

Hello again! This is not Derek Firenze with your local news and commentary for Thursday, June 29, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

While Jefferson County currently has no active Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons, there are cases in all of the surrounding counties on the Olympic Peninsula. Washington State has a total of 132 missing as of June 26 and only 31 have ever been found. Yesterday, the U.S. Justice Department announced the creation of the Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Regional Outreach Program, which will permanently place five dedicated Assistant U.S. Attorneys and five coordinators to help resolve missing and murdered Indigenous women and people cases throughout the country.

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United States Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington released the following statement, “I’m thankful the Administration is heeding the call to provide additional resources to fight the scourge of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Washington state. These additional resources will boost tribal law enforcement efforts to prevent and respond to these troubling cases and improve public safety in Native communities. The decision to place additional Justice Department personnel in Eastern Washington dedicated to addressing this crisis is welcome news in our fight to protect and seek justice in tribal communities.”

This summer, the Jefferson Land Trust will launch a new monitoring study on their nature preserves in which they’ll be recording and analyzing birdsong. Thanks to the support of a \$25,000 Cornell University grant and in collaboration with Kitsap County’s Great Peninsula Conservancy, the study will map the presence of certain indicator bird species to help determine whether their forest management activities are succeeding in creating the habitat conditions that birds and other local wildlife need to thrive.

Carrie Clendaniel, Jefferson Land Trust’s Preserve Manager, summed it up nicely saying, “We want to always be checking to make sure that the ways we’re caring for the land are leading to the results we want – and monitoring is the way to do that. We saw an opportunity with this grant to use birds as indicators of how our forests are doing, both initially and in response to our forest management activities.”

Those forest management activities include selective tree thinning and the creation of key habitat features that are currently lacking in their already managed landscapes, such as standing snags, habitat piles, and downed logs. The collaboration with Kitsap County’s Great Peninsula Conservancy especially helps because this is their second consecutive year of receiving this grant funding for a parallel bird monitoring project on the lands they manage. Staff members from that organization worked with Jefferson Land Trust’s stewardship team to help adapt their field-tested protocol for the land trust’s preserves.

For this first recording session, the conservancy will be loaning their tools while Jefferson County places an order for their own recorders for use in the long run. The conservancy will also train Jefferson Land Trust staff and volunteers to use the recorders as well as the advanced analysis software program that helps interpret the recordings – an incredible time-saving resource for our local conservation organization.

If you'd like to do some of your own work to help conserve the local ecology, you can be a part of Port Townsend's natural storm water solutions by helping care for one of the many rain gardens located across town. Since 2014, the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee has worked with local organizations and community volunteers to build and maintain 19 rain gardens across East Jefferson County, 12 of which are located in neighborhoods across Port Townsend. You may be just a block away!

Maintaining a local rain garden is a great way to get involved with the community and contribute to keeping our beloved Salish Sea healthy and beautiful. If you'd like to see the list of rain gardens and sign up to be a steward, you can visit tinyurl.com/PTRainGardens

(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfCA49exCLyygLt42Ij_u1Nos8CDgH0fYuD_CLnSuzQsOOwJg/viewform?pli=1).

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news at noon and 5pm Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This has been Derek Firenze. Thanks for listening.