



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

## News of the week: Nov. 18, 2022

Dear Reader —

A year ago we were gobsmacked by heavy rain and flooding, and responded to it as best we could as a community and as neighbors. Our two in-depth stories this week — [Part 2 of Eric Scigliano’s deep dive into the Fraser River](#) and [Kai Uyehara’s stories of spirited recovery along the Nooksack River](#) — tell how families are rebuilding, and how planners and policymakers are revising how to think about the water around us and how we can co-exist in the face of climate change.

Also this week, essayist Terri Thayer writes about the flood of emotions around resilience, resistance and remembrance evoked by Native American Heritage Month, and shares a list of resources for those who would act as allies.

These are the kinds of stories we work to bring to you every week.

We can do this with your support during our two-month fundraising campaign when donations are being doubled thanks to challenge grants from local supporters and national donors to INN’s NewsMatch campaign.

And that’s the only way we can do it — with your donation. We don’t charge anyone for reading our original reporting, we don’t take advertising, we don’t have a large hedge fund or a millionaire with deep pockets propping us up. Our business model is not-for-profit, our editors are volunteers and your donations go directly to paying the freelancers who report the stories you read.

The idea is simple: we believe that local news, fact-based and independent of special interest, should be a community service that is supported by the community. We are happy to be part of a movement that journalist Margaret Sullivan called “[the most encouraging development that’s happening in local news.](#)”

If you're among those who are in a position to donate to support our efforts, now — [throughout November and December](#), when your donation will be doubled — is a perfect time.

Support quality, in-depth community journalism.  
Support *Salish Current*. Thank you for reading!

— 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. 18, 2022](#): Mickey Mouse Friday! Boeing toxic risk, post-fire logging, Arctic salmon, British Columbia build back better, fish farm ban, Nicola River, Washington water standards, forest funds

**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 — Part 2: The flood and building back better](#)



*Pole hooks in hand, Les Antone's fellow Kwantlen First Nation members spent days saving the Brae Island-Langley bridge after the November 2021 flood, as millions of board feet of timber swept down the Fraser.*

**By Eric Scigliano:** The great flood of 2021 brought massive destruction but also the opportunity to build back better. [Read more.](#)

## [After the flood: still rebuilding amid uncertainty, anxiety — and community](#)



*Ryan Wittig has had help from friends and neighbors in rebuilding his family's Sumas home after last November's flooding. The home now boasts insulation, wiring and wallboard.*

**By Kai Uyehara:** A year after flooding devastated the Nooksack Valley, survivors continue working to recover from damages, prepare for future flooding—and wait for government funds and solutions. [Read more.](#)

## [Listen, and support Indigenous voices](#)



*The stories of Raven and Salmon, Bear and Steelhead, and Thunderbird, portrayed in a story pole dedicated earlier this fall at the Port of Bellingham, teach lessons of respect for all creatures.*

**By Terri Thayer:**  
Commentary: Knowledge and awareness of the challenges Indigenous peoples face are good; what matters is action. [Read more.](#)

## [Letters to the Editor](#)

### **• Riveter's Collective: Reduce use of physical force and deadly force**

*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. The Whatcom County Parks & Recreation department has requested around \$655,000 to clean up outdoor lead contamination at the county-operated Plantation Rifle Range. ([CDN/paywall](#))

### The Border

Sumas Prairie. The Raincoast Conservation Foundation tested water samples after last November's flood of the Sumas Prairie in Abbotsford and found excessive nutrients, metals, fecal bacteria, hydrocarbons and pesticides — as well as cocaine and painkillers. ([CBC](#))

### Nature

Fish birds. Wendy Feltham writes, "Birds have evolved to eat all kinds of food— insects, seeds, grains, nuts, seaweed, worms, other birds, and small animals— and some eat fish. Fish eaters are known as pescatarians. I like to photograph our local birds, especially when those birds have successfully caught fish. When possible, I zoom in to see the fish closer. Here are a few examples ...." ([Rainshadow Journal](#))

Butterfly. The nearly extinct island marble butterfly's recovery depends on a captive rearing lab in a cabin at American Camp at the San Juan Island National Historical Park but its island habitat declines due to development, construction and human activity including threats from nonnative species. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

