

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for April 26, 2022.

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Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence spoke to the Board Of County Commissioners yesterday for their weekly public health briefing. Jefferson County is still in the HIGH transmission rate category and Clallam County remains in the MODERATE category. Although 300 people per day are still dying from COVID-19 in the U.S., there have been no deaths in the past several weeks in Jefferson County and Clallam County. You can look at the latest numbers, mask recommendations, and links to report positive COVID test results at the counties' websites: <https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19> and <https://www.clallam.net/coronavirus/>. And you can listen to the entire COVID-19 update on the KPTZ website (<https://kptz.org/2022/04/25/county-public-health-report-4-25-22/>).

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By 2070, the glaciers on the Olympic Peninsula will have largely disappeared according to a new study. A report on the study was published in the *Peninsula Daily News* last Saturday. The loss of the glaciers and snowfields will alter the region's ecosystems and shrink a critical source of summer water for the lowlands, according to a study published this week in the *Journal of Geophysical Research Earth Surface* by the AGU (<https://www.agu.org/>). AGU (American Geophysical Union) was established in 1919 by the National Research Council and operated as an unincorporated affiliate of the National Academy of Sciences for more than 50 years. They were independently incorporated in 1972.

Olympic National Park hosts some 200 Olympic Mountain glaciers, fed by more than 100 inches in annual precipitation – much of it snow. These mountains, which begin at sea level and top off at nearly 8,000 feet, are low-lying and as the climate warms, the glaciers and the water supply are threatened, according to the study. The Peninsula has lost half of its glacier area since 1900 and, since 1980, 35 glaciers and 16 perennial snowfields have disappeared. Andrew Fountain, professor of geology and geography at Portland State University who led the study, said the few remaining glaciers likely will be shells of their former selves.

“There’s little we can do to prevent the disappearance of these glaciers,” Fountain said in a press release. “We’re on this global warming train right now. Even if we’re super good citizens and stop adding carbon dioxide in the atmosphere immediately, it will still be 100 years or so before the climate responds....This is yet another tangible call for us to take climate change seriously and take actions to minimize our climate impact....As the temperatures warm, not only will the glaciers melt more in summer, which you’d expect, but in the wintertime, it changes the phase of the precipitation from snow to rain....So the glaciers get less nourished in the winter, more melt in the summer, and then they just fall off the map.”

Glacier disappearances will trigger a chain of impacts, beginning with diminishing alpine streams and species like bull trout that have adapted to those cold waters. Negative impacts can ripple throughout ecosystems and up food webs, the study said. “Once you lose your seasonal snow, the only source of water in these alpine areas is glacier melt,” Fountain said. “And without the glaciers, you’re not going to have that melt contributing to the stream flow, therefore impacting the ecology in alpine areas.” Then he added, “That’s a big deal with disastrous fallout.” (So, the question is, should we start digging reservoirs now?)

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Today is the LAST DAY of voting on a \$12.3 million bond measure for the Quilcene School District. As of last Friday, 743 ballots had been returned out of the 1,629 provided to registered voters in the district for a voter turnout of 45.61%. The bond measure – proposed to replace the elementary school, build a new Career and

Technical Education (CTE) facility, and make improvements to the athletic fields – narrowly missed the 60% supermajority needed for passage in February, bringing in an approval percentage of 59.37, just five votes short of the number needed for passage. Ballots must be returned or postmarked by 8pm tonight to be counted.

Postage is provided on ballots for those who mail them. There are 4 ballot drop locations for this election:

- Jefferson County Courthouse, 1820 Jefferson St., Port Townsend: a drive-up box in the back parking lot and walk-up boxes in front of the courthouse steps.
- Jefferson County Library in Port Hadlock: next to the book drop in the parking lot.
- Quilcene Community Center, in Quilcene.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Tuesday.