

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for April 5, 2022.

The two-week COVID-19 case rate in Jefferson County has climbed to 146 per hundred thousand, so we are at the MODERATE level. The County and the CDC are recommending, but not requiring, that we wear masks in indoor public spaces when the case rate is at this level. There are 25 cases in isolation, 1 person is hospitalized and there have been 3,208 cases since the pandemic began. We have lost 28 of our fellow citizens to COVID-19 in Jefferson County since the beginning of the pandemic.

In Clallam County, the two-week case rate is also MODERATE, and has climbed to 161 per hundred thousand. There have been 11,050 cases, and currently 2 people are hospitalized, and we have lost 111 citizens to COVID-19 in Clallam County since the pandemic began.

On a personal note, I was on the ferry yesterday. I myself and one other person were the only two on the passenger deck who were wearing masks. Many other people were not. As we lurch toward the tourist season on the Olympic Peninsula I fear we are headed for a COVID-19 BA-2 surge.

Willie Bence reminded everyone last week that if anyone needs a vaccine or booster and can't leave the house to get one, you can still call the hotline at the EOC (Emergency Operations Center Hotline) so that they can deliver a vaccine to you. The number is: 360-385-9369.

The BOCC briefing will return next Monday, April 11. You can submit your Public Health questions to Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence by emailing contactus@kptz.org. Just be sure to email by this Friday before noon, and your question will be answered at next Monday's BOCC meeting. (And won't you feel special...)

Friday, April 1, a judge in Whatcom County ruled against the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission who were being sued by Whidbey Environmental Action Network (WEAN) to stop the agreement the commission had made with the US Navy to allow nighttime seal combat training. What follows is from a press release provided by WEAN:

"Washington's State Parks and Recreation Commission was "arbitrary and capricious" in granting the United States Navy use of state parks for military training. Their permission to do so was vacated today by Judge James J. Dixon of Thurston County Superior Court in an unusual and lengthy ruling from the bench. The lawsuit brought by Whidbey Environmental Action Network with the support of the Not in Our Parks Coalition challenged a January 28, 2021 approval by the commission to allow parks staff to proceed with permitting the Navy's plans for war training use of state parks in a 4-3 vote. WEAN won on all counts, including the allegation that the emotional impact on the public knowing that covert military surveillance by Navy SEALs was being conducted in parks without their knowledge would affect the public use of state parks. Judge Dixon acknowledged the "creep factor" and ruled it to be an environmental factor necessary to address under SEPA (the State Environmental Protection Act.)"

"We are very pleased that the Superior Court thoughtfully considered the issues and ruled in favor of Whidbey Environmental Action's argument on all counts," said the group's attorney Zachary Griefen. "The court ruled that the State Parks Commission acted beyond the scope of its authority and also violated the State Environmental Policy Act. Parks are for recreation and not for military use."

The stunning judicial rebuke comes after years of lobbying by the US Navy in pressuring Washington State Parks to open up most of the state's waterfront parks for covert military operations. For years, the practice was allowed under an administrative permit with no public knowledge or review.

WEAN Litigation Coordinator Steve Erickson said, "Washington's laws are clear and Judge Dixon just enforced them. Parks are not for military use." Erickson also stated, "I've never heard a judge rule like this. In agreeing with all our arguments, he rebuked the Parks Commission's misinterpretation of their mission."

On Monday's edition of *Attention Please!* Phil Andrus interviewed Larry Morell of Not in Our Parks and Anne Harvey of the Sound Defense Alliance. The interview took place before the decision was handed down Friday. They discuss other things too, like the Growler training that has been going on, and you can listen to that discussion on *Attention Please!* on KPTZ.org. As a bonus, Phil followed up with Larry Morrell after the decision, and that recording is available there too (<https://kptz.org/podcasts/attention-please/>).

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. This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Tuesday.