

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

As reported in the *PT Leader*, officials in Jefferson County and other agencies will gather for a public town hall meeting in Brinnon tonight. The meeting is planned for 6 to 8pm tonight, March 15, at the Brinnon Community Center. All Brinnon, Quilcene, and south-county residents are welcome and encouraged to attend and take part in the question and answer session. The town hall is hosted by the Lazy C Club homeowners' association and will be moderated by Marcia Kelbon. Town hall panelists include County Commissioner Greg Brotherton, Sheriff Joe Nole, and Brinnon Fire Chief Tim Manly. County officials include Deputy Director of Community Development Josh Peters, environmental health specialists Amanda Christopherson and Nick Lawlor, natural resources coordinator Tami Pokorny, and Compliance Officer Becca Maurer. Also attending will be the Hood Canal Communications manager Mike Oblizalo.

Andrew Schwartz, president of the Lazy C Club homeowners' association, said, "We're eager to focus on Brinnon and south-county issues. This is an exciting opportunity to get some answers from our officials and learn about how our small communities can work better with the county." Anyone interested in asking a question at the town hall will need to complete a questionnaire; contact the Lazy C Club at treaslazyc@gmail.com or 360-670-0012 for more information on submitting a question.

Also, as reported in the *PT Leader*, a message of hope and blessings for environmental defenders were lifted up by Tribal leaders on Saturday, March 4. Elders from the Jamestown S'Klallam and Chemakum Tribes met with Lummi Nation carvers at the Fort Worden Commons to gather the prayers of local people and carry them forward to the environmental defenders known as Apache Stronghold. The group is working to defend their sacred site at Oak Flat in Arizona. This was part of a totem pole journey that, when completed, will total 6,584 miles over 33 days with 41 stops on the way to Oak Flat.

Siamel'wit, of the Lummi House of Tears Carvers, said, "The significance of Oak Flat is the right for the Indigenous people to pray in the way that their ancestors have taught them to pray since the beginning of time. The Apache people, they have their prayer ways that are sacred. They have their prayer ways that have been carried on for thousands and thousands of years," she said.

That location has been identified as the site for the largest copper mine in U.S. history. If the mine is developed as planned, it will leave a crater 2 miles long and 1,000 feet deep at a place the San Carlos Apache have stewarded for thousands of years. Siamel'wit said, "Technically all places are sacred, all places are sacred, all is sacred territory. This just happens to be the one territory that was set aside."

The House of Tears Carvers have been making annual totem pole journeys since their first commemorating 9/11. Sit ki kadem, a Lummi elder also known as Doug Jame, said, "My brother was back there in DC lobbying, and when he got back home he figured what could we do as a small nation to help a devastated county? So he came up with the process of carving a totem pole, and that went across country to all the people. He told all the people to put their hand here, let their cry go, and send a prayer across country to those that perished and those that were left behind. And it worked."

The House of Tears Carvers work in conjunction with the Alliance of Earth, Sky, and Water Protectors, as well as their nonprofit sponsor Catskill MountainKeeper and Apache Stronghold. To donate to the journey and keep the prayers on their way, go to https://www.catskillmountainkeeper.org/house_of_tears_carvers_donations.

And one more thing: Covid home test are still available free from Washington State at
<https://sayyescovidhometest.org/>.

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.