



News of the week: April 14, 2023

Dear Reader —

This week's articles from *Salish Current* inform us on issues woven organically in the fabric of our sense of place:

- [Nancy DeVaux](#) reports on legislation meant to protect the iconic Southern Resident orca whales — and its ramifications for the struggling whale population as well as those who observe and study them.
- [Gretchen K. Wing](#) tells how a modernized version of the conservation corps connects young people with caring for and learning about the land and waters of the place we call home, and how that changes lives.

Salish Current set out three years ago to earn your trust with truthful, always-free-to-read local journalism for two reasons.

- First, the volume of local news covering our three-county area was shrinking drastically.
- The second is powerfully and bluntly said by researcher/authors Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West: “The world is awash with bullshit, and we’re drowning in it.”

Professor Bergstrom shared more from their research in a talk both inspiring and disturbing last night, hosted by *Salish Current*, the Munro Institute for Civic Education at Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College, in partnership with Village Books.

The internet has changed our lives and social systems, Bergstrom observed ... but not with the intention to promote sustainability of human happiness. It is engineered to maximize corporate profits. And it does so with algorithms that make choices for us, though not necessarily in our best interests, and often with misleading information dressed up as statistics and data.

The many examples Bergstrom gave suggest a grim picture of intentional misinformation pushed out by profit-seekers and political disrupters. But his ultimate goal in the talk, and in the course he and West teach at the University of Washington on “Calling Bullshit” and their book by the same title, is to empower us to push back:

- Remain vigilant, and recognize bullshit whenever and wherever you encounter it.
- Figure out for yourself precisely why it is bullshit.
- Provide a statistician or scientist with a technical explanation, or a nonscientist with an accessible, persuasive explanation, of why a claim is bullshit.

Bergstrom also pointed out two sources of information that have earned and kept the trust of their communities: local journalism and public libraries. We are pleased to be that resource for you, and deeply grateful for your [continuing support](#) that makes it possible for our nonprofit news organization to provide our coverage freely accessible to all to read.

—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 April 14, 2023](#):
Dolphin Friday, steelhead help, SCEA ends, carbon-cap,
e-vehicles, hypoxia, Tacoma ship fire, orca protection.

News from the *Salish Current*

[Senate bill changing vessel-orca distance moves forward](#)



The law requiring some vessels to maintain a 1,000-yard distance from Southern Resident orca whales may change to apply to all vessels, except researchers with permits.

By Nancy DeVaux: Keeping our distance from the whales: 1,000-yard rule for all vessels passes both Washington houses. [Read more.](#)

[Modern conservation corps meshes care for land, health for youths](#)



Restoring camas gardening and other ancient practices and deepening youths' ties with the environment are among key purposes of the Coast Salish Youth Stewardship Corps.

By Gretchen K. Wing: Youth Conservation Corps in the Salish Sea region offer a prescription for youths' mental, cultural and spiritual health — and a means to care for the land. [Read more.](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

- Micki Jackson: **Stories motivate people to action**

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

Abortion protection. Bill ([HB1469](#)) which blocks local cooperation with out-of-state efforts to pursue criminal and civil cases related to abortion was passed by the legislature and sent to the governor. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Gun wait. Bill ([E2SH 1143](#)) requiring a 10-day waiting period before purchasing firearms was passed by the legislature and sent to the governor. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Assault weapons. Bill ([HB 1240](#)) banning the sale of assault weapons has passed both houses of the legislature and has gone to conference for reconciliation. ([Seattle Times/paywall](#))

Drug dashboard. A new [state dashboard](#) shows that there were 7,598 fatal overdoses from 2017 through 2021, the majority related to opioids. ([KUOW](#))

Drug use. Bill ([SB 5536](#)) passed by the state Senate and House continues making drug possession a misdemeanor but difference in the range of criminal penalty requires the bill to go to conference for reconciliation. ([Crosscut](#))

Bellingham drug use. The Bellingham City Council voted 5-2 to make public use of a controlled substance a misdemeanor subject to arrest. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Anacortes drug use. The Anacortes City Council voted to make public drug use illegal inside the city. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Hot pursuit. Bill ([SB 5352](#)) which lowers the threshold for law enforcement to be able to pursue suspects passed the legislature and is now in conference for reconciliation. ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

Education

Higher ed. Western Washington University faces a \$10 million budget shortfall from declining enrollment due to the COVID pandemic and loss of federal funding. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Nature

Plastic ban. Bill ([HB 1085](#)) passed the legislature and will require hotels to phase out single-use personal care plastic bottles. ([Bill Report](#))

