well as other shortcomings.

[\(Seattle Times/paywall\)](#)

Salmon passage. Despite a \$20 million removal two years ago of the Middle Fork Nooksack dam, there's

been no evidence of fish passage or population increase. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Logjam. Skagit County workers at the Highway 9 bridge took apart a 40-foot logjam created during last November's flooding. ([KING](#))

Waters. Four new videos provide tips on how to keep Skagit Valley streams wild and cool. ([Dept. of Ecology](#))

Whales. Four years after Tahlequah's vigil, legal experts, conservationists, and academic scholars are looking at how perceptions of the whales have changed since then and whether laws and policies should reflect new thinking about ethical responsibilities to orcas and other animals. ([Salish Current Magazine](#)) See: Can Southern Resident killer whales have legal rights? ([Salish Current, April 28, 2022](#))

## **Business**

Ferry funding. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration has awarded \$38.6 million to Washington State Ferries, the largest amount granted to 35 states and three territories. ([MarineLog](#))

Net pens. Feeding a hungry world is necessary and good but does it have to be by net pen aquaculture in Puget Sound? ([Olympic Peninsula News](#))

Amazon's Skagit Valley distribution facility, under construction since late 2020, on Bay Ridge Drive east of Skagit Regional Airport, is nearing completion. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Snow Farm in Lynden was assessed a \$3,000 Waste and Toxics penalty by the Department of Ecology in April: "Since 2019, Ecology has documented bacteria-contaminated water being discharged from the property. Ecology contacted the landowner on multiple occasions to inform him about water quality issues and best management practices. The discharges continued, and a penalty was issued." ([Dept. of Ecology](#))

## **Commentary**

Food. Karen Sullivan in part three of the Rainshadow Journal's Deranged Gourmet series gives us "Recipes From the 1950s: Dead Things in Aspic." Dead Shrimp Parade Ring, Little Spaghetti-O Mouths Crying for Help Ring and more! ([Rainshadow Journal](#))

History. Javiera Carmona Jiménez reflects on the photographic images of the Kinsey exhibit at the Whatcom Museum: "It is counterintuitive to think that the past is dynamic and changing just like the present. The past changes because the readings and interpretations we make of it are modified by new sensibilities and new agendas that gain force in the present. This is the reason museums, through their exhibitions, narrate the past, art and nature and fulfill their function of activating memory to encourage other views, raise new questions and encourage responsible action in the present." ([CDN/paywall](#))

## **Community**

Land Bank. The 58-acre Glenwood Inn property on Orcas Island, with natural bluffs, forest land and one-third of a mile of shoreline, is a gem of conservation but the project has come with controversy after a miscommunication among the San Juan County council, the land bank and the San Juan Preservation Trust. ([San Juan Journal](#))

## **Arts and Leisure**

Exhibit: "Looking Forward, Facing Back" features the work of Jessica Silver, Lyz Staman, Susan Cohen Raphael, Erin Libby and Jano Argue will send you on a time-traveling journey through the whimsical and surreal dream worlds of these evocative creators. Reception, Aug. 5, 6–9 p.m.; exhibit Aug. 5–27, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. [Allied Arts Gallery](#), Bellingham.

The Jansen Arts Center celebrates its [10th anniversary](#).

Community. The Friday Harbor Director's Film Series presents "The Babushkas of Chernobyl," a film about how 200 women defiantly cling to their ancestral

homeland in Chernobyl's radioactive "Exclusion Zone."  
July 29–Aug. 10, \$1.95. [To watch.](#)

Fairhaven Outdoor Cinema. "Moana," Aug 6, 7 p.m.  
[Tickets at the event.](#)

### **Jump in!**

On the water. Paddle Tour of Bellingham Bay's cleanup sites, Aug. 6 2–5 p.m., Bellingham Community Boating Center. RE Sources. [Tickets.](#)

Clean up. Marblemount Clematis Removal Work Party, Aug. 6, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Marblemount Conservation Area, Skagit Land Trust. [Register.](#)

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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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