



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

News of the week: Nov. 4, 2022

Dear Reader —

We're doubling down: our two-month-long, match-your-dollar [fundraising campaign](#) is on!

Donations are already coming in to enable *Salish Current* to continue providing free access for all readers to local news not found anywhere else. **Thank you, early donors!**

We've set a goal to raise \$65,000 by the end of the year to bring you more regional in-depth reporting, new clips and community commentaries in 2023. We want to grow *Salish Current* with community partners and more readers and supporters.

Every dollar donated (monthly donations, too) will be doubled by very generous local supporters and by national foundations supporting nonprofit local news, in particular news that supports diversity, equity and inclusion among our community. The rest is up to you.

Salish Current has come a long way since we launched in February 2020 and we've shown that a nonprofit online newsroom is an important boost for our community.

We have a long way to go. We're looking forward next year to adding a staff position to work along with our volunteer editors as we continue to pay for the work of our freelance writers. That's exciting—it's the cornerstone for long-term stability.

We want to bring you **more in-depth stories** like Eric Scigliano's feature on the Fraser River and Rena Kingrey's story on the effects of ocean acidification. Look for our stories to **focus on the "why"** and on how people in our community are affected. [Your donation today doubled-down makes all this possible.](#)

On another note, we were deeply saddened to hear this week of the death of a true community builder who connected, improved quality of life for and lightened the burden of all those around him. **Matthew Thuney**, South Fork Valley organizer extraordinaire and man of many talents, will be deeply missed. *Salish Current* was honored to have had his support as a member of our first board of directors. His memory will continue to inspire us.

Please **share this newsletter** with others and encourage them to subscribe to *Salish Current*. And please take a moment to [donate what you can and to have your donation doubled](#).

Thank you for your support!

— 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 Nov. 4, 2022](#): King Tut Friday, cedar, rat poison, 'Salmon Seas' proclamation, Capitol Lake future, B.C. forestry regs, MMPA, B.C. old growth.

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

News from the *Salish Current*

[Tacoutche Tesse, the northwest's great ghost river](#)



The Fraser River flows calmly at Glen Valley on its way into the delta, as fishers try their luck on an autumn evening. Long known as “the mighty one”—Tacoutche Tesse, to local Carrier speakers—the river faces challenges from human

intrusion, climate change and more.

By Eric Scigliano: *Salish Current* is exploring in a series of articles the Fraser River and its rich, varied and threatened life. The week, Part 1: Not the Columbia. [Read more.](#)

[Researchers, growers face the challenge of acidic ocean water](#)



Dealing with the problem of ocean acidification is like trying to work a 1,000-piece puzzle without “the picture of what it’s supposed to look like and ... missing half the pieces,” per Western Washington University researcher Brooke Love.

By Rena Kingery: Salish Sea waters are acidifying faster than ever before, but researchers in Washington are leading the world in addressing the looming disaster. [Read more.](#)

[Community Voices / Claims about Nooksack water rights must meet fact test](#)



Sometimes there is too much water flowing in and around the Nooksack River—as there was after the river flooded last November—and sometimes not enough. Solving those problems will take collaboration, says one commentator.

By Fred Likkel: Commentary—Collaboration is the only way to solve the twin problems of too little water at one time, too much at another, in the Nooksack Basin. [Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Walker: Cybersecurity grant funds support many programs
- Donovan: Ramel is excellent partner for local elected officials

Our policy: Salish Current welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. Those accepted for publication will focus on issues addressed in news articles or commentaries in Salish Current and be factual. No snark or put-downs will be acceptable; general nastiness will be rejected. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for length and clarity. Salish Current will publish letters sent to the editor at its sole discretion.

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](#)

[Lead ammo.](#) After 50 years of live ammo practice, Whatcom County's Plantation Rifle Range will be closed

to clean up contaminated lead from soil near a salmon stream and drainage to Lake Samish. ([Whatcom County](#))

Leaded gas. The Environmental Protection Agency said that small airplanes are the largest source of lead pollution in the air of Washington state, pumping about 17 tons of the brain-damaging substance into the air each year. ([KUOW](#)) (See: "[Leaded aviation fuel fires decades-long complaint](#)," *Salish Current*, July 26, 2022)

RSV. Whatcom County Health Department announced this week a surge in Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) cases in children has contributed to a shortage of hospital beds for children in the region and put a strain on the pediatric healthcare system. ([Whatcom County](#))

Booster. Only 15% of Washington residents have gotten the new COVID booster shot, updated for omicron, according to state public health officials. ([KUOW](#))

Education

WWU cop. Katryne Potts has been hired as the new Western Washington University chief of police and will begin work Jan. 1, pending background checks. ([KGMI](#))

The Border

Poison. British Columbia has permanently banned the sale and use of rat poison because of the risk to other animals who consume poisoned rats. ([CBC](#))

Nature

Logging. The "Box of Rain" forest with trees 80 to 115 years old near Deming has been listed for auction for logging rights by the state Department of Natural Resources. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Business

Settlement. Skagit Valley Farm has agreed to pay \$138,500 toward salmon restoration efforts in the Skagit area as part of a settlement agreement with the Washington Department of Ecology over unauthorized irrigation. ([Dept. of Ecology](#))

Government

San Juan County

The council met on Oct. 31. [Agenda items and video](#) included:

- Discussion: Comprehensive Plan briefing

The council met on Nov. 1. [Agenda items and video](#) included:

- The council scheduled a 2022 Budget Third Amendment public hearing for Nov. 29.
- The council scheduled a 2023 Budget Mid-biennial Review public hearing for Nov. 29.
- The council approved the 2023 Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan and scheduled a public hearing for Nov. 29.
 - The council scheduled a public hearing on Nov. 29 for setting the 2023 property tax levy for Land Conservation Futures.
 - The council scheduled a public hearing on Nov. 29 for setting the 2023 property tax levy for county roads.

