



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

## News of the week: Jan. 20, 2023

Dear Reader —

*Salish Current* doesn't think of itself as doing breaking news but as doing in-depth reporting with a news focus, a deeper relevance to what's going on in our readers' lives.

Next week, there's another round of king tides expected around the Salish Sea and we'd like to think that the articles [Kai Uyehara](#) and our other reporters have written about river floods, shorelines and rising seas provide a context for understanding the physical, social and economic forces climate change is working in our communities. It's profoundly true that in this area, we live by water, in many senses.

We also are happy when our reporting isn't as linear as it usually is but tells a story the way this week's Artist's Corner features a snowy owl painting by artist [Eve McCauley-Chomiak](#). We'll let Eve and the snowy owl speak for themselves.

We invite you to peruse the curated news items and agendas in this week's newsletter and get a taste of some interesting issues and events: recognizing the rights of orca whales, neighborhood noise, local declarations of candidacy, Argentine dance, Italian baroque music and more.

We're always happy to hear from you because we think of *Salish Current* as a community newsroom, community-supported, free to read and free from influence. Share us with others and, if you can, [please support us](#). Thanks for reading.

— Amy Nelson, Publisher

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

**#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter**

**#NoJusticeNoPeace**

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 Jan. 20, 2023](#): Penguin Friday! Seal kill, toxic makeup, plastics, OPA 90, B.C. roe herring fishery, First Nation veto, orca rights, Petrogas penalty.

## News from the *Salish Current*

### [Rising seas, high tides, storm surges and waterfront homes: does value outweigh the risks?](#)



*Sandy Point enjoys a day of calm on a recent January day. Homes along the area's shorelines continue to sell at the same pace as inland homes unaffected by coastal risks, realtors report — despite flooding.*

**By Kai Uyehara:** Predicted sea-level rising along with extremely high tides and storm surges pose increasing risk to coastal waterfront homes. How much are these trends affecting property values? [Read more.](#)

### [Artist's Corner: Rise Above 2020](#)



*A snowy owl spotted on a wintry day in the Skagit Valley inspired Rise Above 2020.*

Persistence paid off for Eve McCauley-Chomiak, when searching for a snowy owl amid snow-patched fields on the Skagit Flats. [Read more.](#)

## Letters to the Editor

- Bill Appel: **Proposal for orca rights needs more detailed work**
- Tony Angell: **Discovering snowy owls is a memorable adventure**

*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

**ART.** The City of Bellingham now will send the Alternative Response Team (ART) of behavioral health specialists and nurses in response to nonviolent behavioral health incidents, which will reduce the number of calls made to law enforcement in cases where an on-scene social worker would be more beneficial. ([KGMI](#))

**Police shooting.** The City of Portland and Multnomah County will pay \$80,000 to Erik Hoofnagle of Portland and formerly of Bellingham to settle a federal lawsuit against a police officer and county sheriff's sergeant who shot Hoofnagle with less-lethal munitions causing 14 wounds, including a broken right kneecap. ([Oregonian](#))

### Education

**BTC prez.** James Lemerond is the new president of Bellingham Technical College and plans to focus on getting high school students into the trades and making it easier for adults to return to college. ([CDN/paywall](#))

**SOS.** Storming the Sound, the annual gathering of environmental educators and practitioners, was held Thursday in La Conner, bringing together 125 in its 24th year. ([Skaqit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

### **Nature**

**Orca rights.** Jefferson County joined three Puget Sound cities in declaring inherent rights for the Southern Resident killer whale population, including the right to life, autonomy and free and safe passage, making it the first state county to do so. ([Peninsula Daily News/paywall](#))

**King tides.** Be on the lookout for high water and potential flooding in the early mornings of Jan. 23-25 as another round of high tides raise Salish Sea waters. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

**"Pineapple Express."** The atmospheric rivers that fill California's rivers to overflowing, trigger mudslides and breach levees start 2,500 miles away near Hawaii where the weather has been calm and dry. How come? ([Honolulu Civil Beat](#))

### **Business**

**Nooksack adjudication.** The state Department of Ecology says that the filing date for water rights adjudication for the Nooksack River drainage is anticipated for late summer 2023, contingent on gathering more information about funding and court readiness. The department answers additional questions that have arisen about the process. ([WA Dept.of Ecology](#))

