

# Salish Current

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

Mar. 13, 2020

## [A wood stove swap-out is helping clear the air in rural Whatcom County](#)



Smoke inversion is a big factor in air quality in eastern Whatcom County's Columbia Valley. A clip from [drone footage](#) captured in October 2019 by Whatcom Fire District 14 above the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center near Kendall illustrates the intensity of the problem.

*By Matt Benoit*

— For nearly a decade, the Columbia Valley Air Quality Improvement Project has worked at reducing particulate pollution from wood smoke by replacing older, out-of-regulation wood

stoves in residents' homes with newer, more efficient ones — a home renovation worth thousands but available at no cost to residents.... [Read more here.](#)

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## News from around the region...

EDITOR'S NOTE: Coronavirus news coverage in the [Bellingham Herald](#) can be accessed online without a subscription.

### Health & Safety

[What you need to know about COVID-19 in B.C. on March 13, 2020](#)  
British Columbians asked to avoid travelling out of the country. (CBC)

[Whatcom County declares public health emergency over coronavirus](#)

A Whatcom County public health emergency was declared after the county had its first confirmed case of COVID-19. (Bellingham Herald)

[Coronavirus risk prompts CBP, CDC to deny travelers at border in Whatcom County](#)

U.S. Customs and Protection reported travelers have been denied entry into the United States. As of March 7, Canada did not have a travel ban in place relating to the COVID-19 outbreak. (Bellingham Herald)

### Education

[The five-year funding for STEM training is at historic high from previous grants](#)

NASA has doubled its grant to Western this year, bringing the total to \$190,000. The grant will fund research projects and help train future science and math teachers over the summer. (Western Front)

### Government

[What passed, what died in the 2020 Washington Legislature](#)

A look at some of the higher-profile bills that passed and didn't pass during the 2020 session. (NW News Network)

[Growth issues get real in Eastsound, but new VR regs in limbo](#)

The recently-completed San Juan County Land Capacity Analysis provides more guidance for development but the local vacation rental conflicts remain unresolved. (Orcas Issues)

[City formalizes exploration of aquatic center/community center](#)

The Anacortes City Council unanimously approved a memorandum of agreement Monday with the Fidalgo Park and Recreation District to explore combining a youth community center and a

two-pool aquatic and fitness center. (Anacortes American)

## Nature

### [Supreme Court rejects Trans Mountain legal challenges. So, what's next?](#)

Cases regarding the pipeline's impacts on endangered killer whales and Indigenous rights won't be heard, but opponents of the project say its future is far from certain. (The Narwhal)

## Business

### [Whatcom Parched](#)

Farming and water in Whatcom County. Climate change starts a new chapter in Whatcom County's century-old water shortage issue. (Klipsun Magazine)

### [Coronavirus outbreak affects Skagit events, businesses, nonprofits](#)

The COVID-19 outbreak is creating uncertainty for the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, the county's largest tourism draw. (Skagit Valley Herald)

## Community

### [After their neighborhood became a food desert, disabled residents are fighting back](#)

Bellingham's Birchwood neighborhood lost its grocery store nearly four years ago. For some locals, that means spending extra time and money that they might not have. (Crosscut)

### [Construction of Ship Harbor roundabout begins Monday](#)

Construction of the Ship Harbor roundabout in Anacortes on Oakes Avenue at the entrance to Clearidge and San Juan Passage neighborhoods begins Monday.

### [Family Care Network facility could open by mid-2021](#)

The new Blaine facility would provide much-needed medical services to local residents. (Northern Light)

### [City establishes new immigration board](#)

Ten Bellingham community members were named by Mayor Seth Fleetwood to a new Immigration Advisory Board that will review and evaluate policies and make recommendations relating to immigration matters. (Western Front)

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*Salish Current is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, online local news organization serving Whatcom, San Juan and Skagit Counties. Salish Current exists to protect and improve democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.*

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