



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

News of the week: Sept. 23, 2022

Dear Reader —

Ever feel overwhelmed in an ocean of information?

We looked at one type of flood last week, with an article about [still-ongoing flood recovery](#) in the Nooksack Basin after last November's damaging deluge.

This week, we have another deluge in mind: the "[flood of undifferentiated information](#)" — an apt description of what we face every day as a result of technology.

Of course we need information, to be responsible voters, to be enlightened neighbors, to maintain our health and that of the environment, to enjoy the rampant creativity, talent and beauty in our corner of the universe.

But not all the information reaching us is meant for our good or even the public good. Much of it is meant to distract us or control or influence our behavior, for the benefit of others.

That's why the particular variety of information called journalism is important: It exists to give voice to the powerless, to monitor the behavior of those to whom we grant power, to enlighten and inform, to witness and provide "[the best obtainable version of the truth.](#)"

When we ask people where they get their news, the responses range from local newsrooms and international news outlets, to a plethora of social media, to close friends or family members. A recurring theme is trust; that's vital.

Happily, *Salish Current*, with free-access, independent local journalism, is among the sources people mention. We know more and more of you are reading and trusting us, as we watch the growing numbers of subscribers and website readers. Our goal over the next few years is to quadruple those numbers, and we need

your help for that. Please consider sending this newsletter or an article link to your friends or family — you are their trusted news source.

We exist to be the witness democracy needs in order to survive, sharing information for the public good. Thank you for helping us keep doing so through your [donations](#).

— 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 9/23/22](#): Bisexuality Friday, Squamish River restoration, British Columbia sea gardens, Seattle's river, global fossil fuel database, Coastal GasLink violations, Yukon sockeye, relocating trees, Seattle Green Deal, rockfish poaching

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

News from the *Salish Current*

[Child care shortfall frustrates families, hampers local economy](#)



The commute from Ferndale to Bellingham is a daily two-hour drive for Alaina Hirsch, whose only child care option is in Blaine. The declining number of options available impacts families as well as employers needing to fill jobs.

By Matt Benoit and Sadie Fick: Demand far outstrips the supply of available and affordable child care locally. The problem is multifaceted, as solutions also will need to be. First in a two-part series. [Read more](#).

[Community Voices / Vote Yes for Our Library](#)



Computers for kids sit close to bookshelves at the San Juan Island Library. Islanders will have the opportunity in the November election to approve bond funding for a new facility that would upgrade and add space for a variety of activities.

By Mark Madsen: Commentary: With the current San Juan Island Library facility bursting at the seams, some islanders are urging votes in favor of a bond to pay for an upgrade. [Read more.](#)

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

Border COVID. The Canadian government reportedly will drop requirements for vaccination at the end this month. ([Canadian Press](#))

Monkeypox. The Washington State Department of Health has launched a [monkeypox virus data dashboard](#). Whatcom County reported its second case since the outbreak started ([The Northern Light](#)) and the virus has infected about 20 people a week in the state. ([KUOW](#))

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

Government

San Juan County Council

The council will meet on Sept. 26. [Agenda.](#)

- Comprehensive Plan Briefings

The council will meet on Sept. 27. [Agenda.](#)

City of Bellingham

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

Public Works and Natural Resources Committee

- Broadband Advisory Workgroup Final Report and Recommendations. [Staff report.](#) [Final report.](#)

Community and Economic Development Committee

- Consideration of Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism's 2022 Tourism Promotion Area Budget. [Staff memo.](#) [Funding request.](#) [Budget worksheet.](#) [Marketing plan and work program.](#)

Committee of the Whole

- Discussion of Returning to Council Chambers. [Staff memo.](#)
- Post Point Resource Recovery Project Discussion. [Staff report.](#)

The council will meet again on Oct. 3.

Whatcom County

The council will meet on Sept. 27. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public Hearing

- Resolution approving the Whatcom County Six-year Transportation Improvement Program for the years 2023-2028. [Staff memo.](#)

Consent Agenda

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Michael Bobbink for hearing examiner services. [Staff memo.](#)
- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and the Port of Bellingham for construction

costs associated with the Bellingham Shipping Terminal Clean Power/Telecom project in the amount of \$1,125,000. [Staff memo.](#)

The council will meet again on Oct 4.

Port of Bellingham

The commission met on Sept. 20. [Agenda items](#) included:

The commission unanimously approved all consent agenda items.

