



News from the *Salish Current* for the week ending Sept. 18, 2020:

[Toxic tansy ragwort is having a boom year](#)



Toxic to animals with livers, tansy ragwort fills a gap in the seasonal need for nectar for some butterflies and other insects. Above, an Oregon branded skipper rests on tansy ragwort flowers. (Ann Potter photo)

By Alex Meacham

— Pernicious, invasive and even sometimes deadly for livestock, tansy ragwort has enjoyed a booming bloom this summer in Whatcom, Skagit and San Juan counties and across the rest of western Washington and Oregon. Local weed boards and landowners seeking to eradicate the weed say they are finding more sites than ever this year.

Tansy ragwort contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids, chemicals which can build up in an animal's liver and eventually prove fatal. At least one farm animal in the area has died from tansy ragwort poisoning this year, according to Joseph Shea, coordinator of the Skagit County Weed Board. [Read more here.](#)

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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 around the region:

Health and Safety

- Canada will keep the border closed until at least until Oct. 21 ([CBC](#)) and more likely until the end of November. ([Reuters](#)) And really, not many Canadians or their public officials favor opening the border despite economic losses ([CBC](#))
- Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood agreed with the Whatcom County Public Health Advisory Board that racism is a public health crisis and will forward to the City Council an official proclamation to that effect. ([Bellingham Herald](#))

Education

- Western Washington University begins classes Sept. 23 with an enrollment of about 15,000 students. Almost all courses will be delivered remotely. ([City of Bellingham City Council meeting report.](#))

Government

- The Lynden City Council is scheduled on Sept. 21 to consider a city statement on racial justice in response to two youth-originated Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Lynden this summer. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))
- The Anacortes City Council authorized on Monday the sale of up to \$48.1 million in 20-year revenue bonds to fund improvements to the city's water and sewer systems. ([Anacortes American/paywall](#))
- City of Bellingham
 - The City Council on Sept. 14 voted unanimously to approve purchase of property on the north shore of Lake Whatcom for \$1.8 million to preserve forests in the watershed. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
 - A summary of the City Council meeting of Sept. 14 can be found [here](#).
 - The Council voted 5-2 (Knutson, Hammill opposed) to request the City administration develop changes to the current [Public Works conduit policy](#) to take community needs and economic development needs into consideration. Public Works and Natural Resources Committee chair Michael Lilliquist said, "This is not about broadband."
 - The Council voted unanimously to direct the City administration to create a budget proposal to fund the creation and development of a 911 co-responder program that, when operational, will specifically address behavioral health 911 calls through an unarmed

response that will include designated crisis responders, nurses and community health professionals or other similar health professionals. ([22723](#))

- The Council unanimously approved that the Council, Mayor, and Administrative staff attend the Multicultural Organization Development and Integrating Diversity and Inclusiveness into Your Systems training. ([22753](#))
 - The Council unanimously voted to request a briefing on police certification or the status of a national database that tracks officers that have been let go due to serious misconduct. ([22754](#))
 - The next meeting of the Bellingham City Council is scheduled for Sept. 28, 7 p.m. Agenda and information on how to view and participate can be found [here](#).
- Whatcom County
 - A summary of the Whatcom County Council meeting of Sept. 15 can be found [here](#).
 - The council voted unanimously to grant Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless a nonexclusive franchise for the provision of wireless telecommunications services. ([AB2020-086](#))
 - The council voted 6-1 (Elenbaas opposed) to authorize the County Executive to enter into interlocal agreements between Whatcom County and regional law enforcement agencies for the use of the Plantation Rifle Range to train personnel, in various contract amounts.
 - The Council voted 5-2 (Byrd, Elenbaas opposed) to authorize the County Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Commerce for funding to develop and expand shelter programs, in the amount of \$1,194,211 ([AB2020-376](#))
 - The next meeting of the Whatcom County Council is scheduled for Sept. 29, 6 p.m. To participate, [click here](#).
- Port of Bellingham
 - Minutes of the Sept. 15 meeting of the Port Commission can be seen [here](#).
 - **Broadband:** Staff reported that the scope of work is being finalized and discussions with partners are underway.
 - **Border:** Staff reports that the business community is very motivated to open the borders, but the non-business community members are very supportive of keeping the border closed.
 - The Port of Bellingham will hold a special meeting on Sept. 29 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom to discuss its 2021 capital budget. The next regular commission meeting is scheduled for Oct. 6.

Nature

- A decade after the Salish Sea was named with the hope that nations would improve collaboration on conservation, scientists and First Nations say that has not been fully realized and the waterway is suffering because of it. ([CBC](#))
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- Out of \$18 million of grants awarded for salmon restoration statewide, Skagit County will spend its \$1.1 million in the Skagit River and its tributaries, and \$23,000 in the south fork of the Nooksack River that snakes through land north of Highway 20.
- Take a trip with Center for Whale Research founder and senior scientist Ken Balcomb to photograph whales during the Sept. 5 Superpod encounter. ([The Orcasonian](#))

Commentary

- *Salish Current* managing editor Mike Sato asked readers last week to provide responses to the quadrennial question, "[Are you better off now than you were four years ago?](#)" We encourage you to share a response of up to 100 words with a photo and send to: SalishCurrent@gmail.com

Business

- Results of a Western Washington University survey show that, despite losing eight out of 10 customers who were Canadian due to the border closure, Point Roberts businesses indicate they will remain open or will reopen even if the border is closed for the rest of the year. ([All Point Bulletin](#)) Senator Patty Murray introduces federal legislation which would provide forgivable federal loans to small businesses in places like Point Roberts. ([Bellingham Herald](#))
- Discussions of the future of the Washington State Ferries' Anacortes-Sydney BC run need to take into consideration the shortage and age of vessels available to serve the route and the significant investment that will have to be made in vessels. ([Anacortes American](#))
- The Lynden City Council will consider on Sept. 21 a proposed rezone of 21.8 acres at Main Street and Guide Meridian Road to Mixed Density Residential from Mannahouse (formerly City Bible) Church of Portland, Ore., with a proposal for the site of a Planned Residential District of 134 housing units — single-family, small cottages, townhomes and four-plexes. ([Lynden Tribune/paywall](#))

Community

- Lopez Island community members held a ceremony of respect on Sept. 6 before removing Black Lives Matter signs that had been vandalized three times since being erected. ([San Juan Journal](#))

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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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