

News of the week: Sept. 16, 2022

Dear Reader —

First things first: an apology for our error with Jenn Mason's name in [this column last week](#). As if we needed more, it's evidence of the dangers of multitasking, particularly around deadlines; we did know better and deeply regret our error. Thank you, also, to the readers who kindly pointed it out. (If you haven't seen the column, it's worth a read. Jenn fired up a banquet hall full of listeners with her story of compassion-fueled educational outreach, and focus in the face of adversity.)

One element of the motivation behind Jenn's goal for WinkWink is especially resonant for Salish Current: We aim to create a safe space for important discussions, in our case, around civil discussion of civic issues. Our world is complex; we need innovative solutions and informed action from the people as well as the leaders we choose to serve us.

In the line of civic discussion, this week we have two Community Voices columns, one encouraging us to consider how the reach of the commons affects private property rights, and another pointing to the need for action from riders and policy makers in working with Washington State Ferries to solve service problems in the San Juans.

A letter to the editor urges Bellingham-area residents to take advantage of an opportunity to speak up and help move the city forward in climate action.

Kai Uyehara shares the stories of North Whatcom neighbors still working to recover from last November's flooding — even as this year's flood season approaches. And San Juan County's Emergency Management team provides a fascinating description of just why recovery of the Aleutian Isle which sank off San Juan Island last month is so difficult.

We know you're not oblivious to the unhoused folks in our neighborhoods; yet another issue to solve. We've joined Bellingham Rotary Club in inviting you to [share your thoughts on homelessness](#) and would like to publish what you have to say. Send your thoughts to John Dunne, jedunne@uw.edu, or to me, SalishCurrent@gmail.com. Hope to hear from you.

Thank you for reading *Salish Current* and for your [support](#). And remember to share this newsletter with others who may be interested!

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

Want more environmental news? [Salish Sea News and Weather](#) is a weekday curated compilation of news from Salish Sea news sources. Free via email or on the web.

[Salish Sea News Week in Review 9/16/22](#): Guacamole Friday, racist names, British Columbia forestry, restoring the Fraser, British Columbia greenhouse goals, Colstrip buyout, end of Oregon coal, Chouinard's gift, Washington toxins, Lululemon gift

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

News from the *Salish Current*

[Flood survivors face next flood season while awaiting long-term fixes](#)



Flood recovery has been delayed by funding timelines for some. Ryan Wittig, left, and his nephew John Robert began demolition a week after Nooksack flood waters receded but waited months for permitting to begin construction.

By Kai Uyehara: Flood season is coming faster than housing solutions, as recovery from 2021 flooding continues in Whatcom County. [Read more.](#)

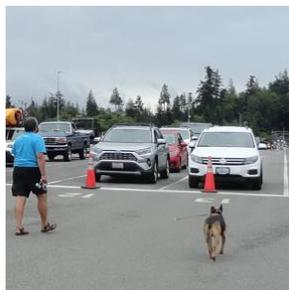
[What's known, not known about Aleutian Isle recovery](#)



At most, divers have two half-hour windows per day to work on recovering the sunken Aleutian Isle, 200 feet below the surface of Haro Strait off San Juan Island.

By San Juan County Emergency Management: An update on the sunken vessel Aleutian Isle off the west coast of San Juan Island details the extreme hazards involved in recovering the boat. [Read more.](#)

[Community Voices / Sitting silently does nothing for island ferry service](#)



Plenty of cars, plenty of waiting at the Anacortes ferry terminal: As part of the state highway system, Washington State Ferries' San Juan Islands runs provide vital links among the archipelago's

communities.

By Alex MacLeod: Commentary: Inaction on ferry service issues guarantees that what we know is bad will almost inevitably get worse. [Read more.](#)

[Community Voices / A word about property rights and freedom](#)



A “Private Property” sign asserts ownership in a wooded area, carrying implications about how the land may be accessed and used.

By William Appel:

Commentary: Government, in balancing the peace, health and economic welfare of the people, has an interest when it comes to private property rights.

[Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Sturdivant: Good work!
- Gross: Speak up for climate action

News from around the region

(Some of 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. Omicron variant-targeted bivalent booster doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are now available. ([Washington Dept. of Health](#)) Locate a vaccination site near you and what is available at that site [here](#).

COVID-19 Community Health Levels:

[Whatcom County Community Level Health Risk](#): Low

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

[Skagit County Community Level Health Risk](#): Low

Education

Parent rights. Bills that include bans on critical race theory, sex education and puberty blockers for students will be introduced during the upcoming Washington state Legislative session as part of a “Parents’ Education Bill of Rights.” Five other measures “to recognize the ultimate authority of parents to determine what is best for their children’s education” were also announced in an Aug. 24 press release by Sen. Jim McCune, R-Graham. ([Tacoma News Tribune/paywall](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council met on Sept. 12.

Discussion: [Comprehensive Plan Briefings](#)

- Action: The council voted unanimously to schedule a public hearing on the comprehensive plan on Nov. 29.

The council met on Sept. 13.

Public hearing: [Adopt Emergency and Supplemental Appropriations to the 2022 Budget](#)

- Action: The council approved (2-1, Stephens opposed) emergency appropriations to the 2022 budget. At issue was inclusion of \$50,000 to develop a greenhouse gas baseline measure for climate change actions.
- Action: The council unanimously approved supplemental appropriations to the 2022 budget.

City of Bellingham

Town Hall. The city council will host a [virtual town hall meeting](#) on Sept. 19, 6–8:30 p.m. to hear public comments on priorities to be addressed in the city's proposed biennial budget.

The council met on Sept. 12. [Agenda items](#) included:

Public hearing:

- The council voted unanimously to forward to the Committee of the Whole an ordinance amending the Bellingham municipal code to establish manufactured home park overlay and regulations related to change of use, ownership and closure of a park.

Public Works and Natural Resources Committee:

- The council voted unanimously to forward to the Committee of the Whole discussion of Post Point sewage process improvements.

Parks and Recreation Committee:

- The council voted unanimously to approve the Hundred Acre Wood master plan.
- The council voted unanimously to approve naming the Chuckanut Community Forest, the Hundred Acre Wood.

Other business:

- Council member Martens will join the Immigration Advisory Board for the rest of the year.

The council will meet again on Sept. 26.

Whatcom County

The council met on Sept. 13. [Agenda items](#) included:

Consent Agenda:

- The council authorized all consent agenda items 6-1, with Elenbaas opposed.
- The council voted (6-1, Galloway abstained) to hold in committee the request from the county executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Michael Bobbink for hearing examiner services.

The council will meet again on Sept. 27.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Sept. 20. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent Agenda:

- Approve a modification to Bellingham Bay Community Boating Center's [Harbor Land Lease](#) including lease of DNR Property for property located at 555 Harris Avenue.

Presentations:

- Derelict vessel update
- Broadband update

The commission will meet again on Oct. 4.

For the people

Elections

Forum. The Bellingham City Club virtual forum on Sept. 28, Noon, will feature 40th Legislative District House Position 2 candidates Alex Ramel and Trevor Smith; 42nd District House Position 1 candidates Alicia Rule and Tawsha (Dykstra) Thompson; and 42nd District House Position 2 candidates Dan Johnson and Joe Timmons. [Register here.](#)

Forums. Bellingham/Whatcom County League of Women Voters will hold virtual election forums on Oct. 7, 12, 14 and 18. See the [schedule](#) and share what you want asked of the candidate by using the online issues and questions [form](#).

