

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, February 28, 2023.

Covid Numbers were updated yesterday for Jefferson County. Jefferson County Public Health reports that 48 new cases were added in the past week, so there have been 6,965 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began. The two-week COVID case rate is still high at 327 per hundred thousand. The County estimates only 1 in 14 cases are currently being reported, so it is HIGH, and extremely high if we multiply: Over 4,578 cases per hundred thousand and about 672 new cases in the past week. No one is currently hospitalized, and no new deaths have been reported, leaving the total number of those who have died at 34 due to COVID in Jefferson County.

For all data, there is a link on the transcript for the Jefferson County Public Health Covid-19 Dashboard. That page is now being updated every week. (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) At this high – very high – transmission rate it is strongly recommended that we all wear a high-quality, well fitting mask in public indoor settings. Dr. Allison Berry's NEXT health report to the BOCC will be on Monday, March 6, during the Jim B. show. You can ask questions by sending them to contactus@kptz.org by noon, this Friday, March 3.

A new report released by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office shows that salmon recovery around Washington State is not on the rise. The report demonstrates that salmon in Washington are still struggling due to climate change and other challenges. Of the 14 population groups of salmon and steelhead in Washington listed as at-risk of extinction under the federal Endangered Species Act, ten are in crisis or falling further from recovery goals.

In a press release from Governor Jay Inslee's office, Inslee says, "Salmon need our help, now. Salmon are essential to our identity, ecosystems and economy. We can't wait to save them – we have to invest in their recovery right away by restoring habitats and doing everything possible to repel threats to their survival."

The challenges exacerbated by climate change include habitat loss, stormwater pollution, stream temperature, predation, and barriers to migration. Washington salmon populations have been declining for generations. As Washington grew, many of the places salmon live were altered or destroyed. In 1991, the federal government declared the first salmon in the Pacific Northwest as endangered. By the end of that decade, salmon and steelhead and bull trout populations were listed as threatened or endangered in three-quarters of the state.

It's not all bad news in the report, however. Erik Neatherlin, director of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office said, "We have some places where salmon have been growing in numbers and nearing recovery, such as the summer chum in Hood Canal and the fall Chinook in the Snake River. We also have seen both state and federal funding increase significantly for salmon recovery in the past year. That influx of money will help us start larger recovery projects and take bigger steps forward."

In addition, the report notes that since 2005, 3,750 barriers to fish passage have been corrected, more than 4,730 miles of stream have been made accessible to salmon, and more than 26,000 acres of land along waterways, estuaries, and near-shore areas hosted restoration projects. Coincidentally, the ninth biennial Salmon Recovery Conference, a 2-day event which brings together more than 650 salmon recovery professionals to share their work and the latest science for recovering salmon, is scheduled to take place April 18 in Vancouver, Washington.

The links to both the report (<https://stateofsalmon.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SOS-ExecSummary-2022.pdf>) and state of salmon website (<https://stateofsalmon.wa.gov/>) can be found at the end of this story in the transcript of this report on kptz.org.

One more thing: In the PT Leader this week it is reported that a local craftsman, Ben Tyler III, was named Grand National Amateur Decorative Duck and Goose Call Maker of the Year at the annual Grand National Custom Call Competition in Nashville, Tennessee. Tyler makes some of the most dazzlingly designed devices to deceive ducks and delight collectors. His custom calls can cost up to \$800.

Tyler said, “Most all these calls are collector items, and there’s a lot of old-time collectors out there, too. The really nice ones, hand-carved ones – most collectors love those things and they put them up on their shelf along with a hundred or more calls that they have.” Tyler does make calls to carry to the blinds, carved with a checkering pattern that forms a grip, but his award-winners are destined to never doom a duck. Tyler said, “I don’t take the really nice ones out there.”

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.