### Business

Fish farms. The state Department of Natural Resources will not renew fish farm leases on net pens and requires operations to cease by Dec. 14. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Forest future. RE Sources and Center for Responsible Forestry present a [10-minute film](#) featuring Dr. Jerry Franklin addressing the need to move towards

ecological forest management as a better alternative to today's industrial logging. ([RE Sources](#))

Marine trades. A four-year Northwest Marine Apprenticeship program was launched in October by the Whatcom Working Waterfront Foundation for maritime workers to gain more knowledge in their profession and in areas of general marine technology and safety, gasoline and diesel engine repair, maritime law, navigational equipment, and paint and finish applications. ([The Northern Light](#))

Red cup strike. Starbuck workers on Red Cup Day picketed the Iowa Street, Sehome Village and Cordata stores on Thursday in Bellingham. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

### **Community**

Give thanks. Lighthouse Mission Ministries of Bellingham will resume its in-person Thanksgiving dinner for anyone who is hungry on Nov. 24, 1 p.m., at Church of the Assumption's gymnasium, 2116 Cornwall Ave. To donate or to volunteer for this or another free meal on Christmas Day, call (360) 733-5120, or [click here](#).

News of News. The League of Women Voters of Washington released a report detailing "The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy." [Read it here.](#)

Legacy. South Fork Scoop wrote: "For the past 10 years, if you've received the South Fork Scoop, or listened to KAVZ 102.5 FM, or attended an event at the Van Zandt Community Hall, you are surely familiar with the hard work, wit and wisdom of Matthew Thuney. Matthew passed away on Oct. 30, leaving a tremendous hole in our collective heart. The South Fork Valley Community Association ... intends to honor his legacy by continuing his amazing work. This includes broadcasting locally and online through KAVZ, collaborating with other local organizations, celebrating our community at the Hall, and distributing this monthly newsletter — The South Fork Scoop. As Matthew frequently closed his emails: "Onward!" Matthew's life will be celebrated at the Van Zandt Community Hall on Nov. 26, 5-8 p.m.

## **Arts and Leisure**

**FHFF.** Friday Harbor Film Festival's On-Demand Festival winners, as well as the student film award winners and runners-up, are available to [stream FREE here](#) through Nov. 30. Films are: "Corky," "Contrasts," and student film winners and runners-up.

**Arts fest.** Allied Arts 43rd Annual Holiday Festival of the Arts opens Nov. 18 10 a.m.–7 p.m. until Dec. 24 and features over 100 local artisans and craftspeople presenting their holiday goods. [Info.](#)

**Winterfest.** South Fork Winterfest brings together local artisans, crafters and musicians where you can do some early Christmas shopping: pottery, paintings, carvings, wreaths, crafts, books by local authors, refreshments and music. Van Zandt Community Hall, Nov. 19, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

**Celebrate.** November is Native American Heritage Month. Check out the resources at the [Bellingham Public Library](#) and at the Bellingham City Club [web site.](#)

**The Land.** Check out the Allied Arts of Whatcom County exhibit "[Of the Land, From the Land](#)" featuring pieces by John Hoyte, Lori Hill Sterling Rung, Belinda Botzong, and Liz Cunningham. 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!**

**Flood.** Whatcom County hosts a community meeting on flood vulnerability and risk assessment, Nov. 19, 1–3 p.m. at Birch Bay State Park's BP Heron Center. The county is gathering information to better understand river and coastal flooding impacts, which will be used for policies and preventive plans. ([The Northern Light](#))

**Salmon return.** Watch salmon return at Bender Fields / Fishtrap Creek, 8770 Bender Road in Lynden with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association. Nov. 19, Noon–3 p.m. [Info.](#)

**Heat wave.** Researcher Melissa Miner will give a talk on how the 2021 heat wave affected rocky intertidal zones of the Salish Sea. Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m., Woodmen Hall,

Lopez Island. A Lopez Historical Museum event. \$10 suggested donation.

