

Good afternoon. You've got 91.9 KPTZ tuned on your FM dial or computer – here in Port Townsend Washington. I am Simon Jaynes, bringing you your local news for April 14, 2022.

Federal Tax Returns for most Americans are not due tomorrow on the traditional Tax Day – April 15, but the date has also not been significantly extended, as it was in the previous two years due to the pandemic. Taxes this year are due on Monday April 18. The due date was pushed back because of Emancipation Day – a local Washington DC public holiday that is observed on April 16 every year, commemorating the D.C. Compensated Emancipation Act, signed by Abraham Lincoln 8 months before his broader emancipation proclamation during the Civil War. The act freed 3000 slaves in the District of Columbia. This year, as the date falls on Saturday the 16th, federal offices will be closed Friday, April 15, and everyone gets a few extra calendar days to get their taxes filed by the deadline.

The COVID-19 case rate in Jefferson County has returned to the “High” Category this week, meaning it is above 200 per 100,000. As of Tuesday, April 12, the two-week case rate sits at 208 per 100,000. At this level, it is strongly recommended everyone wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask in public, indoor settings. This gauge is updated Tuesdays and Fridays.

JeffCo Public Health reported 10 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday, bringing our total case count since the beginning of the pandemic to 3,273. There are currently 62 cases in active isolation and 2 people currently hospitalized. The Port Townsend School District has only reported 2 cases of COVID-19 across all of its students and staff in the last 2 weeks. But there are reports of a common cold circulating in the community with many of the same symptoms as COVID-19, so that has kept a number of students home from school as they tried to return from Spring Break this past week. Please make sure to visit <https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/202/Public-Health> if you have any questions regarding current health recommendations or for how to acquire free COVID-19 tests for you and your family. Let's keep the community safe.

The first stakeholder meeting for the Sims Gateway Boatyard Expansion project was held on Tuesday, April 14. The project, which has been much debated in the past year due to people's attachment to the string of 90-year old poplar trees lining Sims Way, has an official schedule for 2022 that can be found on the city web page at <https://cityofpt.us/engagept>. Last year, incidents at the Boat Haven involving the trees and arcing power lines instigated work on the project, whose goals include removal of the iconic poplars.

According to the City of Port Townsend, the project is intended to leverage the economic health of Boat Haven and the maritime industry, safety and reliability of the power grid, and environmental stewardship consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, Gateway Development Plan and the 1986 Landscape Plan for Kah Tai. In February, the Port Townsend City Council approved the formation of a stakeholders committee to examine the plan. Included in this group are: Arlene Alen, director of The Chamber of Jefferson County; Ron Sikes of the Admiralty Audubon Society; arborist Forest Shomer; residents Dan Burden, Russell Hill and Steve Mader; permaculturist Jennifer Rotermund; and Joni Blanchard, who works in the Boat Haven. Their first meeting on Tuesday was broadcast online but no public comment was taken. There will be monthly meetings until a plan is agreed upon and presented to City Council. Their next scheduled meeting is through the City's Parks, Recreation, Trees and Trails Advisory Board (PRTTAB). It will be held at 4:30pm on April 26. To attend online, see <https://cityofpt.us/bc/page/parks-recreation-trees-and-trails-advisory-board>. According to City Public

Works Director Steve King, construction work on the Gateway project is intended to begin this winter and continue into spring 2023

Earth Day is coming up next week, and there are several ways to celebrate it by getting your hands dirty.

On Friday, April 22, Friends of Fort Worden is hosting an english ivy pull from 9:30-11am at the top of the hill in the Cistern/Command Post area (see trail H-2 on the park map). The ivy is not very green here, but it is very thick, so loppers and heavy-duty clippers are needed, as well as gloves to protect your hands.

On Saturday, April 23, you can join the Friends of Fort Flagler on Marrowstone Island from 9am to 1pm to help remove invasive plant species. Volunteers who have experience removing Scotch Broom are encouraged to sign up, and bring their own tools, water, and gloves.

Also on Saturday, the Port Townsend Marine Science Center will host its annual Earth Day beach cleanup at four locations – Fort Worden State Park, downtown Port Townsend, Indian Island County Park, and Shine Tidelands State Park. Volunteers will collect and sort through debris to clean up the beach, and to contribute data to the Ocean Conservancy's international database. The cleanup will take place from 1 to 5pm at those four locations.

That's it for today's local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday, and at 5pm Monday through Friday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Simon Jaynes, thanks for listening and have a great day