Whatcom Creek. The state Department of Ecology requests public review and comment until April 30 on its draft cleanup plan to clean up fecal pollution from Whatcom Creek. ([Dept. of Ecology](#))

Cutthroat. The state Fish and Wildlife Commission has determined that fishing for cutthroat trout in Lake Whatcom will remain closed, and rejected a petition filed by a local fisherman who claimed that the population had recovered. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Business

Tulip suit. Tulip Town is suing a competing garden, Tulip Valley Farms, claiming its owner, while working for Tulip Town, was secretly working to form Tulip Valley Farms. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Recycling permits. The Port of Bellingham and ABC Recycling are working with the state Department of Ecology to get the right stormwater permits for metal recycling activities that have been going on for months. ([CDN/paywall](#))

Seafood mart. Port of Anacortes commissioners are considering opening a seafood market in its marina area where vendors can sell directly to the community. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))

Community

Middle housing. Bill ([HB 1110](#)) which would allow duplexes or fourplexes in single-family zones passed the

House in amended form and moved to conference with the Senate for reconciliation. ([Crosscut](#))

Next flood. The city of La Conner has formally established an emergency management commission to plan for future emergencies like the Dec. 27 flooding. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#)) See also: "Surprising channel flood leaves La Conner planning for future," ([Salish Current, Feb. 9, 2023](#))

Rent help. Skagit County will use the \$2 million from the fourth round of COVID-19 relief funding to help renters avoid eviction for nonpayment of rent. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

SCEA ends. The Skagit Conservation Education Alliance will cease operations on June 30 after 22 years of operations. ([Skagit Valley Herald/paywall](#))

Blaine public works. Harper Gandhi has been hired as the public works director for the City of Blaine and will begin work on June 1. ([The Northern Light](#))

Earth Day Party. The RE Store will celebrate 30 years of local reuse with a free, all-ages outdoor party — and offer a storewide 30% off sale on Earth Day. April 22, 3–8 p.m. [RSVP.](#)

Fix It. NW Free Repair volunteers will hold a drop-in repair workshop to fix your broken household item. Bellingham Public Library, April 18, 4:30–6:45 p.m.

Map It. Learn from a firefighter how to bring your neighbors together to share information and develop a plan for emergencies and disasters. Map Your Neighborhood at the Bellingham Public Library, April 25, 6–6:45 p.m.

Commentary

Public health. Caitlin Rivers in *Your Local Epidemiologist* writes: "The wellspring of misinformation is effectively infinite compared to the scant resources of public health. It is unlikely that we will ever get ahead of the deluge. But there is another way forward: we must focus instead on getting our own house in order by improving core communications..." ([Your Local Epidemiologist](#))

Arts and Leisure

Spring concerts. The Bellingham Community Chorus presents its Spring 2023 concerts on April 29 at 7 p.m. and April 30 at 3 p.m., St. James Presbyterian Church, Bellingham. [Information.](#)

EOB. The 18th annual Essence of Bellingham photo competition is open to community member submittals that capture the essence of living, working and playing in Bellingham. May 1 deadline, [entry details here.](#)

Western show. Two exhibitions, “Pareidolia” and “Teacher/Scholar/Artist,” will run concurrently until May 6 at the Western Gallery located on the university campus. ([The Front](#))

Whatcom Reads. “Red Paint: The Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk” by Sasha Lapointe is Whatcom READS' 2024 featured title. ([Whatcom Talk](#))

Showtime. The photography exhibit, "Vintage Vaudevillians," promoting early vaudeville acts in Bellingham, returns to the Lightcatcher in partnership with Whatcom READS. Through May 31. [Info.](#)

Textile dyeing. The Whatcom Museum presents Katazome Today, contemporary visions of a unique and historically significant Japanese textile-dyeing process. Through June 11. [Information.](#)

Jump in!

Bee film. Friday Harbor Film Festival’s FREE Best of the Fest series presents "The Pollinators" at the San Juan Island Library, April 14, 7 p.m. [Information.](#)

Stream health. Join the City of Bellingham and Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association at Arroyo Park to remove invasive species and reduce erosion into this salmon-bearing stream. April 8, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Register here.](#)

Trails. More trail work at the Marblemount Conservation Area with Skagit Land Trust. April 14, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. [Info and registration.](#)

Million trees. Help transform Squalicum Creek Park by planting 70 more trees on the west slope above the playfields, April 15, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info and registration.](#)

Food systems. The San Juan County Food System Team presents three forums discussing a shared roadmap of strategies to foster a local food culture and economy, in advance of publishing its plan this summer. April 16, 5 p.m., Oddfellows Hall, Eastsound; April 18, 5 p.m., Community Center, Lopez; April 20, 5 p.m., Brickworks, Friday Harbor. [Information.](#)

