



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

News of the week: Sept. 30, 2022

Dear Reader —

This week's newsletter is the 135th issue we've emailed to our readers in the 31 months *Salish Current* has been publishing original news stories, selected local news links and community essays.

We've been doing this with the support and donations from readers, the hard work of professional freelancers and the volunteer efforts of our dedicated editors, board members and advisors.

Our initial goal when we began *Salish Current* was to see if a model of community-supported journalism, free to read and free from advertising, delivered to readers in Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit counties, could be sustained with a professional freelance staff and volunteer editors.

Thanks to your support and volunteers' efforts, we have reached that goal and are set to move forward another step.

That step is to build toward a staffed newsroom and administration, to grow and sustain the kind of fact-based journalism we do as an organic part of the communities we serve.

To succeed, we will increase our readership, develop strategic partnerships and increase our donations and grants. We will not do this all at once but in steps to measure our progress — and we will share with you how we are doing.

We begin this new phase of *Salish Current* in the next few months with a fundraising campaign that's critical to our first steps forward in 2023. *Salish Current* is not supported by a millionaire or a hedge fund. We are [supported by you, our community, and you, our readers.](#)

Help build our readership by sharing this newsletter and encouraging others to subscribe. And help us grow by making a one-time or monthly donation so we can bring to readers news that's free to read and free from advertising.

Thank you for supporting *Salish Current*.

— 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 9/30/22](#): Koala, volcanoes, Amtrak, British Columbia tree protection, EPA environmental justice, salmon crisis racism, Southern Resident killer whale census, “rainway,” sea weed toxics, Washington salmon grants

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

News from the *Salish Current*

[Voters asked to approve child care support as demand exceeds supply](#)



Finding child care is increasingly difficult for parents in Whatcom, Skagit and San Juan counties, as the number of providers decreases while the number of families looking for care grows.

By Matt Benoit: Whatcom County voters will decide in November whether they will fund change for an overburdened child care system. ([Read more.](#))

Wanted: nurses — and nursing educators — as shortage persists



Health care providers are finding nursing staff in short supply and looking for ways to support training for more — and nurses are hitting the road to travel for better pay, different assignments.

By Zach Kortge: Local hospitals and clinics are struggling along with others across the nation to find enough nurses. ([Read more.](#))

Changing names to step out of a racist shadow



The Skagit Audubon Society chapter ponders whether to remove John James Audubon's name from their title; Western's College of the Environment has already dropped "Huxley" from theirs.

By Kai Uyehara: Legacy, racism and inclusivity are at the core of the discussion in decisions to remove name dedications from the titles of institutions. ([Read more.](#))

Community Voices: 'I was one of the lucky ones'



Sometimes home is a temporary shelter; a tent or a room at the Y. "One of the lucky ones" describes his time of housing insecurity and the support that helped him along the way.

Contributed by Jack Westford: On the verge of homelessness at a crucial

time, Jack Westford considers himself to be "one of the lucky ones." ([Read more.](#))

Letters to the Editor

- Harmer: Shewmake serves 42nd District best

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

Emergency end. The city of Bellingham will be following the state in ending COVID-19 emergency orders on Oct. 31. ([City of Bellingham](#))

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

State of the U. Western Washington University president Sabah Randhawa reported this week that students of color represent 29% of the entire university this year, that first-year enrollment stands at its highest yet with 3,237 students, that retention rates at the university have been stagnant at 80%, and that the reduction in tuition revenue in 2020 and 2021 will impact the university's operating budget over the next several years. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council met on Sept. 26 to discuss the comprehensive plan. [Agenda and video.](#)

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

The council will meet on Oct. 3. [Agenda item](#) includes comprehensive plan discussion.

City of Bellingham

The Bellingham City Council will meet in person and remotely beginning Oct. 3. ([City of Bellingham](#))

The council met on Sept. 26. [Agenda items](#) included:
Public Works and Natural Resources Committee

- Broadband. The Broadband Advisory Group's consultant advised against the city directly providing internet service to customers in competition with private service providers. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Community and Economic Development Committee

- The council approved (6-0, Hammill recused) the proposed budget for the Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) monies.

