

Hello again. This is Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, May 18, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

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While the national debt ceiling crisis currently unfolding in the United States Congress may seem far away, it's already having a direct effect on one local project. The Port Townsend Pump Track project, which aims to bring family-friendly and accessible exercise to the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, has been moving ahead slowly but surely thanks to a grant of \$50,000 from the county to help with planning and permitting. That money, however, is contingent on the federal government sorting out its issues. The government reached the \$31.4 trillion debt limit on January 19 and Treasury has been using a series of accounting maneuvers to keep paying its bills. On Wednesday, the *Washington Post* reported that Senators Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, Tina Smith, Ed Markey, and Jeff Merkley are circulating a letter to Biden urging him to invoke a clause in the 14th amendment that would declare the debt ceiling unconstitutional, getting rid of the debate forever – and the congressional drama that comes with it.

Locally, the pump track group needs the money those Democrats are fighting for to help pay the Evergreen Mountainbike Alliance who have already put together a plan for the track. A pump track consists of a circuit of rollers, banked turns, and features designed to be ridden completely by riders “pumping” – generating momentum by up and down body motion – which can be used by people riding bicycles, scooters, and even wheelchairs. After seeing the one Port Angeles built, the local group decided to spearhead bringing one to Jefferson County.

On May 11, the Jefferson County Fairgrounds Associations Board of Directors voted to continue its support of the track while sitework and permitting drags out in part due to far away as D.C. To find out more about the project and how to support it, search for the Port Townsend Pump Track group on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088693955971>).

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While a pet can be a comfort during hard times, it can also be hard to take care of a furry friend while struggling financially. That's why Pet Helpers is sponsoring a pet vaccination event including doggie toenail clipping, pet first aid information, and an introduction to basic dog training at the Caswell Brown Village on May 28 starting at 11am. The clinic is for pets of low-income folks only, including those unemployed, living on Social Security, or unhoused. Those who would like to attend but are unsure if they qualify, as well as those with excitable animals who require extra care, can go to <https://pethelpersporttownsend.org/> to find out how to preregister.

Those who are more fortunate can help fund the Pet Helpers in these efforts at their second annual Pet Boutique Yard Sale from 10am to 2pm Saturday, May 27 in Uptown at 540 Tyler Street near the Saturday Farmers Market. The sale will feature an assortment of gently used pet products like leashes and collars as well as animal-themed arts and crafts. There will also be a raffle for a pet portrait by local animal artist Laurie Riley.

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One particularly peculiar group of animals was spotted downtown on Tuesday providing comfort to any and all who happened to cross their path. The Pacific Pack Goats – a trio consisting of the Lady Jade, her daughter Indigo (or Indy), and their attendant Sir Copper – could be seen making their way down Water Street for what their owner John Smith calls goat therapy. Smith and his dog Daisy kept watch over the ibexes while people stopped for quick meet and greets with the animals. He hopes to continue toting the goats around town for guided goat hikes on the Larry Scott Trail, as well as offering goatscaping services to areas that need to be eaten

down. Goats are known for eating anything, and that includes intimidating blackberry vines. While Smith is looking for more portable fencing options, right now the goats can only chew in areas that are already fenced in. Smith says his dream is for packing with goats to go viral, for people to drive less and live more locally, and bring “shepherd life” back into popular practice. Smith and the Pacific Pack Goats can be found on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091394453845>).

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KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.