

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Wednesday, May 25, 2022.

This reporter recently covered the upcoming changes to plastic recycling in Jefferson County, and next week the change goes into effect. What follows is from Jefferson County Solid Waste:

Beginning June 1, bottles and jugs (without caps) will be the only types of plastics accepted for recycling in Jefferson County. Other plastics that were previously allowed were being shipped off to other countries and it wasn't clear if they were being recycled. Contamination of all recyclables is a huge problem. Please put your rinsed, CLEAN plastic bottles and jugs in bins. Do not include containers that have held hazardous materials like motor oil, antifreeze, weed killer, etc. Those can be dropped off at the Household Hazardous Waste site at the Port of Port Townsend Boat Haven. Tin and aluminum cans are acceptable. Glass bottles and jugs are too, but only green, brown and clear—no blue glass. Recycled mixed paper is okay: office paper, junk mail, newspapers, paper bags, or boxes. Corrugated cardboard also is okay. But no milk cartons or other paper that has a layer of plastic in it. Jefferson County's cardboard stays local – it goes to Port Townsend Paper.

Here's what is acceptable for recycling. It includes an informative downloadable flyer:

<https://jeffersoncountysolidwaste.com/recycle/recycling-changes/>.

Drought conditions are expected to impact much of the Pacific Northwest this summer, but the North Olympic Peninsula is set to be in good shape for the warmer weather. Scott Pattee, water supply specialist with the Washington Snow Survey Office, said Friday, "About a month ago, I would have said that we were going to potentially have a problem with drought. Back on April 1, we were below 90% of normal snowpack, but then we had this amazing April snowfall, so by May 1, we were slightly above normal and now (as of last Friday) we are at 150% above normal."

As reported Monday in the *Peninsula Daily News*, a U.S. Drought Monitor map shows that about 54% of Washington state is experiencing abnormally dry or drought conditions, with about 25% of the state in severe or extreme drought predominately east of the Cascades. Here is a link to the monitor:

<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?WA>.

According to The Associated Press, Washington and Oregon recorded above-normal precipitation levels and below-normal temperatures in April, which brought gains in the snowpack in some areas. State climatology experts are predicting summer will be warmer and drier than normal, though a heat wave like last summer is unlikely.

Nick Bond, Washington State University climatologist, said, "It would be quite surprising to have anything of that magnitude come up this year. Chances are, it will be a pretty good summer in terms of water availability." Bond also said one large factor staving off drought on the Peninsula will be the time the fall rainy season begins. The cool, wet weather has also delayed the start of the fire season.

However, fire potential remains above normal, according to Eric Wise with the Northwest Area Coordination Center. Wise said the potential is driven by drought conditions in the east and the previously stated projections of warmer and drier weather in the coming months.

One more little item was reported in yesterday's *Peninsula Daily News*: A young orca whale was spotted late Sunday in a lagoon near McKinley Paper Mill in Port Angeles. The whale made several unsuccessful attempts to exit the lagoon. "There is a canal connecting the open water to the lagoon," said Forbes Darby, communication program manager for NOAA Fisheries. "The entrance to the canal is covered with a bridge that cars can cross. The onsite responder noted that the whale made several unsuccessful attempts to leave throughout the night, but did not appear to want to swim under the bridge into the canal."

Researchers with the Orca Behavioral Institute of Friday Harbor believe the whale was an 8-year-old male member of a transient pod of orcas known to travel to this region. At around 8:30am Monday, he reportedly made his way to the mouth of the canal and then to the harbor and was last sighted making his way out to the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

May marks the beginning of the spring migration for orcas. Although they do not have predictable migration patterns, there are well-known feeding grounds in southern Canada and northern Alaska, according to NOAA Fisheries.

The COVID-19 numbers for today:

In Jefferson County the two week case rate is 938 per hundred thousand (still climbing.) There are 155 cases in isolation for a total of 3,936 cases. There are ZERO people hospitalized and there have been 29 deaths since the pandemic began.

In Clallam County the case rate is 842 per hundred thousand for a total of 12,486 cases. There have been 112 deaths in Clallam County since the pandemic began but no new deaths this week.

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 Wednesday.