### **Community**

**Port noise.** The Southside Community will meet with one or more Port of Bellingham commissioners to discuss noise issues associated with ABC Recycling on Jan. 25, 6:30–8:30 p.m., at the Squalicum Boathouse. ([Port of Bellingham](#)) See also: "Ship-loading noise tests Bellingham port's neighborliness" ([Salish Current, Jan. 13, 2023](#))

**Blaine library.** \$2 million in state grant funding cannot be used to build a smaller Blaine library, according to the state Department of Commerce, despite local voters twice voting down a larger branch library. ([KGMI](#))

**Sumas library.** The Whatcom County Library System hopes the Sumas library, closed since the flood of November 2021, will be open by Feb. 15 when retired pastor Carl Crouse is scheduled to read from his book, "The Waters Are Rising." ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#)) The library system estimates it cost \$210,000 to reopen the building, with insurance paying about \$170,000, and the balance from FEMA, donations to the Sumas Library Recovery Fund via the Whatcom County Library Foundation, WCLS's capital budget and \$35,000 in community donations. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

**Parks.** The city of Bellingham reports purchase of seven parks and greenway parcels in 2022 using Greenways levy funds and park impact fee revenue. ([City of Bellingham](#))

**Woodstock Farm.** Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department is seeking organizations or individuals to manage, program or operate all or part of Woodstock Farm, as a public special use site. Applications are due March 1, 2023. ([City of Bellingham](#))

### **Commentary**

**Saving salmon.** RoseMary LaClair, chair of the Nooksack Indian Tribe, writes that the Nooksack, the Lummi and the State of Washington have signed a memorandum of understanding with the City of Bellingham to actively support each other in fixing fish passage and re-opening streams for salmon to migrate upstream. She calls on Whatcom County to do the same and calls the recent federal bipartisan infrastructure bill a once-in-a-generation opportunity to receive funding to do this work. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

### **Arts and Leisure**

**Kinsey pix.** Ken Burns and Ralph Lauren are among those who have purchased images from the thousands of images produced by Darius and Tabitha Kinsey and archived at the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham. The collection includes prints, plus glass, nitrate and stereoscope negatives. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

**Dance film.** Watch "Piedra Libre" the Argentine documentary about the Argentine dance company Oduduwa Danze Afroamericana, by directors Alejandra Vassallo and Pia Sicardi, in encore showings online Jan. 19–21 and Jan. 26–29. Presented by Cascadia

International Women's Film Festival, in partnership with Kuntz and Company's dance film series; [tickets \\$10 here.](#)

**Music fest.** The Salish Sea Early Music Festival resumes with the Four-Part Italian Canzona (1580-1625); with Vicki Boeckman (renaissance recorders), Anna Marsh (renaissance bassoon), Lindsey Strand-Polyak (viola) and Jeffrey Cohan (renaissance transverse flute). Jan. 27, 7 p.m., Bellingham First Presbyterian Church; Jan. 29, 12:30 p.m., Friday Harbor Brickworks; Jan. 29, 6 p.m., Lopez Island Grace Church; Jan. 31, 7 p.m., Fir-Conway Lutheran Church; Feb. 1, 6 p.m., Orcas Adventist Church. Enjoy by donation.

**FHFF.** "The Long Rider" is the first free Friday Harbor Film Festival's Best of the Fest series offering screening on Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. at the San Juan Island Library. Director/producer Sean Cisterna will appear by livestream to speak about the film and answer audience questions following the film. The library will provide popcorn and beverages. [Info.](#)

**Allied Arts.** "Earth to Atmosphere" features work by artists from Baker Creek Ceramics and watercolor paintings by Michael Heath, Janine Hazebrouck and Tom McCalla. Allied Arts Gallery, through Jan. 28. [Info.](#)

**Old City Hall History.** Tour Bellingham's Old City Hall building and basement with a docent and see the historic jail rooms, including a padded cell from the days of prohibition, and learn about the architecture of the venerable building, as well as the history of the early days of Bellingham. Sundays, 1-2 p.m. [Info.](#)

### **Jump in!**

**Winter birds.** Swan biologist Martha Jordan speaks about the white birds of winter — swans and snow geese — and the challenges they face in migration and on their wintering grounds. Jan. 24, 7 p.m., Whatcom Museum Old City Hall, in person. A North Cascades Audubon [event.](#)

**Mary Jane.** Bellingham City Club's first program of the year on Jan. 25 is an online discussion at 1 p.m. about the first 10 years of the legalization of marijuana, and how it has affected our state. Speakers will be Dr. Josh Kaplan, Assistant Professor, Western Washington University's Behavioral Neuroscience Program, and

Danielle Rosellison, cofounder of Trail Blazin' Productions, a retailer of medical marijuana. [Register here.](#)

**Island Ag.** The Agricultural Resource Committee (ARC) of San Juan County will hold presentations by local organizations supporting agriculture in the islands and invite discussion related to agricultural economic viability and the local regulatory environment. Jan. 26, 1:30 to 3 p.m, Orcas Library Community Room.