Plastic poison. "Toxic Relationship: Plastics and Your Health" is the topic of an online talk by Dr. Philip Landrigan, the Director of the Global Public Health Program and Adjunct Professor of Environmental Health at Boston College. April 19, 9:30 a.m., Bellingham/Whatcom County League of Women Voters Climate Team. [Information.](#)

Earth Day. Join Skagit Land Trust and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to plant trees and remove invasive species at the Utopia Conservation Area in Sedro-Woolley. [Info and registration.](#)

Earth Day. 900+ trees wait to be planted and numerous invasive plants to be removed at the WWU Miyawaki Forest Demo Site. Free pizza, too. April 22, 9 a.m.–Noon. [Info and registration.](#)

Earth Day. RE Sources and the Endangered Species Coalition presents "From Tree to Sea," a special Earth Day screening of films highlighting the ways in which the fates of the Northwest's iconic salmon, rivers, forests, and communities are inextricably linked. April 22, 11:30 a.m., Pickford Film Center. [Details.](#)

Earth Day. Meet RE Sources at Bellingham's Marine Heritage Park, grab a trash grabber and combat plastic pollution. April 22, Noon–2 p.m. [Sign up.](#)

Earth Day. Bellingham's MakersMart is at the waterfront Granary Building with 30 local makers selling eco-friendly goods, with 10% of proceeds donated to the Whatcom Million Trees Project. April 22, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. [Information.](#)

Tourism. The Bellingham City Club presents online "Tourism as an Economic Driver" a discussion with Dylon Deane Boyle, director and president of the

Bellingham/Whatcom Tourism Board. April 26, Noon; [reservation](#) by April 24. The City Club will resume meeting in person on May 24.

Beach clean. The Spencer Spit Beach Community Clean-Up on Lopez is held on April 29, Noon–2 p.m. State park day-use fees waived for volunteers.

Government

For the people. The final day of the 2023 legislative session is April 23.

[Washington State Legislature Bill information.](#)

[SB 5352](#)

[Passed Senate; in House Rules.] Concerning vehicular pursuits.

[HB1340](#)

[Passed House; on Senate floor calendar.] Concerning actions by health professions disciplining authorities against license applicants and license holders. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

[HB 1337](#)

[Passed House; on Senate floor calendar.] Expanding housing options by easing barriers to the construction and use of accessory dwelling units. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

[HB 1110](#)

[Passed House; on Senate floor calendar.] Increasing middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing. [Lekanoff, Ramel]

[SB 5371](#)

[Passed Senate; in House Rules.] Protecting Southern Resident orcas from vessels. [Lovelett, Shewmake]

Crosscut's Washington Bill Tracker

Crosscut will update their bill tracker throughout the rest of the session, scheduled to end on April 23.

San Juan County

The council will meet on April 18. [Agenda items and video.](#)

- Discussion/action: Argyle Lots

City of Bellingham

The council met on April 10. [Agenda](#) items included:

The council voted 5-2 (Lilliquist, Martens opposed) an ordinance of the City of Bellingham amending

Bellingham Municipal Code Chapter 10.08 regarding the use of controlled substances in public places. See: "Bellingham acts on measure to criminalize drug use in public" ([Bellingham Herald/paywall](#))

The council will meet again on April 24.

Whatcom County

The council met on April 11. [Agenda items](#) included:

- Approved request (6-1, Byrd opposed) to send a letter regarding the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. [Draft letter.](#)
- Approved request (4-3, Buchanan, Frazey, Galloway opposed) to send a letter regarding the Brokedown Palace timber sale. [Proposed letter.](#)
- Unanimously approved holding in committee Whatcom County Food System Plan. [Presentation.](#)

The council will meet again on April 25.

Port of Bellingham

The commission met on April 11. [Video](#) and [agenda items](#) included:

- The commission unanimously authorized the executive director to execute an Option to Purchase Real Property between the BoardMill Group LLC and the Port of Bellingham for approximately 5.3 acres in the Waterfront District. Due to the size of the file, please click on the following attachments to get complete document. [L#1](#), [L#2](#), & [L#3](#). [[YouTube 13:16 - 39:00](#)]
- The commission unanimously approved the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, [Resolution No.1408.](#)
- The commission unanimously authorized the executive director to execute an Authorization to Proceed for Millworks LLC's [proposed Phase 2 project](#) concept within the Waterfront District. [[YouTube 42:14 - 58:00](#)]

The commission will meet again on April 25.

**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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