Nature

Side channel. Whatcom County Public Works issued on Sept. 12 a State Environmental Policy Act [Declaration of NonSignificance](#) on a project to reduce flood flow of the Nooksack River by opening a mouth of an existing side channel near Everson. The county expects to begin work before the flood season. Comment on the DNS closes on Sept. 16. See also: “Flood survivors face next flood season while awaiting long-term fixes” ([Salish Current](#), Sept. 15, 2022)

Fraser flooding. Building on the floodplain and diking the flow of the Fraser proved disastrous for people and salmon when last fall's flood hit. Can B.C. build back better for both people and salmon? ([The Narwhal](#))

MacKaye Harbor. San Juan County has completed removing old beach armor and spreading fresh sand and gravel at the Lopez Island shoreline, and the road and dock are now open with a kayak-friendly public access to the county beach north of the boat launch and a restored sitting area. ([San Juan County](#))

Business

Border meeting. Dignitaries, business leaders and researchers met Sept. 12–13 at Semiahmoo Resort at

the 2022 Cascadia Innovation Corridor conference and discussed climate change. ([The Northern Light](#))

Labor settlement. The 900 or so union members working as health care workers at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center reached agreement in a new labor contract last week with the hospital granting a 7.5% pay raise. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Lummi tourism. The U.S. Department of Commerce has granted the Lummi Nation \$4.6 million to develop infrastructure to support tourism-related business, such as construction of a new retail marketplace for use by Indigenous artists and craftspeople, to attract more tourism to the region. The grant is expected to create 71 jobs and retain 139 jobs. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Community

Peacemakers. Whatcom Peace and Justice Center honored local peacemakers Tina McKim for her work with the Birchwood Food Desert Fighters and Sadie Olsen (Kwastlmut) of Lummi Nation for her work promoting Indigenous learning and spaces in the county. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Parking. Bellingham Public Works director Eric Johnston and Deputy Police Chief Don Almer said on Sept. 9 that two parking enforcement officers will be on the job starting Friday, Sept. 16. New parking meter rates and metered areas have not been enforced due to vacancies in the department. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

Film. "Racing Extinction," director Louie Psihoyos film in the Friday Harbor Film Festival, follows undercover activists trying to stave off a man-made mass extinction. Stream the film on demand through Sept. 21 for \$1.95 [here](#).

Kid Time. Village Books in Fairhaven and in Lynden reads to your kid on Sept. 17 and 24, 11–11:30 a.m. Weather permitting, they'll even take your kid outside.

Jump in!

Beach cleanup. Join RE Sources and Surfrider at the monthly trash cleanup on Sept. 17, 10 a.m. to Noon, at Locust Beach (3199 Locust Ave, Bellingham). Snacks and supplies provided. [Info.](#)

Climate action. The City of Bellingham celebrates ALL IN for Climate Action Week Sept. 19-25 with a series of fun and informative events, activities and presentations hosted by the Bellingham community. [Jump in here.](#)

Public safety. The Downtown Bellingham Partnership will hold a town hall meeting addressing public safety, Sept. 20, 5–6:30 p.m., Rotunda Room of the Old City Hall (Whatcom Museum). [Information.](#)

Glenwood Inn. Meander around the newly acquired North Shore/Glenwood Inn property on Orcas Island on Sept. 24, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. with the San Juan Land Bank and San Juan Preservation Trust. Contact Tanja Williamson at 360–378-4402 or tanjaw@sjclandbank.org.

Sacred Waters. Whatcom County Library System presents “Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge and Honoring Sacred Waters: The Documented Oral History of Life on the Nooksack River” with Tli’nuk’dzwidzi/Althea Wilson, Lummi tribal member and documentary filmmaker. The screening is at 5–8 p.m., Sept. 24 at Pioneer Pavilion in Ferndale, [registration required.](#)

Homewaters. North Cascades Audubon Society presents Street Smart Naturalist David B. Williams in a virtual presentation about Puget Sound, tracing human history from the earliest records more than 12,500 years ago to present. He will also tell stories about Olympia oysters, rockfish, geoduck, kelp and herring, as well as salmon and orca. [Register here.](#)

Read and share. Whatcom County Library System's annual Read and Share program of online author events from Oct. 8 to Nov. 10 features Bellingham author Clyde Ford's memoir, "Think Black." Borrow the book or the eAudiobook from the library and register for the book discussion and writing workshop events. [WCLS Read & Share.](#)

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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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