The council will meet again on Nov. 7. [Agenda items.](#)

The council will meet again on Nov. 8. [Agenda items.](#)

City of Bellingham

The council will meet on Nov. 7. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public Hearing: 2023-24 Biennial Budget. [Presentation.](#)

Public Works and Natural Resources Committee:

- Update of 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan. [Presentation.](#)

Parks and Recreation Committee:

- 2022 Recreation Needs Assessment Report. [Presentation,](#)

Climate Action Committee:

- Update on Community Carbon Pollution Levels. [Presentation.](#)

The council's Special Budget Work Session (Mayor, Council, Municipal Court) will begin at 1 p.m.

Committee of the Whole:

- Immigration Advisory Board Report. [Presentation.](#)
- Interlocal agreement with Whatcom County to support and fund Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. [Agreement.](#)
- Ordinance establishing legal framework for the city's operation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations. [Ordinance.](#)
- Resolution adopting fee schedule for electric vehicle charging. [Resolution.](#)
- Ordinance amending 2021-2022 biennial budget increasing revenues and expenditures and authorizing an interfund loan of up to \$1,500,00 from the general fund to the Medic One fund. [Staff Memo.](#)
- Ordinance related to city of Bellingham's property tax levy. [Staff Memo.](#)

The council will next meet on Nov. 21.

Whatcom County

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

Public Hearing:

- Ordinance amending the Whatcom County Code relating to Personal Wireless Service Facilities. [Staff Memo.](#)

The council will meet again on Nov. 22.

Port of Bellingham

The Port's 2023 Preliminary Strategic Budget is online ([76mb](#)). Presentations and public hearings are scheduled for Nov. 15, with adoption scheduled for Nov. 15.

The commission met on Nov. 1. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Public Comment on ABC Recycling jobs and noise [[YouTube 2:00-24:00](#)]
- Presentation 2023 Budget. Tamara Sobjack on 1% property tax increase [[YouTube 25:00-39:00](#)]
- Public hearing on the 2023 Preliminary Strategic Budget. No comments were offered.

The commission will meet again on Nov. 15.

For the people

Elections

Fraud. Skagit County election officials have refuted claims by representatives from the Skagit Voter Integrity Project who have been sending alleged voter fraud evidence to Skagit County Elections since September 2021. ([KGMI](#))

Dismissal. A U.S. District Court in Seattle has dismissed a lawsuit alleging Whatcom County government committed fraud in the November 2020 election. The lawsuit was nearly identical to seven other lawsuits a nonprofit organization filed across Washington. ([The Northern Light](#))

Commentary

HOA. Ross Anderson in "Escape Pods: The Rise of the Homeowners Associations" writes from the Peninsula about the benefits and challenges of living in an HOA, much less trying to managing one. ([Post Alley](#))

Community

Movies. Benefactor Michael Feerer of Bellingham has pledged he would match \$200,000 raised by Bellingham's Pickford Film Center to meet its \$1 million goal to build three new cinemas. The Pickford has already raised \$500,000. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Housing. Anacortes officials grappled with the twin problems of affordability and availability at a Skagit League of Women Voters "Housing for Our Whole Community" forum in late October. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Survey. Blaine residents are asked to provide their thoughts on affordable housing projects through November via a Kushan Land Trust online survey. Visit bit.ly/3UdWIsE to take the survey in English and visit bit.ly/3NoGRoJ to take the survey in Spanish. ([The Northern Light](#))

Head Start. Skagit/Island Head Start opened its new Burlington space which includes two classrooms (for a full-day preschool and a full-day toddler class), a

commercial-grade kitchen, office space and a green space behind the facility for a future playground. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Arts and Leisure

The Land. Join [Allied Arts](#) of Whatcom County at the art walk and opening reception on Nov. 4, 5–9 p.m. for the exhibit "Of the Land, From the Land" featuring pieces by John Hoyte, Lori Hill, Sterling Rung, Belinda Botzong and Liz Cunningham. The exhibit continues through Nov. 26.

Skyviewing. The Western Gallery brings 41 of Noguchi's skyviewing works together for the first time. Through Nov 26. [Information.](#)

Jump in!

Park work. Remove invasive plants and plant native plants and shrubs at Maritime Heritage Park to revitalize salmon habitat, Nov. 5, 9 a.m.–Noon. City of Bellingham, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and Washington Native Plant Society. [Info and 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 and Share.](#)

See salmon. Join Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association at Maritime Heritage Park to watch salmon return to Whatcom Creek. Nov.11, Noon– 3 p.m. [Info.](#)

Work party. Hike in with Skagit Land Trust to the Tope Ryan Conservation Area for a day's work pulling red protectors and maintaining fences. Nov. 11, 9 a.m.– Noon. [More info and registration here.](#)

Poetry. The South Fork Valley Community Association and the Deming Library bring Poetry Cafe back live at the Van Zandt Hall, Nov, 12, 6:30 p.m. with local poets, musicians, and storytellers. [Register in advance.](#)

Farmland floods. Gavin Willis of Whatcom Family Farms updates work addressing flooding, riparian habitat improvement and healthy waterway promotion for salmon. Nov. 16, Noon–12:30 p.m. via Zoom. [Register here.](#)

Trails. Work with Skagit Land Trust at the Samish Island Conservation Area to enjoy and help maintain walking trails. Nov. 18, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info and registration here.](#)

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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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