Committee of the Whole

Post Point Resource Recovery Project Discussion

- The council unanimously concurred with the mayor's decision to halt further work on biodigestion for waste solids handling at the Post Point sewage treatment plant.
- The council unanimously approved a motion that the administration bring forward any policies previously adopted by the city council that may need to be amended to align with this new direction relative to the Resource Recovery project and that, as they relate to the city's current climate Action Plan, relevant action plans and policies affected by the Post Point decision be referred to the council's Climate Action Committee for review and possible modification to the Climate Action Plan and, if necessary, brought to the full council for consideration and possible adoption.
- The council unanimously approved a motion that the administration actively pursue and develop work plans investigating future projects in alternative waste solid technologies and processes, including but not limited to thermal processes such as pyrolysis and gasification, for supplementing and/or replacing the current incineration equipment and processes.

The council will meet again on Oct. 3. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public Hearing

- Proposed resolution of the City of Bellingham encouraging voters to vote "Yes" on Whatcom County

Proposition 2022-6, regular property tax levy for emergency medical services, in the general election.

[Resolution.](#)

Community and Economic Development Committee

- Update on Gardenview Tiny House Village.

[Presentation.](#)

- 2022-23 Severe Weather Shelter Plan. [Staff memo.](#)

Committee of the Whole

- Ordinance amending the 2021-2022 biennial budget increasing revenues and expenditures for the Tourism Promotion Area. [Ordinance.](#)

- Introduction of the proposed 2023-2024 biennial budget. [Mayor's budget message.](#) [Presentation.](#)

The council will meet again on Oct. 24.

Whatcom County

The council met on Sept. 27. [Agenda items](#) included:

Public Hearing

- The council unanimously approved as amended the Whatcom County Six-year Transportation Improvement Program for the years 2023-2028

Consent Agenda

- The council approved 4-2-1 (Byrd, Elenbaas opposed; Galloway abstained) the county executive entering into a contract between Whatcom County and Michael Bobbink for hearing examiner services.

Other Items

- The council approved 5-2 (Byrd, Elenbaas opposed) a substitute ordinance amending Whatcom County Code to restructure the Public Health Advisory Board.

[Amended ordinance.](#)

Introductory Item

- The council approved 5-2 (Byrd, Elenbaas opposed) an ordinance for public hearing on Oct. 11 adding a new Chapter 2.107 to the Whatcom County Code to create a Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. [Substitute ordinance](#) was approved 7-0 to replace the first paragraph of Section 2.107.070 as follows: An Appointment Committee consisting of one staff representative for Whatcom County appointed by the County Executive, one staff representative for the City of Bellingham appointed by the Mayor of Bellingham, and four community representatives recommended by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council shall be established to 1) review applications for appointed Commission positions 2) evaluate applicant's

eligibility for appointment, and 3) provide written recommendations for Commission appointments to the County Executive and Mayor of Bellingham. Once established under this ordinance, the Commission Steering Committee shall supersede the four community representative members on the Appointment Committee. On no less than an annual basis, the Appointment Committee shall assess Commission vacancies and perform its duties as provided herein.

Committee of the Whole Executive Session

- The following motion was read and approved 6-1 with Frazey opposed: I hereby move to authorize Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu to execute Expedited Settlement Agreement (No. 21317) between Whatcom County and the State of Washington, Department of Ecology. This Expedited Settlement Agreement will settle all Dangerous Waste and Water Pollution Act violations involving the Plantation Rifle Range identified in the Agreement.

The council will meet again on Oct 18.

Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Oct. 4. [Agenda items](#) include:

Presentation

- Climate Action Strategy Update

The commission will meet again on Oct. 18.

For the people

Antisemitic apology. Dan Johnson, 42nd Legislative District candidate for House Position 2, apologized for an antisemitic Facebook post disclosed in an article about the candidate's social media posts the *Bellingham Herald* newspaper called "sexist and anti-Semitic," that spread "misinformation about COVID-19," called for the "overthrow of government officials" and offered "support for anti-government militants." [\(KGMI\)](#)

Elections

Forums. Bellingham/Whatcom County League of Women Voters hosts online forums beginning tonight (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](#))] The forums continue 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

Wastewater. The City of Bellingham will stop pursuing anaerobic digestion projects at the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant following a unanimous city council vote Monday. ([Bioenergy Insight](#))