North Fork towns. Local history author Michael Impero will share pictures and research from his new book about the towns, people, and events of the North Fork: Kendall, Maple Falls, Glacier, and Shuksan. Highlights include the history of the Nooksack Indians, local families like the Zenders and their semi-pro baseball team, famous murders, gold mines, and the making of a few motion pictures. [North Fork Library](#), Dec. 10, 1–3 p.m.

### **Elections**

**Sharon Shewmake** (D) has won the 42nd Legislative District Senate position by 836 votes at last count. Candidate Simon Sefzik (R) has gracefully conceded. [\(The Northern Light\)](#)

**Proposition 5** (Children's Initiative Levy) as of Nov. 11 was trailing by 50.06% to 49.94%, a margin of 138 votes out of a total of 108,062 ballots cast. 234 ballots remained to be counted. [\(Bellingham Herald/paywall\)](#)

In the **Skagit Public Utility District** race, Corrin Hamburg led incumbent Germaine Kornegay by 583 votes as of 11/17. Hamburg has 20,571 votes and Kornegay 19,988. [\(Skagit Valley Herald/paywall\)](#)

### **Government**

#### **San Juan County**

The council will next meet on Nov. 29.

#### **City of Bellingham**

The council will meet on Nov. 21. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public Works and Natural Resources Committee:

- Update on the City of Bellingham Urban Forestry Management Plan, Conclusion of Phase 2. [Presentation.](#)

Parks and Recreation Committee:

- Greenways Strategic Plan 2022-2026. [Presentation.](#)

Committee of the Whole:

- Resolution in Support of Abortion Rights, in Opposition to the U.S. Supreme Court Opinion in Dobbs

v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, and Stating that it is City Policy that No City Employee Within the Scope of their Duties Interfere with the Rights of an Individual to Access Abortion Services. [Resolution](#).

- Discussion Regarding Resolution 2007-18 (Proposed Charter Review)

The council will meet again on Dec. 5.

#### Whatcom County

The council will meet on Nov. 22. [Agenda items](#) include:

Public hearing:

- Ordinance in the matter of the adoption of the final budget of Whatcom County for the Biennium 2023-2024. [Proposed ordinance](#).

Consent agenda:

- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a contract between Whatcom County and Washington State Military Department for State Individual Assistance Grant Funds for November 2021 Flood housing assistance, in the amount of \$2,050,000.
- Request authorization for the County Executive to enter into a local agency agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Transportation, for the North Lake Samish Drive Bridge No. 107 Replacement Project, CRP No. 913006, in the amount of \$8,997,310.

Other items:

- Ordinance establishing the Plantation Rifle Range Lead Reclamation & Capital Improvements Fund and establishing a project based budget for the Plantation Rifle Range Lead Reclamation & Capital Improvements project. [Proposed ordinance](#).

The council will meet again on Dec. 6.

#### Port of Bellingham

[Technical problems with the Port's website prevented a report on actions taken at the 11/15 meeting.]

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 will meet on Nov. 15. [Agenda items](#) include:

Consent Agenda:

- Authorize a modification to the “[Public Space Use Policies and Procedures](#)” in order to better capture the Port’s current event spaces and the line-up for food truck operation at the Portal Container Village. In addition, a modification to raise the amount charged for Events Damage/Cleaning Deposit to better operate private event rentals in Port facilities and parks.
- Authorize the [sale](#) of 19.22 acres and a 20,000 square foot building to Teal Jones Lumber Services at market value of \$4.2 million less \$246,000 for indemnifying the Port against potential environmental hazards and less \$34,500 of half of the option payments for a total sales price of \$3,919,500.
- Authorize entering into a [contract](#) with the state Broadband Office to accept a \$4 million infrastructure grant which, when coupled with a \$1 million grant received from the Whatcom County EDI, will be used to fund a fiber-to-the-home project between Lake Terrell and the city of Ferndale.

Public Hearing: 2021 Strategic budget

Action items:

- Approve 2023 strategic budget and authorize regular property tax levy.
- Authorize [option to purchase](#) real property with Millworks LLC, a purchase and sale agreement for real property with Mercy Housing Northwest and all related documents required to finalize the transaction.

The commission will meet again on Dec. 6.

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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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