

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, July 5, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

According to the Olympic Peninsula Environmental News, a coalition of groups – Earth Law Center, the Center for Whale Research, and the Keystone Species Alliance – filed a notice of appeal on June 30 to challenge the “Power Plant” timber sale, currently set to be auctioned on July 26 by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The proposed “Power Plant” timber sale is a 126-acre timber sale that borders such recreation routes as the Olympic Adventure Trail and the trail to access the old lower Elwha dam site, as well as nearby climbing areas.

The forest sits nearby the Elwha River with a mix of Douglas fir and Western red cedar, many at least a hundred years old, and a diverse, naturally regenerated understory. \$327 million of federal funding has been invested in the river’s restoration to date. The legal action alleges that DNR has systematically engaged in extensive logging of older legacy forests in the Elwha River Watershed without studies or consideration of impacts to instream flows, groundwater recharge, and water temperature. The lawsuit also alleges that DNR failed to consider how the logging could impact this critical riverine wildlife corridor, soil health, salmon and orca populations, and ongoing Elwha river restoration. The Elwha River is City of Port Angeles’ residents only source of drinking water. The legal action specifically focuses on Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz’s efforts to push through timber sales. Activists claim the forest could be saved if Public Lands Commissioner Franz directed the harvest to stop.

Briceson R. Standley, 34, from Port Angeles, is scheduled to be arraigned July 10 after a federal grand jury indicted him on two counts of sexual abuse of a minor, who later attempted to kill himself, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Standley has been held at the Federal Detention Center in SeaTac, south of Seattle, since his arrest on June 15.

According to the *Peninsula Daily News*’ examination of court records, Standley met a 15-year-old boy sometime between April 1, 2022, and June 4, 2022. They had previously communicated on a social media app. Prosecutors are quoted as saying that “In the first encounter, Standley sexually molested the youth. In the second encounter, Standley allegedly carried a machete and a pocketknife and raped [him].” The teen was being treated at Seattle Children’s Hospital after a suicide attempt by a lethal dose of painkillers. He reported the abuse to a nurse practitioner who, in turn, reported it to the Port Angeles Police Department. Since the assaults had taken place in Olympic National Park, the federal courts were given jurisdiction on the case.

A woman who was being held at the Kitsap County Jail was found dead in her cell early Monday morning, the Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office said in a statement. The unidentified 46-year-old woman had been arrested by Bremerton police on Friday on suspicion of fourth-degree assault in a domestic violence case and had been scheduled to be released on Monday, the statement said. Jail staff were notified by inmates who found the woman unresponsive, and staff attempted to revive the woman but their efforts were unsuccessful. The Port Orchard Police Department is investigating the incident.

The 2023 Puget Sound summer crab-fishing season started July 1, but some areas will have limited crabbing or will remain closed because Dungeness crab numbers are still low. Speaking to KUOW Public Radio, Don Velasquez, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife crustacean biologist, said, “The summer seasons being announced today are very similar to what was announced for summer 2022. Some areas with continued low abundance of Dungeness crab will see limited seasons or remain closed this year to continue to promote Dungeness population recovery.”

Marine Area 12, which is south of Ayock Point in Hood Canal, is one such area that is closed to crabbing because of low populations. So is Marine Area 13, which is south Puget Sound. Many areas are open for crabbing, including Marine Area 9, which continues south in Admiralty Inlet from Point Wilson. For a full list, click on the link (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/newsroom/news-release/recreational-crabbing-open-july-1-many-puget-sound-marine-areas-2>).

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.