Restoration. The state Salmon Recovery Funding Board has granted over \$817,000 to fund four Whatcom County salmon habitat projects on the Middle and South forks of the Nooksack River. ([KGMI](#))

Skagit restoration. The Smokehouse Dike project will restore about 120 acres of salmon habitat and reestablish saltmarsh vegetation and tidal processes to parts of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community's land and the Similk Beach project aims to restore a historic intertidal pocket estuary north of Similk Bay. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Business

Seaweed. According to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, there are now five prospective seaweed farmers with pending aquatic lease applications before the agency and another four more in the wings, for a total of nine in various stages of permitting. ([NW News Network](#))

Port expansion. The Port of Skagit has received \$1.7 million in a loan and grant from the state Community Economic Revitalization Board to prepare port land for the expansion of 17,000-square foot expansion of Cairnspring Mills. The company has \$21.5 million in

private investment for its expansion. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Sweet deal. The Totally Chocolate building on Sweet Road in Blaine was sold to Founders Group of Food Companies, the current owners of Totally Chocolate, for \$7.3 million. ([The Northern Light](#))

Carpentry. The Northwest Carpenters Institute of Washington's Burlington Training Center was opened this week and will house the carpenter apprenticeship program previously held housed in Mount Vernon. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Community

Free ride. Youth passengers 18 and younger will ride for free on Washington State Ferries beginning Oct. 1. This does not include teenagers behind the wheel of a motor vehicle. (WSF)

Unity Village. The two dozen tiny home village residents living next to the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Facility in Bellingham won't have to move now that the planned construction at the plant has been cancelled. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Affordable housing. Community Action of Skagit County has constructed 34 affordable apartments in a underused Burlington commercial space and will begin renting the apartments in November. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

ADUs. The Bellingham Planning Commission received no public opposition and will recommend relaxing rules governing smaller, detached houses on residential lots known as "accessory dwelling units." ([CDN/paywall](#))

Nooksack solar. The Nooksack Tribe will install solar panels estimated to generate over 49,000 kilowatt hours of power every year using a Puget Sound Energy grant. ([KGMI](#))

Arts and Leisure

Studio tour. Whatcom artists show their wares in studio Oct. 1 and 2; 8 and 9. [Complete tour details.](#)

BMC music. The Bellingham Music Club presents soprano Ibidunni Ujikutu and pianist Rebecca Mañalac in a program at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bellingham, Oct. 5, 10:30–11:30 a.m. [Information.](#)

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

Music Fest. The 2022 Lynden Music Fest Oct. 8–12 features music from Nashville, Finland, Argentina. Tango, Bluegrass, Jazz, Egyptian Music, swing dancing at venues around Lynden including the Jansen Art Center, The Inn at Lynden, WECU expo building, The Mill, The Newsroom pub and more. [Info.](#)

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.](#)

Jump in!

Reefnet. "Living Tradition: Reef Netting in the San Juan Islands" is the Lopez Historical Society presentation on Oct. 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lopez Center for Community and the Arts. \$10 suggested donation. [Info.](#)

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 Country Today](#))

Monument AC meet. The San Juan Islands National Monument Advisory Committee will meet via Zoom on Oct. 6 at 9 a.m. to receive updates on the staffing and management of the monument, and discuss how it will be involved in advising on the ongoing management of the monument. To attend, [click here.](#) Click here [for](#)

[more info](#). Also, see: "San Juan Islands National Monument: where's the plan?" ([Salish Current](#))

[Watmough](#). Public comment welcomed on the interim Watmough Preserve (Lopez Island) Additional Stewardship and Management [Plan](#) until Oct. 10 ([LopezRocks](#)) See: "'Most special place' for salmon, native culture gains protection with San Juan land bank purchase" ([Salish Current](#))

[Women's march](#). Join Indivisible Bellingham at a Rally for Reproductive Rights, Freedom and Privacy in solidarity with the Women's March national days of action on Oct. 8 at 3 p.m., Bellingham City Hall.

[Bright lights](#). Join a community gathering sponsored by the Chuckanut Health Foundation on Oct. 11, 4–5:30 p.m. at Lee Park behind the Bellingham Library to celebrate the work to establish the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. Wear bright-colored clothing and go to the county council meeting later where a council vote is scheduled.

[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](#).

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.

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