Presentations

- Derelict vessel update, Tiffany DeSimone [[Watch 7:57-22:17](#)]
- Broadband update, Gina Stark [[Watch 22:22-52:00](#)]

The commission will meet again on Oct. 4

Elections

Forum. The Bellingham City Club virtual forum on Sept. 28 at 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 begin their online forums Sept. 30 with candidates for Whatcom PUD commissioner at 5 p.m. and Whatcom District Court judge at 6:15 p.m. See: "Voting for a judge: does it matter?" ([Salish Current](#)) Forums continue on Oct. 7, 12, 14 and 18. See the [schedule](#) and share what you want asked of the candidates by using the online issues and questions [form.](#)

Nature

Restoration. Logjam construction at Hutchinson Creek along the Nooksack River has been declared a success in

supporting salmon habitat restoration, according to the Nooksack Indian Tribe. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Sunken boat raised. On Tuesday, the Washington State Department of Ecology reported that the fishing vessel Aleutian Isle was safely and uneventfully transported to Mitchell Bay on San Juan Island Monday afternoon. ([Dept. of Ecology](#))

Pumpout. The Port of Lopez is providing recreational boater free sewage pumpouts in Fisherman Bay, thanks to grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Washington State Parks Clean Vessel Act Grant Program. ([The Weekly](#))

Business

Bus cost. Whatcom Transit Authority acquiesced to bus manufacturer Gillig's price increase of \$273,321 for delivery of seven new diesel buses ordered in June 2021. The company claimed supply-chain issues for the increase. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Skagit internet. With completion of a broadband backbone from Anacortes to Concrete, 300 homes in the Concrete, Hamilton and Lyman east Skagit County area will be able to get high-speed internet service this week. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Commentary

Where's the ferry? Last week's Community Voices commentary by Alex MacLeod "[Sitting silently does nothing for island ferry service](#)" was reprinted in the Orcsonian and drew many lively [responses](#).

Democracy's future. Pulitzer-prize journalist and islander Hedrick Smith discusses how the fate of our democracy is on the ballot this fall. [Watch here](#).

Community

Quiet Skies. Following the legal decision that the Navy could not move forward with the addition of 36 new warfare jets and hundreds of thousands more flights

until they more fully considered the consequences of the jets' loud presence in nearby fly-over regions, local activists will continue noise monitoring. ([Islands' Sounder](#))

Minority health. Skagit County Mental Health Matters program is training members of different communities on how to have difficult conversations about mental health, and encouraging them to fight the stigma associated with treatment in their communities. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

97295. Communities in the 97295 zip code which suffered from last November's flooding have available \$18.6 million in federal and state disaster relief funding, part of which will fund hiring a manager to coordinate long-term recovery efforts. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Child care. The Samish Indian Nation broke ground last week on its new Anacortes Early Learning Center which will provide a Head Start program for infants from 0–3 years old. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Transition housing. The Lynden City Council has adopted an interim ordinance that requires that recovery residences, sober living homes or halfway homes not be within 500 feet of community schools nor 300 feet of other community residential facilities. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Boulevard Park. The City of Bellingham is slated to receive a \$500,000 state grant to repair and improve the shoreline of Boulevard Park which has been damaged by erosion, storm surges and sea level rise. ([City of Bellingham](#))

Trestle repair. The Anacortes City Council voted to declare restoring the damaged Tommy Thompson Trail trestle an emergency which allows the city to waive state competitive bidding requirements. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

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

Orcas Film Fest. The Orcas Island Film Festival Oct. 6-10 will feature eight documentary films and 28 feature films from 25 countries. ([Orcasonian](#))

Friday Harbor Film Fest. The Friday Harbor Film Festival will feature in-theater films Oct. 21-23 and on-demand films Oct. 24-30. [Information and tickets.](#)

Arts center. The Anacortes Arts Festival and partners are buying the Anacortes Cinemas building owned by the city of Anacortes and plan when the contract is finalized to build a brand-new art center. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Jump in!

Clean up. Join the 2022 Fall Great Islands Clean-up on Sept. 24 beginning at 10 a.m. at the San Juan Island Brewing Co. parking lot (410 A St. in Friday Harbor) and ending at 2 p.m. — and join in the after-event party. [Info.](#)

Glenwood Inn. Meander around the newly acquired North Shore/Glenwood Inn property on Orcas Island on Sept. 24 10 a.m. to 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.](#)

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

Homewaters. North Cascades Audubon Society presents Street Smart Naturalist David B. Williams in a virtual presentation on Sept. 27 at 7 p.m. 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.](#)

Refinery open house. BP Cherry Point hosts a public open house on Sept. 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for those interested in getting an up-close look at the refinery's operations. ([The Northern Light](#))

Cayou Channel. Join in the ceremony for the renaming of Harney Channel to Cayou Channel on Oct. 2. Canoes, kayaks, sail and power boats and other watercraft are welcome to join the blessing in the channel at 8:30 a.m. and a community potluck will be held from 2–4:30 p.m. at West Sound Community Hall. See "Cayou Channel officially renamed to honor Coast Salish leader" ([Indian County Today](#))

Read and share. Whatcom County Library System's annual Read & 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.](#)

Like this newsletter? Share it. And it's easy to subscribe by reply mail. Your email address will never be shared and you can unsubscribe at any time. — 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.

Follow and engage with *Salish Current* on social media:

Facebook — [Salish Current](#)

Twitter — [@currentsalish](#)

LinkedIn — [Salish Current](#)

Write to us: SalishCurrent@gmail.com

Check out what's new: [Salish Current](#)