**NW Owls.** Join Paul Bannick for a program featuring video, sound, stories from the field and several dozen new images from his award-winning and best-selling bird book, "Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls." Jan. 26, online, \$10, North Cascades Institute.

**Stewardship.** Become a Salish Sea Steward by taking 40 hours of free community science training taught by local experts beginning Feb. 7, then pledge to commit 40 hours of volunteer service in one year to teach others. Jan. 31 registration deadline, [Skagit Marine Resources Committee.](#)

**Eagles!** The Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center in Rockport is now open on weekends until mid-February. Guided walks leave at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. from the Interpretive Center and last 1 1/2 to 2 hours. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

## **Government**

For the people

[Crosscut's Washington Bill Tracker](#)

Crosscut will update their bill tracker throughout the rest of the session, which is scheduled to end on April 23. [Check it out.](#)

[Washington State Legislature Bill information.](#)

[HB 1153](#) Prohibiting octopus farming.

[HB 1215](#) Concerning the protection and restoration of riparian areas. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

## **Elections**

**2023 Candidates.** Whatcom County executive Satpal Sidhu and council member Kathy Kershner will run for reelection and council member Carol Frazey and auditor

Diana Bradrick will not. Bellingham City Council member Dan Hammill will be challenged by Liz Darrow, and Kristina Michele Martens will run for reelection. Blaine police chief Donnell Tanksley has announced his candidacy for Whatcom County sheriff. ([CDN/paywall](#))

### San Juan County

The council will meet on Jan. 24. Agenda items and video recording are [found here](#).

- Correspondence: Requests for San Juan County Proclamation–Southern Resident Killer Whales.
- Discussion: Regional Transportation and Ferry Update

**Observer Corps.** Reports on meetings of the Friday Harbor Town Council (Jan. 5) and San Juan County Council (Jan. 9 and 10) may be found here: [San Juan County LWV](#).

### City of Bellingham

The council will meet on Jan. 23. [Agenda items](#) include:

#### Public hearing

- Consideration of an ordinance amending Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations and process. [Staff memo](#).

#### Public Works and Natural Resources

- Ordinance amending the Bellingham Municipal Code authorizing employees of the Public Works Department to enforce non-criminal parking regulations. [Staff memo](#).

#### Parks and Recreation

- Cornwall Beach Park Project update and park name recommendation. [Staff memo](#).

#### Committee of the Whole

- Discussion of City Council response to Stakeholder Advisory Committee recommendations. [Draft letter](#).

### Whatcom County

The council will meet on Jan. 24. [Agenda items](#) include:

#### Public hearing

- Ordinance amending the Whatcom County Unified Fee Schedule - ferry rates. [Ordinance](#).

#### Other items

- Resolution in support of adjudication funding in the Washington State 2023–2024 biennium. [Revised proposed resolution.](#)
- Discussion and approval of letter regarding climate action legislative priorities. [Draft letter.](#)
- Request authorization for the county executive to enter into a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Hunt Forensics for increased costs of services in the amount of \$893,449.13 for the total amount of \$3,356,602. [Memo.](#)

#### Port of Bellingham

The commission will meet on Jan. 24. [Agenda items](#) include:

#### Consent Agenda

- Authorize the executive director to amend the [Personal Services Agreement](#) with Makers to provide technical expertise to support t planning efforts in 2023 for the Waterfront District Marine Trades Area.

#### Presentation

- Marina rules and regulations

#### Action item

- Authorize the executive director to execute an Authorization to Proceed for [Harcourt's proposed Projects No. 5 and 6](#) within the Waterfront District Master Development Area.

#### Special Port Meeting

Two or more port commissioners may attend the [Southside Community meeting](#) to discuss noise issues associated with ABC Recycling on Jan. 25, 6:30–8:30 p.m. at the Squalicum Boathouse, 2600 N. Harbor Loop Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225. The commission will take no formal action during this event.

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Mike Sato, Managing Editor**

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news — freely accessible to all — with independence  
and strict journalistic integrity.

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