

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, April 26, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

The Port Townsend Psychedelic Society, who have worked tirelessly for years to decriminalize state laws on psychedelics, have reasons to be happy. On Monday, the Jefferson County Commissioners proposed a draft resolution to reduce certain psychedelic plants – psilocybin mushrooms, ayahuasca, and cacti containing mescaline, otherwise known as “entheogens” – to the lowest law-enforcement priority in Jefferson County. Many speakers from the public testified to the effectiveness of entheogens in medical contexts, particularly for the treatment of mental health issues such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The commissioners expressed some concern over county government interfering with local law enforcement and both Jefferson County Sheriff Joe Nole and Prosecuting Attorney James Kennedy were present at Monday’s meeting. They, too, had concerns about ignoring the laws of the state. As quoted in a report by the *Peninsula Daily News*, Nole said, “I took an oath of office to enforce the laws of the State of Washington. Law enforcement needs to abide by the rules. This applies to laws I agree with or not.” The commissioners decided to take the next week to finalize the resolution, then bring it back to their next meeting on Monday, May 1 for a final vote.

Last week, U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer and Senator Patty Murray reintroduced the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This legislation would permanently protect critical salmon habitat and sources of clean drinking water for local communities, while also protecting and expanding outdoor recreation opportunities like hiking, camping, boating, hunting, and fishing without closing any roads. Representative Kilmer said in an office press release, “As someone who grew up on the Olympic Peninsula, I learned firsthand that economic growth and environmental protection go hand in hand. I’m proud to reintroduce this practical, balanced strategy, that will protect the wildest and most pristine places on the Olympic Peninsula while ensuring we can keep and grow jobs in our natural resource industries and other sectors.” The Wild Olympics legislation would permanently protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest as wilderness and 19 rivers and their major tributaries – a total of 464 river miles – as Wild and Scenic Rivers. The legislation would designate the first new wilderness in the Olympic National Forest in nearly four decades and the first-ever protected wild and scenic rivers on the Olympic Peninsula.

The seismic study world is abuzz with the discovery of an underwater spring approximately 50 miles off the coast of Oregon. The leaking liquid was determined by researchers at the University of Washington (<https://www.washington.edu/news/2023/04/10/warm-liquid-spewing-from-oregon-seafloor-comes-from-cascadia-fault-could-offer-clues-to-earthquake-hazards/>) to be a kind of “tectonic lubricant” from the notorious Cascadia Subduction Zone fault. If it stops leaking, some researchers say that the consequences could be disastrous.

This underwater hole, named “Pythia’s Oasis” (<https://interactiveoceans.washington.edu/10/2019/pythias-oasis-an-underwater-spring-unlike-any-other/>) after the mythological oracle who prophesized with the aid of mind-altering hot spring gasses, was first discovered in 2015 by UW graduate, now White House Policy Advisor, Brendan Phillip. At the time, Phillip was tracking methane bubbles that naturally steam out of the seafloor on the edge of the continental shelf. Although similar fluid seep sites exist nearby, University of Washington

researchers say the Pythia's Oasis is the first of its kind – a leak so significant it could be detected from the ocean's surface.

A seafloor-exploring robot found the “liquid” spewing out of the hole is “almost fresh”, low in salinity, rich in minerals, and at least 16 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the surrounding sea water it leaks into. Researchers speculate it comes from the Cascadia megathrust where temperatures are an estimated 300 to 500 degrees Fahrenheit. A [research article](#) in *Science Advances* explains that the fluid pressure of Pythia's Oasis creates less friction for ocean crust and sediment to slide passed each other. But if the pressure is turned down it could cause the two plates to lock, causing pressure to build up, resulting in a damaging earthquake up to a Magnitude-9 on the Richter Scale.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.