

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, May 31, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office has posted on Facebook that they are conducting a search and rescue mission at the Ranger Hole in Brinnon. Joshua A. Guerrier, 28, of Olympia has gone missing and is presumed to have entered the Duckabush River. His personal belongings, clothing, cellular phone, and dog were located near the Ranger Hole trail. Several agencies are assisting, including Jefferson Search and Rescue, Clallam Fire District #3, and Pierce County. The Ranger Hole trailhead is closed. Jefferson Search and Rescue, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Search and Rescue, and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office searched the area by foot, helicopter, and drone. Center Valley Animal Rescue and the Brinnon Fire Department assisted with the missing man's dog. As of 8am this morning, Guerrier is still missing.

Survey and eradication efforts for the invasive weed Spartina, more commonly known as cordgrass, starts tomorrow and lasts through November. This includes all variants – Spartina densiflora, Spartina alterniflora, Spartina spartina, and Spartina anglica. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has announced in a press release that the work will take place in multiple areas, including Grays Harbor, Hood Canal, Willapa Bay, Puget Sound, the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula, and near the mouth of the Columbia River.

Spartina had been eradicated at five additional sites in 2022. Since 1995, WSDA has served as the lead state agency for Spartina eradication, facilitating the cooperation of local, state, federal, and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners. The cooperative effort reduced infestations from a high of more than 9,000 solid acres in 2003 to just over two total acres in 2022, spread over 125 sites – meaning 62 percent of Washington's sites are not yet eradicated. If left unchecked, Spartina outcompetes native vegetation and converts ecologically healthy mudflats and estuaries into solid Spartina meadows. As a result, important habitats for salmon, forage fish, invertebrates, shorebirds, and waterfowl are lost; the threat of flooding is increased, and the state's shellfish industry is negatively impacted.

The Washington State Department of Transportation has announced that efforts to restore fish habitat back to a more "natural" state have begun on State Route 104 and SR 19 in Jefferson County. Contractor crews working for the Washington State Department of Transportation began yesterday a summer-long project that will replace two fish barriers with new fish-passable structures. A two-lane bypass around the work zone on SR 104 between South Point Road and SR 19 will be built to ease traffic. The bypass is expected to be open July 21. SR 19 between Egg and I and Swansonville Roads will close for ten days after Labor Day weekend. The specific dates and times for this work will be announced later this summer. During the closure, travelers will use Center Road to detour around the project area. Both culverts will be replaced with 18-foot-wide, three-sided fish-passable structures. Fish will be able to pass through both creeks more easily. The water will be slower and simulate a natural creek environment.

According to a press release from the Jefferson County Auditor, eight positions are open for a Special Three-Day Filing Period, June 7 through June 9. Candidates who file during this special period may not withdraw. These races will appear only on the General Election ballot, no matter how many candidates file for the office.

A Director at Large for a 4-year term and a Director at Large for a 2-year unexpired term for the Queets/Clearwater School District No. 20, three positions in the Clearwater Fire District No. 7, including a 6-year short and full term, two positions in (Paradise Bay) Water District No. 1, including a 6-year term and one with (Brinnon) Water District No. 2, a 6-year short and full term. Candidate filing will be held in the Jefferson County Auditor's Office located at 1820 Jefferson Street in Port Townsend and will open Wednesday, June 7 at 8:30am and close Friday, June 9 at 4:30pm.

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.