

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, June 14, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

Yesterday, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell spoke at a Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hearing focused on wildfire preparedness and response. She is quoted in a press release as saying, “I think that it is time and opportunity for us to really break down the barriers that are prohibiting us from having a faster response, and work quickly on the faster response. My whole state is in the forecast for this summer being in the epicenter of this ... there are small fires already burning in Central Washington and a small fire in Yakima County, which grew to 150 acres last night.”

Because there have been well above-normal temperatures and below normal precipitation, snowpack has rapidly declined. This has caused very dry conditions across Washington. Past years with forecasts like this have been followed by especially destructive fire seasons.

During the hearing, Sen. Cantwell pressed Jaelith Hall-Rivera, Deputy Chief of State, Private, and Tribal Forestry, USDA Forest Service, on the need to improve coordination between the various agencies that help fight wildfires to ensure faster fire response. Hall-Rivera responded, “Senator, we are focused on getting tracking systems out. We have done a lot of pilot testing as a result of the Dingell Act and we appreciate the focus and intention on this technology. We’re going to be equipping our fire fleet with tracking devices this year.” According to the Bureau of Land Management, in Oregon and Washington the Dingell Act directs the Bureau of Land Management to take several actions related to its surface management authorities on public domain.

Numerous news outlets are reporting that the Clallam County Sheriff’s Office is conducting a felony investigation into the killings of ten alpacas in Joyce just west of Port Angeles. On the morning of May 26, Connie Beauvais observed the dead bodies of her alpacas scattered over the yard outside her dining room window. They had been shot by a small caliber weapon in the early morning hours. Clallam County Sheriff’s Office is conducting the felony investigation as a violation of Animal cruelty in the first degree. Speaking to the *Peninsula Daily News*, Beauvais said, “This was done in the dead of the night under a clear sky with a crescent moon with a silencer and night-vision glasses.” She presumed the latter based on a lack of response from her dog. She said the animals are not visible from the road, so “somebody got out and walked through the trees over to the pasture and shot them purposely.” Anyone with information is asked to call dispatchers at 360-417-2459.

In a post on Facebook, the Kitsap County Medical Examiner’s Office is currently in possession of the remains of five people that are considered either indigent or abandoned and they request “...to place the remains with family or friends if possible.” They have dedicated numerous hours attempting to find family for these individuals to no avail and they hope that this outreach through the media will reach someone that they were unable to locate through other means. If you are, or know of, a friend or family member of any of the following individuals, please contact the Kitsap County Medical Examiner’s office at 360-731-6843:

- Lawrence Jones — date of birth: January 25, 1948
- Jerry Forbus — date of birth: February 26, 1952
- William Clyde — date of birth: April 25, 1947
- Steven Owens — date of birth: April 18, 1949

- Thomas Kasper — date of birth: December 27, 1955

Any remains not claimed before the end of business on June 26, 2023 will be interred at the Silverdale Pioneer Cemetery at a public ceremony tentatively scheduled for July 8 at 10am.

Tidal currents canceled the 6:30am from Port Townsend and the 7:15am from Coupeville sailings and will do so every morning through Saturday this week. Please see the Tidal Cancellations for a complete list of affected dates and departures (<https://www.wsdot.com/ferries/schedule/AddCancelBySimpleRoute.aspx?routeid=8>). Your alternate routes are Edmond/Kingston and/or Mukilteo/Clinton. Walk-on space is available for all departures.

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.