

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, May 3, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

In a press release, the Washington State Board of Natural Resources announced Tuesday the approval for a transfer of 109 acres of conserved forests just west of North Beach and near McCurdy Point on the Quimper Peninsula. The three parcels currently managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will be protected with perpetual deed restrictions restricting uses to conservation and recreation after Jefferson County agrees to pay \$383,000. Jefferson County began leasing the parcels from DNR in 2009 through a now-defunct Trust Land Transfer Lease program that funded 50-year conservation leases on DNR-managed lands for local governments. Jefferson County Commissioner Kate Dean said, "We are so pleased to have come to an agreement with DNR to conserve this forestland that is so beloved by our residents. With the help of our local partner, Jefferson Land Trust, this forest will continue to be used for recreation and to provide ecosystem services such as sequestering carbon – all while ensuring that other timberlands continue to provide important revenue for schools, libraries, fire districts, and more." A link to the map of the parcels can be found here: https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/em_bc_bnr_quimper_05022023.pdf.

According to Jefferson County Department of Public Health (DOH), recreational harvest of all shellfish species in Discovery Bay is now officially reopened. The danger of biotoxins in the bay was removed on April 21. Clam samples are showing a decline in the specific biotoxins that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning. Jefferson County Public Health has removed warning signs at public access points at the bay.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning can be fatal. The illness is caused by eating shellfish contaminated with toxins from the naturally occurring marine plankton *Alexandrium*. However, more than a dozen beaches remain closed across Island County to butter clam and varnish clam harvesting after high levels of marine biotoxins were found in their clam samples. The following areas in Island County remain closed to butter and varnish clam harvesting: Port Susan, West Whidbey Island, Saratoga Passage, Possession Sound (including Utsalady Bay), Penn Cove, and Holmes Harbor. The DOH informs us that an area can be closed to butter and varnish clam harvest but open for other marine species. While crabs and shrimp are not included in the closure, crabs should be cleaned before cooking and the crab butter found under the shell should be removed.

The City of Port Townsend announces the establishment of a Poet Laureate program, a collaboration between the Culture and Society Committee and the Port Townsend Arts Commission, and in partnership with the Port Townsend Public Library. The Poet Laureate would serve an initial one-year term to serve in ceremonial, educational, and inspirational ways in honoring the City's active creative community, promoting the City's robust literary arts, and celebrating the written word.

Evan Robert Starkey, 33, of Port Townsend, made a terrible error when he posted photographs on social media of some of the \$4,700 of cordless DeWalt power tools he allegedly stole in December 2021 from the cargo trailer of a Port Hadlock roofing company. The Port Townsend police received a tip from someone who saw the posts. Now, he faces a felony charge of second-degree possession of stolen property. Starkey has changed his story to police, first denying any involvement, then admitting to it. He also claimed to have received the tools from another man, who, in turn, had received them from somebody else, according to court documents provided

to the *PT Leader*. When police searched Starkey's home, they found stolen tools – including a chopsaw, power drills, power staple guns, a jig saw, roofing gun and toolbox filled with hand tools – as well as drug paraphernalia that the police say indicated heroin use. Conviction of second-degree possession of stolen property can result in a maximum prison sentence of five years and a \$10,000 fine.

Jefferson County PUD have announced that they will continue the undergrounding work along Van Trojen Road south of Chimacum through May 7 as new utilities are placed. Flaggers should be onsite and crews may be on or near the roadway, so please drive with caution!

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.