

Salish Current

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

*At the end of a week of pain, shame, sorrow and anger, Salish Current affirms its commitment to work for truth, justice, equality and healing for all people.
#SayTheirNames #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace*

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News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending June 5, 2020:

[New oil spill response base in Friday Harbor will address present — and growing — threat](#)



Local responders keep their skills sharp through drills and training, to be ready when called to help prevent small-scale oil spills in the Salish Sea.
(Photo courtesy Islands Oil Spill Association)

By Genevieve Iverson

A new response base to be built on San Juan Island will amp up the Islands Oil Spill Association's capability to help prevent oil spills when small-spill threats arise. ([Read more here.](#))

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[The coronavirus pandemic adds new twists to the 'good death': Community Voices](#)



By Floyd McKay
(this article first ran in Post Alley)

In our time of pandemic, the hackneyed phrase, “a good death,” has come to have new meaning and, yes, a new life, if you will. Partly it is the thousand deaths in our Washington, and the hundred thousand in the nation. Partly it is the chaos of leadership in the other Washington. ([Read more here.](#))

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News from around the region...

Health & Safety

- Skagit and Whatcom counties were approved Friday morning to move into Phase 2 of the state's Safe Start plan. ([Bellingham Herald](#)) ([Skagit Valley Herald](#))
- All transient overnight lodging in San Juan County is allowed to resume at 50% capacity, including hotels and motels, camping, moorage, and vacation rentals. ([San Juan Update](#))
- Whatcom County Hispanics make up 9% of the county population but comprise 18% of the confirmed COVID-19 cases in the county, an increase of

15% of cases May 17. Residents who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native represent 3% of the county's population but make up 12% of cases, up from 11% May 17. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

- A petition advocating a ban on bicycle travel on Chuckanut Drive had received over 400 signatures by mid-May. ([Western Front](#))

Education

- The Blaine school board unanimously approved a three-year contract for Blaine school district superintendent Christopher Granger. ([The Northern Light](#))
- An all-ages summer reading program featuring a bingo-card format to track the books read or listened is available from the Bellingham Public Library and Watcom County Library System. ([Whatcom Talk](#))
- Nearly nine out of 10 Washington parents polled between April 13 and 24 were very concerned about their children falling behind during school closures, with three out of four parents of children in public schools expressing high levels of stress, and more stress felt by parents of kids with disabilities and families earning less than \$50,000 annually. ([Tacoma News Tribune](#))

Government

- Skagit County estimates a loss of \$4.5 million in general fund revenues due to the COVID-19 shutdown and, combined with an estimated \$6.3 million increase in spending from the fund, faces using about half of the \$22.4 million held in reserves from 2019. ([Skagit Valley Herald](#))
- Proposed zoning changes for Point Roberts development regulations in the Small Town Commercial zone are available from the the Community Advisory Committee. ([All Point Bulletin](#))

Nature

- The dead Asian giant hornet found near Custer was a queen, according to the Washington Department of Agriculture which is placing about 300 traps for the hornet in Whatcom County. ([My ferndale News](#))
- Investigation into the nature and amount of toxic contamination in a 3.1-acre-in-water site in Bellingham Bay resumed this week, a third stage in developing a cleanup plan. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

Business

- With a 4-3 vote the Whatcom County Council approved the ninth, six-month, interim extension of a ban on filing, accepting or processing new applications for most new or expanded facilities for shipping unrefined fossil fuels that won't be processed or used at the Cherry Point industrial zone ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Survey results from 726 respondents out of the approximately 10,000 businesses in Whatcom County provide a glimpse into the effect of the COVID-19 shutdown on local businesses and employment. ([Western Front](#))
- About 700-plus new residents are expected in the vicinity of Bellingham's Samish Way/Lincoln Street area when apartment planned and under construction are built. ([Northwest Citizen](#))
- COVID-19 restrictions have halted travel business activity in Bellingham and recovery will come slowly. ([Western Front](#))
- PeaceHealth Whatcom County received \$12.6 million in coronavirus grant money out of the \$75 million received by PeaceHealth's Northwest Network. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

Community

- Bill Tsi'li'xw James, hereditary chief of the Lummi people, died June 1 at age 75. ([Seattle Times](#))

- This year's San Juan County Fair, held at the County Fairgrounds since 1924, will this year be an Alternative Fair in a virtual format. ([San Juan Update](#))
- The Ferndale YMCA closed permanently June 1 due to its building lease not being renewed and because of COVID-19. ([Lynden Tribune](#))
- The Anacortes Arts Festival which draws about 100,000 people in August has been cancelled. ([Anacortes American](#))
- Doe Bay Fest 13, which was scheduled to occur at Doe Bay Resort and Retreat, August 6-9 is officially cancelled for 2020, as is the Imagine festival also hosted at Doe Bay Resort. ([Orcas Issues](#))
- All-day summer program cancellations due to COVID-19 in Bellingham and Whatcom County exacerbate the need for additional child care. ([Western Front](#))
- The Ferndale Public Market opening scheduled for summer has been delayed until plans for public safety are finalized. ([My Ferndale News](#))

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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 strengthen democratic governance by reporting and curating local news with independence and strict journalistic integrity.

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